

THE COHERENCE OF KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

Studies in German Idealism

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VOLUME 4

THE COHERENCE OF KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

by

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To Ilona

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“But pure reason is a sphere so
separate and self-contained that
we cannot touch a part without
affecting all the rest...”
(*Prolegomena*, 4: 263)

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1. *Introduction*

Kant considered the doctrine of transcendental idealism an indispensable part of the theory of knowledge presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. My aim in this book is to present a new defense of the coherence and plausibility of Kant's transcendental idealism and its indispensability for his theory of knowledge. I will show that the main argument of the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic is defensible independently of some of Kant's claims which are said to threaten its coherence.

I have undertaken an inquiry into the coherence of Kant's transcendental idealism for the following reasons. A defense of the *coherence* of transcendental idealism is required by the existing state of Kantian scholarship. The claim that Kant's transcendental idealism is incoherent has appeared in various forms over the last two centuries. The most powerful and elaborate criticism of Kant's transcendental idealism is found in Part Four of Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense*. Several commentators have tried to reestablish its coherence. Although Allison and other commentators have contributed ideas that are valuable for an account of the coherence of Kant's transcendental idealism,¹ their arguments fall short as a response to the standard objection. Indeed, the claim that Kant's transcendental idealism is incoherent continues to be the view held by most thinkers.

I have limited my goal in this book to establishing the coherence of Kant's transcendental idealism due to two related reasons. Some of Kant's ideas seem to be incompatible with discoveries in the exact sciences.² In addition, even if one resolves these incompatibilities (which, according to some commentators, is indeed possible), one is left with the task of defending the epistemic view presented in the *Critique* in contrast to all other alternatives.³ In any case, the decision to

¹ See Allison (1983; 1996). Two interpreters that share Allison's approach to the standard objection are Bird (1962) and Prauss (1974).

² Kant's commitment to the absolute necessity of Euclidean geometry is a salient example.

³ The distinction between space and spatiality is particularly important in order to reconcile Kant's doctrine of transcendental idealism with the later discoveries in the exact sciences with which Kant was not familiar. Allison (1983: 98), claims that the argument for ideality can bypass the argument from geometry when he discusses

favor the Kantian standpoint can only be made if the coherence of Kant's position is established.

In order to assess the force of the standard objection to Kant's transcendental idealism, I will begin this chapter by outlining Strawson's argument.⁴ I will then present the main points of Allison's response to this objection and the difficulties involved in this type of defense. Finally, I will briefly outline my own response to the standard objection that will be defended in the present book.

2. *Strawson's Attack*

According to Strawson, transcendental idealism can be schematically presented as follows. There is a sphere of supersensible things which are neither spatial nor temporal. Things that belong to this sphere are related by means of a quasi-causal complex relation of affection — A-relation (Strawson, 1966: 236). Experience is the consequence of the complex A-relations that hold in the sphere of things in themselves. It consists of temporally ordered intuitions some of which have the character of a law-governed world of objects. All intuitions are potentially susceptible to self-ascription by a self-conscious subject. Transcendental idealism is in fact equivalent to phenomenistic idealism. The physical world does not exist beyond our perception (Strawson, 1966: 246). Knowledge that derives from A-relations is knowledge of appearances and not of things as they are in themselves since "the mode of intuition or awareness that we have is one in which the object affects our faculties" (Strawson, 1966: 253).⁵

Transcendental idealism allows for non-empirical knowledge. However, non-empirical knowledge must be the knowledge of appearances. This constraint is connected to Kant's principle of significance: "we can have no non-empirical knowledge...of anything which is not an object of possible sensible experience" (Strawson, 1966: 241).⁶ Yet, according

the relevance of the arguments from geometry to the transcendental ideality of space. Brittan (1978: 87-88) maintains that space and spatiality must be distinguished in order to protect the internal coherence of Kant's theory of Knowledge.

⁴ Prichard (1909) presents an argument that parallels Strawson's argument.

⁵ Throughout this book I will use double quotation marks when I quote whole sentences as well as parts of sentences. Single quotation marks will be used only when another writer whom I have quoted uses them.

⁶ It is important to note that Strawson's formulation of Kant's principle makes it possible to distinguish it from a verificationist principle. Kant's principle is not tantamount to the claim that the meaning of all terms must be based on an empirical method of verification. Kant's principle of significance allows for the possibility of

to Strawson (1966: 243), this principle is “either effectively independent of the doctrine of transcendental idealism or at most it depends, for Kant — in some cases of application — only on that relatively familiar phenomenistic idealism”.

