

# Kant's Transcendental Idealism as Empirical Realism

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Submitted for the degree of PhD at the University of  
East Anglia, Department of Philosophy

August 2016

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## Abstract

This thesis examines Kant's transcendental idealism. It argues that the key to understanding Kant's idealism lies in appreciating how it is compatible with Kant's empirical realism. It suggests against the so-called traditional view that transcendental idealism is not a distinction between illusion and reality, where appearances are how things merely seem to be to us in virtue of the nature of our minds, and where things in themselves are understood to be how things really are. Instead, it argues that transcendental idealism, when charitably interpreted, reveals how minds such as ours can have genuine cognitive access to reality, based on exploring the links between the conditions of experience, in terms of a priori forms of intuition and categories that the cognitive subject supplies to its experience, and the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, in terms of the necessary ontological structures that objects of experience must have in order to be representable through human forms of intuition (space and time). The thesis suggests that Kant uses his transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves in at least three ways and that unpacking these three uses helps us to get a better grasp on Kant's idealism. The three senses of the transcendental distinction are: (1) the traditional phenomenalist conception, according to which appearances are 'mere representations' and things in themselves are the putatively 'real' things, (2) the notion that things in themselves are 'objects of a pure understanding' and (3) that appearances are conditioned phenomena while things in themselves are the unconditioned ground of phenomena. The thesis argues that senses (2) and (3) can be combined to yield transcendental idealism as empirical realism, while the arguments and passages that turn on sense (1) must be rejected.

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## Note on Abbreviations and References

All references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* cite the standard A/B paginations and, unless otherwise stated, are to the Guyer-Wood Cambridge translation (1998). References to Kant's other works employ the volume/page numbering of the Akademie Edition and refer to the relevant volumes of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. I employ the following abbreviations:

Cor – Kant's philosophical correspondence in *Correspondence*

CPJ – *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

CPR – *Critique of Practical Reason in Practical Philosophy*

Dis – *On a Discovery Wherewith Any New Critique of Pure Reason Is to be Made Superfluous by an Older One in Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*

DS – *Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*

GM – *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals in Practical Philosophy*

ID – *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intellectual Worlds (Inaugural Dissertation) in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*

JL – The *Jäsche Logic* in *Lectures on Logic*

LM – Kant's metaphysics lectures in *Lectures on Metaphysics*

MFNS – *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science in Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*

ND – *A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition (Nova Dilucidatio) in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*

NM – *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*

PE – *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality (Prize Essay) in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*

PM – *The Employment in Natural Philosophy of Metaphysics Combined with Geometry, of which Sample I Contains the Physical Monadology in Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*

Pro – *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science in Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*

R – Kant's *Reflexionen* in *Notes and Fragments*, unless stated otherwise

Full details of the translations used are provided in the bibliography. All other references are given parenthetically in the text and cite the date of publication. When referring to a portion of the *Critique* I use capitalization, so ‘Transcendental Deduction’ refers to that part of the *Critique*, while ‘transcendental deduction’ refers to either the argument or the project itself. I use single quotation marks for direct quotation and double quotation marks for indirect quotation.

## Introduction: Transcendental Idealism as Empirical Realism?

### 1. An Introduction to the Problem and Aims of the Thesis

Kant's transcendental idealism is one of the most divisive topics in philosophical scholarship. The main question concerns how we should understand Kant's transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves, and the corresponding limitation of our knowledge to appearances.<sup>1</sup> Those such as Peter Strawson (1966), Paul Guyer (1987) and Kenneth Westphal (2004) understand transcendental idealism to be the negative thesis that we do not know how reality is (things in themselves), but only how it must seem to minds such as ours (appearances). Though it is not a position these philosophers endorse, they take Kant to have held this view, and they argue that there are strands of his thought that can be profitably separated from his much-maligned idealism.<sup>2</sup> These philosophers can be termed 'Kantian anti-idealists'. Others, such as Karl Ameriks, assign a less real status to appearances than to things in themselves, but nonetheless take appearances, for Kant, to be genuinely 'non-fraudulent' (2003: esp. 35-38; 2011). Ameriks could be described as occupying the middle-ground, or as he often calls it, the 'moderate' position. Then there are those such as Henry Allison (1983; 1996; 2004; 2012; 2015a; 2015b), Paul Abela (2002), Arthur Collins (1999) and Lucy Allais (2004; 2007; 2011; 2015) who argue, albeit in very different ways, that Kant is not a traditional idealist, trapping us behind a veil of perception, but a philosopher with profound insights into the way we gain cognitive access to reality. One of the key problems – maybe even *the* key problem – for understanding and evaluating Kant's transcendental idealism as a philosophical position is how to work out an interpretation of this idealism that is compatible with what Kant terms his empirical realism, for as Abela notes, 'Realism with a wink' is the best description of how even Kant's allies have viewed his supposed combination of

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout I often refer to Kant's distinction between appearances and things in themselves as the 'transcendental distinction'.

<sup>2</sup> For Strawson, this is the general notion of transcendental arguments. These are arguments that purport to demonstrate that one thing, e.g., the relative stability and uniformity of nature, is the necessary condition of the possibility of something else that is taken for granted, e.g., self-consciousness. For Guyer, building on this general idea, it is the thought that Kant has a legitimate 'transcendental theory of experience' contained in the Analogies of Experience and the Refutation of Idealism. Westphal contends that Kant's arguments actually lead to unqualified realism, but that Kant erroneously adopted transcendental idealism.

transcendental idealism and empirical realism (2002: 1). Although it is an oversimplification of the above positions, they can all be broadly characterized by where they stand on the question of how much weight should be attributed to transcendental idealism vis-à-vis empirical realism. Guyer and Strawson place the emphasis on what they see as Kant's misguided metaphysical idealism, taking the claimed empirical realism to be wholly incompatible with this idealism. By contrast, Allison, Abela and Allais could all be reasonably taken as emphasizing Kant's (empirical) realism: even the title of Abela's book reflects this position (*Kant's Empirical Realism*), while Allison is emphatic that transcendental idealism cannot be understood as a distinction between appearance and reality (2004: 46-47, *passim*), as Guyer and Strawson would have it; Allais completely rejects the notion that Kant entertains phenomenism or metaphysical idealism of any kind.<sup>3</sup> The question falls to scholars on this side of the debate to set out what Kant's idealism does consist in if it is not of the traditional variety. One possible response to this problem is that of Collins who goes even further by rejecting the idealist characterization of Kant's position altogether (1999: ix-xvii, 3-7). Developing an adequate account that is not *prima facie* philosophically absurd and that manages to retain some sense of idealism – it is called transcendental *idealism* after all – while not allowing this idealism to render the claimed empirical realism vacuous has been aptly described as the ‘holy grail’ of Kant scholarship (Ameriks 2011, 29). I aim to present an interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism that retains an acceptable sense of idealism with a commitment to a genuinely robust empirical realism that is worthy of the ‘realism’ credential. This is my modest attempt to continue the quest for the grail.

The approach adopted here shares a broad commitment to what has been termed the ‘one world’ reading of transcendental idealism. This is the view that, whatever else is to be said about it, Kant's distinction between appearances and things in themselves should not be construed as one between two ontologically distinct types of objects, or as between representations and their objects in such a way that the representations are regarded as cutting us off from reality, pace Guyer and Strawson.<sup>4</sup> But while I agree that

<sup>3</sup> Allais' view could also be described as a ‘moderate interpretation’, and she draws attention to the similarity between her work and Ameriks’ (2015: 16), but I have characterized her position as emphasizing realism because of her insistence that Kant is a direct realist, or is best approached through the lens of direct realism (2015: 16). Although direct realism has no straightforward connection with Kantian *empirical* realism, it is clearly opposed to traditional idealism.

<sup>4</sup> Allison, Allais, Abela, and Collins are all ‘one world’ readers who have influenced my current position, but the term suggests an overgenerous conception of how much interpretations under this label agree. As

this is the most charitable and philosophically rewarding way to read Kant, I also take seriously the overwhelming textual evidence that Kant often espouses a phenomenalist idealism. As such, I present an account of what motivates Kant towards this extreme idealism and suggest how it can be corrected to accord with the genuine critical spirit that is prevalent throughout the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Central to this approach is the recognition that Kant does not present one single, clearly defined and unambiguous account of the distinction between appearances and things in themselves, but instead employs the distinction in a variety of interrelated ways.<sup>5</sup> By being sensitive to the multifarious use of the distinction I think we can make progress in the quest for the grail. More specifically, I will argue that the distinction can be construed in (at least) three different ways and that two of these three ways can be combined to form a version of transcendental idealism that is both realist and idealist in acceptable senses:

(1) as a distinction between appearance and reality, where appearances are mental representations, entities or constructions out of actual or possible mental representations, and things in themselves are the ‘real’ things behind the appearances – this is the metaphysical idealist aspect of Kant’s idealism, but it also encompasses less extreme ‘phenomenalist’ readings such as Van Cleve’s (1999) ‘qualified’ ‘two world’ view.<sup>6</sup> (2) as a critical reflection on the conditions of experience, revealing that we have a tendency to view things *as* things in themselves, that is, to consider the objects of our experience *as if* they are objects of a pure understanding rather than *as* appearances, objects given through, and thus conditioned by, our forms of sensibility (space and time) – this aspect of Kant’s idealism is closely related to a ‘one world’ Allison-style deflationary reading. (3) appearances as conditioned phenomena and things in themselves as the unconditioned ground of phenomena – this aspect overlaps to some

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Dietmar Heidemann points out, these interpreters agree that Kant’s distinction is not between two worlds, but that is *all* that they agree on, for they disagree on just about everything else (2011: 201).

<sup>5</sup> That there is no unambiguous account may seem obvious, but Allais maintains that it is possible to find an unambiguous account of appearances and things in themselves (2004: 665; 2015: 11). Others, such as Marcel Quarfood are much more sensitive to the flexibility in Kant’s employment of the distinction (2011: esp. 156–157).

<sup>6</sup> Since this is by far the most familiar characterization of transcendental idealism, due to space constraints, I take it as given that it is hard to deny that Kant *ever* characterizes transcendental idealism in these terms. In Chapter 4 I argue that transcendental idealism operates as a phenomenalist idealism in the resolution of the mathematical antinomies, but the reader will find additional analysis of some of the most phenomenalist-sounding passages in the Appendix to this thesis. As will become clear, I think that transcendental idealism can be given an acceptable non-phenomenalist reconstruction but doing so entails recognizing those areas where Kant (whether intentionally or not) relies on phenomenalist idealism.

extent with the metaphysical ‘one world’ or ‘moderate’ interpretations of Ameriks and Allais. My overall aim is to show that Kant’s transcendental idealism, when charitably understood and reconstructed, does not cut us off from reality, but rather shows how we are able to experience an objective, genuinely real, publicly perceivable world in the first place. Based on an exploration of the three different senses of the appearances/things in themselves distinction I hope to separate a legitimate version of transcendental idealism, as a combination of senses (2) and (3), from the illegitimate, metaphysical idealist version of transcendental idealism that correlates with sense (1). In this way, I offer a detailed exegesis of the Kantian texts, while putting forward a philosophical position that I take to be in accord *with the spirit, but perhaps not every letter*, of the Kantian texts. Though I can do little more than gesture towards the plausibility of transcendental idealism, much less establish the truth of such a position, I hope to show that Kant’s novel account of the conditions of experience, and the corresponding limitation of our knowledge to appearances, should not be dismissed out of hand. Furthermore, before we can even give transcendental idealism a fair hearing we must understand just what is being proposed, and as years of debate will testify, no consensus has yet been reached.

## 2. The Structure of the Thesis

Above I have given a very brief survey of the different interpretations of transcendental idealism. The reader will find a detailed analysis of the different positions in the Appendix.<sup>7</sup> In Chapters 1 and 2 I undertake a detailed analysis of the Transcendental Analytic in order to understand what Kant means by affirming both the transcendental ideality and empirical reality of empirical objects as ‘appearances’. I argue that Kant’s empirical realism consists in his demonstration in the Transcendental Deduction and the Analogies of Experience that the relational categories (substance, causality, and community) have *objective validity* and *objective reality* with respect to objects of possible experience.<sup>8</sup> Briefly, I will argue that it is only through his

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<sup>7</sup> This material was originally the first Chapter of the thesis, but since it is not essential to my positive argument it was relocated.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, the full story of how the categories are conditions of possible experience would have to include his accounts of the applicability of the categories of quantity, quality and modality to appearances. This is well beyond the scope of this thesis. At any rate, it is the account of the relational categories to appearances as conditions of possible experience that is (a) most significant in Kant’s

transcendental idealism concerning the status of space and time as a priori forms of our intuition that Kant can affirm his empirical realism, that is, the objective validity and reality of the (relational) categories with respect to objects of possible experience.<sup>9</sup>

Chapter 1 examines Kant's argument in the Transcendental Deduction that the categories are conditions of possible experience because they are the a priori rules for bringing representations to the synthetic unity of apperception through rule-governed acts of synthesis. In Section 1 I explain and justify the distinction between the objective validity and objective reality of the categories. In Section 2 I argue that the *objective validity* of the categories rests on their indispensability for human understanding as conditions of experience, by being the conditions of the thought of objects in general. The question of objective validity is distinct from the question of objective reality, however, at least with respect to pure concepts, so this role of being rules for thinking objects in general is not enough to secure their objective reality. In transitioning from the objective validity to the reality of the categories I take seriously Kant's claim in the B-Deduction that the categories are conditions of experience because they are also conditions of perception. This is the argument of Section 3. For the *objective reality* of the categories to be established it is a necessary (but not a sufficient) condition to demonstrate that they have a necessary connection with empirical intuition or perception, since if they are to hold of objects of experience, it follows that they must hold of objects of perception, since *a fortiori* anything that is to be experienced (cognized through a rule-governed *connection* of perceptions) must already be (directly or indirectly) perceivable; it must already count as an *object in general* for us. Kant's strategy is to link the categories to the objects of perception by connecting them with the act of the mind (termed 'figurative synthesis') that provides the *form* of objects of perception. The figurative synthesis is what grounds the 'original orderability' of appearances, the means through which it can be guaranteed that anything that is given through our forms of intuition (space and time) can become an object of experience in virtue of it being given through these forms. Following recent work on the topic by Beatrice Longuenesse (1998; 2005) and Allison (2004; 2012; 2015a) I examine the contribution of the figurative synthesis to the possibility of experience at length. Specifically, I argue with Longuenesse against Allison that the figurative synthesis

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philosophy, (b) the most plausible philosophically, and (c), the most important for my purposes insofar as they shed the most light on the relationship between transcendental idealism and empirical realism.

<sup>9</sup> See Section 3 below for a more detailed explanation of my interpretation of 'empirical realism'.

generates space and time as formal intuitions, and thus as the spatiotemporal *forms of empirical objects* or appearances, but also with Allison against Longuenesse that the categories must be involved in some substantive way in the figurative synthesis if the second step of the Deduction is to succeed.<sup>10</sup> Since the categories, on my reading, are at work in the figurative synthesis of the imagination, it follows that they have a necessary connection with the form of appearances, thus showing that appearances are formally amenable to our forms of thought, but this does not yet suffice to show their *objective reality*. In short, all this argument tells us is that it is necessary for us to use such concepts for *thinking* objects in general, such that they can then be conceptualized under empirical concepts in experience. If the second step succeeds then we also know that it is in principle impossible for appearances to be given that cannot be thought as an object through the categories, but we do not yet know that reality consists of substances that endure unperceived through time, that they are in causal interaction with each other, etc. Since Kant agrees with Hume that concepts like causality cannot be read off from the content of experience he sets out an alternative way of proving the *reality* of these concepts, namely by establishing that they function as rules of determining appearances in time. I pick up Kant's move from objective validity to objective reality in Chapter 2 by moving from the Transcendental Deduction to the Analogies of Experience.

In Chapter 2 I explore how Kant continues his strategy in the Analogies of Experience. In Section 1 I explore the complicated relationship between the Deduction and the Analogies. In Section 2 I focus on the relational categories in more detail as conditions of perception of objects in general. In Section 3 I demonstrate that Kant's empirical realism with respect to the categories consists in how the relational categories are related to empirical objects as the ontological conditions of their representability in time, i.e., empirical time-determination. In short, conformity to the relational categories of substance, causality and community are the necessary conditions that *objects* must meet if they are to be objects of possible experience for us, but it is only possible for us to *know* this, according to Kant, under the presupposition of transcendental idealism as a formal idealism of space and time. By the end of the Chapter I hope to have shown that Kant's idealism, as the 'original orderability' of appearances, and his empirical realism, as the conformity of objects of experience to the mind's way of representing objects as

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<sup>10</sup> This step is the exorcism of the transcendental spectre that appearances might be constituted in such a way that they could appear to consciousness through the forms of intuition, but be unable to be thought through the categories.

unifiable in one temporally unified self-consciousness, go hand in hand, but this still leaves open the question of what Kant means when he claims that we cannot know things in themselves.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I address this question directly. I examine what Kant means by denying that we can know things in themselves, and I also answer the related worry that my interpretation may seem to give us knowledge of things in themselves, which would be obviously inappropriate as a reading of Kant, even one that is only Kantian in spirit. In Chapter 3 I address the question of whether Kant is doing metaphysics; this is important because Kant is often taken to have rejected all metaphysical speculation, which, if true, would block the reading of empirical realism that I supplied. It is also significant because my proposed empirical realism may look to fall afoul of Kant's repeated denial of knowledge of things in themselves. If our knowledge of appearances is ultimately knowledge of real, *mind-independent*, objects of experience then it would seem to be a gaping contradiction in Kant's account if by 'things in themselves' he means 'mind-independent things' or something akin to that. To demonstrate that this is not the case I show in Section 1 that Kant *takes himself* to be doing a kind of metaphysics that is legitimate according to his philosophy, and that there is an acceptable and coherent sense of the transcendental distinction that allows us to understand why Kant affirms the applicability of the categories to appearances, while also denying their application to things in themselves. I also suggest that to see how Kant's empirical realism and transcendental idealism hold together it is necessary to investigate further what it means for space and time to be empirically real vis-à-vis the categories. I argue that the sense in which the ideality of space and time allows for empirical realism is very different from the sense in which the categories entail empirical realism, and that recognizing this is crucial to formulating a coherent interpretation of Kant that is able to accommodate both the idealist and realist components of his thought.<sup>11</sup> In Section 2 I introduce one of the three senses of the transcendental distinction, alluded to above, by focusing on the largely-neglected/misunderstood Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection in the *Critique*. This is sense (2) of the transcendental distinction: things in themselves are things considered as 'objects of a pure understanding'. I explain what this sense is and how it constitutes the first element in a version of transcendental idealism that encompasses empirical

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<sup>11</sup> I motivate and explore this strategy of understanding the empirically real status of space and time as being different to the status of the (relational) categories in Section 3 below.

realism. In Chapter 4 I identify and explain the remaining two senses of the transcendental distinction.

To examine the remaining two senses I turn to the Antinomy of Pure Reason and explore how Kant resolves the paradoxes that reason generates when we attempt to think the unconditioned as given in the spatiotemporal world. I argue that denying us knowledge of things in themselves is equivalent to denying us knowledge of the unconditioned ground of appearances, which is sense (3) of the distinction. However, I strive to separate this sense of the distinction from the disreputable phenomenalist idealism that Kant, in my view, lapses into with his solution to the mathematical antinomies; this is the first sense of the transcendental distinction and is perhaps the one that is most familiar to readers. I show that current deflationary readings of the resolution of the mathematical antinomies rely upon the very kind of phenomenalist idealism that proponents of this interpretation, such as Grier (2001) and Allison (2004; 2012; 2015a; 2015b), repudiate as a reading of transcendental idealism, and that the recent ‘moderate’ and anti-deflationary attempt by Allais (2015) also fails to make sense of the resolution. I argue that Kant’s resolution of the mathematical antinomies turns on a metaphysical idealist reduction of objects to representations, but that his insights into the resolution of the dynamical antinomies can be extended across the board because these rely upon the acceptable version of transcendental idealism that I sketched out in Chapter 3. Bringing senses (2) and (3) of the transcendental distinction together, along with a rejection of passages and arguments that turn on sense (1), will allow us to arrive at a plausible, textually-grounded combination of transcendental idealism and empirical realism. I conclude this Chapter by relating my interpretation back to those positions that are the most similar to mine. I compare my view with Allison’s in some detail, in particular with respect to his strategy of approaching the conflict between transcendental realism and transcendental idealism as one between a theocentric conception of the standards and conditions of cognition and an anthropocentric one and conclude the thesis.

### 3. An Interpretative Puzzle and A Proposal: Understanding Kant's Empirical Realism

Before beginning Chapter 1, I think it will prove helpful to establish further the main problem of understanding transcendental idealism *as* empirical realism and something about my overall solution to the problem, viz., the notion of the ‘original orderability’ of appearances. To do this I will approach the issue by comparing the accounts of Guyer (1987; 2007) and Allison (1996; 2004; 2007; 2012; 2015a; 2015b) on the question of the reality and ideality of space and time, which illuminates the problem. The main question is how Kant can coherently claim that space and time, and everything in them, are transcendently ideal and *simultaneously* empirically real. This seems like the kind of question that one should be able to answer after a few weeks of lectures on Kant, but in my experience it does not take long for even bewildered undergraduates to spot a contradiction here.<sup>12</sup> The point can be expressed very simply: do space, time and the objects that are in them exist independently of the human mind? If the answer is ‘yes’ then we can justifiably claim that space, time and spatiotemporal objects are ‘real’, and if the answer is ‘no’, then we can conclude that they are ‘ideal’. It is not immediately obvious what difference the additional qualifications of ‘transcendental’ and ‘empirical’ should make. Sebastian Gardner explains that: ‘To say that space and time and spatiotemporal objects are empirically real is to say that they are real when considered from the human standpoint’ (1999: 90). But we can ask what this qualification – ‘when considered from the human standpoint’ – really means. To claim that something is real when considered only in a certain relation looks suspiciously like dodging the question, and this point is expressed when critics of the ‘one world’ view raise the objection that the same thing cannot be both spatiotemporal and non-spatiotemporal: it must be one or the other and since appearances are spatiotemporal while things in themselves are not, the two cannot be numerically identical.<sup>13</sup> We can make some progress with our question if we separate, for the time being, the question of

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<sup>12</sup> Even professional Kant scholars struggle with this. Van Cleve humorously asks: ‘How can you eat your cake empirically and still have it transcendently? I have always wondered how this can be anything but doublethink’. On a reductive or ontological phenomenalist interpretation such as Van Cleve’s, I think it is fair to say that it must be a case of Orwellian ‘doublethink’ (1999: 251). Similarly, Strawson suggests that Kant’s idealism is incoherent because it maintains that our representations necessarily have the character of being representations *of* things that enjoy mind-independent existence, while also holding that from the ‘critical’ perspective such things are nothing but representations (1966: 56-57, esp. 241-263).

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Walker (2010: 824-825).

the reality of space and time themselves from the question of the reality of *objects* that are in space and time.

According to Guyer, Kant mistakenly moved from the ideality of space and time to the ideality of the objects (appearances) encountered in them (1987: 20-24). In his pre-Critical *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770), Kant held that space and time are not real independently of the mind, but, according to Guyer, Kant did not conclude that their objects are also ideal, and in fact Guyer maintains that there is only a puzzle about the relation of mind and world leftover from the *Dissertation* for Kant to solve if the objects that are to conform to the conditions of their representation are mind-independent (1987: 20-24). Guyer maintains, however, that due to ‘several very bad arguments’ Kant arrived in the first *Critique* at the metaphysical dogma that not only are space and time ideal, but so too are their objects, thus transferring spatiotemporal properties from the objects or things themselves over to our *representations* of things (appearances) (1987: 342; 2007: 12-13). We can see from this that Guyer thinks that transcendental idealism (as he understands it) and empirical realism are incompatible. Indeed, Guyer’s main aim is to separate what he sees as a legitimate ‘transcendental theory of experience’ from the metaphysical thesis of transcendental idealism. Guyer argues that the theory of experience re-emerges in the *Critique*, primarily in the Analogies of Experience and Refutation of Idealism, and represents Kant’s return to realism. On Guyer’s reading, all that Kant is entitled to on the basis of his arguments in the *Critique* is the *conditional* necessity that if something is to be an object of experience for us then it must be in space and time (1987: 363-365); Guyer links this conditional necessity to what he terms the ‘restriction’ model of the mind. This is the idea that our cognitive capabilities are restricted by the kinds of objects that come before them. On the ‘restriction’ model the forms of intuition and categories act as gatekeepers that prevent us from experiencing objects that are incompatible with our conditions of experiences, and Guyer maintains that this is all that Kant can legitimately conclude (1987: 53-61, 69). However, Guyer thinks that Kant held an ‘imposition’ model of the mind in the rest of the *Critique*, according to which the mind *imposes* its forms and concepts on a formless material for cognition, and we know that this material does not *really* conform to these impositions. Guyer understands transcendental idealism on the ‘imposition’ model and argues that Kant reached it based on the assumption that genuine (synthetic) a priori cognition requires *absolute* necessity, which in turn requires ‘imposition’ to explain the *de re* unconditional necessity at issue.

By contrast, Allison (1983; 1996; 2004; 2012; 2015a; 2015b) argues that Kant's idealism about space and time is not an ontological thesis at all, but is rather about understanding space and time in terms of their epistemic functions rather than as 'realities' of any kind (2004: 98). What Allison means by this is that space and time function as 'objectivating conditions' or 'epistemic conditions' by structuring our representations into representations *of objects*, rather than as being psychological (responsible for belief-acquisition) or ontological conditions (responsible for the existence of things) (2004: 11-12). For Allison, transcendental idealism is a standpoint that arises from the recognition that there are a priori epistemic conditions that serve to structure and make possible our experience of objects. Allison argues that Strawson (1966), Guyer (1987), Langton (1998), Ameriks (2003) and others are wrong to take transcendental idealism to be an ontological or metaphysical position:

Nevertheless, things are not that simple, since a straightforwardly ontological reading of the sort that Ameriks (and many others) favor founders over the problem of empirical realism. As we have seen, once statements about things considered as they are in themselves are taken as claims about how they *really are*, it becomes difficult to avoid taking statements about appearances as claims about how they merely *seem to us* to be. And this, in turn, is hard to reconcile with any robust form of empirical realism. One obvious way of preserving this realism is Guyer's proposal to jettison the idealism altogether. But this is to throw the baby out with the bath water. Short of that, however, there appears to be no solution available within the framework of Kant's philosophy, save somehow deontologizing the transcendental distinction. Whatever it may be, it *cannot be* a distinction between how things seem to be to beings like us and how they really are. (Allison 2004, 46-47)

Allison is right that if transcendental idealism is not to be construed as a distinction between appearance and reality – something that Kant specifically denies (B69) – then some way must be found to reconcile transcendental idealism and empirical realism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This would appear to be denied by Gardner. Gardner sees it as being a fault with the 'two conception' view that it 'detaches the contrast of appearances and things in themselves from that of appearance and reality: "thing in itself" no longer incorporates the sense, clearly intended by Kant, of having greater reality than appearances (of being "real *per se*", Bxx) [...] this account loses touch with Kant's view of the inferior reality of appearances' (1999: 294). This is surprising because Gardner also explicitly affirms

As Guyer points out, though, even Allison's novel deontologization of space and time as 'epistemic conditions' still ultimately reduces to the claim that things as we experience them are *not* in space and time independently of our minds, which is clearly an ontological thesis of some description, even if it stops short of explaining exactly what kind of ontological status space and time have (2007: 14-16). Guyer attributes to Allison an 'abstractionist' reading of transcendental idealism, by which he means that Allison's notion of considering a thing as a thing in itself is just to abstract the 'epistemic conditions' that allow us to cognize the thing. In this way, since appearances and things in themselves are just two ways of considering things (as appearances, as things in themselves) on Allison's reading it follows that things *do* have spatiotemporal properties, but in considering them in themselves we omit the 'epistemic conditions' from our *concept* of them (Guyer 2007, 12). And of course, the omission of predicates from a *concept* no more entails that objects exist that satisfy this description than it does that in abstracting a person's gender for the purposes of a fair job interview entails that there are genderless people. So construed, Allison's position looks trivially true on the abstractionist reading or, if it is construed metaphysically, to be an obvious 'howler' and, sure enough, Allison is quick to repudiate this reading of his position (2007: 32-33). But Guyer's misreading of Allison's deflationary approach really highlights the main difficulty that I outlined above, viz., on Kant's account are spatiotemporal properties ones that objects *really* have, or not?<sup>15</sup> The question seems particularly important on a deflationary 'one world' account for it would seem to require that the same object both *be* spatiotemporal and non-spatiotemporal at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

Allison responds that Guyer and those who charge the 'one world' view with contradiction are approaching the issue through 'transcendentally realistic lenses': that

that transcendental idealism cannot be understood without taking the claimed empirical realism seriously as inseparable from Kant's idealism (1999: 89-92).

In addition, it is not obvious why Allison thinks that transcendental idealism cannot have *any* metaphysical aspects if it is to avoid collapsing into an appearance/reality distinction; that simply does not follow. What does follow is that any satisfactory interpretation must reflect both a commitment to idealism and realism.

<sup>15</sup> Guyer is not alone in misunderstanding Allison's position. Hoke Robinson attributes a 'filtration' model to Allison (1983) on the basis that this is the only form of the relationship between object and representation that is coherent with Allison's 'two aspect' commitments (1994: 424). However, Allison responds that it is a 'great irony' that Robinson should attribute to him a view which is best thought as belonging to Allison's 'staunchest critic', i.e., Guyer (Allison 1996, 14-15). Nonetheless, commentators still read Allison as holding an 'abstractionist' position, despite his claims to the contrary. For example, see Allais (2015: 80-86).

<sup>16</sup> Aquila (1979), Robinson (1994), Van Cleve (1999: 146-150), Walker (2010: 824-825), Schulting (2011a: 13-16) and Stang (2014) all take this threat of contradiction to be a serious objection to 'one world' positions in general.

is, that these critics take things in themselves to be the ‘real’ things. When things in themselves are viewed in this way, and appearances are treated as second-class, it is entirely natural to assume that spatiotemporal properties must properly belong to one or the other, and, accordingly, their transference over from the ‘real’ things to ‘mere representations’ is surely a cause for concern. Allison objects that Kant’s idealism is not about such transference of properties, and that in fact Kant is offering an ‘alternative to ontology’, rather than a move *within* ontology (2007: 37). In other words, while this is not something that Allison spells out, Guyer and those like him are still assuming that space and time are *properties* (or relations or things), while Kant’s point is that space and time are none of these, but rather are *forms of intuiting* or *knowing*. As Allison explains, this means that: ‘their scope is limited to what falls within their purview, which in this case is what can be sensibly given’, and he explains that provided there is agreement on this point then he does not mind transcendental idealism being labelled an ontological thesis (*ibid*). Despite saying this, Allison remains wary of the terms ‘ontological’ and ‘metaphysical’ for these immediately invite the worry that I am seeking to address. We seem to be forced to choose between two competing and unattractive alternatives. We can either say that things only *appear* or *seem* to be spatiotemporal while in reality they are not, which is scepticism, or we can say that appearances *really are* spatiotemporal but things in themselves are not, which is phenomenism or metaphysical idealism. Neither is satisfactory (Allison 2007, 38). But we can also see that if we take seriously the claim that space and time are *not* properties (or relations or substances) then the difficulty disappears: for it makes no sense to ask of a mere *form* or *way* of perceiving things whether things really are that way unless the form in question is also taken to be a property that the things perceived can have (or not have). To ask the latter, as Guyer and many others do, is to surreptitiously assume that space and time are *properties*, such that they either belong or do not belong to things (in themselves). Still, this is very controversial, for a famous objection to transcendental idealism is repeatedly raised against the position; the so-called ‘neglected alternative’.

The objection grants that Kant may be right that space and time are a priori intuitions, and that it is true that everything that we can perceive (appearances) are in space and time, but it asks why it follows that space and time cannot *also* be properties of things in themselves. Kant appears to have neglected a third possibility: that space and time are forms of appearances *and* properties of things in themselves (Kemp Smith 2003, 113). At the very least, does not the doctrine of noumenal ignorance mean that

Kant is overstepping his prescribed limits to metaphysics in claiming that we can *know* that things in themselves are *not* spatiotemporal.<sup>17</sup> It should be clear that if Kant is right that space and time are not properties or relations or things, then this objection fails, but admittedly, everything turns here on the success of Kant's arguments that space and time are *only* a priori forms of intuition, and evaluating the success of these arguments is not my concern.<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding the 'neglected alternative', there is another problem raised by the ideality of space and time on Allison's account. It is raised by Allison's contention that his account still leaves room for *things* that *cannot* be given to us through sensibility: (positive) noumena such as God, the soul, etc.

Allison is clear that his notion of 'epistemic conditions' is not supposed to rule out the possibility of there being *things* that transcend these conditions, only the possibility of them *being objects for us* (2004: 12), but when combined with the claim that space and time are only forms of intuition (not properties, etc.,) this raises another puzzle: what separates things that can be given to us in sensibility (given as appearances) and things that *ex hypothesi* cannot be given to us through sensibility? The most obvious and natural answer would be to say that things can be given to our spatiotemporal intuition precisely because they are (*in themselves*) spatiotemporal. This answer is clearly not open to anyone who takes Kant's idealism seriously, but as Allais also points out, nothing in Allison's position that the ideality of space and time is to be understood in terms of them making an a priori contribution to the possibility of experience undermines the straightforward realist thought that these 'epistemic conditions' could also be true of the objects themselves, and that *this* is why we can experience them (2015: 81).<sup>19</sup> In short, we seem to return to Guyer's 'restriction' model, according to which it is plausible that we can know a priori that objects must have certain features if we are to experience them and that this knowledge only requires a *conditional* necessity (1987: 363).

<sup>17</sup> This appears to be Guyer's complaint (1987: 334).

<sup>18</sup> See Allison (2004: 128-134) for the objection and an excellent response to it. Allison runs through the different forms the objection can take and rejects each in turn. For an account that is more sympathetic to the objection but in the end decides against it having 'philosophical significance', see Gardner (1999: 107-111).

<sup>19</sup> Allais argues that Allison is only entitled to his conclusion that epistemic conditions reflect only the structure of the cognitive mind and not the structure of things in themselves if he conflates two separate notions of such conditions: namely, the notion that they reflect cognitive structure and the notion that such conditions are 'objectivating' (2015: 80-87). I have a good deal of sympathy for Allais' criticism. Abela voices the concern that Allison's (1983) account can look like 'little more than a form of empirical idealism, fortified with formal features' if we fail to give enough of a role to the empirical object itself in constraining our representation of it (2002: 39). Although aimed at the original account it seems to me that Allison's later (2004) account is equally susceptible to this charge.

In his recent work Allison raises a powerful objection to Guyer's 'restriction' model. Allison argues that if Kant did entertain the view that Guyer holds then 'it is a good thing that he abandoned it', since on the basis of Guyer's account it would be impossible to affirm either the *objective necessity* that objects we perceive are spatial (and temporal) or that we can know a priori that they are (2015a: 452); Allison even suggests that Guyer's 'restriction' model is irrelevant to the possession of a priori knowledge (2015a: 446). These are two serious criticisms, but they amount to the same overall objection that Kant cannot hold onto the empirical reality of space and time on Guyer's account. To illustrate his point, Allison appeals to a possible scenario where our minds are structured so that we can perceive only green things. He readily admits that in such a scenario we could infer only the conditional necessity that: 'necessarily, if something is perceived it is green' and therefore it would be a contingent matter that we can only perceive green things, for if we were constituted differently then things could be a different colour for us or perhaps lack colour altogether. Nevertheless, we would not want to say that we know a priori that everything we perceive will be green (2015a: 446). Leaving aside the issue of how we could know that things are green when we lack concepts of any other colours, the main issue here concerns the illusory nature of our perception of greenness:

The major point, however, is that if this were the case, all that we would be entitled to claim is that things necessarily *seem* green to us in virtue of our sensory apparatus. Thus, far from yielding a priori knowledge of *things*, it would not provide even empirical knowledge of them, but at best of our sensory apparatus. In Kantian terms, it would yield a subjective but not an objective necessity. (Allison 2015a, 446)

Allison's criticism is well taken, and further we can see that if transcendental idealism is understood in terms of Allison's scenario then any claim to empirical realism must be vacuous.<sup>20</sup> However, several points are worth noting in response.

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<sup>20</sup> Of course, transcendental idealism has often been compared with a scenario where we wear coloured-glasses that we are unable to remove, so that things only *appear* to be a certain way in virtue of these irremovable spectacles. See Gardner (1999: 91-92) and Altman (2008: 111) for useful discussions of the 'glasses analogy'. Gardner focuses on space and time and Altman on the categories; both rightly reject the appropriateness of the analogy as a reading of transcendental idealism.

First, it must be pointed out that Allison takes as his chosen property one that is typically thought to be ‘ideal’ (in some sense), and one that for Kant is explicitly ‘empirically ideal’ and so is not appropriate for modelling transcendental idealism (A29-130/B45). This means that Allison’s analogy might not disprove the ‘restriction’ model supplying us with any a priori knowledge. Second, if Guyer’s ‘restriction’ model can be charged with attaining cognition only of our sensory apparatus then this charge applies to Allison’s own model, because as Allison also points out, Kant *does* take the spatiotemporal nature of appearances to be a *conditional* necessity (2015a: 446, n.22), as Kant allows for other forms of sensible intuition (B72).<sup>21</sup> But this means on Allison’s preferred alternative that the spatiotemporal form of appearances is still a contingent matter that is dependent on our cognitive capacities: if we had different forms of sensible intuition then we might not perceive things spatially and temporally. I am therefore confused as to why Allison raises this objection against Guyer when it seems it could apply to any form of transcendental idealism, including his own. The only way I can see of blocking the objection would be to supply an argument that space and time are the *only* forms of sensible intuition that are *possible*, but then it would *still* be the case that objects have these forms only because of our cognitive capacities.<sup>22</sup> If space and time are to be coherently regarded as both empirically real and transcendentally ideal, then their ‘reality’ must consist in something more than their being grounded in our cognitive capacities; this ‘something more’ is their role as sensible conditions of the possibility of experience. But that alone does not help us with the preceding objection (that transcendental idealism cannot be combined with empirical realism); indeed, it makes the objection more urgent, for we are still left with an account that allows both for the (logical) possibility that there are things (‘noumena’ in the positive sense) that transcend our subjective ‘epistemic conditions’ and that also denies that we can give any *ontological* characterization or status to space and time *an sich*.<sup>23</sup> But if we cannot give an ontological status to space and time then we have no way of explaining why some things can be given to us and why others cannot. This makes Allison’s account very vulnerable to the objection that he does not, and cannot, explain why only certain objects, *viz.*, the objects of *possible* experience, can be given to sensibility. Or rather it

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<sup>21</sup> Shaddock (2015) argues that Allison’s account of epistemic conditions is subjectivist, despite his explicit aim being to reject subjectivism.

<sup>22</sup> Not only does Kant not supply such an argument it is unclear that he could even if he wanted to, for this would surely constitute a violation of the limits of legitimate metaphysics.

<sup>23</sup> See for example Allison (2004: 132).

means that the natural answer to that question is completely unavailable to him, viz., that they can be experienced by us who perceive things spatially and temporally precisely *because* they are in space and time *independently of us*.<sup>24</sup>

Third, even if Allison's counter-analogy demonstrates the inadequacy of Guyer's 'restriction' view, it does so only for very crude and simple arguments that attempt to establish that a particular property must be one that objects have if we are to experience them (i.e., their being green or their being perceivable by beings that can only detect objects that cause them to experience green-type sensations). As far as I can see, it leaves open the possibility of more sophisticated arguments that may even appeal to features of Allison's own account to ground a priori knowledge of conditions that objects must satisfy in order to be objects *for us*. Furthermore, while it is clearly the case that one could not supply an argument that objects have spatiotemporal features, independently of us, while holding transcendental idealism, it could be argued that there are *other* features that objects must have to be objects of possible experience for us. Better still, it could be the case that these *other features* could be known to hold of objects of experience because of transcendental idealism. If that were the case, then given the transcendental nature of the latter, the former might be knowable a priori, too.

As already indicated, I do not think that there is one single, unified and unambiguous account of transcendental idealism presented in the *Critique*, but I do think that there are (at least) three prominent senses of the transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves, such that two of the three are compatible with a robust form of empirical realism, while one is not. I propose that just as there are multiple meanings of the transcendental distinction, so too are there multiple senses of 'empirical realism'. I argue that the sense in which space and time are empirically real (or objectively valid) for Kant is importantly distinct from the sense in which the categories are objectively valid, though the two are interdependent. I believe the key to making sense of the reality of space and time is their status as *forms* or *ways* of perceiving, whereas as for the categories the issue is considerably more complex and my account will focus primarily on the relational categories. I argue that their reality is best considered as consisting of being the conceptual and *ontological* conditions of

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<sup>24</sup> In his response to Robinson (1994) Allison claims that 'being representable in these disparate ways is a function of different modes of representing rather than of the nature of the things represented, it is not (except in a trivial sense) a property of the things themselves' (1996: 15). I think it is far from trivial that *some* things are able to be objects *for us* because of our modes of representing and that conceptual room is left by (Allison's) Kant for things that exist but cannot be objects for us: something more than *just* the modes of representing must ground this possibility.

time-determination. That is, the relational categories are not only the conditions of thinking objects in general – this they share with the other categories – but they also exhibit the features that things must have if they can be represented by us as *objects*. In order to be representable in time for beings that are equipped with space and time as their forms of perception these ‘objects’ must conform to the schematized relational categories, as set out by Kant in the Analogies of Experience.

The above points bring us to the notion of the ‘original orderability’ of appearances. I intend this notion to be a helpful expository device that illuminates his transcendental idealism, despite being a term that Kant himself never employed. The term originates with Allison (2004: 12-14) and highlights the idea that what Allison terms the ‘discursivity thesis’ entails that appearances are presented to the mind in sensible intuition in such a way that they are orderable by the operations of thought. The discursivity thesis is, on Allison’s account, essential for grounding Kant’s idealism. The discursivity thesis is basically the claim that human cognition contains two irreducible components: thought and sensible intuition (2004: 12-13). This is expressed by Kant in the famous slogan: ‘Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind’ (A51/B76). Allison understands this thesis as the idea that human cognition always requires its object to be given to it from outside and that this is insufficient for cognition. An object is given to consciousness by intuition and is thought by means of the understanding. So far, one may wonder what this innocuous looking thesis has to do with Kantian idealism; as Allais asks (2015: 87), why can a realist not also accept discursivity? Of course a realist can accept discursivity, but this ignores what is implicit in acceptance of the discursivity thesis. This can be unpacked as follows:

D1: Human cognition requires a matter to be given to it from outside the cognitive subject and a form for turning this matter into cognition. That is, human cognition requires both sensible intuitions and concepts (A50-51/B74-75).

D2: Intuitions and concepts are heterogeneous: the understanding cannot intuit and the senses cannot think. Their roles are *irreducible* (A51/B76).

D3: Because of D1 and D2, for experience to be possible, it is necessary that the data provided by sensible intuition be formally amenable to conceptualization.

E1: Experience (empirical cognition/objective representation) is possible.

D4: In virtue of D3 and E1 there must be some ‘original orderability’ that allows sensible intuitions to be conceptualized.

For Allison, the ‘original orderability’ of appearances consists in the existence of the a priori forms of sensibility (space and time) that make possible the ordering of the sensible data by the understanding (2004: 14-15), but as I will show in Chapters 1 and 2 below, I think that there is more to this notion than just the forms of sensibility. As I understand it, the notion of ‘original orderability’ must contain two conditions. First, the mind must be capable of ordering appearances, that is, appearances must be *subjectively* orderable. Second, appearances must be such so that *in themselves* they are constituted in a way that will allow the mind to order them, that is, they must be *objectively* orderable. Without further ado, let us start to analyse Kant’s argument for ‘original orderability’ by turning to the Transcendental Deduction.

## 1. ‘Original Orderability’: The Transcendental Deduction

### Introduction

In this Chapter I will argue that the discursivity of human cognition entails what Allison calls the ‘original orderability’ of appearances (2004: 12-14). This ‘original orderability’ provides the grounds for Kant’s idealism and his empirical realism. Although I analyse ‘empirically real’ more in Chapter 3, ‘empirically real’ can provisionally be understood as meaning that ‘something has a justified application to appearances or objects of experience’.<sup>25</sup> I will argue that proving that subjective a priori conditions of experience (space, time and the categories) are empirically real requires demonstrating that these a priori components have both *objective validity* and *objective reality*.<sup>26</sup> Kant thinks that ‘little effort’ is required to show this in the case of space and time, since only through these forms can something be presented to us in empirical intuition in the first place (A89/B121-122). The same is not the case with the categories, for these do not give us objects in intuition and, consequently, there could be a radical cognitive misfit between intuitions and concepts, such that appearances could be given to us without our attempts at conceptualizing them having any chance of success. Demonstrating that the categories are a priori conditions of possible objects of experience entails ruling out this epistemic situation by proving that the categories are not only required for experience (as conditions of thinking objects), but also demonstrating that appearances are not ‘so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity’ (A89-91/B122-123). I will refer to this situation of epistemic chaos as the ‘transcendental spectre’. Kant’s solution for legitimating the categories turns on the successful exorcism of this spectre, which in turn presupposes transcendental idealism (A101, A114, A129, B164). To exorcize the spectre Kant must show that appearances are received by sensibility *in such a way that rules out the possibility that the understanding cannot order them*. Kant must prove that appearances are ‘originally orderable’ which entails showing that, (1) appearances are orderable from the side of the subjective conditions of thought, so that *we* are able to *think* of them as orderable, and (2) that appearances themselves are constituted in ways

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<sup>25</sup> This is in line with Kant’s own definition of empirical reality (of space) as meaning the objective validity (of space) ‘in regard to everything that can come before us externally as an object’ (A28/B44).

<sup>26</sup> I explain this distinction in Section 1.

that allow them to be ordered by us.<sup>27</sup> In more familiar Kantian terms, Kant must show that the conditions of the possibility of experience, viz., the subjective conditions of the thought of objects, are the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience themselves (A111, A158/B197). This is a complex argument that occupies Kant for the majority of the Transcendental Analytic. As such, my analysis will be spread across this Chapter and the next. This Chapter concerns Kant's argument in the Transcendental Deduction for (1) and the start of his argument for (2). While I will make substantial use of material from the A-Deduction I will focus on the B-Deduction. Chapter 2 will complete the analysis by examining Kant's efforts in the Analogies of Experience to prove (2). Before describing the structure of this Chapter I shall outline my interpretation of the Deduction.

I follow the generally accepted claim that the B-Deduction consists of two steps.<sup>28</sup> In the first step (§§15-20), I take Kant to argue that the categories have objective validity insofar as they are the subjective conditions of the thought of an object in general. The categories are *concepts* of an object in general, by means of which a manifold of intuition is determined with respect to the logical functions of judgement. The categories are the concepts operative in what Kant calls ‘intellectual synthesis’ and bring a manifold of intuition to the synthetic unity of apperception. Kant argues that the latter is equivalent to representing an object (in a ‘thin’, intentional sense). Having the representation of an object in this sense is necessary but not sufficient for having experience. The categories therefore have objective validity because the representation of an object in general is presupposed in representing particular objects in experience, but the transcendental spectre is still intact. Exorcizing

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<sup>27</sup> These two points loosely correspond to what Kant calls the ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ sides of the deduction in the Preface (Axvi-xvii). However, it should be noted that there he claims that what is said at A92-93 should be thought sufficient to persuade the reader of the objective deduction. Since Kant refers only to the categories having objective validity as subjective conditions of thought, I dispute Kant’s claim in the Preface that this is sufficient by itself.

<sup>28</sup> See Henrich (1969), who argues that a successful interpretation of the B-Deduction must account for the fact that §20 and §26 contain significantly different conclusions and that only when they are taken together do they constitute a single proof (1969: 641-642). While Henrich’s specific interpretation of the Deduction has been criticized, the general ‘two-steps-in-one-proof’ interpretative criterion has rightly been recognized and my interpretation adheres to it. Briefly, Henrich argues that the first step demonstrates that the categories apply to intuitions that contain unity and that the second step removes this ‘restriction’ by showing that since space and time are unities, and all our intuitions are given in space and time, the categories necessarily apply to anything that can be intuited by us (1969: 645-646). See Allison (2015a: 327-328; 2004 161-162) for criticism of Henrich’s specific view, while accepting the ‘two-steps-in-one-proof’ interpretative criterion. See Bird (2006: 310) for the worry that the second step is just a trivial inference from the genus (sensible intuition) to the species (our spatiotemporal intuition). Schulting, however, disputes the received wisdom of the ‘two step’ approach, arguing that §20 is not really a *conclusion* at all but only a transitional moment along with §21 (2012: 277-278, n.5).

the spectre requires demonstrating that the categories can be used to cognize all objects of experience by demonstrating that these necessarily conform to the categories. In the second step of the Deduction (§§21-27), Kant attempts to show from the way that appearances are given in intuition that the categories must be applicable to them. His strategy is to show that since space and time are intuitions they must contain a manifold. Representing a manifold *as* a manifold presupposes a synthesis, which to function in cognition must be in accordance with the conditions of the unity of apperception. Since these conditions are the categories then space and time as intuitions are under the unity of apperception. Since any empirical intuition presupposes space and time as pure intuitions, it follows that empirical intuition must conform to the categories. Assuming that his arguments are sound, Kant has shown that the categories are required for representing an object in general, which means that they have objective validity, and he has demonstrated that insofar as things are given in intuition then they must conform to the categories. However, this does not show that the categories are *fully* justified, for Kant has yet to show that they have objective reality in the sense of being conditions of the *objects* of experience. While the second step of the Deduction makes considerable progress towards demonstrating the objective reality of the categories this is only a necessary (transitionary) step. In Chapter 2 I will argue that Kant completes his proof of the justified application of the categories to all objects of possible experience in the Analogies of Experience.<sup>29</sup>

In Section 1 I introduce the distinction between ‘objective validity’ and ‘objective reality’ and explain it in relation to the argument of the B-Deduction. In Section 2 I examine the first step of the Deduction, arguing that the categories are subjective conditions of the representation of an object in general. In Section 3 I examine the second step of the B-Deduction, focusing on the accounts of figurative synthesis (§24) and synthesis of apprehension (§26). In Section 3.1 I analyse the argument up to §26, focusing especially on §24 and the introduction of the ‘figurative synthesis’ as the means for showing that intuitions of space and time stand under the unity of apperception. In Section 3.2 I examine §26 and the notorious distinction between a ‘form of intuition’ and ‘formal intuition’. Despite being relegated to a footnote, the presence of this distinction in §26 indicates its central importance for understanding the proof of the deduction. Through the notion of figurative synthesis

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<sup>29</sup> This is not to deny that *Kant* thinks he has completely legitimated the categories by the end of the Deduction.

Kant seeks to link the categories to the synthesis of apprehension as conditions of perception, and therefore as conditions of experience.<sup>30</sup> The argument of §26 constitutes the very heart of Kant's proof of 'original orderability', as it serves as his ace for exorcizing the transcendental spectre. My aim is to outline the different ways of understanding the second step and to shed light on the relationship between figurative synthesis and transcendental idealism. My discussion will focus on the recent accounts by Henry Allison (2004; 2012; 2015a) and Beatrice Longuenesse (1998; 2005), and I will argue for a position that sits between the two, but I do not pretend to have done full justice to these complex issues, which would require a much lengthier account.

## 1. The Problem of the Transcendental Deduction: 'Objective Validity' and 'Objective Reality'

Kant thinks that appearances must have a form that allows them to be ordered in relations and that this form cannot be a feature of the things (in) themselves (A20/B34, A86/B118). He quickly identifies this form with space and time (A22/B36). While this a priori form is taken by Kant to be necessary for experience (empirical cognition), it is insufficient as judgements are required and judgements require concepts (A50-52/B74-76) – this much I take as uncontroversial. Space and time are the sensible conditions of experience and the categories are the intellectual conditions of experience. For transcendental idealism to include empirical realism the application of these forms and concepts to objects must be shown to be justified. It is not enough to show merely that we have such a priori subjective components of experience – the so-called question of fact (*quid facti*) – but also that our employment of them is justified – the so-called question of lawfulness (*quid juris*) (A84-85/B116-118).<sup>31</sup> As we will see in Chapter 3,

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<sup>30</sup> Thus I do not take Kant to be a non-conceptualist. For better or worse, Kant seems to think that perception requires *pure* concepts. That said, given the substantially different role these concepts play compared to empirical concepts in perception, this leaves it unclear quite how Kant should be understood with reference to this contemporary debate. For non-conceptualist accounts of Kant, see Allais (2009; 2015: Ch. 7, 11) and Hanna (2005; 2008). For conceptualist accounts, see McDowell (1996) and Land (2011). My present concern is not to enter into this debate, but I will make some points regarding it in Section 3.

<sup>31</sup> Kant's distinction between the *quid juris* and *quid facti* is often taken as signalling a 'normative turn', according to which Kant allegedly rejects the idea that determining a concept's possession-conditions is enough to determine its deployment-conditions. Callanan (2011) convincingly argues that, at least with respect to the categories, Kant does *not* take such a turn, for the means by which the categories are 'originally acquired' also reveals their deployment conditions. Nonetheless, Callanan also states that the deployment-conditions concern the legitimacy of the concepts – that if the concepts genuinely refer then

Kant thinks that it takes ‘little effort’ to make the objective validity or empirical reality of space and time comprehensible. Temporarily setting aside Kant’s misplacement of faith in the comprehensibility of his account of space and time, Kant thinks that it is considerably harder to establish the applicability of the categories to the objects of experience. He famously claims that he knows of ‘no investigations more important for getting to the bottom of that faculty we call the understanding’ in order to ‘make comprehensible the objective validity of its concepts *a priori*’ than his efforts in the Transcendental Deduction (Axvi). Indeed, the concern with the problem of the Transcendental Deduction haunted Kant from at least 1772, as indicated in the well-known letter to Marcus Hertz (21<sup>st</sup> February 1772) where he claimed to have found ‘the key to the whole secret of metaphysics’ in the form of the question: ‘What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call “representation” to the object?’ (Cor, 10: 130). Kant picks up with that problem in his explanation of the strategy of the Transcendental Deduction.

Since the categories are not conditions of the intuition of objects there is ‘a difficulty revealed here that we did not encounter in the field of sensibility, namely how **subjective conditions of thinking** should have **objective validity**, i.e., yield conditions of the possibility of all cognition of objects; for appearances can certainly be given in intuition without functions of the understanding’ (A89-90/B122). This leads Kant to envision a scenario where our a priori concepts fail to have content:

For appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity, and everything would then lie in such confusion that, e.g., in the succession of appearances nothing would offer itself that would furnish a rule of synthesis and thus correspond to the concept of cause and effect, so that this concept would therefore be entirely empty, nugatory, and without significance. Appearances would nonetheless offer objects to our intuition, for intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking. (A90-91/B122-123)

The worry is that we may be presented with appearances that we are unable to conceptualize because our concepts, unlike space and time as the forms of appearances,

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‘one can infer the range of the extension from the possession-conditions’ – and not the question of whether the concepts are objectively real (2011: 17, 24, n.32). See Section 3 below.

are not necessary conditions of the objects being *given* in intuition. Kant's description of the scenario contains one possible solution: the scenario will be impossible if the categories turn out to be conditions of intuition, but this possibility is ruled out by Kant twice in quick succession in the quoted passages: 'intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking' and 'appearances can certainly be given in intuition without functions of the understanding'.<sup>32</sup> Mirroring almost verbatim the content from the Hertz letter, Kant continues that there are only two cases where synthetic representation and its objects can be related to each other, namely where either the object makes the representation possible or the representation makes the object possible (A92/B124; Cor, 10: 130-131). Neither of these two cases adequately describes how pure concepts could relate to objects. In the first case, the representations in question would be empirical because they would be attained through sensation. The second case elevates human intuition to the status of divine intuition, which is able to create its object merely through representing its existence (*ibid*). Kant maintains, however, that there is another way that representations can make the object possible, but not in terms of the *existence* of the object; rather, a representation can be 'determinant of the object *a priori*' if it is possible through it alone to **cognize something as an object** (*ibid*). There are two ways that a representation can make the cognition of an object possible, either by being the means through which the object is given in intuition or the means through which thought of the object is possible. Kant suggests that if it can be shown that experience requires the thought of an object in general, and that the categories are concepts of an object in general, then the objective validity of the categories will be secured because only through them will it be possible to *think* an object as corresponding to an intuition in experience (A92-93/B125-126).<sup>33</sup> Before I begin to analyse Kant's argument for the

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<sup>32</sup> Some commentators have argued that this statement is the formulation of a possibility that Kant ultimately means to reject. See Guyer and Wood (1998: 725, n.17). However, Allais argues that Kant only intends to reject the possibility that appearances are not related to the functions of understanding, and not the claim that intuitions do not require the functions of thinking to be given (2015: 161-163). Others, such as Kemp Smith (2003) and Wolff (1963: 90-94) see this as either a hangover from the pre-Critical theory of the *Dissertation* and/or as evidence for the 'patchwork theory'. See Allison (2015a: 189-191) for helpful discussion. My own view is that neither is correct. *Intuitions* can be 'given' without the categories but since these contain a manifold of impressions, they cannot be represented *as* intuitions (singular representations) without being brought to the unity of apperception, which requires the production of synthetic unity through the categories in figurative synthesis/apprehension. I argue in detail for this reading in Section 3.

<sup>33</sup> As Shaddock points out, Kant's claim is ambiguous between the categories being the only way that we, as cognitive *subjects*, can have experience and the claim that they are necessary conditions of the cognition of *objects* (2015: 667). Shaddock argues that the latter captures Kant's position that the categories are objectively valid, but he does not distinguish between objective validity and reality.

categories being the conditions of thinking in a possible experience, we need to establish that the distinction between ‘objective validity’ and ‘objective reality’ that underpins this analysis can be reasonably sustained.

As the reader may have noticed, Kant refers persistently to the *objective validity* of the categories in these quotations; nowhere has he referred to the *objective reality* of the categories. Kant sets out to establish specifically their objective validity by showing that they are conditions of cognition insofar as they are required to think objects for intuitions. Similarly, Kant explains the empirical reality of space (and time) as consisting in their objective validity with respect to all external objects that can come before us in intuition (A28/B44). Why, then, should we force a distinction between objective validity and objective reality with respect to the categories on Kant when he himself thinks that it is enough to prove only their objective validity? I think there are several reasons for doing so.

First, Kant is not very consistent with his own employment of the two terms. Sometimes he treats them as interchangeable and at other times he clearly understands there to be some substantial difference between them. For example, Kant speaks of cognition having objective *reality* when the cognition is related to an object, but that this requires that the object be given in actual or possible experience. To illustrate his point, Kant claims that space and time would lack objective *validity* ‘if their necessary use on the objects of experience were not shown’ and this is *despite the fact that it is certain* ‘that they are represented in the mind completely *a priori*’ (A155-156/B194-195). Clearly, here Kant treats the terms as if they were interchangeable, but I would also suggest that his own argument prohibits them from being strictly identical, though due to the nature of the discussion I cannot prove this until Chapter 3. Nonetheless, to pre-empt the point: we saw above that in his explicit explanation of the Deduction, Kant argues that the categories will have objective validity if they are shown to be conditions of the *thought* of objects in general, but this, I contend, by itself does not show that the categories actually *apply* to objects. All it shows is that *if* we are to have experience then *we must think* objects through these concepts, but not that these concepts actually apply. In this sense, it is enough for us to treat things *as if* they were subject to the categories though in reality they are not. By contrast, on Kant’s account this is not possible with space and time because, as we will see in Chapter 3, due to their

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Consequently, I think the first claim captures the objective validity of the categories and the second claim captures their objective reality. I explain this further below.

ontological status as being nothing more than forms of representation, there is no gap between their objective validity and objective reality. This is because there is nothing more to things really being (empirically) in space and time than their *being represented as being* in space and time (A374-375). This is not the case with concepts (whether a priori or empirical). As indicated at A156, Kant holds space and time to lack objective validity if their application to objects is not shown *even though* it is certain that they are a priori representations in the mind. He states that if the object of the cognition is not able to be given in intuition then one has ‘to be sure, thought but not cognized anything through this thinking’ (A156/B195). This suggests that objective validity for space and time must consist in being more than a priori representations, but compare this with Kant’s statement of the validity of the categories as conditions of thought in the Deduction. There it seems to be possible in principle that the categories have objective validity (by being represented a priori in the mind, as the *thought* of an object in general) *without* being applicable to the actual objects of experience, so that they could be objectively valid while we nonetheless fail to cognize anything through thinking in accordance with them. Matters are complicated further because Kant immediately returns to discussing objective reality in the current passage. He claims that the ‘**possibility of experience**’ is what ‘gives all of our cognitions *a priori* objective reality’, but then a few lines later claims that the possibility of experience is what gives ‘objective validity’ to the synthesis contained in the categories (A156-158/B195-197). It is clear that here Kant sees no distinction between objective validity and objective reality. By contrast, after explicating all of the principles of understanding, Kant makes a different reference to ‘objective reality’. He says that ‘in order to understand the possibility of things in accordance with the categories, and thus to establish the **objective reality** of the latter, we do not merely need intuitions, but always **outer intuitions**’ (B291). This is significant because in the previous passage (which was taken from the introduction to the system of principles) there was no reference to the necessity of *outer* intuition, only that the object must be given in *some indeterminate way* for thought, which follows analytically from the discursivity thesis itself. After defending the individual principles, however, Kant claims that we need intuitions of matter in space in order for time-determination to be possible because time constantly flows while matter must be what persists and allows temporal determination to occur (*ibid*). In other words, the mere requirement that the categories serve as conditions of thought is no longer held to be enough to ground their legitimacy because what the Schematism

and, especially, the Analogies of Experience, have shown us by this point is that the categories must be both *realized* and *restricted* by the sensible conditions of experience (A146/B185-186, A217/B264, B291, A279/B335). Only through their relation to sensibility can the categories go from being *merely* objectively valid to securing objective reality. This is further exhibited in how Kant's concern with 'the possibility of things in accordance with the categories' reflects the idea that conditions of experience must be conditions of the objects of experience. As such, even though Kant uses his terminology carelessly at times, there are hints of a genuine distinction between objective validity and objective reality that is of relevance to understanding Kant's legitimization of the categories. For this reason, we should not be deterred from making use of this distinction in understanding Kant's argument just because he was inconsistent in his own usage of the terms.<sup>34</sup>

Second, I am not the first to read the B-Deduction in terms of a move from objective validity to objective reality.<sup>35</sup> Allison read the B-Deduction in these terms back in the first edition of *Transcendental Idealism* (1983) and argued that the first step of the Deduction was concerned with objective validity and the second step with

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<sup>34</sup> After the Analytic of Principles Kant continues to claim that the categories have a justified application to objects only through their relation to sensibility, but now he often uses 'objective validity' to signify this *conditional* legitimacy of the categories (i.e., they are valid *only if* they are related to sensibility), rather than just as referring to the role they play in being subjective conditions of thought, as he did in the outset of the Deduction. See A245-246, A289/B345 and A254-255/B310. However, he also uses 'objective reality' to refer to how the categories 'constitute the intellectual form of all experience' (A310/B367), which is what I have termed the 'objective validity' of the categories. However, he may also be referring to the second, conditional, sense for he continues by stating that because they constitute the intellectual form of experience 'it must always be possible to show their application in experience'. At A95 Kant refers to the 'objective reality' of the categories as resting on nothing but being the a priori conditions of a possible experience, which again suggests that the two terms are interchangeable. Kant also uses 'objective reality' to designate whether a concept has a real object or not. At B412 he denies that the idea of the soul is objectively real, or at least claims that we cannot prove its reality, and in section eight of the Antinomy he claims that the idea of a finite or infinite series of conditions has no objective reality independently of the empirical synthesis through which such a series is given. Again, this means that the concept or idea has no objective reality because its object (a complete synthesis) cannot exist (A510/B538). The clearest example of this usage of the term is in the Ideal where Kant contrasts logical possibility and real possibility of a concept. A concept is logically possible if it is non-contradictory, but it is really possible only 'if the objective reality of the synthesis through which the concept is generated' has been established (A596n/B624n). Kant also employs the terminology in relation to judgements, as meaning that they have the capacity to be either true or false, which I discuss below. In addition, in the *Prolegomena* he suggests that 'objective validity' is interchangeable with 'necessary universal validity' (4: 298). What all these different uses show is that Kant does not distinguish between objective validity and reality in any *systematic* way.

<sup>35</sup> Bird is sympathetic towards Allison's distinction and Henrich's two-step interpretation, but he is concerned that if they are right then the 'objective reality' of the categories should be demonstrated one by one in the second step, though Bird concedes that perhaps no more is required than that the second step guides us towards the Principles (2006: 322-324).

objective reality.<sup>36</sup> Corresponding to this distinction were two conceptions of an object, which Allison argued were mirrored by Kant's employment of two separate words for 'object'. Corresponding to a concern with objective validity was the German '*object*' or '*objekt*', an object taken in a very broad logical sense, and corresponding to the concern with objective reality in the second step was '*Gegenstand*', an object in the strong sense (Allison 1983, 135-136). Allison was heavily criticized by Longuenesse (1998: 110-111, n.14) and others who failed to see any worth in the distinction, and it was pointed out on philological grounds that there is a certain randomness to Kant's employment of both the German words and the two kinds of objectivity. Indeed, we saw above that Kant frequently treats the two variations of objectivity as synonymous. Nonetheless, while ceasing to place any weight on the terminology, Allison continues to argue that the B-Deduction is concerned with two conceptions of an object and two kinds of objectivity.<sup>37</sup> We will see that the B-Deduction's two-step proof makes a great deal more sense when read as moving from objective validity to objective reality than it does when Kant is taken to show only the objective validity of the categories. Allison downplays the distinction between validity and reality, however, suggesting that if these terms are unwelcome by other commentators then the point can be expressed equally well by saying that the first part of the Deduction shows that the categories are conditions of the *thought* of objects, while the second part concerns their role in perception and experience (2004: 476, n.11).<sup>38</sup> This is basically correct, but I will place additional weight on the distinction insofar as I do not take the objective reality of the categories to be properly ascertained until the Analogies of Experience.<sup>39</sup> Now I will explain how I think this distinction bears on understanding Kant's argument.

Validity is generally taken to be a purely formal notion in logic that concerns whether an argument establishes its conclusion based on the truth of the premises. Where it is not possible for the premises to be true and for the conclusion to be false the argument is deemed valid; likewise, where the truth of the premises does not guarantee the truth of the conclusion it is invalid. Although Kant is not concerned with arguments in the Deduction but a priori concepts and cognitions, I suggest that the objective validity of the categories should also be understood in formal terms. I argue that the

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<sup>36</sup> Buroker (2006: 116-135) also follows Allison's interpretation.

<sup>37</sup> See Allison (2004: 476, n.11; 2015a: 187-188, n.41, 380-383).

<sup>38</sup> In his most recent work Allison (2015a: 380-383) again emphasizes that the B-Deduction concerns a difference between two conceptions of an object in relation to two kinds of objectivity.

<sup>39</sup> At least with respect to the relational categories.

categories are objectively valid insofar as they relate to an object, but crucially, this ‘object’ does not have to be an object in the strong sense of an object of experience. All that is required is that they relate to an object in a very broad sense in terms of representing something (a manifold) *as* (having or corresponding to) an object. This will be made clearer in Section 2. The objective reality of the categories consists in the reality of their objects, or at least their real possibility. That is, the concept of cause and effect, for example, will be objectively real just in case the objects to which it is applied really stand in real (rather than Leibnizian ideal) connections with each other and *mutatis mutandis* for the other concepts.<sup>40</sup> As I understand Kant’s argument, the categories are objectively valid because they are concepts of an object in general, and all objects of experience, qua experienced, are grounded on the *thought* of an object in general, where this is to be understood as the unification of intuitions under the concept of an object that is represented as distinct from these intuitions (B137, A93, A109). Kant says that this *would be* a sufficient deduction of the categories *were it not the case* that thinking an object in general did not require that the faculty of understanding relate to the represented object (A97). It is therefore necessary to elucidate the possibility of the relation of the understanding to objects in order to determine whether the understanding has a ‘real use’, that is, a use that ‘brings a transcendental content into its representations’ through acts of synthesis (A79/B105). The ‘transcendental content’ introduced to intuition is the relating of representations to an object. Determining the latter, however, requires exorcizing the transcendental spectre for it must be the case that the understanding has a necessary relation to sensible intuition if its concepts are to *really* apply to the objects represented, that is, have objective reality. So, while I am arguing that Kant moves from proving their objective validity to objective reality in the B-Deduction, it could also plausibly be argued that he is *only* concerned with proving their objective validity; proving this in turn requires showing that the categories are necessarily connected to our sensible intuition and so are objectively valid.<sup>41</sup> To put the

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<sup>40</sup> As mentioned in the thesis Introduction, this claim is complicated considerably by the division between mathematical and dynamical principles. In particular, it is not obvious that this characterization will work for the modal categories and postulates. As was the case regarding space and time as forms of intuition, it is also arguable that there is no gap between the axioms and anticipations being objectively valid and objectively real since these also refer to syntheses of intuition as spatiotemporal magnitudes. Although I cannot defend these claims here, when I say that there is a gap between the two kinds of objectivity in relation to the categories this should be understood as applying primarily to the *relational* categories. See Chapter 3.

<sup>41</sup> Allison suggests that when Kant claims that the categories can be legitimated by showing that they enable the thought of an object, he is really making the stronger claim concerning real possibility rather

point another way, the *necessity* and *validity* of the categories consists in their being conditions of possible experience, but their *possibility* and *reality* consists in being related to sensible intuition.

Admittedly, my interpretation is controversial for it could be objected that Kant's 'Copernican Turn' and Humean insights mean that the only way that the categories can be legitimated is by showing that they have a purely formal role as conditions of experience, and that nothing more than that can be proved or is required. I discuss and reject this objection in Chapter 3, but let us now turn directly to the B-Deduction and Kant's attempt to establish the objective validity of the categories as conditions of thought.

## 2. The Categories as Conditions of Thought: 'Objective Validity'

My analysis will closely follow the structure of the B-Deduction; however, I will often refer to material from the A-Deduction, usually in footnotes, both to elucidate or contrast certain features of the argument, and to show that there is no doctrinal change between the two editions. All of the relevant features to my interpretation of the argument are already in the A-Deduction, but their presentation is clearer and more systematic in the B-Deduction.<sup>42</sup> I will discuss only those aspects of the Deduction that I take to bear on the main argument.

The B-Deduction opens with a discussion of synthesis and combination in §15. Kant reminds the reader that an intuition presents a manifold through our form of intuition, but while this intuition may contain a manifold of (successively intuited) impressions it cannot be *represented* to consciousness *as* a manifold without 'combination' or 'synthesis'.<sup>43</sup> Kant attributes *all* synthesis to the understanding

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than mere logical possibility, since staking the validity of a set of concepts on their making possible the thought of objects makes the deduction too easy. This is because *any* concept that is logically possible, i.e., contains no contradictions, can be the means through which an object is thought, but this is insufficient for showing that the object so-thought is *really* possible (2015a: 205). Real possibility requires that the object conforms to our formal conditions of experience, in this case, that the categories are understood in terms of their sensible conditions, space and time. See A218-226/B265-274.

<sup>42</sup> I take Kant at his word when he claims that he altered only the presentation and not the content of the Deduction (Bxxxvii-xxxviii), at least with respect to the A- and B-Deductions. I do not see the *Prolegomena*'s deduction as compatible with the B-Deduction *in its stated form*, despite the efforts of commentators such as Longuenesse (1998: Ch. 7) and Allison (2004: 178-185, 201; 2015a: 355-369, 292-306). Admittedly, Allison does admit that in order to make the reconciliation work the letter of the *Prolegomena* must be dropped (2015a: 368, n.59).

<sup>43</sup> I am here drawing on the account of 'synthesis of apprehension' from the A-Deduction: 'Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did

(‘whether we are conscious of it or not’) and equates ‘combination’ with the notion of ‘synthesis’ (B129-130).<sup>44</sup> When Kant speaks of being unable to represent something as combined in the object unless we have combined it ourselves, he should be understood as saying that we cannot represent anything *as composite* without the occurrence of synthesis, rather than that we construct the world itself (Allison 2015a, 332; Cor, 11: 515).<sup>45</sup> Since combination cannot come from the objects themselves, it must come from the self-activity of the subject. This is obvious: to represent something as combined entails that the subject *consciously takes* *x* as being a certain way, which means that the subject must be capable of being aware of what it is doing.<sup>46</sup> Kant notes that where synthesis can occur then the manifold must be capable of being synthesized: ‘the concept of combination also carries with it the concept of the unity of the manifold. Combination is the representation of the **synthetic** unity of the manifold’ (B130). Kant means that combination can only take place where the manifold contains synthetic unity; synthesis allows this synthetic unity to be represented, but this invites the question of what this unity is and how it makes combination possible (B130-131).<sup>47</sup>

This higher unity is quickly identified with ‘pure/original/transcendental apperception’. This unity is nothing other than the idea that ‘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 either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me’ (B131-B132). It is important to correctly understand what Kant means by this principle. It does not, for instance, mean that *all* representations that I ever have must be unifiable in self-consciousness. Rather, as Kant explains, it is the idea that all representations that are

not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another [...] Now in order for **unity** to come from this manifold [...] it is necessary first to run through and then take together this manifoldness, which action I call the **synthesis of apprehension**, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such, and indeed as contained **in one representation**, without the occurrence of such a synthesis’ (A99).

<sup>44</sup> Compare A78 where Kant famously attributes synthesis to the imagination as ‘a blind though indispensable function of the soul [...] of which we are seldom even conscious’ as contrasted with the understanding which ‘bring this synthesis **to concepts**’. Kant anticipates the elevation of understanding over imagination in his own copy of the first edition where he amends ‘function of the soul’ to ‘function of the understanding’. Kant’s handwritten amendments to his copy are included in the Guyer-Wood translation (Guyer-Wood 1998, 211).

<sup>45</sup> In this letter to J. S. Beck, Kant clearly equates combining a manifold with ‘apprehensio’. This will be important in the second step.

<sup>46</sup> This reflexive aspect of representing is also evident in the A-Deduction’s ‘synthesis of recognition’ (A103-106).

<sup>47</sup> The idea that a synthesizable manifold must be associative in itself has its precursor in the A-Deduction. There Kant speaks of the *a priori* ‘affinity of the manifold’ which is required for any empirical imaginative associations (A100-102, A113, A122).

contained in *one* intuition must be ascribable to one consciousness in order for them to be represented as comprising one intuition. Another key point is that Kant is not saying that I *must be conscious* of these representations *as mine*, but that I *must be able to become* conscious of them as mine, because ‘they must yet necessarily be in accord with the condition under which alone they **can** stand together in a universal self-consciousness, because otherwise they would not throughout belong to me’ (B132-133). This tells us that there is a condition that representations must meet to be apperceived and that ‘From this original combination much may be inferred’ (B133).

Kant then outlines his theory of consciousness, at least his theory insofar as this applies at the level of appearances or actual experience.<sup>48</sup> The theory reflects both the Humean insight that I never encounter a permanent self in introspection, for that self, what Kant calls ‘**inner sense or empirical apperception**’, is always a determination of my state and is never encountered in isolation (A107), but also that the ‘I think’ is a necessary condition of self-consciousness and cognition. As Gardner explains: ‘Hume has [...] employed his “I” to create his bundles in thought, and then attempted incoherently to delete it’ (1999: 146). Kant argues that we do not become conscious of representations as ours by adding consciousness to them, but rather by adding representations together and being *conscious of the synthesis* of them (B133).<sup>49</sup> On this basis Kant concludes:

Therefore it is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations **in one consciousness** that it is possible for me to represent the **identity of the consciousness in these representations** itself, i.e., the **analytical** unity of apperception is only possible under the presupposition of some **synthetic** one.  
(B133-134)

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<sup>48</sup> I make this qualification because of the analysis of Gardner who argues that apperception does point towards the existence of an ‘I’ as a thing in itself, but that we cannot know whether the merely formal unity of apperception is of our self as a thing in itself or not (1999: 145-149). Similarly, Strawson reproaches Kant for implying that there is more to apperception than the concept-connected unity of experience, namely that the ‘I’ is a being that thinks (1966: 172-174).

<sup>49</sup> As Allison observes, this consciousness of synthesis does not refer to an internal act of ‘synthesis watching’, but rather to being conscious of the end product, namely the combined representation (2015a: 340-341). Once again, reflexivity is inbuilt into the Kantian account: it is not something that we do in addition to thinking but is rather an essential element of thought itself. Van Cleve refers to the idea that consciousness of representations occurs through their bearing relations to each other (rather than to a noumenal self) as Kant’s ‘system’ theory of consciousness (1999: 83).

Kant explains the general idea here better in his metaphysics lectures. The analytical unity of apperception is a ‘one in many’ where the ‘one’ in the case of apperception refers to consciousness. It is the idea that the same consciousness ‘I’ is contained in multiple representations and it is the *ratio essendi* of the synthetic unity of apperception. The synthetic unity is a ‘many in one’, which means synthesizing representations in an intuition together in order to apprehend them *as* a multiplicity in one representation; it involves a subject *consciously* taking the manifold *as* a manifold. However, given Kant’s theory of consciousness (at the level of actual experience), the synthetic unity is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the analytic unity (LM, 29: 889), hence in §16 he claims that the analytic unity is possible only on the presupposition of a synthetic one, for it is only through being conscious of synthesizing representations together can the ‘I’ be aware of its own identity across these representations.<sup>50</sup> Kant claims that this principle of the unity of apperception ‘is the supreme one in the whole of human cognition’ because it expresses the necessity of a priori synthetic unity of the manifold where this means that the mind must have combined the manifold in certain ways in order for the manifold to be brought to the unity of apperception. Kant then builds on this argument in §17.<sup>51</sup>

Kant opens §17 with a reminder that the supreme condition of intuition is that it stands under the forms of intuition, space and time; the supreme principle of intuition in relation to the understanding is that it stands under the formal conditions of the synthetic unity of apperception, i.e., that it *can* be combined in one consciousness, which is necessary if it is to function in cognition (B136-137). To this opening statement Kant attaches an important footnote that anticipates the role of space and time as pure intuitions in completing the second step of the Deduction. The main point is that space and time contain a manifold since they are intuitions as well as forms of intuition, which makes them synthetic or composite unities (they contain an infinite number of parts in one). This means that in order for their manifold to be represented it must be subject to an act of synthesis, despite the fact that the manifold in them is *not* made out

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<sup>50</sup> The idea that the principles are *ratio essendi* and *ratio cognoscendi* of each other is borrowed from Allison (2015a: 230).

<sup>51</sup> It is disputed whether the principle of apperception is analytic or synthetic. Here (B135) Kant claims that it is analytic but nonetheless expresses a necessity of synthesis, but some have thought that this contradicts the A-Deduction, where Kant appears to claim that the same principle is actually synthetic (A117n). Guyer argues that the principle is synthetic, because an analytic principle cannot get the argument off the ground, and that Kant contradicts himself (1987: 132-140), while Allison defends the analyticity of the principle and counters that the guilty candidate from the A-Deduction is not the same as the candidate from the B-Deduction; hence there is no contradiction (2015a: 346-348; 2004: 163-167; 1996: 41-49). I generally follow Allison’s analysis here by restricting the principle to representations in *one* intuition or perceptual state.

of a combination of parts into a whole, but is rather a given whole that is delimited into parts. Kant tells us that the ‘singularity of theirs’ will be important later, referring the reader to §25 (B136n).<sup>52</sup> Following this Kant introduces his central claim that the unity of apperception and the cognition of an object are reciprocal:

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

Here Kant claims that not only is the synthetic unity of apperception a necessary condition of relating representations to an object but that it is also sufficient. The necessity claim is not controversial. Once again, if I am to represent something to myself as an object in an intuition I must be able to be conscious that the ‘I’ that thinks *a* is the same ‘I’ that thinks *b* and, again, the same ‘I’ that thinks *a* and *b* together as an ‘object’.<sup>53</sup> What is very controversial, however, is that this is a sufficient condition. Indeed, Kant’s critics have been quick to charge him with (yet another) gross non-sequitur here, and it is not hard to see why.<sup>54</sup> If Kant means that the unity of

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<sup>52</sup> Kant’s reference is incorrect and should be §26, for this is where he incorporates the unity of space and time into his argument.

<sup>53</sup> This point is explained in more detail in the ‘synthesis of recognition’ from the A-Deduction: ‘If, in counting, I forget that the units that now hover before my senses were successively added to each other by me, then I would not cognize the generation of the multitude through this successive addition of one to the other, and consequently I would not cognize the number; for this concept consists solely in the consciousness of this unity of the synthesis’ (A103).

<sup>54</sup> Guyer complains that Kant just runs together the unity of self-consciousness and knowledge of objects without presenting any argument for why the two should be equated (1987: 116-119). In Guyer’s view the argument of §§17-19 just collapses back into the equally unsuccessful deduction in the *Prolegomena* that concentrated on arguing that the categories are necessary for judgements of experience over judgements of perception. Bird argues that the ‘modest’ view must take the unity of apperception to be the ‘final necessary condition’ of the objective reference of representations, excepting any empirical obstacles (2006: 298-299). In addition, there is the worry that the reciprocity is too strong, ruling out non-objective modes of consciousness, such as dreams and hallucinations. The classic version of this objection is Lewis’ famous remark: ‘Did the Sage of Konigsberg have no dreams?’ (1929: 221) The classic response is by Beck (1978: 38-60), but also see Allison (2015a: 437-440). Beck is correct in seeing the role of the categories as allowing us to tell a coherent (even if false) story rather than ‘dumbly facing chaos without even knowing it’ (1978: 54).

apperception is necessary and sufficient for full-blown *knowledge* of empirical objects then it is of course a hopelessly flawed argument. Fortunately, this does not seem to be the case.<sup>55</sup> Closer inspection of the text reveals that what Kant has in mind by the ‘objective validity’ of representations here is nothing more than the idea of representations being related to *something*, thought as *an object as such* or *in general*. In other words, Kant is only making the claim that where we attach the ‘I think’ we are unifying representations together in an intuition by means of the concept of an object in general.<sup>56</sup> Since the first step of the argument abstracts from the nature of sensible intuition and concerns only a formal unity of thought in relation to objects – what Kant will soon term ‘intellectual synthesis’ (§24) – Kant cannot be arguing for knowledge of actual *empirical* objects. Rather, he is concerned with the transcendental conditions of representing anything *as* an object, or what Allison terms cognition in the ‘thin’ sense (2015a: 353). By ‘cognition’ in this ‘thin’ sense, Kant really means – and would have done better just to have called it – the *thought* of an object as something corresponding to the synthesis of intuitions or unity of apperception. Against this, it could be objected that Kant refers to the ‘objective validity’ of empirical cognition as ‘(truth)’ (A125), suggesting the stronger, ‘thick’ sense, but this objection neglects the fact that Kant does not abstract from the nature of empirical intuition in the A-Deduction as he does in the B-Deduction. Furthermore, in §22 Kant describes the categories as concepts for *thinking* an object *as distinct* from *cognizing* an object (B146), reflecting the equivalence of ‘cognition’ or ‘objective validity’ in the first step with ‘thought’, and his shift of concern in the second step to ‘experience’ or ‘cognition’ in the ‘thick’ sense. If this interpretation of §17 is correct, then the non-sequitur and ‘no dreams’ objections (referred to above in note 54) are blocked.

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<sup>55</sup> Here I am indebted to the analyses of Schulting (2012: Ch.4, esp. 53-61, Ch. 10, esp. 206-207), Allison (2015a: 352-355), Buroker (2006: 121-123) and Baum (2011: 62-70). This line of interpretation is important because the claim that an object *is* that in the concept of which a manifold of intuition is united can all too easily be taken as an expression of Berkeleyan-style phenomenism. Thus, Strawson sees the categories as substitutes for the constraint that external objects would normally be thought as exercising over the way we represent things (1966: 61). Similarly, without the ‘thin’ conception of an object and objectivity it can seem as if Kant has allowed the external world to drop out of the picture completely with respect to the *truth* of cognition.

<sup>56</sup> This notion of a concept of an object in general corresponds more or less with the ‘transcendental object’ from the A-Deduction (A104-110). I say ‘more or less’ because, like with most of Kant’s terms, he uses them flexibly in different contexts. Indeed, while the ‘transcendental object’ is not present in the B-Deduction, it is clear that there is no doctrinal change at all. Both Longuenesse (1998: 110-111, n.14) and Allison (2015a: 351-352) correctly insist that the notion of the ‘transcendental object’ is retained in the B-Deduction, though the name is dropped.

In my view, §18 does little to add to the overall argument. The key point is the claim that:

The **transcendental unity** of apperception is that unity through which all of the manifold given in an intuition is united in a concept of the object. It is called **objective** on that account, and must be distinguished from the **subjective unity** of consciousness, which is a **determination of inner sense**, through which that manifold of intuition is empirically given for such a combination. (B139)

This passage reiterates what we saw above. The unity through which representations are related to an object (thought as distinct from them) *just is* the synthetic unity of consciousness, namely the consciousness of synthesis that is required for the analytic unity of apperception. The rest of this section is notoriously dense and confusing, and seems to be Kant's attempt to reconcile his distinction between subjective and objective unities of consciousness from the *Prolegomena* (where it took the form of the judgements of perception/experience distinction) with the current account of judgement as such being objectively valid. Kant confuses two senses of 'subjectively valid' here, which makes the actual relevant argument difficult to follow. His point seems to be that, in line with §17, the objective unity is a *thought* unity while the subjective unity is one that is not consciously thought but is guided by subjective rules of association (B140). The latter represent states only as they come into the mind and do not represent an 'object' since this requires thought. The reference to empirical apperception is seriously misleading insofar as this empirical consciousness of temporal determination has no obvious relationship to either the subjective validity of associations or the objective unity of consciousness as thought of an object in general.<sup>57</sup>

Kant makes his next major advance in §19, bringing in the connection with judgement that is distinctly lacking from the A-Deduction.<sup>58</sup> After quarrelling with previous logicians about the inadequacy of their account of judgement, as not specifying the relation between the concepts combined in them, Kant states that a judgement 'is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the **objective** unity of apperception. That is the aim of the copula **is** in them: to distinguish the objective unity

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<sup>57</sup> See Buroker (2006: 123-124) and Allison (2015a: 356-363) for further discussion

<sup>58</sup> The absence of judgement from the A-Deduction is a justified and frequent complaint of critics. See Altman (2008: 122), Buroker (2006: 106, 115), Longuenesse (1998: 58-59) and Allison (2015a: 196, 327, 372).

of given representations from the subjective' (B141-142). What this means is that the combination of concepts thought in a judgement are brought together by their relation to the objective unity of consciousness (B142). It is this necessary unity of consciousness that brings them together and constitutes the relation of representations to an object.<sup>59</sup> The downgrading of Kant's conception of an object here to the 'thin' sense helps explain his otherwise paradoxical claim that even empirical (contingent) judgements contain a '**necessary unity**' (B142). In making the judgement, 'Bodies are heavy' the necessity is *normative* and *formal* insofar as the empirical judgement is grounded in the synthetic unity of apperception; it characterizes the *relation* between the subject and predicate that is being claimed in unifying diverse representations and *not* the perceptual content in the judgement (Pro, 4: 298, 305).<sup>60</sup> If I apply <body> to the *x* of my judgement then I am normatively constrained to apply the other marks of the concept to the *x* in question, and I also make the demand that others should do the same.<sup>61</sup> The main point, however, is simply that a judgement brings representations together in such a way that they become capable of bearing a truth-value, which is what Kant means by saying that the judgement issues in a relation that is '**objectively valid**', and that is sufficiently distinguished from the relation of these same representations in which there would be only subjective validity, e.g., in accordance with the laws of association' (B142).<sup>62</sup> The example is potentially misleading because it employs an empirical concept, which suggests that there is no need for the categories to establish objective reference of representations. However, Kant's point is that reference to an object is not

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<sup>59</sup> This point is also expressed in the 'synthesis of recognition': 'We find, however, that our thought of the relation of all cognition to its object carries something of necessity with it, since namely the latter is regarded as that which is opposed to our cognitions being determined at pleasure [...] rather than being determined *a priori*, since insofar as they relate to an object our cognitions must also necessarily agree with each other in relation to it, i.e., they must have that relation that constitutes the concept of an object. [...] It is clear [...] [that] the unity that the object makes necessary can be nothing other than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of the representations' (A104-105). See also A109: 'This relation [of representations to the transcendental object], however, is nothing other than the necessary unity of consciousness, thus also of the synthesis of the manifold through a common function of the mind for combining it in one representation.' The account is also compatible with the definition from the note to *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* as 'an action through which given representations first become cognitions of an object' (MFNS, 4: 475-476).

<sup>60</sup> This is the mistake of Guyer who attributes to Kant the view that empirical judgements are a form of necessary truth, though he does also concede that Kant tries (unsuccessfully, in his view) to distance himself from this implication of his arguments in the B-Deduction (1987: 114, 117-121, 127).

<sup>61</sup> See Allison (2015a: 365-366, 294-295) and Buroker (2006: 124-126). Both justifiably lament Kant's choice of examples for, as is so often the case, they serve to obscure rather than clarify the point he is making.

<sup>62</sup> It would be paradoxical in the extreme if 'objectively valid' meant 'true' here for it would mean that every judgement is true just in virtue of being a judgement! But as we have repeatedly seen, at least in the Deduction, what Kant usually means by this term is that representations relate to an object (in the 'thin' sense). See Allison (2004: 88, 175; 2015a: 366), Buroker (2006: 125) and Longuenesse (1998: 82).

something that can be gleaned from experience, for experience already presupposes that I am relating my representations to something (in the ‘thin’ sense). The unity of representations needed to represent objects cannot come from objects, and since the transcendental object is ‘nothing for me’ because we have to do only with our representations, this additional unity must be grounded a priori, namely as a way of representing the relations between representations in a judgement.<sup>63</sup>

Having established the missing connection between the objective unity of consciousness, the representation of an object (in the ‘thin’ sense), and the notion of judgement, Kant finally introduces the main characters, the categories, in §20:

The manifold that is given in a sensible intuition necessarily belongs under the original synthetic unity of apperception, since through this alone is the **unity** of the intuition possible (§ 17). That action of the understanding, however, through which the manifold of given representations [...] is brought under an apperception in general, is the logical function of judgments (§ 19). Therefore all manifold, insofar as it given in **one** empirical intuition, is **determined** in regard to one of the logical functions for judgment, by means of which, namely, it is brought to a consciousness in general. But now the **categories** are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them (§ 13). Thus, the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under categories. (B143)

Most of this argument requires no comment, since we have been through each stage already. What does require further comment is the connection between §19 and ‘logical function’ of judgement and §13 (really §10).<sup>64</sup> Nowhere in §19 does Kant mention or explain the notion of a ‘logical function’ of judgement, and even the title of the section makes reference only to the ‘logical form’ of judgement, which is not quite the same

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<sup>63</sup> See Allais (2011: 102-106; 2015: 285-289) for helpful discussion explaining why the relation of representations cannot be a further representation.

<sup>64</sup> There is some dispute over whether Kant meant to reference §13 or §10. Guyer and Wood retain §13 on the grounds that this is where Kant first raises the problem of the justification of the categories, which in §20 has now been answered (1998: 727, n.41). However, it is §10 that supplies the premise to this last step of the argument in §20, and as we are about to see, the justification of the categories has not yet been completed.

thing.<sup>65</sup> To understand the term, and with it the argument, we must go back to §10, which contains the so-called ‘Metaphysical Deduction’.

Kant derives the categories from the logical functions of judgement in §10. By ‘function’ Kant means ‘the unity of the action of ordering different representations under a common one’ and by ‘judgement’ he means ‘the mediate cognition of an object, hence the representation of a representation of it’ (A68/B93). So the basic thought is that judgement employs functions to combine representations together under a common one, where this can be applied either to combinations of concepts or intuitions (*ibid*).<sup>66</sup> As we saw in §§17-19, this act of making a judgement is also what constitutes the relation of representations to an object. Kant’s claim turns on the idea that the same actions or rules that govern combinations of concepts in judgements *also* guide the synthesis of intuitions such that the represented ‘something = *x*’ can (eventually) be reflected and subsumed under the categories and empirical concepts:

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**, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to objects *a priori*. (A79/B104-105)

Kant does little here to argue for this bold claim, but the argument of the Deduction delivers most of the missing proof. Through the reciprocity of transcendental apperception and objective representation, Kant justifies the claim that the understanding introduces a ‘transcendental content’ to the synthesis of intuitions. Through the identification of the categories with the rules for synthesizing intuitions Kant succeeds in showing that *a set* of pure concepts – not necessarily the ones

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<sup>65</sup> Specifically, the logical function is a rule-governed act of combining representations and the logical form is the product of the unification. See Longuenesse (1998: 78; 2005: 19, n.5).

<sup>66</sup> I am not concerned with the completeness of the table of judgements or with the derivation of the categories from it. For partial defences of both the completeness and derivation claims see Longuenesse (1998) and Allison (2004: Ch. 6). For detailed analysis of the ‘guiding thread’ and an explanation of the ‘Metaphysical Deduction’, see especially Longuenesse (2005: Ch. 4).

identified in the table – are required to relate representations to objects in general.<sup>67</sup> One final comment concerns Kant's claim that the manifold of intuition is determined with respect to *one* of the logical functions of judgement insofar as it is given in one intuition.<sup>68</sup> Allison points out that this is a mistake (2015a: 371-372). Insofar as a judgement is well-formed then it is determined with respect to one function from each of the four titles (quantity, quality, relation and modality).<sup>69</sup>

If the argument so far goes through then Kant has shown that the categories are *necessary* conditions of the possibility of experience because they are concepts of an object in general, by means of which alone representations can be thought as constituting a synthetic unity. That synthetic unity of representations is both the ground of the analytic unity of apperception and the necessary and sufficient condition of the relation of representations to an object in general (in the ‘thin’ sense). The categories are necessary as subjective conditions of thinking objects, but it hardly follows from this that the categories really apply to objects of experience. All that has been shown is that *if* a manifold of intuition has been brought to the unity of apperception and thus represents an object *then* that manifold stands under the categories – as the means through which unity was brought to the intuition – but the worry expressed at A90 is that because of the radical separateness of sensibility and understanding, itself a consequence of the discursivity thesis, it is entirely possible that appearances could be so constituted that they do not accord with the conditions of thought. If Kant stops here then he will have demonstrated that the categories have conditional necessity: *if* we can represent objects through them *then* the categories apply to our intuition, but Kant now needs to demonstrate that all appearances *do* conform to the conditions of thinking them; that is the task of the second step, to which I now turn. To be clear, the second

<sup>67</sup> By this I mean that the Transcendental Deduction shows the necessity of presupposing some a priori concepts for the possibility of experience, but with the exception of two examples in §26, Kant does little to justify the *particular* concepts in the Deduction. This is the task of the Principles.

<sup>68</sup> What Kant means by ‘determined’ with respect to the logical functions is that when a judgement is made, e.g., ‘all bodies are divisible’, then it is left indeterminate which concept will occupy the place of the subject-concept and the predicate-concept ( $x$  is  $y$ ). However, when this judgement is made with respect to an object, then the places of the constituent concepts are *determined*. That is, all bodies (subject/substance) are divisible (predicate/accident). See B128-129. Obviously, making this judgement does *not* require the full-blown ontological concept of substance as that which is always a subject and never a predicate, but it does require that in empirical intuition bodies are treated within the context of the judgement as substances.

<sup>69</sup> For example, ‘all bodies are divisible’ is universal, affirmative, categorical and assertoric. However, Buroker argues that *all* the categories are necessary for judging objects as they are interdependent (2006: 86-127). Schulting (2012) argues that *all* the categories are derived from the analytic principle of the unity of apperception; thus he disagrees that the Deduction gives only a ‘global’ proof of the general validity of the categories.

step is concerned with the exorcism of the transcendental spectre that is left intact by the first step. The transcendental spectre that Kant is concerned with is not to be confused with a ‘Cartesian’ evil demon hypothesis, or any kind of external world scepticism. No part of the Deduction is concerned with refuting external world scepticism. I agree with Ameriks (2003) that Kant presupposes the actuality of experience and then works out its transcendental conditions. As explained above, the transcendental spectre arises because our cognition requires the joint efforts of two distinct and irreducible faculties, viz., sensibility and understanding, so it is possible that appearances could be given through sensibility while being incompatible with the understanding. This is not a concern about accurately representing reality, but about being able to *represent* and *judge* about reality at all.

### 3. The Categories as Conditions of Perception and Experience: A Step towards ‘Objective Reality’

In §20 Kant states that ‘the beginning of a **deduction** [...] has been made’ in that it has been shown that a manifold of intuition that is unified stands under the unity of apperception by means of the categories (B144). Since the categories are separate from sensibility their function needs to be specified independently of sensibility, viz., as the conditions of thinking an object in general.<sup>70</sup> Demonstrating this meant abstracting entirely from the specific nature of *our* sensible intuition, even though it was not possible to abstract from the fact that the manifold of intuition had to be supplied prior to the synthesis of understanding, for this is entailed by the discursivity thesis. Kant then states what work remains to be done, and it is very important not to underplay this statement:<sup>71</sup>

In the sequel (§ 26) it will be shown from the way in which the empirical intuition is given in sensibility that its unity can be none other than the one the category prescribes to the manifold of given intuition in general according to the preceding § 20; thus by the explanation of its *a priori* validity in regard to all

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<sup>70</sup> Allison argues that the categories need to have a specifiable function independently of the sensible conditions and that is achieved by linking them to ‘intellectual synthesis’ (2012: 35-36).

<sup>71</sup> I argue below that non-conceptual readings of the Deduction often fail to take seriously the importance and role of the second step in the overall argument.

objects of our senses the aim of the deduction will first be fully attained. (B144-145)

Two points are noteworthy. First, the aim of the deduction has *not yet* been fulfilled, which means that merely demonstrating that the categories are conditions of the thought of objects (in general) does not – of itself – grant them a priori validity. In the terminology that I am employing, the categories have ‘objective validity’, that is, a role in experience as necessary conditions of possible experience, but they do not have ‘objective reality’. For all that has been shown so far they could be just cognitively ‘empty’, subjectively necessary, forms of thought.<sup>72</sup> My interpretation explains why Kant claims that only a ‘beginning’ of a deduction has been made with the preceding argument. It is because the categories have been shown, *pace* Hume, to have an a priori role in experience (they are not derived from experience and they are not dispensable concepts), but at the same time it has not yet been demonstrated that they accomplish this role. The second point is that Kant affirms that the deduction will be completed in §26. This short and notoriously difficult section even bears the title of ‘transcendental deduction’. This means that despite what has been demonstrated already, Kant does *not* take it to be enough to justify the application of the categories to objects. Unfortunately, while being a significant improvement over the A-Deduction with its three proofs, the second step of the B-Deduction is still very unclear and suffers from its own complexities that were not contained in A-. To anticipate, the second step turns explicitly on connecting the categories with the synthesis of apprehension (perception). The argument begins with apprehension, moves from apprehension to the forms of apprehension (space and time), and from there to the necessity of the categories for perception and experience (B159-161). But we will come to that in due course.

### 3.1. The Second Step of the Deduction: §§21-26

Kant completes §21 by explaining that the categories only have significance in relation to a discursive cognizer:

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<sup>72</sup> See Allison (2004: 185-186).

They are only rules for an understanding whose entire capacity consists in thinking, i.e., in the action of bringing the synthesis of the manifold that is given to it in intuition from elsewhere to the unity of apperception, which therefore **cognizes** nothing at all by itself, but only combines and orders the material for cognition, the intuition, which must be given to it through the object. (B145)

Because the categories have no cognitive content themselves they are, as we saw previously, concepts of an object (unified manifold of intuition) *by means of which* the intuition is determined with respect to the logical functions; as to *how* they determine intuition has not yet been explained. Although Kant will partially explain this in §26, he will not properly address it until the Schematism. Instead, his present concern is with the connection the categories must have to empirical intuition in general in order for actual objects to be thought through them. Kant begins to move towards this conclusion in §22.

In §22 Kant distinguishes thinking an object from cognizing an object. It is clear from the text that what he here calls ‘thinking’ corresponds to what he termed ‘cognizing’ in the first step of the Deduction, since in the first step he was concerned only with the *thought* of an object in general and in the second step he brings our sensible intuition back into the story. Cognition in the ‘thin’ sense, or ‘thought’, concerned the relation of representations to an object in the ‘thin’ sense as a unification of a manifold of intuition under the synthetic unity of apperception. The sense of ‘cognition’ operative in §22 is quickly identified with ‘empirical cognition’ or ‘experience’ (B147), meaning it is cognition in a ‘thick’ sense. Kant’s main point in the section is that both (sensible) intuition and concepts are required for cognition in the ‘thick’ sense, which he illustrates by means of the role of space and time in mathematics. While these pure intuitions allow us to construct mathematical figures, we do not cognize these figures as real unless these forms can be presented in *empirical* intuition. This has an important link to Kant’s rejection of innate knowledge, which we will see below. Because the categories must be applied to *empirical* intuition to yield cognitive content they are for this reason restricted to use in possible experience.<sup>73</sup> Kant repeats these points in §23, which officially spells out the implication of the categories being applicable only to experience, namely, that while they seem to extend further than

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<sup>73</sup> See also A146-147/B185-186.

intuitions, insofar as they are concepts of *things in general*, they cannot be used to determine anything whatsoever about things that are not possible objects of experience. Significantly, Kant states that without relation to sensibility the categories are ‘mere forms of thought without objective reality [...] Our sensible and empirical intuition alone can provide them with sense and significance’ (B148-B149).<sup>74</sup> Now we come to the first of the two crucial sections of the second step of the B-Deduction.

In §24 Kant reminds the reader that the categories are not enough for cognition of an object (in the ‘thick’ sense) because they are only ‘forms of thought’, required for thinking ‘objects’ through bringing a manifold of intuition to the synthetic unity of apperception. This specific role of the categories now gets labelled ‘purely intellectual’, highlighting its independence from sensible conditions (B150). However, due to discursivity, human cognition also consists of the ‘fundamental’ form of our receptivity in addition to the spontaneity of thought. Only through the sensible (specifically spatiotemporal) manifold being thought in accordance with the unity of apperception can the categories ‘as mere forms of thought, acquire objective reality, i.e., application to objects that can be given to us in intuition’. This is called the ‘figurative synthesis’ (*synthesis speciosa*) and is distinct from the ‘purely intellectual’ synthesis (*synthesis intellectualis*) (B150-151). As if things were not complicated enough, Kant then adds that the figurative synthesis, if it relates to the synthetic unity of apperception, ‘must be called, as distinct from the merely intellectual combination, the **transcendental synthesis of the imagination**’ (B151).<sup>75</sup> He explains this name on the grounds that the imagination has something in common with both sensibility and understanding: it is an *intuitive* faculty, but at the same time it *determines* ‘the form of sense *a priori*’ and is therefore not itself determinable, which makes its synthesis of intuitions ‘an effect of the understanding on sensibility’ under the guise of the ‘**productive** imagination’

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<sup>74</sup> Kant also denies here that the categories can be applied *at all* to non-sensible objects (B149), which will be significant in Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>75</sup> This is the first mention in the B-Deduction of the ‘imagination’ as a cognitive faculty. It appears on the surface to be consigned to the backseat in B- whereas it had central importance in A-. In fact, in A- the imagination was one of three *irreducible* cognitive faculties: sense, imagination and apperception (A94), while the understanding was conceived as the synthesis of the imagination *in relation to* the unity of apperception (A119). As we saw, Kant assigns all synthesis to the imagination in A- (A78), but all synthesis to the understanding in B- (B130). By contrast, the imagination only enters the story in §24 in the B-Deduction and the understanding is straightforwardly *identified with* the synthetic unity of apperception (B134n). Nonetheless, insofar as the ‘transcendental synthesis of the imagination’ is in both Deductions and is the key to the applicability of the categories in both, there is no substantial change in Kant’s views. If anything, the shift to focus on the understanding was probably to emphasize the role of *logical functions of judgement* in experience, which is the only new substantial addition to the B-Deduction.

(B151-B152).<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately, Kant does little to elaborate on what all of these terms mean or how they contribute to securing the objective reality of the categories, instead suddenly shifting focus to the paradox of self-knowledge: why we know even ourselves only as appearances.

Despite this, it is here that he attempts to explain what the figurative synthesis does. Distinguishing between ‘apperception’ and ‘inner sense’ Kant argues that the figurative synthesis is the self-affection of the subject (B153). The basic idea is that consciousness receives content from outside, via inner sense. The form of inner sense is time, so all representations are in time. Inner sense, however, only supplies *a manifold*, but in order for this or any manifold to *be* something, to *be an object* for consciousness, it must be combined under apperception *through* the categories (*ibid*). This is crucial, for this means that *any* consciousness of *an object* ('thin') sense turns on figurative synthesis: ‘The understanding therefore does not **find** some sort of combination of the manifold already in inner sense, but **produces** it, by **affecting** inner sense’ (B155).<sup>77</sup> Although Kant’s aim is to back up his claim that we cognize even ourselves only as appearances and not as things in themselves, his wider claim is that all cognition takes place only through the passive subject being *both* externally affected (by things in themselves) and internally affected by the active subject (figurative synthesis); this dual-affection combines the representations of outer sense *in accordance with* the unity of apperception *through* the categories as concepts of an object in general. This point is clearer in one of the additional passages added to the B-edition of the Transcendental Aesthetic:

Now that which, as representation, can precede any act of thinking something is intuition and, if it contains nothing but relations, it is the form of intuition, which, since *it does not represent anything except* insofar as something is posited in the mind, can be nothing other than the way in which the *mind is*

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<sup>76</sup> Kant distinguishes between the productive and reproductive imagination here, claiming that the latter is exercised only empirically in association, while the former contributes to cognition a priori (B152). This contradicts the A-Deduction where the reproductive imagination also has an a priori role, namely as the ‘the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination’. (A100). However, later at A118 and A123, Kant specifies that the a priori role of the imagination is *productive*. See Allison (2015a: 221) for discussion. Thus, in the end there is no doctrinal change here, despite surface differences.

Since ‘productive imagination’, ‘transcendental synthesis of the imagination’, and ‘figurative synthesis’ are all synonyms, I shall henceforth use ‘figurative synthesis’.

<sup>77</sup> Kant’s examples of self-affection are all, appropriately, figurative, as having to do with spatial figures produced/cognized through combination of acts in time. The point is to emphasize the interdependency of space and time as intuitions. See Longuenesse (1998: Ch. 8, esp. 226-227).

*affected by its own activity*, namely this positing of its representation, thus the way it is *affected through itself*, i.e., it is an inner sense as far as regards its form. (B67-68; my emphasis)

Notice how Kant claims that intuition does not *represent anything* without the mind being affected by its own activity, and he seems to equate the very notion of our ‘form of intuition’ as being ‘nothing other than the way in which the mind is affected by its own activity’. This will be very significant below in relation to §26.<sup>78</sup> To the first-time reader of the Aesthetic, this claim must be entirely opaque, but I would suggest that it serves less to back up the ideality of time – as Kant claims – and more to connect the new edition of the Aesthetic with the new B-Deduction, for it is clear that the self-activity spoken of here is nothing other than the figurative synthesis of §24. Introducing the reader (albeit indirectly) to the notions of ‘synthesis’ and ‘self-affection’ now helps alleviate the appearance of revising or even contradicting the theory of the Aesthetic later on.<sup>79</sup> I will skip §25 as this adds nothing that is directly relevant to my interpretation of the Deduction.

In §26 Kant claims to have completed the Deduction and to have shown that:

Consequently, all synthesis, through which even perception itself becomes possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience. (B161)

Our concern is to find and unpack Kant’s argument for this conclusion, for as years of debate show, it is not obvious what it is or whether it succeeds. Kant opens by reminding the reader that two things have been accomplished with respect to the categories. (1) The *a priori* origin of the categories has been shown by their derivation from the logical functions of thinking. Indeed, the categories *just are* these logical functions insofar as a manifold is determined with respect to the functions in a given

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<sup>78</sup> I think it is fair to say that this notion of the mind affecting itself has been largely neglected in the literature, and this neglect is responsible for some of the confusions that have arisen. For example, Allais claims that ‘An *a priori* intuition does not involve anything affecting us – because it is *a priori*’, and she takes attributing this claim to Kant to be ‘relatively uncontroversial’ (2015: 195-196). However, as we can see, a *priori* intuition *does* involve being affected by something: it involves the self being affected by *itself* through figurative synthesis.

<sup>79</sup> I will discuss the apparent contradictions and/or revisions below.

intuition. (2) The possibility of them being a priori cognitions of objects of intuition in general was demonstrated in §20. Now Kant intends to make good on the promise of showing that the categories can be used to cognize ‘whatever objects **may come before our senses**’ in terms of ‘prescribing the law to nature and even making the latter possible’ (B159-160). In order for this to be shown, it is at least a necessary (although Kant also seems to think it is a sufficient) condition to connect the categories with objects of perception, qua objects of perception. This is indicated by the next sentence: ‘First of all I remark that by the **synthesis of apprehension** I understand the composition of the manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of it (as appearance) becomes possible’ (B160).

Since this is the first mention in the B-Deduction of the ‘synthesis of apprehension’ and of perception being at all relevant to the argument we have to look back to the A-Deduction for further details. Our first question is ‘why does perception require a synthesis of apprehension?’ Kant offers two answers in the A-Deduction. I cited part of the first passage previously to help understand Kant’s notion of ‘synthesis’ or ‘combination’ in §15:

Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another [...] Now in order for **unity** to come from this manifold [...] it is necessary first to run through and then take together this manifoldness, which action I call the **synthesis of apprehension**, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such, and indeed as contained **in one representation**, without the occurrence of such a synthesis.

Now this synthesis of apprehension must also be exercised *a priori*, i.e., in regard to representations that are not empirical. For without it we could have *a priori* neither the representations of space nor of time, since these can be generated only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides. We therefore have a pure synthesis of apprehension (A99-100).

This passage claims that every intuition is itself a manifold of impressions that has been successively intuited.<sup>80</sup> This is in line with what we learnt from B67-68 and §24 above. To represent anything through these impressions they must be *taken* by the cognitive subject as constituting a (synthetic) unity, which requires that the subject ‘run through and take together’ this multiplicity *as* a multiplicity.<sup>81</sup> Kant is making the anti-empiricist point that even bare perception is not given as such to the perceiver but requires cognitive processing of some kind. Kant then adds that there must be an *a priori* synthesis of apprehension as well, for otherwise we could not have even the representations of space and time. This is a surprising and puzzling claim: has Kant not argued that space and time are given as pure intuitions in the Transcendental Aesthetic? Well, yes, but as I intimated above, he *also* hints at the idea of them requiring a synthesis or, more precisely, an act of internal affection (positing) for them to represent anything. Though Kant does not use the term in the A-Deduction, I think it is safe to assume that the *a priori* synthesis of apprehension corresponds to the figurative synthesis.<sup>82</sup> If this is right, then the representations of space and time as actual intuitions ‘can be generated only through the [figurative] synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides’ (A100). I will discuss what this means after analysing the second passage where Kant explains the synthesis of apprehension.

The second passage occurs during the ‘argument from below’. Beginning from scratch again, Kant explains that an appearance is given to us only if it is combined with consciousness; this combination with consciousness turns the appearance into a perception (A120). Since this is the first step in the argument, I suggest that ‘appearance’ here is best taken in its neutral sense, namely as the undetermined object of empirical intuition (A20/B34). This implies that there is a distinction to be drawn between ‘intuition’ and ‘perception’. This is important because one of the key arguments for Kantian non-conceptualism is that intuition is a singular and immediate representation of an object, and this is usually taken to mean that ‘empirical intuition’

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<sup>80</sup> The temporal aspect of the synthesis was understated in §15, where Kant seemed to imply that it is simply because a manifold is *given* that entails the need for synthesis, whereas in the A-Deduction it is clearer that it is the *successive* nature of the intuiting of a manifold that dictates the need for synthesis. Indeed, the fact that all representations must be ordered in time is ‘a general remark on which one must ground everything that follows’ (A99). We will revisit this in Chapter 2.

<sup>81</sup> This contrasts with Guyer’s (1987: 122, 148) atomist account of intuition, which ignores the fact that Kant says intuition *contains* a manifold and that the synthesis is about representing it as a manifold.

<sup>82</sup> As does Allison (2015a: 415, n.67) and Rosenberg (2005: 112).

and ‘perception’ are synonyms for Kant.<sup>83</sup> Closer inspection of the text reveals, however, that Kant is very careful to draw a distinction between intuition and perception. It is implied here at A120 and is made fully explicit in §26: ‘I make the empirical intuition of a house into a perception through apprehension of its manifold’ (B162). Even in the *Prolegomena*, where Kant appears to deny any role for the categories as conditions of (judgements of) perception, he still defines perception as an ‘intuition of which I am conscious’ (Pro, 4: 300).<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, it cannot be objected that the perception of which Kant speaks in these passages really means ‘experience’ (empirical cognition) because in B162 Kant is explicitly contrasting perception *with* experience, in A120 he is building up *from* perception *to* experience, and in the *Prolegomena* he is distinguishing between (judgements of) perception and (judgements of) experience, where only the latter apparently require the categories. After explaining that different perceptions are dispersed in the mind – I assume here he means the ‘successively intuited *impressions*’ of A99 – and therefore require a combination in the mind, Kant identifies this necessary combination with the synthesis of apprehension/imagination:

There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination, and whose action exercised immediately upon perceptions I call apprehension.\* For the imagination is to bring the manifold of intuition into an **image**; it must therefore antecedently take up the impressions into its activity, i.e., apprehend them. (A120)

\* No psychologist has yet thought that the imagination is a necessary ingredient of perception itself. This is so partly because this faculty has been limited to reproduction, and partly because it has been believed that the senses do not merely afford us impressions but also put them together, and produce images of objects, for which without doubt something more than the receptivity of impressions is required, namely a function of the synthesis of them. (A120n)

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<sup>83</sup> In taking empirical intuition as being enough to present particulars to consciousness I think the conflation of intuition and perception underlies the non-conceptualist reading of Kant, such as that found in Allais (2009) and Hanna (2005; 2008). Even conceptualist readers, such as Land (2011: 202), mistakenly equate the two notions.

<sup>84</sup> I leave it an open question whether the judgements of perception are instances of perception, for Kant, or a kind of judgement that take perceptions for its material but are less than a full-blown experience/judgement of experience.

Notice the link that is drawn between the synthesis of apprehension and the imagination. Specifically, the synthesis of imagination is called apprehension when it is directed to ‘perceptions’ or, what amounts to the same thing, ‘impressions’. The use of ‘perceptions’ here is slightly misleading since it makes it sound like the imagination works on what are already perceptions, but Kant removes this impression in the footnote. There he explains that the imagination ‘is a necessary ingredient of perception itself’ because it has not been previously realized that the senses do not put impressions together into images. This activity requires more than just receptivity; it requires ‘a function of the synthesis’ of impressions. In short, the imagination combines impressions into an image and perception is only possible through this activity. However, both this passage and its claim have proved controversial in the literature. Allison, who is otherwise sympathetic to Kant’s theory of cognition, claims that the role of the imagination is *not* the formation of images (2004: 187-188).<sup>85</sup> He argues instead that the imagination is responsible for the formation of schemata (2015a: 256). It is certainly correct that the imagination produces schemata for concepts, but it is surprising that Allison is so quick to dismiss the idea that it also produces images since he himself cites the key texts where Kant makes this claim. I think part of the problem is that Allison misreads A120n because he sees it as saying something different to A99, whereas I read A120n *in light of* A99 and these other texts. The first relevant text is the dense but very useful note known as ‘*Loses Blatt*, B 12’, the usefulness of which stems from its close similarity to the A-Deduction, and from the fact that it can be (fairly) reliably dated because it is written on the back of a letter that is dated 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1780 (Allison 2015a, 86). Although I will refer to more of it later, this is the relevant passage for the current point:

The pure synthesis of the imagination is the ground of the possibility of the empirical synthesis in apprehension, thus also of perception. It is possible *a priori* and produces nothing but shapes. The transcendental synthesis of imagination pertains solely to the unity of apperception in the synthesis of the manifold in general through the imagination. Through that a concept of the

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<sup>85</sup> However, see Allison (2004: 482, n.56) where he acknowledges that Kant says exactly this in A120n. In his latest work, Allison does seem more open to acknowledging the extent to which Kant equates apprehension, perception, productive imagination and the formation of images (2015a: 133, 137, 254-255), but still claims that this is a misleading description by Kant of his own view (2015a: 255-256).

object in general is conceived in accordance with the different kinds of transcendental synthesis. The synthesis happens in time. (*Loses Blatt*, B 12, 23: 18)<sup>86</sup>

This passage in particular is useful because it foreshadows not only the A-Deduction's account of the synthesis of apprehension and the role of the imagination, but also the B-Deduction's notion of 'figurative synthesis'. The claim that the synthesis of imagination 'produces nothing but shapes' is clearly reminiscent of Kant's examples of figurative synthesis in §24, namely of the production of circles, lines and representations of the dimensions of space through the synthesis of acts in time and the affection of sensibility by the understanding. Moreover, the note supports the identification that I made earlier of the figurative synthesis with the pure synthesis of apprehension *and* it also suggests that these can in turn be taken as aspects of one underlying act of synthesis that operates on multiple levels. In other words, with respect to the 'threefold synthesis' of apprehension, reproduction and recognition, 'intellectual synthesis' and 'figurative synthesis' Kant is not specifying different individual acts of synthesis but different descriptions or aspects of the same synthesis.<sup>87</sup> Since Allison freely recognizes and approves of the centrality of the figurative synthesis in completing the Deduction, the identification here of the productive function of the imagination in making perception possible with that synthesis should ease concerns about the imagination forming images. As per A99, the idea is not that sense impressions are given atomistically and then have to be (literally) constructed into mental pictures, but rather that the manifold has to be produced *as* a manifold representation through the subject being conscious of the act of synthesis through which it attends to its own acts of combination (§24), producing figures and shapes in apprehension.<sup>88</sup> In short, reading the manifold of

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<sup>86</sup> The *Loses Blatt* is a set of Kant's *Reflexionen*. For useful but opposed discussions of the *Reflexionen* in the 'silent decade' see Allison (2015a: Ch. 3) and Guyer (1987: Ch. 2).

<sup>87</sup> Buroker (2006: 107, 131), Allison (2015a: 205), and Anderson (2015: 352-353) all recognize that the 'threefold synthesis' is one act of synthesis in different layers or aspects. Anderson explicitly affirms, against Kantian non-conceptualism, that while the exposition is bottom-up, the *dependency* relation is top-down. Longuenesse correctly affirms that the acts of self-affection, if they have data from outer sense are the synthesis of apprehension, but if these acts 'are considered in themselves' then they are the figurative synthesis (1998: 240).

<sup>88</sup> See also A124: 'For in itself the synthesis of the imagination, although exercised *a priori*, is nevertheless always sensible, for it combines the manifold only as it **appears** in intuition, e.g., the shape of a triangle.'

intuitions as an image is identical to reading the manifold as an intuition.<sup>89</sup> Hence in A120n the ‘function’ of synthesis is nothing other than the categories.<sup>90</sup> We now have a comprehensive account of the synthesis of apprehension and of its relationship to the figurative synthesis; this puts us in a position to return to §26.

I have argued that Kant thinks that perception requires a synthesis of apprehension because, while intuition contains a manifold of sense impressions that are successively intuited, in order for these impressions to represent anything to consciousness they must be subject to a synthesis; the subject must take them as being a synthetic unity. In the next step of the argument Kant connects the possibility of perception (synthesis of apprehension) to space and time as our forms of intuition. Specifically, the synthesis of apprehension must be in agreement with time, ‘since it can occur only in accordance with this form’ (B160).<sup>91</sup> The synthesis of apprehension will be subject to whatever conditions that time is also subject to. Since the forms of intuition give a manifold but do not present it *as* a manifold to consciousness, figurative synthesis is required for these forms themselves to be (pure) intuitions: ‘But space and time are represented *a priori* not merely as **forms** of sensible intuition, but also as **intuitions** themselves (which contain a manifold)’ (B160-B161).

Unfortunately, Kant makes life much harder both for himself and anyone still remotely following the argument of the Deduction by introducing a further distinction, one that is actually critical to the entire argument, in an exceptionally dense, cryptic and arguably even self-contradictory footnote. The next Section is concerned entirely with this note and how it completes the deduction.

### 3.2. §26: ‘Form of Intuition’ and ‘Formal Intuition’

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<sup>89</sup> The equivalence of ‘image’ and ‘intuition’ for Kant also helps remove another discrepancy that Allison finds. In the Schematism, Kant refers to time ‘as the pure image of all objects of our senses in general’ (A142/B182), which Allison (2015a: 385) is understandably concerned about. If I am right, however, all Kant means by this is that time is the pure *intuition* of all objects of the senses, which is no more than what he has already affirmed in the Aesthetic and Deduction, and is now explaining in greater detail in the Schematism to resolve the apparent problem of the heterogeneity of pure concepts and sensible intuition. Moreover, this need not conflict with Allison’s view that by ‘image’ Kant must mean something like an interpretation (2004: 190).

<sup>90</sup> The figurative synthesis combines a manifold under apperception through ‘functions of consciousness’, which are directly identified with the categories (*Loses Blatt*, B 12, 23: 19).

<sup>91</sup> Presumably, the same applies to space as well, but Kant always privileges time since *all* representations must come in this form.

Space, represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry), contains more than the mere form of intuition, namely the **comprehension** of the manifold given in accordance with the form of sensibility in an **intuitive** representation, so that the **form of intuition** merely gives the manifold, but the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation. In the Aesthetic I ascribed this unity merely to sensibility, only in order to note that it precedes all concepts, though to be sure it presupposes a synthesis, which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. For since through it (as the understanding determines the sensibility) space or time are first **given** as intuitions, the unity of this *a priori* intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding (§ 24). (B160-161n)

This note has been read in a wide variety of ways.<sup>92</sup> I will focus on two recent readings that seem to me encapsulate the best of both extremes: one by Allison (2004; 2012; 2015a) and the other by Longuenesse (1998; 2005). I mentioned earlier that there are concerns about the compatibility of the Aesthetic and the Deduction; specifically, it seems incompatible that space and time should be characterized as pure intuitions in the Aesthetic but that in the Deduction (and the Axioms) they are described as requiring a synthesis.<sup>93</sup> In this respect, the note exasperates when it both attributes a unity to space and time as intuitions and affirms that they require synthesis to be given as intuitions. Indeed, Lorne Falkenstein can be forgiven for taking the note to contain a contradiction ‘from which anything follows’ (1995: 91). It is also not immediately obvious how this note advances the argument of §26 to which it is appended.

Allison claims that the note does not contain a contradiction, but he does this by introducing additional terminology. Allison argues that both the ‘form of intuition’ and ‘formal intuition’ refer to *pure* intuitions, in the sense of the Aesthetic. However, Allison takes the two terms to refer to different kinds of pure intuition, taking ‘form of intuition’ to mean ‘indeterminate [unconceptualized] pure intuition’ and ‘formal intuition’ to mean ‘determinate [conceptualized] pure intuition’ (2004: 115). He then argues that the former must also be taken in two separate ways: as a ‘form of intuiting’ and as a ‘form of the intuited’ (*ibid*). The ‘form of intuiting’ refers to how we intuit

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<sup>92</sup> See Onof and Schulting (2015) for an excellent discussion of the many different interpretations of the note and its significance. They identify the tensions and apparent contradictions (2015: 4-5).

<sup>93</sup> See Kemp Smith (2003: 347ff) and Wolff (1963: 228).

things in a certain *manner*; the ‘form of the intuited’ is an ‘essential order or pattern’ of the thing that is intuited (*ibid*). He continues that the ‘form of the intuited’ is ‘the single, and all-inclusive, space that contains within it the manifold of spaces’ and that *this* is the space that Kant is primarily concerned with and characterizes as transcendentally ideal; this space corresponds with neither the ‘form of intuiting’ nor the ‘formal intuition’ (2004: 115-116). In addition, Allison follows Falkenstein (1995: 7-9) in taking *this* space of the Aesthetic to contain a pre-conceptual ‘input’, namely that the data presented in it must be presented ‘in a certain fixed manner’ so that ‘on this view, the understanding (or imagination) does not produce a spatiotemporal order through its activity but merely uncovers or brings to consciousness one that is given independently of it, though not [...] independently of the nature of sensibility’ (2004: 114).<sup>94</sup> This ‘input’ gets uncovered by consciousness through the imaginative synthesis in the ‘output’, but the point is that the order is already there in the forms of sensibility. Allison construes the contribution of sensibility in a substantial way as not just a mere capacity to intuit in spatiotemporal form, but also as containing (as the form of the intuited) this pre-conceptual order or pattern, so that on his view, the unity of apperception is *constrained by sensibility*; for Allison, this requirement of apperception (intellectual synthesis) to accord with sensibility is what prevents the second step of the B-Deduction from being unnecessary or trivial (2004: 191-193; 2012: 37, 46-47).<sup>95</sup> In summary, there are three main terms operating in Allison’s account. There is the ‘form of intuiting’ that refers to the specific way or manner that we intuit (spatiotemporally) as an innate capacity. Then there is the ‘form of the intuited’, the transcendentally ideal, pre-conceptual, pattern or framework that conditions determinate representations of space and time. Both of these are readings of the expression ‘form of intuition’. Lastly, there is the ‘formal intuition’ which is a determinate conceptualized *representation of* the ‘form of the intuited’ (2004: 115-116). This is space ‘represented as **object** (as is really required in geometry)’. As I understand Allison, only the ‘formal intuition’ requires figurative synthesis.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Although Allison is here explaining Falkenstein’s ‘formal intuitionism’, he makes it clear that he accepts this distinction in the next paragraph by using it to resolve the apparent contradiction between the Aesthetic and the Deduction/Axioms.

<sup>95</sup> Allison affirms this interpretation in his responses to Longuenesse. He reads the first clause of the last sentence of the note in terms of his distinction between indeterminate and determinate intuition and takes the second clause to affirm that sensibility is independent of the conditions of the understanding and places its requirements on apperception (2012: 47, n.18).

<sup>96</sup> The same holds for Onof and Schulting (2015).

I think Allison's interpretation, while it is undeniably attractive, is very problematic, for four reasons. First, while these distinctions are helpful for discussing the different roles of the forms of intuition in Kant's account, Allison is wrong to treat them as strictly separate from each other. In fact, in addition to needlessly complicating the story, he seriously downplays the role of the formal intuition in the argument of §26. I will explain why this is after setting out Longuenesse's alternative so that I can discuss the two interpretations together.

Second, the notion that the understanding/imagination simply uncovers or brings to consciousness a *pre-existing*, pre-conceptual, order already present in sensibility is directly contradicted by §24, the very section that Kant refers us back to in the note. Once again: 'The understanding therefore does not **find** some sort of combination of the manifold already in inner sense, but **produces** it, by **affecting** inner sense' (B155). Consider again §15: 'the **combination** of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore *cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition*' (B129; my italics).<sup>97</sup> Allison would counter this by claiming that 'combination' refers to the *representation* of determinate spaces and times through the limitation of the single, all-inclusive space and time (or form of the intuited); however, Kant does not say that he is concerned with the *representation* of spaces and times rather than with the unity of space and time as such. Indeed, he seems rather to affirm the opposite of what Allison is claiming: namely that he is concerned with the *unity* of space and time as such (not just the *representation* of their unity through conceptual determination/limitation of the single space and time). To deal with this problem Allison, following Onof and Schulting (2015: 27-31, esp. 28), has taken to distinguishing between the unicity of space and the unity of space as two different conceptions of unity. The former refers to the internal unity that space has independently of the understanding, while the latter refers to the formal representation

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<sup>97</sup> To be sure, Kant's point in §15 concerns the combination of appearances in terms of *taking* a manifold *as* a manifold rather than literally constructing a mental picture out of discrete impressions. But with respect to time and space these are nothing other than *mere forms* of representation, thus themselves representations. What can it possibly mean to say that *forms* of representation contain a pre-conceptual content? I take it that this 'content' can only be *formal*, that is, that intuition intuited through these forms must have a certain form, but this does not and cannot contain a fixed way that the data is actually ordered, waiting to be uncovered. Granted, I am construing 'content' here in a substantial way, but I admit that the notion is ambiguous and that there might be a minimalist sense of 'content' inherent in sensibility qua sensibility. For example, that in representing objects spatially we must represent them as *outside* each other and as *outside of us*. Our sensations come in spatiotemporal form independently of any activity on our part. Because these features of outer sense belong entirely to sensibility independently of the understanding's figurative synthesis they are internal to the form of intuition, but neither feature can be said to yield a pre-conceptual pattern or content in any substantial sense.

of this internal unity. Given that Kant does not employ this terminology this cannot be said to be conclusive, and I will discuss it further below.

Third, I am puzzled about why Allison thinks sensibility constrains apperception rather than apperception constraining sensibility, which he admits is the most natural reading (2012: 47). Allison defends this claim on the grounds that it is not *logically* contradictory for there to be discrete, multiple spaces and times that do not form an all-inclusive single space and time (2015a: 380-381, 413). This is true, but I fail to see how this is relevant. Specifically, as Allison is plainly aware, the kind of impossibility that the conditions of apperception rule out is strictly *phenomenological*, not logical (2012: 48): if a manifold cannot be combined in one consciousness then it cannot be an object *for me*.<sup>98</sup> Allison points to Kant's intuition arguments in the Aesthetic for the necessity of representing spaces and times as parts of a single space and time, but this is completely compatible with the account that Allison is opposing, namely that apperception constrains sensibility so that it must present intuitions this way.<sup>99</sup> The phenomenological impossibility of representing separate spaces and times under the unity of apperception leaves it undecided what this impossibility is grounded in. Now, admittedly, Kant *does* claim that the intellectual combination is 'subject to a limiting condition that it calls inner sense, which can make that combination intuitable only in accordance with temporal relations that lie entirely outside of the concepts of the understanding proper' (B159), but I take this to mean only that our combination of the manifold must occur in a temporal form, which could be taken as a constraint only in a minimal sense.<sup>100</sup> While intellectual synthesis must concur with the temporal form (of intuiting), it is also the case that this temporal form (of intuiting) is insufficient for the presentation of objects since the manifold intuited in time must then be *combined* in accordance with the unity of apperception, i.e., synthesized by means of the categories. I will say more about this mutual constraining of apperception and sensibility at the end of this Section. Moreover, we can see that this third problem with Allison's account is closely connected with the second: he views sensibility as constraining apperception because sensibility is construed as having a (pre-conceptual) content (or pattern) of its

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<sup>98</sup> See Onof and Schulting (2015: 25-26) for discussion of scenarios in which, for whatever reason, the unicity of space and the unity of apperception do not harmonize. They do not discuss time.

<sup>99</sup> In fact, Longuenesse appeals to exactly the same passages.

<sup>100</sup> It is also significant that Kant claims that the form of inner sense is a limiting condition of intellectual synthesis in §25 where he is concerned with defending his earlier conclusion that we know even ourselves only as appearances.

own – the ‘form of the intuited’ – which means that apperception has to conform to this pre-existing content.<sup>101</sup>

Fourth, I think Allison (and by extension, Onof and Schulting)<sup>102</sup> are misled by Kant’s talk of ‘being given’.<sup>103</sup> In responding to the question of how Kant can say that the unity of space is both given and presupposes a synthesis, Allison concludes that there are two senses of ‘unity’ and two senses of ‘being given’ at work, and so there is no contradiction (2015a: 412-413). We have seen what the two senses of unity are (unicity and the representation of it). Allison suggests that the term ‘given’ is ambiguous between referring to what is given by sensibility, independently of the understanding, and to what is given through the operations of both faculties in experience (2015a: 412-413). He further suggests that the first sense is operative in ‘the **form of intuition** gives the manifold’ and the second sense in ‘the **formal intuition** gives unity of the representation’ (B160n; 2015a: 413). This is correct to a certain extent. Specifically, Allison falls into the trap of assuming that if something is ‘given’ then by definition it cannot be the result of synthesis, but this assumption is unwarranted. It is natural to think that if something is ‘given’ then it is presented immediately without any input from the understanding, but closer examination of the text suggests a very different distinction. Although concerned with the original acquisition of the categories and whether Kant undertakes a ‘normative turn’, Callanan (2011) demonstrates that the given/made distinction does not correspond to a ‘non-acquired/acquired’ distinction, but rather to an ‘acquired involuntarily/acquired voluntarily’ distinction (2011: 7-8). Viewed in this way, the fact that a particular representation is *given* no longer entails that it cannot be the result or product of synthesis. Of course, this cannot be conclusive, since Kant’s terminology is rarely unambiguous, but it does at least suggest that the Allison/Onof and Schulting line of argument is not forced upon us on the grounds that Kant is contradicting himself in saying of the unity of space that it is both given and presupposes synthesis.

Against Longuenesse (2005: 32), Allison denies that the aim of the B-Deduction is to show that space and time stand under the unity of apperception, but this is exactly how Kant presents the second step of the Deduction. Examine the exact wording of §21:

<sup>101</sup> Though, notice that even here, sensibility’s having a certain intuitive pre-conceptual content, qua sensibility, does not rule out the possibility that this content has its source (at least partially) in the unity of apperception.

<sup>102</sup> See Onof and Schulting (2015: 33) where they claim that space is a *given* infinite magnitude. Because this is given, this feature is held to belong internally to the unicity of space.

<sup>103</sup> In Chapter 4 we will see that ambiguity of ‘being given’ is a recurring problem.

‘it will be shown [in §26] from the way in which the empirical intuition *is given in* sensibility *that its unity* can be none other than the one the category prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general’ (B144-145; my emphasis). The implication is clearly that there is something about *the way in which* the empirical intuition *is given* that entails that *its unity* is none other than that provided by the categories, and not the other way round. Notice again that Kant says that the category is what *provides* the unity *of* empirical intuition rather than just the *representation* of a *pre-existing* unity. Notice also, that now that being ‘given’ no longer precludes the involvement of synthesis, it is possible that understanding can be affecting sensibility as the latter gives a manifold to consciousness. Since the categories bring a manifold to the unity of apperception, it follows that Kant is claiming that empirical intuition, because of the way it is given, stands under the unity of apperception. What could it be about the way that empirical intuition is given such that it conforms to the categories? Longuenesse has the start of a promising answer.

Longuenesse (1998: Ch. 8) argues that the second step of the B-Deduction forces a ‘rereading of the Transcendental Aesthetic’ (1998: 213).<sup>104</sup> Unlike some who think that the second step of the Deduction is either unnecessary or a trivial inference from the genus (sensible intuition) to the species (spatiotemporal intuition), Longuenesse thinks that the second step ‘turns out to be far more radical’ than such an inference, by reinterpreting the forms of intuition first examined in the Aesthetic (*ibid*). Longuenesse takes the space and time of the Aesthetic to be *products* of the figurative synthesis expounded in §24 (1998: 216). Indeed, as she claims, Kant does send us back both to the Aesthetic and to §24. She makes sense of the previously noted contradiction in the note by taking space and time to be products of synthesis *independently of concepts*, which, crucially for her, includes the categories (1998: 224). In short, what were mere forms of receptivity in the Aesthetic are now considered to be *products* of the figurative synthesis, making them entities of the imagination (1998: 305).<sup>105</sup> The

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<sup>104</sup> While it is a rereading, everything that is said in the Transcendental Aesthetic still holds (Longuenesse 2005, 34).

<sup>105</sup> As evidence for this *prima facie* strange claim that space and time are imaginary beings, Longuenesse (1998: 305) cites the table of ‘nothing’, where Kant states that pure space and pure time are formal conditions of appearances and ‘are to be sure something, as the forms for intuiting, but are not themselves objects that are intuited (*ens imaginarium*)’ (A291/B347). Kant defines an *ens imaginarium* as ‘**Empty intuition, without an object**’ (A292//B348). Allison objects that by inserting ‘*ens imaginarium*’ here Kant does not mean that space and time are imaginary entities, but rather he means that the idea that they are actual (transcendentally real) objects is what is imaginary (2015a: 411-412). I am unconvinced. There is no mention of the views that Kant is opposed to here (i.e., Newton’s conception of absolute space and

understanding (as ‘the capacity to judge’) affects sensibility in such a way as to generate space and time ‘as the necessary intuitive counterpart to our discursive capacity to reflect *universal* concepts, concepts whose extension (the multiplicities of singular objects thought under them) is potentially unlimited’ (1998: 224).<sup>106</sup> Whereas Allison correctly judged that both ‘form of intuition’ and ‘formal intuition’ are ‘pure intuitions’, he incorrectly holds that only the latter requires figurative synthesis, where this is understood to be the formal representation *of* the form of the intuited. Longuenesse correctly maintains, however, that the ‘form of intuition’ from the Aesthetic *insofar as it is a pure intuition* is also a formal intuition (1998: 216-220). In short, the forms of intuition of the Aesthetic already are products of figurative synthesis, but in the Aesthetic, notwithstanding B67-68, Kant abstracts from the contribution of the understanding in generating space and time as forms of objects because he is concerned entirely with what they contribute *a priori* to experience qua intuitions. To support her controversial reading, Longuenesse cites the following passage from the Aesthetic, which fully identifies the ‘form of sensibility’ and ‘pure intuition’:

This pure form of sensibility itself is also called pure intuition. So if I separate from the representation of a body that which the understanding thinks about it, such as substance, force, divisibility, etc., as well as that which belongs to sensation, such as impenetrability, hardness, color, etc., something from this empirical intuition is still left for me, namely extension and form. These belong to the pure intuition, which occurs *a priori*, even without an actual object of the

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time), and in the first edition the expression was inserted after ‘pure time’, which accords with the idea that ‘pure time’ is an imaginary entity. Furthermore, in responding to another critic on this point (Michel Fichant), Longuenesse points out that Kant characterizes space and time this way again in *On a Discovery* (2005: 72), which is especially notable because this is where Kant clarifies his view of the status of space and time as the *a priori* forms of objects: ‘one can and must admit that space and time are merely *things of thought* and *beings of the imagination*, which have not been invented by the latter, but must underlie all of its combinations and inventions because they are the essential form of our sensibility and the receptivity of our intuitions, whereby in general objects are given to us’ (Dis, 8: 202-203; my emphasis). Here Kant states, unequivocally, that space and time, as forms of our sensibility are ‘things of thought’ and ‘beings of the imagination’, but that they are not thereby fictitious. I will explore what this means below, but for now the important point is that Kant does characterize space and time *on his account* of them as beings of imagination, *pace* Allison, Onof and Schulting.

<sup>106</sup> See Longuenesse (1998: *passim*; 2005: Ch. 1-4) for her comprehensive interpretation of the *Critique* that is centred on the notion of the understanding as ‘the capacity to judge’, which takes seriously the idea that the forms of judgement provide a ‘leading thread’ to the derivation of the categories. Though I disagree with aspects of her view, my current account is heavily indebted to Longuenesse.

senses or sensation, as a mere form of sensibility in the mind. (A20-21/B34-35)<sup>107</sup>

Both at the start and end of the passage Kant identifies ‘pure intuition’ with ‘form of sensibility’. Although not cited by Longuenesse, there is also the passage from the Transcendental Exposition of Space, where Kant argues that there can only be a pure intuition of space (for use in geometry) if that pure intuition is also the form of empirical intuition, with its seat a priori in the formal constitution of the mind (B41).

Crucially, the possible objection that *pure intuition* refers only to the *determination* of space itself (as an object) is blocked by the fact that Kant links the ‘pure intuition’ as the ‘form of sensibility’ to the empirical intuition of a body, showing that the pure intuition, qua pure intuition, is already required for the representation of *empirical* objects, not just the representation of space and time as themselves objects.<sup>108</sup> If this is right, then the ‘formal intuition’ of the Deduction corresponds to both the ‘form of sensibility’ and the ‘pure intuition’ of this passage in the Aesthetic, and if that identification is correct, then a synthesis must be involved, since we are told that formal intuition presupposes synthesis in the note. That synthesis can be none other than the figurative synthesis of §24, or the *pure* synthesis of apprehension, for Kant affirms of the latter that ‘without it we could have *a priori* neither the representations of space nor of time, since these can be generated only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides’ (A99-100).<sup>109</sup> As is noted by both commentators, however, Longuenesse’s reading appears to saddle us with another problem: the ‘form of intuition’ in the note does not appear to have the synthetic, unified character that it does in the Aesthetic.

Lest the idea that ‘form of intuition’ has multiple senses appear disingenuous to the reader, it should be noted that Kant warns his critic Eberhard not to go ‘leafing through the *Critique* with the help of a dictionary’ as a substitute for situating the argument and terminology in context (Dis, 8: 223). Just preceding this rebuke to

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<sup>107</sup> My citation is to the Guyer-Wood translation, but, as far as I can tell, there is no significant alteration to Longuenesse’s (1998: 218-219).

<sup>108</sup> In fairness, as I understood him above, I do not think Allison would make this objection for he recognizes that both ‘form of intuition’ and ‘formal intuition’ are pure intuitions.

<sup>109</sup> See also the synthesis of reproduction, where Kant likewise affirms that without the transcendental function of the imagination we could not have the representations of space and time (A102). Allison correctly observes that apprehension and reproduction were separate in the A-Deduction, but in B- they have been merged together (2015a: 413-414, n.16).

Eberhard is Kant's helpful clarification that gives us the resources to understand the distinction that Kant is drawing in the note:

Only this first formal ground, e.g., of the possibility of an intuition of space, is innate, not the spatial representation itself. For impressions would always be required in order to determine the cognitive faculty to the representation of an object (which is always a specific act). Thus arises the formal *intuition* called space, as an originally acquired representation (the form of outer objects in general), the ground of which (as mere receptivity) is nevertheless innate, and whose acquisition long precedes the determinate *concepts* of things that are in accordance with this form; the acquisition of the latter is an *acquisitio derivativa*, in that it already presupposes universal transcendental concepts of the understanding, which likewise are acquired and not innate, though their *acquisito*, like that of space, is no less *originaria* and presupposes nothing innate except the subjective conditions of the spontaneity of thought (in conformity with the unity of apperception). (Dis, 8: 222-223)

The first formal ground (in Allison's analysis, the 'form of intuiting') corresponds to the 'form of intuition' from the note. It refers to nothing more than an innate disposition that allows the mind to be affected in such a way that it can have specifically *spatiotemporal* representations when it is prompted by outer and inner affection.<sup>110</sup> This is critical, for Kant explicitly identifies our *form of intuition* of empirical objects with our capacity for self-affection: 'the form of intuition, which since it does not represent anything except insofar as something is posited in the mind, can be nothing other than the way in which the mind is affected by its own activity' (B67-68).<sup>111</sup> By contrast, the 'formal intuition' corresponds to both the 'formal intuition' of the note and to the 'pure

<sup>110</sup> Longuenesse calls this a merely 'potential form' and explains the idea in connection with Kant's theory of epigenesis in biology (1998: 221-222; 2005: 26-29; CPJ, 5: 422-423). Allison (2012: 40) criticizes this strategy as do Onof and Schulting (2015: 31-32).

<sup>111</sup> See also R5934: 'space and time are the forms of combination in intuition and serve to apply the categories *in concreto*' (18: 393). As I understand it, Kant is here claiming that space and time themselves, qua forms of intuition, are the *forms of combination*. Put bluntly: our form of intuiting *objects just is* the synthesis of manifolds in space and time. See also the Axioms: 'The synthesis of spaces and times, as the essential form of all intuition, is that which at the same time makes possible the apprehension of the appearance' (A165/B206; my emphasis). Note again, how Kant refers to space and time in the plural, strongly suggesting that the apprehension (perception) of objects already entails the representation of spaces and times, rather than the latter being something that occurs subsequent to being perceptually presented with objects. Nonetheless, space and time, qua forms of intuiting independently of the understanding, may contain some minimal content. See note 97 above.

intuition' of the Aesthetic.<sup>112</sup> This passage also includes proof that the *synthesized* representation of space is what provides the *form* of outer objects.<sup>113</sup> In Allison's analysis it is the 'form of the intuited' that provides the form of empirical objects (as I understand him), and the 'formal intuition' is the determinate representation of the 'form of the intuited'. But the passage shows that it is formal intuitions that provide the form of empirical objects. I therefore agree with Longuenesse that space and time, *as the forms of empirical objects* in apprehension, are products of the figurative synthesis but this is as far as I follow her interpretation. I do not agree with her second claim that figurative synthesis is independent of the categories.