Some of Strawson’s reasons for his claim that Kant’s transcendental idealism is an incoherent doctrine are the following. As Strawson notes, the claim that supersensible reality and the phenomenal sphere are identical seems to be part of what Kant regarded as the demands of morality. It must be also part of the transcendental distinction between appearances and reality. However, the claim that supersensible reality and the phenomenal sphere are identical renders incomprehensible the distinction it is supposed to serve. According to Strawson, any meaningful application of the contrast between appearances and reality presupposes two concepts: the concept of the identity of reference and the concept of the corrected view. A meaningful application of this distinction presupposes two standpoints from which an object is envisaged, namely, the mode in which it appears and what it really is. Judgments made in one of these standpoints are modifications of judgments made in the other standpoint. The identity of reference is established by the spatiotemporal position of the object judged (Strawson, 1966: 250-251). As Strawson adds, the most important example of the philosophical contrast between appearances and reality is the distinction between common sense and common observation and scientific causal explanations. In this context, appearances are regarded as causally dependent on the character of the things themselves and our physiological makeup. Though common sense judgments can tell us something about the causal mechanism involved, scientific judgments serve to correct common sense judgments.

According to Strawson, Kant’s distinction between unknowable non-sensible reality and appearances derives all its important features from the above type of contrast between appearances and reality. Yet, according to Strawson, this sense of the contrast is unavoidable but misleading. It is unavoidable, since there is no other sense in which the

the *non-empirical knowledge* of *empirically given* objects and objective states of affairs. This principle determines *the realm of possible objects* to which non-empirical concepts could be applied and not *their sense and significance*. As will be shown later, pure concepts have *transcendental significance* that is related to their (merely presumed) transcendental use. Transcendental use is illicit not in virtue of the transcendental significance of pure concepts but rather in virtue of the fact that objects to which they could be applied must be empirical objects that are given in the forms of intuition.

Kantian distinction can be understood. Yet, it is misleading, since Kant maintains that all the terms involved in the contrast between common sense and common observation and scientific causal explanations belong to the sphere of phenomena and are therefore inadequate for the purpose of positing the Kantian contrast. The doctrine of transcendental idealism must therefore address the following question: "How, given this rejection, is it possible to specify the standpoint of the corrected view and to specify it in such a way that identity of reference to objects as they appear and as they really are is intelligibly secured?" (Strawson, 1966: 254). As Strawson argues, in the context of Kant's theory, a significant application of the contrast between appearances and reality violates Kant's principle of significance. Kant's doctrine of transcendental idealism is hence incoherent.

In sum, the main steps in Strawson's argument are as follows:

1. Supersensible things exist.
2. Supersensible things are unknowable
3. One *knows* [a priori!] that experience is the outcome of complex A-relations that hold in the sphere of things in themselves. Supersensible things are the terms of the A-relations. They are the objects that appear in the appearances.
4. Therefore, one knows that supersensible unknowable things, which are distinct from their appearances, are real if one knows that the objects of experience are real.
5. Significant application of the contrast between appearances and reality must involve the concept of the identity of reference and the concept of a correcting judgment.
6. Kant's principle of significance determines the limits of our kind of possible knowledge.
7. Statement (4) cannot be known if one does not significantly apply the contrast between appearance and reality.
8. All relevant correcting judgments necessary for a significant application of the contrast between appearances and reality violate the Kantian principle of significance.
9. The application of the transcendental contrast between appearances and non-sensible real things is therefore incompatible with Kant's principle of significance and a theory committed to both is internally incoherent.

3. Allison's Response

As noted above, Allison addressed the claim that Kant's transcendental idealism is an incoherent doctrine in his book *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: an Interpretation and Defense*. My concern in the present section will be to present Allison's main contentions in order to see if they can serve as a basis for a response to Strawson's argument. Allison's first step (1983: 10) is to define the concept of an epistemic condition as one "that is necessary for the representation of an object or an objective state of affairs". There are two kinds of epistemic conditions, namely, sensible conditions that include the forms of intuition and intellectual conditions that include the pure concepts of the understanding. Allison then proceeds to claim that the standard objection fails to differentiate between the empirical sense in which Kant distinguishes between appearances and things in themselves and, on the other hand, a transcendental sense of this distinction. It also fails to note a corresponding distinction between two senses of the ideality / reality distinction. At the empirical level, the distinction between things in themselves and appearances is a distinction between mental entities (in the Cartesian sense) and physical objects. At the transcendental level, the distinction is between "two distinct ways in which things (empirical objects) can be "considered": either in relation to the subjective conditions of human sensibility (space and time), and thus as they "appear", or independently of these conditions and thus as they are "in themselves" (Allison, 1983: 8). In other words, a thing as it is in itself at the transcendental level is the empirical object (the thing in itself at the empirical level) considered in abstraction from the human, subjective sensible conditions.