Longuenesse argues that the figurative synthesis occurs before the categories are generated (as *concepts*). She highlights how the unity of sensibility is said to 'precede all concepts' though 'it presupposes a synthesis' and that the 'unity of this *a priori* intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding' (B161n). Furthermore, it follows from her characterization of the understanding as 'the capacity to judge' that an application of the understanding does not necessarily entail an application of concepts (1998: 224). Here I generally agree with Allison's criticisms (2012: 41-42).

First, since the Aesthetic is before the introduction of pure concepts, the 'concepts' which are said to be subsequent to the unity of space and time are clearly the concepts *of* space and time, not the categories; a claim that is confirmed by Kant's reference to the concepts of space and time at the end of the sentence in which the locution occurs. Second, like Allison, I am puzzled about how a *capacity* can be said to affect anything. Presumably, Longuenesse means the exercising of the capacity, but since this capacity consists of judging, and judging requires concepts to combine in judgement, then figurative synthesis cannot be an exercise of this capacity to judge since it precedes *all* concepts. Third, when Kant attributes unity to space and time, I

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<sup>112</sup> However, the claims in the Aesthetic and in this passage are not fully consistent, for in the Aesthetic Kant claims that the form of sensibility occurs *a priori* in the mind in terms of consisting of extension (space) and form (presumably, time), whereas here he claims that the spatial representation is acquired only with the occurrence of impressions. I take it that in the Aesthetic Kant means that the *possibility* of space (as innate disposition) is what occurs *a priori* but that the spatial representation *as the form of empirical objects* is acquired only with the occurrence of outer affection. In short, the pure intuition is the spatial representation, but the form that occurs *a priori* without outer affection is just the innate capacity to receive a manifold spatially. Once again, the preliminary nature of this passage in the Aesthetic, along with the abstractionist nature of the Aesthetic itself, precludes Kant from properly distinguishing the innate capacity and the actual spatial representation.

<sup>113</sup> Kant also affirms this just before the passage, saying that the originally acquired representations are the form of *things* in space and time (Dis, 8: 221).

take him to be referring to their unity *qua* intuitions. That is, to the fact that spaces and times are intuited as being *in* them, not *under* them, as would be the case if they were concepts, which is a consequence of there being only a single space and a single time. This is what Kant means by denying that the unity belongs to a concept of the understanding in the final sentence. Fourth, if the interpretation of the first step of the Deduction that I provided above is correct, then it follows that the categories are *necessarily* involved (in some sense) in figurative synthesis. The intellectual synthesis is the combination of a manifold of intuition under the unity of apperception. The functions of judgement combine representations together under one consciousness, and the categories *just are* these functions insofar as the manifold is determined with respect to them, issuing in an objective unity (representation of an object).<sup>114</sup> Unlike Longuenesse, who takes the intellectual synthesis to be the (teleologically guided) aim of the figurative synthesis,<sup>115</sup> I take it to be referring to the same underlying act of spontaneity, but now conceived with reference to the spatiotemporal nature of *our* sensible intuition, which means that bringing a manifold of our sensible intuition to apperception entails unifying that spatiotemporal manifold into a formal intuition. By downplaying the categories, I think Longuenesse's account risks leaving a gap in the deduction. This gap can be illustrated by examining her account of the argument:

- (1) Every synthesis of apprehension presupposes the forms of space and time;
  - (2) now, *these forms, being themselves unified intuitions, are under the transcendental unity of apperception, which is the source of the categories*; (3) therefore, every synthesis of apprehension, by the mere fact that it presupposes the forms of space and time, is capable of being thought under the categories.
- (Longuenesse 1998: 214; her emphasis)

Longuenesse argues that because space and time are under the unity of apperception (as unified intuitions) and the unity of apperception is the source of the categories, then space and time and the synthesis of apprehension, are also ‘capable of being thought under the categories’, but this does not follow. Assuming transitivity, it follows that any

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<sup>114</sup> Kant illustrates this nicely in his response to Eberhard (Dis, 8: 223).

<sup>115</sup> Longuenesse denies the involvement of the categories in figurative synthesis at least partially because she sees the logical functions as having an objectifying role as forms of reflection (1998: 12). I concur with Allison that allowing the logical forms to usurp the role traditionally thought to be held by the categories makes it very difficult to make sense of the first step of the Deduction, especially the argument of §20 (2012: 30-36).

synthesis of apprehension must be capable of being brought under the unity of apperception, but it does not follow that just because the unity of apperception is the source of the categories, as well as of the formal intuitions of space and time, that the conformity of appearances to the categories is guaranteed. This is because Longuenesse *separates* the unity of apperception (as the faculty of understanding) from the categories, by taking the former to be the capacity to judge. While the categories may have *their source* in the unity of apperception they are not involved in the production of space and time as unified (formal) intuitions on Longuenesse's account, and thus the necessary application of them to empirical intuitions is not demonstrated. It is the *logical functions* of judgement that combine representations under apperception on Longuenesse's account, if I understand her correctly, but while these are admittedly also the categories (when the manifold is made determinate with respect to the functions), it is still possible that appearances, while apprehendable, could be such that the categories *as concepts* fail to hold of them: that is, intuitions could be given that cannot be *subsumed* under the categories in (judgements of) experience.<sup>116</sup> In short, the transcendental spectre remains because, despite what has been shown, appearances could *still* be given in intuition without the categories applying to them. If, however, the categories were necessary in some way for figurative synthesis then it *would* follow that they necessarily apply to any represented empirical objects since the synthesis of apprehension is this figurative synthesis in its empirical dimension.<sup>117</sup> The argument from apprehension to apperception would be complete. I will now attempt to spell out how I think such an account should go.

On my interpretation the synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) and the figurative synthesis (which is a priori) are really one and the same.<sup>118</sup> What distinguishes them is that the former is the transcendental synthesis of the imagination in relation to affection from outer things, yielding the representation of empirical objects in apprehension, while the latter is the synthesis of the imagination independently of outer affection, which produces figures in a priori intuition. The synthesis of imagination yields a priori the form of empirical objects. In the Postulates of Empirical Thinking Kant states 'that this very same formative synthesis by means of

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<sup>116</sup> Allison (2012: 30-36) raises a similar worry.

<sup>117</sup> Criticism of Longuenesse's position reflects different concerns. Both I and Allison (2012) object against Longuenesse that she leaves too little of a role for the categories; by contrast, Onof and Schulting (2015: 31-32, n.40) object that giving the categories a 'pre-discursive' role, is 'one of the most problematic aspects' of her account. Both I and Allison regard it as one of the most favourable aspects.

<sup>118</sup> Allison (2015a: 420) also takes them to be functions of a single combinatory act.

which we construct a figure in the imagination is entirely identical with that which we exercise in the apprehension of an appearance' (A224/B271).<sup>119</sup> Both the synthesis of apprehension and figurative synthesis, then, can be regarded as two sides of the same coin: viz., the synthesis of imagination. Now, I want to suggest that Longuenesse is right that space and time, as single and infinite, are products of the imagination, but equally, I emphasize that these products are nothing to us, and thus cannot function as the *forms of objects* or as themselves objects ('as is really required in geometry'), without the categories supplying synthetic unity to the manifold of intuition; it is this second point that Longuenesse denies.

Kant's texts on this issue are notoriously unclear, as we have just seen. I think the main problem is that, for whatever reason, Kant fails to properly distinguish between what *underlies* figurative synthesis/apprehension and this synthesis itself. Sometimes he refers to figurative synthesis as underlying the possibility of appearances being given in space and time at all, which supports Longuenesse's account. For instance, Kant states that the very possibility of appearances presupposes 'a formal intuition (of space and time) as given' (A268/B324). At other times he characterizes the synthesis as the conceptual determination or limitation of a manifold of intuition, which basically concurs with Allison's account. However, we still need to ask: in what way does the very possibility of appearances presuppose formal intuitions of space and time as already given? I think Longuenesse's account answers this question.

What the possibility of appearances in terms of intuition presupposes is twofold. First, they presuppose a form for their matter – that form is clearly space and time and this is what allows them to be ordered in the first place (A20-22/B34-36). This form corresponds to the 'forms of intuition' from the note and the 'first formal ground of sensibility' from *On a Discovery*. Second, they presuppose space and time themselves as given intuitions, as the *projected* background conditions of the perception of empirical objects and so I think Longuenesse is right to maintain that it is 'quite reasonable to maintain that the unity, unicity (there is only one space and one time), and infinity of time and space – all features attributed to them as pure intuitions, in the Transcendental Aesthetic – are features we imagine or anticipate and thus project as preconditions of the unity of experience' (2005: 34).<sup>120</sup> However, on both accounts the

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<sup>119</sup> The context makes clear that 'formative synthesis' is another term for figurative synthesis.

<sup>120</sup> The projection of one space and one time through the imagination is the key role of the figurative synthesis on her account (2005: 34-36).

role of the imagination is emphasized. Allison (2012, 48) takes it to be necessary for representing the internal unity of space and time, while Longuenesse (2005, 47-48, 77) takes it to be responsible for the existence of that unity, but both appeal to it for the same overarching reason: the imagination is responsible for representing all spaces, times and appearances in *one space* and *one time*, for we only intuit the present time or the given space. The imagination, however, intuitively represents what is *not* present in intuition, and yet at the same time, it determines sensibility and is not itself determinable (§24). So conceived the imagination *fills in* the gaps either side of what is immediately presented to consciousness making Kant's 'pure intuition' a curious mixture of *immediacy* and *mediacy*. It is immediate insofar as it relates directly to its 'object', but it is mediate insofar as any given space or time is represented at all only insofar as it is represented as a part of a single, all-inclusive (infinite), space or time.<sup>121</sup> The projection of space and time as pure intuitions underlies both the construction of figures in a priori intuition (figurative synthesis in a strict sense) and the apprehension of empirical particulars (synthesis of apprehension). However, this projection of space and time as pure intuitions is figurative synthesis in the broad sense, and both are required for actual cognition insofar as figurative synthesis in the strict sense is identical with the synthesis of apprehension.<sup>122</sup> These are the 'formal intuitions' from *On a Discovery* and the note.

Longuenesse is therefore right that sensibility is determined by the figurative synthesis, insofar as the forms of sensibility are guided towards just those features that are necessary for intuitions to conform to the unity of apperception: namely, a *single* space, where all determinate spaces are limitations of the whole and a *single* time, where all determinate times are limitations of the whole.<sup>123</sup> But Allison is right that

<sup>121</sup> As such, this is a phenomenological claim about the structure of our experience, rather than the (seemingly false) claim that what we intuit *is* an infinite space and time. Melnick expresses this point particularly well when he suggests that Kant's controversial claim that space is intuited as 'an infinite given magnitude' is perhaps best understood as the notion that we perceive any given space (or time) under the 'pre-conception' or '*pre-intuition*' that it is part of a single space (or time) (1973: 11). Gardner makes a similar point, characterizing the pure intuitions of space and time as 'unperceived backgrounds implicated in all empirical intuition by virtue of its form' (1999: 85).

<sup>122</sup> Kant outright states that perception (synthesis of apprehension) contains more than just space and time as formal intuitions (B207), entailing that perception does *at least involve* formal intuitions. See also B202-203.

<sup>123</sup> This act of the imagination is co-extensive with, and not ontologically prior to, the effort of the mind to synthesize impressions as manifolds. For without external affection there would be nothing to stimulate the mind to originally acquire the formal intuitions. In other words, the projection of the unicity of *specifically* space and time is *logically* prior to empirical syntheses of apprehension (as having its innate ground in the cognitive subject, viz., 'forms of intuition' from the note/'first formal ground of sensibility' from *Discovery*), but in fact the empirical and a priori syntheses are two sides of one combinatory act.

apperception is constrained by sensibility, for the manifold that is given to it is spatiotemporal independently of its activities, so its intellectual synthesis is restricted to spatiotemporal form as the figurative synthesis for us humans. Apperception and sensibility mutually constrain and realize each other, revealing a deep unity at the heart of the Kantian system. Nonetheless, as we saw in step 1, this (projected) unity, even though originating with the subject, still has to be *taken as* a (synthetic) unity by the subject, and this presupposes synthesis and therefore the categories. This is the synthesis of apprehension, to which we must again turn our attention.

The synthesis of apprehension, as the name implies, concerns our apprehension of appearances as objects in space and time. Because the categories are at work in figurative synthesis we would expect to see the categories at work in the synthesis of apprehension as well. Immediately after establishing the conclusion of §26, Kant illustrates the necessity of the categories for apprehension in two examples, one to illustrate the category of quantity in relation to space and the other to illustrate the category of causality in relation to time. Here is the first example, along with the attached note that I take to confirm my reading:

Thus if, e.g., I make the empirical intuition of a house into perception through apprehension of its manifold, my ground is the **necessary unity** of space and of outer sensible intuition in general, and I as it were draw its shape in agreement with this synthetic unity of the manifold in space. This very same synthetic unity, however, if I abstract from the form of space, has its seat in the understanding, and is the category of the synthesis of the homogeneous in an intuition in general, i.e., the category of **quantity**, with which that synthesis of apprehension, i.e., the perception, must therefore be in thoroughgoing agreement.\* (B162)

\* In such a way it is proved that the synthesis of apprehension, which is empirical, must necessarily be in agreement with the synthesis of apperception, which is intellectual and contained in the category entirely *a priori*. It is one and

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The imagination projects the singularity of *one space* and *one time* as the form of our sensible intuition, but any synthesis of our sensible intuition under apperception must take the form of time, but equally, any temporal synthesis must take place within the backdrop of the unity (singularity) required by apperception.

the same spontaneity that, there under the name of imagination and here under the name of understanding, brings combination into the manifold of intuition.  
(B162n)

It should also be noted that Longuenesse cites the two examples as well, but she takes them to show not that the categories are required for synthesis but that the synthesis *conforms to them* in virtue of both the categories and the act of synthesis originating with the capacity to judge. However, crucially, Longuenesse does not cite the whole passage for either example, omitting the lines that contradict her reading. Specifically, in the case of quantity, Kant states ‘that this very same synthetic unity [...] is the category of the synthesis of the homogenous in an intuition in general’, and again, for time, ‘this synthetic unity’ abstracting from time as the form of inner sense ‘is the category of cause’ (B163). In both cases, the synthetic unity in question is explicitly identified with the relevant concept: the category is *both* the source of the ‘pure synthetic unity of the manifold’ (A128/B177) when it is guiding the synthesis of apprehension and it is the representation of synthetic unity ‘**generally represented**’ through a concept (A78-79/B103-104). Turning to the attached footnote we can see that Kant unequivocally equates the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of understanding as being the same act of spontaneity taken under two descriptions. Combine this result with the previous identification between figurative synthesis and apprehension (as the a priori and empirical sides of one action) and we arrive at the conclusion that all of the different syntheses explicated in the Deduction are aspects of one underlying activity, which at bottom involves the categories as the means for combining representations under apperception, as constitutive of the relation of representations to an object (in the ‘thin’ sense). But with their connection to the forms of intuition, the categories are also established as necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for representing objects *of experience*.<sup>124</sup> For if the argument as I understand it goes through, then it follows that in order for something to be represented as an object to us, this tentative ‘object’ must be given to us in empirical intuition; it must *become* an object of the senses. Empirical intuition, however, presupposes pure intuition as its form, but pure intuition can only be intuited or given to consciousness *as* intuition if its

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<sup>124</sup> Allison agrees that the second step involves a stronger conception of an ‘object’ and that the synthetic unity of apperception is only a necessary condition of this conception, whereas it is necessary and sufficient for the weaker conception (2015a: 379-380).

manifold can be brought to apperception. It must be subject to a synthesis that combines the manifold and represents it *as* a manifold.<sup>125</sup> Since empirical intuition only represents objects insofar as it has the pure intuitions as its form, and the latter represent something only insofar as they are subject to synthesis in accord with the unity of apperception, then it follows that any empirical intuition (and hence, any possible ‘object’) must be in accordance with the unity of apperception and the categories.

If Kant’s argument succeeds he has shown that the categories are formal conditions of experience by demonstrating (1), that they are the necessary conditions of representing a manifold *as* an object (in general), which is a necessary condition of representing any particular objects, and (2), that *insofar as we perceive or apprehend* a manifold, or better, insofar as an object is *perceivable*, it follows that the manifold of intuition can, in principle, be thought and combined through the categories under the unity of apperception. In short, the objective validity of the categories as conditions of experience has been established. At this stage, a few comments are in order before we proceed to examine how Kant can move from the categories being conditions of bringing a manifold to the unity of apperception to the categories, at least the relational ones, holding as conditions of the *objects themselves*. Specifically, more needs to be said about the role of the categories as conditions of perception, for recent scholarship implies that the categories cannot be conditions of perception for Kant.

Recently, there has been renewed interest in Kant’s theory of cognition considered as an anticipation of both conceptualist and non-conceptualist theories of perception. Although I do not intend to enter into the complex question of whether Kant

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<sup>125</sup> See the note appended to §21: ‘The ground of proof [that the synthesis of manifold in an intuition that is mine takes place by the category] rests on the represented **unity of intuition** through which an object is given, which always includes a synthesis of the manifold that is given for an intuition, and already contains the relation of the latter to unity of apperception’ (B144n). Admittedly, the claim once again is ambiguous between meaning that the *unity of intuition* is that through which an object is given, and meaning that it is the *representation* of this unity that gives an object. If it is the former then it straightforwardly follows that appearances, in virtue of being apprehended, stand under the categories because apprehension presupposes synthesis, a taking together of a manifold *as* a manifold by representing it as determined by the logical functions. Insofar as a manifold is *determined* by these logical functions the functions operate as categories (§20). If it is the latter, I believe the same result follows, but indirectly, since here the categories must operate as full-fledged concepts (for use as predicates in judgements of experience) for (pre-discursive) unity of intuition to be *represented* (discursively) and thus for objects to be given. In either case, though, insofar as something is apprehended the intuition possesses unity (unity of a manifold *in* an intuition) and ‘already contains the relation of the latter to unity of apperception’ (B144n). Once again, the argument of §26, as stated in §21, turns on showing that the unity of empirical intuition (i.e., an apprehended manifold of intuition) is ‘none other than the one the category prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general according to the preceding § 20’ (B144-145).

can justifiably be termed the spiritual father of either approach,<sup>126</sup> I want to situate my account in relation to arguments made by recent philosophers. For example, it has been forcefully argued by Allais (2009; 2011; 2015: Ch. 7) and Hanna (2005; 2007) that Kant's conception of intuition commits him to some version of non-conceptualism. Allais maintains that the role of intuition on Kant's account is to present objects to consciousness, and, in line with her relational model of perception, she maintains that what distinguishes intuition from sensation for Kant is that the former but not the latter has a cognitive, epistemic dimension to it (2007; 2015). Intuitions involve the direct presence of objects to consciousness; they are singular and immediate representations that relate to objects immediately (A320/B377, A68/B93; JL, 9: 91). Further, Allais argues that Kant's theory of mathematics and geometry commits him to genuine, fundamental, non-conceptual content in the form of the a priori intuitions of space and time. Indeed, Kant even argues that there is some content that is irreducible to conceptual description, namely his account of space in relation to the phenomenon of incongruent counterparts (DS, 2: 281-3; Pro, 4: 286). This is all correct. What I dispute is Allais' further claim that that this non-conceptual content is sufficient for perception, that is, for the presentation of particulars to consciousness (2009: 384; 2015: Ch. 7 and 11).

If the account sketched above is correct as a reading of Kant, it follows that while content is given to the understanding through intuition, intuition is not yet perception (in Allais' sense) (B162). The reference of representations to an object does not come from the application of concepts. Concepts alone can never individuate an object, nor can they present an object to consciousness; that much is indisputable. But part of Kant's insight is that even if all of our representations (in a transcendentally realistic sense) were directly of things in themselves, this *still* would not account for the possibility of representing an object. Even if nature was a completely unified whole, subject to necessary and systematic laws, the human mind would still have to represent this unity to itself, that is, take it *as* a synthetic unity.<sup>127</sup> As Allais herself makes clear, the relation of representations to an object cannot itself be a further representation because then an infinite regress looms (2011: 104-105); rather, the relation of representations to an object consists in thinking of these representations as necessarily

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<sup>126</sup> Hanna claims that non-conceptualists have failed to acknowledge their debt to Kant for he is the hidden origin of both positions (2005: 251).

<sup>127</sup> For compelling accounts of the problem of representing reality to ourselves, see Gardner (1999: 33-37) and Altman (2008: 122-125).

belonging together with a kind of unity: the unity of judgement (§§17-19). It is uncontroversial that representations must be synthesized to be thought in a judgement: indeed, a judgement is already a synthesis of concepts (Longuenesse 2005, 100-101), but what is controversial is Kant's fundamental claim that the synthesis of concepts thought in a judgement requires synthesis of intuitions (for analysis into concepts) (*ibid*), which is the central claim of the 'leading thread': that the same function that unifies concepts in a judgement also unifies intuitions (A79/B105), in such a way that they can be subsumed under concepts. In other words, as Kant claims in §15, the mind can only analyse what it has already synthesized, and the a priori rules of this pure synthesis are the categories. If the account I offered here is correct then the categories are also operative in the very apprehension of an object, or the presentation (empirical consciousness) of something. Does this mean that Kant is a conceptualist, that objects can only be perceived if the subject has the relevant concepts to *describe* what it is that they see? No, it does not, at least not in the sense of strong conceptualism, i.e., that we cannot be presented with a particular without the *application* of concepts (Allais 2009, 386).<sup>128</sup>

Since the synthesis of apprehension is logically prior to forming judgements – at this stage there are not even any empirical concepts to combine – the categories cannot function here in their full-fledged, predicative function as discursive concepts by means of which intuitions can be subsumed under their schemata in judgements (of experience). Rather, they must function pre-discursively in guiding the mind's effort to grasp the apprehended manifold as something that can be thought *as* an object. Rather than specifying what shape an object has, or what magnitude it is, the manifold must first be minimally represented in terms of it *having* some (unspecified) shape, *having* some (unspecified) magnitude, etc.<sup>129</sup> Granted, Kant does claim that the only *use* of concepts is for judging by means of them (A68/B93), a claim that might be thought to be in tension with this pre-discursive, *perceptual* role, but I do not think so. Unlike forming judgements, the employment of the categories in perception is not something

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<sup>128</sup> Importantly, I am not advocating moderate conceptualism as a reading of Kant either. This is the idea that intuitions are singular and immediate representations of particulars – that their role is to *give* objects – but that in order for intuitions to *be* intuitions the application of concepts is required. Allais rejects both strong and moderate conceptualism (2015: 149).

<sup>129</sup> See Allison (2004: 195-196, 483, n.70; 2015a: 418-421) for further discussion of this role of the categories, which he terms their function as 'rules of apprehension', an expression he borrows from Longuenesse (1998: 116-118). Longuenesse (1998: *passim*) sees the categories as being operative at both ends of the cognitive spectrum, being predicates in judgement and rules for generating schemata by reflecting on the sensible given in accordance with the logical forms.

that we consciously do, for they are not operating *as* concepts, but as forms of thinking representations as having or representing an object (in general). This may be exactly why Kant claims that the synthesis of the imagination (responsible for apprehension) is indispensable for cognition but is also ‘blind’ (A78/B103), while also claiming that *all* synthesis is governed by the understanding (B130).<sup>130</sup> Insofar as we do not consciously employ the categories at this pre-discursive level, it is understandable that Kant would not include this role as a *use* of the categories; indeed, insofar as this role in apprehension is a necessary condition of there being any concepts to combine in judgements in the first place, we could even say that the pre-discursive role is still concerned (albeit indirectly) with the use of concepts to form judgements.<sup>131</sup> Given that the categories do not operate as full-fledged concepts in apprehension this should go some way to reconciling the insights of both conceptualist and non-conceptualist readers of Kant. Indeed, Allais even hints that there might be room for a pre-discursive role for concepts in perception as rules for synthesis, claiming that her concern ‘is with

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<sup>130</sup> Allais suggests that when Kant attributes all ‘combination’ to the understanding, he is attributing only one specific kind of synthesis to the understanding (2009: 396, n.35). This is unconvincing, not least because Kant amended his own copy to assign the imagination as a function of the understanding. Furthermore, the three syntheses of the ‘threefold synthesis’, or the figurative and intellectual syntheses, are really applications of the one and the same underlying combinatory act. Schulting criticizes Allais for failing to see that her attempt to separate synthesis from (pure) concepts misses the point of the ‘leading thread’ (2012: 246-247, n.8). Indeed, he is right that if synthesis as the combining of a manifold under apperception is removed from the categories the entire chain of argument, from the ‘leading thread’ through to §20, falls apart. One might even say that synthesis just is the pure concepts, or better, the logical functions, being applied to different levels of cognition. To be sure, not every connection in consciousness requires synthesis. This is exactly the point of Kant’s (admittedly not very clear) §19 where he distinguishes between an objective unity of consciousness (judgement) and a subjective unity (empirical association), but those subjective associations themselves presuppose a priori synthetic unity as their necessary condition. I discussed §19 in Section 2. Allais could counter that A78 seems to distinguish between synthesis (as such) and bringing synthesis to concepts, but if Kant does take the understanding (apperception) and imagination (apprehension) to be the same act as he claims in §26 then I would suggest that the distinction be read as a preliminary or merely functional one. At any rate, it is clear that *pure synthesis* is inseparable from the categories.

<sup>131</sup> It is important not to misunderstand this point. In saying that the categories are *a priori* rules of synthesis that are presupposed for combining concepts in judgements, Kant is *not* claiming that each pure concept is presupposed for exercising judgement under the correlated logical form. He is not, for instance, saying that judging under the hypothetical form presupposes the full-blown concept of causality or that making a categorical judgement presupposes the full-blown conception of substance, *pace* Guyer (1987: 98-99), Bennett (1966: 92) and Strawson (1966: 81-82). Rather, the point is that judging under a certain form presupposes a certain way of thinking the connection between representations – the logical functions of judgement as forms of conceptualizing – and that when what is to be combined is a manifold of sensible intuition the logical functions become categories. To think of an event or appearance as, *in itself*, determined with respect to the categorical form of judgement the subject is taken as if it were a substance in the context of the judgement: e.g., Socrates is mortal. As Allison puts it, the corresponding category is generated through the logical function as a ‘hypostatization or projection onto an object’ (2004: 149). There are not two sets of concepts (functions and categories) where one presupposes the other but rather one set that functions in two ways (as logical functions for synthesis of concepts and as categories for synthesis of manifolds of sensible intuition) See Longuenesse (1998: 78) and Allison (2004: 149-156; 2015a: 178-180).

whether, according to Kant, having and applying concepts *understood as general rules which are essentially constituents of judgments* is necessary for perception of particulars' (2009: 389).<sup>132</sup> Given that she at least leaves open the possibility that one could also plausibly characterize concepts for Kant as rules for synthesis it is surprising that she completely rejects the thought that synthesis requires concepts, for as I understand her, I am not sure that the account I have offered of the role of the categories as rules for apprehension is incompatible with emphasizing the irreducible role of intuition in perception as the representation that relates immediately to an object. That claim can hold *even if* the categories – as rules of synthesis – are necessary for representing or giving the content of intuition to consciousness, as I have argued.<sup>133</sup>

In short, I am claiming that a cognitive subject, on Kant's account, *does* require the pure concepts (at least the mathematical ones) in their *pre-discursive form* in order to be presented with a particular in consciousness: for  $x$  to see  $F$ ,  $x$  must be able to represent  $F$  as occupying space and time, even if  $x$  does not *consciously* determine  $F$  as being  $F$  (or not  $F$ ). Seeing  $F$  as being  $F$  undoubtedly requires judgement and, here again, the categories are necessary conditions of the *thought* of an object in general. But while closely related, this is separate to the perceptual role of the categories as rules of apprehension, guiding the mind's effort to unify the sensible data in such a way that will enable the eventual subsumption of intuitions under the categories in their full-fledged *predicative* function. Empirical concepts are not required to see  $F$ , though they are necessary for representing  $F$  as  $F$ , but pure concepts, operating as rules for perceptual synthesis, are necessary for consciousness to be presented with an  $F$ .<sup>134</sup> If this were not the case, and intuition alone was enough to present particulars to consciousness, then the deduction would fail because then there would be no way for non-empirical concepts to apply to objects.<sup>135</sup> As we will see in Chapter 3, without a necessary

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<sup>132</sup> See also Allais (2015: 173-174).

<sup>133</sup> Walsh helpfully characterizes intuition as ‘proleptically’ an awareness or presentation of particulars to consciousness (1975: 14-15). Earlier I denied that intuition requires the categories to be intuition, which may appear to contradict my account of apprehension. The point is that intuition is that in our representation that relates immediately to an object, but that for the object to be *perceived* awareness ('empirical consciousness') of the intuition must be generated through apprehension.

<sup>134</sup> On this point, see Kant's example of a savage perceiving a house in the *Jäsche Logic*. Kant argues that without concepts the savage could still see the object (the house), but not conceive of it as a dwelling fit for human habitation, etc., because he lacks the concept of a house (JL, 9: 33). This example is frequently cited by non-conceptualists (Allais 2009, 388; Hanna, 2005, 262) to support their account, but I take it as obvious that Kant is referring to *empirical* concepts (specifically, that of a house) in the example.

<sup>135</sup> Similarly, see Gardner (1999: 140, 162) who claims that the categories must enter into intuition in order for there to be objects of intuition for us. Though Gardner does not appear to distinguish between the perceptual and discursive roles of the categories, I suggest that it is the perceptual role that must enter

connection to the synthesis of apprehension the categories would be only subjectively necessary, showing at most that we must think in certain ways in order to represent things as objects, but not that things actually are that way (B167-168). We shall return to the role of the categories in apprehension in Chapter 2.

As a final point, one might object that the ‘perception’ and ‘apprehension’ that Kant refers to in §26 are not the same as being presented with particulars, or that we cannot rest a resolution of this dispute on passages where Kant talks about perception, because he uses both ‘*Wahrnehmung*’ and ‘*Perzeption*’ for ‘perception’; in addition, it is not clear whether he uses the two systematically in a technical sense (Allais 2015, 151, 154, n.18). Allais argues that by perception, Kant means not the presentation of particulars to consciousness but rather having a certain state of awareness of what one is seeing: ‘In this sense, when I see a house but am not aware of the individual bricks as parts of the house, I do not *perceive* the bricks, even though I am *seeing* them’ (2015: 151). This is not something we can fully investigate here, but I would point out that Kant writes: ‘that by the **synthesis of apprehension** I understand the composition of the manifold in an empirical intuition, through which perception, i.e., empirical consciousness of it (as appearance), becomes possible’ (B160) and ‘Consequently all synthesis, through which *even perception itself* becomes possible [...]’ (B161; my emphasis). Granted, this is a delicate point, but by saying that ‘even perception itself’ becomes possible Kant does not seem to be invoking a special technical sense of perception as meaning a particular state of awareness (the representation of distinct things *as* consisting of complex parts), but rather consciousness of intuitions, consciousness that *something* is being presented to consciousness. My reading makes sense of why Kant says ‘even perception’, for this suggests that he is making a surprising point, whereas the idea that the representation of something *as* consisting of *complex* parts requires concepts is far less surprising.<sup>136</sup>

To support her interpretation of Kant, Allais cites A120 and B160 as evidence. I do not find her evidence compelling. When Kant talks about perception at B160, it is to contrast it with ‘experience’, as cognition through a rule-governed connection of perceptions. In this context, I am unclear on why Allais takes this to be referring to a specific mode of awareness of an object (a house perceived as consisting of bricks),

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into intuition; the discursive role is too strong, and the Kantian non-conceptualists are right to reject this on exegetical grounds.

<sup>136</sup> See further note 148 below.

when Kant's example of the apprehension of a house is explicitly concerned with taking the empirical intuition to represent a *shape* (drawing its shape in space through synthetic unity). Similarly, at A120, Kant is talking about what must be done to a manifold of intuition in order to yield the image (singular representation) of an object, which concerns how *we must take* the manifold as a synthetic unity.<sup>137</sup> I agree with Allais that by 'manifold of intuition' or 'empirical intuition', Kant does not mean a 'sensory mush', but it does not follow from this that intuitions entirely *by themselves* present particulars *to consciousness*. Allais argues that any conceptualist account (of any form) cannot do justice to Kant's argument in the Deduction. She gives many reasons for this and I cannot engage with them here.<sup>138</sup> One point I will make, however, concerns her account of §26. Allais is dismissive of §26, and argues that what Kant says there 'cannot be taken to drive the interpretation' (2015: 174-175).<sup>139</sup> I fundamentally disagree. First, what Kant says there should be afforded the most weight of all because the section represents the outcome of the second step of the Deduction, which is his attempt to exorcize the transcendental spectre. Second, and more importantly, Kant even titles this section the 'Transcendental deduction', indicating that this short, notoriously dense section contains the actual deduction of the categories, or at least the final stage of the deduction. Third, this section represents Kant's only effort in the Deduction itself to illustrate the legitimacy of particular categories: quantity and causality. Allais argues that §26 cannot overrule Kant's opening of the Deduction (A89-90/B122-123), where he states that appearances can be given in intuition without the categories, on the grounds that B160n-161n is 'an unclear and controversial footnote' (*ibid*), but this works both ways. Kant's opening is neither clear nor uncontroversial; indeed, as we saw, it has been taken as evidence for the 'patchwork' theory of the Deduction, and it has also been taken to be the statement of a starting position that Kant ultimately means to reject. The passage is compatible with both of these interpretations, even though I have agreed that Kant does not think that intuitions require the categories to be

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<sup>137</sup> I assume that Allais would disagree with this, since on her account the synthesis of apprehension is about turning representations of particulars into representations of unified complex parts; without the synthesis we are still presented with a distinct thing, but cannot represent it as a unified complex of parts (2015: 165, 274).

<sup>138</sup> I intend to write a paper in the near future arguing that Kant is neither a conceptualist nor a non-conceptualist about perception, but loosely a 'proto-conceptualist' where I will engage fully with the arguments for and against these different readings of Kant on the role of concepts in perception.

<sup>139</sup> Allais is referring specifically to the footnote (B160n-161n) that I have discussed at length, but since she does not, as far as I am aware, anywhere discuss the argument of §26 as a whole, including the two examples of categorial synthesis that Kant supplies, I take her to be effectively dismissing the overall significance of this section.

intuitions. Since the controversial footnote occurs in the conclusion of the Deduction, this is *exactly* where we would expect Kant to reject his earlier claims if that is his intention. At any rate, whatever the merits of the non-conceptualist account – and they are considerable, for there is genuine evidence for both sides – its supporters owe their opponents a compelling account of why Kant does claim that the categories are conditions of perception if this is not his true position, as he explicitly and unambiguously does in §26.<sup>140</sup>

### Conclusion: ‘Original Orderability’

If Kant’s arguments go through, by the close of the B-Deduction he has demonstrated that pure concepts are necessary for representing an object insofar as the relation of representations to an object cannot itself be a representation, or derived empirically, for this would presuppose just what is to be explained. As such, if Kant’s identification of the pure concepts with those in his table of categories is correct, then he has shown that these concepts have objective validity insofar as they are subjective conditions of the *thought* of an object in general. But this leaves open the possibility that there could be appearances in intuition that are not subject to our forms of thought. Kant still needs to show that appearances are originally orderable. The second step of the Deduction demonstrates that they are. It does so by showing that in order for things to be given in empirical intuition they must be given in accordance with the forms of intuition (space and time). Since these forms of intuition do not *represent* anything to *consciousness* without synthetic unity they must themselves, as the forms of empirically intuited objects, be subject to an a priori synthesis, termed the figurative synthesis of the imagination. The categories are the means by which a manifold (pure or empirical) is brought to the unity of apperception and thus issues in the representation of something *as* an object. It therefore follows that insofar as something is perceivable in empirical intuition, it is necessarily subjectable to the categories. Appearances cannot be given in intuition without also being combinable through the categories. The transcendental

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<sup>140</sup> On a further note, it is worth pointing out that just as my account of the categories does not sit easily with the letter of Kant’s account in the *Prolegomena*, the same is equally true of Allais’ account. Kant explains the ‘relation of representations to an object’ in the *Prolegomena* as concerning how we take our intuitions to be determined as universally valid; he does not explain the notion as something that involves how we must think an object in general in order to make *empirical* concept-application possible, which is Allais’ view (2015: Ch. 11). Indeed, it is clear from Kant’s examples of judgements of perception that they already involve the use of empirical concepts, such as those of heat, stone, air, etc.

spectre has been exorcized to the extent that, *if* something is given in empirical intuition *then* that something must be represented as an ‘object’ to consciousness and this requires pure concepts operating pre-discursively as rules of synthesis. As such, any *intuitable* manifold is originally orderable from the side of the conditions of thought, qua intuitible, not because concepts directly relate to objects, but because in order for the content of the intuition to be presentable to consciousness as perception, to be something for me, qua cognizer, it must conform to pure concepts operating pre-discursively.

Appearances are originally orderable because at bottom they are given to consciousness through one underlying cognitive act that has both a priori and empirical dimensions. Although I have argued in detail for a view that sits between the interpretative extremes of Longuenesse (figurative synthesis creates the forms of space and time) and Allison (figurative synthesis merely represents pre-given unities of space and time), what is essential to the current account that combines elements from both is that all empirical intuitions – and thus all possible objects of experience – fall under the categories, because it is only through the forms of intuition being represented as formal intuitions that space and time provide the form of empirical objects. But the representation of space and time as formal intuitions entails taking the manifold as a synthetic unity, which in turn presupposes the categories. On Kant’s account, if an appearance is presented to consciousness in perception then this appearance can be thought as an ‘object’ (in general) through the categories. However, there is much that Kant’s argument has not shown at this point.

Aside from two dense examples (quantity and causality), Kant has done nothing to show that his proposed table of categories is the correct one. A more serious problem, however, to be picked up in Chapter 2, is the fact that so far only the mathematical categories have been shown to play a role in the mere *perception* of an object. This is problematic because Kant’s argument in §26 jumps directly from the claim that the categories are conditions of perception to them therefore being conditions of experience (B160-161), but this means that only those categories that are necessary for perception have been established to be conditions of experience. Part of the problem here is that it seems as though *x* will be a necessary condition of the intuition of *y* if and only if *x* is aimed at the *intuition* of *y*. Thus, it is clearly the case that the mathematical categories do apply to things, qua perceived, for this is how Kant explains the role of these principles (A161-162/B199, B110). By contrast, the dynamical categories do not appear

to be aimed directly at intuition but rather at the relations between the *existences* of appearances, such that they are unifiable in one spatiotemporal order. Granted, Kant does not introduce this distinction (in a substantial way) until the Analytic of Principles, but if the dynamical categories do have a different role than the mathematical ones then, at the very best, the Deduction is incomplete.<sup>141</sup> There is the further problem of showing how just because empirical intuitions must have been synthesized through these concepts as rules of synthesis that it follows that they have objective reality. The exorcism of the spectre removes the in principle incompatibility of appearances and pure concepts, but it does not show that for any given case that we can necessarily apply our concepts to intuited manifolds. There is no guarantee that we will be able to do this *in practice* just because it is impossible *in principle* that the manifold will be incompatible with our forms of thought. There are two issues here. One, which I will not discuss further, concerns what Kant calls the ‘power of judgement’, namely our capacity to actually subsume intuitions under concepts as constituents of judgements. He thinks that it can be demonstrated not only that we can apply pure concepts to intuitions in judgements, but also that we *must* be able to do so (A135-136/B164-175). The second issue concerns what I have called the objective reality of the categories. It should be clear that showing that certain concepts are necessary as *formal* rules for synthesis, or even for subsuming intuitions under *empirical* concepts in judgements, does not show that these concepts actually accurately describe the objects to which they are applied. One response, to be discussed and rejected in Chapter 3, is to say that there is nothing more to these concepts being objectively real than their use as formal rules of judgement as subjective conditions of thought. The second response is to see if Kant has additional arguments available to him that can prove the objective reality of pure concepts. That is, that concepts such as substance and causality, apply to objects that are (or are grounded on) substances and that are causally efficacious. We will see in Chapter 2 that Kant demonstrates that appearances are originally orderable not just from the side of the conditions of thought, but also that they are *in themselves* determinable in accordance with the conditions of thought. We have seen that space and time, as the *forms* of objects, are generated through the figurative synthesis, suggesting that the

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<sup>141</sup> See Allison (2004: 197-201; 2015a: 423-424) for careful discussion of what Kant does and does not manage to establish with his argument that the categories are conditions of experience because they are conditions of perception. Allison revises this opinion in an important way in his latest work on the topic, but I will discuss this in Chapter 2.

transcendental ideality of space and time in part rests on the unity of apperception,<sup>142</sup> but it is not yet clear how this shows that the objects of experience themselves must conform to our conditions of cognition. To complete the proof of original orderability and showcase the connection between transcendental idealism and empirical realism, we must turn to the Analogies of Experience.

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<sup>142</sup> While I have focused on Longuenesse's account to explicate the idea that figurative synthesis is responsible for the pure intuitions of space and time, Gary Banham also argues that the idealism of sensibility is dependent on an idealism of apperception (2011: 109-125, esp. 122-124). However, like Longuenesse, he denies that categories play any role in the production of space and time as forms of the manifold.

## 2. ‘Original Orderability’: The Analogies of Experience

### Introduction

In this Chapter I will analyse the Analogies of Experience, following on directly from my analysis of the Transcendental Deduction. Briefly, I argued that Kant needs to show both the objective validity and the objective reality of the categories to provide the required proof of the legitimacy of the categories, or what amounts to the same thing, their empirical reality as necessarily applying to the objects of our possible experience. Kant’s strategy for legitimating the categories is to show that appearances are originally orderable by the understanding, that is, that appearances can be ordered by the mind through the application of the categories. I suggested that the Transcendental Deduction establishes the objective validity of the categories as necessary conditions for the representation of something as an object in a ‘thin’, intentional sense. I also suggested that Kant took a large step towards proving the objective reality of the categories by showing that the categories are necessarily connected to the objects of our perception, insofar as these objects are represented through the synthesis of apprehension. Insofar as apprehension presupposes space and time as forms of intuition, and the latter represent something only through the unity of intuition generated by being brought under the unity of apperception, it follows that any objects of apprehension conform to the categories in the sense that the categories are the means by which their representation in apprehension is possible. While this removes Kant’s dreaded spectre that appearances might be constituted in such a way that they can be presented to consciousness without being thinkable through the categories, it is still a far cry from showing that these rules of synthesis accurately characterize the objects to which they are applied, viz., their objective reality. In the present Chapter we will examine Kant’s attempt to prove the objective reality of the (relational) categories in the Analogies of Experience. The Chapter is divided into three Sections.

In Section 1 I discuss further the complicated relationship between the Transcendental Deduction and the Analogies of Experience. Specifically, I address whether the latter makes the former redundant and whether Kant, in a sense, rewinds or restarts the argument in the Analogies, as if the Transcendental Deduction had not just preceded it. This is not a side issue, for it concerns what Kant thinks he has already

shown in the Deduction and what work remains to be done. I think it is easy to overstate what the Deduction is supposed to achieve and that both arguments are required to legitimate the categories.<sup>143</sup> In addition, I begin to address the concern leftover from the previous Chapter that Kant has helped himself too quickly to the conclusion that the categories are conditions of experience because they are conditions of perception. I argue that Kant does not make a mistake in claiming that the concept of cause is necessary for the *perception* of objective succession in §26, as opposed to the *experience* of objective succession. This analysis leads into Section 2. In the rest of the Chapter, I argue that the Analogies of Experience contains a two-step argument where Kant moves from a phenomenological account of our perception of temporal relations to a metaphysical argument about the necessary conditions of our perception of temporal relations. Kant argues from the categories as conditions of the possibility of experience to the categories as conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience. In Section 2 I explore the first step, namely, Kant's phenomenological account of the perception of time and the temporal relations between objects. I argue that Kant's account is regressive: he begins with a purely empiricist account of perception, shows that this is inadequate to explain our ordinary everyday experience of objects, and then concludes that our ordinary experience must be guided by the relational categories. This account is essentially continuous with the analysis of perception in the Deduction, especially §26. If Kant stops with the Deduction he will have shown only that pure concepts are necessarily presupposed in our perception of objects, but not that they are conditions of the objects of experience, and demonstrating the latter requires the second step. In Section 3 I examine what more Kant says in the Analogies and in his pre-Critical work to ground the move from the necessary presupposition of the relational categories in perception to the proof of their objective reality. Here I draw on recent work by Eric Watkins (2005; 2010) to underscore the ontological side of Kant's thought. That is, the Analogies are not intended as purely epistemic principles, 'inference tickets', or merely the forms for thinking temporal relations; rather, they exhibit the necessary ontological structures that things must possess to conform to our forms of intuition in order to be objects of experience for us.

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<sup>143</sup> I focus on the relational categories, as I indicated in the Introduction to this thesis, but I would suggest that for any type of category, both the argument of the Deduction and its corresponding section in the Analytic of Principles is required to prove its legitimacy.

## 1. Restarting the Argument? The Place of the Analogies in the Transcendental Analytic

In this Section I want to discuss two issues that relate to the place of the Analogies of Experience in the overall critical system. The first issue concerns the relationship between the argument of §26 and the argument of the Analogies of Experience, for as we saw previously, there is a concern that Kant moves too quickly from claiming that the categories are conditions of apprehension to the conclusion that this proves that they are necessary conditions of the possibility of experience. The second issue concerns the role of the Transcendental Deduction vis-à-vis the Analogies of Experience more generally. The basic point is that if the Transcendental Deduction has answered the *quid juris* what further work remains to be done? Prima facie, the entire Analytic of Principles would appear to be redundant, but given the importance of the Principles, as well as the fact that Kant deploys very different arguments there to justify the categories, the opposite worry is generated: far from being redundant, the Analytic of Principles (especially the Analogies) is where Kant appears to do the heavy-lifting, making the Deduction either redundant or irrelevant. Let us begin with the tension between the role of the categories in perception and experience.

We saw in the previous Chapter that Kant's strategy for legitimating the categories as conditions of possible experience turns on a proof in two steps. The first step demonstrated that the categories are concepts of an object in general, and that they bring a manifold of intuition to the unity of apperception by determining the intuition with respect to the logical forms of judgement (§20), thus yielding the representation of an object, in a thin, intentional sense. This step shows that the categories are objectively valid. The second step demonstrates that the categories are necessary conditions of the perception of objects, because the synthesis of apprehension involves representing a manifold as a synthetic unity, and the categories are the source of synthetic unity. Space and time, as formal intuitions, represent a manifold and any perception of objects in space and time presupposes these formal intuitions. Representing a manifold of intuition as a manifold requires that the manifold be brought under the unity of apperception, which is the job of the categories. Consequently, the representation of empirical objects in perception stands under the categories (§26). Since experience is defined as

‘cognition through connected perceptions’, it follows that as necessary conditions of perception, the categories are also necessary conditions of experience (B160-161). Kant concluded the second step with two examples of the role of the categories in apprehension, but these examples are unclear at best. The worry was raised that if Kant’s argument focuses on the categories as conditions of experience *because* they are conditions of perception, then the lack of detailed explanation of the role of the categories in perception leaves a serious hole in his account. More specifically, there are two related concerns that have been raised.

The first is that in stressing their role in perception, Kant obscures the essential distinction between perception and experience. Only the mathematical categories/principles (quantity and quality) are employed in perception, but in moving to experience – cognition through a connection of perceptions – we transition to an additional level of synthesis, aimed at representing appearances as unified in a single time (and space) through the dynamical relations between the existences of appearances (A160-162/B199-202). The categories of relation (and modality) are required for this second level of synthesis, but they are not required for perception, or so runs the objection.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, claiming that perception is also structured by the categories directly contradicts Kant’s justification of the categories in the *Prolegomena*, where the categories are not required for judgements of perception, but only for turning these subjectively valid judgements into objectively valid judgements of experience (Pro, 4: 297-302, esp. §18).

The second objection extends from the first. Notwithstanding Kant’s apparent collapse of the distinction between mathematical and dynamical categories/principles, even if Kant’s argument in §26 works, Kant provides only *two* examples to substantiate the conclusion.<sup>145</sup> If so much argumentative weight is attributed to the second step, particularly the connection drawn between conditions of apprehension and conditions of experience drawn in §26, it is reasonable to expect him to have said more about the role

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<sup>144</sup> Allison raises this objection to §26 (2004: 197-201), and later objects that in the Analogies Kant is incorrect to call the analogies ‘rules of apprehension’, because their role is for thinking the subjective order of apprehension as objectively ordered (2004: 234).

<sup>145</sup> Kant complicates matters by including only one example for *quantity* which strictly speaking is the *title* of a group of categories, and one example of the categories of relation. While the reference to quantity independently of its three moments might be taken to anticipate the fact that the mathematical categories turn out to have only one principle serving for all three, rather than one principle for each category, Kant does nothing to explain the need for this difference here. He does not even acknowledge it. Thus, the discrepancy in his treatment of the two cases is a source of confusion.

of the individual categories in the constitution of *perception*, but he does not.<sup>146</sup> Prima facie, this objection ignores the detailed account given in the Analytic of Principles, where Kant does explain the distinction between the two kinds of principles (mathematical and dynamical), and provides arguments for all of the individual principles, but this account only serves to reinforce the suspicion that the argument of §26 is faulty: the Analytic of Principles explicitly emphasizes the *difference* between perception and experience, whereas the former emphasizes their similarity. In answer to both of these objections, I will maintain that it is not a mistake for Kant to speak of causality being a condition of apprehension on the grounds that the Analogies of Experience also contains an argument that the relational categories are necessary for apprehension, not just experience. In fact, it will be shown that the role of the relational categories in apprehension is necessary for grounding their distinct role in experience. Before moving directly to the text of the Analogies, however, it is worth noting that Allison himself in his most recent work has put forward a proposal for justifying the argument of §26.

As with his earlier account,<sup>147</sup> Allison believes Kant is entitled to conclude that the mathematical categories are necessary conditions of the possibility of experience because they are conditions of perception, for experience requires perception. But since experience involves more than perception – namely *cognition* through a rule-governed *connection* of perceptions – it is not clear that the argument of §26 has demonstrated that the categories are needed in this sense. The *Prolegomena* indicated that the move from perception to judgments of experience was the connection of representations in a universal consciousness and established that undertaking the conversion is the task of the relational categories (2015a: 423). Allison cites the example of causality and objects that what Kant describes as apprehension or perception of an event should be described as the *experience* of an event, and that as it stands this contradicts his ‘official account’ in the Second Analogy (2015a: 423-424). He further argues that this is not ‘quibbling’ because Kant also states that only the mathematical principles are unconditionally necessary, since they are conditions of the possible intuition of objects; the dynamical principles hold only in relation to the condition of empirical thinking (of objects) in experience, and so are only conditionally necessary (A160-161/B199-200). The relational categories are responsible for undertaking the conversion of perception into

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<sup>146</sup> Again, Allison’s account (*ibid*) exhibits this concern.

<sup>147</sup> See Allison (2004: 197-201).

experience (empirical cognition) through a connection of perceptions, but Kant has not yet argued for this. Indeed, as Allison points out, the second example, presumably provided to achieve the global proof of the dynamical categories, only obfuscates matters further by contradicting what Kant will go on to say about the dynamical categories. The dynamical categories are not aimed, unlike their mathematical counterparts, at the mere *intuition* of appearance but at the *experience* of appearances. While this is certainly true, Allison appears to overlook the possibility that the dynamical categories – at least the relational ones; the case is complicated with respect to the modal categories – are also necessary for apprehension as well as experience, while also playing a *distinct* role in making experience possible. While the mathematical categories are able to make their contribution to the possibility of experience just by merely making possible the apprehension of an appearance as a *quantum* (magnitude), perhaps the relational categories must fulfil two roles. Making apprehension possible is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition of their successful contribution towards the possibility of experience (as distinct from perception). In other words, to experience something as a determinate magnitude (*quantitas*) nothing more is required than an application of the categories of quantity through the axioms of intuition, but while it is necessary that to experience an event we must apprehend the manifold *as* an event, this is not enough to empirically cognize it as such.<sup>148</sup> I say more about this below.

Nonetheless, Allison extends his account and suggests that if we take seriously the idea that the B-Deduction consists of one proof in two steps, it is possible to supply the missing argument on the basis of what Kant has supposedly demonstrated in the first step of the proof, though it does take us beyond the explicit argument of §26 (2015a: 425-426). To perceive or cognize an object (in the ‘thin’, intentional sense) entails unifying perceptions (constituted as we have seen through the mathematical categories) within one consciousness, a task which belongs specifically to the dynamical (or at least the relational) categories. Allison formulates the missing step as follows:

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<sup>148</sup> A *quantum* is a whole perceived as a single entity, but such that it can be quantified determinatively. *Quantitas* is the quantitative determination of a *quantum*. For example, returning to Kant’s favourite example of a house once again, perceiving the house as an object in space means perceiving it as a quantum (§24). Cognizing determinate measurements of the house such as its width and height, etc., through successive application of a unit, say a metre (or a brick), is to determine it quantitatively, as a *quantitas*. See Longuenesse (1998: 263-271) for further discussion.

1. It follows from the first five steps [of §26] that all perceptions, as contents of an empirical consciousness, fall under the mathematical categories.
2. It follows from the principle of the synthetic unity of apperception that episodes of empirical consciousness that are not connected in a single self-consciousness would be nothing to me qua cognizer, i.e., I could not even be aware of them as jointly mine.
3. As was argued in the *Prolegomena* and will be shown in the Analytic of Principles, this connection is the work of the dynamical (or at least the relational) categories.
4. Therefore, all perception and all empirical consciousness must also fall under these as well as the mathematical categories. (Allison 2015a, 426)

This is an attractive argument, but there are problems. One problem is that it runs the risk of completing the argument of §26 by fiat.<sup>149</sup> This is because appealing to the first step of the Deduction cannot help here as the actual connection of the categories to objects of experience turns on their necessary connection with the synthesis of apprehension. This is, as we saw previously, how the exorcism of the transcendental spectre is achieved. Essential to completing the exorcism is showing that insofar as something is apprehended by consciousness then consciousness has been guided (pre-discursively) by the categories as ‘rules of apprehension’. This is what Kant’s examples must show, and indeed, he does make this claim on behalf of the relational categories, but this move is *rejected* by Allison – he denies that the relational categories are ‘rules of apprehension’ – so he cannot help himself to it now. I now want to turn to the second issue of this Section, that of the relationship between the Analogies of Experience and the Transcendental Deduction.

The basic issue is straightforward. Kant’s avowed task in the Deduction is to settle the question of the *quid juris* with respect to the categories. If the Deduction is taken to have settled this question, as Kant claims, then it is natural to ask what further work needs to be done. It is tempting to think that if the Deduction has succeeded then there is no further essential work to be done, other than at most explaining the arguments and implications of the Deduction in greater detail and clarity.<sup>150</sup> As has been

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<sup>149</sup> This is Allison’s initial criticism of Kant’s treatment of the dynamical categories in §26 (2015a: 423).

<sup>150</sup> Kant does give this impression in the opening of the Analytic of Principles, when he states that here he is concerned with explicating the synthetic a priori judgements that arise by applying the categories to

frequently pointed out, however, Kant does not write in the Analytic of Principles as if the Deduction has achieved the main task. Guyer goes so far as to claim that is as if Kant is restarting the argument of the deduction from scratch (1987: 178);<sup>151</sup> Bennett patronizingly suggests that Kant supplies the Analogies of Experience because his previous arguments ‘have not the faintest appearance of following’ (1966: 93). Such comments aside, there is a real issue here about how far the proofs of the individual principles in the Analytic of Principles presuppose or depend on the Deduction. It would not be unreasonable to expect Kant to insert each category into a generic formulation of the overall argument from the Deduction to yield each a priori principle in turn, but he does not do so. Furthermore, the Analogies receive a substantially longer treatment than the other three principles, which does at least suggest that they are in some way more important than the other three. If the Analytic of Principles was about applying the results of the Deduction to the individual categories then we could expect similar treatments of each. Moreover, if it presupposes the Deduction then it would be natural to assume that the proofs would make extensive reference back to such key notions as the synthetic (and analytic) unity of apperception, to the logical forms of judgement, as well as to the claim that the objective unity of apperception consists in the relation of representations to objects. While Kant does refer to the unity of apperception in the Analytic of Principles, its role is clearly subdued compared to the importance it was afforded in both editions of the Deduction. The logical forms have effectively no role at all, and Kant’s arguments do not come together systematically to substantiate the link between the representation of an object and the objective unity of consciousness. At most, then, the Deduction can be taken to supply only a global or very general proof that experience rests on a priori conceptual conditions, but that everything about what principles make experience possible and how they do so remains to be explained. But if this is the case then the question inevitably looms whether Kant’s ‘crown jewel’, as Allison puts it (2015a: 425), is actually redundant since each of the principles could be plausibly read as establishing *by itself* the legitimacy of each

possible experience (A148/B188-189). However, in the opening section of the Analytic of Principles, the Schematism, Kant reflects upon how a priori concepts like causality can be justified in light of Hume’s claim that we cannot perceive an impression of necessary connection. As Kant puts it, we cannot empirically intuit causality (A137-138/B176-177).

<sup>151</sup> Guyer does admit that he may be overstating the point, but argues that even so, all that Kant strictly borrows from the Deduction is the notion that experience requires the concept of an object in general, and that the results of the Metaphysical Deduction are ignored entirely, as the arguments of the Principles have to do only with the structure of time and not the structure of judgements (1987: 178-180).

correlated category. Indeed, the Second Analogy is often broken off and evaluated as a response to Hume's sceptical doubts about causality independently of the Deduction or the Principles as a whole are separated and taken in combination with Kant's account of natural science in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Perhaps, however, Kant's arguments for the individual principles will turn out to be unsound if they are divorced from the Deduction?

Broadly following this line, Longuenesse takes the Deduction to have established that the conditions of the possibility of experience are the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, Eric Watkins takes the Deduction to have shown that application of the categories to experience is *normatively justified*, insofar as the Deduction shows that they are not 'unavoidable distortions bound up with our perception of the world rather than accurate reflections of it' (2005: 187-188). As such, without the Deduction the Principles can establish at most that a certain category is necessary for experience, but not that it is a condition of the *objects* of experience. This is a tempting line of thought, and it would certainly supply much-needed force to Kant's epistemological arguments in the Principles, but while it is true that the arguments for the principles are meant to be evaluated in light of the Deduction, this line of thought rests, I think, on too strong a conception of Kant's aims in the Deduction.

I argued previously that Kant addresses two questions in the Deduction. The first is how can concepts that are not derived from experience be justifiably applied to objects given in experience? Or, to put the question in more Humean terms as Kant does in the Schematism, how can concepts that cannot be empirically intuited (or derived from Humean impressions) nonetheless have objective validity (A137-138/B176-177)? The answer is that such concepts could still be taken to make their objects possible if they are necessary a priori conditions of the cognition of objects. As we saw, however, by 'cognition' in the first step of the Deduction Kant means 'thought', so the first question can be answered as follows: Non-empirical (i.e., a priori) concepts may have objective validity if and only if they make possible the *thought* of something as an object (in general). As the argument develops, Kant comes to equate the thought of a manifold as representing an object with the objective (synthetic) unity of consciousness, which is governed by the categories as the forms of intellectual synthesis. If successful,

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<sup>152</sup> Longuenesse makes this point in her analysis of the Second and Third Analogies respectively (2005: 134, 159, n.22, 198-199, n.19). I discuss Longuenesse's account of the Analogies below.

the first step shows that a priori concepts are necessary for the representation of anything *as* an object in general through the unification of a manifold of intuition in one consciousness. But that is all that it shows. It is left to the second step to show that any manifold of sensible intuition *can* be brought to the synthetic unity of apperception.

In order to prove this Kant must first remove the unwelcome possibility that appearances could be given to consciousness in intuition while being unable to be brought to the unity of apperception. This is the transcendental spectre. I will not repeat my analysis of Kant's exorcism here, save to note the implications of it. First, if the argument of the second step succeeds, then Kant has removed that possibility by showing that a priori concepts are also the pre-discursive rules of the synthesis of apprehension that make empirical intuitions into *perception* (empirical consciousness) of appearances. Once again, though, the most that this shows is that a priori concepts are employed in a synthesis of intuitions such that they can belong to one consciousness, making perception of particulars possible. The proof does not show that these concepts will be applicable in a predicative function in judgements, nor does it show that the concepts accurately represent the world and are not 'unavoidable distortions' (as Watkins put it above). Now, if all that one wanted to show was that a priori concepts are real and are indispensable from the human standpoint, then I would agree that the Deduction is enough for this purpose. But this would be a surprising place for Kant to stop in his strategy if he really is in the business of replying to Hume. After all, the latter (as Kant reads him) does not dispute the *indispensability* of the concept of cause and effect, but only that we directly perceive an impression of connections between events, or have any basis of inferring through reason and understanding that all A-type events will necessarily be followed by B-type events, or that the future will resemble the past.<sup>153</sup>

The indispensability of the notion of causality for Hume rests on its use in science and common life, whereas if the interpretation I have given of the first step of

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<sup>153</sup> For Kant's reading of Hume, see especially Pro (4: 257-258, 310). He famously claims that on Hume's account the concept of cause and effect is nothing 'but the bastard of the imagination [...] impregnated by experience' (*ibid*). For Hume's sceptical doubts about causality and his account of the concept as arising from custom and habit see Hume (2007: esp. §IV, §V, §VII). For insightful discussion concerning the extent of Hume's scepticism and of Kant's response to it, see Callanan (2006). Callanan argues that Hume's scepticism in the *Treatise* concerns not just the justification of metaphysical concepts, but also the rational justification for any judgement whatsoever. For criticism of Callanan's view, see Schulting (2012: 46-48). For my purposes of explicating Kant's idealism and realism it is enough to stick with Kant's response to Hume regarding metaphysical concepts, even if Hume's scepticism has a larger purview than implied here.

the Deduction is correct, for Kant it rests on the concept being a necessary condition of the unification of a manifold in one consciousness through which objects (in a thin, intentional sense) can be represented. If the interpretation I have given of §26 is also correct, then the concept also has a pre-discursive role in perception through guiding the synthesis of apprehension, though clearly more needs to be said about that role since Kant says precious little in §26. At any rate, neither of these two roles could be said to constitute the objective *reality* of the concept, i.e., a proof that objects stand in real (not Leibnizian ideal) relations of physical influence on one another, such that when A is posited a cause necessitates that B shall universally follow.<sup>154</sup> Thus, as I construe the Deduction, Kant has only shown the objective validity of a priori concepts, and while a necessary step has been taken towards objective reality, viz., connecting them with objects of perception, more is required to substantiate the reality of these concepts. Nonetheless, the Deduction is not irrelevant to this project for the pre-discursive role serves as a vital ground for the proof of their objective reality.

However, given the difficulties that we have encountered in exploring the relationship between the Deduction and the Analogies, it might be preferable to find an account of the latter that dispenses with the arguments of the former, along with the dubious psychological notions of synthesis, acts of the mind and Kant's taxonomy of cognitive faculties. Before I provide my own account of how the Analogies complete the *quid juris*, I want to examine an influential interpretation that treats Kant's theory in the Analogies independently of the Deduction, as a purely epistemological project. This is Guyer's reading.

For Guyer the answer to the question of what it means for something to be a condition of experience 'is to say no more and no less than that it is a necessary condition for the *justification, verification, or confirmation* of the judgments about empirical objects that we make on the basis of our representations of them - to whatever degree of confirmation they actually admit.' He denies that the principle or concept 'constitutes an empirical object in any ontological sense', and he also denies that it is 'somehow a psychological precondition of the occurrence of a representation' (1987: 245-246). Guyer, following Strawson, explicitly rejects what he takes to be Kant's transcendental psychology and thinks transcendental idealism is a doctrinal disaster

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<sup>154</sup> I deliberately leave the determination of A and B here ambiguous to account for as many readings of the Analogies as possible. Below, I will argue that A and B are states of an underlying substance and not discrete events such as Hume's two billiard balls colliding.

caused by Kant falling under the sway of some very bad arguments. What he does approve of, however, is the theory of empirical time-determination contained mostly in the Analogies and the Refutation of Idealism, which he holds to be free of (or at least separable from) transcendental idealism. Guyer holds a *purely* epistemological reading of the Analogies, according to which Kant is only clarifying the epistemic conditions under which we can confirm or verify empirical judgements we make about objective states of affairs (in the Analogies) and about our own subjective states (in the Refutation) (1987: 258-259, 303-304). Guyer's view is that Kant is arguing for the existence of causal laws, but only insofar as they serve as conditions for verifying judgements. He seems to hold an extreme epistemological reading, however, insofar as *actual knowledge* of what causal laws obtain in any particular event is required in order to confirm that we have correctly interpreted an objective succession in our stream of representations (1987: 252). Guyer's account has suffered from frequent attacks from many angles, both for its implausibility, as well as for appearing circular.

First, Guyer's account seems wildly implausible since it requires that in order to correctly recognize whether objective succession has taken place we must subsume that sequence of representations under a known causal law, but this just seems misguided: after all, as Allison asks, is it not the case that we correctly recognize instances of objective succession, such as the freezing of water, without having to have known about the causal conditions under which water will freeze? (2004: 256-257). Second, Guyer's account is dangerously close to being circular. In order to justify our (claimed) knowledge of objective succession (or simultaneity) we require actual *knowledge* of what causal laws obtain, but in order to ascertain what causal laws obtain we need to appeal to something in order to recognize the instantiation of a causal relation in the first place, and the apparent source would seem to be knowledge of objective temporal relations. But, if so, then it seems that we are using knowledge of objective temporal relations to justify knowledge of objective temporal relations.<sup>155</sup> Guyer is well aware of the danger, however, and responds by claiming that it is because knowledge of causal laws is held only to function in the *confirmation* or *justification* of judgements of objective temporal relations (and not the generation of beliefs about objective

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<sup>155</sup> Multiple commentators have charged Guyer with circularity. See Watkins (2005: 198-199); Longuenesse, (1998: 337-338; 2005: 167, n.32) and Allison (2004: 257; 1996: 89). Abela argues that causal laws must be 'presupposed *in general*', but that knowledge of them is not required to claim that we have perceived an objective succession; knowledge of causal laws is 'the product of reflective judgment, not the spontaneous judgements of the understanding' (2002: 182-185). Longuenesse agrees that the *presupposition* of causal laws is required but not actual knowledge of them.

succession) that he can avoid this charge. Guyer claims there is no circularity provided one does not both derive an objective succession from a chain of representations while also using that same chain as evidence for a causal law (1987: 258-259). While Guyer manages to dodge the circularity charge it lands him with a different problem instead, i.e., how do we first recognize an instance of objective succession?<sup>156</sup> Presumably, Guyer would dismiss this problem altogether insofar as it concerns what, for him, are the dubious considerations of ‘real or imagined psychological processes for the generation of particular representations and beliefs’ (1987: 258). But, as I will show, it is these ‘real or imagined’ acts of synthesis that allow Kant to move beyond the impoverished position of Humean empiricism to provide a genuine grounding for the relational categories. We began to see this in Chapter 1 through the tight connection Kant draws between perception, the synthesis of apprehension, and the categories as pre-discursive rules of synthesis; now it is time to see how he continues this account in the Analogies. While I will draw on the First and Third Analogies, my focus will be on the Second Analogy.

I understand the argument of the Second Analogy to be comprised of two steps. I will first sketch out my reading and then substantiate each step with analysis of the text. In Section 2 I suggest that the first step is concerned with demonstrating that application of the concept of causality is necessary for the *possibility of experience*. In Section 3 I argue that the second step demonstrates that the concept is a condition of the *possibility of the objects of experience*. That is, that objects of experience must causally influence one another; *mutatis mutandis* for the concepts of substance and community. It should be stated that I am not providing a step-by-step analysis of Kant’s explicit argument in the text, but rather reconstructing what I take to be the overall thrust of the argument, irrespective of Kant’s untidy presentation of it.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Again, Watkins (2005: 199) and Longuenesse (2005: 167, n.32) both raise this problem. Allison argues that Kant’s answer to Hume is precisely that the schema of causality is required for forming the representation of an objective succession (2004: 257).

<sup>157</sup> Watkins argues that there are two lines of argument in the text. The first is the condensed argument added to the B-edition (B323-324) that turns heavily on Kant’s account of the cognitive faculties, and the other main line that makes far less appeal to his faculty psychology (2005: 207-209). Longuenesse provides an exhaustive analysis of the five different A-edition expositions and of the separate B-edition argument (2005: 177-183).

## 2. Kant's Phenomenological Argument: The Analogies of Experience as Conditions of The Possibility of Experience

I argue that Kant's first step in the Analogies is regressive, moving from a description of our temporal awareness of objects back to the conditions of such awareness. (1) First Kant assumes a purely Humean conception of perceptual awareness, according to which all we have is our subjective stream of consciousness, which is always successive. (2) From a successive stream of representations, however, we cannot infer the objective order of representations – that is, represent an object – because that stream is *always* successive. As such, there is nothing that we can use in this successive sequence to infer the objective order from the subjective; yet we clearly can and do make judgements distinguishing subjective from objective time-relations. (3) Therefore, something must account for this ability through which in ordinary experience we distinguish the subjective succession of say (to borrow Kant's example) our perception of a house from the objective coexistence of the all the parts that constitute the house as a relatively enduring empirical object. Similarly, it takes no great conscious effort to perceive a ship going downstream; rather, what takes conscious effort is to notice precisely *that* the order of our representations *is* successive.<sup>158</sup> (4) Kant therefore concludes that our order of apprehension is determined by the relational categories and that this accounts for the sense in which they are, as conditions of apprehension, conditions of the (eventual) conscious judgements (of experience) that our representations are of causal connections between the objects of our (successive) perception. In short, the first step of the Second Analogy describes the implicit presupposition that is at work in any perception of objective succession. The concept is not derived from experience, but is rather a necessary condition of connecting two empirical intuitions into the empirical cognition of a fixed necessary order. But this is only the first step in Kant's overall argument. If Kant stopped here he would have responded to Hume only by suggesting that Hume got the capacity wrong that is responsible for the concept; Hume took the imagination to produce the concept through habitual association, based on perceived regularities, whereas Kant argues that it is the understanding that is responsible.

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<sup>158</sup> See Longuenesse (2005: 160) who makes this phenomenological point.

Kant might be thought to be essentially conceding Hume's point insofar as he has only shown that *we must presuppose* the validity of the concept (as a matter of even *perceiving* an objective succession, let alone forming judgements of experience concerning actual objective temporal relations), but he has not shown that we are justified in making this presupposition, and thus Hume's question about the justification of the concept remains untouched. As such, since we *have* to use the categories then it could be concluded that they do have objective validity, being necessary for the *thought* of objects, but they could easily lack objective reality: there may be no causal connections in nature despite the concept of such connections having a compulsory application for us. It could still be the case that 'I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause *in the object* (i.e., necessarily), but *only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected*' (B165; my emphasis). How, then, can Kant move from the application of the concept being a necessary condition of the possibility of experience to the content of the concept (i.e., necessary *causal relations*) holding as conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience themselves? Of course, one might object that Kant need not (and does not) take this second step; Guyer's epistemological reading that we have just considered holds that Kant makes no ontological points with the Analogies. All Kant proves is that in order to take one set of judgements to be true (judgements concerning subjective or objective temporal relations) we must take another set of judgements to be true (judgements concerning substances and causal relations), but Guyer grudgingly concedes that these judgements need not actually be true, though he thinks that if scepticism plays this game then 'it is boring' (1987: 426-427). Boring or not, if Kant's claim that the conditions of experience are the conditions of the objects of experience is to be taken seriously (and not either as a mere tautology or as an obvious non-sequitur) then he must make the second step, that is, demonstrate their objective reality. Furthermore, Guyer's reading has already been demonstrated to be inadequate. I will explain what this second step consists in after justifying attributing the first step to Kant.