"Ideality" in its most general sense signifies mind dependence. "Reality" signifies independence or "external to mind". At the empirical level, ideality "characterizes the private data of an individual mind" (Allison, 1983: 6). At the transcendental level — the level of philosophical reflection — ideality "is used to characterize the universal, necessary, and, therefore, a priori conditions of Human knowledge" (Allison, 1983: 7). In other words, transcendental idealism is the theory that emphasizes the mind dependence in the broad non-private, empirical sense of the objects of human knowledge by means of a philosophical reflection that reveals the a priori, necessary, and subjective conditions of human knowledge. Transcendental idealism is

therefore compatible with empirical realism and is distinct from phenomenalism.

Many points in Allison's interpretation are necessary for an argument for transcendental idealism. Nonetheless, Allison's account cannot be regarded an adequate response to Strawson's objection.

Let us first consider the ways in which Strawson's main steps are addressed and interpreted by Allison. Firstly, Allison endeavors to deontologize the transcendental distinction. According to him, the distinction to which Kant's transcendental idealism is committed is not a distinction between two types of properties allegedly instantiated by one and the same thing but rather between two modes of considering things. Nonetheless, it is clear that Allison is committed to (1) and (4). The object in itself in the transcendental sense is the empirical object considered in abstraction from the subjective sensible conditions. If empirical objects exist, non-sensible objects must be real. They are the objects that appear in the transcendental sense. Allison is also implicitly committed to (5). Things considered as they are in themselves are the same things that appear to us.⁷ The possibility of correcting judgments is presumably based on the claim that empirical objects must obey the epistemic *subjective* conditions. These conditions are indispensable for human knowledge and are presumably dispensable when empirical objects are transcendently considered by removing the subjective epistemic conditions.

As noted earlier, Strawson maintains that Kant is unable to significantly apply this distinction without violating his own principle of significance. Can Allison's interpretation serve as a response to this criticism? According to Allison, epistemic, sensible conditions are *subjective* conditions. Given the nature of the differences between the empirical and the transcendental distinction between "appearance" and

⁷ When Allison responds to his critics he addresses the problem involved in the claim that things considered as they are in themselves are *the same things* that appear to our senses. According to Kant, phenomenal objects are individuated by their spatiotemporal locations and things in themselves are not spatiotemporal. The claim to identity therefore seems to lack any conceptual grounds. Nevertheless, Allison maintains that the claim that things considered as they are in themselves are *the same things* that appear to our senses does not commit Kant to full or even partial isomorphism between the phenomenal and the noumenal. See Allison (1996: 12).

It should be noted, however, that even if there is no isomorphism between reality considered as it is in itself and empirical phenomena, there must be some sense in which things considered as they are in themselves are the same as the things that appear.

“reality” and the nature of the corresponding distinction between “in itself” in the empirical sense and “in itself” in the transcendental sense, a corresponding distinction between “subjective in the empirical sense” and “subjective in the transcendental sense” could be posited.⁸ “Subjective” in the empirical sense presumably means subjective in the private “Cartesian” sense, i.e., “ideality” in the empirical sense and “appearance” in the empirical sense, whereas “subjective” in the transcendental sense means the conditions of human knowledge that are a priori accessible to philosophical reflection, independently of knowledge of things as they are in themselves. If the claim that sensible conditions are both epistemic conditions in the empirical sense and subjective conditions in the transcendental sense were justifiable, this would constitute the basis for a response to Strawson’s objections. But a coherent interpretation must not violate the principle that determines the limits of possible knowledge presupposed by the transcendental distinction between “appearances” and “things in themselves”.

It is precisely at this point that Allison’s interpretation fails. In order to discard the claim that Kant’s theory of knowledge is inadvertently committed to skepticism, Allison rightfully contends that one must be careful not to confuse “appearance” in the transcendental sense with mere empirical semblance. The subjective epistemic conditions “do not determine how objects “seem” to us or “appear” in the empirical sense; rather, they express the universal necessary conditions in terms of which alone the human mind is capable of recognizing something as an object at all” (Allison, 1983: 9). If sensible necessary conditions are necessary for recognizing something as an object, one wonders how one can consider an empirical object as a thing in itself in the transcendental sense by abstracting it from sensible, epistemic subjective conditions of human knowledge. Things in themselves are the empirical objects “transcendentally considered”. The correcting judgment is presumably the judgment that asserts that the epistemic sensible conditions are *subjective* conditions. However, an epistemic sensible condition determines the limits of possible knowledge. It determines the kinds of *real* objects and real objective states of affairs