(1) That Kant thinks that the apprehension of the manifold of intuition is always successive should be uncontroversial: Kant states many times throughout the Analogies and the Deduction that our apprehension of time is always successive.<sup>159</sup> What may be

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<sup>159</sup> See A189/B234 and A182/B225. Kant also implies successiveness of the manifold implicitly at A99. Kant's claim is obviously philosophically controversial. Lovejoy (among many) objects that we can just see when objects are and are not successive or simultaneous, and that Kant's psychological problem is his

more controversial is the claim that this presupposes a purely Humean conception of perceptual awareness.<sup>160</sup> To be sure, although the Analogies are clearly aimed at Hume Kant does not anywhere (as far as I am aware) explicitly claim that if Hume was right subjective succession in apprehension is all that we would possess; the only point Kant makes about what would follow if Hume was right is that the concept of causality would be empirical and would not contain the necessity that we typically ascribe to it. Rather, so-called causal connections would be contingent and empirical, containing only a feigned universal validity (A195-196/B240-241). Nonetheless, I find such an argument concerning apprehension implicitly contained at A194-195/B239-240.<sup>161</sup> The argument is indirect, assuming that there is nothing that precedes an object's state (occurrence) through which it follows in accordance with a rule. If this were so, then there would be nothing to distinguish any sequence of representations from any other and thus no way to distinguish the objective sequence from the (always successive) subjective sequence because in this case there would be ‘nothing in the appearance that determines it so that a certain sequence is thereby made necessary as objective’ (A194/B239-240). Since we do experience or at least represent to ourselves *that* things happen (even if not necessarily *why* they happen, i.e., possess insight into Hume’s ‘secret powers’ or necessary connections) it follows that ‘we always presuppose that something else precedes it, which it follows in accordance with a rule’ (A195/B240). Although no explicit reference to Hume is made, the very next paragraph contains a description of what would be the case if the concept of causality was derived from experience (just as Hume suggested); so I think this speaks in favour of (1).

(2) Again, I do not think there is anything too controversial in ascribing this premise to Kant. It is a key premise of all three analogies that the successive nature of apprehension prevents us from using apprehension as the basis upon which to infer what the objective order is. Nonetheless, a few remarks are necessary for it is here that the

alone (1967: 297). Interestingly, Lovejoy does concede that it is only in actual perception ('not mere sensation') that we just *see* objective temporal relations, which demonstrates his lack of understanding of the argument, for it is concerned precisely with what it is to *perceive* an object rather than just to have 'mere sensation'. This is because Lovejoy takes the argument to be concerned with distinguishing between objective and illusory perceptions of temporal relations rather than with how we come to represent something objectively in the first place. On the other hand, more sympathetic scholars have also raised concerns about Kant's claim that apprehension is always successive. Beck helpfully suggests, however, that the claim can be weakened without loss to the more reasonable idea that the subjective stream of successive states *may sometimes* be different to the objective relations (1978: 144-145).

<sup>160</sup> Although not quite the same claim, I am not the first to consider the idea that Kant may be comparing different *conceptions* of experience. Beck distinguishes between Lockean experience and Kantian experience as part of his analysis (1978: 40-41).

<sup>161</sup> According to Longuenesse, this brief argument is the second exposition (2005: 179-180).

famous charge of Strawson – that the Second Analogy contains a ‘non sequitur of numbing grossness’ – can be addressed.<sup>162</sup> Strawson reads Kant as confusing two types of necessity: conceptual and causal. He reads Kant as inferring from the (to Strawson) reasonable assumption that if objects causally determine our apprehension then we must *regard* the order of our representations as necessarily fixed (conceptual necessity), to the distinct claim that the order of states in the object must also be necessary (causal necessity). In short, if I am to regard my perceptions A and B as constituting an event then I am conceptually constrained to think of A as necessarily preceding B, and I cannot reverse the order, but from this it does not follow that the succession of B upon A is itself necessary in the object. This confusion amounts to inferring from a feature of our subjective apprehension (irreversibility) the necessary succession of the states of the object. This would, of course, be a non-sequitur, but as has been pointed out many times, Kant makes no such inference.<sup>163</sup> Kant makes it clear numerous times that we cannot infer the objective order from our subjective apprehension.<sup>164</sup> The key place that this point is made clear is ironically the very passage that Strawson cites as evidence against it. While Strawson reads this passage as claiming that we can infer from irreversibility to necessary succession of the occurrence, Kant makes what appears to be the *opposite* of this inference:

In our case I must therefore derive the **subjective sequence** of apprehension from the **objective sequence** of appearances, for otherwise the former would be entirely undetermined and no appearance would be distinguished from any other. *The former alone proves nothing about the connection of the manifold in the object, because it is entirely arbitrary.* (A193/B238; my emphasis)

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<sup>162</sup> For the charge of non-sequitur see Strawson (1966: 28, 137-138); however, the objection was actually first made by Lovejoy in 1906, reprinted in Gram (1967: 284-308, esp. 300-303). While both attribute a non-sequitur to Kant, they do so for different reasons. Lovejoy’s charge focuses on how the principle of sufficient reason has nothing to do with what Kant actually argues, and that he allegedly plagiarizes an argument about time from Wolff.

<sup>163</sup> Although they disagree on what the argument does consist in (and achieves), Allison, Longuenesse, Guyer, Friedman, Watkins and Melnick all agree that there is no non-sequitur in the Analogies. Rather, as Guyer explains, the non-sequitur is actually Strawson’s. See Guyer (1987: 255-259, esp. 256), Allison (2004: 254-256), Watkins (2005: 204-206; 2010: 162-163), Longuenesse (1998: 367-368, n.75; 2005: 164-165) and Melnick (2006: 206-207). For a particularly interesting response to the charge, see Friedman (1992: 168-170, 186), who focuses on the original charge by Lovejoy.

<sup>164</sup> See A182/B225-226, A189/B23, and (implicitly) B257-258.

So, rather than inferring the objective order from the subjective, the passage seems to suggest that the subjective order must be inferred from the objective. We will see that this is not quite right either, but for now the point is that the subjective order is not the (inadequate) datum from which we infer the objective order.<sup>165</sup> How should we understand Kant's claim in the passage? Rather than claiming that we can infer the objective order from the subjective, Kant should be understood as providing a transcendental analysis of what is involved in thinking of an objective succession in the objects of our representation. This is Allison's view. The idea is that the schema of causality is the rule through which we interpret our subjective apprehension as the representation of an event; that is, we move '*to* the assumed irreversibility (in a particular instance) of the sequence of perceptions *by* subsuming this sequence under the schema of causality, *through* which one takes this sequence as the cognition of an event' (2004: 256). This, though, is not enough by itself to refute the charge, for we can still ask how we recognize in the first place when we should interpret the sequence as irreversible; at least, the link between irreversibility and causality has become obscure at best. What justifies us in employing the schema in this way? Instead, we should view irreversibility as a feature of our subjective apprehension, as nothing more than a consequence or symptom, at most, of an actual objective succession (Walsh 1975, 138), but we cannot infer from our subjective apprehension being irreversible to the existence of an objective succession.<sup>166</sup> That is precisely why Kant claims that we must *derive* the subjective apprehension from the objective order, which is a claim that has puzzled even those who do not agree with Strawson.<sup>167</sup> We will return to this issue as part of the second step below.

(3) Subjective apprehension, then, is not enough to distinguish the objective order from the subjective, and yet, as Kant's two examples make plain, leaving aside philosophical pedantries, we are *clearly* able to recognize when our perception of an object or event should be considered successive or simultaneous. Our perception of a house is always successive – I can go from perceiving the roof to the base or the base to the roof or the roof to the windows, etc., but I do not therefore think that the *parts of the house* are themselves successive; similarly, when I perceive a ship sailing downstream

<sup>165</sup> This passage is also where we could introduce the second step of the argument, which could be understood as beginning here, but I shall refrain from doing that until later.

<sup>166</sup> One might say that irreversibility of apprehension is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of a causal connection in the apprehended object(s).

<sup>167</sup> Namely Allison (2004: 250-251) and Wolff (1963: 268).

and I see it at  $p^1$  at  $t^1$  and at  $p^2$  at  $t^2$  I do not assume that it is a different ship at the second point in time (unless circumstances provide good evidence for this), but rather I assume that the transition of the ship from the first to the second point is of a relatively enduring object that is changing its state rather than being a new object at a new time.<sup>168</sup> Leaving aside any philosophical machinations, my ordinary experience confirms this simple (trivial) ability, and yet, if Kant's contention that the subjective order of representations is no clue to the objective order in the objects then Humean empiricism renders this simple ability a complete mystery: at the level of ordinary experience strict empiricism cannot be the whole story. Something must account for this seemingly trivial ability, shared by all cognitively efficient humans, to recognize when objects or their states exist successively or simultaneously.<sup>169</sup> Yet, it is by no means obvious that the transcendental idealist is any better placed to solve this mystery than the Humean empiricist. Indeed, the situation may actually be *worse* for the transcendental idealist as Kant maintains that time itself is not an object of perception (B233).<sup>170</sup> If we could directly see time or, as the claim is usually understood, our perceptions came with a sort of temporal stamp on them that indicated their objective position in absolute time, then it seems that there would be no problem: we would be able to *just see*, without any conscious effort, the temporal relations between the objects of our perception; but our perceptual states do not come with any sort of time-stamp on them and we cannot read off the objective order from features of the subjective order. What resources does the transcendental idealist have that a Humean empiricist does not? The answer is clear: a priori concepts of the understanding and a priori forms of intuition.

(4) Since we are capable of determining time empirically, the Kantian account holds that special concepts and principles must be at work that allow us to do this, and since concepts belong to the understanding and are not the domain of the imagination or sensibility, it follows that causality is not 'a bastard of the imagination [...] impregnated by experience' (Pro, 4: 258), but is rather a concept that must be applied to a sensible manifold such that the manifold is connected in a fixed and necessary way. But what

<sup>168</sup> Kant's examples in the Second Analogy presuppose the truth of the First Analogy, namely that the perception of alteration presupposes the existence of an enduring substance, the states of which suffer change while the substance is whatever endures through that alteration.

<sup>169</sup> There are obvious exceptions and qualifications here and I do not intend to list them.

<sup>170</sup> This claim that time cannot be perceived might be thought to be in tension with the Aesthetic and Deduction, for Kant describes time as a pure intuition and claims that we can represent space (and by implication, time) as an object through formal intuition (A33/B50, B160n). I analysed the latter claim at great length in Chapter 1.

sort of application is this? Is it a conscious or unconscious process? Here again we must keep in mind Kant's two examples: perception of a house and perception of a ship sailing downstream. These do not seem to me to designate processes that require a special conscious effort to carry out; by contrast, it is precisely the recognition that our subjective sequences of representations are insufficient to ground awareness of objective relations that requires a special effort of conscious reflection, hence why we are tempted to raise the objection that we can just see temporal relations.<sup>171</sup> As such, it seems more likely that Kant's thought is that special concepts are at work, unconsciously or implicitly, in the mere *apprehension* of a sensible manifold, as pre-discursive rules of synthesis. The relational categories describe what is presupposed in the *perception* of an objective succession or simultaneity, or in the case of the First Analogy, what is presupposed as conditions of the perception of *any* temporal relation whatsoever. Moreover, it is precisely because they first make possible the *perception* of an objective succession that they serve as necessary (but not sufficient) conditions of possible experience as distinct from perception. Kant's example from §26 (the perception of water freezing) makes this clearer.

When I *see* that water freezes – a change of state of the empirical ‘object’, water – I presuppose that the freezing follows something else, something distinct from the water (in that state) as that which the freezing – or the unknown change of state – follows in accordance with a rule. Thus, as I successively apprehend a manifold of intuition already in the apprehension these (implicit) rules are being used to convert empirical intuition into perception, making it ‘something for me’, qua cognizer, a manifold representation of which I am conscious, which can then go on to be converted into empirical cognition proper, or at least serve as the material for judgements that make a claim to objective validity (judgements of experience). Rather than being in tension with §26, the Analogies are a continuation of that argument, but they do inject an additional element into Kant's account of perception that was perhaps only implicit in §26: rather than being understood as a purely passive taking in of a manifold, the synthesis of apprehension should be understood as quasi-active. It is not yet the fully active capacity of consciously forming judgements (of experience), but nor is it the completely passive reception of sense data that is then subsequently combined to yield cognition. To perform the synthesis of apprehension with respect to a manifold that is of

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<sup>171</sup> Longuenesse develops this phenomenological observation in more detail (2005: 160-161).

an objective succession is to be, even as becoming (empirically) conscious of the representation, searching for rules through which the perception can be understood (i.e., experienced).<sup>172</sup> With respect to the concept of causality, the synthesis of apprehension entails presupposing that the change of state (e.g., of water as liquid) to another different state (water as solid) presupposes something upon which the second state follows in accordance with a rule. Kant explicitly affirms that the synthesis of apprehension *does* presuppose such a rule in the object of apprehension, and the synthesis does not simply supply the (successively apprehended) material to which the rule must then be consciously applied in order to make the order of subjective apprehension objectively fixed.<sup>173</sup> Rather, further refining his account of the ‘threefold synthesis’ given in the A-Deduction, the synthesis of appearances is always successive when it occurs through *the imagination alone*:

But if this synthesis is a synthesis of apprehension (of the manifold of a given appearance), then the order in the object is determined, or, to speak more precisely, there is therein an order of successive synthesis that determines an object, in accordance with which something would necessarily have to precede and, if this is posited, the other would necessarily have to follow.  
(A201/B246)<sup>174</sup>

Recall that for Hume the concept of causation is a product of the imagination. With that in mind, I take this passage to confirm what I claimed earlier, namely that Kant begins with a Humean conception of what is involved in perception, then shows that this is inadequate to account for what we take for granted, viz., an ability to distinguish between subjective and objective succession without any conscious reflection, and concludes, *pace* Hume, that our perception is guided by a priori rules of the understanding, viz., the relational categories. Kant explicitly distinguishes a synthesis of appearances as that of a synthesis of imagination from a synthesis of apprehension,

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<sup>172</sup> See A126: ‘[The understanding] is always busy poring through the appearances with the aim of finding some sort of rule in them.’

<sup>173</sup> He misleadingly suggests this is the case when he writes: ‘In the synthesis of appearances the manifold representations always follow one another’ (A198/B243), but as we will see he clarifies exactly what he means soon after.

<sup>174</sup> Kant also talks repeatedly of the *perception* of objective succession or changes of state here in addition to the *experience* of them, implying that he is just as concerned with perception as he is with (judgements of) experience, which tells against Allison’s reading that the Analogies are concerned solely with experience.

which, if as I have argued, continues the argument of the Deduction, means that the synthesis of apprehension must be held to be distinct from the actual cognition of *what* the actual rule is that relates the successive states to an object. As we saw, in §26 Kant explicitly distinguishes the synthesis of apprehension/perception from the experience of an event so, unless we want to be uncharitable to Kant, we should assume that the synthesis of apprehension that Kant details in the Deduction is exactly the same as the synthesis of apprehension that Kant mentions in the Analogies.<sup>175</sup> If this is granted, then we can clearly see that the relational categories have two roles in the Analogies: first, they function as the implicit pre-discursive rules of the synthesis of apprehension of a manifold, which if combined with the account given in the Deduction, means they are the rules through which we *become conscious* of a manifold by bringing the manifold to the unity of apperception, issuing in the representation of something *as* an object (in the ‘thin’ sense). Second, they function discursively as the concepts under which connected intuitions must be subsumed in order to cognize objective temporal states of affairs, e.g., in the judgement of experience that if the sun shines on the stone, the stone will become warm (Pro, 4: 301n, 312). It should also be clear that the first pre-discursive function in apprehension is a necessary ground of the second discursive function in experience: that is, unless I *presuppose* in my perception of the change of state of the stone that it has changed in accordance with a rule, a rule which holds universally such that when some state *a* is posited of an object *x* then another state *b* follows as a state of *x* in accordance with a universal rule, then I cannot form the (eventual) judgement of experience that the rule in question is that the heat of the sun causes the stone to warm up, that the heat of the stone is, as an appearance, *in itself* determined with respect to the logical function as the consequent of a hypothetical judgement. Thus, the conditions of apprehension, of connecting a manifold in consciousness, are conditions of the possibility of experience. Now, I would suggest that the way to reconcile what Kant says here with what he says about the division of the mathematical and dynamical principles would be to take the mathematical principles or categories to constitute *all* perception of objects, whereas the dynamical categories and principles hold only under an added condition, namely that we relate multiple *intuitions* to each other, rather than a manifold of representations in a single intuition, which is the case with the

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<sup>175</sup> Just as Allison maintained that it was a mistake for Kant to make causality a condition of apprehension in the Deduction, he takes Kant’s claim in the Analogies that the concept is a ‘rule of apprehension’ to also be a mistake (2004: 234). The account developed here obviously challenges Allison’s on this point.

mathematical categories. Admittedly, Kant nowhere (as far as I am aware) explicitly states this, and it does turn on a very flexible usage of ‘intuition’ and ‘manifold of representations’, but as we have seen many times, Kant frequently uses his terminology in (irritatingly) flexible ways. Nonetheless, if Kant does have something like this in mind, it would help explain why he characterizes the dynamical categories as both conditions of apprehension (in §26) *and* as conditions of experience, as explicitly distinct from apprehension. It also makes sense of why the mathematical categories are said to condition only the intuition of appearances because they extend only to the perception of things as occupying space and time. The mathematical categories are more fundamental with respect to apprehension because they constitute *all* perception whatsoever, albeit only with respect to the intuition of something, while their relational partners condition only *some* perceptions and have a distinct role in experience of things (as objectively determined in time).

However, it could easily be objected that if this is all Kant argues for in the course of reaching his conclusion, i.e., that there are universal rules that hold of the objects (of experience) themselves, he has helped himself to much more than his argument allows. Specifically, why does he feel able to shift from the epistemological/phenomenological point that *we must presuppose* that alterations ‘occur in accordance with the law of cause and effect’ to the much stronger, metaphysical/ontological conclusion that they *do or must* occur in accordance with such a law? In other words, the move from the (relational) categories being conditions of the possibility of experience to them being conditions of the objects of experience, at this point, still stands in serious need of justification. As we saw in Section 1, appealing back to the Deduction here does not help us, for the same problem exists there as well: there is a gap between objective validity of the categories as formal rules of synthesis and their objective reality, i.e., not being ‘unavoidable distortions’ of reality. We cannot defer a solution to this problem any longer. In addition, there is the related question of why Kant feels he can help himself to the ‘same cause, same effect’ principle and not just the weaker ‘some cause, some effect’.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Of course, one might object to this second claim that Kant does not help himself to such a conclusion, but I follow Longuenesse and Watkins in taking Kant to have concluded in favour of the strong principle despite his explicit argument only confirming the weaker principle. Friedman and Guyer also argue for the strong principle. By contrast, Allison, Beck and Buchdahl all argue that Kant is trying to ground only the weak principle. Strawson maintains that Kant tried to show too much, and therefore only affirms a weak principle that the spatio-temporal framework itself must endure as a general backdrop to experience, or at least, to any coherent conception of experience we can make intelligible to ourselves. See Watkins

### 3. Kant's Metaphysical Argument: The Analogies of Experience as Conditions of The Possibility of The Objects of Experience

There are two main threads in Kant's thought that can be appealed to in order to explain why he felt he was entitled to draw metaphysical principles about the objects of experience from the Analogies, along with the existence of causal laws. First, Kant's argument in the Analogies must be understood in the context of the account of time that he has developed in the Transcendental Aesthetic and other parts of the *Critique*; this line of thought is pursued by Longuenesse. Second, Kant's argument in the Analogies, particularly his conceptions of causality and substance, must be understood in light of his earlier and more detailed accounts given in his pre-Critical works; this line of thought is developed by Watkins. By combining elements of both lines of analysis I aim to explain Kant's second step in the Analogies, through which he bolsters support for the conclusion of the first step, while providing ontological principles that can be known to hold of the objects of experience. That said, with respect to drawing on the significance of his early work it must be emphasized once again that I am reconstructing how his argument could have been developed, rather than how he actually presented the argument. I will begin with the significance of Kant's views on time and then move to his broader metaphysics.

As I read him, what allows Kant to go further than he otherwise could in asserting that the conditions of experience are conditions of the objects of experience is his account of the unity of time. Because time is an a priori intuition we can know in advance of any experience of objective relations 'that the preceding time necessarily determines the following time (in that I cannot arrive at the following time except by passing through the preceding one' (A199/B244). This is a truth about the nature of time as human subjects represent it. If one takes issue with this then the second step of the argument will fail, but I take it that at least with respect to *ordinary* experience, one cannot advance to another point in time save first passing through the preceding times leading to that moment. From this seemingly innocent claim Kant infers an important conclusion, namely:

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(2005: 216), Longuenesse (2005: 171-172), Allison (2004: 247; 1996: 80), Beck (1978: 111-129, esp. 126), Buchdahl (1969: 651-655; 1974: 128-150), Friedman (1992: 170), Guyer (1987: 252) and Strawson (1966: 144-146).

It is also an indispensable **law of the empirical representation** of the temporal series that the appearances of the past time determine every existence in the following time, and that these, as occurrences, do not take place except insofar as the former determine their existence in time, i.e., establish it in accordance with a rule. For **only in the appearances can we empirically cognize this continuity in the connection of times.** [...] Now this determination of position cannot be borrowed from the relation of the appearances to absolute time (for that is not an object of perception), but, conversely, the appearances themselves must determine their positions in time for each other, and make this determination in the temporal order necessary. (A199-200/B244-245)

The key point is that appearances must *conform to* the unity of time, that is, be consistent with the nature of time, such that they can be the '**law of the empirical representation** of the temporal series'.<sup>177</sup> What this means is that in order for events and states of affairs to be individuated in time (and space) certain rules for relating appearances to time are required. Since time itself is unperceivable, these rules must hold of the objects themselves so that the objects, through their states/change of states happening in accordance with these rules make necessary their position or determination in time.<sup>178</sup> But this argument seems to leave Kant's second step on shaky territory, for it might look arbitrary to assert any connection between the nature of time and the necessity of causal connections between objects. At most, the argument given so

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<sup>177</sup> Watkins also suggests that appearances must be consistent with time (2010: 164), and even suggests that more than perceiving temporal relations is at issue here: it is about *constituting* temporal relations (2005: 191). While I certainly agree that time is ideal for Kant, and is not already given as such, I do not see the analogies as being the means of constituting temporal relations, but as the means through which events and objects in it can be represented in accordance with our forms of intuition, by also revealing the ontological conditions that must hold of the objects (of experience) themselves. Allison rejects the idea that the Second Analogy is 'an argument from the nature of time, though it is concerned with the conditions of the representation of a succession in time' (2004: 252). I agree that it is not an argument that is concerned with the nature of time as such, but I disagree insofar as I take it to be an argument that is (at least partially) based on the necessary conditions for appearances to *conform to* the nature of time (as we represent it). I am situated somewhere between Allison and Watkins on this issue.

<sup>178</sup> See Longuenesse (2005: 172-177) for a similar conclusion. Longuenesse, however, focuses on how the Second Analogy presupposes the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic, according to which we possess time as an a priori intuition. She argues that 'only through the preservation of empirical correlations through time can the unity, continuity, and ordering of our pure temporal intuition be realized in empirical objects of knowledge (appearances)' (2005: 174). I agree with her reading, but as she herself notes, it makes the strength of the Second Analogy dependent upon the strength of the Aesthetic, and that is among the most controversial aspects of Kant's theory of experience (2005: 176-177). By contrast, while I do draw on the ideality of time I also want to connect the Analogies to Kant's earlier work to substantiate his conclusions.

far can show (once again) only that *we must presuppose* that objects stand in the connections *necessary for us* to correlate them in time, not that for any particular case of time-determination that they must actually do so. Fortunately, further focus on the so-called ‘unity of time’ that Kant refers to can bridge the gap from epistemology to metaphysics, especially once combined with resources from his earlier pre-Critical works.

The unity of time consists of the three *modi* of time: persistence, succession and simultaneity. These jointly constitute the unity of time. Time must be persistent; it remains the same while its moments arise and cease, but time cannot come into and out of existence, else experience would be impossible.<sup>179</sup> The second two *modi* specify what temporal relations must exist *between* objects and their states such that they can be represented in one persisting time. All objects or events must be either before or after one another (successive), or exist at the same time (simultaneous).<sup>180</sup> We have seen what must be presupposed in our apprehension of objects if we are to represent objects (of consciousness); now we need to determine whether Kant can substantiate the link between the unity of time and objects such that these rules can be known to obtain. A brief examination of his earlier philosophy will demonstrate why he thought the second step was sound and not worth explicitly spelling out.

In Kant’s pre-Critical works he presents arguments for many of the conclusions reached in the Analogies, but in more detail and with an unambiguous metaphysical tone. He attacks both Leibniz’s position of pre-established harmony and the (literal) version of physical influx that was opposed to pre-established harmony.<sup>181</sup> Against these two theories Kant presents a sophisticated position that still relies on a harmony of nature, but explicitly entails causal interactions between substances. Most notably for our purposes he is concerned with the determinations of objects and how causality is

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<sup>179</sup> This does not mean that time is a substance or a real thing, but that all events must be relatable in a *single* timeframe that itself does not change. In short, all moments of time are parts of one time, and this is the sense in which time itself is permanent. It is the permanent whole in which all individual times are intuited in relation to each other.

<sup>180</sup> See Watkins (2005: 191-195) for a more detailed account of the unity of time and of Kant’s interest in it.

<sup>181</sup> Pre-established harmony is the Leibnizian doctrine that causal interaction – or physical influx – is *metaphysically impossible*. Instead, Leibniz maintains substances can act only on themselves and that God established substances (monads) at the time of their creation in such a way that all of their future states would harmonize with each other. In this way, it appears as if substances causally interact when in fact they cannot. The main attraction of this position for Leibniz (and his supporters, such as Wolff) is its ability to resolve the mind/body problem generated by Descartes’ dualism. See Leibniz (1989: 143, 214). Leibniz’s doctrine is complicated and had a large influence on the young Kant’s metaphysics. See Watkins (2005: Ch. 1, esp. 23-37) for an insightful discussion of Leibniz.

possible at all. Kant distinguishes between grounds and determinations in *Nova Dilucidatio* (1755), arguing that for every determination there is a ground that explains why that predicate is posited and why its opposite is excluded (ND, 1: 392-394). He also argues that each ground can provide only one set of determinations, such that if a substance's state is to change then the grounds for that change, *pace Leibniz*, cannot be found in that substance but must be sought in external substances. Following Crusius – another influence on the young Kant – Kant maintains that in order for a world to exist all the substances that make up that world must stand in *real* connections with each other, i.e., causally interact, otherwise there would just be a collection of substances, but nothing like a self-subsistent dynamical whole that in turn is not part of another whole.<sup>182</sup> In order for causal interaction to occur there must be real grounds that contain the determinations of other substances. This is because a substance cannot change its own state or determination without changing its own grounds, but if grounds are to change then an unacceptable infinite regress looms: what is responsible for a change of ground if substances only act on themselves? Kant reasons that grounds must be immutable, and also maintains that grounds posit their determinations immediately (ND, 1: 411), so it makes sense to think that the same ground cannot posit multiple, different determinations (except where specific added circumstances are required such as the object being in motion instead or at rest).<sup>183</sup> Given all of this, it follows that substances must act on each other, which means that pre-established harmony is false (ND, 1: 412). That means that the unity of the world depends on causal interaction, since it would not be a world (a dynamical whole) if substances did not interact, for change would not be possible. It is no coincidence, either, that Kant borrows Crusius' terminology of grounds and determinations (albeit while using it in his own distinct way).

Very significantly, Crusius defines a real ground as something that ‘brings about or makes possible a thing outside of thought [...] either by means of an efficacious cause [...] [or through] the laws of truth in general’, such that when one thing is posited, logically something else must be posited as well (Crusius, *ibid*, §36). A real ground is something that makes possible a thing *outside of thought*; this indicates a realist rather than an idealist metaphysics. While Kant converts Crusius’ real inefficacious cause into

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<sup>182</sup> See Crusius, *Sketch of the Necessary Truths of Reason*, §350, translated in Watkins (2009: 170).

<sup>183</sup> See Watkins (2005: 118-125) for an explanation of how Kant inherits the conception of grounds/determinations offered by Wolff and Meier while using it to reject pre-established harmony. I pass over the details since they are not relevant to my purpose.

a ‘logical ground’ he retains his notion of a real efficacious ground. Of course, this would mean very little with respect to Kant’s argument in the Analogies if he had abandoned the notion of a ‘real ground’ by 1781 in favour of purely epistemological conditions of justification, but there is good evidence to the contrary. For example:

It is therefore important to show by an example that even in experience we never ascribe sequence (of an occurrence, in which something happens that previously did not exist) to the object, and distinguish it from the subjective sequence of our apprehension, *except when a rule is the ground that necessitates us* to observe this order of the perceptions rather than another, indeed that it is really this necessitation that first makes possible the representation of a succession in the object. (A196-197/B242-243; my emphasis)

The status of the required rule is admittedly ambiguous between being a rule for thinking a subjective order of apprehension as order-determinate, thereby representing the apprehension as an objective succession in thought, and the ground being something in the object that makes this order determined in itself. Kant moves to the latter claim four paragraphs later (A199-200/B244-245), but here he could still reasonably be construed as sticking merely to conceptual grounds. Given the (implicit) progression of the argument from conditions of experience to conditions of the objects of experience it is not surprising that the clearest example is located in a footnote appended to the *conclusion* of the Analogies:

The unity of the world-whole, in which all appearances are to be connected, is obviously a mere conclusion from the tacitly assumed principle of the community of all substances that are simultaneous: for, were they isolated, they would not as parts constitute a whole, and were their connection (interaction of the manifold) not already necessary on account of simultaneity, then one could not infer from the latter, *as a merely ideal relation, to the former, as a real one*. Nevertheless we have shown, in its proper place, that community is really the ground of the possibility of an empirical cognition of coexistence, *and that one therefore really only infers from the latter back to the former, as its condition*. (A218/B265; my emphasis)

Kant does not spell out in the *Critique* this distinction between real and ideal relations, so it seems reasonable to assume that it means what it did in his pre-Critical works. A real relation is one that makes possible an object or something outside of our thoughts – what he elsewhere terms an ‘antecedently determining ground’, and an ideal relation is one that makes possible the cognition of something – what he elsewhere calls a ‘consequently determining ground’.<sup>184</sup> With this terminological distinction clear, the implications of the passage should be transparent: the principle of community, expounded in the Third Analogy, is the ideal ground through which we cognize the simultaneity of appearances, but through it we infer the real ground that makes possible the actual simultaneity of appearances, i.e., mutual interaction of causally efficacious substances. To restate the point in terms of the argument of the *Critique*, the ideal ground/relation is the condition of the experience (empirical cognition) of the temporal relation, while the real relation/ground is the condition of the object of experience with regards to its conformity to the unity of time.<sup>185</sup> Here we see, perhaps better than anywhere else, Kant’s famous method of the ‘Copernican turn’ in its full application: objects must conform to our conditions for cognizing them – in this case, they must conform to the nature of time as we represent it in figurative synthesis, as expounded in the Deduction. But equally important, we could never come to experience the ideal ground of experience of temporal relations if the relational categories were not already operative in the synthesis of apprehension (perception) itself, as the conditions through which we can become conscious of representations as unified under one consciousness, as I argued above and in Chapter 1. If I am right, though, would we not expect Kant to

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<sup>184</sup> This distinction is introduced in *Nova Dilucidatio* as part of Kant’s analysis of the principle of determining/sufficient ground. See ND (1: 394) for ‘consequently determining ground’, or ground of truth and (1: 396) for ‘antecedently determining ground’, or ground of existence. Although clearly a precursor to his distinction between logical and real grounds, Kant does not draw the latter distinction until 1763 in *Negative Magnitudes* (NM, 2: 202). It is important to keep in mind that the two distinctions are not equivalent. In both cases the real ground or ‘antecedently determining ground’ is one that is explicitly causal and not true merely through conformity to the principle of identity (so the ground is what Kant will refer to in the *Critique* as synthetic), but the ‘consequently determining ground’ is a ground of cognition, identical to Crusius’ ideal ground, whereas Kant’s logical ground has more in common with Crusius’ real but inefficacious (existential) ground, which, unlike for Crusius, is explicitly *not* causal for Kant, since it is true merely through the principle of identity. Given that Kant in *Negative Magnitudes* (2: 203) purposely points out the difference between his distinction and Crusius’ it is odd that he should invoke the distinction between real and ideal grounds in the *Critique*, rather than his own distinction between real and logical grounds. Nonetheless, the text unambiguously confirms that it is the former distinction that Kant draws on there.

<sup>185</sup> This claim may bring to mind Strawson’s non-sequitur again, but the claim is not a psychological one about particular instances of human cognition. Rather, the point is that in Kant’s transcendental analysis conditions of objects of experience are revealed to be equivalent to conditions of experience.

have spelled this out more clearly than he did, especially with respect to the significance of ideal and real grounds?

We saw in Chapter 1 that Kant has an unhelpful habit of relegating key arguments to footnotes (B160-B161); nevertheless, the straightforward answer is negative. The *Critique* must be understood in context of the pre-Critical philosophy, and it must be remembered that what we as modern commentators emphasize as being a direct and conscious shift from the tone and aims of Kant's early work to the Critical period is ultimately an artificial distinction. While there are certainly many differences between Kant's early and later work there is also a great deal of continuity. In particular, the first *Critique* should be understood as emerging from those earlier reflections on metaphysics. Perhaps the clearest example of this is with the final section of *Negative Magnitudes* where Kant expresses his puzzlement concerning the mystery of real grounds:

I fully understand how a consequence is posited by a ground in accordance with the rule of identity. [...] But what I should dearly like to have distinctly explained to me, however, is how one thing issues from another thing, though not by means of the law of identity. The first kind of ground I call the logical ground, for the relation of the ground to its consequence can be understood logically. In other words, it can be clearly understood by appeal to the law of identity. The second kind of ground, however, I call the real ground, for this relation belongs, presumably, to my true concepts, but the manner of the relating can in no wise be judged.

As for this real ground and its relation to its consequence my question presents itself in the following simple form: How am I to understand **the fact that, because something is, something else is?** A logical consequence is only really posited because it is identical with the ground. [...] A body A is in motion; another body B, lying in the direct path of A, is at rest. The motion of A is something; the motion of B is something else; and yet the one is posited by the other. Now, you may subject [these concepts to as much analysis as you please: you will never find the motion of B contained in the motion of A]. Nor am I willing to be fobbed off by the words "cause" and "effect," "force" and "action". For if I already regard something as a cause of something else, or if I attach the

concept of force to it, then I am already thinking of the cause as containing the relation of the real ground to its consequence, and then it is easy to understand that the consequence is posited in accordance with the rule of identity. [...] Let us see whether we can offer a distinct explanation of how it is that, *because something is, something else is cancelled*, and whether we can say anything more than I have already said on the matter, namely that it simply does not take place in virtue of the law of contradiction. I have reflected upon the nature of our cognition with respect to our judgement concerning grounds and consequences, and one day I shall present a detailed account of the fruits of my reflections. (NM, 2: 202-204)

The ‘detailed account’ of Kant’s musings on the question of real grounds is the first *Critique*. But the reason that the logical/real grounds distinction does not receive explicit attention is twofold. First, it *is* present in the *Critique*, but no longer as a distinction between grounds but rather as a distinction between two kinds of judgements or principles: the ‘logical ground’ becomes the analytic judgement and the ‘real ground’ becomes the synthetic judgment.<sup>186</sup> Kant’s answer, then, to the question of real grounds is nothing other than the possibility of synthetic a priori judgements; the most famous of which are the analogies of experience.

Second, the intended audience of the *Critique* would already have likely read Kant’s earlier efforts so it is not surprising that Kant simply presupposes knowledge of his earlier theories in the *Critique*. The three analogies undeniably have their origins in the principles of succession and co-existence of the *Nova Dilucidatio*, *Negative Magnitudes* and *Inaugural Dissertation* and, as Watkins explains, since Kant is concerned with grounds and determinations in his early works it stands to reason that, insofar as Kant is concerned with exactly the same ontological principles in the *Critique*, that there he is simply concerned with finding the real grounds for specifically

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<sup>186</sup> The equivalence of logical grounds with analytic judgements and of real grounds with synthetic ones is stated explicitly by Kant in the Critical period text, *Metaphysik Volckmann*, (28.1: 403-404), cited in Longuenesse (1998: 355-356). Longuenesse notes that the logical/real ground distinction is the precursor to the analytic/synthetic distinction. Watkins notes that it is the question of real grounds that motivates Kant’s project in the *Critique*. Allison denies that the logical/real grounds distinction is equivalent to the analytic/synthetic distinction, but maintains that, viewed retrospectively, *Negative Magnitudes* is the point at which the distinction is required for Kant to move forward (2015a: 17-18). Allison’s claim would seem to be contradicted by several texts such as by R3753, cited in Longuenesse (1998: 353) and R3738 (17: 278). Although from the 1780s, the *Metaphysik Volckmann* passage unambiguously equates the analytic with the logical ground (reason) and the synthetic with the real ground (reason), suggesting that Kant certainly came to view the analytic/synthetic distinction as equivalent to his pre-Critical one.

*temporal* determinations (2005: 231). But it is precisely the unity of time as something appearances must be consistent with that functions as the answer to the question of the relation between real grounds and their consequences.<sup>187</sup>

### Conclusion: ‘Original Orderability’ As Kant’s Answer to Hume

Thus, Kant’s argument in the Analogies is completed. The analogies are *not* just epistemological conditions of the justification of judgements about temporal relations, *pace* Guyer, but equally they do not admit of a completely metaphysical grounding either; nor do they simply expound the conditions for *thinking* our successive stream of representations as representing objective succession or simultaneity, *pace* Allison. Rather, from phenomenological/epistemological conditions of the unity of representations in one consciousness, as rules that are operative in the very perception (synthesis of apprehension) of appearances, the categories ground principles (the analogies) under which appearances can be reflected, subsumed and recognized under in judgements of experience. But these principles can only apply if the objects themselves obey these rules. Building on his earlier work that was concerned with the relationship between grounds and determinations, Kant turns to the unity of time as something represented in a priori intuition and attempts to demonstrate that being an object of experience requires conforming to this unity. Having taken his arguments to have proved this conformity, Kant reasons that we can infer the real grounds of temporal relations – grounds that make possible things outside of thought – (the conditions of the objects of experience) from the ideal grounds of cognition (the conditions of experience).

Notice, however, that if we ignore the role that the (relational) categories play in the synthesis of apprehension then it becomes difficult to see how Kant can achieve this result and refute Hume. Rather, it looks as if Kant cannot directly refute Hume at all since they presuppose such radically different metaphysics of nature.<sup>188</sup> But if the

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<sup>187</sup> Time as an a priori intuition is what makes up for the lack of analytic connections for real grounds. Longuenesse argues that no state/object would be individuated in time unless the rules for correlating things in time were always true. Like me, she sees this not as expounding a purely epistemic condition for knowledge of temporal relations but as being an ontological principle true of the objects themselves (as appearances) in order for them to be things ‘endowed with recognizable properties, and individuated in space and time’ (2005: 174).

<sup>188</sup> This is precisely Watkins’ conclusion. He rejects the kind of phenomenological account that Longuenesse and I focus on as placing too much emphasis on the ‘subjective’ aspect of the Deduction,

account presented here is on the right lines then Kant *does* have an answer to Hume: the concept of causality plays a role in the mere *perception* (synthesis of apprehension) of an event – and Hume does not doubt that he has *perceptions* – but if Kant is right then the only way the concept can play this role is if the conditions of experience are the conditions of the objects of experience. That is, the role that Kant identifies in the Deduction *is* taken for granted by Hume and is subsequently demonstrated to have as its condition the conformity of the objects themselves to the unity of time; a conformity which consists in the objects of our experience actually being causally efficacious substances. Crucially, it is the ‘subjective’ side of Kant’s project that undermines Hume’s sceptical doubts and serves as the first step towards validating the categories as being ‘able to represent necessary connections in nature’, as Watkins puts it, but without that first step Kant cannot show that our concepts enable our cognitive access to reality.<sup>189</sup> While Hume does not doubt the indispensability of the concept, he does seem to take it to be a *practical* issue only, whereas as Kant argues that without this concept (and its counterparts) we would not even have perceptions, let alone empirical knowledge of Hume’s matters of fact. But this role in perception itself turns on reality, at least at the level of ordinary experience and macroscopic objects, being accurately characterized by these concepts. By appealing to the nature of time, as something that is given to us as an a priori intuition, Kant argues that because time itself is not a direct object of perception external objects must possess certain features if they are to be consistent with the unity of time and representable in time as our a priori form of intuition. Under the methodological assumption of the ‘Copernican turn’, Kant demonstrates that the conditions of experience, e.g., presupposing that a change of state follows in accordance with a rule, truly are conditions of the objects of experience as well, i.e., that in order to be experienced the states of an object really must follow in accordance with a rule. Thus the ‘subjective’, epistemological, side of Kant’s account – and all the different acts of synthesis that it encompasses – turns out to be an

and thereby leaving no distinct work for the ‘objective’ aspect. But he then later concludes that there is no feature in Kant’s account of causality that Hume takes for granted, no neutral philosophical ground between them, and so Kant cannot directly refute Hume. See Watkins (2005: 198) for his rejection of the phenomenological interpretation and (2005: 373–389, esp. 386) for Kant’s reply to Hume.

<sup>189</sup> Watkins claims that the categories can only pick out necessary connections in nature if there are such connections to pick out (2005: 406), but as we have seen, the objective validity of the categories consists in guiding the unification of representations under the unity of apperception. Their validity consists in being concepts of an object in general, necessary for taking a manifold as constituting an objective unity under apperception. Their reality is grounded on their validity, insofar as their validity serves as the *ratio cognoscendi* or ‘ideal ground’ of their reality.

indispensable clue to legitimating the ‘objective’, metaphysical, side of the account. We can only form judgements of experience if our apprehension is already guided towards the possibility of forming such judgements by ‘rules of apprehension’. But, in turn, due to the nature of time as we generate and represent it in figurative synthesis, the objects of our experience can be known to obey the presuppositions implicitly made in the mere apprehension of appearances. In short, the categories are both objectively valid, as conditions of the thought of objects, and objectively real, as accurate characterizations of what mind-independent empirical reality must be like to conform to our forms of intuition. Of course, this does not mean that we are guaranteed to make correct judgements, for this is a matter of repeated scientific observation and discovery, but it does justify our search for laws at the empirical level, because such uniformity of nature is a condition of our very ability to engage in those practices in the first place. In brief, this is Kant’s empirical realism. Through the transcendental ideality of space and time we can know that the objects of our ordinary experience are causally efficacious (relatively) enduring substances. Mind-independent reality exists, and we have access to some of its structural features *a priori* in virtue of forms of intuition, which only represent objects when the manifold in them is brought to the unity of apperception.

But there is a problem that must have occurred to any reader remotely familiar with Kant. Kant famously denies that we can cognize things as they are in themselves, yet the position I have ascribed to him seems surprisingly realist. It may appear that I am claiming that on Kant’s account the Analogies of Experience reveal fundamental ontological principles that hold of things as they are in themselves, but this is not the case. Even if I am not ascribing knowledge of things in themselves to Kant’s account, it could still be argued that my Kant is far too metaphysical to be the ‘real’ Kant. After all, this is the philosopher who claimed to have ended the appeal and grounds for dogmatic metaphysics, who took away the metaphysician’s right to ratiocinate concerning transcendent reality, and concluded that reason’s only genuinely legitimate use is in the practical domain.<sup>190</sup> These are two important objections and if either goes through then the account of Kant I have given can hardly be called Kantian, not even in spirit. In the next Chapter I address both concerns and show that Kant can affirm both the form of empirical realism I have outlined and maintain his epistemic humility concerning things in themselves.

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<sup>190</sup> For a clear statement to this effect see Pro (4: 278). Kant develops his account of practical reason at great length in both *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason*.

### 3. Kant's Metaphysics and Epistemic Humility

#### Introduction

I have argued that Kant's transcendental idealism should be understood in relation to his claim that it is a form of empirical realism. In Chapter 1 I argued that Kant seeks to establish the legitimacy of the categories by demonstrating that they have objective validity, as the conditions of thought in a possible experience, and that he makes a step towards proving their objective reality by linking them to the synthesis of apprehension, responsible for our perception of objects. In Chapter 2 I argued that Kant completes this proof by establishing that the world of experience must be subject to the categories in order for us to determine temporal relations between objects of experience (as well as of objects to ourselves). I concluded that the categories are not just epistemic conditions of the cognition of temporal relations, or rules for thinking of determinate temporal relations, but that they actually characterize the objects of experience themselves insofar as these must exhibit certain formal features that make possible their unification in one time. Kant's proof of the categories as conditions of the objects of experience rests on his thesis of the ideality of space and time, for without this ideality it could not be established a priori that the world of experience must be subject to certain rules. I suggested that this accounts for one link between his realism and idealism. Kant can hold empirical realism (that the categories necessarily apply to the objects of possible experience) only because of his transcendental idealism. However, these claims may be thought to be in severe tension with other aspects of Kant's account. First, it may seem that I have made a pre-Kantian metaphysician out of the philosopher who was once described as taking an 'executioner's sword' to metaphysics.<sup>191</sup> Kant is famous for claiming that metaphysics, as it had been practiced up to the *Critique*, is impossible. After all, he asserts that ontology must 'give way to the modest [name] of a mere analytic of the understanding' (A247/B303). He has, to this end, often been construed as doing away with metaphysics, even to the point of making transcendental philosophy nothing over and above an analysis of the necessary conditions of the possibility of experience, where these conditions are taken in a methodological non-

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<sup>191</sup> Heinrich Heine, cited in Altman (2008: 28).

metaphysical or even anti-metaphysical sense.<sup>192</sup> Second, related to this first objection is the perhaps more serious concern that Kant, as I have presented him, ends up violating his own critical strictures that we do not and cannot know things in themselves. If Kant's analogies are ontological principles such principles may be thought to provide us knowledge of things as they are in themselves, but this thought is clearly contradicted by the text. These are two serious objections and it is the concern of the present Chapter to answer them. In the process, we will get clearer about the complicated relationship between Kant's idealism and realism.

In Section 1 I explain why Kant's transcendental idealism should still be considered a metaphysical position, even though he does criticize traditional metaphysics. I argue against the idea that Kant rejects metaphysics of any kind. I demonstrate that Kant's epistemic humility concerns the illegitimacy of the *method* of metaphysics and does not constitute an outright denial of all metaphysical claims. I term anti-metaphysical readings of transcendental idealism 'formalist' due to the way that the categories and principles are taken to be formal conditions of experience. I examine the account of Melnick (1973) as representative of this general position and explore some aspects of the larger view. I will suggest that the formalist approach can make good sense of the objective legitimacy of space and time (as forms of intuition), but that it runs into serious difficulties by trying to make sense of the legitimacy of the categories using the same model. It is here that we will revisit the status of space and time as empirically real vis-a-vis the categories as empirically real. We will further clarify our understanding of the relationship between the ideality and empirical reality of space and time by distinguishing between the related (but separate) contributions of the ideality of space and time to Kant's overall realism. It will be argued that in the Analogies, it is primarily the ideality of *time* that is responsible for grounding Kant's empirical realism with respect to the categories, but it will be shown that the ideality of *space* plays an additional role in grounding Kant's realism. In Section 2 I turn to the second objection, viz., that taking the analogies to be ontological principles implies that we have knowledge of things in themselves, which would be obviously inconsistent with Kant's frequent limitation of human knowledge to appearances. I draw out a sense of the transcendental distinction that allows for the ascription of ontological principles to the

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<sup>192</sup> By 'metaphysics', I mean a concern with the 'nature of reality', rather than just a philosophical non-empirical form of reflection. Clearly, Kant remains committed to the necessity of the latter (Gardner 2015, 2), but whether he is committed to (a form of) the former is controversial.

objects of possible experience in a way that does not contradict Kant's limitation of knowledge to appearances. This second sense takes 'appearances' to be objects as determined through the understanding as limited to the sensible conditions of its application, and 'things in themselves' to be noumena or putative objects of a pure understanding; I find this sense operative in the Amphiboly in the *Critique*, and I accordingly analyse Kant's argument both to define this second sense of the distinction and to substantiate my rejection of metaphysical 'one world' readings that maintain that, by denying us knowledge of things in themselves, Kant is denying that we can know the intrinsic natures of things.<sup>193</sup> By the end of the Chapter, we will be in a position to examine the third sense of the transcendental distinction, and to complete the account of Kant's idealism as empirical realism.

## 1. Transcendental Idealism and Metaphysics

### 1.1. The Role of the 'Copernican' Turn

It is undeniable that Kant's project in the *Critique* has huge implications for metaphysics. Indeed, in the second edition preface (1787), following the line of the *Prolegomena* (1783), Kant makes explicit that he is concerned with examining the very possibility of metaphysics as a science. Central to Kant's 'Critical' philosophy is the notion of the 'Copernican revolution', or as it is sometimes called, the 'transcendental turn'.<sup>194</sup> The famous passage in which Kant compares his investigation with Nicholas Copernicus' famous hypothesis admits of multiple interpretations, but one fairly common reading of the turn takes it to prescribe that philosophy must put aside the first-order investigation into the properties of *things* in favour of a second-order investigation into the *conditions of the possibility* of our *knowledge* of things. As Allison puts it during an explanation of Kant's conception of an 'object': 'first-order talk about objects is replaced by second-order talk about the *concept* of an object and the conditions of the representation of an object' (2004: 175). Similarly, Gardner claims that one important aspect of the revolution is the turn towards epistemology over metaphysics, but that the

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<sup>193</sup> See Section 1 of my Introduction for the three ways Kant uses the appearances/things in themselves distinction, and the Appendix for my general analysis of 'one world' metaphysical readings. I discuss the phenomenalist account of the distinction again in Chapter 4, in relation to the mathematical antinomies.

<sup>194</sup> See Gardner (2015).

revolution also entails rethinking the basic framework of epistemology as well (1999: 40).<sup>195</sup> In other words, both these components of the ‘turn’ point towards it being intended more as a metaphilosophical strategy, rather than being a straightforward metaphysical thesis about the nature of reality. As Gardner is quick to point out, however, Kant emphasizes that the arguments of the *Critique* do not just assume the methodological hypothesis of the revolution, but are rather intended to *prove* the apodictic certainty of the hypothesis (Bxxiin; 1999: 47).

The hypothesis is the idea that we might get further with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects of our cognition must conform to our conditions of cognition, rather than that our cognition must conform to the objects (in themselves) (Bxvi). This hypothesis breaks down into two claims. First, objects must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition; second, objects must conform to our conceptual conditions of cognition. Together, the two claims say that objects must conform to our conditions of cognition, rather than that our cognition must conform to the objects. A clear implication of this hypothesis is the notion that there *are* conditions of cognition in the first place, but more importantly, for Kant, investigating what these conditions are should tell us something *a priori* about the nature and scope of these conditions. Of course, what Kant means is very specific; not just any necessary condition of cognition can count as relevant, but specifically those that come from the nature of the cognitive subject (rather than the world) and those that place some kind of constraint or necessity on how we formally represent things. Kant characterizes the revolution as a ‘change in our way of thinking’ (Bxxiin), but this ‘change’ is clearly closely related to the doctrine of transcendental idealism, taken in its broadest terms, as the thesis that the objects of our cognition are appearances and not things in themselves. But all this leaves unspecified what Kant means by the hypothesis along with the status of these conditions and their objects (as appearances). In Chapters 1 and 2, I have given a detailed account of what I think it means to say that objects must conform to the conceptual conditions of their cognition, but here I want to say more about what it means for objects to conform to the conditions of their intuition, as well as to reject one important alternative to my account of the conceptual conditions.

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<sup>195</sup> The idea that the ‘Copernican revolution’ reflects a methodological standpoint is most clearly and compellingly expressed by Allison’s ‘deflationary’ interpretation of the revolution as advocating a shift from a theocentric to an anthropocentric conception of cognition and its conditions. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 2 I argued that Kant intends the principles of the employment of the categories to be metaphysical principles, characterizing objects themselves (as appearances). To that extent, I have taken a decidedly metaphysical or ontological reading of the ‘Copernican revolution’; however, there is a common line of thought that takes the revolution to reject the very idea of metaphysics as an investigation into the nature of reality. Investigating the nature of reality, or metaphysics in the old sense of the rationalists, must be replaced by a new metaphysics. If metaphysics cannot be an investigation into the nature of an *an sich* reality – that is to say that things in themselves are not and cannot be the proper objects of human inquiry – then what form can it take? Obviously, the Kantian response is to replace the old metaphysics with transcendental philosophy, according to which we can specify a priori the conditions of the possibility of experience, but that famous claim is open to wildly different interpretations. There is a clear split in the literature between so-called ‘analytic’ interpretations, and those that include some form of idealism. Strawson’s (1966) interpretation embodies the analytic strategy, according to which what can be salvaged from the disreputable idealist metaphysics of the *Critique* is the notion of metaphysically-neutral transcendental arguments. These arguments attempt to show something about our conception of experience and then derive necessary ‘transcendental’ pre-conditions of the realization of this conception.<sup>196</sup> Of course, the well-documented and obvious problem with such a realist project is that it is *prima facie* very difficult – perhaps impossible – to bridge the gap between psychological necessities of representation and reality.<sup>197</sup> By switching to some form of idealism, it at least becomes *prima facie possible* to bridge that gap, but other, equally serious problems, emerge. We saw in the Introduction that it is all too easy to construe Kant’s repeated talk of appearances being representations in a phenomenalist, even extreme Berkeleyan, fashion.<sup>198</sup> Gardner (and to an extent, Allison) offers a position that removes the resemblance to Berkeley, while also dealing with the worry that Kant cannot get to extra-representational reality through transcendental conditions, but Gardner’s position exhibits a major difference to the analytic interpretation concerning the status of these transcendental conditions.

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<sup>196</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, Guyer (1987; 2007) carries on the legacy of Strawson’s approach, buttressed by much closer analysis of the Kantian corpus.

<sup>197</sup> Stroud (1968) argues that Strawson’s attempts to employ transcendental arguments run into this problem.

<sup>198</sup> See the Appendix for my analysis of ‘two world’ and phenomenalist interpretations. We will see this again in Chapter 4.

According to what I term the ‘formalist’ approach, these conditions are taken to be nothing more than subjective conditions of representing, or mere necessities of representing. They attach not to objects but to our *mode of cognizing* objects, specify our conceptual scheme, and establish how we must represent the world through transcendental functions in order to make experience possible for us.<sup>199</sup> This interpretation takes seriously Kant’s ‘Copernican revolution’ as a shift in our way of thinking. The shift concerns our conception of objects, such that these objects can meet the conditions of their ‘epistemic seeming’, thereby removing the gap between our beliefs and reality by reconceiving what it means to know an ‘object’ in the first place, or what it means for something (e.g., causally-ordered experience) to be a transcendental condition. We constitute objects through these conditions such that we can know them. The basic idea is expressed forcefully by Gardner: ‘the existence of X can be inferred from the necessity of our representing X, because X is something whose very existence is a function of such necessities (crudely: it exists because we make it, and we make it because we need it)’ (1999: 186). Such an argument is unlikely to impress a sceptic who wants to know whether the world *really* contains the condition (e.g., is causally ordered), but Gardner takes Kant to be undermining the epistemic framework from which scepticism gets its traction (2015: 5-6). If we conceive of an object as something that *exists* with its intrinsic constitution *independently* of our cognition of it – reality in the strong sense – then the sceptic’s objections hit their target, but if we accept a weaker sense of reality – reality insofar as it necessarily conforms to our conditions of cognizing it – then the sceptical challenge can be answered. This is what Gardner (and to an extent, Allison) takes Kant’s notion of ‘appearances’ to mean: they are objects conceived as meeting the conditions of their ‘epistemic seeming’ (*ibid*), objects as they are *constituted* by the cognitive subject, rather than objects as they are in themselves (1999: 41, 122). While this way of understanding the status of objects as ‘appearances’ does, *prima facie*, avoid the pitfall of equating transcendental idealism with a more sophisticated form of Berkeleyan idealism, it is not clear, as Gardner concedes, that no strong idealist story is required at some point to deliver on the necessary conformity of appearances to transcendental conditions by showing how the mind can *impose* conceptual form on objects (2015: 7). Of course, it is also always open

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<sup>199</sup> This way of stating the position deliberately echoes Kant’s definition of the ‘transcendental’ at B25: ‘I call all cognition transcendental 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*.’

to the realist to dig in their heels and maintain that knowledge is only knowledge when it is of how things are in some (suitably qualified) sense independently of the mind.<sup>200</sup> Admittedly, the transcendental idealist could respond by pointing out that because of our cognitive capacities we will always represent objects in terms of  $x$ , whether or not  $x$  actually holds of things in themselves; furthermore, even if  $x$  does pertain to things in themselves, this is not the reason that we *represent* the world in terms of  $x$ , so how matters stand with things in themselves drops out of the relationship between mind and world as cognitively irrelevant (2015: 6).<sup>201</sup> Still, it could reasonably be objected to this that the transcendental idealist is not answering the sceptic's challenge so much as moving the goalposts in an equally dogmatic manner.<sup>202</sup> One way out of this impasse would be to show that  $x$  (whatever  $x$  is) is not only existentially tied to the function of representational necessities *but is and can be nothing more than this*. If this could be successfully demonstrated then transcendental idealism can not only answer the sceptical challenge to  $x$ , by showing that  $x$ 's legitimacy does not consist in its being mind-independently real, but also reveal something genuinely substantial and philosophically interesting about the nature of  $x$ . I think it can be successfully shown that Kant *does* adopt this strategy with respect to the justification of space and time as being empirically real while transcendentally ideal, but that we cannot straightforwardly apply this model to the legitimacy of the categories, at least not to the relational categories. To illustrate why this is the case I will analyse the account of Melnick (1973; 2006) that exemplifies this 'formalist' approach.

Melnick takes a purely formal reading of the categories. According to his interpretation, the categories as pure concepts do not pick out features of the world that it can be said to either possess or lack (2006: 225-226; 1973: 158-159). The categories do not apply to objects in this way. Rather, the categories serve as concepts that make possible an 'epistemic link' between the logical forms of judgement – our means for connecting representations – and the data given through sensibility (1973: 41-42, 52-53). They set up an ontology that allows for judgements to relate to objects in the first place, for a cognitive relation to exist between mind and world. This agrees with the idea that the 'Copernican revolution' involves a conscious shift away from determining

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<sup>200</sup> See Prichard (1909) who takes Kant's account of knowledge to simply fail to satisfy what is normally meant by 'knowledge'.

<sup>201</sup> As Kant puts it at one point: 'what the things may be in themselves I do not know, and also do not need to know, since a thing can never come before me except in appearance' (A277/B332-333).

<sup>202</sup> Gardner discusses this concern (2015: 14-16).

the nature of mind-independent reality to specifying the formal conditions of the possibility of experience, by showing that certain intuition forms and conceptual conditions play the role of transcendental functions in constituting experience. A transcendental condition is not such a condition because it is indispensable, but because it is a formal condition:

i.e., *its being not a feature of the world itself that we require in order to relate to the world but rather a feature that makes sense only in terms of (or is introduced by) that relation.* [...] The world itself being composed of objects is nonsense, for the world being composed of objects is just our relating to experience cognitively (judgmentally). It makes no sense to say that a *formal* element may not, after all, really obtain or be found in the world itself as if it ought to be, as if unless it were we would be dealing merely with our own chimeras. One cannot object that we ought not relate to the world as being composed of objects unless our so relating corresponds to the world itself really being composed of objects, or that we may relate to the world as composed of objects yet this may not be the way it really is, for our relating to the world cognitively is identical to its being composed of objects. There is no feature of the world itself that is the basis of our relating to it in a formal way; our relating to it in this way is precisely what it means for the world to have this feature. [...] We must conceptualize in terms of *causal* connections, but still are causal connections really to be found in the world? Does our conceptualization correspond to the world itself? To understand the formal nature of causality is to understand the nonsense of this question. The element of necessity that is involved in the notion of a *causal* connection is our use of the hypothetical judgment counterfactually in relation to time-determination. (1973, 158-159; Melnick's emphasis)

On this account, the categories do not *pick out features of the world itself*; their applicability consists in allowing us to relate cognitively to experience, that is, making judgements about the objects of experience with an aim to cognition.<sup>203</sup> Of course, it is

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<sup>203</sup> See also Ernst Cassirer's interpretation, an example of which is cited in Gardner (2015: 9). Cassirer takes the transcendental method not to concern things but the validity of truth, by asking not what things are or are not, but what judgements precede all others.

incontestable that the categories play the epistemic role that Melnick identifies;<sup>204</sup> indeed, this just is what I have examined at length in Chapter 1 as the *objective validity* of the categories, but even so, it is still deeply misleading to suggest that their entire legitimacy is exhausted by their objective validity. Melnick goes as far as to claim that it is ‘nonsense’ to ask whether causal connections are in the world, or whether the world is composed of objects. Yet, I take it that Kant does not think it is nonsense to ask whether the world contains causal connections or causal unity, otherwise he would not spend so much time and effort delving into the issue, as we saw in Chapter 2. Sometimes Melnick seems to be aware of this and asserts that time-determination requires that the *objects themselves* be subject to rules that allow for the determination of states and events in time. For objects to be subject to such rules just means that the objects must be determinable in time in virtue of certain *features* that those objects (appearances) must have. For example:

We require a means of concluding from features of events or states of affairs to their temporal ordering; i.e., we require rules that license inferences (“inference tickets” in Ryle’s terminology) from features of events or states of affairs to temporal ordering. But the notion of a rule that licenses such inferences is precisely the core of the notion of a causal law. The transition from (i) time-determination must be based on features of appearances, to (ii) time-determination requires causal laws, is, for Kant, an obvious transition, *for a causal law is precisely a rule that allows us, on the basis of features of appearances, to conclude to a certain temporal ordering of appearances.* (1973: 91; Melnick’s emphasis)

Melnick claims that Kant is not open to the objections that Stroud (1968: 254-257) famously makes because causality is a *formal* concept. If the concept picked out a feature of things that is required as a condition of experience, or of us relating to experience, then ‘transcendental idealism is a sham’ because our requiring *x* to obtain would not guarantee that *x* does actually obtain. Stroud’s objections in this case hit their target. However, because the concept is formal there is nothing more to *x* really obtaining than us relating to the world in just this way (Melnick 1973, 157-158; 2006:

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<sup>204</sup> See Melnick (1973: 144-151, esp. 147) for the role that the categories play in the unity of apperception.

225-226). Similarly, Gardner maintains that the task of demonstrating the validity of pure concepts does not involve showing that there are extra-representational features of the world that these concepts identify, but rather that the concepts play a transcendental function in *giving* us a world in the first place; they constitute ‘the initial conceptual form of the given’, and ‘not inferences about reality that may be made on the basis of it’ (1999: 178).

If the formalist position is right, then Kant does have an answer to the Humean sceptic, but it is one that is very weak and unlikely to persuade such a sceptic. In a nutshell, the transcendental idealist is telling the Humean that his questions are the wrong ones. It does not matter whether the world actually contains necessary connections, substances, etc., so long as these are features of our conceptual scheme, this is how we will relate to experience and the world, and, on the strongest form of this position, there is no way that such features could belong to the world itself since they are nothing more than our relating to experience in this way. As Gardner points out, to defeat the transcendental idealist, it is incumbent on the opponent to show that other concepts can play the role of constitutive transcendental functions, or that the categories fail to cohere with the overall transcendental theory of experience (1999: 179). While I agree that the categories are transcendental functions, in the sense of constituting the relation of representations to an object in general as I argued in Chapter 1, I think this position comes with serious exegetical and philosophical costs that are not outweighed by the supposed benefits. I will make a few points against the position before moving on to explain my alternative.

First, we saw above that Melnick claimed that the formal status of the transcendental conditions is what allows them to survive Stroud’s objections. *Prima facie*, this is right. If  $x$  is not the kind of thing that can be said to be either in or not in the world, then it makes no sense to object against the condition that it is not in the world, or that the world only contingently satisfies the condition, etc. However, this may be too quick. Transcendental idealism is often (unhelpfully, in my view) compared to a set of glasses that we cannot take off: everything we see is ‘coloured’ by these glasses.<sup>205</sup> In this case the glasses of spatiotemporal and conceptual form. Since we are

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<sup>205</sup> See Gardner (1999: 91-92) and Altman (2008: 111) for useful discussions of the ‘glasses analogy’. Gardner focuses on space and time and Altman on the categories; both reject the appropriateness of the analogy as a reading of transcendental idealism.

currently concerned with the conceptual conditions let us examine this form using the concepts of causality and substance.

While it may be the case that the objective validity of these concepts entails nothing more than their playing the role of transcendental functions in making experience possible – in *this* sense, they *cannot* be features of the world itself – it does not follow that there is *no* sense in which they can be said to hold of the world itself. This important point can be brought out by contrasting these two categorial *components* of the concept of an object in general with the *concept* of an object in general itself. Melnick claims that asking whether the world is composed of objects is nonsense, and here we can, I think, agree with him provided that this is understood correctly. For Kant, we saw in Chapter 1, the notion of an ‘object’ consists in thinking of the manifold of intuition as united in a concept (of an object in general), and that it is the role of the categories to establish this relation between representations and their ‘object’ that they are putatively representations of (B137). To this end, in this specific Kantian technical sense of the term, there can be no ‘objects’ in the world itself, for the representation of the world as dividing up into ‘objects’ requires reference to a cognitive subject. This does not mean, of course, that there is no mind-independent reality or existence of things, but that the representation of this reality as being of *objects* does not exist independently of cognition. Does this same logic hold for the concepts of causality and substance? I do not think so.

Representing things *as* objects does not require mind-independent reality to *do* anything, other than to *affect* the mind (in some sense) to provide sensory representations to the mind.<sup>206</sup> However, with the concept of causality, it is not enough that I relate to appearances through a counterfactual employment of the hypothetical form of judgement, but that the *things* that I identify (or in Gardner’s sense, *constitute*) must actually *do something*. Specifically, against Leibniz, Kant holds that mind-independent substances must *causally* affect each other (and us); substances must *interact* with one another (and us). So while it is the case that the formalist commentators could say that the concepts of cause and substance are nothing other than modes of judging things as determined in time (means of time-determination), the successful application of these forms of judgment to experience requires reality to do something, for something to be the case that is *not up to me* (qua constituting subject),

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<sup>206</sup> This is true of any representation of objects, notwithstanding the notorious ‘problem of affection’, which I do not intend to engage with here.

but is up to the world itself. Now, granted, to this it could be objected that things causally affecting each other is a projection of the mind, a mind-dependent connection between (in themselves) disconnected events (or, at least, if there is a connection then we cannot perceive it), but if this strategy is pursued then the realist concern regains its force. To say that we *project* connections onto the world that the world does not have (in itself) is just to say that our representations fail to grasp reality, or ‘colour’ it with features that it does not possess independently of the mind. This leads back to Hume’s sceptical conclusion that the concept is one based on habit and custom, and not on rational insight into the world, albeit with the additional point that without making use of this concept we could not have experience at all. But even with that additional ‘transcendental’ aspect to the concept, it remains the case that the formalist model could only ever say that we must treat reality *as if* it contained (relatively/absolutely) permanent substances, necessary real physical causal connections, and universal interaction, but never that the world actually does (or can) contain these features.<sup>207</sup> In terms of the argument of this thesis, the relational categories would contain objective validity but no objective reality. It might be the case that pure concepts are the kind of things that we cannot say that either they do or do not apply to reality (in itself), but on this position we nonetheless *project through them* the notion that reality *does* contain such features, even though we (Kantians) know that it does not. As such, Kant would be open once more to the charge that his transcendental idealism degrades reality, so that we can say only that we know how things must *seem* to us because our minds impose such forms on reality and never how they *really* are, because these forms *distort* our representation of reality.<sup>208</sup> It is no help to appeal to the ‘object-enabling’ features of these conditions because it remains the case that we project features onto reality that reality cannot really have. At best, transcendental idealism becomes a theory about how *we must think* (i.e., a set of subjective necessities of representation) and not a theory about the conditions under which thought and cognition can represent an objective

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<sup>207</sup> See Allais (2015: 49) who denies that Kant argues that we must treat our perceptions *as if* they contain substances, causes, etc. I agree. Nonetheless, the interpretation is not groundless and Kant was clearly tempted by a position like this. For example: ‘We do not have sensations of outer substances (only of their outer effects on us), *rather we add them to sensations in thought*. But only in relation to the affections of our mind; thus not as what they are in themselves, but as that which is permanent in appearance’ (R5358, 18: 160, 1776-1778; my emphasis).

<sup>208</sup> Of course, this will not be an effective argument against those who do read Kant’s idealism in this way, but it should be a serious cause for concern for those who take seriously Kant’s denial that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is one between illusion and reality (B69).

world (i.e., a set of objective necessities).<sup>209</sup> Kant explicitly denies that his account of the categories reduces them to subjective necessities, which leads to my second point: the formalist account is exegetically flawed.

Kant explicitly rejects the idea that the categories represent only subjective necessities. In contrasting his position with the alternatives of Humean empiricism and pre-established harmony/pre-formation, Kant writes that, on the assumption of these other accounts ‘I would not be able to say that the effect is combined with the cause in the object (i.e., necessarily), but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think of this representation otherwise than as so connected’ (B168). Kant does *not* want to say merely that we judge of things in a certain way because of the way our minds are constituted, but that effects really are necessarily connected with their causes, etc., in the objects of experience. Although Melnick cites B168 as evidence that the categories are not just indispensable postulates of thought (1973: 158), it is very hard to see how they can be anything other than exactly just this on his account.<sup>210</sup> Presumably, Melnick thinks they are more than this because of the formal status of these conditions: there cannot be any question about whether they really obtain because they *cannot fail* to obtain, given their formal status. As I suggested above, however, this reeks of a merely verbal victory over the sceptic, and it also transforms Kant’s principle that the conditions of possible experience are equivalent to the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience into vacuous babble. Also, just as Kant criticized Hume for dropping the notion of ‘necessary connection’ from his conception of causality (B5), so too could we accuse Kant of dropping the notion of ‘connection between objects’ from his conception, in favour of a conception where the concept is nothing more than a rule-governed synthesis of representations in consciousness.<sup>211</sup> Kant does not present his account in this way. Kant does not present the analogies overall as if they specified merely how we must treat our perceptions; he presents them as metaphysical principles

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<sup>209</sup> See Kitcher (1990: 1; 2011: 218) who holds that ‘we can do no other’ than apply the categories and that this is Kant’s answer to the *quid juris*. See Shaddock (2015: 267-269) for discussion. Shaddock rightly rejects interpretations like Kitcher’s as subjectivist, holding only that the categories are subjectively necessary. He argues that Allison’s (2004) account, despite rejecting subjectivism, is also subjectivist by Kant’s standards insofar as Allison relativizes the concept of an object to its necessary epistemic conditions (2015: 70-71; Allison 2004, 12), but I am unconvinced this is right, since Shaddock neglects Allison’s position that Kant rejects a theocentric conception of cognition and its norms. See Chapter 4.

<sup>210</sup> Interestingly, Kant does characterize the categories as practical postulates of thought for the use of the understanding in R6109 (18: 457, 1783-1784), though I take him to mean by this merely that they have a restricted *conditional* application only to possible objects of experience, which is what he affirms in the passage.