⁸ The distinction between a transcendental subject (transcendental self-consciousness) and an empirical subject as two distinct entities is an important part of Allison’s interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction and the Paralogism Chapters. See Allison (1983), Chapters 7 and 13. Allison’s interpretation of Kant’s concept of transcendental apperception is discussed in chapter 12.

that we *can represent*.⁹ Thus, the principle which determines the universal and necessary conditions for representing something as an object is both necessary for a meaningful application of the distinction between “appearance” and “unknowable things in themselves” at the transcendental level and is violated when the distinction is applied. The question is how one can characterize sensible conditions both as necessary and universal epistemic conditions as well as conditions that are merely subjective. How can one meaningfully claim that these conditions can be abstracted from objects when they are “transcendentally considered” as they are in themselves without renouncing the identity of reference? If one contends that one cannot really consider an object “as it is in itself” in abstraction from the sensible conditions that are necessary for recognizing or representing it, one can no longer adhere to (1), (4) and (5). But in this case there seems to be no sense left in which one may claim that sensible epistemic conditions are subjective conditions.

The other deficiency of Allison’s interpretation is the following. Allison characterizes sensible conditions as necessary and universal conditions. Their status as universal and necessary is, to be sure, an important part of Kant’s account of the synthetic a priori principles that are the conditions of the possibility of experience. These synthetic a priori judgments are necessary and universal judgments (B 3). But synthetic a priori judgments are necessary only with regard to objects of sensible intuition, whose sensible form are the epistemic sensible conditions. In what sense, however, are synthetic a priori principles known as necessary and as universal principles, if it is possible to consider empirical objects in abstraction from the sensible conditions? The problem that this supposition raises is not merely that synthetic a priori judgments might either be false, or neither true nor false, when things

⁹ It is indeed true that Kant’s doctrine of transcendental idealism must be committed to the claim that we are able to represent things in themselves as objects of the pure understanding. But the claim that (a) things in themselves are *the same things* represented as empirical objects *is not entailed* by the claim that (b) we are able to represent things in themselves as (merely logical) objects of the pure understanding by means of a concept of a thing in itself. The former claim necessarily entails that if empirical objects are real, things in themselves are real. It therefore entails that the concept of the pure understanding that represents noumena is instantiated by real objects independently of whether they are represented by means of sensible epistemic conditions. This indeed seems to be inadvertently implied by Allison’s position. However, it can be shown that (b) does not entail (a) if one recognizes the possibility that the concept of the noumenon can be empty even if empirical objects are real.

are considered as they are in themselves (in the transcendental sense). According to Allison, one can apply the transcendental contrast between appearance and reality to empirical objects. One therefore *knows* that things in themselves in the transcendental sense are real if empirical objects are real. Consequently, one *knows* that the necessary and universal judgments one is disposed to make about empirical objects are necessary and universal when these objects are considered as spatiotemporal and either false, or neither true nor false, when the *same objects* are considered in a different way. Hence, if one can consider the empirical objects in two distinct ways, one must conclude that the synthetic a priori principles are *known* to be necessary and are *known* to be not necessary. This flawed kind of modality is what Kant calls subjective necessity. The inconsistency involved in the notion of subjective necessity is involved in a theory committed to (1)-(5) and to the claim that Allison's epistemic conditions are conditions for knowledge of objects.

In order to avoid these objections, important revisions must be made in the standard defense of transcendental idealism. Such a defense must provide a rejoinder to Strawson's objection and to account for the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge without making the inconsistent claims that are related to the concept of subjective necessity. In the following sections, I will outline the defense of transcendental idealism presented in this book.

4. *The Existence of Noumena and the Ideality of Space and Time*

Strawson and Allison both claim that commitment to the existence of things in themselves is an inherent part of Kant's transcendental idealism. This supposition is at least partly corroborated in Kant's texts. There are, however, other passages that are inconsistent with this supposition. For example, in the preface to the second edition, Kant states that an empirical object "should be taken in a **twofold meaning**, namely as appearance or as thing in itself" (B xxvii). In the same context, Kant maintains that it would be absurd to characterize an empirical object as an appearance that did not have anything appearing in it. In addition, in the *Prolegomena*, when Kant distinguishes his critical theory from idealism, he makes the following claims:

Idealism consists in the assertion that there are none but thinking beings, all other things which we think are perceived in intuition, being nothing but representations in the thinking

being, to which no object external to them in fact corresponds. I, on the contrary, say that things as objects of our senses existing outside us are given, but we know nothing of what they may be in themselves, knowing only their appearances, that is, the representations which they cause in us by affecting our senses. (4: 288-289)

Kant's position in the *Prolegomena* is that commitment to the actual existence of things in themselves constitutes the feature of transcendental idealism that distinguishes this position from idealism. These things are the external things that are given to our senses and they are known only as they appear. But a very different position is stated in the chapter "On the amphiboly of concepts of reflection:"

The understanding accordingly bounds sensibility without thereby expanding its own field, and in warning sensibility not to presume to reach for things in themselves but solely for appearances it thinks of an object in itself, but only as a transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance), 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); it therefore remains completely unknown whether such an object is to be encountered within or without us, whether it would be canceled out along with sensibility or whether it would remain even if we took sensibility away. If we want to call this object a noumenon because the representation of it is nothing sensible, we are free to do so. But since we cannot apply any of our concepts of the understanding to it, this representation still remains empty for us, and serves for nothing but to designate the boundaries of our sensible cognition and leave open a space that we can fill up neither through possible experience nor through the pure understanding. (A 288-289/B 344-345)

According to the above passage, it is not possible *to know* whether anything would remain, if we took sensibility away. In other words, the existence of noumena is not entailed by the fact that things are given to our senses.

It therefore appears that Kant was divided regarding the question of whether the actual existence of things in themselves should be part of his transcendental theory of experience. One may attempt to settle this inconsistency by presenting a fourfold distinction between "thing in it

self”, “noumenon”, “transcendental object” and “sensible object”. Although these terms have distinct meanings in Kant’s writings, the inconsistency cannot be resolved merely on the basis of this distinction. Another possibility is to attribute the conflicting positions to the differences between the first and the second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Yet, the three examples discussed above clarify why it is difficult if not impossible to solve this problem in this manner.

Some of the contexts in which the existence of things in themselves is claimed to be part of transcendental idealism are contexts in which Kant refers to the possibility of freedom. Admission of the existence of noumena seems to be what underlies the possibility of freedom. Whether or not the possibility of freedom presupposes the identity of noumena and human empirical subjects is a question that indeed merits attention. Yet, since my concern here is primarily with Kant’s metaphysics and epistemology, I will not pursue an answer to this question. Strawson’s argument persuasively points out the undesired philosophical results of the claim that the existence of noumena is entailed by the existence of empirical objects. Nevertheless, as I will show in the Second Part of this book, the fact that Kant was divided on this issue does not indicate an inconsistency in his doctrine of transcendental idealism. His main arguments for transcendental idealism can be freed from the supposition that empirical knowledge of empirical objects entails the existence of noumena. This is possible, however, only if one is willing to acknowledge the essential incompleteness of our kind of knowledge.

In agreement with Allison, I maintain that there are two distinct ways in which Kant distinguishes between appearance and reality. At the empirical level, there is a distinction between empirical substances studied by the physical sciences and appearances, which are their particular modes of givenness. In Kant’s theory, as several commentators have noted, intuitions differ from sensations.¹⁰ Intuitions are singular and immediate representations.¹¹ As I note in Chapter 6 below, the term

¹⁰ Bird (1962: 6) convincingly makes the claim that the term “sensation” does not have the same meaning as “appearance”. This distinction is discussed in Chapter 6.

¹¹ In the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *lectures on Logic*, Kant characterizes “intuition” as a singular and immediate representation of an object. The meaning of “immediacy” and its relation to “sensibility” is a subject of ongoing exegetical controversy. However, all the parties involved agree that “intuition” (*Anschauung*) does not have the same meaning as “sensation” (*Empfindung*). See Parsons (1969), Hintikka (1969; 1972), Thompson (1972) and Howell (1973). I will discuss this issue in Chapter 6.

“intuition” denotes the epistemic *act* through which real objects are immediately given. Intellectual intuition and sensible intuition are both subtypes of this generic concept of intuition. Sensible intuitions are epistemic acts in which empirical objects are immediately given to the mind by means of singular representations. Appearances are the immediate *undetermined* objects of sensible intuitions. They are undetermined if they are considered merely as objects *given* in intuition, in abstraction from the determinations of the understanding. The main question discussed by Kant in the *Transcendental Analytic* is whether undetermined objects of sensible intuitions must be determined by a priori concepts.