<sup>211</sup> See also A91-92/B123-124 and B168.

about the actual nature of the objects of experience. The first analogy is: ‘All appearances contain that which persists (**substance**) as *the object itself* (my emphasis), and that which can change as its mere determination, i.e., a way in which the object exists’ (A182). The second analogy is: ‘All alterations occur in accordance with the law of connection of cause and effect’ (B231); and the third analogy: ‘All substances, insofar as they are **simultaneous**, stand in thoroughgoing community (i.e., interaction with one another)’ (A211). The principles unambiguously assert that they hold of the actual objects of experience, and not the comparatively weaker claim that we must regard the objects of our perception *as if* they behave in certain ways (as substances, causes, etc.).<sup>212</sup> Granted, Kant is much more hesitant in the *Prolegomena* (§26) to say that the principles hold of objects. Indeed, in addition to affirming (as expected) that they do not hold of things in themselves, he is unwilling to state that they even hold *of appearances*, because technically they hold only of our *cognition* of things *as* appearances, which might be thought to support the formalist position (Pro, 4: 309-310). However, closer inspection of the text shows that the natural reading of this section is that Kant is explaining the *mode of proof* of the principles, and insofar as this turns on the possibility of experience rather than the dogmatic method of rationalist metaphysics,<sup>213</sup> he is quite correct to say that the principles hold directly only in relation to the possibility of experience, rather than directly of appearances. At any rate, the *Critique* (especially the B-edition) must surely take interpretative precedence over the *Prolegomena*, and while there are passages that could be thought to support the formalist reading of the categories, on balance the *Critique* affirms the metaphysical interpretation.

My final point is that the formalist approach makes it very hard to see what the difference is between so-called ‘constitutive’ and ‘regulative’ principles. The former are constitutive because they are transcendental conditions of the possibility of experience that have been legitimated through a transcendental deduction; they are the principles of the Aesthetic and Analytic. However, the latter are *also* afforded transcendental status by Kant, but he denies that they have objective validity, or claims that if they do, then they have only ‘indeterminate’ validity and cannot receive a transcendental deduction

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<sup>212</sup> The text of the Third Analogy, in particular, contains many more examples. See A211-215/B257-262.

<sup>213</sup> I expand on the method of traditional metaphysics below.

(A663-664/B691-692, A669-670/B697-698).<sup>214</sup> Although there is much dispute in the literature over the consistency and cogency of Kant's account of 'regulative' principles, it is clear that he feels the need to draw a distinction between them and the principles of pure understanding; this is very hard to make sense of on the formalist account if Kant's claim that the regulative principles are also transcendental is taken seriously.<sup>215</sup> The constitutive principles have more than a merely 'as-if' application, but this is exactly how Kant characterizes the regulative principles of reason and their application to experience.<sup>216</sup> However, I want to make it clear that I reject the formalist position only in relation to the categories and principles of understanding; I think the position accurately models Kant's account of the forms of intuition, but it is precisely the significant difference between the forms of intuition and the forms of thought that necessitates the need for the much lengthier deduction of the latter.<sup>217</sup> To see this, let us revisit and expand on Kant's thesis that space and time are transcendentally ideal.

By the transcendental ideality of space and time, I am referring to how space and time, for Kant, are only the forms of appearances and not features of things in themselves. They do not pertain to or describe things in themselves, nor are they to be understood as being themselves *entities*, *properties* or *relations* between things (A26/B32, A32-33/B49). I agree with Allison that space and time are not to be understood ontologically, but epistemologically (2012: 72). This means that space and time are *forms* for intuiting objects, forms of representing; or, as Gardner puts it, ways that objects are '*brought to appear*' (1999: 109). They are forms of intuition which, on my account, as the *forms of empirical objects* are generated through figurative synthesis, an act of the mind that produces space and time as formal representations through its own activity of self-affection (B67-68). Allison claims that Kant's chief move is to 'deontologize' space and time, by viewing them as subjective conditions of cognition, rather than *an sich* realities of any sort (2004: 121, 132). This is right, to an

<sup>214</sup> That said, Kant *does* label the dynamical principles as being regulative, but this is not in the same sense as in the Transcendental Dialectic. Kant distinguishes between the dynamical principles as 'regulative principles of **intuition**' that are constitutive of experience and regulative principles of reason that are not (A664/B692). See A178/B221 and A180/B223 for the distinction between constitutive and regulative principles of the understanding.

<sup>215</sup> See Guyer (2005), Buchdahl (1969; 1974) and Allison (2004: Ch. 15).

<sup>216</sup> For examples, see A616-617/B644-645, A619/B647, A643-645/B671-673, A670-671/B698-699, A685/B713 and A686/B715.

<sup>217</sup> This is explicitly denied by Melnick, who maintains that the objective validity of the categories should be understood on the same model as that of space and time; more precisely, that the idea that space and time do not apply to things in themselves should be understood in light of how the categories, as formal conditions, do not apply to things in themselves (1973: 139).

extent. Yes, it is the case that space and time are viewed by Kant as forms of representing or perception and, as such, their phenomenological character cannot be carried over to things in themselves, nor can the latter share a qualitatively identical form with appearances, but it does not follow that Kant is not interested in the kind of *reality* that space and time have. In fact, the reverse is the case: it is because space and time are only real *as* forms of bringing appearances to appear, that is, understood in terms of their epistemic functions, that Kant can block the (otherwise obvious) objection that these forms distort the mind's representation of reality (in itself).<sup>218</sup> Space and time being real, on Kant's account, *just means* that things can be represented to consciousness through these forms: they are real *as* forms of intuition/pure intuitions. As phenomenological, pre-conceptual forms of awareness, space and time cannot be said to have any other kind of reality. Put bluntly: the (transcendental) ideality of space and time just is the (empirical) reality of space and time.

To say that empirical objects *really are* in space and time – i.e., that the objects of our experience are spatiotemporal, or that space and time are *objectively valid* – is just to say that these objects can be represented spatiotemporally. But since space and time are *nothing more than* forms of representing objects in (pure and empirical) intuition, then there is *nothing more* to objects being in space and time than their being *represented as being* in space and time (B41; A35-36/B52; esp. A374n-375n). It is easy to see that space and time can be treated *formally* in this way precisely because they have been *deflated* or ‘deontologized’ from being substances or properties to being sources of cognition, but it remains an ontological thesis. Space and time apply only to appearances because the only objects that we can perceive are those that affect us; but the form that affection takes is already ‘in us’ (in the transcendental sense).<sup>219</sup> Thus, space and time can be said to hold only of appearances because things in themselves are things conceived, or thought, independently of the sensible conditions of experience. Since objects are in space and time *only in virtue* of the relationship they have to the mind in experience, then Kant can maintain both his empirical realism and

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<sup>218</sup> An objection which once again brings to mind the idea of the distorting glasses that we can never remove. Allison is emphatic that the ideality of space and time does not threaten their empirical reality (2004: 121), but I suggest that the only way for this claim to hold is that we accept that Kant's is an ontological thesis about the real nature of space and time. Of course, this has not stopped Kant's critics from attributing to him an appearance/reality distinction.

<sup>219</sup> Kant distinguishes between transcendental and empirical senses of ‘in us’ and ‘outside us’ at A373. Something exists outside us transcendently when it is a thing that ‘exists distinct from us’, and a thing is ‘outside us’ empirically when it is a thing that is to be encountered in space. Something is ‘in us’ empirically when it is an object of inner sense (time). I discuss this distinction further in the Appendix.

transcendental idealism in relation to space and time precisely (and only) because of their formal nature. There is no gap, then, between the *objective validity* of the forms of intuition, as conditions of cognition, and their *objective reality*, because there is nothing more than the forms of intuition as such forms must do, or conditions that they must meet, other than *making possible* the representation of things in intuition. Nonetheless, this is not the whole story, for as we saw back in the Introduction to this thesis, there remains an explanatory gap in the current account: if space and time are just subjective sensible conditions of human experience what separates (in principle) those things or aspects of reality that can appear and those that ostensibly cannot?

Because of the analysis given in Chapter 2, we can now fill that gap and say that only because the *things* which can be given to us in space and time have, in themselves (as appearances), certain ontological (but not directly perceivable) features, i.e., they are causally efficacious substances, that it is possible for these very things to be objects of *our* spatiotemporal intuition. That is to say, space and time are empirically real, or really apply to things that can be given in our forms of intuition, because those things meet the conditions for their representation under the unity of apperception: all appearances must be orderable in *one* space and *one* time. Since representing appearances *as* temporally determined requires the analogies as principles of time-determination, which themselves reflect the *real* grounds of time-determination, to represent something in space and time is already enough to warrant the claim that the thing really is in space and time. Or, equivalently, space and time are unconditionally valid of *all* objects of *the senses*. Kant can therefore say that objective validity and objective reality do not come apart for the forms of intuition, whereas they can come apart with respect to the categories, and it is exactly this possibility that generates the transcendental spectre exorcized in the B-Deduction. There is a further link between the ideality of space and time and Kant's realism that I have not yet identified, but it is relevant here for showing just how inseparable validity and reality are with respect to these forms: the ideality of space in Kant's rejection of empirical idealism.

Kant's refutation of idealism is famous in the history of Western philosophy because of the importance it attaches to the existence of the outside world as a basic presupposition of the determination of the self in time. But there is another aspect of Kant's rejection of idealism that receives less attention. The ideality of space plays a simpler role in constituting Kant's realism. Basically, if space were a thing in itself then in addition to the problems of accounting for a priori knowledge of it – something that

Kant thinks we have – it would be hard to see how the fact that we represent things spatially would afford us knowledge that things really are in space. However, if space is ideal in just the way that was explained in Chapter 1, that is, it is a form of intuition but not yet itself an actual (formal) representation, then something must be responsible for our acquiring the formal representation of space itself. We saw that Kant explicitly rejected the idea that the formal representations of space and time are innate as the forms of objects/objects themselves (Dis, 8: 222-223). Rather, only the possibility of the representation is innate, but in order to acquire it we must be affected by external things in order to stimulate our cognitive faculties into action; only then do we acquire the formal representation of space. In this way, the original acquisition of space requires the occurrence of experience, but it is not itself derived *from* experience. In other words, in order for space to be given to us as an actual representational object (formal intuition), there must be an external reality in order for this form of intuition to be realized: ‘if extended beings were not perceived, one would not be able to represent space’ (A292/B349).<sup>220</sup> Once again, then, the transcendental ideality of space and time is what guarantees the empirical reality of the objects of experience.<sup>221</sup>

Although it is often a neglected point, Kant does claim that the Transcendental Aesthetic contains a *transcendental deduction* of space and time (A87-88/B119-120); it is not just the categories that require a deduction (although they are the only concepts that receive a chapter titled as a deduction). Because space and time are sensible conditions of *intuition*, showing that they are transcendental conditions is enough to provide a deduction of them, for nothing can be given to us as an object unless it can appear in space and time (*ibid*). As we saw in Chapter 1, the case is not the same with the categories, for these are not conditions of objects being given in intuition. Nonetheless, Kant’s argument is lacking two important claims that are needed in order for his claim that a sufficient deduction of space and time has been given to hold. The first is the formal nature of space and time. The second is the discursivity thesis.

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<sup>220</sup> See also Pro (4: 337) where Kant asserts that his formal idealism ‘destroys material or Cartesian idealism’.

<sup>221</sup> Collins makes this connection between the ideality of space and reality of the external world but in connection to Kant’s argument in the Fourth Paralogism (1999: 54-55, 80-81). I think this is best taken as an example of how Kant *should* have argued in the Fourth Paralogism, but unfortunately did not. I think we can agree, though, that this argument is what can be extracted from Kant’s discussion even if we cannot agree on whether or not it is what he actually said. I discuss the Fourth Paralogism in the Appendix.

As explained above, Kant's deduction of space and time only succeeds in showing their objective validity and reality – or better, that objective validity and reality cannot come apart for them – if he shows that the nature of space and time is exhausted by what can be attributed to them as pure intuitions, viz., their status as formal sensible conditions. This is important. For without showing their formality Kant is left wide-open to the rejoinder of the neglected alternative. As we saw in the Introduction, the natural conclusion to draw from the success of space and time in representing objects in intuition is simply that we can represent objects spatiotemporally (through forms of intuitions) *because* objects *really are* in space and time, *independently* of our forms of intuition. The discursivity thesis is equally necessary. Both intuitions and concepts are necessary for cognition, but because of discursivity, there is a difference in what these components are applied to. Space and time are forms of a content that is essentially formless and already intrinsically sensible (manifold of sensation). There is no prior constraint placed on space and time in terms of them fulfilling their role in generating cognition; by contrast, the categories are applied to sensible intuitions, intuitions that already have *non-conceptual* spatiotemporal form. There is therefore a problem concerning how something conceptual (the categories) could apply to and order something intrinsically non-conceptual (Gardner 1999, 129). To make matters worse, it is uncontroversial to say that we experience the world in space and time: every event, every perception we have occurs in one or both of these forms, but it is not obvious that the categories enjoy this status. As we have seen, this difference is what gives rise to the transcendental spectre that there could be things that can appear without being thinkable as objects by the understanding. Part of Kant's response was to argue that the categories are pre-discursive rules of apprehension, rules for representing or apprehending the content of intuition; in short, for turning empirical intuition into perception (empirical consciousness of appearance). The other part was to argue that the categories hold of the objects of experience themselves insofar as the objects of our intuition must have certain ontological features in order for appearances to be united under the unity of apperception. It is their relation to sensible intuition that provides sensible content to the categories, relating them to the world, without which they are merely logical forms for thinking a manifold *as* an object in general. The principles of substance, causality, etc., hold of objects independently of the mind, but there is an important sense in which Kant limits the application of the categories to appearances, and that is to claim that the categories, taken abstractly, do *not* apply to objects (that is, to *things in general*).

Rather, the objects are to be subsumed under the *schemata* of the categories, not the categories themselves (A181/B223). This is because the categories only have application to objects that *can be given* in space and time, since these are the sensible conditions under which the categories can be employed empirically. This is the sense in which they can be said to hold only of appearances and not of things in themselves. As Kant succinctly states regarding the categories in the Phenomena and Noumena chapter:

In a word, all of these concepts could not be **vouched for** and their **real** possibility thereby established, if all sensible intuition (the only one we have) were taken away, and there then remained only **logical** possibility, i.e., that the concept (thought) is possible is not the issue; the issue is rather whether it relates to an object and therefore signifies anything. (B302n-303n)

Just because the categories hold only of appearances does not mean that they cannot hold of actual objects in a *mind-independent* sense. Indeed, if the categories are to be distinguishable from the ideas of reason then they must be constitutive of the objects of experience, not just (subjectively) how we must think them given the nature of our cognitive faculties. Still, it could be objected that my account ignores or seriously downplays Kant's criticisms of metaphysics and ontology, and consequently has him engaged in the very enterprises that he disparaged.

## 1.2. Kant's 'Critical' Conception of Metaphysics

While it is undeniably true that Kant does reject general metaphysics or ontology, along with so-called 'special' metaphysics – the concern of the Transcendental Dialectic – it does not follow that he rejects *all* metaphysical speculations, or that his own position does not contain any metaphysical claims or commitments.<sup>222</sup> Rather, I will argue that he introduces a new method for metaphysics

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<sup>222</sup> Ameriks stresses that the Transcendental Analytic does little by itself to demolish particular metaphysical claims and theories and that even the Transcendental Dialectic does not recommend a wholesale dismissal of metaphysics (2003: 120-121). Ameriks also emphasizes the metaphysical aspects of Kant's doctrines against those who neglect them (2003: 147). Similarly, Moore points out that if Kant's denial of metaphysical speculation is supposed to encompass all a priori knowledge then Kant's own positive conclusions, such as those reached in the Analogies, are illegitimate as well (2011: 236). Allais reaches a similar verdict: that just because Kant is concerned with disputing the metaphysics of his predecessors this is no reason to think that he does not have metaphysical commitments of his own,

to follow and that this method yields immanent metaphysics. Kant is concerned to curb the pretensions of sensibility and understanding from thinking that they reach and cognize objects beyond possible experience. Related to this project is his concern with showing that sensibility and understanding themselves only apply to objects under certain a priori conditions. This means that metaphysics faces a *restriction* of its claims to knowledge and not a complete denial. That this is so becomes clearer once we examine exactly what Kant understands by ‘metaphysics’. Kant replaces the dogmatic procedure of his predecessors (of equating logical and ontological relations) with transcendental philosophy, but we should be in no doubt that the conclusions of the latter are still metaphysical.

Although examining the possibility of metaphysics as a science is the primary aim of the *Critique* (B22), Kant discusses metaphysics itself surprisingly little. In the Preface and Introduction to the *Critique* we are told little about what metaphysics is for Kant. There is the famous claim that metaphysics must contain synthetic a priori cognitions if it is to be a science (B18), but this does not distinguish metaphysics from any other theoretical science of reason (A10/B14). What is distinctive of metaphysics is that it is the attempt to cognize things a priori from mere concepts, devoid of any influence from experience or intuition (Bxiv). Kant complicates matters by dividing metaphysics into various branches. In the Preface he simply claims that metaphysics consists of two parts. The first part is concerned with what can be cognized a priori concerning the objects of experience, or as he puts it: metaphysics ‘concerns itself with concepts *a priori* to which the corresponding objects appropriate to them can be given in experience’, for with the ‘Copernican’ method of the *Critique*, Kant claims not only to be able to show how a priori cognition is possible but also takes himself to have delivered ‘satisfactory proofs of the laws that are the *a priori* ground of nature, as the sum total of objects of experience’ (Bxviii-xix). This is the combined result of the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic. Kant clearly takes his positive contribution in the *Critique* to still be metaphysics. This part of metaphysics, later identified as ‘immanent’ metaphysics (A845/B873), is contrasted with the second part, later identified as ‘transcendent’ (*ibid*). Transcendent metaphysics concerns what can be cognized *beyond* experience (cognition of God, immortal souls and the world-whole) and this is the part that Kant rejects in the *Critique* (Bxviii-Bxix). The point is

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especially once we see that what Kant means by ‘metaphysics’ is not the same as what we take it to mean today (2015: 5-7).

reinforced when Kant comes to outline his revolution in philosophy: it is not the overthrow of metaphysics that he seeks, but rather the transformation of ‘the accepted procedure’ of metaphysics (Bxxii). The traditional procedure is the attempt to derive rational cognition from concepts *alone*, sometimes described as doing metaphysics *dogmatically*, and this Kant completely rejects on two grounds: first, it is one of the main aims of the *Critique*, particularly of the Transcendental Analytic, to show that no cognition arises from concepts in isolation from intuition; second, even if this were possible, then, by the argument of the Introduction, it would still not be metaphysics since metaphysics must contain *synthetic a priori* cognitions and not merely analytic ones, since the latter add nothing new, being a mere analysis of concepts (B23).<sup>223</sup> In the Architectonic Kant defines metaphysics in general as ‘the whole (true as well as apparent) philosophical cognition from pure reason in systematic interconnection’ (A841/B869). The Architectonic introduces the ideas of the ‘metaphysics of nature’ and the ‘metaphysics of morals’. The very fact that Kant thinks that a metaphysics of nature is still achievable (though not, in the end, achieved by Kant)<sup>224</sup> is more than enough to show that Kant takes metaphysics to still be a worthy goal of transcendental philosophy, albeit a metaphysics that must operate within severely restricted boundaries.

In Chapter 4 I will explain the importance of the antinomies to Kant’s argument in the *Critique*, but it is worth noting now that the claims of both parties in the antinomies fall under the heading of ‘transcendent’ metaphysics, because although they concern appearances (empirical objects), the ‘world’ is a pseudo-empirical concept (Grier 2001, 176; Allison 2004, 390; A479/B509; Pro, 4: 337-338). This means that while the object of the concept is empirical, it is nonetheless an (unachievable) idea of reason because the totality or sum total of appearances can never be *given as* a totality.<sup>225</sup> In employing the idea, reason strives for completeness in the series of conditions, and it is just this striving for conditions that Kant uses to first characterize metaphysics in the *Critique* as a battlefield of endless controversies (Avii-viii). Kant rejects this kind of metaphysics because it employs principles not meant for use in experience and that instead overstep all bounds of experience (A296/B352-353), even though, in the case of the antinomies, these principles do concern appearances. None of this, however, rules out the possibility of ascribing ontological principles to objects in

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<sup>223</sup> In the *Prolegomena*, Kant concedes that metaphysics will still contain analytic cognitions, but maintains that the main part of it must consist of synthetic *a priori* judgements (4: 273-274).

<sup>224</sup> He did, however, go on to write a metaphysics of morals in a work of the same title.

<sup>225</sup> Kant refers to this as the ‘transcendental cognition of the world’ (A846/B874).

virtue of which they are objects of experience; the (relational) categories yield such principles.

It could be objected that Kant rejects ontology (in addition to transcendent metaphysics), so how can the *Critique* contain ontological principles? It is true that Kant rejects ontology, as we saw above (A247/B303), but we have to understand exactly what Kant means by ‘ontology’. Unfortunately, Kant does not tell us much in the *Critique*, but he does elaborate in his metaphysics lectures, following the *Critique*. Ontology is ‘the science of the properties of all things in general’ (LM, 29: 784, 1782-1783). As Manfred Baum explains, with this strict definition, according to which ontology deals with the *universal* predicates of *all* things as such, Kant is criticizing Baumgarten’s formulation according to which ontology deals with the *more general* properties of things (2011: 63-66, esp. 65).<sup>226</sup> Kant’s revised notion of ontology, however, contains nothing but the a priori concepts used to think a thing in general, though this is an abstract notion without any (actual) determinate object (*ibid*).<sup>227</sup> Since the concepts that structure the thought of an object in general are from understanding and reason, this is really *self*-cognition and belongs to transcendental philosophy (LM, 29: 757, 1782-1783). Indeed, these a priori concepts of ontology are the categories.<sup>228</sup> Any science that cognizes the properties of all things must be a priori, because experience can never show that *all* objects must have certain properties; it can only show that the objects perceived so far have them (LM, 29: 785-786, 1782-1783). Kant, in contrast to the suggestions of the *Critique*, explicitly states that ontology, as defined, *does* belong to transcendental philosophy (rather than the latter being the replacement of it), and so it cannot be ontology *per se* that he means to reject. Rather, as with metaphysics, the *procedure* for doing ontology must be transformed, and this transformation yields a restriction on the legitimate scope of metaphysical claims.

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<sup>226</sup> See also Boer (2014: 225) who explains that the conception of ontology that Kant inherited was Wolffian and concerned the investigation ‘into the conceptual determinations that allow us to achieve knowledge of something at all.’

<sup>227</sup> As was explained at length in Chapter 1, thinking an object in general is to represent something *as* an object by regarding one’s representations as a synthetic unity, and thus as representations of *something* in a broad sense.

<sup>228</sup> Indeed in some places Kant refers to the pure concepts as ‘transcendental concepts of ontology’ (LM, 28: 263-265, 1770s) and in others equates the principles of experience with the synthetic a priori propositions as constituting an ‘inference of ontology’ (R552, 18: 219). The former reference does have to be considered in the context of rational psychology, admittedly, but it is nonetheless very suggestive. In case there is any doubt that the transcendental concepts through which the ‘I’ is determined are the same as the categories, see A398-400, where Kant states that the predicates of the pure ‘I’ are just the categories. Perhaps the clearest example is R5603 (18: 247, 1778-1780s): ‘We have spoken in ontology of concepts of the understanding the use of which in experience is possible because they themselves make experience possible’.

Nonetheless, Kant does reject the idea that ontology has an actual object (being in general); for in thinking a thing in general one is not yet thinking any *particular* thing, not even an unknown something. Rather, the subject is merely considering formally how any ‘object’ must be conceptualized in thought, but no object has yet been *given* (for this requires intuition).<sup>229</sup> To take these conceptual conditions of thought as principles that lead to knowledge of actual objects leads to metaphysical error.<sup>230</sup> But this is because an essential component is missing: a factoring in of the means by which an object can be given. This is nothing other than space and time as the forms of sensibility. Since only objects of the senses can be given through space and time, it follows that the categories can only be legitimately applied to objects of the senses.

Preceding the passage where Kant replaces ontology, he asserts that:

Now from this it follows irrefutably that the pure concepts of the understanding can **never** be of **transcendental** use, but always only of **empirical** use, and that the principles of pure understanding can be related to objects of the senses only in relation to the general conditions of a possible experience, but never to things in general (without taking regard of the way in which we might intuit them).  
(A246/B303)

Taking into account what Kant says in his lectures in combination with the arguments of the *Critique*, it is clear that Kant does not reject the idea that certain principles can be known to hold a priori of objects, but he limits the scope of these principles to objects of *possible experience*; thus the rejection of ontology is *not* the rejection of attempts at a priori cognition (or claims about objects), but the rejection of attempting to speculate *purely* through concepts, isolated from the conditions under which alone they can be known to apply to, and thus determine, objects. When commentators such as Michelle Grier claim that Kant turns ontological conditions into epistemological conditions or replaces ontology with ‘transcendental epistemology’ (2001: 85, 107), this is only partially true. These conditions figure as epistemic conditions insofar as they are necessary for us to have knowledge of these objects, but they are also still ontological in the sense of characterizing objects (of possible experience) themselves. The exception

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<sup>229</sup> See A845/B873, where Kant claims that considering reason and understanding as a system of concepts related to objects in general is to consider objects without assuming that they are given. He terms this ‘*Ontologia*’ and claims that it is the province of transcendental philosophy.

<sup>230</sup> See Section 2 below and Chapter 4.

to this, as discussed above, is space and time as forms of intuition, for here Kant's move is precisely to argue that space and time are not entities or properties but only internal structures for perceiving and organizing appearances. The (relational) categories, by contrast, concern the synthesis of representations necessary for a temporally unified consciousness, but given the argument of the Analogies, this requires that appearances (empirical objects) themselves must be determinable in time in virtue of ontological features that, in Kant's account, also serve primarily (for us) as epistemic conditions. The way to discovering this, however, is not through a first-order consideration of objects, as in traditional metaphysics, but with a second-order investigation into the forms, concepts and principles required for any thought and experience at all. We cannot cognize the possibility of causality, etc., from the pure concepts alone, but always require the relationship of the concept to 'a third thing', the possibility of experience; taken in this relation, then, we can cognize a priori the laws of the connection of things in general, as objects of possible experience (A766/B794).<sup>231</sup> Further, provided that we apply the categories only in accordance with their schemata (under the conditions of space and time, accordingly) then we can also conclude that the conditions of experience are *the conditions of things*; if we try to think up new objects or features independently of these conditions then these concepts do not have any object and remain empty (but logically coherent) fictions (A770-771/B798-799).<sup>232</sup>

If my argument is accepted, then I have shown that attributing the position I have described to Kant is compatible with his rejection of traditional metaphysics, but it could still be argued that my account does contradict his frequent denial that the principles of experience apply to things in themselves, and his famous conclusion that we can have no knowledge of things in themselves.<sup>233</sup> If by 'things in themselves' Kant is understood to mean straightforwardly 'mind-independent objects' or 'how things are independently of the mind' with appearances meaning 'how things seem to be' or 'how we represent things', then there is a contradiction, but I now hope to show that this is not the only employment Kant makes of the distinction, nor is the sense operative in his denial that the categories characterize things in themselves. We now need to see if there are other ways of understanding the distinction that avoid the egregious position of

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<sup>231</sup> Although what empirical features and laws actually hold cannot be discovered at all without instruction from experience.

<sup>232</sup> See also A783/B811.

<sup>233</sup> For Kant's denial that the categories characterize things in themselves/noumena, see B149, B309, A286-287/B242-243, A288-289/B344-345, A358-359 and Pro (4: 312-313).

Berkeleyan phenomenism, do not reduce appearances to illusions, and are consistent with the account of empirical realism that I have given, along with being broadly consistent with the text. I think that there are, and I will now establish the first of these additional compatible senses.

## 2. ‘Things in Themselves’ As Objects of Pure Understanding

We can make a start on formulating a non-distorting version of Kantian humility by examining Kant’s repeated claim that noumena or things in themselves are ‘objects of pure understanding’, specifically, his account of metaphysical error in the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection. This section concerns Kant’s account of how Leibniz arrived at his rationalist doctrines of monadology and pre-established harmony by confusing the different representations of the mind.

The Amphiboly closes the Transcendental Analytic, offering the first of various accounts of metaphysical error that Kant proffers in the *Critique*.<sup>234</sup> Specifically, Kant diagnoses Leibniz’s error as involving a ‘transcendental amphiboly’. A transcendental amphiboly is Kant’s term for confusing ‘the pure object of the understanding with the appearance’ (A270/B326). Although this sounds vague and too broad, it actually designates a very specific error. The error is of confusing an object as it would be *thought* through pure concepts alone with the object as it *appears* through sensibility, or more directly, taking a comparison that pertains to the content of concepts (a comparison of concepts) to pertain to the objects themselves (a comparison of things), which results from conflating the contributions of understanding and sensibility (Longuenesse 1998, 133).<sup>235</sup> Kant identifies four sets of concepts of comparison or reflection and demonstrates how each misled Leibniz to an ‘intellectual system of cognition’ (A280/B336). The four sets are <identity> and <difference>, <agreement> and <opposition>, <inner> and <outer>, and <matter> and <form> (determinable and determination) (A261/B317). The clearest example is the first, so I shall use that to illustrate the general idea.

If some object is presented to us multiple times with the same inner determinations – by this Kant simply means properties – then, according to a

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<sup>234</sup> See Grier (2001: 101-130) for discussion.

<sup>235</sup> Although she is concerned with what it can tell us about Kant’s views on concept-formation, Longuenesse (1998: Ch. 6) gives an excellent analysis of the overall argument of the Amphiboly.

comparison of concepts or mere ‘logical reflection’, it is the same object. For example, if an *x* is presented to me with four legs, a wagging tail and it makes barking noises at me then since this *x* exhibits the same marks as the *y* I later see I can assume that *x* and *y* fall under the same concept ‘dog’ because they share the same inner determinations. I have compared these representations with respect only to their belonging under the same concept. I have made a comparison of concepts according to the marks that constitute the concepts in question and have determined that my concept of *x* and my concept of *y* are identical. If, however, I am concerned with *x* as an *appearance*, and multiple objects appear to me as *x* then I am concerned with a comparison through sensibility, the forms of which are space and time. If I intuit multiple objects that appear as *x* then it is enough that they occupy different places in space, represented through sensibility, for the objects to count as individuals, even if there is no conceptual (‘inner’) difference between them. Yet, represented as an *object of pure understanding*, according to mere inner determinations, there is only one dog.<sup>236</sup> The point may seem trivial, but if Kant is right, it is just such a conflation as this that leads Leibniz to his famous principle of the identity of indiscernibles (A263-264/B319-320).<sup>237</sup> That is, since space and time are held to be *distortions* or confused representations of things in themselves for Leibniz, then only conceptual considerations – inner determinations – discoverable (in principle, even if not in practice for us) through analysis of concepts can be the ground of knowledge. This is exactly what we see in this passage. An object that is *represented* through the pure understanding – what it means to be an ‘object of pure understanding’ – just is an object that is represented or *thought* through only conceptual properties; given that these properties are the only true representation of things (as they are in themselves), since perception is unreliable, it follows straightforwardly that the principle of the identity of indiscernibles holds for objects.<sup>238</sup> Kant maintains, *pace* Leibniz, that because of the equally fundamental contribution of sensibility and its forms for cognition, the principle *only* holds for a comparison of representations under a concept, not for a comparison of objects (appearances) (*ibid*). If, following Leibniz, we take the appearance (object of sensibility thought through schematized categories, represented through space and time) for a thing in itself (object

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<sup>236</sup> Kant’s own example is the comparison of two raindrops regarding their inner determinations (as indiscernible) and their appearances in space (as individual drops).

<sup>237</sup> See Guyer and Wood (1998: n.100) for further discussion. Although it is not a point I want to pursue further here, it could be argued that a similar line of thinking underlies Spinoza’s Proposition 5 in *The Ethics* that ‘In nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute’ (1996: 3).

<sup>238</sup> See Leibniz (1989: 30-34, 215-217).

represented through concepts alone, not represented in space and time where the latter are confused representations of the former) then we inevitably arrive at Leibniz's view that where there is no 'inner' difference between objects, then they are identical, an essential component of Leibniz's intellectual system (A271-272/B327-328).

Kant continues this analysis for the remaining three sets of concepts, arguing that in each case if one conflates how the object is thought as a thing in itself (object of pure understanding or noumenon),<sup>239</sup> and how the object appears then one is led to an erroneous metaphysical principle or claim.<sup>240</sup> Crucially, one of these claims is that substances must really be monads and, as such, possess intrinsic determinations.<sup>241</sup> But what Kant does in each case is to show that the claim at issue results from taking the representations of sensibility as being non-fundamental, or reducible to (confused) representations of the understanding. This presents us with a very clear account of things in themselves. When Kant denies us knowledge of things in themselves, this does not mean that we are stuck behind some idealist 'veil of perception' that traps us among the contents of our mind, but rather that we must take into account the dual (or discursive) nature of human cognition: that the proper determination of the properties and features of objects entails the *joint* contributions of sensibility (denied by Leibniz) and understanding (denied by Locke) (A271/B327).<sup>242</sup> But it is precisely because the two types of contribution are irreducible to each other that the possibility of error arises: the concept of an object in general is nothing other than what is represented through the forms of thinking in general. Because the categories contain the forms of thought in the unity of apperception, they may seem to have a greater extension than sensibility, which is clearly limited to being affected by objects, and thus we (like Leibniz) can be misled by this logical connection of representations in general by taking them to be

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<sup>239</sup> The concept of a noumenon is of an 'object determinable in accordance with mere concepts' (A285/B341). When I refer to 'noumenon', this should be taken in its positive sense, as an object of a pure understanding or intellectual intuition, i.e., as an object for God. However, it is important to note that Kant distinguishes between a positive and negative sense of the term in the B-edition. The negative (and legitimate) use of 'noumenon' refers to an object considered in abstraction from our sensible intuition, as a merely limiting problematic concept of reason. The positive sense of 'noumenon' is an object of non-sensible intuition, i.e., of intellectual intuition. Kant is clear that we cannot know whether or not such noumena are possible. See A287/B343, B307-311.

<sup>240</sup> See the very helpful R5534 (18: 230-231, 1778-1783) where Kant explains in detail the concepts of 'thing in itself', 'transcendental object' and 'noumenon'.

<sup>241</sup> This is the bedrock of Langton's interpretation of things in themselves as *being* these intrinsic determinations of substances. See the Appendix.

<sup>242</sup> See Kant's famous claim that 'Leibniz **intellectualized** the appearances, just as Locke totally **sensitivized** the concepts of understanding in accordance with this system of **noogony** (if I am permitted this expression), i.e., interpreted them as nothing but empirical or abstracted concepts of reflection' (A271/B327).

determinative of things in general; that is, determinative of objects independently of the contributions of sensibility (A279/B335, A289/B345-346). This is what Kant means by a ‘transcendental use or misuse of the understanding’ (A296/B352). Kant even goes so far as to attribute the entire Leibnizian enterprise to the transcendental amphiboly, as ‘resting on nothing but a misunderstanding’ (A270/B326). So much for Leibniz, but what does this tell us about Kant’s conception of things in themselves?

I suggested that this account is a starting point for outlining a version of Kantian humility that is compatible with his genuine idealism and realism. According to this account, knowing things in themselves would not be to know some extra facts about, or properties of, the objects of experience, but rather would take the form of knowing them in a different way; a way that is, for us, strictly impossible. In denying us knowledge of things in themselves, Kant denies that we can cognize objects through concepts alone, independently of sensibility. He goes further, though, by showing how the denial of sensibility’s role results in grand metaphysical theories, such as Leibniz’s monadology and pre-established harmony which presume ‘to cognize the inner constitution of things by comparing all objects only with the understanding and the abstract formal concepts of its thinking’ (A270/B326).<sup>243</sup> I argue that this point should be taken as referring to what we think would be true of noumena given our concepts (of comparison), but the reference to cognizing the ‘inner constitution of things’ is ambiguous. It could mean that Kant thinks that there *is* an inner constitution of things (as things in themselves), and that Leibniz’s error was in thinking that he had found the means to cognizing this specific constitution (as monads). Or it could mean that Kant rejects the framework in which the problem is set up. Langton (1998) and Allais (2015: Ch. 10) take the first option, but now I want to examine a key passage that sheds light on why we should take the second reading:

According to mere concepts the inner is the substratum of all relation or outer determinations. If, therefore, I abstract from all conditions of intuition, and restrict myself solely to the concept of a thing in general, then I can abstract from every outer relation, and yet there must remain a concept of it, that signifies no relation but merely inner determinations. Now *it seems as if it follows from this* (my emphasis) that in everything (substance) there is

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<sup>243</sup> Both the monadology and the thesis of pre-established harmony are attributed to comparing objects in accordance with <inner> and <outer> without sensibility (A266/B322, A274-275/B330-331).

something that is absolutely internal and precedes all outer determinations [...] consequently that it is **simple** [...] [and] all things would really be **monads**, or simple beings endowed with representations. And this would all be correct, were it not that something more than the concept of a thing in general belongs to the conditions under which alone objects of outer intuition can be given to us, and from which the pure concept abstracts. For these show that a persistent appearance in space (impenetrable extension) contains mere relations and nothing absolutely internal, and nevertheless can be the primary substratum of all outer perception. (A282-284/B339-340)

This is a very long and dense passage, and I have tried to preserve the general flow and logic of it as much as possible. The ellipses cover the extended details of why objects of pure understanding, considered as such, must be conceived of as monads, but since these details fall within the gaps in the passage that come after the locution ‘Now it seems [...]’ I believe my selective citation preserves Kant’s reasoning. At the start of the passage Kant discusses what must be true according to mere concepts. He explains that the inner must be what serves as the substratum of outer relations, according to mere concepts, since nothing else is given that can serve this role, for the concept of a thing in general is nothing more than the concept of a thing that abstracts from the contribution of sensibility and thinks it through concepts alone. A thing composed only of internal determinations cannot contain composition, since this presupposes *outer* (i.e., spatial) relations between its parts, and this is exactly what is denied, according to mere concepts, so this thing is a monad (simple being with representations). So far, it could easily be thought that Kant endorses this Leibnizian picture, but he then completely rejects it by saying that it would be true *were it not the case that* something more than just the concept of a thing in general is required for cognition, i.e., sensibility, for bringing back in what we have abstracted from reveals that the conditions of intuition yield the substratum (space) that is not simple (for space is continuous), but nonetheless serves as the substratum of all outer perception.<sup>244</sup> Absolutely inner determinations are not necessary to ground the substantiality of the objects of experience, for the relational/dynamical theory of matter as filling space through

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<sup>244</sup> This point is actually made more explicit just after this passage: ‘But since something is contained in the intuition that does not lie at all in the mere concept of a thing in general, and this yields the substratum that cannot be cognized through mere concepts, namely a space that, along with everything it contains, consists of purely formal or also real relations’ (A284/B340).

attractive and repulsive forces is enough to account for this. Kant has a purely relational ontology, or at least, he seems open to the possibility that nothing in scientific explanations of phenomena requires a non-relational ontology.

An important objection has been raised against the claim that Kant has a purely relational ontology by Allais. Allais, following Langton, thinks that Kant's epistemic humility takes the form of denying that we can cognize the intrinsic natures of things; however, unlike Langton, she is much more sensitive to the obscurities and ambiguities that plague the Amphiboly chapter (2015: 224). She also agrees that science, on Kant's account, does not require intrinsic properties. Nonetheless, she argues that Kant's critique of Leibniz should not be thought to consist in ruling out non-relational intrinsic grounds for relational phenomena, but rather as denying that we can determine what these intrinsic grounds are, namely, that we cannot say, as Leibniz did, that the absolutely inner determinations are monads (simple soul substances); there are intrinsic natures but we cannot determine what these are through comparison of concepts ('logical reflection') alone. She examines three significant passages from the Amphiboly – A265-266/B321-322, A274/B330, A282-285/B338-341 – the last of which I have also just examined. She concedes that the first two are ambiguous between the two possible readings, but maintains that the third conclusively shows that Kant thinks that intrinsic natures are required as a *conceptual truth* for non-relational natures (2015: 236-238). I agree that it *is* a conceptual truth, for Kant, that relations require the non-relational, and that Kant does express this point in the third passage; what I question is whether this is enough to attribute to him the view that things have absolutely intrinsic natures as things in themselves.

Allais admits that the passage could be understood as arguing that conceptual truths capture mere analytic entailment-relations among concepts that do not provide us with any metaphysical insight (2015: 239). This is in line with distinguishing between our *concept* of things as they are considered in themselves and how things actually are as things in themselves (noumena). Allais rejects this weaker reading, however, on the grounds that it misunderstands Kant's account of logical possibility. She rightly observes that if something is logically possible on Kant's view that this is not enough to guarantee its real possibility (A244/B302), but suggests that if something is deemed logically *impossible*, then this *is* enough to show that it is really impossible (2015: 240). Since Kant thinks that it is logically necessary that relations entail non-relational grounds, relations that do not require this are impossible (*ibid*). Prima facie, Allais is

right: the principle of non-contradiction is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of metaphysical truth (A150/B189). This is a very delicate point, however. While Kant does call a comparison of concepts a ‘logical reflection’, I think Allais’ objection can be challenged; I make three related points. First, if the conditions under which concepts apply are not met then these concepts remain empty of cognitive content; in the current case, they are nothing more than forms of comparing *concepts* (*not* things). We have to keep in mind that Kant compares the (cognitively inadequate) notion of ‘logical reflection’ with the notion of ‘transcendental reflection’, where the latter is ‘a duty which no one can escape from if he would judge anything about things *a priori*’, since it alone ‘goes to the objects themselves’ (A262-263/B318-319).

Second, when applied solely at the level of concepts, it *is* contradictory to say that the outer (relational) can exist without the inner (non-relational), but this is a truth that holds only because we are *abstracting* from the other half of the equation: concepts are *not* adequate for determining real possibility because they are lacking the forms of sensibility, the necessary conditions for their application *to objects*. As such, as Kant says, an entire source of determining what can ground relations (attractive/repulsive powers of matter, represented through sensibility) has been cut off (A285/B432). This means that while it *seems* as if everything ‘outer’ must be grounded on something ‘inner’, this is not the case because sensibility ‘yields the substratum that cannot be cognized through mere concepts’ (A284/B340). If the objects of our cognition were things that could be determined through *thought* alone (noumena), then our concepts could be used to determine them, but we cognize only appearances. That is, we can only cognize things that can only be determined through *both* the forms of spatiotemporal intuition and concepts employed together. Moreover, I think Kant *explicitly denies* that things *must* have an intrinsic nature simply in virtue of the conceptual relationship between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’. Kant says that because of the missing component in cognition: ‘I cannot say that since without something absolutely inner no thing can be represented **through mere concepts**, there is also nothing outer that does not have something absolutely internal as its ground in the things themselves that are contained under these concepts and in **their intuition**’ (*ibid*). This sentence is tortuous, even by Kant’s standards. As I read him, Kant is saying that the claim that we *cannot* make is that ‘there is also nothing outer that does not have something absolutely internal as its ground’, etc. Despite following from ‘mere concepts’, the claim does not hold because ‘mere concepts’ abstract from the *necessary* condition of their applicability, viz.,

sensibility (space). When considering things through ‘mere concepts’ there must be something absolutely inner, but ‘mere concepts’ are inadequate for determining the features of actual things: thinking that they are sufficient for determining any features of noumena is what Kant is reprimanding Leibniz for. As such, claims to cognition based on ‘mere concepts’ are, *pace Allais*, completely illusory.

Third, and following on from the second point, not only are claims through ‘mere concepts’ illusory, they actually make the *concept* of a thing in general *contradictory*. Kant says:

But if I apply these concepts to an object in general (in the transcendental sense), without further determining whether this is an object of sensible or intellectual intuition, then limitations (which do not flow from this concept) immediately show up, which pervert all empirical use of them, and by that very means prove that the representation of an object as a thing in general is not merely **insufficient** but rather, without sensible determinations of it and independent of an empirical condition, **contradictory** in itself, thus that one must either abstract any object (in logic), or else, if one assumes an object, then one must think it under conditions of sensible intuition[.] (A279-280/B335-336)

This is important: if we do not determine whether our object is one of sensible or intellectual intuition then our *concept* of an object in general is inherently contradictory. If we abstract any object then the concept does not apply to objects and if an object is assumed then it must be considered in relation to the sensible conditions of intuition. Whether a claim is coherent, contradictory or a mere contrary is determined by whether it is taken to hold of an actual thing in itself, an appearance or as neither (as considered purely formally through ‘mere concepts’). This point can be made clearer by briefly considering Kant’s resolution of the mathematical antinomies.

Briefly, it looks like it would be a contradiction to say that something (the world) must be both infinite and finite (in space and time); indeed, this is a logical contradiction: a thing in space and time cannot be both and must be one or the other. Kant’s answer is that this contradiction vanishes once we recognize that the world is not a thing in itself, but the sum total of appearances. If the world is a thing in itself then it is true that it must be either finite or infinite in space and time, but if the world is an appearance then it does not need to be either, since the world is nothing more than the

(thought) sum of appearances.<sup>245</sup> The same can be said of the apparent contradiction in thinking of relations without something non-relational: this is true of things considered through ‘mere concepts’ (which we take to also cognize things in themselves) but is not true of appearances. So, while it is a conceptual truth that the ‘outer’ requires the ‘inner’, we cannot take this to mean that there really is an intrinsic nature to things as they are in themselves, *pace* Allais. It is a logical truth that something relational must have non-relational grounds, but the contradiction in denying this disappears once we adopt transcendental idealism.<sup>246</sup> Lest this comparison between conceptual relations and the antinomies seem too much of a stretch to hold it should be noted that Kant affirms that the error involved in the antinomies is another instance of the amphiboly (A484/B512). Still, while I think I have given strong responses to the objection, it cannot be pretended that this is conclusive.<sup>247</sup> It seems to me, however, that the genuinely *critical* response would be to remain agnostic about whether things *as* things in themselves really have intrinsic natures or not, rather than assuming that they do just because our concept of them requires this.

We can now go further in specifying what it means to consider things as ‘things in themselves’. It is not merely considering things in relation to sensible intuition (as appearances) and as not in this relation (as things in themselves), as the deflationary ‘one world’ view would have it, but the idea also covers what *would be true of objects* if it were the case that the conditions for determining them could be met through concepts alone. The problem does not just concern our taking appearances for things that can be determined through thought alone (as noumena),<sup>248</sup> but also that our very means of thinking things *as* noumena is an illusory representation of what we think would be true of noumena. On this account, the transcendental distinction is not between appearance and reality. Rather, it shows that a certain means of determining reality is not open to us, that we require sensible intuition (being affected by the objects of our cognition) in

<sup>245</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>246</sup> This is not to say or assume that Kant’s argument is a good one; I am merely appealing to his resolution of the antinomies to illuminate his account in the Amphiboly.

<sup>247</sup> And in fairness to Allais, she concedes that claiming that appearances have intrinsic natures that ground them is the ‘controversial point’, though she thinks that there are ‘strong grounds’ for attributing the view to Kant (2015: 242-243).

<sup>248</sup> This appears to be Boer’s view. She holds that Kant’s ‘things in themselves’ do not refer to the mind-independent things that affect us but rather to things conceived as knowable through inner characteristics. Her view of things in themselves is similar to what I am proposing here, but unlike Boer, I do not think that this how Kant always uses the term, and my account goes further in taking Kant to analyse what would be true of objects of experience if they were objects of pure understanding, i.e., knowable through ‘mere concepts’, rather than simply denying that we can know them through mere concepts. See Boer (2014: esp. 238-247).

order to have knowledge of reality. Keeping with the theme of the upcoming Transcendental Dialectic, what Kant seems to identify here is an *illusory* system of cognition that attempts to determine reality without the aid of the senses.<sup>249</sup> Intelligible objects (objects thought as determinable without sensibility) are impossible because the objective reality of the categories only holds for objects that can be given to their schemata. While we can form the *thought* of objects not meeting these conditions through the formal activity of thinking in general, we cannot claim that any such objects exist; however, just as we have no grounds for proving that noumena (in the positive sense) are possible, nor do we have any means of ruling out their existence either. As I argued above, this suggests that transcendental idealism is best thought of as a restriction of the scope of metaphysics. We cannot determine that the categories or spatiotemporal predicates pertain to all things (in general) without distinction, but only to objects of the senses, i.e., objects that are given through the joint efforts of sensibility and understanding (A286-288/B342-434).<sup>250</sup> Kant says as much when at the close of the Amphiboly he explains that the concept of a noumenon is *not* the concept of an object:

but rather the problem, unavoidably connected with the limitation of our sensibility, of whether there may not be objects entirely exempt from the intuition of our sensibility, a question that can only be given the indeterminate answer that since sensible intuition does not pertain to all things without distinction room remains for more and other objects; they cannot therefore be absolutely denied, but in the absence of a determinate concept (for which no category is serviceable) they also cannot be asserted as objects for our understanding. (A287-288/B344)

The idea that there *could* be objects beyond those that we can possibly experience will play a key role in Chapter 4. However, although this notion is certainly present in the passage, it is less obvious how we can apply this account of things in themselves, as objects *beyond* experience, to the consideration of an object of experience as *it is in itself*. In fact, we have to be very careful here as Kant not only warns us not to confuse

<sup>249</sup> Grier makes a similar point: ‘On Kant’s view, the consideration of things in themselves is basically an illusory way of representing appearances’ (2001: 278). However, in Chapter 4 I will object that she slips into a subjectivist position.

<sup>250</sup> Although he rejects this reading of transcendental idealism, Melnick expresses this idea eloquently when he writes that the concept of a thing in itself ‘serves a limiting function by reminding us that there may be more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the Transcendental Deduction’ (1973: 152).

knowledge of appearances – things as determined through sensibility and understanding – with things in themselves – things thought as objects of understanding alone – but he also forbids us to think of things in themselves in terms of the categories.<sup>251</sup> My interpretation appears to run the risk of violating this restriction. To close this Section I will deal with this worry.

Specifically, I take seriously Kant's central lesson of the Schematism, which warns against taking thought of things in themselves to yield even a minimal amount of information about things in themselves; for as we have seen, such thinking only tells us about the *concept* of a thing in general, which is not a real object but merely representative of the formal unity of thought in general. Kant makes this point again in the Amphiboly. Kant claims that by limiting sensibility to appearances, we can think a thing in itself ‘but only as a transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance), and that cannot be thought of either as magnitude or as reality or as substance, etc. (since these concepts always require sensible forms in which they determine an object)’ (A288/B344-B345). This may be thought to stand in tension with my claims above, where I argued that it is compatible with Kantian humility to take the analogies as fundamental ontological principles of the objects of experience; for here Kant denies that we should think of the thing in itself as a substance, etc. First, it should be noted that this claim only yields a contradiction with my account of the Analogies if ‘things in themselves’ is construed as referring to the ‘objects themselves’ as opposed to the ‘representation’ of an object. On ‘two world’ and phenomenalist readings this is how the term is usually understood; however, here I have suggested that it be construed as referring to a particular way of considering how objects are determined. We therefore have two readings of the passage at hand. It can be taken as a metaphysical denial that objects, considered as they are mind-independently, are substances, causally efficacious, realities (positive determinations), etc., or it can be taken as meaning that *considered as* objects of pure understanding we are not licenced

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<sup>251</sup> This is a difficult point, because as well as forbidding us from taking the categories to apply to things in themselves, Kant also thinks that in *considering* objects as things in themselves, we can and must *think* them through the pure categories, but the important point is that such thinking gives no purchase on how things may be in themselves. See Schulting (2011b: 160-161), who is particularly critical of confusing the notion of how we must consider or think things in themselves and how they *actually* are as things in themselves. See also Kohl (2015: esp. 94-102) who, despite being an advocate of the ‘two world’ camp, emphasizes that noumena are not substances, causes, etc.; however, he does also think that the negative analytic judgements about thing in themselves, such as their being non-spatiotemporal, are truths about actual things in themselves and *not* just of our concept of them; he denies that this counts as knowledge on Kant’s account and therefore holds it not to violate Kant’s epistemic humility (2015: 101, n.17).

to claim that objects are substances, etc. This seems to me to be what Kant means in the passage, as suggested in particular by the parenthesized phrase ‘(since these concepts always require sensible forms in which they determine an object)’. The point, then, is that Kant does not deny anything about the nature of reality, but instead shows us that we can determine objects only *as* appearances and not *as* things in themselves, because the former are the only kind of objects that can be given to us through the joint efforts of sensibility and understanding, i.e., objects of possible experience. This leaves open room for objects that could, conceivably, be only determined as things in themselves for a being that *would*, unlike us, be able to apply its concepts to things without the mediation of (sensible) intuition or would know things directly through intuition without the need for concepts.<sup>252</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that Kant goes on to offer yet another account of appearances and things in themselves in the *Critique*, where ‘things in themselves’ stands in for objects that *cannot* be given to our sensible form of intuition, or even objects that are given but cannot be given in their totality to our kind of intuition. This is broadly his notion of the ‘unconditioned’ or ‘unconditioned totality of conditions’. To illustrate this third sense of the distinction I turn to the Antinomy of Pure Reason in Chapter 4.

### Conclusion: A Non-Distorting Idealism and Epistemic Humility

In this Chapter I have considered whether Kant’s views on metaphysics and his denial that we cognize things in themselves are in tension with the account that I have given of his realism. I argued that Kant is still doing metaphysics, albeit a metaphysics that has a greatly restricted scope compared to its predecessor. I argued against the idea

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<sup>252</sup> These two are obviously not equivalent but I pass over the details of this alternative hypothetical form of cognition. Kant refers to it often in the first *Critique* as ‘intellectual intuition’ or ‘non-sensible intuition’, suggesting that such an intuition does not require concepts at all, while in the third *Critique*, he refers to it instead as ‘intuitive understanding’ (B72, B145, B307-308; CPJ, 5: 406-408). See Quarfood (2011: 144-152, esp. 149-52) for an interesting discussion of what this form of cognition is and whether these expressions are equivalent. Quarfood (2011: 153-157) explores ‘things in themselves’ as a theory of the structure of conceptuality in much the same way as I do here. He also thinks Kant’s argument in the Amphiboly is not an endorsement of rationalist metaphysics but is rather ‘a diagnosis of how the discursive understanding has to conceive of things metaphysically, when it misunderstands its function’ (2011: 155). However, he focuses on what sense this reading can make of Kant’s claims about things in themselves not being possible through the whole, whereas I focus on how these ‘hypostatized structures of discursivity’ (2011: 156) can account for Leibniz’s monadology and give us (part of) a non-distorting account of appearances and things in themselves by isolating one sense of the distinction. Clearly, however, the present account of things in themselves as objects of pure understanding is indebted to Quarfood’s and should be understood as complementing his account.

that the categories are only formal concepts that make experience possible and argued that they do characterize ontological features of objects themselves. The categories are formal concepts, but the relational concepts (at least) do pick out necessary connections in the objects of experience themselves, as being substances, empirical causes, etc., or rather they do when applied to objects through the analogies. In Section 2 I addressed the concern that my account contradicts Kant's epistemic humility about things in themselves. I set out an advanced deflationary epistemological account of the distinction as it is presented in the Amphiboly. According to this account, appearances are objects as they are determined through schematized categories, and things in themselves are things thought as 'objects of a pure understanding'. That is, things considered as if their features could be determined through 'mere concepts' alone. The Amphiboly sets out a compelling account of how conflating appearances and things in themselves can lead to Leibnizian doctrines such as pre-established harmony and that ultimate reality consists of monads. In addition, this epistemological account has metaphysical implications. Specifically, the fact that we cognize only objects of a possible experience – that is, appearances or phenomena – conceptual room remains for things that do not appear at all and that could, in principle, only be determinable for an intellectual intuition. While we may be misled (as the younger Kant was) into thinking that thought in accordance with 'mere concepts' can yield knowledge about things as they are in themselves, the mature Kant recognizes not only that appearances do not represent how things would be for a (hypothetical) intellectual intuition, but also that any attempt we do make to determine objects through 'mere concepts' – to take them as things in themselves or noumena – is an inherently illusory exercise, for when divorced from the sensible conditions of their application, 'mere concepts' combine to form an *inherently* contradictory concept of a thing in general.

## 4. The Real as Ideal: Things in Themselves as the Unconditioned and the Transcendental Turn Revisited

### Introduction

In this Chapter I complete my account of Kant's transcendental idealism as empirical realism. I isolate a third sense of the transcendental distinction, according to which, when Kant denies us knowledge of things in themselves this is to be understood as the denial of the possibility of acquiring knowledge of what he calls the 'unconditioned', or the 'unconditioned totality of conditions' for a given conditioned phenomenon. In short, the unconditioned stands in for the idea of complete explanation insofar as the idea marks what is self-explanatory. However, Kant exhibits unresolved ambivalence towards the idea of the unconditioned, seeming to fluctuate between two different conceptions of it.<sup>253</sup> According to the first conception, as presented in the resolution of the mathematical antinomies, Kant takes the idea of the unconditioned to be completely illusory, that is, that both positions in the mathematical antinomies are deemed to be necessarily false because the objects of our knowledge are appearances and not things in themselves. According to the second conception, however, best illustrated in the resolution of the dynamical antinomies, both positions *may* be true insofar as they hold of appearances and things in themselves, respectively. I argue that Kant is wrong to conclude that both the thesis and antithesis are false with respect to the mathematical antinomies, that in fact that resolution reveals an implicit reliance on the metaphysical idealist account of transcendental idealism. This is a very controversial claim. Deflationary interpretations (Allison and Grier) and 'moderate' metaphysical readings (Allais and Ameriks) both take the resolution of the mathematical antinomies to reveal a non-phenomenalist form of idealism. I argue that Kant's resolution is incompatible with a non-phenomenalist idealism and that a genuine deflationary reading of the mathematical antinomies, when properly understood, yields a 'both potentially true' resolution, rather than a 'both necessarily false' verdict.<sup>254</sup> If I am right, this complicates the third sense of the transcendental distinction. Allison's deflationary

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<sup>253</sup> For reasons of space my account focuses solely on the role of the unconditioned in the Antinomy of Pure Reason. I think it is compatible with what Kant says in the Paralogisms and the Ideal.

<sup>254</sup> Henceforth I refer to these as the 'both false' and 'both true' resolutions. The modal element in each (*necessarily false, potentially true*) applies throughout.

account is also controversial in another respect. Insofar as he understands the ‘transcendental turn’ to entail a shift from a theocentric to an anthropocentric paradigm of cognition and its norms, Allison argues that in some respect Kant’s ‘both false’ resolution also holds for the dynamical antinomies. On Allison’s account, there is no ‘fact of the matter’ for either type of antinomy, and in fact the thought that necessarily one position or the other must be true is indicative of the transcendental illusion that ensnares reason (2004: 48-49).<sup>255</sup> I argue that this does not follow from a genuine deflationary position. However, my account owes much to Allison’s work on transcendental idealism, here in particular his idea that the transcendental turn can helpfully be understood with reference to different paradigms of cognition. I borrow Allison’s idea and reformulate it to show that all four antinomies can be resolved with a ‘both true’ resolution, adding the final component needed to substantiate Kant’s empirical realism as a non-distorting formal idealism.

The Chapter is in three Sections. In Section 1 I examine the mathematical antinomies and Kant’s oft-maligned claim that reason is in the grip of a ‘natural and unavoidable’ transcendental illusion. After explaining what I take to be at issue in these two antinomies, I ask what kind of idealism is needed to make sense of the ‘both false’ resolution that Kant provides. I suggest, against the current interpretative trend, that the ‘both false’ resolution follows only on the assumption of a metaphysical idealism, but I also argue that it is not required to resolve the antinomies. Drawing on Kant’s earlier work, I explain how a methodological deflationary reading could make sense of providing a ‘both true’ resolution for these antinomies. In the process I consider the supposed methodological readings of Grier and Allison, the ‘moderate’ metaphysical view of Allais, and the rejection of undecidability as a solution by Gardner. In Section 2 I turn to the dynamical antinomies and provide a deflationary reading of them, but I challenge Allison’s claim that there is no ‘fact of the matter’ at issue. I show that a deflationary account of transcendental idealism need not be in tension with the idea that Kant’s conception of freedom entails a metaphysical conception of a non-natural kind of causality (transcendental freedom). In the final Section I consider the transcendental turn as a turn from a theocentric to an anthropocentric model of the norms and conditions of cognition. I show that this account makes sense of Kant’s realism and idealism and allows for the ‘both true’ resolution to hold for all the antinomies.

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<sup>255</sup> Allison makes this claim directly with respect to the third antinomy and Kant’s theory of freedom. I assume that he takes it to hold of the fourth antinomy as well.

However, it should be noted that due to space constraints the arguments expressed in this Chapter are in condensed form.

## 1. The Mathematical Antinomies: Methodological or Metaphysical Resolution?

In the Antinomy of Pure Reason Kant sets out his view that reason finds itself locked in disputes that cannot end because reason finds itself committed to two equally compelling, but contradictory, conclusions. Of a piece with the Paralogisms and the Ideal, Kant's aim is to exhibit what happens when reason attempts to grasp the completeness of appearances in terms of what is unconditioned or self-explanatory. The Antinomy concerns the concept of the world, but unlike its two companions, the Antinomy seeks to show that reason is pulled in *two* opposing directions, in the form of a thesis and antithesis for each of the four disputes, rather than in constituting a one-sided illusion (A406/B433). Kant affords great significance to his discovery of the antinomies, not least because he takes the resolution of them to provide indirect support for transcendental idealism (A506-507-B534-535), but also because they serve to awaken reason and Kant from their 'dogmatic slumber' (Pro, 4: 338; Cor, 12: 257-258). In Section 1.1 I discuss Kant's theory that reason is in the grip of transcendental illusion, his account of the mathematical antinomies, and his 'both false' resolution. I argue that the 'both false' resolution is not supported by the application of transcendental idealism (in its non-phenomenalist form) to the mathematical antinomies. In Section 1.2 I examine Kant's earlier account of metaphysical error as an alternative account of how a methodological treatment of the mathematical antinomies should go. In Section 1.3 I consider possible objections to my account of how Kant should have resolved the mathematical antinomies based on his rejection of epistemic modesty and the distinction between the mathematical and dynamical antinomies as turning on different kinds of synthesis.

### 1.1. Transcendental Illusion and Resolving the Mathematical Antinomies

The mathematical antinomies, so-called because they concern the mathematical totality of appearances in space and time, comprise of two disputes. The first antinomy

concerns whether the world is limited in space and time or is infinite in both respects. The thesis argues that the world is finite in both respects (A426/B454), while the antithesis argues that it is infinite (A427/B455). The second antinomy concerns whether composite substance is infinitely divisible or divisible into simple parts. The thesis argues that the simple is all that really exists (A434/B462), while the antithesis affirms that composite substances are infinitely divisible (A435/B463). The status of the disputes as forming an antinomy concerns the peculiar fact that both sides can perform a successful *reductio ad absurdum* on their opponent, which means that reason is forced to accept two contradictory conclusions, but since this is not acceptable, the antinomies threaten to issue in ‘the **euthanasia** of pure reason’ (A407/B434). I am not concerned with whether Kant is right that both conclusions are equally warranted, nor with the arguments that the proponents of the thesis and antithesis positions supposedly make but only with what type of idealism is needed to make sense of Kant’s official resolutions.<sup>256</sup>

To appreciate Kant’s resolution we need to understand his idea that there is a transcendental illusion operating at the heart of the antinomies and all of reason’s efforts to grasp the unconditioned. The basic problem is that a guiding subjective principle of reason gets transformed into an illegitimate and illusory principle that reason must assume in order to fulfil its purpose. Following Grier (2001: 119-122) and Allison (2004: 330), let us call these P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>. P<sub>1</sub> states that reason should ‘find the unconditioned for the conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed’ (A307/B364). Allison aptly terms this principle an ‘intellectual categorical imperative’ for theoretical reason (2004: 385). The principle commits reason to always look for further conditions of any given conditioned cognition; in short, to never let the quest for explanation stop (A498/B526). P<sub>1</sub> makes no claims about the

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<sup>256</sup> See Allison (2004: 366-376), Guyer (1987: 404-412), Wood (2010: 245-265), Grier (2001: Ch. 6), Bennett (1974) and Walsh (1975: 195-214) for some of the standard objections and responses to the individual proofs. Sadik Al-Azm (1972) has convincingly argued that the main source of inspiration for Kant’s presentation of the antinomies was the correspondence between Leibniz and Clarke (1956). Al-Azm argues that the antithesis position in the antinomies is, perhaps surprisingly, best associated with Leibniz’s arguments against the Newtonian Clarke, whose own arguments typically mirror those deployed by Kant on behalf of the thesis. However, I do not agree with Al-Azm’s stronger claim that it is wrong to associate the thesis positions with rationalism and the antithesis positions with empiricism. While it may be the case that historically Leibniz did champion arguments and positions in his disputes with Clarke that are decidedly empiricist-sounding, it is also the case that Leibniz is mainly referring to the phenomenal/empirical world in these arguments; the Leibnizian idea that nonsensible reality consists of monads, for example, clearly lends itself much better to the thesis position that reality must consist of indivisible simple substances. Besides, the antinomies are supposed to capture opposed ways of thinking about the unconditioned that stem from the nature of human reason and so they are not meant to be limited to any particular historical moment.

objects themselves; it merely tells reason to always seek for further conditions/explanations. The problem is that  $P_1$  presupposes  $P_2$  as its condition of application, comparable to the relationship between a category and its schema (Allison 2004, 330; Grier 2001, 124-126).  $P_2$  is the (illusory) principle that ‘when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given (i.e., contained in the object and its connection)’ (A307-308/B364).  $P_1$  is analytic, simply spelling out the conceptual connection between the conditioned and its condition(s) (A498/B526), but  $P_2$  is synthetic, expressing a connection between the conditions and the *unconditioned*, which is not analytically entailed by the mere concept of a ‘condition’ for the ‘conditioned’ (A308/B365).

Nonetheless,  $P_2$  appears to be sound: after all, what could be more intuitive than thinking that if a conditioned (e.g., an effect) is given then the condition of that (e.g., the cause) is also given, where the former is *dependent on* the latter? Indeed, this is nothing more than one of the immanent principles of Kantian metaphysics (i.e., the second analogy); so far, however, this is just  $P_1$ . The problem arises, though, once we assume in accordance with the illusory principle that *all* the conditions *are given* with the conditioned, right back to the unconditioned. To stick with the example, from the chain of causes and effects we trace the connection back to an unconditioned first (uncaused) cause or take the entire causal *series* itself to be unconditioned (i.e., given *as infinite*). But as can be seen from this example,  $P_2$  by itself underdetermines which of the two alternatives is actually right as it licences both conclusions.<sup>257</sup> While we hold  $P_2$  to be true, a necessary condition of  $P_1$  (searching for the conditions for a given conditioned), we cannot escape from the conviction that one of the two claims *must* be true and the other false (A501/B529-530). Since the principle is synthetic, it stands in need of something to justify its application to reality, just as all synthetic a priori judgements do; it requires reference to a ‘third thing’ to connect the conditions and unconditioned together. Since the antinomies concern our conception of the world as a whole and the world would seem to be the locus of this connection, analysing this concept is our next task.

Understanding what Kant means by the ‘world’ is not an easy task. First, Kant explains that the object of his investigation are so-called ‘world-concepts’ that concern

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<sup>257</sup> This is nicely illustrated by Grier through reference to the second antinomy (2001: 212-213).

‘the absolute totality in the synthesis of appearances’, which he equates with the idea of the ‘world-whole’ (A408/B434). From here, Kant divides the genus ‘world-concepts’ into two species; those of the ‘world’ and those of ‘nature’. The concept of the ‘world’ ‘signifies the mathematical whole of all appearances and the totality of their synthesis in the great as well as the small, i.e., in their progress through composition as well as through division’ (A418/B446). By ‘nature’ Kant refers to ‘the very same world’ considered as ‘a dynamic whole’ in terms of the ‘unity in the **existence** of appearances’ (A418-419/B446-447), or as considering the sum of appearances as ‘a subsisting whole’ (A419n/B446n). Kant complicates matters by pointing out that he calls ‘world-concepts’ ‘cosmological ideas’ in order to account for the ambiguity present in the term ‘world’, for the latter can mean both ‘the sum total of all appearances’ but also, in its ‘transcendental’ sense, the ‘sum total of existing things’ (A419/B447). As we will see, Kant exploits these ambiguities in his resolutions of the antinomies, particularly with respect to the division between mathematical and dynamical conflicts. For now, it is important to see that Kant can mean at least three different things by ‘the world’. He can be referring to the totality of appearances or the totality of existing things – these are not obviously equivalent expressions – and with respect to that ambiguity, he can in turn be considering the totality as a quantity in space and time, as a mathematical whole, or as a dynamic, explanatory whole.

One further feature of the idea of the ‘world’ that is worth noting is its pseudo-empirical status. Ostensibly, the idea refers to the complete synthesis of appearances, that is, objects of possible experience, and this suggests that the ‘world’ is simply a higher-order empirical concept. The problem is that the concept carries the synthesis of appearances beyond the limits of any possible experience, making it an ‘idea’ in Kant’s technical sense. The idea is inherently problematic, then, insofar as it combines a synthesis of *empirical* items with a *transcendent degree* of synthesis (A420/B448), which makes it a good candidate for a source of dialectical reasoning.<sup>258</sup> Let us now go straight to the resolution of the first antinomy, where I will provide the bulk of my analysis.

The first antinomy concerns the limits of the world in space and time. The thesis claims that it must be finite and the antithesis concludes that it must be infinite. Kant

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<sup>258</sup> Grier (2001: 176) and Allison (2004: 359-361) both emphasize that the ‘world’ is a pseudo-empirical concept. Bird observes that scientists are just as likely to slide from legitimate immanent inquiries into illegitimate transcendent inquiries because of the ambiguity built into the notion of a world whole as both empirical and transcendent (2006: 672-673).

argues that both claims are false. The world is *not* finite in space and time, but it is not on that account infinite either. Proponents of both positions wrongly take the thesis and antithesis to be contradictories that mutually exhaust all possible solutions, but in fact they are really contraries, for they do not exhaust all possibilities. Kant illustrates the structure of his resolution by appealing to an analogy: ‘If someone said that every body either smells good or smells not good, then there is a third possibility, namely that a body has no smell (aroma) at all, and thus both conflicting propositions can be false’ (A503/B531). Similarly, if someone says that ‘a square circle is round’ and someone else says ‘a square circle is not round’, we can say that both disputants are wrong, because the concept of a ‘square circle’ is inherently contradictory: square circles are logically impossible (Pro, 4: 341). Kant thinks that this same logic can be applied to the mathematical antinomies as the concept of the ‘world’ is also inherently contradictory. The idea of the ‘world’ as constituting a quantity in space and time is contradictory because it leads to the conclusions of both the thesis and antithesis. Since a contradiction cannot be true, it follows that the world cannot exist as a mathematical whole in space and time (*modus tollens*). This is the basis of Kant’s infamous indirect proof of transcendental idealism:

The proof would consist in this dilemma. If the world is a whole existing in itself, then it is either finite or infinite. Now the first as well as the second alternative is false. [...] Thus it is also false that the world (the sum total of all appearances) is a whole existing in itself. From which it follows that appearances in general are nothing outside our representations, which is just what we mean by their transcendental ideality. (A506-507/B534-535)

The indirect proof is very controversial.<sup>259</sup> I take it to fail, at least in establishing transcendental idealism as Kant is employing it here. Clearly, if transcendental idealism and transcendental realism exhaust the only possible ways of understanding the status of the ‘world’ then Kant’s conclusion that transcendental idealism is true goes through (appearances are nothing outside our representations), but if it is not then the argument fails.<sup>260</sup> We need to analyse this proof very carefully. First, if Kant’s reasoning is

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<sup>259</sup> Allison defends Kant’s indirect proof (2004: 388-395), while Wood (2010: 259-261) and Guyer (1987: 404-412) reject it.