A central feature of Kant’s concept of an intuition is that the singular representation that is part of a sensible intuition must involve the a priori representations of space and time. The claim that spatiotemporal representations are a priori representations at least means that relations between objects that occupy space and time do not constitute space and time. Other objects could have occupied the same spatiotemporal position occupied by the given objects. The main features of space and time explain why spatiotemporal intuitions are sufficient for distinguishing an empirical object from another object.¹² Space and time are our only forms of intuition.¹³

An argument for the coherence of transcendental idealism must avoid making any commitment to the objective reality of noumena. The claim that space and time are indispensable for us for representing real objects underlies Kant’s principle of significance. The ideality of space and time, the fact that they are not features of things in themselves, is his main reason for claiming that we do not possess knowledge of objects as they are in themselves.¹⁴ However, there are two difficulties related to the ideality of space and time. The first of these

¹² Warren (1998) convincingly argues that Kant’s arguments for the apriority of space do not employ the supposition that space is necessary for individuation. However, Warren’s claim is compatible with the claim made in the “Amphiboly”, namely, that space and time are the only representations we actually possess that are sufficient for distinguishing one object from another.

¹³ The claim that individuation is not possible by other means is based also on Kant’s claim that for finite humans there are no *infima species* — singular concepts of “really possible” objects — but only singular uses of concepts.

¹⁴ As Ameriks notes, Kant’s specific reasons for transcendental idealism are “the characteristic features of a priority and spatio-temporality and the apparent linkage between the two” (2003: 99). As Ameriks points out, many interpretations and reconstructions of Kant’s Copernican revolution simply bypass the specific nature of Kant’s position.

is the problem known in the secondary literature as the problem of the neglected alternative.¹⁵ The second difficulty concerns the relation between apriority and subjectivity. According to the received interpretation, the main premise of the argument for the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves and therefore for the transcendental ideality of space and time is the *subjectivity* of space and time. The claim that space and time are subjective is allegedly entailed by the claim that they are a priori representations. As some scholars have noted, it is not clear why an entity that possesses the features that establish the apriority of space and time must be an ideal entity in the transcendental sense. The reasons that establish the apriority of space seem to be compatible with the possibility that space is a feature of objects as they are in themselves.

As I will show in Chapters 8 and 9, Kant's "missing" argument for the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves can be reconstructed from claims scattered in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and other relevant writings. The initial premises of this argument are the claim that space and time are a priori and singular, Kant's principle of significance and the features of the *concept* of a thing in itself. The proof invokes a distinction between individuating features of objects and the notion of an individual essence. Individuating features suffice to distinguish one object from another. The characteristics that constitute the identity of a thing in itself determine the individual essence of an individual object "in itself". The relations that an object has to other objects are not a part of its individual essence. A thing in itself must be considered as the individual that it is independently of any possible relation it has vis-à-vis other individuals.¹⁶ If one has knowledge of the individual essence of an object, one can individuate objects. However, it follows from Kant's premises that spatiotemporal positions — the only features of empirical objects that we possess that are sufficient of individuation — cannot be part of the individual essence of anything.¹⁷ Since space

¹⁵ On the history of the problem of the neglected alternative see Allison (1983: 347). See also Parsons (1992).

¹⁶ This does not mean that an object cannot participate in relations. It merely means that relations do not determine the identities of objects.

¹⁷ The basic idea here is somewhat related to Langton's main thesis. According to Langton (1998), Kant's claim that we do not know anything of things as they are in themselves should be interpreted as meaning that we possess no knowledge of the inner properties of things. All we know are the relational properties of things. Yet, there are two important differences between my position and Langton's position. Langton believes that things in themselves must exist, if appearances are given. She

and time underlie all possible empirical properties that could be ascribed to empirical objects, namely, causal properties and sensible properties, no possible empirical property could be a property of a thing in itself. Therefore, empirical objects are not known as things in themselves.

Noumena are introduced to Kant's argument by means of the generic, pre-given *concept of pure reason*.¹⁸ The ideal of pure reason is the archetype of all concepts of things in themselves. The object related to the ideal is merely an *intentional* object. But since neither the ideal nor any derivative concept of a thing in itself could be known to be an object of our kind of intuition, these concepts are empty. The dualism presupposed by the transcendental reflection that determines that we cannot have knowledge of things as they are in themselves is, therefore, one of *two concepts of objects*. An object of experience is "that in the concept of which a manifold of a given intuition is united" (B 137). The concept of such an object necessarily involves sensible intuitions. It is a concept of an object that is applicable to what is given to us. The concept of pure reason of a thoroughly determined object in itself (A576/B 604) suffices for the purpose of portraying all empirical objects as not being things in themselves.