<sup>260</sup> See Allison (2015b: 33).

correct, it does seem to be the case that the world cannot *exist as* a mathematical whole, if by so existing we are led to contradictory conclusions. However, from this it is unclear whether we can really say that the world *cannot* so exist as a determinate totality or only that we cannot *coherently represent* it to ourselves that the world exists as a determinate quantity. In any case, it is not obvious that the denial that the world exists as a mathematical whole is in any way directly equivalent to ‘appearances being nothing outside of our representations’. To put the point another way, it is not clear that, despite structural similarities, Kant’s examples are relevantly similar enough to his transcendental conflict to warrant such a straightforward rejection of the thesis and antithesis as grounded on a self-contradictory concept.<sup>261</sup>

The concept of a square circle is inherently contradictory because it involves ascribing two properties to the object that cancel each other out. This is obvious and is unlikely to be contested (except perhaps by philosophers who reject contradiction as an adequate reason for taking something to be objectively impossible). By contrast, Kant’s explanation for why the concept of a world existing as a mathematical whole is contradictory is far from watertight. He argues that the appearance of a contradiction disappears once we assume that the world does not exist as a thing in itself. If we assume that the world is a thing in itself then it follows that it must be either finite or infinite, but if the world exists ‘only in the empirical regress of the series of appearances, and by itself it is not to be met with at all’ then it is neither finite nor infinite as a whole because it does not *exist as* a whole (A504-505/B532-533). One way of understanding Kant’s point would be to read him as denying that the ‘world’ is an object, or at least an object of possible experience. The world cannot have a finite or infinite magnitude because it is not an object; as such, it cannot have *any* magnitude in itself, because it is not the kind of thing that can have a magnitude. The attempt to determine the magnitude of the world as an object would appear to constitute a category error, mistaking the ‘world’ as a naming expression or definite description.<sup>262</sup> The obvious problem is that this linguistic analysis does not seem remotely idealist. Granted, as Allison points out, it also ignores the role of transcendental illusion in generating the initial problem (2004: 389-390), but it seems that a realist can reject the dispute of the first antinomy by simply pointing out that the ‘world’ fails to refer, and so both sides are

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<sup>261</sup> In addition, these two examples are dissimilar as well. Only the ‘square circle’ is a self-contradictory concept; there is nothing self-contradictory in the ‘bodies’ example, for that concerns a false dichotomy, rather than a self-contradictory concept.

<sup>262</sup> Allison (2004: 389-390) considers this point.

wrong. It does not turn on any claim about the ideality of space and time, nor the ontological status of the objects of experience, and so it cannot feature in an indirect proof of transcendental idealism from the mere existence of the antinomy.

Nonetheless, the failure of the ‘world’ to refer seems to me to be inadequate to warrant the dissolution of the mathematical antinomies. We could reject the precise formulation of the thesis and antithesis, as erroneously assuming that the world is an *object*, and reformulate them to remove this assumption, while still expressing the pull of reason towards both conclusions. What is to stop us from simply asking whether if we could (*per impossibile*) travel through all of space or travel back in time (in Kant’s terms, keep the empirical regress of appearances going) would we reach a point where we could not travel any further, where we would find no ‘objects’ in space or ‘events’ in time? Admittedly, there are very questionable assumptions about space and time, among other things, at work here, but it still seems a natural enough question to ask, and the rejection of the world being an object does not seem sufficient to rule out *any* speculation whatsoever about the limits of the domain of events and objects in time and space. At most, Kant’s purported resolution shows only that great care must be taken to be precise and clear about the scope of the claims we make about the cosmos. Part of the problem in Kant’s presentation of the antinomies is the vagueness of his own central claims. When he effectively denies that the ‘world’ refers to an object, what sense of ‘world’ is operative here? For example, he does not deny that there might be an outermost sun in space, or claim that we must have an infinite number of ancestors in time. Instead, he agrees that there could be an outermost sun in space and a first pair of living beings in our ancestral history (A522/B550). This is because both of these are determinate appearances that can be given as a whole in intuition. There we cannot say that the regress in their synthesis must be without end precisely because they are given as wholes (or can be so given), but while this may be so it makes it difficult to make sense of Kant’s overall claim that both the thesis and antithesis *must* be false. How can we make sense of the idea of an *outermost* sun if we do not have anything (an imagined or experienced boundary) by which to decide what is to count as the *outermost*?<sup>263</sup> Similarly, with respect to ancestral history, does Kant mean to deny that the Earth has a beginning in time *as an empirical body*? Presumably not, but then we need to be a great

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<sup>263</sup> This point is meant to bring to mind familiar worries of Newton, Einstein and modern physicists about locating the universe in space. If there is absolute space then the universe can be located in relation to that, but if there is not, *what* is it relative to? See, for example, Brian Greene (2004: Ch. 2-3).

deal clearer about just what is meant by the ‘sum total of appearances’, and what is to count as a possible appearance in this context. One could potentially resolve this problem by construing ‘world’ in its ‘transcendental’ sense as the ‘totality of existing things’. It does not make sense to ask whether the *total sum* of existing things has a beginning in time, but only of particular things *in* the world, not the world itself.<sup>264</sup> It seems to me that Kant may be trading on the ambiguity of the ‘world’, as meaning both the ‘totality of appearances’ and the ‘totality of existing things’. In affirming that there can be an outermost sun, etc., he is relying on the ‘totality of existing things’ – the ‘transcendental’ sense of the term – but in denying that the world can have a beginning in time or a limit in space, he is relying on the world as the ‘sum total of appearances’, where ‘appearance’ means precisely something given through and presented as being in space and time, since the latter are transcendently ideal.<sup>265</sup> The possible reformulation of the thesis and antithesis to avoid treating the world as a pseudo-object and the ambiguity inherent in the ‘world’ constitute two reasons to be suspicious about Kant’s ‘both false’ resolution, but they are far from conclusive.<sup>266</sup>

I want to now show that to get his ‘both false’ resolution, Kant must rely implicitly on a metaphysical idealism that is precluded by the deflationary and moderate metaphysical readings. That is, his idealism here does not just concern ways of considering objects transcendently (as appearances/as things in themselves), or claim that the objects of our experience must be metaphysically inferior to their fundamental grounds, but consists of the outright idealist reduction of what exists to what can be determined to exist by human minds. The first option is advocated by Allison and Grier, the second option by Allais, and the third by Guyer. I will argue with Guyer that what Kant puts forward is an idealism that is hard to tell apart from Berkeley, but I will set out exactly what I think the deflationary reading *should* say about the mathematical antinomies and argue that, so construed, transcendental idealism does resolve the

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<sup>264</sup> However, I am undecided about whether construing ‘world’ in the transcendental sense helps with the issue of its boundaries in space.

<sup>265</sup> It might even be thought that defining the ‘world’ as the ‘sum total of appearances’ makes it analytically true that the world does not exist outside of representations since ‘appearances’ just are representations (Allison 2004, 389).

<sup>266</sup> Another potential way of putting the question is cut off immediately because of transcendental idealism itself. We cannot, for instance, ask whether *space* and *time* have beginnings/boundaries or not because these are a priori intuitions. The questions of the antinomies concern the limits of the world-series *in* space and time, not space and time themselves. Guyer makes this mistake (1987: 407-408).

antinomies.<sup>267</sup> Let us first consider what Allison and Grier say. I argue that there are two issues here. First, I argue that Allison's account contains an implicit reliance on just the kind of metaphysical idealism that he rejects as a characterization of transcendental idealism. Second, I argue that Grier's analysis, at least of the second antinomy, ends up degrading appearances to how things merely seem to be to us, while things in themselves capture what is really true. Neither of these are satisfactory features for deflationary accounts to have since the central features of this interpretation are the rejection of the resemblance of Kant to Berkeley and the idea that appearances are only how things seem to be, and that there is some aspect of reality that we cannot know.<sup>268</sup>

Both of these deflationary readers take Kant's resolution of the mathematical antinomies to be sound. They hold that Kant is correct to conclude that both the thesis and antithesis are false, and they also accept that Kant is correct to affirm a 'both true' verdict for the dynamical antinomies.<sup>269</sup> I think this is mistaken. On the Allison-Grier reading, transcendental idealism is an epistemological or methodological thesis about the correct way of considering objects in relation to the conditions of their possibility. They can be considered in relation to the way they appear to us (as appearances) through being given through the forms of sensibility (space and time), and considered as things in themselves, things as thought through the categories independently of the conditions of sensibility.<sup>270</sup> On this reading, Kant does not deny that objects of experience are real but instead draws attention to the essential role of epistemic conditions in the possibility of experience, conditions that do not derive from the nature of objects in themselves. The reading can also maintain, as I argued in Chapter 3, that the discursivity of human cognition entails the irreducible faculties of sensibility and understanding working together and that, because of their essential distinctness, it is possible for us to be misled by attempting to determine reality through pure concepts alone, as happens in Leibnizian metaphysics.

According to this reading, when Kant talks of things being appearances and not being things in themselves, what is at issue is whether or not these things are taken as things whose nature is determined by the sensible conditions of their experience or things that are thought to be determinable independently of those conditions. This is

<sup>267</sup> This, of course, does not mean transcendental idealism is true: all it means is that the doctrine of transcendental idealism is relevant for thinking about cosmological disputes.

<sup>268</sup> See Allison (2004: 46-47) and Grier (2001: 86-87). Guyer aptly describes the deflationary view as holding that 'Kant never intended to deny anything about the real nature of things' (1987: 4).

<sup>269</sup> See Allison (2004: 364-365, 387-388) and Grier (2001: 214).

<sup>270</sup> See Grier (2001: 86-94) and Allison (2004: Ch. 1-3, esp. 16-17; 1990: 44).

confirmed by Allison in his analysis of what Kant means when he claims that if the conditions and conditioned were things in themselves then P<sub>2</sub> would actually be true. Kant says:

If the conditioned as well as its condition are things in themselves, then when the first is given not only is the regress to the second **given as a problem**, but the latter is thereby really already **given** along with it; and, because this holds for all members of the series, then the complete series of conditions, and hence the unconditioned is thereby simultaneously given, or rather it is presupposed by the fact that the conditioned, which is possible only through that series, is given. Here the synthesis of the conditioned with its conditions is a synthesis of the mere understanding, which represents things **as they are** without paying attention to whether and how we might achieve acquaintance with them. (A498/B526)f

This is a very ambiguous passage, but it is undoubtedly the key to Kant's entire strategy.<sup>271</sup> Allison reads it along very similar lines to the account I gave in Chapter 3 of the Amphiboly. That is, when Kant equates a synthesis of the mere understanding as one representing how things are, this is not to be understood as saying that a synthesis of understanding succeeds in representing how things really are, but rather that it draws attention to how this synthesis can mislead us into thinking that we cognize how things really are when we employ the concepts of the understanding – here in the form of P<sub>2</sub> – independently of the conditions under which they apply to reality.<sup>272</sup> The main point is that by abstracting from sensibility the metaphysician implicitly takes the relationship between the conditioned and its conditions to be timeless, so that the conditions are given with the conditioned in just the same way that the premises of an argument are given simultaneously with the conclusion in a piece of syllogistic reasoning (A498-499/B527-528, A417/B444). By contrast, transcendental idealism takes into account how things are given through the conditions of sensibility and thus the transcendental idealist can avoid being duped into thinking that the totality of conditions is given simultaneously with the conditioned.<sup>273</sup> By distinguishing between appearances and

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<sup>271</sup> Allais (2015: 92-93) likewise focuses on this passage.

<sup>272</sup> See Allison (2004: 386).

<sup>273</sup> See Allison (2004: 386-387)

things in themselves we can see that P<sub>2</sub> is illusory and therefore false, whereas transcendental realism has no way of seeing through the cognitive illusion: the unconditioned is *not* given simultaneously with the conditioned.<sup>274</sup>

While I believe that this is all correct, I nevertheless maintain that it is not sufficient to yield the conclusion that both claims *must* be false. Allais also questions the motivation behind the deflationary reading of Kant's claim that the unconditioned would be given if the conditions were things in themselves, asking 'why should abstracting from the conditions of knowledge force us to say anything about whether or not the unconditioned must be thought as given?' As she points out, 'abstracting gives you less, not more', so it is hard to see how abstracting sensible conditions would allow Kant to say that mind-independent reality (things in themselves) must contain the unconditioned (2015: 93). If Allais is correct then a deflationary reading cannot say anything about how the antinomies should be resolved. Fortunately, I think this criticism rests on a misunderstanding of what is involved in the deflationary position. Allais' objection would be right if the deflationary position maintained only that appearances are things merely considered in relation to the conditions of sensibility – then it would follow that Kant cannot claim that things in themselves contain the unconditioned – and things in themselves are things considered independently of those conditions, but the position contains more than this, or at least can contain more than this. Using the account given in Chapter 3, a deflationary account also shows that Kant's conception of things in themselves covers what *would be true of things* if they were things whose nature could be determined through pure reason alone. If we attempt to determine reality through pure concepts, independently of their schemata/sensible conditions, then we reach erroneous metaphysical conclusions as these concepts cannot determine anything other than the basic form of thinking an object in general when deployed absent material from (sensible) intuition, through which an object is given. It is crucial to see that the sensible conditions not only *realize* but also *restrict* the application of pure concepts (A146-147/B185-186). We saw this in relation to P<sub>2</sub> above: if there is no temporal gap between conditioned and conditions then they are given simultaneously, but reality cannot be accurately reflected through conceptual structures of thought alone; therefore, in relation to appearances, to reality determined through our conditions of cognition, P<sub>2</sub> is false and illusory. In turn, this means that *any* attempt to

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<sup>274</sup> See Grier (2001: 209-214).

theoretically (or dogmatically) determine the world in terms of its extension, divisibility, causality and possibility is bound to fail. The same mistake underlies each of the antinomies.

In each case, the thesis assumes that the world can be abstracted from its sensible conditions (space and time). It does this because it takes the sensible world to be a world ‘in general’, analogous to the object or thing ‘in general’, whereby it is thought through pure concepts independently of the sensible conditions that restrict and realize their application.<sup>275</sup> The antithesis recognizes that the world of the senses is *conditioned by* space and time, but goes on to project these epistemological conditions of things as appearances as ontological conditions of *all* things in general. Since the thesis abstracts from time as a condition it assumes (erroneously) that all the conditions are given simultaneously, including an unconditioned first member; the antithesis assumes that all the conditions are given to infinity, rather than as a first member of the series.<sup>276</sup> But does it follow from the necessary failure of the thesis and antithesis to dogmatically resolve the antinomies that there is no determinate ‘fact of the matter’ at issue? I do not think so.

While it is hard to see how the mere notion of considering sensible conditions concerning how objects are given to us could bear on whether or not the world can have a determinate magnitude, it could still be reasonably objected that taking into account the *ideality* of these sensible conditions does warrant the ‘both false’ resolution. Specifically, (i) if space and time are transcendentally ideal, then appearances – things as given in space and time – are also transcendentally ideal; if (ii) spatiotemporal objects are ideal, and the ‘world’ is just the ‘sum total’ of them, then it follows that the ‘world’ itself is ideal; that is, (iii) the world does not *exist* outside of the empirical regress of representations. Since the world does not exist outside of the empirical regress then (iv) it is false that it is finite (there is no predetermined boundary), but it is also false that it is infinite (because this would be to *negatively* determine its boundary). Instead, as Kant says, the world’s magnitude, which is constituted only through the regress of appearances, can only be taken to continue indefinitely, insofar as it is possible for us to continue the regress (A504-507/B532-535, A517-523/B545-551). There are two problems here. First, (i) is consistent with two different interpretations of the transcendental ideality of appearances. On the traditional ‘two world’/phenomenalist

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<sup>275</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>276</sup> See Grier (2001: 210-213) for further explanation.

interpretation, appearances are things that *really are* spatiotemporal, but do not represent the ‘real’ things existing ‘behind’ them, where these putative ‘things’ (in themselves) are non-spatiotemporal.<sup>277</sup> In other words, space and time do not exist mind-independently and this status is transferred directly over to the *things* intuited in space and time: they also do not exist mind-independently.<sup>278</sup> If we insert that interpretation of (i) into the argument then the conclusion (iv) directly follows, since the items that make up the ‘world’ do not exist in themselves, it follows that the ‘world’ does not exist as a mind-independent thing (in itself). By contrast, if we take a ‘one world’ approach (be it deflationary or moderately metaphysical), so that the transcendental ideality of space and time does not transfer to the *existence* of appearances as objects of possible experience, but only to the *way in which these things are represented*, then (iv) no longer follows. This is crucial: by interpreting (i) in ‘one world’ terms space is made for a distinction between the ideality of the *existence* of things and the ideality of the *manner of representing* things in a way that is closed to traditional interpretations, but as we have seen, Allison and Grier nonetheless agree with the ‘both false’ resolution.<sup>279</sup> This is odd because Allison makes clear that a major advantage of his position is that ‘the temptation to worry about the *existence* of things in themselves disappears once it is recognized that Kant is not primarily concerned with a separate class of entities, which, unlike appearances, would supposedly “be there” even if there were no finite cognizers’ (2004: 51). Instead, what is ideal is merely the manner in which things are represented (as spatiotemporal), as indicated by Kant in this important (but double-edged) passage:

We have sufficiently proven in the Transcendental Aesthetic that everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our

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<sup>277</sup> I am characterizing the ‘traditional’ interpretation in the broadest terms possible to cover its many different versions, including the more sophisticated forms.

<sup>278</sup> Guyer sees this move from the ideality of space and time to the ideality of everything in space and time as being the key metaphysical change from the *Inaugural Dissertation* to the *Critique*. There is no problem about how pure concepts ‘in us’ could apply to things ‘outside us’ if these things have no mind-independent existence, but there clearly is a problem if these concepts apply to things that *exist ‘outside us’* as mind-independent things. Part of the appeal of transcendental idealism for Kant is that it allows him to solve his problem of ‘objective validity’ by jettisoning ‘ontological realism’, according to Guyer (1987: esp. 20-24).

<sup>279</sup> Similarly, Allais agrees that it is a non-phenomenalist idealism that makes sense of the ‘both false’ resolution (2015: 93-95).

thoughts no existence grounded in itself. This doctrine I call **transcendental idealism**. The realist, in the transcendental signification, makes these modifications of our sensibility into things subsisting in themselves, and hence makes **mere representations** into things in themselves. (A490-491/B518-519)

The passage can easily be read in favour of either ‘one world’ or ‘two world’ interpretations. The identification of ‘appearances’ with ‘mere representations’ which are not to be taken as ‘subsisting’ things clearly supports the latter, but, equally, the former can appeal to the phrase ‘as they [objects of experience] are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself’.<sup>280</sup> In other words, the existence of things is not threatened by transcendental idealism, for Kant’s idealism concerns only the *form* in which they appear to cognitive subjects. This distinction is precisely what allows Kant to distinguish his idealism from Berkeley’s (Allison 2004, 35). However, taking seriously the deflationary interpretation of Kant’s idealism requires modifying Kant’s resolution. We cannot say that the ‘world’ does not exist apart from in the regress of appearances since the ‘world’ refers to *both* the ‘sum total of appearances’ *and* to ‘the totality of existing things’. On the deflationary account, *things* exist and, therefore, the ‘world’ in the ‘transcendental’ sense also exists. Reality exists in an indeterminate way because only through space and time and the principles of the understanding can we make claims about the individuation and quantity of things, but nonetheless mind-independent reality *exists*. What does *not* exist is the ‘world-whole’, for as Kant says, such a world-whole can never be given in intuition (A519/B547). But does it follow that there is no determinate ‘fact of the matter’ regarding the magnitude of the world? No, all that follows so far is that we can only say that the magnitude is indefinite, since we cannot have an intuition of an infinite series (of parts of space or moments in time), nor of a finite boundary. Neither of these are objects of possible experience. Moreover, since things are not in space and time – that is, represented spatiotemporally *as* extended beings, etc., – independently of their being represented as being in space and time through being given in our forms of intuition (A374-375), then it is impossible to determine the magnitude of the world prior to instituting the empirical regress of intuitions. Objects cannot be given *as* objects of experience unless they are given

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<sup>280</sup> Indeed, Allison uses this passage to justify his reading of appearances as qualifying *how* things appear rather than stating that appearances exist only in a Berkeleyan sense (2004: 35).

through the forms of space and time; that is, they cannot *be assigned* a determinate magnitude unless synthesized in space and time as magnitudes. But to claim that something cannot have a determinate magnitude (in the sense of its having some fact of the matter *if* given through synthesis) because that magnitude cannot be determined independently of the act of assigning one (through the regressive synthesis) is an invalid argument, for it equivocates on the meaning of the conditioned and conditions ‘being given’. This is our second problem.

Specifically, Kant reasons from one sense of the conditions ‘being given’, the sense in which the conditions are given *simultaneously with* the conditioned, to a conclusion about another sense that concerns the *existence* of the conditions, that is, if they cannot be presented *with* the conditioned then they do not *exist*.<sup>281</sup> Kant does not just make the epistemically modest claim that, *from the human standpoint*, the unconditioned cannot be given, but the epistemically immodest claim that the unconditioned does not *exist* at all in the case of the mathematical antinomies.<sup>282</sup> Kant is particularly explicit about this in the second *Critique*, where he states that for the mathematical antinomies ‘the unconditioned can never be found’ because ‘the two opposed ways of finding the unconditioned and the totality of conditions for it were both false’ (CPR, 5: 104). This is not just a claim about what we cannot cognize, but a claim about what exists, irrespective of whether we can cognize it or not. Kant’s main reason for this conclusion is that the mathematical antinomies concern a different kind of synthesis to the dynamical ones. We will see below that this distinction is flawed. All that can be said so far is that the world as a *spatiotemporal* whole cannot be given in intuition, but *not* the claim that the world (in the ‘transcendental’ sense) has no determinate magnitude.

There is, then, a very narrow and specific sense in which Kant *can* say that the world itself has no spatiotemporal magnitude, but this sense precludes ruling out the idea that there is *any* sense in which it exists as a determinate (but unknowable) totality: things exist but they cannot exist as a *spatiotemporal* whole unless they are represented through our forms of intuition; things cannot be represented as a complete collection in

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<sup>281</sup> Wood also takes ‘being given’ to be relevantly ambiguous (2010: 259–260).

<sup>282</sup> Similarly, Allison remarks that the unconditioned and conditions in the mathematical antinomies cannot be said to exist, not even in principle from a God’s-eye perspective (2004: 385). I discuss Allison’s account further in Section 3.

space and time by us; therefore, the world does not exist as a *spatiotemporal* whole.<sup>283</sup> But since the things that are appearances are just *the same things* that are things in themselves (at least on the ‘one world’ views under current consideration), we can *also* say that, if we *could* intuit all objects of possible experience (objects in space/events in time) *then* we could determine how far the empirical regress could actually go. In short, while the world does not exist *as a spatiotemporal* whole, it does exist as a determinate totality, and there could be a fact of the matter about far the empirical regress could go, albeit this fact is necessarily unknowable for us.<sup>284</sup> To deny this is to implicitly fall back into a ‘two world’ interpretation of the ideality of appearances where it is their *existence* that is cancelled out, rather than the manner in which they are represented as existing. In Section 1.2 below I will develop this resolution by drawing on Kant’s pre-Critical account of metaphysical error. I have argued that Allison’s Kant must implicitly rely on a ‘two world’ conception of transcendental idealism to get the ‘both false’ resolution through; now I want to show that such a resolution also converts the transcendental distinction back into a distinction between appearance and reality by examining an example from Grier’s account.

Grier explicitly advocates the methodological reading of transcendental idealism (2001: 86-94). It is therefore surprising that in her analysis of the mathematical antinomies she comes very close to identifying appearances with how reality seems to be to us and things in themselves with how reality really is. Consider this explanation of the resolution of the second antinomy, concerning whether composite substances are finitely or infinitely divisible:

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<sup>283</sup> For a similar verdict see Guyer (1987: 385-411), who argues that Kant’s ‘both false’ resolution goes through only by assuming the principle that what exists must be determinable by or decidable for us. I agree, but have chosen to focus on Kant’s possible equivocation on the senses of the conditions ‘being given’.

<sup>284</sup> Kant even considers the possibility that things in themselves outreach our representations, hinting at the possibility of a ‘both true’ resolution of the first antinomy in this late note: ‘A thing in itself does not depend on our representations, and can thus be much greater than our representations reach. But appearances are themselves only representations, and their magnitude, i.e., the idea of their generation through *progressus*, cannot be greater than this *progressus*; and since this is never given as infinite, but rather as only possible to infinity, the magnitude of the world as appearance is also not infinite, but the *progressus* in it proceeds to infinity’ (R5902, 18: 379, 1785-1789). As appearance the world’s magnitude is indefinite, but as a thing in itself it could be greater than our representations. This is very different to saying that it is *absolutely impossible* that the world is either, because it is *not* a thing in itself. Similarly, in an earlier note he reflects that ‘The world has a beginning, not, however, as appearance but rather as being in itself’ (R4618, 17: 610, 1772). Kant goes too far here by saying that the world (in itself) *does* have a beginning, but the basic point that we cannot conclude that world in itself does not have a beginning simply because the world as appearance does not is in line with the deflationary, methodological view that Kant should have taken in the *Critique*. See also note 301 below.

In short, if composites are *things as they are*, then we must conceive their elements to be either prior to or conditioned by (coextensive with) space (i.e., the exclusive disjunction seems to stand). Transcendental idealism shows the error in both. Because space necessarily conditions any composite, understood as appearance, we cannot argue with the thesis that appearances have the unconditionally simple at their ground. As appearance, the composite and each of its parts is necessarily given in space. But because space itself is transcendently ideal, we also cannot conclude (along with the antithesis) from features of our sensation of the real to a metaphysics of things as they are; that is, we cannot conclude that “things as they are” independent of us necessarily conform to the (geometrical) features of space-time (e.g., infinite divisibility). (Grier 2001, 213; Grier’s emphasis)

Although the locution ‘things as they are’ was earlier given a deflationary interpretation it is very hard to not read its use by Grier as lacking the further implication that ‘things as they are’ are how things *really are* independently of us. If this is how Kant’s methodological resolution of the mathematical antinomies is to be understood then I can see no discernible difference between this reading and the metaphysical reading that Grier and Allison both oppose, for this statement explicitly takes Kant to have *denied* something about the *real nature* of things (that things independent of us conform to the geometrical features of space-time). But, I also confess that I am puzzled by Grier’s resolution, for the last sentence suggests something much closer to the methodological recommendations of the *Dissertation* – to be discussed below – that puts her account of the resolution explicitly at odds with Kant’s. For Kant does *not* say that the thesis could be true of things in themselves (reality could contain the simple), while the antithesis is true of appearances, but that *both* conclusions are *necessarily* false.<sup>285</sup> To take up agnosticism about the unconditioned being predicable of mind-independent things in themselves is also to *reject* Kant’s own resolution in the *Critique*, as he declares that both thesis and antithesis are not only *false* but also *absolutely impossible*.<sup>286</sup> It is also,

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<sup>285</sup> However, just as he suggested in his notes that things in themselves could be bigger than our representations reach, in another text after the *Critique* he suggests that the simple *could* exist in things in themselves. See *Discovery* (8: 209-209n) and note 301 below.

<sup>286</sup> Specifically, Kant moves from the already familiar claim that we cannot experience an infinite time-series in the world of sense and nor can we experience an absolute boundary of the world of sense, to their actual impossibility. From this empirical impossibility, because of the reduction of spatiotemporal objects to representations, he declares that a beginning of the series in time or the world to be infinite in

as I will show below, to effectively elide any significant difference between how the mathematical and dynamical antinomies should be resolved. Before turning to the ‘both true’ resolution of the dynamical antinomies I want to briefly examine Kant’s earlier account of metaphysical error to substantiate how I think a methodological reading of the mathematical antinomies should run.

### 1.2. Kant’s Alternative Methodological Resolution

It is generally acknowledged that Kant’s procedure in the *Inaugural Dissertation* is methodological; it is controversial, however, whether this method carries over to the *Critique*.<sup>287</sup> I shall argue that the *Inaugural Dissertation* is methodological throughout in its resolution of metaphysical problems and that the *Critique* is methodological only in the resolution of the dynamical antinomies. The *Inaugural Dissertation* contains a superior method for dealing with the problems of metaphysics. In the fifth section Kant analyses one particular source of metaphysical error concerning how principles of sensitive cognition can contaminate those of intellectual cognition.<sup>288</sup> He issues a warning to metaphysicians that whatever is predicated of a concept of the understanding that has to do with relations of space and time, due to the ideality of the latter, ‘must not be asserted objectively; it only denotes the condition in the absence of which a given concept would not be sensitively cognizable’ (ID, 2: 412-413). The fallacy of predication spatiotemporal relations of objects of understanding (intellectual cognitions)

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past time to be ‘absolutely impossible’, completely cutting off any possibility of epistemic humility in the conclusion. That is, they are not just impossible for us to experience, but also impossible in themselves (A520-521/B548-549). I reject the inference from empirical impossibility to absolute impossibility because it turns on the principle that what exists must be determinable by us, whereas Allison accepts it (2012: 18). I therefore also disagree with Ameriks who attempts to save Kant from the charge of begging the question by suggesting that it is the dogmatists who rely on the spurious principle that experience is a reliable guide to absolute dimensions (2003: 109-110), for while this is undeniably true, it is an inadequate defence because Kant also relies on this principle: Kant does not make the *epistemologically modest* claim that we cannot know whether the world is finite or infinite, but the *epistemologically and ontologically immodest* claim that since both are ‘empirically impossible’ they are both ‘absolutely impossible’, in direct contrast to his methodological procedure in the dynamical antinomies.

<sup>287</sup> Guyer (1987: 16-20 and Ch. 18, esp. 388-390) argues that Kant’s procedure prior to the *Critique* is laudably methodological, but that it becomes dogmatic and metaphysical in the *Critique*. Guyer has been attacked for this view by Grier (2001: 191-194) and Allison (2004: 394-395), who both take the methodological method to carry over into the *Critique* and critically dispute Guyer’s ontological reading of transcendental idealism.

<sup>288</sup> Kant actually claims that he is concerned with preventing ‘*the infection of sensitive cognition by cognition deriving from the understanding*’ (ID, 2: 411), but Walford (in Kant 2002, 407, n.x) says that Kant must mean the opposite, and indeed this is apparently confirmed a few lines later: ‘great care must be taken lest the principles which are native to sensitive cognition transgress their limits, and affect what belongs to the understanding’ (ID, 2: 411). Allison agrees and concludes that Kant is entirely concerned with the contamination of intellectual cognition by sensitive principles (2015a: 78, n.81).

issues in what Kant calls three ‘subreptic axioms’ (ID, 2: 412). Kant’s rejection of the axioms constitutes a recommendation of epistemic modesty. At the basis of the ‘subreptic axioms’ is the mistaken assumption that whatever cannot be given in our sensible intuition is impossible. This spurious principle is invalidly derived from the true principle that, whatever cannot be given in *any* intuition at all is not thinkable, and is therefore impossible (ID, 2: 412-413).<sup>289</sup> The claim is that we conflate what is subjectively impossible (because not cognizable by us) with what is objectively impossible (because not thinkable/able to be intuited at all). Admittedly, the pre-Critical Kant uses this modesty to open up space for direct (intellectual) cognition of noumena (God and the soul) (ID, 2: 406-410), whereas the Critical Kant does not.<sup>290</sup> Nonetheless, the warning not to mistake subjective impossibility for objective impossibility is sound advice, and, moreover, these ‘subreptic axioms’ clearly anticipate the problems of the Antinomy (though not yet expressed in the form of antinomies). The axioms transfer conditions of sensitive cognition over to the objects themselves (making them the equivalent of intellectual cognitions). The three axioms are:

1. The same sensitive condition, under which alone the *intuition* of an object is possible, is a condition of the *possibility* itself of the *object*.
2. The same sensitive condition, under which alone it is *possible to compare what is given so as to form a concept of the understanding of the object*, is also a condition of the possibility itself of the object.
3. The same sensitive condition, under which alone some *object* met with can be *subsumed under a given concept of the understanding*, is also a condition of the possibility of the object itself. (ID, 2: 413)

The first and second axioms are the most relevant. The first axiom is illustrated by the principle ‘whatever is, is somewhere and somewhen’, and Kant finds it at work in ‘idle questions’ about the location of the soul and God. There is an indirect link between this

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<sup>289</sup> As Allison points out, Kant is unfortunately silent on the question of how *we* can know when something cannot be given in *any* intuition (2015a: 79).

<sup>290</sup> Some think that Kant allows cognition of things in themselves through practical reason. Allison denies this (2004: 48), while Wood affirms it (2010: 264-265). Walsh is very suspicious of the role of practical considerations in the resolution of the antinomies (1975: 211-214). Kohl (2015: 102-109, esp. 103) thinks that Kant allows us to give positive content to the idea of noumenal freedom and things in themselves through practical reason, but that this does not address theoretical questions, such as how freedom is possible.

axiom and some aspects of the antinomies. For example, the axiom could underlie the thought that the world, *as an object*, must have a location in space and time (a beginning and a limit), or that, in relation to the fourth antinomy, the necessary being must be part of the world (as in space and time) and not outside it. In addition, since the mathematical antinomies allegedly parallel the application of the mathematical principles of the understanding they also can be said to concern the possibility of *intuition* (of the world), just as their legitimate counterparts (the axioms of intuition and anticipations of perception) make possible the intuition of appearances.<sup>291</sup>

A direct link exists between the antinomies and the second axiom. Kant gives two examples of this axiom: ‘*every actual multiplicity can be given numerically*, and thus every magnitude is finite. The second is: *whatever is impossible, contradicts itself*’ (ID, 2: 415). The first example immediately suggests the first antinomy, specifically the thesis. The error stems from the fact that forming a conception of magnitude entails sensitive intuition of the object. Since sensitive intuition of an object occurs only through successive synthesis, the apprehension of the object needs to be attainable in a finite time; since an infinite series is one that cannot be apprehended successively to completion, it follows that we can have no *sensitive cognition* of an infinite magnitude. Once again, we move from the subjective impossibility of *our apprehension* of an infinite series to the objective impossibility of an infinite series itself (*ibid*).

In 1770, then, Kant was well aware of the dangers of conflating what we can judge to be possible in accordance with our specific cognitive powers and what may be objectively possible. Notwithstanding his theory of cognition of noumena through the (uncontaminated) use of the intellect, Kant’s procedure for dealing with metaphysical disputes turns on an analysis of the different cognitive powers and the strict separation of their domains of application. Because sensitive cognition is limited to the object considered as phenomenon we should not expect truths knowable through reason to necessarily be displayable in experience. Equally, we should not dismiss the conclusions of experience just because they do not match the requirements of reason. What we find in the *Dissertation* is a subtle and sophisticated account of the ways in which (what will later be identified as) reason and the understanding exert their influence on attempts to find complete explanations of phenomena, but in a way that

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<sup>291</sup> Kemp Smith is suspicious of Kant’s transference of the mathematical/dynamical distinction from the categories over to the ideas of reason (2003: 510), whereas Allison accepts the claimed link (2004: 364-365; 2012: 17).

advocates epistemic modesty as the preferred position. To rephrase in terms of the *Critique*, just because the unconditioned cannot be displayed in sense experience we should not conclude that it is impossible in itself, but equally we should not take the conclusions of our sense experience to be false because they do not match up to the principles of reason.

Kant's account of transcendental illusion, if correct, has doomed the aspirations of reason to settle the antinomies dogmatically by deciding with certainty in favour of one side over the other, but once construed in a genuine deflationary way, it leaves open the possibility that there is a determinate 'fact of the matter' at issue in the conflicts, but cautions that the question of which side (if either) is correct is undecidable from the human standpoint. Notice that my resolution is different from Kant's official account but that it takes into consideration how transcendental idealism exhibits the errors in the arguments of both parties. If Kant is right, then  $P_2$ , the 'natural and unavoidable' illusory principle that the conditions are given with the conditioned in a complete series back to the unconditioned, guarantees that *any* attempt we make on the basis of pure reason to answer the questions that transcend possible experience will *always* fail. In *this* sense, it is true that both the thesis and the antithesis of the mathematical antinomies are false, even necessarily false, for  $P_2$  will always sabotage our attempt, either (as with the thesis) wrongly concluding something about the world on the basis of abstracting from its spatiotemporal nature, or (as with the antithesis) wrongly projecting space and time as ontological conditions of all reality, not just empirically cognizable reality. But this holds just as well for the dynamical theses and antitheses as well. What my account does not rule out, contrary to Kant, is the possibility that there *could* be a fact of the matter with respect to things in themselves, things as they are considered independently of our epistemic conditions. As I will demonstrate below, my account fits exactly with Kant's resolution of the dynamical antinomies. The thesis takes the intellectual conditions as constitutive independently of the sensible conditions under which they apply to reality; the antithesis takes the sensible conditions as holding without qualification of all things in general. Neither side manages to tell us anything about the nature and existence of the unconditioned, but only by a non-sequitur can we conclude that not only do both types of *argument* necessarily fail to prove their conclusion, but that both *conclusions* are, in themselves, necessarily false as well.

### 1.3. Objections and Responses

In this Section I want to consider some of the objections that could be raised against my position that the mathematical antinomies are undecidable for us. First, I consider Gardner's objection that 'undecidability' is not an appropriate resolution of the antinomies and offer some responses. Relatedly, I consider whether Kant's 'both false' resolution can still be deemed 'methodological', as Grier and Allison both claim. Second, I consider the much-cited fact that Kant distinguishes between the mathematical and dynamical antinomies on the basis that they involve different kinds of synthesis, and the implication that this distinction justifies Kant's different resolutions. I argue that the distinction is problematic and that it does not provide adequate grounds for Kant's different resolutions.

Gardner (1999) considers the possibility that Kant should have concluded not that there is no determinate fact of the matter regarding the world's magnitude, but rather that the question is unanswerable, for the truth cannot be known by us. He argues that 'undecidability fails in *this* context to count as a philosophical solution' (1999: 251). Gardner's first point turns heavily on the assumption that the arguments of the thesis and antithesis are sound – let us assume that they are. Gardner asks us to assume that there is a truth at issue, that the universe is in fact finite in space and time, and that we somehow know this – perhaps God told us.<sup>292</sup> He then points out that we would be stuck in a hopeless position of *knowing* that the thesis is definitely true, and therefore *knowing* that the antithesis is false, but being unable to understand *how* the antithesis can possibly be wrong given that its argument is actually sound. As Kant says, 'however the answer might come out, it would only increase our ignorance' (A485/B513). Gardner compares this unhappy situation with the idea of God telling us that  $2+2$  does not equal 4, suggesting that we would find such a case 'inconceivable' (1999: 251). Second, in order to make 'undecidability' an appropriate solution, the transcendental realist would need to provide a plausible account of why the truth is something that is beyond our capacity to ratiocinate about, but since transcendental realism holds the mode of our cognition to be adequate to knowledge of things in themselves, such a realist cannot do this without already embarking on the Critical path (1999: 252). By contrast, Gardner maintains that 'the diagnostic power of the Critical

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<sup>292</sup> If the reference to God's knowledge is unconvincing, then we can substitute it with an infallible or much-higher intellect. The important point is that, for the purposes of the thought experiment, we somehow learn that the thesis *really is* true and the antithesis *really is* false, or vice versa, but that the arguments nonetheless appear to us to be fully cogent.

perspective' allows Kant to explain the paradox in three ways: (1) in terms of different conceptions of the unconditioned in relation to different cognitive powers, (2) in terms of the conflation of appearances and things in themselves, and (3) by understanding the bounds of knowledge (1999: 253). Explaining that Kant takes the antinomies to be a problem forced on us not by the objects themselves – we do not *perceive* finite or infinite world-series – but by the ideas of reason, Gardner concludes that 'undecidability' fails as a solution 'not because it leaves us in perplexity regarding the cosmos, but because it leaves us in perplexity regarding ourselves' (1999: 254-255).

Before I reply to Gardner's points, it is important to note where we agree. Certainly, we agree that there is a transcendental illusion operating in the arguments of both the thesis and antithesis that nulls any claim to validity. We also agree that the 'Critical perspective' allows Kant to explain the antinomies in terms of conflicting conceptions of the unconditioned, linked to the different requirements of our main two cognitive powers. The antithesis is influenced by the understanding's principles always to seek further conditions, while reason influences the thesis in desiring completeness in the series of conditions. However, while transcendental idealism certainly entails the distinction between understanding and reason, I confess I do not see why it could not be open to a more sophisticated realist to distinguish between different cognitive powers and their influences and requirements. At any rate, the important point is that I am not arguing on behalf of transcendental realism: my account of how Kant should have resolved the mathematical antinomies is still transcendental idealist; my form of 'undecidability' concerns a 'fact of the matter' in relation to things in themselves, while we can only say that the synthesis of appearances is indefinite.

Taking Gardner's first point, I agree that Kant thinks a dogmatic answer only increases our ignorance. If Kant's proofs on each side of the equation are sound then it is very hard to reconcile the *known truth* of one position with the successful argument of its opponent. This, of itself, however, does not seem to me a convincing objection. With respect to the dynamical antinomies, particularly the third antinomy, Kant does seem to take both sides to be potentially true, and as years of analysis will testify, making sense of *how* one and the same subject can be both fully determined *as* phenomenon and possibly free *as* noumenon is extremely difficult. Indeed, Kant goes to great pains to stress that he is not proving the reality of freedom, but only that its possible reality does not contradict the lawfulness of nature (A558/B586). I suggest, then, that this objection is a good one, but that it counts just as much against the 'both true' resolution of the

dynamical antinomies that Gardner (and others) look favourably upon as it does against taking the mathematical antinomies to be undecidable. Granted, Kant does not exactly claim the dynamical antinomies are undecidable, but he does think we can accept the possible reality of freedom while still remaining committed to thoroughgoing determinism holding for phenomena: this is effectively the same as admitting that we are ignorant as to how both positions can really be true, but this is no argument against them both *being* true (in some suitably qualified sense), which is what Gardner would need to make his first point stick.<sup>293</sup>

I think Gardner's second point rests on an interpretative difference concerning what it means to be a transcendental realist. On Gardner's account, a transcendental realist is someone who thinks that we have knowledge of things in themselves, where the latter is understood to be how things *really* are, independently of our conditions of cognition. Appearances have an inferior reality compared to things in themselves (1999: 294), and the transcendental philosopher is constrained to make claims only about 'necessities of representation' rather than how reality actually is, about the 'shape' of the human perspective, not the 'fundamental constituents of reality' (1999: 304). As such, it is of course true that if a transcendental realist thinks our mode of cognition can reveal how things really are then it makes little sense for this same realist to think that there are things about reality that we necessarily cannot know, such as the magnitude of the cosmos. But this is not what Kant says, at least here in the Antinomy. He says that the transcendental realist makes what are mere representations (appearances) into things subsisting for themselves (A490-491/B518-519); thus, this realist reifies representations into things and makes an object (the world) out of 'mere representations'. This is why the mathematical antinomies are not undecidable for Kant, because the thing we call the 'world' does not exist outside of the indefinite regress of appearances. When Kant talks about the world being appearance or thing in itself he seems to be talking about the

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<sup>293</sup> In the third *Critique* Kant appeals frequently to a different conception of things in themselves as the supersensible substratum of nature, in order to resolve the antinomies of taste and judgement. Kant argues that, while from the human standpoint, we cannot unify the two types of judgement together, nor give one a higher priority than the other, they may nonetheless be 'objectively unifiable' in the supersensible ground of appearances (CPJ, §78). I suggest that a similar appeal could be made to the supersensible ground (or equivalently, appeal to the principle of the purposiveness of nature), to ground the possibility that natural causality and spontaneous causality could also be 'objectively unifiable', despite the fact that we cannot coherently unify the two types of causality as causal explanations of human actions. See Geiger (2011: 81-87) for an insightful discussion of the role of the 'supersensible' in the third *Critique*; however, while I find his analysis of the principle of purposiveness in relation to the supersensible compelling, I do not agree that the notion has no ontological aspects, as he claims.

ontological status of the thing in question rather than whether we take knowledge to be of how things really are (or not).<sup>294</sup>

This point also addresses whether the ‘both false’ resolution can be considered ‘methodological’. I maintain against Allison and Grier that it cannot, as can be seen from this passage:

Now if I ask about the magnitude of the world with respect to space and time, for all of my concepts it is just as impossible to assert that it is infinite as that it is finite. For neither of these can be contained in experience, because it is not possible to have experience either of an *infinite* space or infinitely flowing time, or of a *bounding* of the world by empty space or by an earlier, empty time; these are only ideas. Therefore the magnitude of the world, determined one way or the other, must lie in itself, apart from all experience [...]

So far, this is very suggestive of the methodological restrictions recommended by the pre-Critical Kant. We cannot have an experience of infinite space or time or of a limit to either, so, Kant reasons that ‘the magnitude of the world, determined one way or the other, must lie in itself, apart from all experience’, but then Kant continues:

But this contradicts the concept of a sensible world, which is merely a sum total of appearance, whose existence and connection takes place only in representation, namely in experience, since it is not a thing in itself, but is itself nothing but a kind of representation. From this it follows that, since the concept of a sensible world existing for itself is self-contradictory, any solution to this problem as to its magnitude will always be false, whether the attempted solution be affirmative or negative. (Pro, 4: 342)

Kant’s claim here is hard to reconcile with his avowed humility.<sup>295</sup> Furthermore, his conclusion that the world and its components are nothing but representations violates

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<sup>294</sup> Gardner himself makes effectively the same point against the methodological reading by saying that the locution ‘the world in itself’ does not lend itself easily to their ‘thing considered in itself’ interpretation (1999: 292).

<sup>295</sup> The passage also indirectly exhibits the failure of the ‘indirect proof’ to licence the conclusion that appearances are nothing outside our representations, for as can be seen, although Kant does try to force the stronger conclusion that all appearances are representations, one could just say that the world is transcendentally ideal without its components (appearances) having to be ideal.

his own ‘sceptical method’ and objections that he employs. Specifically, a ‘dogmatic’ objection is one where the critic argues he has *insight into the constitution of the object*, whereas a critical one shows only that the ‘assertion is groundless, not that it is incorrect’ (A388). If Kant’s resolution really is reducing objects to representations, then he is clearly overstepping his claim to provide only a ‘critical’ objection to the assertions of reason by making the dogmatic claim that his ‘indirect proof’ of transcendental idealism ‘brings us to a discovery about the *true constitution* of things as objects of sense’ (A507/B535; my emphasis; A423-424/B451). Nonetheless, we have yet to consider Kant’s direct explanation for resolving the dynamical antinomies with a ‘both true’ resolution: his argument that the two types of antinomy entail different kinds of synthesis, and so this is our next task.

Kant claims that the mathematical antinomies concern a synthesis of the homogenous, of appearances in space and time. Because the synthesis concerns homogenous items it must always connect spatiotemporal appearances; there is no space for things in themselves, so Kant cannot invoke things in themselves in resolving the mathematical antinomies (A528-529/B556-557). By contrast, the dynamical antinomies may admit of a synthesis that includes heterogeneous items, or can at least be *thought* to include them without contradiction, hence it may be that both positions are true for these conflicts rather than both false (A530-531/B558-559). Like their categorial counterparts, the dynamical antinomies concern what must be *thought* in relation to appearances, rather than what must be intuited, as Allison correctly points out (2012: 17). However, I do not find this convincing, for several reasons.

First, the idea that only the dynamical antinomies involve what must be thought rather than intuited is false. Specifically, we do not *intuit* the boundary of the world nor its infinitude, but as Kant says, we have the latter in the world-whole *only in concept* (A519/B547), which is effectively to say that we *think* it as the unconditioned ground of the world-series.<sup>296</sup> Second, the idea that the dynamical antinomies may go beyond appearances to include (thought of) things in themselves constitutes a clear revision by Kant of his opening diagnosis, according to which *all* of the antinomies concern what must be *thought* to complete the objective synthesis of empirically given appearances; what must be thought with respect to things in general/things in themselves is reserved explicitly for the Ideal of Reason (A407-408/B434-435). Furthermore, Kant claims that

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<sup>296</sup> See also R5553 (18: 223, 1778-1779).

the ‘world-concepts’ only carry the *degree* of the synthesis to transcendence, *not* in kind (A419-420/B447-448), but invoking any reference to things in themselves, even as merely negatively-conceived intelligible grounds, violates the ‘same-in-kind’ restraint.<sup>297</sup> While Kant’s accounts of freedom and God are far from clear, it is undeniable that intelligible causality and a necessary being are *not* appearances, in either ‘one world’ or ‘two world’ interpretations. In fact, given the strict methodological constraints on the deflationary view – that in talking of ‘things in themselves’ Kant is defining the notion in terms of the activities involved in thinking things in general/as objects of pure understanding, or that in speaking of things in themselves, Kant is talking about a philosophical *way of considering* things, rather than a set of objects that are distinct from appearances (Grier 2001, 89-90) – it is hard to make sense of what it would mean to add *things* (distinct heterogeneous items) to a synthesis of appearances when such things are supposedly the *same things* but just considered ‘in themselves’. Of course, Allison’s view is meant to leave open the idea of things that are only things in themselves, but many have suspected that he cannot coherently do that by the constraints of his own interpretation.<sup>298</sup> By contrast, if we allow for a methodological conception of things in themselves for the objects of experience *and* a metaphysical conception of things in themselves as the unconditioned then there is no difficulty in making sense of Kant’s resolution.

Third, Kant draws a distinction between two kinds of ‘world-concepts’. He distinguishes between the ‘world’ in the narrow sense, as a magnitude, and ‘nature’ as the *very same world* but considered as a dynamic and explanatory whole. I argue that this is undermined if Kant’s ‘both false’ resolution for the mathematical antinomies is taken seriously. The issue concerns how Kant characterizes the two senses. A dynamic whole is one that is ‘a subsisting whole’ (A418n-419n/B446n), yet this cannot be identified with being the very same ‘world’ as the mathematical whole of appearances, for *that* world is the sensible world; that is, ‘the sum total of appearances’, a concept of a world for which Kant states that it would be a *contradiction in terms* for it to exist outside of representation (Pro, 4: 432). If the sensible world, conceived as a magnitude, does not exist outside of the regress of representations then it is hard to see how *this*

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<sup>297</sup> Kant’s claim in the second *Critique*, that the distinction between the two kinds of antinomy ‘permitted to make the synthesis transcendent’ (CPR, 5: 104) for the dynamical conflict, expressly contradicts his opening account in the Antinomy.

<sup>298</sup> This is a charge that is frequently levied against ‘one world’ readings in general, e.g., Schulting (2011a: 11) aims this objection at Allais.

*same world* could coherently be conceived as a ‘subsisting whole’ through accordance ‘with an inner principle of causality’ (A418n-419n/B446n). Note that this conflict between the two ‘world-concepts’ exists only on the assumption that Kant’s denial that the mathematical antinomies concern a matter of fact goes through. If we reject that conclusion, as I have argued we should, then we can distinguish between the world in the ‘transcendental sense’ as the ‘totality of existing things’ and the taking of this world to have a spatiotemporal magnitude. We can agree with Kant that, because of transcendental idealism, the sensible world cannot have a spatiotemporal magnitude independently of the regress of appearances, for the size of the regress determines its spatiotemporal magnitude; however, crucially, we can maintain that there *is* a matter of fact at issue in the mathematical antinomies, for while the *spatiotemporal* magnitude is dependent on the subjective regress, all that exists – things in general – while not individuated (for us) nonetheless *exist* as a determinate totality.<sup>299</sup> This fits very well with a ‘one world’ interpretation, for it leaves intact the reality of the external world, while taking into account Kant’s insights into the futility of attempting to answer the antinomies dogmatically through the use of pure reason.

It must be noted that I am not the first to claim that Kant’s resolution of the dynamical antinomies should apply equally well to the mathematical ones. W. H. Walsh has argued that the second antinomy should be resolved by claiming that both sides can be true (1975: 210-212).<sup>300</sup> We can agree with the antithesis that nothing in the *sensible*, i.e., spatiotemporal, world can be absolutely simple, but agree with the thesis that this does not rule out the possibility of the simple as such perhaps being in noumena (1975: 212-214).<sup>301</sup> We saw above that Grier’s formulation of the resolution of the second antinomy appeared to hint at this possibility, while still claiming that both sides are false (2001: 213). Allison objects that Walsh’s conclusion ‘is correct but beside the point,

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<sup>299</sup> See Gardner (1999: 255) and Allais (2015: 93-94).

<sup>300</sup> See Kemp Smith (2003: 510-513) for a similar claim.

<sup>301</sup> In his early work, *Physical Monadology* (1756) and in his submission for the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences prize essay (1764), Kant took the view that Leibnizian monads were compatible with the infinity of space because the simplicity of monads could be distinguished from the sphere of their activity (the force of impenetrability), which is subject to the infinite divisibility of space. Thus, the infinite divisibility of space does not affect the fact that bodies consist of indivisible monads (PM, 1: 477-483; PE, 2: 286-287). The difference between the early Kant and the Critical Kant concerns the status of these claims: the former claims to know and to be able to demonstrate the existence of monads and other simples, while the latter (provided he sticks to his own principles) can allow the thought of such claims – thoughts of things in themselves and noumena – but does not claim to know or ‘to seriously assert the least thing about all this’ (A780-781/B808-809). Kant even entertains the possibility of the non-sensible ground of appearances consisting of monads, but again cautions that we can *never* know whether this is the case, for the sensible *always* consists of composites (Dis, 8:209-209n).

since it ignores the cosmological nature of the question at issue' (2004: 502-503, n.12). It is hard to see how Walsh's conclusion fails to count as cosmological, since it concerns the world as a whole. I take it that what Allison means, and this is suggested by his second point, is that Walsh overlooks Kant's claim that the conditions must be homogenous with the conditioned in the mathematical antinomies, so it is illegitimate to add things in themselves to the regress. I have suggested that this distinction is flawed: all the antinomies concern what must be *thought* as the intelligible ground of the completeness of appearances. Now, of course, what I am suggesting does represent a slight modification of the thesis of the second antinomy, because the original claim does concern the *spatiotemporal* world; however, this is because the two disputants are (implicitly) transcendental realists, so there is no room for a distinction between the world as appearance and the world in itself. Once we take up transcendental idealism, as the doctrine that spatiotemporal features of reality are empirically real (but only in relation to being given through our forms of intuition) we can allow for the possibility, as Kant does, that the antithesis is true of things as appearances, since appearances are conditioned by space and time, and that the thesis *may* be true of things considered independently of our forms of intuition.<sup>302</sup> In the next Section I will summarize Kant's resolution of the dynamical antinomies and the implications for the third sense of the transcendental distinction: things in themselves *as* the unconditioned.

## 2. The Unconditioned in Things in Themselves

I have argued against Kant's official resolution of the mathematical antinomies. For this reason, the last Section was long because it was necessary to disentangle Kant's 'both false' resolution, which I argued relies implicitly on a metaphysical idealism, from the 'both true' resolution that he holds for the dynamical antinomies. Since I have no qualms in principle with the 'both true' resolution as following from the application of transcendental idealism to the antinomies, we can be briefer here.

Famously, Kant holds that transcendental idealism allows the dynamical antinomies to be arbitrated 'to the satisfaction of both parties' (A530/B558). This stems from Kant's idea that in their case it is permitted to think of something unconditioned as being outside the conditioned series of appearances, for in this way the series can be

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<sup>302</sup> See Grier (2001: 216-218).

*grounded* on something empirically unconditioned, placating reason, while not upsetting the series of (homogenous and empirical) conditions, thus appeasing the understanding.<sup>303</sup> As such, while the individual *arguments* of the disputants are no more successful than they were before, their *conclusions* can nonetheless be allowed to stand when ‘taken in a corrected significance’, so that the two claims could both be true (A531-532/B559-B560). As Kant explains at length, the ‘both true’ resolution requires transcendental idealism, for if the objects of our cognition were things in themselves then P<sub>2</sub> would be true and the unconditioned would have to be given with the conditioned as the conditions would once again be necessarily homogenous (A535/B563); in short, this would undermine both the claims of the thesis (there is freedom) and the antithesis (everything happens through natural causality) for it generates the paradox of the antinomy (A543/B571). Nonetheless, the structure of the ‘both true’ resolution is only the start of Kant’s efforts to explain how the third and fourth antinomies may coherently be resolved. It is well beyond the scope of this work to explain, much less evaluate, Kant’s theory of freedom or conception of God, so I will settle with sketching out my interpretation of the resolutions and explaining their significance regarding my attempt to link the unconditioned with the transcendental distinction.

The resolution of the third antinomy is notoriously complex and has been read as advocating both compatibilist and incompatibilist models of freedom.<sup>304</sup> As I read it, Kant is arguing that the application of transcendental idealism allows us to say that all phenomena are causally determined, but because this idealism restricts the conditions under which we can have knowledge, then there is room for the possibility that there is an additional causal element involved in free actions that is not empirically cognizable: intelligible spontaneous causation, or freedom. Kant is not arguing that we are really free while appearing to be determined, or that we are determined while falsely believing that we are free; he is not arguing either for freedom and determinism amounting to the same thing. He is arguing that we *really are* causally determined as phenomena in space and time, but that in addition to that, it is not impossible that we could be *really free* as well, albeit in another relation (A536/B564). Kant says that the idea of the freedom of

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<sup>303</sup> Kant often talks of appearances being ‘behind’ things in themselves or things in themselves being ‘leftover’ from appearances or as being their non-sensible grounds. See *Groundwork* (4: 451), *Discovery* (8: 209-209n), *Prolegomena* (4: 289) and the third *Critique* (5: 465) for examples outside of the first *Critique*.

<sup>304</sup> Gardner suggests that Kant’s account contains aspects of both (1999: 263).

the will – what he calls ‘practical freedom’ – presupposes that ‘its cause in appearance was thus not so determining that there is not a causality in our power of choice such that, independently of those natural causes and even opposed to their power and influence, it might produce something determined in the temporal order in accord with empirical laws, and hence begin a series of occurrences **entirely from itself**’ (A534/B562).<sup>305</sup> The key idea is that the causality of appearances is determining but not sufficient for rationally-taken action. In order to take ourselves to be rational (and *a fortiori*, moral) agents we have to presuppose that we were capable of doing otherwise for any action over which we assume some responsibility. The difficulty is reconciling this moral vision of ourselves with the thoroughgoing determinism of nature, the truth of which Kant takes himself to have demonstrated in the Second Analogy.

To expand his solution, Kant distinguishes between the cause, the effect, and the ‘causality of the cause’. He maintains that the cause and effect may both be empirical in nature (appearances), but that the causality of the cause – that is, the determination of the cause to act – could be intelligible, and thus not stand under any other causal law (A544-545/B572-573). This is a difficult idea to grasp, but the best way of understanding it is, I think, to think of one causal series – the empirical series of appearances – running along in time, with interjections by intelligible causality at points in the causal series where the subject makes choices. In this way, the freely acting subject is a phenomenon or appearance, the effects of their actions are also appearances, and so the empirical lawfulness of nature holds, while at the same allowing that the empirical lawfulness of nature is ‘not so determining’ as to make its effects necessarily follow from the empirical causes alone. Kant admits that his solution to the free will problem seems overly subtle and obscure, but maintains that its fruitfulness will become clear in application (A537/B565).

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<sup>305</sup> Kant introduces the contrast between ‘transcendental’ and ‘practical’ senses of freedom in the opening of his discussion. Briefly, transcendental freedom is the proper concern of the third antinomy and expresses the idea that something could begin a state entirely from itself alone, without being determined by another cause necessitating the change of state in accordance with a law of nature (A533/B561). As such this causality, if it exists, must be nonsensible since the Second Analogy has shown that all empirical causality happens in accordance with the law of cause and effect in time. Practical freedom concerns the ‘independence of the power of choice from **necessitation** by impulses of sensibility’ and understanding this kind of freedom is impossible without first resolving the problem of transcendental freedom (A534/B562). For a thorough discussion of the two conceptions of freedom and of the very complicated relationship between them, see Allison (1990: Ch. 3). Kohl (2015: 106) and Hogan (2009: esp. 56) argue that Kant’s theory of freedom entails that free actions do not have metaphysical determining grounds that necessitate their effects. In other words, such actions do not have grounds such that one can infer from the existence of the ground to the effect. This is why we cannot have any insight into the real causes of freely chosen actions because there are no such causally necessitating grounds to uncover in the first place (LM, 28: 270).

Appearances, Kant says, must be ‘grounded in a transcendental object’ for they are not things in themselves.<sup>306</sup> This means that it is logically possible that the transcendental object could possess two types of causal powers. The type that we cognize in experience is natural causality, but the other possible type is an intelligible causality. Applying this idea of two causalities to things yields Kant’s distinction between empirical and intelligible characters, where the former is the character of a thing in appearance and the other its character as a thing in itself (A538-359/B566-567). A thing’s empirical character is the rule or principle through which its causality occurs, and applying this to humans suggests that in the case of, e.g., the malicious liar, the empirical character of the liar could be his bad upbringing, bad temper, insensitivity to shame, etc. By appealing to his empirical character we do *explain* the action of lying (A555/B583). Nonetheless, insofar as we take this person to be a rational agent, responsible for their actions, we ‘set aside’ the empirical character and still blame them for the way they behaved, for reason ‘could have and ought to have determined the conduct of the person to be other than it is’ (*ibid*). This is a very controversial passage, both exegetically and philosophically, but I take Kant’s point to be that the empirical character does explain, and, thus in some sense, contributes to the liar’s action, but because his empirical character is an appearance it is not sufficient to *cause* his action, for reason, as intelligible causality, must approve (or reject) the action in question in a way that stands outside of temporal conditions, relying instead on imperatives and maxims that can determine the subject to act (A552-557/B580-585).<sup>307</sup> In short, Kant’s solution is to open up a space in which intelligible causality could enter into, and thus begin, an empirical series of appearances, but in a way that neither proves that this is actual (or even really possible) and that preserves the thoroughgoing determinism of nature (A557-558/B585-586). Kant’s solution does not require noumena in the strict positive sense of a noumenal subject (distinct from the phenomenal subject) but only the

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<sup>306</sup> The transcendental object, in at least one of its many senses, is effectively the A-edition version of the negative sense of noumenon from the B-edition.

<sup>307</sup> On the question of how best to understand reason’s intelligible causality, I follow Allison’s suggestion that this be understood in terms of what he calls ‘the incorporation thesis’. The basic idea is that reason must incorporate or reject an incentive into its maxim and take it as a reason for action, but it does not causally necessitate the action in question, for this would render reason a literal non-temporal causal power, which Alison (understandably) regards as problematic (1990: esp. 51). That said, I intend this only as one way of fleshing out reason’s causality. Another way of understanding Kant’s solution to the free will debate is to take science and physical laws to be necessarily incomplete, so that there may be actions or circumstances in which physical laws underdetermine (or simply have nothing to say about) what actions should follow from given causes and conditions. See Allais (2015: 305-307) for a brief sketch of this approach. This does not seem to me to be necessarily incompatible with the broad position I advocate here, for it could be that physical laws have nothing to say about a subject’s reasons for acting.

idea that where action is concerned, empirical causes underdetermine whether the action occurs or not, for there could be a second causality involved. Here the unconditioned is clearly the notion of such an intelligible causality, both in its transcendental sense in which something would begin a new causal series from itself, where with respect to the cosmos this something would have to be outside the world, and in its practical sense in relation to the problem of free will. In this second sense, the solution does not require the cause to be outside of the empirical series, but only its determination to act – the causality of the cause – has to be intelligible (A561/B589).

As Kant explains, the case is very different with the fourth antinomy. Not only is this antinomy fraught with internal tensions, its resolution also goes well beyond that of the third antinomy in requiring reason to think itself out of the series of appearances altogether.<sup>308</sup> Kant's solution once again turns on transcendental idealism. As with the third antinomy, we can agree with the antithesis that nothing in the sensible series of appearances can be regarded as empirically unconditioned and therefore as necessary, but we can likewise agree with the thesis that there could be something necessary and empirically unconditioned that is the ground of the conditioned and always contingent series of appearances in the world (A560-562/B588-590). Once again, we cannot claim that the thesis *is* true, but only that it *could be* true given that appearances are not things in themselves, and thus must be grounded on something that is not itself appearance. Kant admits that the idea of a necessary being may even be impossible, but that if this is so then it cannot be shown through a conflict between the two positions themselves (A562-563/B590-591). In relation to the unconditioned, then, it is clear that this is going to be the idea of God as the necessary being needed to ground contingent appearances. It is not until the Ideal of Reason that we get Kant's full account of God as the idea of a necessary and most-real being, but it is clear already that through the use of pure reason we can cognize neither the (real) possibility of freedom nor the (real) possibility of the existence of God.

I want to end this Section by providing some brief examples of Kant linking knowledge of the unconditioned to knowledge of things in themselves to substantiate the third sense of the transcendental distinction because, admittedly, the link is not immediately transparent. As we have seen, Kant takes the side of the antithesis for the dynamical antinomies with respect to appearances and for the mathematical antinomies

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<sup>308</sup> See Grier (2001: 218-229) for an excellent discussion of the complexities and tensions in the fourth antinomy and its relationship to the ideal of reason.

he downgrades their claims: for the first antinomy, infinite regress becomes indefinite regress, and for the second antinomy, infinite regress and infinite number of parts becomes an infinite regress but an indefinite number of parts, owing to his conclusion that the world-series does not exist outside of the synthesis of appearances. From this it is clear that empirical cognition is always of conditioned appearances, thus of things that are never self-explanatory (A483/B511, A508/B536). By contrast, the unconditioned is whatever completes the process of explanation by closing off the series of appearances. This is why reason desires the unconditioned; however, the existence of the unconditioned is not counted among the transcendental conditions of the possibility of experience, for the unconditioned is neither necessary for knowledge (of individual appearances), nor does it make any difference to the process of explaining individual phenomena:

For example, you will not be able to explain the appearance of a body the least bit better, or even any differently, whether you assume that it consists of simple parts or completely of parts that are always composite; for no simple appearance can come before you, and neither can any infinite composition. Appearances require to be explained only insofar as their conditions of explanation are given in perception, but everything that can ever be given in it, taken together in an **absolute whole**, is not itself any perception. But it is really this whole for which an explanation is being demanded in the transcendental problem of reason. (A483-484/B511-512)

Kant links reason's desire for the complete explanation of appearances with its need to go beyond experience, for we do not find the requisite closure in experience:

For that which necessarily drives us to go beyond the boundaries of experience and all appearances is the **unconditioned**, which reason necessarily and with every right demands in things in themselves for everything that is conditioned, thereby determining the series of conditions as something completed. [...] consequently that the unconditioned must not be present in things insofar as we are acquainted with them (insofar as they are given to us), but rather in things insofar as we are not acquainted with them, as things in themselves. (Bxix-xxi)

The passage directly states that the unconditioned must be present ‘in things insofar as we are not acquainted with them, as things in themselves’. The claim is metaphysical and not just deflationary, for it asserts of things as they are independently of our experience of them that they must contain that which closes the series of appearances. However, we have just seen Kant explain at length a sophisticated theory of transcendental illusion that raises serious question marks over reason’s *right* to demand the unconditioned in things in themselves. If we take his official account seriously then it seems that in the mathematical antinomies the unconditioned is not to be found (metaphysically) in things in themselves – in fact, it does not exist at all! However, with respect to the dynamical antinomies, it is possible that the unconditioned *may* exist with respect to noumena, but we cannot affirm or deny the *real* possibility of the unconditioned. I have suggested that Kant’s argument for denying the possible existence of the unconditioned in relation to the mathematical antinomies fails, for it turns on conflating two senses in which the conditions can be said to ‘be given’ with the conditioned. Therefore, if I am right, the mathematical antinomies should be resolved in line with the dynamical antinomies; the direct upshot of this is that in denying us knowledge of things in themselves Kant can be taken as advocating a sophisticated epistemic humility through the Antinomy, according to which we can have secure knowledge about the objects of possible experience, but must renounce the attempt to settle, either through the use of pure reason or science, questions as to the age and size of the cosmos, as well as the existence of God and the nature and scope of causality.<sup>309</sup>

In the last Section of this Chapter, I wish to return to the question of the ‘transcendental turn’ that I discussed in Chapter 3. Here, however, I will focus on a very important interpretation of what the ‘turn’ consists in for Kant that I omitted from that discussion. This is Allison’s idea that the ‘turn’ should be understood as a turn away from a theocentric paradigm of cognition and its norms to an anthropocentric one. While this interpretation has little direct evidence to support it from the text of the *Critique*, I believe that it provides a very helpful model for understanding how Kant’s

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<sup>309</sup> In explaining why nature and freedom are not opposed Kant also points out that, beyond the a priori principle that every event has a cause determined in time guaranteed by the proof of the second analogy, we can have no insight into *any* kind of causality, be it empirical or intelligible: ‘we do not in any way comprehend how it is possible for one existence to be posited through another existence’ (A448/B476).

transcendental idealism can uphold the dual claim to be both idealist and realist enough to capture the cognitive relation between the human mind and reality.<sup>310</sup>

### 3. Transcendental Idealism as a Shift between Conceptions of Cognition

Allison sees Kant's 'transcendental turn' not as a turn *to* the transcendental, but as a turn *from* transcendental realism *to* transcendental idealism (2004: 34).<sup>311</sup> What this means is that, according to Allison, the two forms of transcendentalism are mutually exhaustive standpoints that offer different conceptions of human cognition. Allison claims that they are metaphilosopical or even metaepistemological standpoints and are not themselves metaphysical positions. For this reason, Kant can include a wide variety of different philosophers' positions (Locke, Hume, Leibniz, Berkeley and the pre-Critical Kant) all under the broad title of transcendental realism (2004: 20, 34-35). What unites all variants of transcendental realism is a collective failure to distinguish appearances from things in themselves, where this means refusing to acknowledge the a priori conditions that structure the way in which the mind receives its sensory data and must synthesize it to bring it to the unity of consciousness, which in turn entails a rejection of the claim that human cognition is discursive, involving both sensibility and understanding (2004: 26-27). It should be clear that the account of transcendental idealism I provided through the Amphiboly in Chapter 3 is very much along these lines, as is my methodological resolution of all the antinomies, and my account of empirical realism in terms of the original orderability of appearances from Chapters 1 and 2. As Allison correctly notes, though, so far transcendental realism has not been presented as a positive doctrine, making it look like a heading to capture all that Kant opposed. This is not the case.

The positive doctrine can be best captured by taking transcendental realism to embody an implicit or explicit commitment to 'a theocentric paradigm or model of cognition' (2004: 28). Operative in all transcendental realist accounts is the implicit ideal of a divine form of cognition that non-divine (human) cognition is compared with

<sup>310</sup> Allais points out that in Kant's explicit discussions of transcendental realism he does not characterize it in terms of divine knowledge (2015: 88-89). This is correct, but Kant frequently discusses the transcendental distinction in terms of sensible and intellectual (divine) intuition. Moreover, in his famous letter to Herz (26<sup>th</sup> May, 1789) concerning Maimon's attack on the Critical philosophy, Kant objects against the latter that he wrongly takes human reason to be the same in kind as divine reason, just with a difference in degree, whereas Kant argues that human reason is entirely distinct in kind (Cor, 11: 54).