The claim that an empirical object must be identical to some thing or things in themselves is, therefore, not part of Kant's theory. Moreover, as will be shown in Chapter 9, the first edition contains an argument that undermines the claim that the objective reality of empirical objects entails the objective reality of noumena. As established by this argument, there can be no rational grounds for claiming that the objective reality of noumena is established by means of the mere fact that one has empirical intuitions of empirical objects.

The argument outlined above therefore constitutes the beginning of a response to the standard objection. The characterization of empirical objects as appearances is based on a transcendental reflection that compares the general feature of knowable empirical objects and the gen-

also maintains that Kant's unknowability thesis is not based on the transcendental ideality of space and time but rather on the fact that all our knowledge must involve receptivity.

¹⁸ A similar claim is made by Rescher (2000), Chapters 1 and 2. However, Rescher does not connect this claim to an account of the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves.

eral features of things in themselves that are known by means of a concept of pure reason. The required correcting judgment compatible with the principle of significance is made on the basis of transcendental reflection.

5. *A Priori Knowledge and Skepticism*

Knowledge of the existence of noumena is not merely incompatible with Kant's principle of significance but also with synthetic a priori knowledge. For Kant, a priori judgments are judgments in which one is certain of the necessity of the proposition asserted. The same kind of apriority characterizes analytic and synthetic a priori judgments. A synthetic a priori judgment is a non-contradictory, necessary judgment.

As I will show in Chapter 2, Kant is committed to a distinction between the apriority of non-judgmental representations and the apriority of judgments. According to Kant, the *transcendental significance* of pure concepts cannot be specified by means of the synthetic a priori judgments that we can make, that is, by means of judgments that must involve the pure forms of intuitions. The transcendental significance of pure concepts is the reason why pure concepts seem to allow a *transcendental use*. But transcendental use is illicit. Pure concepts permit only empirical use.

Some commentators interpret the distinction between "logical possibility" and "real possibility" as a distinction between truth in all possible worlds and truth in possible worlds of experience. According to this approach, the role of a priori intuitions in synthetic judgments is to provide models for synthetic a priori judgments.¹⁹ In accordance with Friedman's (1992) criticism of this line of interpretation, I will show that intuitions serve a substantial role in determining the content of synthetic a priori judgments. No synthetic a priori judgment can be specified without intuitions. The realm of knowable possible states of affairs is determined by the synthetic a priori judgments we can make. This important feature of Kant's theory is represented by the claim that although the categories "extend further than sensible intuition... they do not thereby determine a greater sphere of objects" (A 254/B 309).

As I will show in Chapters 3 and 4, this account of synthetic a priori

¹⁹ This view is that of Brittan, (1978), Chapters 1-3 and Philip Kitcher (1975).

judgments is consistent with the relevance and importance of skepticism with regard to the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. I will show that Kant interprets Hume's skeptical problem by means of his critical notions and transforms it into a problem internal to his critical theory. The skeptical problem pertains to our knowledge that the categories are objectively valid. Since the categories are pure concepts of the understanding, the knowledge that they are objectively valid must be a priori knowledge that they are necessarily applicable to objects given in intuition. The applicability of the categories to objects of sensible intuitions is necessary in order to establish them as a priori (necessary) concepts.²⁰

Many commentators are inclined to represent the problem of objective validity as closely related to the Cartesian problem that concerns knowledge of the external world. As others have shown, this view is mistaken.²¹ The Cartesian problem concerns "the objective reality of outer sense". This problem is addressed in the Refutation of Idealism.²² As I will show in Chapter 3, the problem to be overcome by an argument that aspires to establish the objective validity of the categories is that an objective experience of world of objects is really possible even if the categories do not apply to objects of experience. The reality of inner *and* outer sense is presupposed by this problem. The fact that the individual objects given in intuition are individually given might suggest that the "objectivity" of the objects does not require the applicability of pure concepts. In order to demonstrate the necessary applicability of the categories, one must rule out this concept of objective experience.

6. *Transcendental Synthesis*

The key to Kant's solution of the problem of objective validity is the concept of transcendental synthesis. In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant distinguishes between two species of transcendental syntheses: intellectual synthesis and figurative synthesis. An account of both is required for the two-step argument presented in the deduction. In general, figurative synthesis is the act in which pure concepts deter-

²⁰ There is no room in Kant's theory for pure thought objects in the "weighty" sense. The only knowable real objects are objects given in sensible intuition.

²¹ See Ameriks, (1978); (2003) and Engstrom (1994).

²² This is how Kant depicts the problem dealt with in the "refutation of idealism" in the long footnote that he adds to the preface to the second edition (B xxxix).

mine pure intuitions. The arguments in the Transcendental Deduction merely establish the possibility of such a synthesis. One reason for the obscurity of Kant's account is that he attempts to establish the a priori objective validity of the categories with regard to discursive thought in general, independently of any particular feature of our forms of intuition. Regardless of whether or not such an undertaking is tenable, the meaning and importance of transcendental synthesis is more easily grasped where our forms of intuition are concerned.