<sup>311</sup> See also Allison (2012: Ch. 4) and (2015b).

and inevitably found wanting, since it cannot cognize what divine cognition can, i.e., things in themselves. This is contrasted with the anthropocentric model which ‘considers the human mind as the source of the rules or conditions through which and under which it can alone represent to itself an objective world’ and ‘this entails that discursive cognition is elevated to the norm rather than degraded to a second-class form of cognition, as it inevitably is under the theocentric model’ (Allison 2004, 38). The theocentric model does not require a commitment to the existence of God, merely the thought that human cognition ought to be measured against a putative divine counterpart as comprising the normative standard of what counts as cognition (2004: 28). Of course, this model of cognition has much in common with the familiar notion of a God’s-eye perspective on the world, but it elevates that idea to the status of being the final arbiter on questions of truth, reality and existence. What is true is what would be true for God; what exists is what exists for God, etc.<sup>312</sup>

Rather than question whether Kant is right to classify these philosophers as transcendental realists, I want to explore what this theocentric-anthropocentric shift means for Kant’s account of the unconditioned and for our lack of knowledge of it. Unfortunately, Allison’s own account is very unclear. I have examined the deflationary view that Kant is right to introduce a distinction between the mathematical and dynamical antinomies, and to argue that the former must be resolved by the recognition that there can be no fact of the matter with respect to their problems, while in the latter two we must acknowledge that both parties to the debate could potentially be right. Unfortunately, this is not the only response that Allison puts forward. Alison also claims that transcendental illusion consists not in just thinking that the mathematical antinomies must be rejected as disputes without a right answer, but that also the dynamical antinomies should be rejected for the same reason. Specifically, with respect to the third antinomy, Allison takes Kant to deny both that we are free *and* we are not really free, as the positions are contraries, not contradictories:

The question: “Are we *really* free?” keeps returning. And the answer: “Yes, but only from a practical point of view” appears to be either a dodge or a confusion,

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<sup>312</sup> The claimed connection between the theocentric model of cognition and the rationalist philosophers might be viewed sympathetically by the reader, but the connection with empiricist accounts is less obvious. See Allison (2004: 25-27) for an explanation of why Hume is a transcendental realist. He also explains why Leibniz, Locke and even the pre-Critical Kant all count as transcendental realists (2004: 27-34).

because we cannot help assuming that there must be *some* fact of the matter. Although this is true, Kant has an explanation for it. Moreover, this explanation is an essential, though generally overlooked, aspect of his transcendental idealism. It is to be found in the doctrine of transcendental illusion, which will be the centrepiece of the fourth part of this book. For the present, it must suffice to note that the illusion is not that we are free, or, for that matter, that we are causally determined. It lies rather in the assumption that we must *really be* one or the other in some ontologically privileged, context-independent sense. Such an assumption is unavoidable for transcendental realism with its theocentric paradigm, but it is precisely what is called into question by Kant's "Copernican revolution." (Allison 2004, 49)

Allison explicitly identifies the transcendental illusion with the assumption that there must be some fact of the matter concerning the third antinomy, not just the mathematical ones. This might be a plausible idea. I argued that all four antinomies should have the same resolution if Kant is to stick to his methodological procedure, but I suggested that we should extend the dynamical resolution to the mathematical antinomies. One could, however, take the opposite view and instead extend the mathematical resolution to the dynamical antinomies, which is what it looks like Allison is effectively suggesting, at least here.<sup>313</sup> Nonetheless, there are problems. First, as previously noted, Allison is completely committed to the distinction between the mathematical and dynamical antinomies and Kant's claim that they should be resolved differently. That commitment, on the face of it, seems incompatible with rejecting the idea that there is a fact of the matter regarding whether there is non-natural causality in the world.<sup>314</sup> Since Allison does not revisit this specific problem later in the book, despite dedicating a considerable portion of it to analysing the doctrine of transcendental illusion, it is unclear why he thinks that this works. I assume it is because

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<sup>313</sup> See also Allison (2012: 82).

<sup>314</sup> Allison in a later work does acknowledge the criticism that the possibility of being true requires a fact of the matter (2012: 82). He responds by saying that the criticism depends on what we mean by being 'true', and that if truth is understood as 'warranted assertibility from a point of view' in the terminology of Dummett and Putnam, then it is possible for the thesis and antithesis to both be true without there being a fact of the matter. He then sends us back to the (2004: 48) account that I am currently discussing. I do not agree with attributing the 'warranted assertibility' conception of truth to Kant, for I do not think that adopting 'warranted assertibility' is necessarily entailed by rejecting the theocentric model of cognition. See below.

of his rejection of the theocentric model of cognition.<sup>315</sup> I will explore a possible alternative reason below.

According to the theocentric model, what is real or true is what would be cognizable with intellectual intuition. From the divine perspective even infinity would be given, though it cannot be given for a human intellect (Allison 2004, 30). From that assumption it is easy to see why the rejection of the theocentric model would allow the dissolution of a determinate fact of the matter for the antinomies. If we switch to the anthropocentric model of cognition then the human mind is regarded as the source of the rules and conditions of objects, and thus if we cannot experience an infinite magnitude to the world in space and time (or an absolute boundary) then taking up this stance means rejecting the thought that there must be a fact of the matter here. Rather, since space and time only apply to objects of sensible intuition the restriction of their scope means things have no determinate magnitude independently of the forms of intuition. From there, we can apply the same thinking to the dynamical antinomies. We can neither experience a first cause, nor an infinite regress, of empirical causes, so we can reject the assumption that one or the other must be the case. Instead, we subject the question ‘are we really free?’ to two different analyses, one that focuses on our theoretical warrants and the other on the standards we hold ourselves to through practical reason. According to the former, every effect has a cause and its causality is the effect of another cause, etc., but from the practical point of view, where we become aware of a higher vocation and system of values (CPR, 5: 105-108), we can assume our (practical) freedom as a condition of taking ourselves to be moral agents (Allison 2004, 47-49; 2012, 82-83).

This way of resolving the antinomies certainly has its appeal. For one, we get rid of four of the most problematic issues in metaphysics at a single stroke, but as Allison mentioned above, the question ‘are we really free?’ keeps returning, and I suggest that to deny even the possibility of there being a determinate fact of the matter here, when the question is locked down to a specific context, namely humans acting independently of external causal constraints, *really is* to dodge the question. In fact, worse than that it is to get rid of the Kantian conception of morality altogether, since if it is *not even possible* (in principle) that I can really act *purely* under the idea of freedom then how

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<sup>315</sup> This is certainly the case with respect to the rejection of the world having a magnitude. See Allison (2004: 391).

can I regard myself – in any sense – as a moral agent on a Kantian account?<sup>316</sup> Allison is correct in understanding Kant to rule out *knowledge* of freedom, but surely if we take that further and, through the arguments of the *Critique*, conclude that there is no subject matter to decide upon, then all ideas of reason (God, immortal soul, and freedom) lose their action-motivating status as postulates of the practical use of reason. It may be the case that we *can* justifiably regard ourselves as free, etc., from the practical point of view, but doing so would seem to require, as the bare minimum, the *possibility* that we actually are free, that freedom is not impossible. I take it that this is exactly what Kant affirms in the three *Critiques*, in particular at the end of his resolution to the third antinomy. Kant claims only to have shown that freedom is not necessarily incompatible with thoroughgoing empirical causality, but does not claim to have demonstrated either the actuality or real possibility of freedom, because this cannot be done through the theoretical use of reason (A557-558/B585-586). On Allison's account, though, the affirmation that freedom is not impossible must fail, for what Kant has done on that account – despite Allison citing the same passage as affirming the non-contradictory status of freedom and empirical causality – is *to rule out the possibility* of us being free as part of the illusion that there must be a fact of the matter. Kant is not, I think, objecting to the thought that we must be one or the other, but rather to the idea that we can *know* which one is the case and to the idea that we can *only* be one or the other.<sup>317</sup> Transcendental idealism allows Kant to restrict the scope of empirical causality to objects of possible experience thereby maintaining the complete validity of the causal principle, while at the same time keeping open conceptual space for non-natural causality. This provides a more nuanced position, then, insofar as we can be both, if we have independent (practical) grounds for taking ourselves to be the latter as well as the former. Allison's account of the third antinomy seems to drift between affirming that both positions can be correct, in line with Kant's explicit account in the three *Critiques*, and between claiming that there is no fact of the matter concerning the possibility of non-natural causality, which seems to rely very heavily on his rejection of the theocentric model of cognition. Does the shift from the theocentric model to the

<sup>316</sup> Admittedly, Allison recognizes that Kant is completely open to the possibility that we are *not* free, and that we are in fact completely causally determined, but rightly maintains that we are unable to take ourselves to be rational agents if we do deny the possibility of freedom (2012: 27-28). Thus, where practical reason is dominant we are not concerned with *what is true*, but rather with what must be *assumed* as true as a condition of action.

<sup>317</sup> As Allison put it in a much earlier work, following Wood, Kant's conception of freedom is definitely incompatibilist, but he argues for the 'compatibility of compatibilism and incompatibilism' (1990: 28).

anthropocentric model warrant the denial of a matter of fact concerning freedom? I do not think so.

Above I claimed that to conclude that the two positions are contraries rather than contradictories (in the mathematical antinomies) was to implicitly slide from a methodological resolution into a metaphysical idealist resolution. I suggested that it was akin to adopting the spurious premise that what exists must be determinable by (human) minds or conflating the existence and the determinability of the conditions thought as given with the conditioned, but I also noted that rejecting that premise did not mean rejecting Kant's shift from a theocentric model to an anthropocentric one. *Prima facie*, this might seem paradoxical, but it is not, for the two are separate. The principle that what exists must be determinable is nowhere argued for in the *Critique*, as already explained, and it is thoroughly at odds with Kant's whole denial of knowledge to make room for faith. Further, as demonstrated previously, it by no means follows directly from adopting transcendental idealism. Transcendental idealism, as I have characterized it in this work, neither entails nor requires such a principle. Shifting from the theocentric to the anthropocentric model of cognition does not affect the possibilities that can exist independently of human thought and knowledge, or at least that is not what I think follows from it. Rather, what that shift does – as best exhibited in the ‘Copernican Turn’ – is to radically reconfigure our cognitive relationship with the world. Just because something is held to be true or knowable from the divine perspective no longer dictates what must be considered to be true in general. What Kant does in the first *Critique* is to set out an impressive, albeit flawed, thesis that human cognition comes with its own normative standards and conditions, that human cognition is fundamentally different not only in degree *but in kind* as well. For example, space and time may not exist from the divine perspective – this is precisely one of Leibniz's chief reasons for regarding space and time as confused representations of reality reducible to conceptual relations of subject-predicate containment<sup>318</sup> – but, for us, knowing the spatiotemporal relations between objects, even if such relations do not pertain to them independently of the form of our sensible intuition, *just is* to know them as empirical objects through empirical cognition. That is, what will count for us as a true judgement about empirical objects is both constrained and, crucially, *enabled* by our

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<sup>318</sup> See Allison (2004: 30-31) and Leibniz (1989: 30-34, 146-147, 213-225). Kant explains that his conception of sensibility does not attribute any ‘confusedness’ to the faculty, clearly indicating that the faculty does not *distort* the representations of the understanding: it simply does not represent things *as* things in themselves (Dis, 8: 219-210).

intersubjective forms of intuition, forms of judgement and the categories. It is precisely the transcendental turn from transcendental realism and the theocentric model, to transcendental idealism and the anthropocentric model, that allows Kant to maintain the *reality* of space and time and the world as it appears in space and time, through affirming the empirical reality of both (*empirical* objects/appearances really are in space and time), at the modest cost of the transcendental reality of both (they are not in space and time from the divine perspective/independently of the human mind). But that is where the shift ends.

Kant's transcendental turn makes us rethink the status of claims to knowledge made through human cognitive capacities, but he does not go further and make what exists in general *dependent* upon those capacities. It is essential to his overall conception of both theoretical and practical reason that Kant proffers epistemic modesty with respect to speculative metaphysics, and this means restricting the scope of metaphysics to the conditions of possible experience. It is precisely because Kant can restrict the scope of synthetic a priori principles that he is able to affirm both the applicability of those principles to the domain of nature, while also leaving open the possibility that the principles do not hold of all things in general. To take the conditions of experience and make them into conditions of things in general is exactly the kind of metaphysical dogmatism, exhibited in traditional ontology, that Kant means to resist with transcendental idealism; however, it is only by illegitimately extending the scope of the principles of the understanding that we could conclude that there is no fact of the matter regarding the four antinomies. What, then, is the role of the transcendental turn in relation to reason's endless quest for the unconditioned?

I suggested that the implication of the transcendental turn for the unconditioned is to rule out the possibility of knowing the unconditioned. We cannot know, either through pure reason or through possible experience, whether the world (the domain of existing objects) has a limit in time and space, whether composite substances reduce to simples or are infinitely divisible, whether every effect has a cause the causality of which begins in time and is thus the effect of another cause or if this process must terminate in a spontaneous uncaused causality, and finally, whether or not the contingency of beings in the world or the world itself requires grounding in a necessary being, i.e., God. Since the unconditioned in all four cases, once we reject Kant's resolution of the mathematical antinomies as I have argued we should, is to be located in or with things in themselves, it is logical to conclude that another sense in which

Kant can legitimately claim that we have no knowledge of things in themselves is by denying the possibility of knowledge of the unconditioned. Regarding the dynamical antinomies this is uncontroversial, I hope, but even with the mathematical antinomies, Kant does as I have pointed out above toy with the idea that the world in itself *may* have a beginning and even *may* consist of simples despite the infinite divisibility of space and time and therefore of appearances in space and time. With the dynamical antinomies it is not impossible that there could be freedom as well as natural causality and that there could be a necessary being; indeed, from the practical point of view we are licensed to *assume* both, particularly freedom, as postulates of practical reason. Thus, our desire to answer metaphysical questions is fruitless because any attempt to answer questions concerning the unconditioned will be sabotaged by the natural and unavoidable illusion that the conditions are given with the conditioned, including the unconditioned. But Kant tempers this depressing account with the positive story that releases us from the conviction that we must find out the answers to such questions. Appearances, not things in themselves, are the proper objects of human knowledge. Our genuine empirical knowledge of the world and nature is not threatened by the impossibility of knowledge of things in themselves.<sup>319</sup> As Kant puts it in the Amphiboly, ‘what the things may be in themselves I do not know, and also do not need to know, since a thing can never come before me except in appearance’ (A276-277/B332-333).<sup>320</sup> The ideas of the unconditioned may satisfy reason’s desire for explanatory *completeness*, but the ideas make no difference to how individual appearances are to be explained (A483-484/B511-512), for they are always either too big or too small for the regress of appearances (A486-488/B514-517).

Nonetheless, Kant does not reject the God’s eye-view entirely, for as things in themselves, the unconditioned may very well exist and thus complete the regress of appearances. This is, I think, the reason why one of the features of intellectual intuition (first *Critique*) or intuitive understanding (third *Critique*) is to *grasp the whole* immediately without the need for a successive synthesis of the parts to the (projected idea of the) whole (B72, B145, B307-308; CPJ, 5: 406-408). What Kant does deny to the divine perspective, though, is its status as final arbiter on what counts as true or what really exists, in the sense of not degrading what is (empirically) real to different

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<sup>319</sup> Kant claims that the ideas of God, freedom and immortality are the true pursuits of metaphysics, but crucially they are not needed for natural science, but only to get beyond nature (B395n).

<sup>320</sup> See also A30/B45: ‘the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them [appearances], but is also never asked after in experience.’

cognitive subjects – in virtue of shared enabling cognitive capacities – to what is only (empirically) ideal. To borrow a term from Abela (2002: 238), we could say that there are ‘hidden truths’ that are beyond our cognitive capabilities, but that nonetheless may exist or be knowable if we could (*per impossibile*) reach the end of inquiry, or take up a God’s eye-view.<sup>321</sup>

So far I have focused on how the shift from the theocentric to the anthropocentric model of cognition could explain why Allison thinks that Kant can deny that there is any fact of the matter to all the antinomies. We saw that Allison also held onto Kant’s key claim that the mathematical antinomies must be resolved by showing that both positions are false and the dynamical ones by demonstrating that they could both be correct, but it is specifically the claim that we can assert our freedom from the practical point of view that allows Kant to maintain both that there is no fact of the matter about freedom and that the thesis can still be ‘true’ from the practical standpoint (Allison 2004, 47-48; 2012, 82). I now want to show that even adopting a ‘warranted assertibility’ account of truth does not yield the expected goods: specifically, the idea that there could be a practical warrant for adopting a different resolution for the dynamical antinomies but not the mathematical ones.

Prima facie, the mathematical antinomies concern problems only of theoretical reason, questions our reason feels inclined to ask, but ones that have no implications for the practical use of reason. There is a clear sense, however, in which the resolution of the dynamical antinomies directly impinges on the practical use of reason. If it is absolutely impossible for there to be freedom in the world then praise and blame cannot be imputed to moral agents; indeed, on Kant’s account they cannot be considered as

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<sup>321</sup> I am using the term ‘hidden truths’ differently to Abela. Abela uses the term to designate recognition-transcendent truths *in* experience, truths that are facts, but would not (in principle or practice) be revealed at the end of inquiry. Abela uses the notion of divine idealization of inquiry and argues that this alleged ‘warranted assertibility’ account reduces in effect to a traditional truth-conditional account of truth. Abela’s problem with warranted assertibility/pragmatism is that it seems to leave some claims as truth-indeterminate that Kant would think were genuinely truth-determinate, such as whether Homo-sapiens came out of Africa. Kant’s ‘possible experience’ constraint concerns the form of experience and would not leave this example truth-indeterminate. The present example can be resolved by the use of counterfactuals: ‘if someone (*per impossibile*) had been there to see it [...]’, but since this no longer is constrained by what can be verified through experience the fully idealized conception of the end of inquiry is really just a disguised truth-conditional realist account of truth. I agree with this and it is one reason why I reject Allison’s attribution of a ‘warranted assertibility’ conception of truth to Kant, but, unlike Abela, I think Kant does allow for ‘hidden truths’ beyond experience, though they cannot be confirmed or denied on the basis of any theoretical employment of reason or the understanding. Abela does discuss the mathematical antinomies and argues, similarly to Grier and Allison, that they arise through mistakenly taking logical possibility to be the same as real possibility, but he does not discuss the dynamical antinomies at all, and this, in my view, prevents him from seeing that the notion of ‘hidden truths’ goes beyond truths about experience. See Abela (2002: 238-248) for discussion.

rational agents of any kind (GM, 4: 447-448; CPR, 5: 97). Similarly, if it could be decisively demonstrated that there is no God, then this would undermine Kant's claim that the idea of God is justified from the practical point of view (CPR, 5: 11n, 124-125, 143; A829/B857). Now, this is not an argument that Kant can use at this point in his project because he has yet to demonstrate that reason is practical, and that is the concern of the second *Critique*, but *it could be argued* on his behalf that the dynamical antinomies can be resolved differently to the first two because they have a practical dimension to them. There is nothing that pure *theoretical* reason can appeal to in order to solve the dilemmas positively, but it is open, in principle, for us to get the warrant for positive conclusions for the dynamical antinomies precisely because the *practical* use of reason requires these ideas as postulates. In other words, they are warranted as assertions of practical reason, while no such warrant is available for the claims at issue in the mathematical antinomies. Although it would be illegitimate to invoke practical considerations at this stage of the project, such considerations would seem to give clear motivation for why the dynamical antinomies receive a dramatically different, and notably positive, resolution.

But on closer inspection this tempting line of argument breaks down. First, Kant acknowledges that there is a practical interest in *all four* antinomies, for the thesis positions 'are so many cornerstones of morality and religion. The antithesis robs us of all these supports, or at least seems to rob us of them' (A466/B494). I take the practical interest of reason in the thesis positions as such to be further evidence that the mathematical antinomies can also be resolved the same way as the dynamical ones. Or, to put the point another way, why should the latter two be privileged over the first two? We have seen that Kant's official explanation of two kinds of synthesis does not hold up and it seems likely to me, as it has to many others, that what is really motivating the mathematical/dynamical split is that the dynamical antinomies have a direct impact on the tenability of Kant's developing conception of morality. Assuming, for the sake of argument that we want to throw Kant his bone on this issue, why not extend the appeal to practical considerations across the board? After all, as has been pointed out above, we can apply the 'both true' (or the 'both false') resolutions to any of the antinomies by making the antithesis true of appearances and the thesis (potentially) true of things in

themselves.<sup>322</sup> Although Kant does not spell out what practical interest reason has in the first two theses, it is not hard to surmise what it might be.

If the world is finite in space and time, then that lends credence to the idea that it was created by a creator; if composite substances can be divided to reveal indivisible components then, while these simples are not human souls, they are nonetheless simple as such and this therefore opens up conceptual space for thinking of the possibility of other simples such as immortal souls, in much the same way that affirming that transcendental freedom is not impossible opens up conceptual space for practical freedom (at least in the Dialectic). The potential appeal to practical considerations to justify the ‘both true’ resolution for the dynamical antinomies is undercut by the fact that it can be applied equally well to the mathematical antinomies. It could be objected that the finitude of the world and indivisible substances are not required as postulates for the practical use of reason and that this is why the dynamical antinomies require a different resolution; this, however, surely reverses the correct order of the argument. It is because the dynamical antinomies can be resolved differently that their corresponding ideas can be employed as postulates, not the reverse, which would make the derivation of the postulates circular.<sup>323</sup> In light of this two conclusions follow. First, *if* we want to invoke practical considerations in the resolution of the antinomies – assuming that this is not an obvious non-starter – then there is no obvious reason why they should not apply to all four antinomies, though it would be illegitimate to presuppose the postulates as derived from the conditions of morality to resolve the problems of theoretical reason, and then derive the postulates from the successful resolution of these theoretical problems. Second, following from the first, given the failure of practical considerations to necessitate a different strategy for resolving the dynamical antinomies, I contend that our best option is to continue viewing the resolution of all the antinomies through the scope-restriction of the principles of the understanding to the objects of possible experience, and refrain from treating our epistemological conditions – especially space

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<sup>322</sup> Of course, strictly speaking the antithesis is not true of appearances because the antithesis position does not appeal to transcendental idealism, whereas Kant does. This means that interpretations, such as Strawson’s (1966: 209-210) that equate the antithesis with Kant’s position are wrong. Nonetheless, Kant’s claim that the most that can be said of the empirical regress is that it is indefinite is much closer to the antithesis than it is to the thesis.

<sup>323</sup> Of course, the postulates actually owe their derivation to the practical employment of the ideas of all three areas of specialist metaphysics: the immortality of the soul from the paralogisms, free will from the third antinomy, and God from either the fourth antinomy or, in line with Kant’s architectonic, the ideal of pure reason.

and time – from holding of all things in general. That is, to view the resolution through the shift from the theocentric to anthropocentric model of cognition, as I have set it out.

## Conclusion: Transcendental Idealism as Empirical Realism

In this thesis I have argued that Kant's transcendental idealism deserves to be taken seriously as a genuinely robust form of empirical realism. The path to this conclusion, however, has been lengthy. I have argued that Kant's idealism is deployed in three main ways. Kant has often been accused of either holding subjectivism about appearances – that appearances are only the way reality seems to be because of our conditions of experience – and/or that appearances are mental entities in some sense. I argued against the idea that appearances are only how things seem to be but accepted that, at times, Kant does slip into metaphysical idealism regarding appearances. We saw evidence that Kant slips into this kind of reductionism in his resolution to the mathematical antinomies, with his frequent identifications of appearances with 'mere representations' or sums of representations in ways that disallow the acceptable interpretation of this claim, namely that it is the way in which objects are represented (as spatiotemporal) that is ideal rather than their existence.<sup>324</sup> This is the first main sense of the transcendental distinction. However, I say 'slips into' because I do not think that Kant meant to hold this position; indeed, the other two senses of the distinction bear out this story. I explored these in the Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

According to the second sense, the transcendental distinction concerns two ways of taking the objects of experience. They can be considered as appearances and as things in themselves; however, through an examination of the Amphiboly, I extended this epistemological deflationary account to cover not only the mistake of thinking that we can cognize things using concepts alone, but also that considering things as objects of pure understanding determines what *would be true* of those objects if (*per impossibile*) pure concepts were enough for cognition. This attempt to do metaphysics through pure concepts, according to Kant, leads directly to Leibniz's doctrines of pre-established harmony and monadology. I initially explored the Amphiboly to locate a version of the transcendental distinction that did not degrade appearances to the status of being inferior or second-best. I searched for an account of transcendental idealism

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<sup>324</sup> See the Appendix for further discussion and justification of the claim that Kant lapses into phenomenalism.

that could be maintained alongside Kant's empirical realism. The account of transcendental idealism that emerges from the Amphiboly does not include or require subjectivism about appearances; indeed, we saw it suggests that taking the objects of our experience to be objects of pure understanding is actually inherently misleading, generating an illusory system of cognition. Not only does that 'intellectual system' fail to apply to reality, it is also demonstrably false, on Kant's view, because it systematically excludes the sensible conditions *under which alone* our concepts can tell us anything at all about reality; for deployed independently of its sensible conditions, the very concept of an object in general is actually contradictory (A279-280/B335-336). Nonetheless, this account by itself does not tell us what it is that Kant thinks we cannot know in not being able to know things in themselves.<sup>325</sup>

To draw out the implications of Kantian humility I analysed the Antinomy of Pure Reason and argued that there is good evidence to support the view that the notion of the unconditioned can be identified with, or taken to be a property of, things in themselves. While this account is separate to that found in the Amphiboly, the two complement each other well and may even have been intended by Kant to be two sides of the same story. The account in the Amphiboly was wholly negative insofar as it set out a distinct way of cognizing reality which is not open to us, namely through pure concepts or thought alone. The third sense builds on this by showing that the inability of pure concepts to cognize reality also extends to the unconditioned. If (*per impossibile*) it was possible to cognize reality through pure thought alone, then the unconditioned would be given with the conditioned, as the whole series of conditions would be given, but, since such attempts at cognition are inherently illusory by ignoring the sensible conditions of space and time under which alone concepts can apply to reality, the unconditioned is not given with the conditioned, for the latter is not given in the same timeless way that premises are with a conclusion. Indeed, Kant even states that the error underlying the antinomies is an 'amphiboly' (A484/B512). However, as we saw, Kant remained very ambivalent towards the notion of the unconditioned: is it just an illusory principle of reason that projects its desire for complete explanation onto reality, so that the unconditioned *does not exist*? Or, does the illusion consist in reason's inability to *determine* the unconditioned, always either wrongly ignoring the role of sensible conditions in cognizing reality (as the thesis does), or projecting those conditions onto

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<sup>325</sup> Of course, it tells us that we cannot know things in themselves understood as objects of intellectual intuition, but it is hardly a major discovery to learn that we are not gods!

all things in general (as the antithesis does)? With respect to the mathematical antinomies, Kant took the unconditioned to be non-existent because the sensible world is not a thing in itself, but the mere (thought) totality of appearances. In sharp contrast, with respect to the dynamical series, Kant took the unconditioned to be a legitimate assumption of reason since he maintained that it is not necessary for the conditioned to be heterogeneous with its conditions. I have argued against Kant's 'both false' resolution of the mathematical antinomies in favour of a 'both true' resolution. This is necessary because rejecting the idea that there is a fact of the matter at stake in the antinomies is to push Kant's idealism too far, so that it extends not only over the spatiotemporal *properties* of things but over the *existence of the things* that have those properties. This, I argued, is akin to treating transcendental idealism as a form of Berkeleyan phenomenalism, which is not what Kant intended.<sup>326</sup> To this end, I found it necessary to reject the letter of the *Critique* in order to better preserve the spirit of the Critical philosophy.

What emerges, then, is a form of transcendental idealism that is perfectly compatible with Kant's epistemic humility concerning things in themselves, one that does not degrade appearances to the status of representations of how things *merely seem to be to us* as opposed to how they *really are* in themselves. We can say with Kant, that what we know of reality is only of appearances in the twofold sense that what we know is only what can be given to our forms of intuition (space and time) as spatiotemporal appearances, and that, while reason indicates that there could or even must be more to reality than we can cognize, it is beyond the possibility of our cognitive capacities to cognize putative things that do not conform to our sensible conditions of experience. We know things *as* objects of sensible intuition, as spatiotemporal entities and events, not as objects of pure understanding: we cannot individuate through concepts alone; we cannot determine the properties of objects, even the most basic ones through reason alone. Equally, if there are any 'things' or aspects of reality that cannot be given through sensible intuition, then necessarily we cannot cognize them. Nonetheless, this does not make appearances, or what we learn about reality through experience, fraudulent in any sense, but it does show that reality is individuated and spatiotemporal

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<sup>326</sup> I readily acknowledge that more needs to be done to show that the 'both false' resolution only makes sense on an extreme phenomenalist account; it was beyond the scope of this Chapter to do that, since I focused on showing that the 'both false' resolution does not follow from transcendental idealism understood in a broad 'one world' sense. My aim was to show that a 'one world' account, especially a deflationary one, should not accept the 'both false' resolution. I have plans to continue this line of research as post-doctoral research.

*only in relation to* our forms of intuition and not ‘in itself’. As just seen, what makes this combination of (empirical) realism and (transcendental) idealism possible is Kant’s turn from a theocentric to an anthropocentric model of cognition.

According to the theocentric model, space and time could not be said to be empirically (or transcendently) real because things are spatiotemporal only from the human standpoint. Accordingly, the most that could be said of space and time is that things only *seem* to be spatiotemporal to us, not that they actually are spatiotemporal; if a being with intellectual intuition exists, reality would not appear spatiotemporal to it. By remaining within the theocentric model, we must say that appearances are ultimately nothing more than sophisticated distortions of reality. It is easy to recognize the frequency of this narrative in the literature, and why Kant’s combination of realism and idealism has often been dismissed as a sham.<sup>327</sup> However, if we read Kant’s transcendental turn as the assumption that the objects of cognition must conform to our conditions of experience and understand the source and standards of human cognition as being completely different in kind (not merely in degree) to a putatively divine perspective, then space and time, and empirical cognition, can be granted empirical reality.

I have argued that Kant’s empirical realism is grounded in his transcendental idealism. Specifically, we have seen that Kant is able to hold empirical realism regarding the applicability of space and time, along with the categories, to the objects of experience only because of the ideality of the former. It is the ideality of space and time that allows him to overcome scepticism about the external world, insofar as space and time are taken to be pure intuitions, and not things in themselves, or properties of things in themselves, then they are only realized when an external matter provides the means for their manifestation as formal intuitions.<sup>328</sup> They lay waiting in the mind as the forms of its intuition, but are not themselves representations until the occurrence of experience converts them from forms of intuition into formal intuitions, the forms of appearances. In addition, because we have a pure intuition of time, Kant can appeal to the a priori

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<sup>327</sup> See especially Guyer (1987: 5), who holds – in direct contrast to Allison – that it is precisely because Kant holds that there is a possible divine alternative form of intuition that he degrades appearances to mere representations. Guyer suggests that this only partially accounts for Kant’s idealism, arguing that it is also the result of misguided assumptions about the necessity involved in representing spatiotemporal objects. See also Prichard (1909) and Strawson (1966).

<sup>328</sup> To be sure, I think Kant argues *from* realism, not *to* realism, thus I agree with Amerik’s (2003) reading, but the fact remains that his account secures knowledge of the external world *through* the ideality of space.

unity of time as a means of proving the objective reality of the (relational) categories. This is his argument in the Analogies of Experience. Kant argues that the three analogies constitute the rules of transcendental time-determination, detailing the conditions under which we can have empirical cognition of a unified time-order and of objects in one time. Kant shows, against Hume, that if all we had were a successive stream of given singular perceptions then we would never be able to fashion for ourselves the representation of an objective time-order, that is, of the relation of representations to an object of representation. Nonetheless, Kant's argument in the Analogies is incomplete without an account of how the pure intuition of time comes about, as well of what role the categories can have given that they do not pick out empirical features of objects. This account is provided in the Transcendental Deduction. With respect to the second question, Kant answers this by showing that categories constitute the form of the thought of an object in general, and that an objective unity of representations just is the representation of an object in a 'thin', intentional sense. The categories are rules of intellectual synthesis, rules for uniting representations together under one consciousness. However, this role of the categories as objectively valid rules of thought is not enough to guarantee that for everything that can appear to consciousness in intuition that the categories can be applied to it. Kant's answer is developed through the second half of the Deduction, involving the complex notion of figurative synthesis. The figurative synthesis connects the intellectual synthesis with our forms of intuition. By drawing this connection, Kant demonstrates that since space and time as the forms of empirical objects are represented as manifolds, it follows that the categories can apply to everything that is intuited, since it is only through them that a manifold can be represented *as* a manifold and thus as an 'object' (§26). On my reading, if we have only the Transcendental Deduction then the categories have objective validity (as forms of thinking an object in general under synthetic unity of apperception) but no objective reality, insofar as there is nothing to prevent them from being *merely* subjectively necessary; with the Analogies of Experience, we have objective reality, but only under the prior assumption that there is an a priori unity of time, which is itself required for a manifold to be thought together under the unity of apperception. Both are necessary parts of Kant's empirical realism, and transcendental idealism, as the thesis of the *formal* ideality of space and time, underlies both.

In this thesis I have worked to defend a threefold analysis of transcendental idealism and to construct a defensible account of how Kant can justifiably claim that his

position is a genuine combination of transcendental idealism and empirical realism. I have set out an account of transcendental idealism as empirical realism. Due to space restraints, I have, however, confined my analysis largely to the first *Critique*, drawing on the other *Critiques* and texts only when it seemed useful to do so. It remains to be seen whether Kant's careful combination of idealism and realism survives intact in the later developments of the Critical philosophy. Again, due to issues of space, I focused (like so many) on the Analogies of Experience in explaining Kant's metaphysics of experience. There is also much more to say about how the other principles fit into Kant's demonstration of the legitimacy of a priori concepts. These are all areas on which further work could be done, based on the account of Kant's combination of idealism and realism that I have given.

## Appendix: Transcendental Idealism: A Contested Doctrine

### Introduction

In this Appendix I summarize the main interpretations of transcendental idealism. The aim is not to provide a full account of the merits and weaknesses of each reading; the volume of literature is simply too vast. Instead, I explore what I consider to be the most influential interpretations and examine what grounding they have in terms of textual evidence. I demonstrate the main problems that prevent us from taking any one of these interpretations to fully capture Kant's idealism, and to a certain extent, I will be playing Devil's advocate here. Although the utility of using the labels 'one world' and 'two world' to characterize interpretations in the literature has been questioned, I use this distinction to frame my discussion in the interests of clarity and efficiency.<sup>329</sup>

I begin in Section 1 with an account of 'two world' readings, or those positions that have been commonly characterized as belonging under this label. My use of the label is very loose as I include under it any interpretation of transcendental idealism that in some sense denies the mind-independent *existence* of appearances as empirical objects. This includes understanding Kant's idealism to be indistinguishable from Berkeley's, taking transcendental idealism to involve a strict *ontological* separation of two kinds of entities, or modelling the ideality of appearances on the notion of 'intentional objects'. What is common to all these positions is that they deny that appearances (empirical objects) for Kant *exist*, independently of the mind. They also typically (but not always) understand things in themselves to be the 'real' things, and therefore take Kant to deny that we know (ultimate) reality. I show that there is a lot of textual evidence supporting the identification of 'appearances' with 'mere representations', but I also show that there are passages that do not support this

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<sup>329</sup> For example, Allais (2004) once labelled her view a 'one world' account in direct contrast to the 'two world' views that she was attacking, but because the label 'one world' suggests an overgenerous conception of how much commentators under this label agree, along with difficulties with providing accurate descriptions of some positions, she now avoids using these labels where possible (2015: 8-9). By contrast, Walker suggests that 'it is not very helpful to ask whether [Kant] believed in one world or two' (2010: 842), while Oberst (2015: esp. 59-60) argues that actually Kant holds both that there are two world *and* two aspects, so that both positions are true when properly understood. 'Two aspects' is another term for 'one world' views. However, Oberst does also consider the possibility his account allows too many different interpretations of transcendental idealism left standing (2015: 62).

interpretation, and, more importantly, that there are *arguments* in the *Critique* that make no sense on this interpretation: ‘two world’ readings are textually grounded, but cannot be the whole story. I examine ‘one world’ readings in Section 2. I begin by providing evidence for the very broad claim that Kant’s distinction between appearances and things in themselves should not be primarily understood as an ontological distinction between two classes of objects. I then distinguish between interpretations that understand the distinction to still be metaphysical and those which do not. In the rest of the Section I consider the ‘moderate’ metaphysical interpretations of Allais (2015: 2007; 2004), Ameriks (2011; 2003) and Langton (1998). My brief discussion focuses on the most recent metaphysical interpretation, that of Allais (2015). In Section 3 I turn to the so-called ‘deflationary’ interpretations, which are those that see the distinction between appearances and things in themselves as being an epistemological or *methodological* distinction, or as containing no genuine idealism at all. Once again, the discussion is of a preliminary nature, particularly with regard to the very influential views of Henry Allison. With respect to Allison’s (1983; 2004) account I focus on the oft-made criticism that a deflationary account trivializes transcendental idealism by making it the harmless and pointless claim that we cannot have knowledge of things considered independently of the conditions of knowledge. I show that the criticism is unjustified because it fails to take seriously what Allison terms the ‘discursivity thesis’, and also ignores the thrust of Kant’s so-called ‘Copernican turn’. I argue that Allison is correct to see Kant’s idealism as grounded in the discursivity of human cognition, though I understand the relationship between discursivity and idealism in a markedly different way to Allison, but unlike Allison, I still take Kant to be making metaphysical claims about the nature of reality.

## 1. Appearance and Reality: Is Kant a Berkeleyan Phenomenalist?

The ‘two world’ reading has been historically dominant, stretching back to the notorious ‘Garve-Feder’ (1781) review of the *Critique*, and the reading still has many advocates today.<sup>330</sup> The reading has been regarded as ‘textbook’ and ‘standard’ until only relatively recently (Robinson 1994, 415). Garve, and particularly Feder, gave a scathing review of transcendental idealism, naming it a ‘higher idealism’ that

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<sup>330</sup> See Stang (2014), Hogan (2009) and Kohl (2015) for very recent ‘two world’ interpretations.

transforms both us and the objects of our ordinary experience into representations, akin to Berkeleyan ideas. They took Kant to be saying that the faculty of understanding literally *makes* objects out of sensations (Garve and Feder 2004, 201-207). Understandably, Kant was not happy with such a comparison, but despite his protestations many have not hesitated in attributing to him a kind of Berkeleyan phenomenism.<sup>331</sup> I think there are two main reasons for this. The first is that Kant's terminology is highly suggestive of a distinction between how things *merely appear to be* to minds such as ours and how things *really* are, in just the same way that a stick in water *appears* to be bent, while in fact it is not. Kant consistently claims that we know only appearances and have no knowledge of things in themselves; this much is uncontroversial. But it is not hard to slide from a distinction between appearances and things in themselves, where the latter is construed as indicating some unknown *aspect* of reality, to the quite different claim that we know only appearances and not the *things* (in) themselves. To make matters worse, in his *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770) Kant used the even more suggestive language of 'things as they appear' in opposition to 'things as they are' (ID, 2: 392-393).<sup>332</sup> Although the use of 'as' may be suggestive of 'one world' readings, the contrast between 'as they are' and 'as they appear' strongly suggests an appearance/reality distinction.

The second reason is Kant's apparent identification of 'appearances' with 'representations', or, worse, 'mere representations'. Again, once 'appearances' taken as 'representations' are distinguished from 'things in themselves' it is all too easy to see the distinction as being one between our *representations* of things and the *things* themselves. This is exactly how Guyer understands transcendental idealism. He complains that Kant does not need to make things in themselves into ghost-like entities that literally exist outside of space and time because 'he does something just as unpleasant – namely, *degrade* ordinary objects to mere representations of themselves, or *identify* objects possessing spatial and temporal properties with mere mental entities' (1987: 334-335). It is no secret that Kant often speaks of appearances as being

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<sup>331</sup> Strawson takes Kant to hold reality to be supersensible and inaccessible to us: Kant on his reading thinks that we construct reality for us (appearances) out of the unknowable metaphysical reality of things in themselves (1966: 38). Similarly, Prichard thinks that knowledge of appearances is only knowledge of how things seem to be (1909: 78-79). Real knowledge is of how things really are and we do not have this on Kant's account. Bennett (1966; 1974) holds a similar view. Giovani claims that for Kant in knowing appearances we know the thing insofar as it appears to us, but also that this means we '*do not know it [the thing] at all*' (2000: 6). Wilkerson argues that Kant's idealism is indistinguishable from Berkeley's and that Kant was well aware of this (1976: 190).

<sup>332</sup> This language is also occasionally used in the *Critique*, e.g., A249-250. I discuss this passage below.

representations; indeed, even staunch ‘one world’ readers accept that Kant frequently equates the two.<sup>333</sup> The main difficulty that arises from reading Kant this way is that it seems to make the unperceived existence of appearances problematic. That is, if Kant’s ‘appearances’ are the empirical objects of our ordinary experience then the resemblance to Berkeley is even more damning: the good bishop could at least rely on God to sustain ‘objects’ without us perceiving them, but this move is closed to the metaphysically austere Kant.

However, not everyone denigrates Kant for equating ‘appearances’ with ‘representations’. Robinson (1994) argues that once appearances are modelled as ‘intentional objects’ then Kant can limit knowledge to the object as it is in the human perspective, while denying us access to the object in the divine perspective.<sup>334</sup> Van Cleve takes Kant to be a phenomenalist in the sense that appearances are ‘virtual objects’, insofar as they are logical constructions out of the mental states of perceivers (1999: 11). Van Cleve calls his reading a ‘qualified’ version of the ‘two world’ view precisely because, as *intentionalia*, appearances do not form a class of existents on their own; only things in themselves exist (1999: 150). If there is a sense in which Van Cleve thinks that there is ‘one world’ on Kant’s account, then it is a world ‘whose *only* denizens are things in themselves’ (*ibid*). By contrast, even though Guyer’s interpretation is generally considered to be a ‘two world’ view, insofar as the objects that possess spatiotemporal predicates on Kant’s account are to be identified with mental entities, he himself denies that he holds a ‘two world’ view. Guyer claims instead that his is an ‘alternative’ version of a ‘two aspect’ view insofar as representations are, in some sense, supposed to be *of* things in themselves, albeit while having the additional qualities of space and time that have been shifted from the things themselves – where they belong for Guyer – to the appearances of things in accordance with Kant’s dubious arguments concerning unconditional necessity (2007: 12-13).<sup>335</sup> Leaving aside the question of how to accurately label the positions of Van Cleve and

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<sup>333</sup> Allais (2004; 2015) admits that Kant very often identifies appearances with representations, committing him to idealism, but she denies that this idealism must be understood as phenomenism where appearances are taken to be mental entities, or constructed out of mental states, or mental activities. They are mind-dependent properties of mind-independent things. Allison also admits the problem, but dismisses it as ‘a discomfiting feature of Kantian analysis’ (2004: 69-70).

<sup>334</sup> See Chapter 4 for further discussion of this move. Importantly, on Robinson’s account the divine perspective emerges from the human one even though our conception of it treats it as a perspective that would give us access to complete knowledge of reality. As he puts it: ‘We *conceive* the divine perspective to be independent of human experience. But our *conception* of it is not’. See Robinson (1994: 428-432).

<sup>335</sup> See Section 3 of the Introduction to this thesis for further discussion.

Guyer, let us examine the evidence for the ‘two world’ reading, as well as for the issue of whether the transcendental distinction turns out to be one between appearance and reality.<sup>336</sup> We will start with the latter first since this is the easier of the two problems.

### 1.1. Why Kant Might Be a Berkeleyan Phenomenalist

The first example of an appearance/reality distinction can be found in the way Kant characterizes the status of cognition given through sensibility in contrast to cognition given through the understanding, leading him to posit a distinction between ‘things as they appear’ and ‘thing as they are’:

For if the senses merely represent something to us **as it appears**, then this something must also be in itself a thing, and an object of a non-sensible intuition, i.e., of the understanding, i.e., a cognition must be possible in which no sensibility is encountered, and which alone has absolutely objective reality, through which, namely, objects are represented to us **as they are**, in contrast to the empirical use of the understanding, in which things are only cognized **as they appear**. (A249-250)

Kant contrasts what it is to know something as it appears (a cognition involving sensibility) and what it would be to know something as it is (cognition through the understanding alone). I return to this contrast in Chapter 3, but what should capture our attention is the highly suggestive way that Kant characterizes the two types of cognition: as cognition of objects as they *appear* and as they *are*. It is hard not to read this second locution as being shorthand for *as they really are*. Indeed, the passage is strongly reminiscent of the *Inaugural Dissertation* where Kant again claims that sensibility only represents things as they appear and not as they (really) are:

In this way, whatever in cognition is sensitive is dependent upon the special character of the subject in so far as the subject is capable of this or that modification by the presence of objects: these modifications may differ in cases,

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<sup>336</sup> Allais argues that the readings of Guyer and Van Cleve still interpret the transcendental distinction ontologically insofar as on their reading appearances are *not* aspects of the things (in themselves) that appear to us, even if they stop short of making appearances into a second set of entities (2015: 38). I agree and will therefore retain the label ‘two world’ for phenomenalist interpretations.

according to the variations in the subjects. But whatever cognition is exempt from such subjective conditions relates only to the object. It is thus clear that things which are thought sensitively are representations of things *as they appear*, while things which are intellectual are representations of things *as they are*. (ID, 2: 392-393)

That in cognition which is exempt from sensibility relates *only to the object*, which means that only cognition that occurs independently of being affected by objects is cognition of objects *as they are* (in themselves). The link between the *Dissertation* and A249 in this respect is striking, but Kant clarifies that the distinction between things as they appear and things as they are in the *Critique* is not the same as in the *Dissertation* by deleting A249 in the B-edition. Curiously, while A249 was removed the next passage that deflates A249 is in both editions. Given that the B-edition followed after the Garve-Feder review this fact may be indicative of Kant's attempt to distance himself from the charge of holding a Berkeleyan-style 'higher idealism'.<sup>337</sup> Kant says:

If, therefore, we say: The senses represent objects to us **as they appear**, but the understanding, **as they are**, then the latter is not to be taken in a transcendental but in a merely empirical way, signifying, namely, how they must be represented as objects of experience, in the thoroughgoing connection of appearances, and not how they might be outside of the relation to possible experience and consequently to sense in general, thus as objects of pure understanding. For this will always remain unknown to us, so that it even remains unknown whether such a transcendental (extraordinary) cognition is possible at all, at least one that stands under our customary categories. With us **understanding** and **sensibility** can determine an object **only in combination**. If we separate them, then we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions, but in either case representations that we cannot relate to any determinate object. (A258/B313-314)

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<sup>337</sup> Interestingly, Walker (2010) maintains that the 'one world' reading fits better with the *first* edition and the 'two world' reading with the *second* edition. I confess I think this is highly implausible given Kant's efforts to promote the idea that appearances and things in themselves are the same things in the B-Preface. See Section 2.

This passage explicitly repudiates the view of the *Dissertation* and shows that Kant offers a possibility in A249, which he then completely rejects. That is, Kant's distinction between things as they appear being cognized through sensibility and things as they are being cognized through the understanding is not to be understood as saying that human knowledge is limited to appearances, where appearances are to be opposed to how things really are (as accessible to the understanding alone), or noumena in the 'positive' sense. Instead, sensibility gives intuitions to the understanding and the understanding, through applying the categories to those intuitions, represents objects as they are 'as objects of experience, in the thoroughgoing connection of appearances, and not how they might be outside of the relation to possible experience'. This is what Kant means when he says that the distinction should be understood empirically and not transcendentally.<sup>338</sup> The distinction is between the role of sensibility vis-à-vis the understanding with respect to how we cognize objects, rather than as a transcendental one claiming that the understanding is able to represent how objects are independently of possible experience, for we have no grounds for assuming that that kind of cognition is possible at all.<sup>339</sup> In this first case of an apparent appearance/reality distinction, according to which the distinction is between things as they appear and things as they are, we have deflated it by showing that the version of the distinction in the *Critique* does not reduce human knowledge to illusion, whereas in the *Dissertation* it is susceptible to this reading. If Kant meant the distinction to be taken transcendentally, then this would reflect an appearance/reality distinction, but taking it empirically means that he is just comparing the roles of sensibility and understanding in making empirical cognition possible; he is explaining that sensibility cannot represent things as objects of possible experience without the contribution of understanding.

Nonetheless, it could be objected that in both passages Kant *does* hold the distinction, ultimately, to be one between appearance and reality precisely because he is using the distinction empirically: in the *Dissertation* Kant argued that the senses give us

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<sup>338</sup> Kant's use of 'transcendental' is inconsistent: usually the term refers to what precedes experience and makes it possible, but sometimes, as here where it is opposed to 'empirical', it actually means using the categories to go beyond possible experience. Thus, Kant's criticism of Garve and Feder for understanding 'transcendental' as being the same as 'transcendent' is not entirely fair (Pro, 4: 374n). A particularly lucid and helpful explanation of the different ways that Kant refers to a transcendental employment or misemployment of the understanding and of the categories is given by Grier (2001: 79-82). Allison (2015b) also discusses Kant's multiple uses of the term 'transcendental' as reflecting both his predecessor's concern with ontology and his own meaning as having to do with the conditions of the possibility of experience.

<sup>339</sup> At A565-566/B593-594 Kant claims that an intelligible object (thing cognized through concepts alone) is a mere 'thought-entity' for which we have no grounds for assuming it to be possible.

only appearances, and the intellect knowledge of how things really are, in accordance with a transcendental use of the distinction.<sup>340</sup> Similarly, A258/B313-314 could be taken as making the same claim, but now with the unwelcome conclusion that not even the intellect can cognize reality (in the transcendental sense), instead only serving to help the senses provide (misleading) appearances of reality (in the empirical use). I do not think this is the case, for two reasons.

First, as has been well-documented in the literature, Kant *explicitly* denies that by ‘appearances’ he means illusions or how things merely seem to be. In a famous addition to the B-Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant claims that he does not say that things merely *seem* to be outside me (in space), when in reality they are not, but that they *actually are* in space and that ‘It would be my own fault if I made that which I should count as appearance into mere illusion. But this does not happen according to our principle of the ideality of all of sensible intuitions’ (B69-B70). His point is that the spatiality of things lies in our kind of intuition (sensible intuition) and is not a property of the things (in) themselves. Admittedly, this is a difficult point, for it could be objected that for something  $x$  to belong only to our way of perceiving and not to the objects themselves independently of our perceiving them *just is* what it means for  $x$  to be illusory. I analyse the reality and ideality of space and time in detail in Chapter 3. Here it must suffice to note that Kant clearly felt that his characterization of empirical objects as appearances was ‘poorly understood’ when this was taken to mean that appearances are illusory (MFNS, 4: 555). The second reason is that if Kant really held that our knowledge of appearances is only knowledge of how things seem to be (and not how they really are), then this would make virtually the entire Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Analytic – especially the Principles of Understanding – completely pointless. Kant takes himself to be giving a logic of truth in the Analytic and a logic of deception or illusion in the Transcendental Dialectic (A62-64/B87-88); if the former was also just an elaborate way of spelling out the distorted principles that we take to hold of reality (as knowledge of appearances) then this distinction between the Analytic and Dialectic would make no sense. It seems clear, then, that Allison is right to claim that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves – whatever it may be – *cannot* be a distinction between how things merely seem to be and how they *really*

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<sup>340</sup> However, Grier argues that already in the *Dissertation* Kant holds that the intellect does not have access to things in themselves (2001: 52-57).

*are*. Or at least, not in any crude or straightforward sense, as it is often portrayed as being.

This only gets us so far though, for it is possible to deny that Kant's distinction is one between appearance and reality while still arguing that he holds an 'ontological phenomenism' or idealism of the Berkeleyan variety.<sup>341</sup> Unfortunately, this is a much harder problem to resolve; my aim is simply to show that Kant *does* lapse into Berkeleyan phenomenism in places, but that, once again, this cannot be the whole story if the overall argument of the *Critique* is to make sense, nor indeed does Kant intend for it to be taken this way.<sup>342</sup> The passages where Kant seems to make non-innocent identifications of 'appearances' and 'representations' are many, and I am not going to supply an exhaustive list or analysis of them here.<sup>343</sup> Instead, I will select what seem to me the most important of these passages and aim to show that the Berkeleyan reduction of objects to representations is not an isolated occurrence in one part of the *Critique*, but is rather prevalent throughout.

First, a notorious passage from Kant's attempt to deal with Cartesian scepticism in the Paralogisms that was cut completely from the B-edition, particularly notable because it is one of the very few places where Kant ever defines transcendental idealism vis-à-vis its rival, transcendental realism:

I understand by the **transcendental idealism** of all appearances the doctrine that they are all together to be regarded as mere representations and not as things in themselves, and accordingly that space and time are only sensible forms of our intuition, but not determinations given for themselves or conditions of objects as

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<sup>341</sup> Van Cleve (1999: 123-124) distinguishes between 'ontological' and 'analytical' forms of phenomenism; similarly Bennett (1971: 136-137) distinguishes between idealism and phenomenism. Ontological phenomenism and Bennett's idealism correspond to Berkeley's view that there is nothing more to empirical objects than the mental representations of perceivers: objects are literally constructed out of perceptions. Analytical phenomenism and Bennett's phenomenism is the claim that statements or truths about physical objects can be reduced to claims about possible perceptions: objects are logical constructions out of perceptions. Van Cleve (*ibid*) thinks that Kant came close to analytical phenomenism but was never able to fully break away from ontological phenomenism.

<sup>342</sup> In this respect, my view is similar to that of Allais (2004; 2015) who argues that there is genuine evidence for both 'one world' and 'two world' interpretations of Kant. However, she takes this to mean that a stable interpretation must designate a moderate sense in which appearances are mind-dependent properties of mind-independent things that have a way they are in themselves, and that this position can be found unambiguously in the *Critique*. By contrast, I take seriously the passages where Kant does seem to espouse phenomenism – giving a detailed account in Chapter 4 of why in one particular instance he does this – but argue that he does not need to reduce objects to representations. As stated in the Introduction, I do not think there is an unambiguous account to be found in the *Critique*, but that is not necessarily a problem.

<sup>343</sup> For a partially complete list and helpful discussion of the relevant passages, see Allais (2015: 19-27).

things in themselves. To this idealism is opposed **transcendental realism**, which regards space and time as something given in themselves (independent of our sensibility). The transcendental realist therefore represents outer appearances (if their reality is conceded) as things in themselves, which would exist independently of us and our sensibility and would thus also be outside us according to pure concepts of the understanding. It is really this transcendental realist who afterwards plays the empirical idealist; and after he has falsely presupposed about objects of the senses that if they are to exist they must have their existence in themselves even apart from sense, he finds that from this point of view all our representations of sense are insufficient to make their reality certain. (A369)

Here Kant explicitly identifies appearances with ‘mere representations’. That ‘appearances’ are the empirical objects themselves is made obvious by how Kant describes the fourth paralogism in its minor premise: ‘Now all outer appearances are of this kind [have a doubtful existence]: their [i.e., the appearances’) existence cannot be immediately perceived, but can be inferred *only as the cause* of given perceptions’ (A367; my emphasis). The first sentence of A369, then, confirms that part of Kant’s solution to sceptical idealism is, unfortunately, to make empirical objects into ‘mere representations’. Less surprisingly, the second part of the sentence affirms that the status of appearances as mere representations extends to the forms of appearances (space and time) as well. Next, Kant defines transcendental realism specifically as the view that space and time are things in themselves, existing independently of sensibility. Given that here the term ‘things in themselves’ is deliberately opposed to appearances as ‘mere representations’ there is no other way of reading ‘things in themselves’ except as denoting whatever exists independently of the mind in contrast to what exists only in the mind. Thus, in the last part of the passage Kant explains that transcendental realism is guilty of treating what are ‘mere representations’ as if they are mind-independent objects,<sup>344</sup> but Kant then offers a surprising link between transcendental realism and empirical idealism. It is precisely because the transcendental realist treats appearances as things in themselves, that is, empirical objects *as existing independently of the mind*

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<sup>344</sup> Notice here that the contrast is between *representations* construed as if they were entities and not *aspects* or *properties* of things. In other words, the passage cannot plausibly be read in favour of the moderate metaphysical views such as those of Allais, Langton and Ameriks, despite their efforts to do so.

that there is a gap between the cause (the empirical object outside us in the transcendental sense of mind-independence) and the effect (the perception of an object), and hence the existence of mind-independent objects is doubtful for the transcendental realist. It is exactly passages like this one that get Kant charged with holding a Berkeleyan phenomenalist about appearances – empirical objects *just are* mental representations – along with the postulation of an unknowable ‘real’ world: the things in themselves.<sup>345</sup> Kant even goes so far as to claim that ‘the transcendental idealist is an empirical realist’ because the existence of *matter* no longer has to be inferred (as it did for the Cartesian sceptic), but rather that matter ‘is only a species of representations (intuitions)’, ‘nothing but mere representations, i.e., representations in us, of whose reality we are immediately conscious’, for ‘in both cases they [inner and outer appearances] are nothing but representations, the immediate perception (consciousness) of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of their reality’ (A370-372). Lastly, ‘But now external objects (bodies) are merely appearances, hence also *nothing other than a species of my representations*, whose objects are something only through these representations, *but are nothing separated from them*’ (A370; my emphasis). It takes an extraordinary level of interpretative charity (or just plain stubbornness) to read Kant here – I have taken only a small selection of the offending lines – as advocating anything other than the Berkeleyan thesis that what we call objects consist of nothing more than ideas in the mind, and that *this* is why their so-called reality, in answer to Descartes, cannot be plausibly doubted. If this is what his ‘empirical realism’ really consists in then it is neither worth keeping – being a ‘Pyrrhic victory’, as Guyer (1987: 24) calls it – nor is it inconsistent with transcendental idealism, for it just is this idealism taken as a deceptive and ‘lame’ way of maintaining knowledge of the external world through reducing external objects to ‘mere representations’ in us (Walsh 1975, 189-190).<sup>346</sup> Let us consider an alternative reading of this passage.

Dietmar Heidemann (2011) takes transcendental idealism to be a genuine solution to sceptical idealism, and he focuses his attention on the Paralogisms. Following Kant’s lead, Heidemann refers to transcendental idealism and empirical realism as ‘empirical dualism’ and argues that it is composed of three features:

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<sup>345</sup> Langton describes the position that seems to emerge from the Paralogisms on a phenomenalist interpretation as being ‘the worst of all veil of appearance philosophies: Berkeley plus unknowable things in themselves’ (1998: 142).

<sup>346</sup> Similarly, Collins admits that Kant’s rejection of idealism here ‘looks like a bad joke’, but he maintains that this not the case (1999: 60-61).

*ontological independence, epistemic dependence* and *truth-theoretical coherence* (2011: 203-204). Taken very charitably, I am sympathetic to ascribing these three features to Kant's position in the final analysis, but the problem is that the text of the Paralogisms simply does not support such an ascription. This is clear when we compare Heidemann's first feature of empirical dualism with the text: 'ED-1: External objects exist independently of our cognitive capacities as extended bodies in space outside us = *ontological independence*' (2011: 203). The analysis above shows that external objects unequivocally do *not exist as* extended bodies outside us *independently* of our cognitive capacities.<sup>347</sup> Quite the reverse is true: objects are only represented *as being extended* and as being in space *because* they are representations in us, that is, in space as the a priori form of outer sense in general (i.e., *dependent* on our cognitive capacities). Where there is ontological independence in Kant's position is that empirical objects exist as things in themselves (though we do not intuit them as they are in themselves). Nowhere is this made more obvious than just after the end of the Fourth Paralogism where Kant asserts: 'that if I were to take away the thinking subject, the whole corporeal world would have to disappear, as this is nothing but the appearance in the sensibility of our subject and one mode of its representations' (A383).<sup>348</sup> The passage is overtly phenomenalist and suggests extreme Berkeleyan-style idealism. Of course, it is tempered by the assumption of unknowable things in themselves as the ground of appearances, which do not vanish along with the appearances (A379-380), but this is cold comfort indeed. Ontological independence as Heidemann defines it simply is not true of transcendental idealism in the A-edition of the *Critique*. This misreading of the text becomes even more obvious once we take into account that Heidemann is *not* advocating a reduction of external objects to representations (2011: 203), but as we have just seen that is *exactly* what Kant argues: if the external world is to be an object of immediate perception (consciousness) then external objects must be reduced to 'mere representations', an 'appearance in our sensibility' that will disappear if the thinking subject is removed. Now, to be sure, I do agree that Kant should not, in the final analysis, be understood as advocating a version of Berkeleyan-style idealism, but in

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<sup>347</sup> Consider also this passage from the Antinomy: 'all objects of an experience possible for us are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, *as extended beings* or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself' (A490-491/B518-519; my emphasis). The *Prolegomena* is even more explicit: 'the question of whether bodies (as appearances of outer sense) exist *outside my thought* as bodies in nature can without hesitation be answered negatively' (4: 337; Kant's emphasis).

<sup>348</sup> Compare this statement with Schopenhauer (1969: §2, 5).

order to address that problem we first have to recognize and accept *that it is* a problem, which is something that many ‘one world’ commentators just plainly refuse to do except in the most perfunctory of ways.<sup>349</sup> In fairness to non-phenomenalist interpretations the passage *was* deleted for the B-edition, so let us look now at other offending passages that were retained in B-.

Consider how Kant first introduces the term ‘appearance’ in the Transcendental Aesthetic: ‘The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called **appearance**’ (A20/B34). This requires no phenomenalism: the object of an empirical intuition that has yet to be taken up into synthesis (conceptually determined) is an appearance; in other words, an appearance is an *empirical object* that has not yet been (re)cognized as being an object.<sup>350</sup> But already in the Aesthetic Kant soon seems to reduce appearances (empirical objects) to representations: ‘what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose true correlate, i.e., the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them, but is also never asked after in experience’ (A30/B45). Notice how the thing in itself here is the ‘true correlate’ of the appearances: he speaks of one thing in itself being correlated with multiple representations, which undermines the ‘one world’ reading. The trend continues in the Transcendental Deduction: ‘Appearances are the only objects that can be given to us immediately, and that in them which is immediately related to the object is called intuition’ (A108-109); there is no implication of idealism so far, but then Kant continues: ‘However, these appearances are not things in themselves, but themselves only representations, 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’ (A109). This passage is particularly interesting insofar as Kant claims that appearances – again notice the use of the plural – have their own object, even taken as mere representations, namely the transcendental object and that this is not a representation; of course, appearances do not *represent* things in themselves, because things in themselves are not in space and time while appearances are. The last passage I will cite for now is from the Analogies of Experience. This is significant for, as shown in Chapter 2, the Analogies is arguably where Kant most clearly espouses realism.

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<sup>349</sup> For example, consider Allison’s treatment of the subject: ‘[Kant’s slide from talking of appearances to talking of representations] is a frequent and at times discomforting feature of Kantian analysis’ (2004: 69-70).

<sup>350</sup> Allais also notes how the first use of ‘appearance’ is neutral, suggesting no idealism (2015: 20, n.30).

Raising the question of whether a house that is intuited successively also exists successively with regards to its perceived parts in the manifold Kant investigates the notion of an object of representation:

If appearances were things in themselves, then no human being would be able to assess from the succession of representations how the manifold is combined in the object. [...] Now the question is whether the manifold of this house itself is also successive, which certainly no one will concede. Now, however, as soon as I raise my concept of an object to transcendental significance, the house is not a thing in itself at all but only an appearance, i.e., a representation, the transcendental object of which is unknown; therefore what do I understand by the question, how the manifold may be combined in the appearance itself (which is yet nothing in itself)? Here that which lies in the successive apprehension is considered as representation, but the appearance that is given to me, in spite of the fact that it is nothing more than a sum of these representations, is considered as their object, with which my concept, which I draw from the representations of apprehension, is to agree. (A190-191/B235-236)

Here we see Kant's reductionism on full display.<sup>351</sup> His concern is the possibility of perceiving objective succession and simultaneity: just because I intuit a house successively this does not give me adequate grounds for assuming that the house exists successively. Kant suggests that this can only be the case if what we perceive in perception are not the things in themselves but the things as appearances. Why is this? If what I perceive is the thing in itself then I am left with no choice but to treat the house as *existing* successively rather than its parts existing simultaneously; this is because the subjective order of my apprehension (the roof at  $t^1$ , the window at  $t^2$ , etc.,) coincides, or rather *just is*, the objective order of the states of the object. There is no distinction between an objective and subjective order. However, something seems faulty with this reasoning. If 'things in themselves' are taken to be the objects (considered) as they are independently of their *relation to human sensibility*, that is, (considered) how they are *mind-independently of appearances (representations) in time*, then we have a

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<sup>351</sup> Van Cleve suggests that the Analogies is the closest Kant gets to 'analytical phenomenism', but that his way of putting the problem, especially in this passage, expresses ontological phenomenism (1999: 123-124).

problem: if we were to be given things in themselves directly then surely what would follow is that the *objective order* would just be *directly given* to us, not misrepresented through being conflated with the subjective order of our apprehension (or the objective order collapsing into the subjective one).<sup>352</sup> Kant is begging the question when he asserts that if appearances were things in themselves then we would be unable to distinguish the objective from the subjective order of apprehension. Nonetheless, there is something puzzling here and I contend that in order to solve the puzzle we must understand Kant as drawing on two separate notions of ‘things in themselves’ here.<sup>353</sup>

Kant claims that if appearances were things in themselves the problem would be unresolvable, but this is different to the concern with how mind-independent objects are independently of their relation to sensibility. In other words, when Kant speaks of ‘things in themselves’ here I do not think he means things as they are independently of how they appear (whether this be taken in the sense of things as they *really are*, independently of the mind, or things *considered* methodologically on the deflationary reading, or the inner constitution of things on the moderate metaphysical reading). The claim simply makes no sense if this is how it is to be construed: Kant would be effectively saying that if in perception we were presented with how things really are (independently of how they appear) then we would not be able to know how they really are! Rather, Kant’s point is that there is a reification of mental representations into ontologically distinct things or pseudo-entities. In other words, if I treat my *mental representations* (the appearances) of the house as themselves *existing* outside of sensibility then Kant is correct in the passage when he claims that the problem cannot be resolved.<sup>354</sup> This is because my mental image is of a certain part of the house at a

<sup>352</sup> Alternatively, it could even be objected that if things in themselves were given to us, the question of temporal succession or simultaneity of the manifold would not even arise; this is because space and time are features only of appearances and not features of things in themselves, on Kant’s account.

<sup>353</sup> Although I distinguish two senses of the term operative in this (and many other) passages, the two senses themselves fall under the larger sense of a distinction between appearances/representations and reality/things themselves. Thus my sub-division here does not conflict with my claim that there are three main senses in which Kant holds that we do not *know* things in themselves since one of these senses is not concerned with our *knowledge* of things in themselves but rather with the *ontological status* of appearances. See Boer (2014: 235-236, 238) for a very different reading of the involvement of the transcendental distinction: Boer takes Kant to be denying that the house is a thing in itself in the specific sense of it being ‘something the inner characteristics of which can be known.’ As an appearance, the ‘house’ cannot be known through conceptual analysis (intellectual cognition). I can find no evidence to support this reading of the distinction in this passage. The context of the passage makes it clear that ‘thing in itself’ here refers to something that is either completely mind-independent or treated as if it were mind-independent.

<sup>354</sup> Kant also frequently equivocates on ‘appearance’ as meaning the ‘*thing* that appears’ and ‘the *appearance* of a thing’ (usually with the implication that the *appearance* is purely mental), including in this passage, especially in the lines I omitted. See also Oberst (2015: 58-60).

certain time and if I treat these images *as* things then the objective order *becomes* my subjective order of apprehension; if, on the other hand, I treat my mental images as appearances, or as ‘mere representations’, then I can distinguish the order in which I subjectively perceive an object from the objective order of the states or parts of the object as an empirical object. We have two meanings for ‘things in themselves’: an ontological use and an epistemological use. In the ontological use, the term is shorthand for treating something that is not really an object *as if* it were an object, that is, a mental representation or image reified into a thing (in itself). This sense is operative in A190 above and many other passages.<sup>355</sup> Kant’s point seems to be that reified appearances (representations treated as if they were things in themselves) do not *represent* things *considered as they are in themselves* (that is, as outside us in the transcendental, and not empirical, sense). This is our epistemological sense, then; a concern with how things are (or should be *considered*) independently of their relation to the sensible conditions of experience. Now, with this distinction in place we appear to have a way of avoiding Berkeleyan-style phenomenalism.

We can say with Kant that appearances are ‘objects qua sensibly represented’,<sup>356</sup> that is, ‘mere representations’ and thus avoid the mistake of Berkeley who treated these representations *as* things in themselves (in the ontological sense), by distinguishing between the representation of a thing (perception of a certain object in a certain state at a certain time) from the *thing itself* which allows us to save an objective order as being different from the subjective order of perception, or more simply, to distinguish between the mind-independent existence of a thing from the mind-dependent representations of the thing.<sup>357</sup> Therefore Kant does not treat appearances, mental representations, as things, at least not here; however, this still leaves us with a major problem. Even if we defuse Kant’s apparent Berkeleyan idealism by showing that the mistake arises precisely when appearances are taken to be *things* this very fact seems to commit us to the other side of the Berkeleyan coin, i.e., that all we know directly *are*

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<sup>355</sup> Including A490-492/B518-520, analysed in Chapter 4.

<sup>356</sup> The term ‘object qua sensibly represented’ is Allison’s (2004: 70).

<sup>357</sup> Notice the irony here: Kant on the ‘two world’ reading is accused of making representations into things, a second set of things distinct from the ordinary objects of our experience stripped of their spatiotemporal properties as such, but Kant’s point in the above passage is that it is precisely by reifying representations into things that the problem of time-determination becomes unresolvable. However, we must keep in mind that (1) those charged with a ‘two world’ reading often deny that they take appearances to be a second set of entities and (2) Guyer (1987) and Van Cleve (1999:120, 128) both take Kant’s argument in the Analogies to be incompatible with an ontological phenomenalism. For Guyer, the Analogies is part of the positive results of the *Critique* that are separable from transcendental idealism.

*mental representations* and not the things (in) themselves. So, whether appearances are treated as things in themselves (ontological sense) or not, they do not represent how objects are in the transcendental sense of ‘outside us’ (epistemological sense). In short, the passage seems to commit us to an interpretation of Kant that reads him as giving us access only to appearances (‘mere representations’), but unlike Berkeley who took ideas in the mind to exhaust empirical reality, Kant adds the unwelcome notion of a world existing in itself that we have and can have no access to. We have examined some passages and considerations that motivate the charge that transcendental idealism is just another variant of Berkeleyan phenomenalism; now let us consider the considerations that speak against this charge.

### 1.2. Why Kant Might Not Be a Berkeleyan Phenomenalist

There are a number of considerations that speak against Kant being a Berkeleyan phenomenalist, and these have been helpfully summarized by Allais (2004; 2015: Ch. 2).<sup>358</sup> We have already seen above that the objection that transcendental idealism is a distinction between appearance and reality is explicitly repudiated by Kant in the second edition of the *Critique* (B69). However, we also saw that it is possible for Kant to espouse Berkeleyan-style idealism while holding that we have genuine knowledge on his account. I acknowledged the overwhelming textual evidence that Kant does mentalize appearances (in some unspecified sense), but now I want to explain what can be said against the charge, and suggest that, contrary to the impression given so far, transcendental idealism cannot consist of a Berkeleyan phenomenalism if we want to take seriously Kant’s claim that his idealism is also an empirical realism. I will begin with what seem to me the weaker responses and finish with the stronger ones.

(1) ‘*Vorstellungen*’ can be translated as ‘presentation’ as well as ‘representation’. ‘Presentation’ does not have the same phenomenalist implications as ‘representation’. Allais argues that the German can be translated as ‘presentation’ (2015: 13). She suggests that this helps support the idea that the kind of idealism Kant is arguing for need not be taken as one that limits empirical reality to what *exists in the mind*, but rather as referring to how what is empirically real does not transcend what can be given to our forms of consciousness (*ibid*). This is a good point: the word

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<sup>358</sup> In what follows I draw on Allais’ (2015: Ch. 2) excellent discussion, but I do not discuss all seven of her arguments.

‘representation’ does lend itself particularly well to phenomenalist readings or interpretations that take appearances to have some kind of (mental) existence independently of the things (in) themselves. Adopting ‘presentation’ over ‘representation’ does help to counter this trend and makes room for the idea that the mind is in direct contact with external reality, rather than being presented with an image or *re-presentation* of it. However, there are also passages where adopting ‘presentation’ does not help us avoid a phenomenalist reading. We need only look at A190-191/B235-236 again to see this. The house in Kant’s example is the ‘appearance’ or ‘representation’. Adopting the change makes *the house* a ‘presentation’ ‘the transcendental object of which is unknown’. The ‘appearance’ is considered the *object* of my successive apprehension despite ‘the fact that it is nothing more than a sum of these presentations’. I fail to see how changing ‘representation’ to ‘presentation’ in any of its occurrences in this passage avoids the phenomenalist interpretation, for in either case the *house itself*, not merely our *perception* of it, is said to be nothing more than a sum of the representations/presentations that are given to consciousness. The question is what it means to say that these representations/presentations have an object given that the object itself is nothing outside of representation/presentation, a question that *in that particular form* only makes sense on a phenomenalist reading.<sup>359</sup>

(2) The distinction between transcendental and empirical senses of ‘outside us’.<sup>360</sup> Above I talked about Kant’s distinction between appearances and things in themselves in terms of transcendental and empirical senses. Some commentators, primarily Allison (2004; 2012; 2015b) and Allais (2015), have seen this distinction as important for understanding the non-phenomenalist nature of Kant’s idealism. Specifically, Allison concentrates on a crucial passage where Kant disambiguates what it means to call an object ‘outside us’ (*ausser uns*). Allison claims, correctly, that the distinction marks a difference between how a thing is said to be outside us. Appearances can be said to be ‘outside us’ empirically but ‘in us’ (*in uns*) transcendentally.<sup>361</sup> This paradoxical claim makes sense once we take into account Kant’s disambiguation. The

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<sup>359</sup> By contrast, the non-phenomenalist question that is Kant’s real concern, and that can also be detected in the passage, is how we can know that the manifold of the object exists successively or simultaneously if we have only the synthesis of apprehension which is *always* successive. See Chapter 2.

<sup>360</sup> This is not one of Allais’ seven reasons for why Kant is not a phenomenalist, but it she discuss it as part of her third point that empirically real objects exist in a public space: ideas in the mind cannot be publicly perceivable (2015: 45-47).

<sup>361</sup> Appearances are also capable of being just objects of inner sense (time), but in the context of the passage Kant is considering the reality of outer appearances or external objects.

empirical sense marks a difference between whether a thing is *in space* (outside us) or *in time* (in us); the transcendental sense marks a difference between how things are considered in relation to the sensible conditions of human experience. That is, things that are considered in this relation are considered ‘*in us*’ and things as they are considered independently of this relation are transcendently ‘*outside us*’.<sup>362</sup> Allison argues that, so construed, Kant’s idealism has a ‘transcendental thrust’ that makes it about the way things are considered as objects of discursive cognition (considered in relation to the sensible and intellectual conditions of experience), rather than being a crude claim that appearances are ‘*in us*’ in the Berkeleyan sense of literally being ideas in the mind (2004: 24-25). As Allais rightly points out, Allison’s conclusion is too quick (2015: 22, n.34). While Kant distinguishes between the transcendental and empirical senses of ‘*outside us*’, this does not provide any information about how to elucidate the *transcendental* sense of this distinction. All we are told is that things that are transcendently ‘*outside us*’ are things that *exist* distinct from us, which Allison interprets as things *considered* as they are independently of the sensible conditions of experience. However, the distinction between a thing existing in space and a thing existing distinct from us explains nothing, for it is not obvious why these two senses should be pried apart: a thing that exists distinct from us (usually) *just is* a thing that exists in space.<sup>363</sup> Nonetheless, Allais thinks that the distinction ‘sets some constraints’ on how we should interpret transcendental idealism, namely, that the position will make more sense on a non-phenomenalist interpretation because, unlike phenomenism, it allows appearances to be both in time and space, as well as only in time. As such, she argues that things ‘*outside us*’ in the empirical sense cannot literally be in the mind (2015: 22-23). However, in my view, this is also premature.<sup>364</sup> Phenomenism can still make sense of the distinction as marking the fact that objects can *be experienced* phenomenologically or *psychologically as being* external to me (empirically ‘*outside*

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<sup>362</sup> Kant’s exact disambiguation is that something exists ‘*outside us*’ as a thing in itself, i.e., transcendently, when it is a thing that ‘exists distinct from us’, and a thing is ‘*outside us*’ empirically when it is a thing that is to be encountered in space (A373).

<sup>363</sup> For example, if I hallucinate and think I see an entity, say a pizza because I am starving, and it turns out that when I question other people no one else can see it, and when I approach it the apparition vanishes, the ‘pizza’ does not exist in publicly perceivable space. Putting aside transcendental idealism temporarily, when an object exists distinct from my perception or consciousness of it, that object is said to be publicly perceivable by others, the perceptibility of which is normally explained by the fact that the thing exists in space, that is, is there to be perceived by other people. Simply drawing a distinction between a thing existing distinct from me and a thing being represented in space does not tell us how to understand this distinction.

<sup>364</sup> See also Oberst (2015: 63-64), who recognizes that Kant’s disambiguation does not tell us whether to understand the ontological status of appearances as mental or non-mental.

*us*') and their existing '*outside us*' transcendentally, that is, that even though they are experienced as if they were outside us spatially (as common sense realism suggests), it can still be the case that on the transcendental level they are nothing but 'mere representations'. This possibility is even hinted at by Kant in the passage where he claims that he is using 'outside us' in its empirical sense to designate a thing that is to be encountered in space, that is, where 'it is taken in the proper *psychological* question about the reality of our outer intuition' (A373; my emphasis). Therefore, while I agree that the transcendental/empirical distinction is important for understanding Kant's idealism, I am unconvinced that the distinction either speaks straightforwardly in favour of the methodological reading (as Allison claims), or that it makes no sense on a phenomenalist interpretation (as Allais claims). Fortunately, there are better reasons for construing transcendental idealism as a non-phenomenalist kind of idealism.

(3) Kant explicitly rejects the comparison with Berkeley. Kant was incensed by the comparison of transcendental idealism with Berkeley's phenomenism. While it may be true that there is less separating the two than Kant would like to admit, it should definitely make us pause that Kant so vehemently denied the claim that his is a 'higher idealism'. Above (at B69) we saw that Kant clarified that his view is not that things only *seem* to be spatial (and temporal), but that they actually are spatial (and temporal). His point is that their spatiality (and temporality) consists in relation of the thing to the human mind, but that does not render the spatiality (and temporality) of a thing, and thus an appearance, illusory. Nonetheless, there are three worries about Kant's response to Berkeley. First, Kant could have just misread Berkeley, and therefore his rejection of Berkeley does not constitute a good reason for taking seriously his defence that he is not another Berkeley. Second, Kant may not be objecting to Berkeley's phenomenism itself so much as a lack of detail or sophistication in Berkeley's account. Third, Kant may not be rejecting Berkeley's phenomenism so much as the thought that there is nothing more to reality than ideas in the (ultimately divine) mind. In short, this is the concern that Kant is another Berkeley just with the addition of (unknowable) things in themselves.

Allais responds to the first possibility that while it is 'a complex question' whether Kant correctly understood Berkeley, it can be seen that his idealism is different to Berkeley's insofar as he does not demote bodies to illusions. Whether Berkeley actually does this is contentious but insofar as he does make appearances into mental entities, Kant 'has a point' when he claims that appearances are illusions on Berkeley's

account, for if appearances are just mental ideas than their spatiality is illusory (2015: 53). This is closely related to Kant's rejection of appearances being how things merely seem to be in the sense of illusions and stands or falls along with that claim. However, while I agree with Allais' basic analysis, it seems possible that Kant could reject Berkeley for making appearances illusory precisely because he *also* holds these mentalized appearances to be (in a causal affection or grounding sense) *of* things in themselves (though we do not cognize things in themselves through appearances), whereas as Berkeley does not.<sup>365</sup> Regarding the second possibility, Allais concedes that not all of Kant's criticisms of Berkeley can be used to reject a phenomenalist interpretation of transcendental idealism (*ibid*). To answer the third worry, Allais points to the Refutation of Idealism. She argues that since the refutation is aimed at proving what Descartes doubted, and thus must also reject what Berkeley outright denied, viz., the existence of external objects, Kant's objection to Berkeley is to the mentalization of appearances and not just his omission of things in themselves (2015: 54-56). While a detailed examination of the argument of the Refutation is beyond my scope, a couple of brief points can be made.<sup>366</sup>

First, it is worth pointing out that Kant draws attention to the fact that his proof against Descartes is *not* to be aimed at Berkeley, for Kant has already 'undercut' what he takes to motivate Berkeleyan idealism in the Transcendental Aesthetic, namely the assumption that space and time are properties of things in themselves (B274). It is important to keep separate the problematic idealism of Descartes and the dogmatic idealism of Berkeley. This is closely related to the second point, which is that Kant does not, on my interpretation, give a *strict proof* of the existence of external things (although he does give this impression when he says that we must prove that 'we have **experience** and not merely **imagination** of outer things'); rather, he means to show 'that even our **inner experience**, undoubted by Descartes, is possible *only under the presupposition of outer experience*' (B275; my emphasis).<sup>367</sup> Allais argues that Kant is seeking to prove the reality of external objects in space as a condition of the knowledge

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<sup>365</sup> This point also applies to Allais' first objection, namely that for Kant, for there to be appearances there must be something that appears, whereas Berkeley's idealism does not require things that appear, just the appearances. See Allais (2015: 43-44).

<sup>366</sup> See Allison (2004: 285-303) and Guyer (1987: 279-329) for discussions of the argument and its relation to transcendental idealism.

<sup>367</sup> In the language of the contemporary literature, I do not take the refutation, at least as it appears in the *Critique*, to be an *ambitious* transcendental argument. I read it as a modest argument, aimed at showing that the Cartesian sceptic cannot justifiably doubt the existence of an external world if he takes himself to have knowledge of his own subjective states.

of our own mental states, but I read him as making the modest argument that *if* one thinks that we have direct access to our own mental states *then* we can only have this knowledge based on the assumption that we have *experience* of things outside us in space. In other words, Kant does not give a direct proof of the existence of external reality but rather a proof that if one accepts the validity of knowledge of our own states then this *presupposes* a commitment to external reality. This subtle distinction makes sense of why Kant separates problematic and dogmatic idealism: the former is already half-defeated because it is implicitly committed to the presupposition of outer experience, whereas the latter is not committed to even this much, because it does *not* take our own mental states to be in any way reliant on or caused by (a genuinely) external reality. Kant thinks that Berkeley denied the mind-independent existence of external objects on the grounds that they are represented as being in space and time, and that space and time are ‘non-entities’ because they cannot be physically real (B70-71); since appearances are dependent on ‘non-entities’ for their existence the existence of appearances must also be denied. Since, however, Kant has demonstrated that space and time are not things in themselves but rather a priori forms of intuition that condition the *form* but not the actual existence of things as appearances, Berkeleyan idealism is indeed ‘undercut’ by the results of the Aesthetic. What the two considerations leave in place so far is the possibility that Kant could be Berkeley with the addition of things in themselves. That is, the Refutation of Idealism *does* speak against a purely Berkeleyan phenomenalism, but the ‘external’ things required as conditions of time-determination could be either things empirically ‘outside us’ (represented as existing in space) or transcendentally ‘outside us’ (things existing distinct from us).<sup>368</sup>

Nonetheless, Kant asked his readers to substitute the term ‘critical’ or ‘formal’ idealism for the (ill-chosen term) ‘transcendental’ idealism, to make it clearer that this ‘formal’ idealism was opposed to the *material* idealism that denied or doubted the existence of a physically existing, mind-independent reality (Pro, 4: 375; B519).<sup>369</sup> However, Kant does not employ the terms ‘formal’ and ‘critical’ idealism very often,

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<sup>368</sup> Guyer claims that along with being a return to realism, Kant’s attempts to refute idealism mark a new commitment to the idea that the external things required are things in themselves, but that we do not cognize them *as* they are in themselves (1987: esp. 282). He calls this a combination of *epistemological subjectivism* and *ontological realism*.

<sup>369</sup> This point is often raised, e.g., Collins (1999: 23-25) and Allison (2004: 35-36). Kant’s request is particularly clear in a letter to Beck (4<sup>th</sup> December, 1792), where Kant explains that his idealism ‘I could better call “the principle of the *ideality* of space and time” [which is] ideality in reference to the *form* of representation’ which is *not* an ‘ideality of the *object* and its existence itself’ (Cor, 11: 395).

and he continues to speak of appearances as either just being representations or sums of representations in B-. This means that the equation of transcendental idealism with a merely formal idealism is really the desideratum and not the established position that can be unambiguously read off from the text. Finding a way to coherently interpret transcendental idealism as a formal idealism is critical to reconciling this idealism with the claimed empirical realism. On a related note, Kant's empirical realism is also another reason why phenomenalist interpretations are rejected: if bodies are illusions in the sense of only appearing to be mind-independent (while really being nothing more than ideas in the mind) then it is difficult to see how such a position can include any non-vacuous sense of *realism* at all (whether empirical or transcendental).<sup>370</sup> However, those who take transcendental idealism to be similar to Berkeley's simply reject Kant's claim that he is an empirical realist.<sup>371</sup> This is a very tricky point: paying close attention to the text where Kant defines empirical realism does not support the non-phenomenalist interpretation, for all Kant says is that space is empirically real because it is objectively valid 'in regard to everything that can come before us externally as an object' (A28/B44). In other words, space is empirically real because it is the form of outer affection, a form that is in us. This is completely compatible with space representing objects *as if* they were (genuinely) external when in fact they are 'mere representations' transcendentally 'in us'.<sup>372</sup> Thankfully, the fourth point is stronger and, to my mind, succeeds in making us rethink the need to find a non-phenomenalist interpretation of Kant's idealism. This is Kant's argument in the Analogies of Experience.

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<sup>370</sup> Schulting levels this criticism against Van Cleve's phenomenalist interpretation, claiming that he pulls Kant 'much too close' to Berkeley and also 'undermines Kant's emphatic empirical *realism* about objects' with Van Cleve's 'ungainly talk' of "virtual objects" (Schulting 2011a, 16-19; Van Cleve 1999, 8).

<sup>371</sup> The ineffectiveness of appealing to Kant's claim to be an empirical realist is evident in Gardner's account. Gardner triumphantly claims that Kant cannot be a phenomenalist because if he was 'then the fundamental elements in Kant's ontology would be objects of a kind ruled out by the theory of experience in the Analytic – purely sensible objects given independently of concepts' (1999: 274). This is true: the Kant of the Analytic does not allow us to experience sense data, but only conceptualized intuitions that stand under the unity of apperception. But from this it hardly follows that these conceptualized intuitions are themselves anything other than mental representations – albeit more sophisticated ones – and even if it did, then the phenomenalist readers can simply dig in their heels and maintain that the argument of the Analogies is separable from (because incompatible with) transcendental idealism.

<sup>372</sup> Similarly, Oberst considers whether the idea of an object in space or the empirical reality of space acts as a blow against phenomenalist interpretations. He rightly suggests that the answer is negative: all the term means is that there are objects in space on Kant's account, but 'Whether those objects are in or outside the mind is not entailed by that term' (2015: 65).

(4) Kant's ontological commitments in the Analogies are plainly inconsistent with Berkeleyan phenomenism.<sup>373</sup> In my view this is the decisive argument. If it is agreed that Kant's arguments in the Analogies commit him to the existence of substance(s) that endure *unperceived* through empirical alteration (because they can be neither destroyed nor created), that the objects of our ordinary experience are in real (non-ideal), genuine causal relations with each other, and that all substances are reciprocally connected to each other through causal interaction, then Berkeleyan-style phenomenism must be rejected; commitment to any one of the three principles is incompatible with that position. If appearances are nothing more than mental entities existing in the mind of perceivers then they are not substances (nor grounded in substances), are not causally efficacious *as* causal powers, and are not in reciprocal interaction with other. However, it could be argued that Kant affirms these properties of things in themselves (as holding of the objects themselves), so that things in themselves *do* have these properties, but our representations of them (appearances) do not. This option is closed, however, for Kant repeatedly denies that things in themselves are substances, realities, etc., or at least that they should be thought of in these terms (A288/B344-B345).<sup>374</sup> Nonetheless, if (i) appearances are taken to be representations (or constructions..., etc.,) and (ii) the three analogies (and the other principles) hold *only* of appearances (as Kant frequently affirms) then this raises a serious question about the ultimate status of these synthetic a priori principles. As with the question of the reality of space and time, Kant's commitment to both (i) and (ii) invites the question: are things *really* substances (existing unperceived through alteration), causally efficacious, etc., or not?<sup>375</sup> And if the answer is 'no' then why does Kant think that he

<sup>373</sup> Allais rightly takes the Analogies to count very seriously against phenomenism (2015: 48-50). However, I am not in complete agreement with her additional points, such as her claim that Kant *never* says that empirical objects are 'constructions' out of representations using these principles, or that he never speaks of our perceptions representing objects *as if* they are in causal connections, are substances, etc. Oberst (2015: 65) disputes whether Kant's claims about appearances interacting and being substances, etc., are incompatible with phenomenism; he suggests that they are not on broadly similar lines as to how the transcendental/empirical distinction of 'outside us' leaves it undetermined what this distinction amounts to, but this is unconvincing: if Kant's arguments in the Analogies actually *entail* ontological commitments then this is all irrelevant. In Chapter 2 I argue that they do.

<sup>374</sup> See also B149, B309, A286-287/B242-243, A288-289/B344-345, A358-359 and Pro (4: 312-313). I examine the implications of this difficult passage in Chapter 3 for understanding transcendental idealism.

<sup>375</sup> See Section 3 of the Introduction to the thesis for the ontological status of space and time. Stern notes that Kant's 'notorious distinction' between appearances and things in themselves 'introduces complications' for working out the status of Kant's anti-sceptical arguments, including in the Analogies of Experience (1999a: 4). I am also arguing here for a strong reading of the Analogies, according to which Kant's aim *is* to provide a strict proof of the reality of natural causality in the empirical world, but there are other weaker readings of Kant's aim. For example Stern (1999b) argues that the Second

has successfully demonstrated the truth of the principle: ‘All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect’ (B232)? I provide a detailed answer to this question in Chapters 2 and 3, but for now it is enough to see that a phenomenalist account cannot accommodate his arguments in the Analogies of Experience in the way that Kant intended.<sup>376</sup>

We have seen some reasons why the phenomenalist interpretation of Kant may be problematic. I have suggested that only two of the four reasons explored here can really stand against counter-objections, but as the rest of my thesis will make clear, I do side more against ‘two world’ readings and their phenomenalist variants than I do with them.<sup>377</sup> However, I also take seriously the textual evidence in their favour. It is clear that at least some of the time Kant is a phenomenalist, and often his idealism does appear to be something like the standard Berkeleyan picture, supplemented with unknowable things in themselves. But it is equally clear that Kant’s wider account is incompatible with phenomenism, insofar as he takes knowledge of appearances through a priori principles to yield true, genuine knowledge of mind-independent reality. That the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is primarily a distinction within one world of objects is the main claim of Section 2.

## 2. Transcendental Idealism in One World

Just as there is with phenomenalist and ‘two world’ interpretations, there is plenty of textual evidence to support the idea that the distinction between appearances

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Analogy can be read as containing a transcendental argument against the justificatory sceptic, as opposed to an epistemic sceptic.

<sup>376</sup> This is not to deny that phenomenism is at work in the Analogies, for as we saw above, Kant does still make phenomenalist claims (or can be reasonably construed that way); rather, the point is that his arguments turn on, or lead to, ontological commitments about reality that are plainly inconsistent with phenomenalist accounts.

<sup>377</sup> One of Allais’ most interesting objections that is not discussed here is that ‘We do not cognize mental states as they are in themselves’, by which she means that the phenomenalist reading must take Kant to be saying that appearances really are constructions out of a subject’s mental states, while also affirming that we cannot know the subject or its states in themselves. She takes this to mean that Kant cannot be a phenomenalist (2015: 50-51). This is a *very* tricky point and I cannot discuss it properly here, but I do not think the objection stands. In short, I am not sure we can talk coherently about what mental states are *in themselves*, as this seems to me to be something that we could only ever cognize, for Kant, if we had intellectual intuition/the God’s-eye view of reality. As I make clear in Chapter 4, I agree with Allison that one of Kant’s aims is to try to dissuade us from thinking that what counts as true or as knowledge is dictated by the theocentric model of cognition. Put bluntly, I am not sure that the notion of cognizing mental states in themselves is meaningful, so much as a pseudo-notion. However, Allais would reject my response because she rejects the idea that transcendental idealism involves a shift from a theocentric to an anthropocentric model of cognition (2015: 87-89).

and things in themselves is about two points of view on one world, where appearances are things as they appear and things in themselves are the same things but as they are in themselves. I argue for this claim in Section 2.1. The affirmation of a ‘one world’ reading, however, can also be taken in two ways. It can reflect a metaphysical distinction between the extrinsic and intrinsic natures of things or it can be taken as a distinction between two ways of considering or thinking about things. The former is best exhibited in the work of commentators such as Langton (1998), Ameriks (2003; 2011), Allais (2004; 2007; 2015) and Westphal (2004: 56-61). In Section 2.2 I briefly discuss Langton’s view, followed by Allais’. My treatment of Langton is brief because I reserve my main criticism for Chapter 3 as it is instrumental for bringing out the second sense of the appearances/things in themselves distinction. In Section 3 I will discuss the work of those who view the distinction as being non-metaphysical, focusing primarily on Allison. Before that, let us quickly survey the evidence in favour of the broad ‘one world’ style of interpretation that is common to both metaphysical and non-metaphysical interpretations.

## 2.1. Appearances and Things in Themselves as Aspects of One World

While the text by no means presents an unambiguous interpretation of transcendental idealism, there are passages that could be taken to exclude ‘two world’ readings. For example, Kant claims that ‘even if we cannot **cognize** these same objects as things in themselves, we at least must be able to **think** them as things in themselves’ (Bxxvi). That is completely clear: appearances and things in themselves are the *same things*. He continues:

Now if we were to assume that the distinction between things as objects of experience and the very same things as things in themselves, which our critique has made necessary, were not made at all, then the principle of causality, and hence the mechanism of nature in determining causality, would be valid of all things in general as efficient causes. I would not be able to say of one and the same thing, e.g., the human soul, that its will is free and yet that it is simultaneously subject to natural necessity, i.e., that it is not free, without falling into an obvious contradiction; because in both propositions I would have taken the soul **in just the same meaning**, namely as a thing in general (as a thing in

itself), and without prior critique, I could not have taken it otherwise. But if the critique has not erred in teaching that the object should be taken in **a twofold meaning**, namely as appearance or as thing in itself [...] then the same will is thought of in the appearance (in visible action) [as not free, while in itself it is free] without any contradiction occurring. (Bxxvii-xxviii)

The passage clearly speaks of things *as* appearances and things *as* things in themselves. Kant explicitly tells us that the critique teaches us to think of the object in a ‘twofold meaning’. However, it could be objected that the passage occurs after the charge of Berkeleyan idealism has been made. Yet such statements are to be found in both editions. For example, Kant asserts later in the Transcendental Aesthetic that *appearances*:<sup>378</sup>

always [have] two sides, one where the object is considered in itself (without regard to the way in which it is to be intuited, the constitution of which however must for that very reason always remain problematic), the other where the form of the intuition of this object is considered, which must not be sought in the object in itself but in the subject to which it appears, but which nevertheless really and necessarily pertains to the representation of this object. (A38/B55)

The passage explains that space and time, for Kant, belong to the subject and not to the object (in itself), and, due to this, it is necessary to form a *consideration* of the objects independently of space and time, i.e., as they are in themselves. Kant confirms this reading a few lines down when he says that time and space ‘apply to objects only so far as they are considered as appearances, but do not present things in themselves’ (A39/B56). Kant also makes similar statements throughout the Transcendental Aesthetic, such as the claim that ‘the things that we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them to be’ (A42/59), etc. Such statements are not unique to the Transcendental

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<sup>378</sup> It might seem strange to say that appearances have two sides but the puzzle dissolves once we remember that appearances and things in themselves are the *very same things* on this reading. Presumably, Kant says appearances here because the objects as appearances are what he is dealing with regards to the validity of space and time as forms of representation. Nonetheless, it would have been clearer if Kant had specified that ‘the object itself’ or the ‘thing in general’ or, better still, the ‘transcendental object’ is the thing that is considered in two ways: as an appearance and as a thing in itself. See Allison (2004: 61-62). Though, obviously, this would be just one of the multiple meanings of ‘transcendent object’.

Aesthetic and can be drawn from across the *Critique*. Later, Kant talks of how the human being ‘is in part phenomenon, but in another part, namely in regard to certain faculties, he is a merely intelligible object, because the actions of this object cannot at all be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility’ (A546-547/B574-575). Perhaps the clearest passage occurs in the Phenomena and Noumena chapter. Given that this is where Kant explicitly explains the distinction between appearances and things in themselves, along with the related but different distinction between phenomena and noumena, I think it is fair to afford it some additional weight in the exegetical dispute:

Nevertheless, if we call certain objects, as appearances, beings of sense (*phaenomena*), because we distinguish the way in which we intuit them from their constitution in itself, then it already follows from our concept that to these we as it were oppose, as objects thought merely through the understanding, either other objects conceived in accordance with the latter constitution,<sup>379</sup> even though we do not intuit it in them, or else other possible things, which are not objects of our senses at all, and call these beings of understanding (*noumena*).  
(B306)

This passage is especially helpful for illustrating the nuances of Kant’s distinction. It seems that there may be both two *kinds* of object *and* two ways of considering objects at issue. In the first case, when we consider objects as appearances we are considering them as standing in relation to our faculty of sensibility; that is, that there is a way things appear to us in virtue of these faculties and that this way of appearing is to be distinguished from the way that the object may be considered or thought as it is in itself, i.e., as it is completely independently of this relation. But it seems that Kant also wants to leave room for things that are not objects of our senses at all, and thus cannot be appearances for us. This obviously includes God, immortal souls, Leibnizian monads, etc., noumena in the positive sense.<sup>380</sup> Primarily, then, when it concerns how we take

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<sup>379</sup> Allison (2004: 54) renders this clause as: ‘either the very same objects [*eben dieselben*] conceived in accordance with the latter constitution’ which states explicitly what is merely grammatically implied in Guyer and Wood, namely that the contrast is between the objects that are appearances being thought as noumena and objects that are not appearances at all being thought as noumena.

<sup>380</sup> There is a question about whether ‘one world’ readings can really make sense of Kant’s view of noumena in the positive sense. Schulting thinks that Allais’ reading actually *disallows* the existence of God and maintains that ‘one world’ readings in general struggle with this problem (2011a: 11). Allais claims that Kant denies that we have theoretical cognition of noumena, but allows that we can have some cognition of them through practical reason (2015: 15, 61, n.2). This is admittedly very unclear, since

the reality of the objects of experience, Kant has the first sense in mind, but the limitation of human cognition to objects as they appear is clearly intended to have serious implications for the second sense as well, namely that we can have no cognition of putative ‘things’ that cannot be appearances for us. There are two types of possible noumena: objects of our experience conceived as noumena (through intellectual intuition) and putative things, such as God, the soul, etc., that are only noumenal.<sup>381</sup> Let this suffice to show that the general ‘one world’ approach has serious textual support.<sup>382</sup> What the above passages leave unclear, though, is just how the appearances and things in themselves distinction should be understood as concerning the same things. Is this a metaphysical distinction or a non-metaphysical one? I shall now consider recent metaphysical variants of the ‘one world’ reading.

## 2.2. Extrinsic and Intrinsic Natures of Things: Langton and Allais

Due to dissatisfaction with both phenomenalist interpretations and ‘deflationary’ views there has recently been a surge in metaphysical ‘one world’ views. Perhaps the most controversial and scrutinized of these has been Langton’s (1998) interpretation that focuses on Kant’s unknowability thesis, that is, his claim that we cannot know things as they are in themselves. Langton argues that by ‘things in themselves’ Kant should be understood as referring to the *intrinsic* (non-relational) properties of substances, to their intrinsic nature as opposed to their extrinsic nature, where the latter is constituted by a substance’s relational properties (1998: 20). Following Langton, Allais agrees that the distinction is between extrinsic and intrinsic natures, but argues

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Allais (2015: Ch. 3) also explicitly wants to deny that Kant is a noumenalist, but surely reading Kant as allowing us as having some cognition of noumena through practical reason conflicts with her unflinching commitment to denying noumena in the positive sense? She does also later explain that ‘practical cognition’ is supposed to give us another way of ‘giving content to the causality of freedom’ rather than justifying claims to knowledge (2015: 304, n.6), but this makes Kant’s theory of practical cognition seem empty, indeed, even *deflationary*, which surely means there is an unresolved tension in Allais’ ‘essentially manifest’ interpretation. Similarly, Allison takes Kant to leave (conceptual) room for things that are noumena only, such as God (2004: 51), and *deflates* Kant’s talk of practical cognition of noumena as not involving membership or knowledge of an intelligible world (2004: 48). Perhaps it is possible that the non-metaphysical reading that makes the unknowability thesis the consequence of *our discursive cognition* is better equipped to deal with Kant’s commitment to the *possible* existence of noumena than an interpretation that has to take appearances and things in themselves as reflecting extrinsic and intrinsic natures of (only) one set of things.

<sup>381</sup> Walker denies this, claiming that it ‘would be strange indeed to envisage two different kinds of object both called “noumena”’ (2010: 829, n.13).

<sup>382</sup> Other passages that support the broad ‘one world’ approach are: Bxx, A42/B59, B69, B307 and A277/B333.

that the intrinsic nature is not a separate set of properties, but is rather the *ground* of the extrinsic properties (2004: 677). To illustrate the general idea she appeals to colour: colour can be said to *appear* to us insofar as things only appear red for subjects constituted as we are, but we would not therefore want to say that red things are *not* red, just that redness is mind-dependent in some sense. However, we do not know the ground of the redness of the object; this is the intrinsic nature that we are missing in not knowing red *in itself* (2004: 673-674, 679).<sup>383</sup> By contrast, Langton maintains that the intrinsic nature of things takes the form of the intrinsic properties that do not reveal themselves through affecting the subject, and she holds these properties to be responsible for the real substantiality of things (1998: 49). Both Allais and Langton take Kant's humility to mean that there is something substantial (hence metaphysical) about reality that human beings cannot know, and to this extent they have one foot in the 'two world' readings discussed above. Unlike those readings, however, both commentators can attribute genuine realism to Kant, for on both interpretations the appearances are *things* as they appear, that is, real mind-independent objects. What is unknown and unknowable is merely an aspect of reality and not the 'real' things themselves. From this it can easily be seen that metaphysical 'one world' readings sit between the two extremes of phenomenalist and deflationary accounts.<sup>384</sup> Since we have already seen the considerable textual support that either extreme can appeal to in its defence, occupying the middle-ground appears to be an exegetically attractive option and, insofar as Kant clearly aimed to do justice to considerations that motivate both idealist and realist strands of thought, it is also philosophically attractive.<sup>385</sup> Unfortunately, it is not so clear that these positions do successfully occupy the middle-ground.

One problem with Langton's approach is that there does not seem to be any (genuine) idealism in the position at all, which seems to conflict with attributing realism to a (notorious) idealist. Part of the problem is that both appearances and things in themselves have been assigned to the objects themselves as designating two types of properties: extrinsic and intrinsic. Yet we have seen abundant evidence that appearances are, at the very least, mind-dependent on Kant's account, even to the point of just being

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<sup>383</sup> However, the example of colour is only intended as an analogy. What the intrinsic natures of appearances are is unknowable, on Allais's account. At least this is how I understand her position. See Allais (2015: Ch. 10).

<sup>384</sup> Similarly, Ameriks (2003; 2011; 2015) takes the transcendently ideal, for Kant to be less real than what is transcendently real, but still non-fraudulent, which leads to what he calls a 'moderate' position.

<sup>385</sup> I therefore agree with Allais' claim that part of what makes Kant's position so compelling and interesting is precisely his effort to balance realism and idealism (2015: 10-11).

representations (or sums of representations) on the phenomenalist reading. Prima facie, Langton's position conflicts with an overwhelming volume of textual evidence that makes it hard to see how her account could be accurate.<sup>386</sup> Related to this is her apparent neglect of the arguments that are usually thought to have led Kant to transcendental idealism, i.e., his arguments for space and time being a priori forms of intuition and his general concern with the a priori conditions of experience.<sup>387</sup> Next, although Langton takes Kantian humility to mean that we cannot know the intrinsic nature of things, Kant actually explicitly affirms that we *can* cognize what is inner in things; it is just that what is ‘inner’ can only be comparatively inner, rather than ‘absolutely inner’. He says that: ‘Observation and analysis of the appearances penetrate into what is inner in nature and one cannot know how far this will go in time’ (A278/B334).<sup>388</sup> As Graham Bird rightly points out, Langton falls into the trap of repeatedly mistaking passages that express the Leibnizian position that Kant is attacking for his own view (2000: 106). My full account of Langton’s view is given in Chapter 3 where I examine transcendental idealism in the Amphiboly chapter of the *Critique*; here I want to focus on broader criticisms of Langton’s strategy before considering Allais’ modification of the strategy.

Langton argues that on her interpretation ‘an old and ugly problem’ is solved. This is the notorious problem of affection that has haunted Kant scholarship from its first conception by F. H. Jacobi to the present day. Briefly, the problem is that according to Kant, things in themselves *affect* the mind to give us representations; these representations are then synthesized to yield intuitions – singular representations of objects – through application of the categories, one of which is the concept of causality. According to the limitations set on cognition by Kant, the categories can only be legitimately applied to appearances and not to things in themselves, but this raises the problem. If things in themselves affect the mind then there must be a causal relation

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<sup>386</sup> Langton claims that her interpretation is not supposed to show what Kant meant (but failed) to say or even what he ought to have said, but to simply represent what he actually said (1998: 6).

<sup>387</sup> Although there *may* be other arguments that can be constructed out of the resources of the Critical philosophy, it is undeniable that Kant saw himself as providing only two *proofs* of transcendental idealism. The direct proof given through the arguments that space and time are (only) subjective a priori forms of intuition and the notorious ‘indirect’ proof through the resolution of the mathematical antinomies (Bxxii, A506-507/B534-535). I examine Kant’s resolution of the antinomies in Chapter 4.

<sup>388</sup> She also attributes the quote ‘We have no insight whatsoever into the intrinsic nature of things’ to Kant in the opening of her book, but in context this is a deliberate misquotation by Kant of a German poet , used to illustrate his point that Leibniz’s doctrine of monadology is based on a ‘transcendental amphiboly’. The quote is not representative of Kant’s view, but rather is illustrative of what he is attacking. See Chapter 3.

between things in themselves and the mind, not just appearances and the mind, but this violates Kantian humility. Langton sets out the problem by breaking its components down into separate claims:

K1 Things in themselves exist.

K2 Things in themselves are the causes of phenomenal appearances.

K3 We can have no knowledge of things in themselves.

The first two are, according to Langton, metaphysical theses and the third is an epistemological one. Taken individually, each thesis is fine, but once they are put together two corollaries emerge that threaten the coherence of the whole story:

C1 We cannot know that things in themselves exist.

C2 We cannot know that things in themselves are the causes of phenomenal appearances.

Langton concludes that, so construed, K1 and K2 cannot be known so Kant's story has made itself untellable (1998: 7-8). She rejects Allison's 'deflationary proposal' (1998: 7-11) and proffers her own interpretation of the Kantian theses whose conjunction gives rise to the problem of affection:

M1 There exist things in themselves, i.e. things that have intrinsic properties.

M2 The things that have intrinsic properties also have relational properties: causal powers that constitute phenomenal appearances.

M3 We have no knowledge of the intrinsic properties of things (Langton 1998, 13).

Langton claims that with her interpretation, 'the old and ugly problem disappears' (*ibid*), but this conclusion is premature. While it is true that the triad would be consistent if Langton's interpretation of the Kantian theses is correct, it is not clear that the individual theses are philosophically warranted by such an interpretation, especially for Kant. By far the most significant problem is Langton's confidence that Kant can assert M1. K1 is not a problem on either the 'two world' or deflationary readings since in those cases it *does* follow, as a conceptual truth, that if there are appearances there are

things that are doing the appearing (in some sense),<sup>389</sup> but with Langton's case this does not follow, at least not without additional (and notably, idealist) premises.<sup>390</sup> On her interpretation, Kant would first have to demonstrate that things cannot exist independently of us based solely on the extrinsic properties that we experience them as having, but how could this be shown?

First, Kant explicitly claims that we can and do penetrate into the inner reality of nature, but that we *cannot be sure* how far our knowledge will extend in time (A278/B334); so, by that logic, we could never be sure that we had found *all* the properties that nature contains and, therefore, the property or properties responsible for substantiality. A contemporary analogy might be the Higgs-Boson particle, which some scientists hold to be capable of accounting for mass. If true then this particle has long eluded scientific investigation and yet it has been a feature or property of nature all along. Second, it is unclear what these intrinsic properties would even be, assuming that they exist to begin with. Philosophy is no stranger to a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties, which famously is exemplified in Locke's primary and secondary property distinction. For Locke, properties such as shape and motion belong to an object's primary properties because the object has these properties regardless of being perceived; secondary properties include colour for, as we saw above with Allais, objects can only be said to instantiate their colour when perceived (Allais 2004, 673-674). Here such a distinction is clearly intelligible, but for Kant, *all* the properties that Locke considered primary are really secondary (belonging to the intuition of the object) (Pro, 4: 289), so it is very unclear what kind of property or feature could even count as intrinsic on Kant's account. Furthermore, if Kant's humility consists in denying us knowledge of intrinsic properties, why do we find no evidence of what he thinks these properties are when he still holds it to be possible to cognize things in themselves? Specifically, in the *Dissertation* Kant is generally thought to hold that the intellect can cognize things in themselves, once freed from the contaminating influence of

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<sup>389</sup> On the 'two world' reading if there is an appearance (e.g., a mental representation) then there is the thing (unknown independently of the representation) that is doing the appearing or causes the appearance in the subject. On Allison's reading the thing in itself *is* the appearance but considered *in itself*. So, if something can be considered as an appearance, as subject to the conditions of experience, it can be considered in absence of those conditions as well. For Kant's talk of appearances presupposing things in themselves see Bxxvi-xxvii, A251-252 and Pro (4: 314-315).

<sup>390</sup> The missing idealist premise is that something can be the case simply because we must think that it is the case. See Breitenbach (2004: 141). Or in explicit Kantian terms, that the conditions of experience are the conditions of the *objects* of experience.

sensibility.<sup>391</sup> Despite this, the only information Kant gives us about the intelligible world is its form, namely that a collection of substances compose a world only if they stand in real causal interactions with each other (ID, 2: 406-410); there is no mention of intrinsic properties here.<sup>392</sup>

On Langton's interpretation, things in themselves are substances with intrinsic, causally inert, properties. She thinks that this follows from the fact that we have the unschematized concept of substance. We can *know* that things in themselves are substances, but we cannot cognize their intrinsic properties, but Kant explicitly denies that things in themselves should be thought of as substances; moreover, his most explicit denial occurs in the very chapter that Langton relies on the most. Kant writes that the understanding 'thinks of an object in itself, but only as a transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance), and that cannot be thought of either as magnitude or as reality or as substance, etc.' (A288/B344). I will return to this passage in Chapter 3, but for now what is important to note is that Langton seems to think that thinking things through the unschematized categories yields a minimal amount of information about actual things in themselves. Thinking the objects of our experience through the unschematized categories gives us only analytic judgements about the logical form of our thinking about objects in general, not synthetic truths about actual objects (A147/B186).<sup>393</sup>

Additionally, there is a concern about the very *intelligibility* of the idea of things having *any* truly intrinsic properties on Kant's account, particularly in the way that Langton characterizes them, viz., as non-relational properties that do *not* affect us through sensibility. If things are subject to the human mind, and it is in virtue of that relation that they can be said to be in space and time and to be 'objects' for us, what sense can be imputed to the claim that things have properties considered *completely*

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<sup>391</sup> However, Grier argues that even in the *Dissertation* there is no *straightforward* cognition of noumena by reason (2001: 64-66), pointing to the 'principles of harmony' being subjectively valid principles even though they arise from the intellect alone (ID, 2: 217-219). Nonetheless, as cognitions of 'things as they are' (as opposed to 'things as they appear'), intellectual cognition is clearly supposed to yield *some* knowledge of noumena in the *Dissertation*.

<sup>392</sup> Ameriks makes a similar point regarding how knowledge of the intelligible world is relational and concerns things in themselves (2003: 150).

<sup>393</sup> Allais also seems to think that we have formal, analytic knowledge of things in themselves through the unschematized categories (2015: 68-70). However, we have to be careful not to conflate our *concept* of what things are like in themselves with how they *actually* are as things in themselves if we are going to take a metaphysical conception of the transcendental distinction. Analytic truths only tell us something about *our concept* of things in general (and thus of things in themselves), but they do not tell us anything about how things may be in themselves. See Schulting (2011b: esp. 160-161) and Allison (2004: 18). Although he also thinks that the categories do not hold of things in themselves, Kohl insists that analytic judgements about things in themselves do describe actual things in themselves (2015: 101, n.17).

independently of us, on a Kantian account? Objects considered independently of us can only be regarded as an unknown ‘something = X’ (A251).<sup>394</sup> While Langton’s Kant may avoid the thorny problem of violating his own claims to critical modesty through the problem of affection, he transgresses those same boundaries by claiming to know that ‘things’ independently of us have causally inert ‘intrinsic’ properties, etc., but there is no possible way for Langton’s Kant to validate this assumption, much less justify any sort of claim about the nature of these properties (as non-relational). While the route may be different, Langton still leaves us with an inconsistent Kant. However, since she rejects the idea that transcendental idealism is about philosophical methodology (and its implications) this objection is unlikely to bother her, particularly as the objection is inspired by deflationary considerations. Langton takes it as given, as does Allais (2015: 96-97), that it is a conceptual truth that phenomena qua relational require something non-relational,<sup>395</sup> but disputing the validity and applicability of so-called conceptual truths forms part of Kant’s critique of Leibniz in the Amphiboly, and it is reflected in the idea of critiquing the use of *pure reason* more broadly.<sup>396</sup>

There is another objection, however, that operates within the terms of Langton’s reading rather than questioning her whole line of interpretation. This objection asks where freedom is supposed to fit in her account. On a deflationary reading, Kant is not claiming that there is a kind of causality different to the natural one that must exist alongside natural causality, but on Langton’s metaphysical account, there must be room for a genuine, non-phenomenal, spontaneous causality. Causality is obviously a relational property, but Kant unequivocally assigns freedom to the noumenal realm; this means that things in themselves must have causal, i.e., relational properties, but this goes against Langton’s claim that things in themselves are the non-relational, intrinsic properties of substances. In short, Langton’s thoroughly metaphysical Kant has no room for his most famous metaphysical commitment!<sup>397</sup>

Furthermore, it remains unclear what phenomena are on Langton’s interpretation. She repeatedly rejects any notion of phenomena being phenomenalisti

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<sup>394</sup> Admittedly, this turns on a very idealist conception of the sense in which subjects constitute ‘objects’, but at this stage we are not in a place to investigate this conception. See Chapter 1.

<sup>395</sup> In Langton’s case it is analytically entailed that where there are extrinsic properties there must be intrinsic ones, but there is no grounding relation between them. On Allais’ account the intrinsic nature grounds the extrinsic nature but we cannot cognize it.

<sup>396</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>397</sup> Versions of this criticism can be found in Ameriks (2003: 149), Westphal (2004: 56, n.37) and Schulting (2011a: 22-23).

(1998: 48), but she seems unable to provide a positive account of what they are. Recall that for contemporary ‘two world’ readings phenomena are mental representations, entities in the mind, or composed out of mental activities that we have access to at the cost of not having access to the things in themselves and recall, also, that on ‘two aspect’ readings phenomena constitute a way of considering the objects, namely as they appear. Langton denies both, claiming that phenomena are constituted out of the extrinsic properties of substances or the things in themselves (1998: 13), but in what sense can causal properties *constitute* phenomena? Langton does not want to say that the phenomenon is separate from the thing in itself but just is a substance’s extrinsic properties, yet this would seem to attribute to Kant the bizarre and incoherent view that we are affected by one type of property in things but not another, precisely the type that seems to correspond to *empirical* affection, which is not what needs explaining. Kant explicitly states that the cause of our representations is ‘non-sensible’, which immediately rules out extrinsic properties (phenomena) as the viable candidate since these are always sensible (A494/B522).<sup>398</sup> Further, one could ask how the extrinsic properties affect us in the first place and it is no help to simply characterize them, as Langton does, as (causal) relational properties since this does not explain why and how they can appear in space and time to us.<sup>399</sup>

Nonetheless, insofar as Kant does occasionally talk of intrinsic properties and of ascribing distinctive and inner predicates to things in knowing them as things in themselves (A277/B333, A565/B593), Langton still seems to have a point. I show in Chapter 3 in detail why her argument is premised on a misunderstanding of Kant’s critique of Leibniz, and so why she erroneously takes the pure categories to yield even a minimal amount of information about actual things in themselves, when Kant is actually criticizing just this very move. Where I do agree with Langton is that Kant thinks he is telling us that we are missing something substantial in not knowing things in themselves; but I disagree that this ‘something’ is best thought of in terms of intrinsic properties, or indeed in terms of properties altogether. Let us move to Allais’ interpretation.

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<sup>398</sup> In principle, we can be affected by the object as an appearance, i.e., after it has been given through space and time, but not before. Affection before appearance must necessarily be by things in themselves, but we cannot apply the categories here. Doing so is precisely what leads to the errors of metaphysics and generates the problem of affection.

<sup>399</sup> This recalls the puzzle that I set out in Section 3 of the Introduction.

Allais (2004; 2007; 2015) offers a modified version of Langton's interpretation that builds on certain features of Langton's while attempting to incorporate Kant's idealism, along with his concern with the a priori conditions of experience. Her interpretation appeals to a direct realist account of perception to model the status of appearances and things in themselves; however, despite the appeal to direct realism, many of the criticisms levelled at Langton apply also to Allais. Allais attempts to find an interpretation that is asserted unambiguously in the *Critique* while also showing why 'two world' or phenomenalist readings must be wholly rejected. She speaks against the 'trivial sounding claim that in order to be known objects must satisfy certain conditions of knowledge' (2004: 655), which is aimed primarily at Allison. She argues that Allison 'practically makes transcendental idealism true by definition' (2004: 667) because of the way he defines both the notion of an 'epistemic condition' and the concept of a thing in itself.<sup>400</sup> Allais' view is that Kant's distinction is between an extrinsic and intrinsic nature of things: the extrinsic nature is the appearance while the intrinsic is the thing in itself. By contrast to Langton, however, Allais claims that there are not two kinds of properties, so the intrinsic is just the extrinsic considered in itself, i.e., as the ground of appearances (2004: 673-674, 679). It is not clear to me, though, how this succeeds in being non-trivial. Allais' problem with Allison's interpretation is that it looks like transcendental idealism simply says that we can have no knowledge of things independently of the conditions of knowing things, which is trivially true (2015: 82). Yet I think this charge can also be applied to Allais' account. If an object's extrinsic nature is just the way that it appears to a subject then is it not also the case that the secret of its intrinsic nature is hidden from us in an equally trivial way? That is, if the extrinsic nature is equated with a thing's (mind-dependent) way of appearing, and the intrinsic nature is just how the thing is in (complete) independence of its relations to anything else, including us, then of course the intrinsic nature cannot be known.<sup>401</sup> Assuming for now that the attack hits home, it would be problematic if Allais' reading is also vulnerable to the objection. Nonetheless, I think the triviality charge in general turns on an uncharitable formulation of what the interpretation in question is attempting to say, so I will focus on other problems.

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<sup>400</sup> She develops these criticisms in (2015: Ch. 3); I respond to these objections in Section 3.

<sup>401</sup> Even Langton's account can be rendered trivial. Intrinsic properties are those that a substance has independently of relations to other things, so again, it follows as a matter of definition that we cannot know the properties that things have independently of their relation to other things. Indeed, on her account 'in itself' just means non-relational. See Ameriks (2003: 149).

Allais recognizes that transcendental idealism requires that objects be in some way mind-dependent (for otherwise the position is not idealist), but that simultaneously this ‘idealism’ is not to be taken to undermine Kant’s empirical realism (2004: 665; 2015). She rightly suggests that Langton’s account fails at meeting this requirement, but also attacks epistemological ‘one world’ readings for failing the requirement as well. The problem, as Van Cleve remarks, is that ‘one can begin to wonder whether Kant’s transcendental idealism has anything much to do with Kant’s idealism at all’ (1999: 4).<sup>402</sup> However, it seems to me that Allais does not successfully find an alternative sense of mind-dependence for her own account.

Although Allais rightly rejects the idea that appearances are illusory for Kant (B69), I am unconvinced that she successfully formulates a coherent alternative to the phenomenalist that she rejects. To illustrate how appearances can be mind-dependent non-mental entities she uses the classic example of the stick that appears bent in water:

First, the bent appearance of the stick is a perfectly *public* feature of the stick. Second, we can easily make sense of saying that the appearance of the stick *represents* the stick as being bent. Third, while it is not a mental entity, mental state or mental activity, the bent appearance of the stick is clearly mind-dependent, as it exists only in our perception of the stick: the bent appearance of the stick does not exist apart from our perception of it (Allais 2004, 671-672).<sup>403</sup>

This example seems confused. It is unclear that the appearance is *not* a mental entity on this account. Allais maintains that its mind-dependence consists in the appearance only existing in the possible perception of it, but how then do we explain what we actually see in this case?<sup>404</sup> It is no help to claim that the stick is not bent in reality and that it only appears that way since this means that there is a mystery concerning exactly what it is that we perceive. In her later account, Allais again appeals to the direct realist view of perception, this time focusing on the *relationality* of perception. The basic idea is that perception is relational in the sense that there is not just an object and a subject, but also a particular context to the perception. In perceiving a bent stick, Allais maintains that it

<sup>402</sup> Which is a fair comment since some commentators set Kant up explicitly as ‘anti-idealist’, e.g., Collins (1999: xii, *passim*). Interestingly, Allais is not sure whether Collins’ account contains no idealism at all, suggesting that the difference between them may be merely ‘terminological’ (2015: 16-17, n.25).

<sup>403</sup> Collins (1999: 36-39) uses a similar example of a bridge that is perceived as partially obscured.

<sup>404</sup> Allais develops the example further in (2015: 112-114)

is still the stick that is directly given to us in perception – the presence of the object itself to consciousness is part of what makes the mental state a perceptual state – but that the way the stick is seen is mind-dependent, insofar as it is perceived as being different from how it is independently of its appearing to consciousness (2015: 112–114). On this basis she thinks that we can reject phenomenism: the *stick itself* is what is perceived and not a mental state or image, but at the same time the view allows us to make sense of the idea that the stick is perceived *as being* different to how it is in itself: it is perceived as being bent when it is, mind-independently, straight. I am not convinced that this account works, either as a philosophical position or as an analogy for understanding transcendental idealism.

Regarding its coherency as a philosophical position, it is important to note that Allais does not mean to defend its plausibility, but only the idea that it is helpful for understanding Kant; nonetheless, she is clearly very sympathetic to the view. She also claims that she is not claiming that Kant himself is a direct realist (2004: 670; 2015: 16), which makes it unclear why we should think that transcendental idealism can be illuminated by this account of perception if it is not a position that Kant himself did (or would) endorse.<sup>405</sup> If the position is incoherent I see no good reason to saddle Kant with it. My basic issue is that I do not believe it manages to occupy the middle-ground between phenomenism and deflationary readings. Although Allais has attempted to expand on the original idea in her most recent account by appealing to relationality it still seems to me that to insist that it is the object itself that is presented to us (in non-veridical) perception is simply to restate the problem. It is no clearer than before (2004; 2007) *how* the stick itself can be what is presented to us if our perception presents us with qualities (appearing bent) that the stick does not have, independently of its appearance to consciousness. There are two ways out of this dilemma, but neither option seems very appealing. First, we could bite the bullet and concede that, ‘yes’, what we are directly presented with is something that does not have the qualities that we wish to attribute to the thing itself, in which case we fall back into either a form of phenomenism, which Allais rejects because that means that we are not directly given external objects, or we take the second option, which would mean attributing the *property of appearing bent* to the stick itself when it is immersed in water, which seems

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<sup>405</sup> On this point, I agree with Longuenesse that Kant is an indirect realist (1998: 20–21, n.9).

to be her preference.<sup>406</sup> This allows Allais to claim that it is the stick itself that is presented to us, avoiding phenomenism, but then we are faced with the *prima facie* unattractive option of losing the distinction between veridical and non-veridical perception altogether. At least, we can no longer make room for purely *subjective* experiences, for now what would be usually classified as non-veridical (perceiving a stick as being bent) is now veridical insofar as the stick has the mind-dependent *property of appearing bent when immersed in water*.<sup>407</sup> Insofar as Kant clearly wants to retain a sense in which there can be *mere* appearances – that is, representations that do *not* relate to an object<sup>408</sup> – then Allais’ relational account of perception is too strong, making purely subjective appearances impossible.

Even if the account is philosophically coherent, there are reasons to reject it as adequately capturing transcendental idealism.<sup>409</sup> First, Allais takes the distinction between appearances and things in themselves to *not* be a distinction between how reality seems to be and how it ‘really’ is, but this is exactly what the bent stick analogy (usually) signifies: the stick merely *appears* to be bent while it is *really* straight.<sup>410</sup> Second, Allais takes appearances to be mind-dependent aspects of objects rather than being themselves representations, but this conflicts with a huge volume of textual evidence that suggests, at least some of the time, Kant really did mean to equate the objects of our ordinary experience, or the *way that they appear*, as having an existence only ‘as modifications of our sensibility’ (A491/B519) that cannot be attributed to these objects themselves, and that these appearances ‘must not be regarded in themselves, in the same way, as objects (outside the power of representation)’ (A104).<sup>411</sup> My third criticism must wait until Chapter 4 where I argue that all non-phenomenalist interpretations are unable to successfully account for Kant’s official resolution of the

<sup>406</sup> She suggests that non-veridical features are mind-dependent properties of the objects themselves, but she concedes that much work is required to make this relationship comprehensible (2015: 115-116).

<sup>407</sup> Schulting makes this objection, and he also questions whether Allais has really exorcized the phenomenism from transcendental idealism insofar as she fails to explain the ‘the mentalist language that Kant clearly adopts’ (2011a: 10).

<sup>408</sup> The distinction between appearance and phenomenon captures this. Appearances are indeterminate and phenomena are appearances that are ‘thought in accordance with the unity of the categories’ (A248-249).

<sup>409</sup> It must be noted that Allais does not intend the bent-stick analogy as an account of the status of Kantian appearances, but she does intend it to capture the idea that something can be directly presented to consciousness in a way that differs from how it really is (2015: 114). It is precisely this claim that I find incomprehensible.

<sup>410</sup> Notwithstanding the possibility of the bent appearance of the stick being a property of the stick itself, in which case there is no longer any distinction between how things merely seem to be and how they really are.

<sup>411</sup> See A190-191/B518-519, discussed in Section 1.

mathematical antinomies, revealing that there is a significant gap between what Kant asserts concerning the nature of his idealism and how it actually functions. For now, I think it is fair to say that Allais' attempt to understand transcendental idealism through a comparison with relational models of perception requires more work before it can avoid collapsing back into phenomenism: she has not properly accounted for the mentalist language that Kant deliberately chose, and continued to choose after being charged with a 'higher idealism'. Let us turn to the deflationary 'one world' accounts of transcendental idealism.

### 3. Deflationary Accounts of Transcendental Idealism

In addition to the metaphysical variants just discussed, the 'one world' reading can also be understood as designating ways of considering things in philosophical reflection. Some commentators have wanted to strip any credibility from the idea of a 'thing in itself' altogether, arguing that the very idea of such a thing is incoherent and violates the tenets of transcendental idealism. Arthur Melnick argues that a 'thing in itself' is not a *thing* at all but rather a very different concept of a thing to that which we usually employ. Melnick takes Kant as saying that objects should be treated as phenomena because 'involved in the very concept of an object is that it is a way of organizing our experience' and that once this is recognized it is obvious that Kant's point is that concepts are dependent on the subject's method of judging (1973: 133-134). Melnick then explains how the concept of a 'thing in itself' is a concept of an object that 'would have sense apart from any reference to how the experience of a subject hooks up epistemically to his intellectual (judgmental) structure' (1973: 152). Unfortunately, while this reading may be attractive insofar as it manages to disassociate Kant from Berkeley and it rightly emphasizes how the 'Copernican turn' necessitates seeing that the concept of an object is not independent of the structures of experience, it falls afoul of Kant's firm and explicit claim that we can and must *think* things in themselves (Bxxvi).<sup>412</sup> What Melnick denies is that there is a legitimate, *positive* sense to *considering* things in themselves, but this is an aspect of Kant's account that cannot be eliminated and is required to make sense of the 'Copernican turn'. Melnick's view of

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<sup>412</sup> For very similar views and a discussion of their weaknesses, see Ameriks (2003: 70-72). Ameriks (2003: 74-79) then discusses the early works of Allison and those of his chief source of inspiration, Gerold Prauss. My discussion of Allison will focus on his more recent work.

appearances and things in themselves is clearly too deflationary: the concept of a thing in itself for Kant is not incoherent and we are required to think things in themselves as the *grounds* of appearances (A288/B344, A379-380). In this sense ‘thing in itself’ is not just a non-epistemic *concept* of things, but refers to mind-independent reality appearing to us through affecting sensibility.<sup>413</sup>

By contrast, other ‘one world’ commentators have embraced the sense in which ‘things in themselves’ is a coherent and necessary concept of the critical philosophy. H. E. Matthews argues that to consider things as appearances is just to consider them in relation to the subjective conditions of human cognition, i.e., to consider them from the human point of view, but to consider things in themselves is to form a real, alternative viewpoint on the same things (1969: 208). However, as Ameriks points out, Matthews does not explain what would count as another view and so one is left to wonder if *any* other viewpoint counts as considering things in themselves. If this is the case then why can we not characterize the human viewpoint as knowing things in themselves? Alternatively, if there is some other superior view, does this not threaten the common sense (empirical) realism that Matthews takes Kant to put forward? (2003: 73-74) I want now to discuss a reading that is hard to categorize in terms of the ‘one world’/‘two world’ debate. This is Hoke Robinson’s (1994) interpretation that appearances and things in themselves are two non-parallel perspectives on things.

The reason why Robinson’s view is hard to place is because he presents it as an alternative to both Allison’s ‘two aspect’ view and the traditional ‘two world’ view, serving as an earlier attempt to occupy the middle-ground. Robinson rejects ‘two world’ readings as philosophically implausible and Allison’s view on the grounds of textual infidelity. He proffers what he terms a ‘two perspectives’ view, which sounds similar to a ‘two aspect’ reading but it is not. By ‘two perspectives’ Robinson does not mean two perspectives on one and the same set of objects, as Allison does. Rather, he means to contrast a human perspective with a divine one – an idea that he admits he derives from Allison’s work, but nonetheless employs very differently (1994: 428). Appearances are things seen from the human perspective, and things in themselves are objects seen from a divine perspective (*ibid*). At the empirical level (the level of ordinary day-to-day, pre-reflective common sense experience) these two perspectives are considered to coincide: when I see a tree, God would also, in my place, (presumably) see a tree. In this sense the

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<sup>413</sup> See Chapter 3 for further discussion of Melnick’s views.

distinction would seem to concern the same set of objects, but Robinson continues by stating that at the transcendental level I ‘recognize that the tree is an appearance (i.e., an object in the human perspective), and that in itself (i.e., from the divine perspective) it may be quite different, or not exist at all’ (*ibid*). Robinson claims that Kant provides *internal* criteria for distinguishing between knowledge and illusion and that this set of criteria takes over the role that the object in itself plays in transcendently realist accounts, for that object has been banished to the divine perspective (1994: 429). Robinson rejects the ‘two aspect’ reading because it treats the human and divine perspectives as parallel. One problem with Robinson’s view is that it is immediately suggestive of an appearance/reality distinction in that an object that may (seem to) exist in the human perspective might not exist in the divine perspective as a thing in itself, or vice versa. This undermines Kant’s realism and his claim that appearances are not illusions or only how things seem to be (B69). Robinson could respond by insisting that the two perspectives are not parallel, and that while we are constrained to think of a perspective that is independent of our own, our *conception* of that alternative is still made from within the human perspective and so is derived from (thus not superior to) the human perspective (1994: 430-431). Nevertheless, our thought of what it is like to occupy the divine perspective still renders knowledge claims made from within the human perspective potentially invalid simply because they are made from within that (limited) perspective, so accordingly, it is hard to see how Robinson’s view can allow for the robust kind of empirical realism that ‘one world’ views aspire to. Robinson intends the divine perspective to be one that we assume only when things go wrong in our efforts to cognize the world, effectively standing in for ‘what it might be like to know all about something once and for all’ (1994: 431), but this is not convincing in light of the claim that things in themselves are *only* contained under the divine perspective. It is clear that Robinson takes appearances to designate how we represent the world through experience and theorize about it in science, while things in themselves stand in for how the world really is, but just this very fact means that the interpretation cannot sit in the middle but must collapse either into an appearance/reality distinction – knowledge of how things really are is *only* (conceived to be) available to the divine perspective – or it collapses back into dual aspects on one set of things and loses its claim to uniqueness.

While his focus on ‘perspectives’ suggests some similarity with ‘one world’ readings Robinson’s account of appearances pulls him much closer to the ‘two world’

interpretations, for Robinson, like Van Cleve (1999), holds Kant's appearances to be 'intentional objects'. Robinson takes appearances to be generated or 'projected' through representations; that is, that empirical objects owe their existence to us (1994: 429). This cannot be accurate as Kant explicitly states that such a relationship between object and representation can hold only for a divine intuition: God in the very representing of the object creates it (Cor, 10: 130; B145). Robinson is right that the representation does make the object possible in one sense: representations make objects possible if through them *cognition* of things as objects is made possible (A92/B125; MFNS, 4: 476). Thus, Robinson's account is too phenomenalist, ascribing to the view expressed by Garve and Feder that transcendental idealism is a theory about how we literally make objects out of representations through application of the a priori conditions of experience. Notwithstanding that issue, Robinson's attempt to anchor the transcendental distinction in terms of a contrast between human and divine perspectives is too unstable and ultimately must collapse back into one of the alternatives he rejects. Now I want to provide a summary of what is by far the most significant and influential of the deflationary readings, namely the work of Henry Allison. This account is preliminary because certain aspects of Allison's complex view will be examined throughout the thesis.

Allison argues against Guyer, Strawson and others, that transcendental idealism is not the dogmatic metaphysical doctrine that we do not know the world as it is really is, and he also argues that, for better or worse, Kant's philosophical insights cannot be separated from his idealism (2004: 4). Central to Allison's approach is the idea that the transcendental distinction does not pick out two ontologically distinct kinds of entity, but rather refers to how objects should be considered in philosophical (transcendental) reflection. According to Allison, the distinction concerns two ways of considering objects. Objects can be considered as appearances and they can be considered as they are in themselves (2004:16-17). It is worth being very clear about what the deflationary reading claims. Although Allison (1983) has previously presented the idea as being that to consider things as appearances is to consider them in relation to conditions of experience (epistemic conditions) and to consider them in themselves is to consider them independently of these conditions, this is not entirely accurate with respect to his later works. The point is rather that when Kant speaks of considering things as they

appear this means specifically *in relation to sensibility*.<sup>414</sup> Similarly, to consider things as they are in themselves means to consider things independently of their relation to sensibility (1996: 7-8; 2004: 16-17, 52-53). This is a subtle but crucial difference for it makes room for Kant's claims that we can and must *think* things in themselves, and it also helps to dispel the verdict that Allison's interpretation is 'trivial' and 'anodyne'. The notion of 'epistemic conditions' originates with Allison and captures the idea that there are subjective conditions of representation that are not ontological, yet are object-enabling insofar as they make possible the representation of something *as* an object (2004: 11-12; 1983: 10). Importantly, for Allison, these conditions only reflect the cognitive structure of the subject and not the structure of things in themselves (1983: 27). Allison has been heavily criticized for making the unknowability of things in themselves a trivial consequence of a definitional strategy, for helping himself prematurely to the conclusion that epistemic conditions must be purely subjective in virtue of their object-enabling status, and for committing a non-sequitur in asserting with Kant the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves.<sup>415</sup> First, the triviality charge.

If by 'things in themselves' Kant means nothing more than things considered in abstraction from the conditions of knowledge then Kantian humility becomes an analytic tautology. To many Kant's humility is supposed to be, in some sense, a 'depressing' discovery, a cause for lament, as Langton puts it.<sup>416</sup> I submit that those who find Allison's deflationary account trivial have misunderstood what the account actually claims. However, there have been some interesting defences of his 1983 account, ranging from denying that analyticity necessarily implies triviality (Allison 2004, 19; Breitenbach 2004, 144-145) to the deflationary view being misrepresented (Bird 2000, 107). Bird argues that the view is better described as being that 'we can have no knowledge of things in (complete) abstraction from the senses', which is definitely not analytic or, for Kant, trivial. Bird is basically correct. The deflationary view is best

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<sup>414</sup> Although she is aware of Allison's 2004 account, Allais continues to take the point to be considering things in relation to or abstraction from epistemic conditions broadly, rather than specifically sensibility (2015: 77-89).

<sup>415</sup> I indicated in Section 3 of the Introduction (n.19) that I am sympathetic to the worry that Allison illegitimately infers the exclusive subjectivity of epistemic conditions from their role as objectivating functions. I am not concerned with that issue here, but rather with his contention that transcendental idealism should be understood as concerning two ways of considering things.

<sup>416</sup> Allais (2004: 667; 2015: esp. 79-87), Langton (1998: 9-10), Van Cleve (1999: 4) and Guyer (1987: 4, *passim*) all charge Allison with making transcendental idealism trivially true. Allais' 2015 account is the most developed attempt I have found to make the triviality charge stick.

expressed as being the view that we can (and must, for Kant) consider the objects in the world and ourselves in two ways. We can consider them as appearances by considering the way in which they are represented as being in space and time through sensibility, and we can consider them as things in themselves, by considering them as things independently of their relation to sensibility. It is important to note, however, that some, such as Langton, do construe Allison correctly as advocating abstracting from *sensibility*, rather than all epistemic conditions, but still charge the position with being trivial. I think this charge has very little force. It is certainly *not* trivial, for Kant, that we can have *knowledge* or *cognition* of things only through their appearing through sensibility, for this is exactly what rationalist metaphysicians deny. Leibniz and other ‘dogmatists’ think we can attain knowledge of reality through reflecting on our concepts alone; Kant emphatically rejects this. Perhaps to Langton it is trivial that we need sensible intuition to have knowledge, but it was not trivial to Leibniz, or the early Kant, and if Kant’s complex argument in the Amphiboly is correct, it is all too easy to slide into making claims that neglect the (irreducible) role of sensibility. Indeed, Langton’s own interpretation of Kant fails to take seriously the necessary contribution of sensibility to cognition.<sup>417</sup>

Second, related to the triviality charge is the question of what point the reflection is supposed to have if transcendental idealism is not trivial. This objection is raised most forcefully by Guyer (1987: 337-338; 2007: 12), who asks us to imagine a case where a woman is considered for a job. When the interviewers are evaluating her appropriateness for the job they are asked to abstract her gender, thus forming a conception of her that subtracts her gender. Based on this, though, they do not decide that she is in fact genderless, which would be an obvious ‘howler’. Yet this is how Guyer understands Allison’s position: that things really are spatiotemporal, but that in considering them in themselves we abstract their spatiotemporal character and form a conception of them to the extent that they are not spatiotemporal, and from this, Allison’s Kant concludes that things as they are in themselves are definitely not spatiotemporal.<sup>418</sup> The ‘abstractionist’ reading of Allison misses the point (Allison 2007, 32-33). Allison’s Kant is still a transcendental idealist and so, based on the arguments of the Aesthetic, Allison’s Kant takes space and time to *only* characterize things as they are given to the human mind. Things as they are independently of the

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<sup>417</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>418</sup> Again, Allais (2015: 82-83) also seems to hold the ‘abstractionist’ understanding of Allison.

human mind are not spatiotemporal, but, and this is crucial, this does not mean that things *only seem* to be spatiotemporal while really they are not (B69).<sup>419</sup> In this sense, expressing the position in terms of *considering* things is perhaps unhelpful, for it can be misleading insofar as it suggests a purely abstractionist picture where we abstract away properties from our *concept* of a thing that the thing really (mind-independently) has. The point is actually that we abstract away properties that a thing has only insofar as it stands in a certain relation to us, that is, is given to us as an object through sensible intuition.<sup>420</sup> Thus, Kant on the deflationary reading is not asserting a mere tautology, making it trivial, or, alternatively, if not trivial, committing the abstractionist ‘howler’ that worries Guyer.

This may overcome the worry that the idea of considering things metaphilosophically or epistemologically is inherently trivial, but it does not explain what grounds Kant’s idealism on Allison’s account. For Allison, it is a combination of the notion of epistemic conditions and what he calls the ‘discursivity thesis’ that ground Kant’s idealism. Again, he has been misunderstood on this point. First, it has been argued against Allison by Guyer (1987; 2007) and Allais (2015: 80-83) that the notion of an epistemic condition does not entail transcendental idealism: there is nothing inherently idealist about the idea that the objects of our knowledge must meet certain conditions in order for them to be objects of knowledge for us (*ibid*). Indeed, there is not and Allison is aware of this, for he says that to get the full position we need both the notion of epistemic conditions in conjunction with the discursivity thesis. Admittedly, he does also say that the concept ‘brings with it an idealistic commitment of at least the indeterminate sort [...] because it involves the relativization of the *concept* of an object to human cognition and the conditions of its representation of objects’, but all this means is that in order for things to be ‘objects’ for us they must meet our epistemic conditions (2004: 12). The discursivity thesis is necessary for capturing transcendental idealism because it specifies the nature of these conditions. The discursivity thesis is essentially the claim that human cognition contains two irreducible components: thought and sensible intuition (2004: 12-13). This is expressed in Kant’s famous slogan: ‘Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind’ (A51/B76). Allison spells out this thesis as the idea that human cognition always requires its object

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<sup>419</sup> I return to this difficult issue in Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>420</sup> Presumably, Allais would agree with this being Kant’s point in calling appearances spatiotemporal and things in themselves non-spatiotemporal, for she writes: ‘there is no contradiction in saying that things have properties in a certain relation, which they do not have independently of these relations’ (2015: 73).

to be given to it from outside (although he thinks that this requirement also holds of divine cognition), but that this is insufficient for cognition. He notes in passing that Hume and Berkeley appear to take sensible intuition to be enough for cognition with their ‘imagistic’ accounts of thought (2004: 14). The key claim is that the sensible data that is organized by the understanding into cognition must *be presented in such a way that it can be ordered*.<sup>421</sup> Allison suggests that this ‘provides the basis for Kant’s idealism’ (*ibid*). Allison takes this to mean that the sensible intuiting of objects must already take place under a form contributed by the cognitive subject, namely, the form of space and time, and it is the idea that things must be given through these forms (as they appear, not as they are in themselves) that grounds everything else that is to follow in the Analytic. As I explain in Chapters 1 and 2, I agree with Allison’s argument that discursivity does, for Kant, lead to idealism through this notion of ‘original orderability’ (2004: 14). For Allison, this is just the notion of an a priori form of intuition, but positing an a priori form of intuition is not enough to solve the mystery of ‘original orderability’. Solving the mystery requires a detailed examination of Kant’s argument in the Transcendental Deduction, especially the controversial and extremely difficult notions of ‘figurative synthesis’ and ‘synthesis of apprehension’.<sup>422</sup>

## Summary

I have surveyed a variety of different interpretations of transcendental idealism. I argued that it is undeniable that Kant sometimes espouses a subjective or metaphysical idealism, akin to Berkeleyan phenomenalism, supplemented by unknowable ‘real’ things in themselves, as the traditional ‘two world’ view generally maintains. I also showed that this cannot be the whole story and that Kant does not *intend* transcendental idealism to be taken (in any straightforward sense) as a distinction between appearance and reality. On the contrary, we saw that there is overwhelming textual evidence to substantiate the claim that transcendental idealism is supposed to include a robust, genuine sense of (empirical) realism, notwithstanding the disconcerting lapses back into subjective idealism. To this end, I agreed with the ‘one world’ interpreters that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is best understood (both charitably and philosophically) as primarily concerning a single world of things

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<sup>421</sup> See A20/B34.

<sup>422</sup> See Chapter 1.

considered in two ways: as they appear and as they are in themselves. I agreed with the metaphysical interpretations that there is something that Kant thinks we are lacking in not knowing things in themselves, but I argued that this ‘something more’ should not be construed in terms of additional (intrinsic) properties or natures; it remains to be seen what it does consist in. I also argued that Allison’s alternative ‘deflationary’ reading is neither trivial nor guilty of a non-sequitur in avoiding triviality. Allison is right to think that there is something about discursivity that pulls Kant in the direction of transcendental idealism and he is also right that Kant is concerned with identifying epistemic conditions of the possibility of experience.

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