As I will demonstrate in the Third Part of this book, the arguments in the Transcendental Analytic are based on a distinction between content and exhibition. The content of each a priori representation involved in empirical knowledge — “I think”, time, space, and the categories — does not involve the other a priori representations. None of these representations can be reduced to any of the other. The content independence of each representation is manifested by the fact that the propositional content of judgments which involve only features that belong to one of the transcendental representations — for example, space — can be specified without involving the other representations. The propositional content of judgments that ascribe spatial properties and relations to spatial objects do not involve any temporal predicate, the thinking “I” or the categories. Similarly, judgments about temporal succession among representations do not involve spatial representations, the characterization of temporal order among appearances does not involve causal statements and causal relations are not reducible to temporal orders among events.²³ Though the content of each representation can be detached from its condition of exhibition, the possibility of being exhibited is an essential feature of the representations involved in synthetic a priori knowledge. Each of these representations cannot *be exhibited* to the mind *through itself*. As Kant's arguments in the analytic endeavor to demonstrate, objects can exhibit an a priori representation that is part of the content of synthetic a priori knowledge only if it is presupposed that all the other representations are exhibited. Since apprehension is always successive, spatial real objects cannot be represented without temporal constructions. The categories

²³ As Melnick (1973: 22-30) maintains, the irreducibility of spatiotemporal “intuitive” givenness of objects to categorical determination of objects is compatible both with the claim that real relations of objects such as causality and mutual interaction can themselves only be understood in terms of temporal relations and with the claim that knowledge of temporal determination requires the general applicability of the categories to objects of intuition.

require temporal schemata in order to be exhibited by objects. Temporal sequences of events are possible only if the objects represented are enduring and causally determined spatial objects. All a priori elements involved in synthetic a priori knowledge can be exhibited only if they presuppose that a transcendental “I think” can accompany them. A transcendental reflective self-conscious “I think” is possible only if the “I think” involves awareness of the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions.

In other words, there is a network of dependencies between the elements of synthetic a priori knowledge. Each element involved in synthetic a priori knowledge is a representation of objects. Yet, where our kind of knowledge is concerned, all the transcendental representations have *the same domain of objects*, namely, the domain of empirical objects. The fact that the pure category is distinct from the schematized category does not entail that the pure categories have a “wider sphere of objects” (A 254/B 309). Neither does the content independence of space and time entail the “real possibility” of spatial non-temporal objects or temporal, non-spatial objects. The meaning of “I” cannot be fully specified by means of features of spatial and temporal object, yet this does not entail that one is allowed to know that “I” stands for non-spatiotemporal objects. Although a transcendental representation can be grasped a priori, it cannot be experienced *through* itself; it can be experienced only if it is exhibited in empirical objects. Kant’s arguments in the Transcendental Analytic aspire to demonstrate that empirical objects must exhibit all the transcendental representations and that they can exhibit a transcendental representation only if all other transcendental representations are exhibited. The concept of an empirical object is the locus of the synthetic unity of the various transcendental representations. Transcendental synthesis — the necessary synthetic unity of the transcendental representations — determines the concept of an object of experience.

7. *Transcendental Synthesis and the Transcendental “I”*

How does Kant establish transcendental synthesis? Kant’s transcendental “I” is supposed to be the Archimedean point of the proof of the objective validity of the categories. The fact that “I think” must be able to accompany all “my” representations (concepts *and* intuitions) seems to be an apparent reason for considering the “I think” as a unifying

representation. However, how can self-consciousness of identity of an individual subject be relevant to an argument that aspires to establish the *objective validity of the categories*? The conceptual links between “self-consciousness”, self-ascription”, “single consciousness”, and “objective judgment” might explain the relations between self-consciousness and objectivity.²⁴ But this account leaves unexplained the alleged role of “I think” in establishing the objective validity of the *categories*.

A beginning of a solution to this difficulty could be found in the claim the pure “I” stands for “something in general=x”.²⁵ Another closely related view consists in the claim that transcendental apperception must be interpreted in impersonal terms.²⁶ Nevertheless, although this line of interpretation does provide some reasons for conceiving of how “I think” could be part of an account of the objective validity of the categories, one must note that even if “I think” involves an impersonal layer, impersonality could not be equivalent to the generality of a *concept* of a thinking thing. The contrary supposition is refuted by Kant’s persistent use of personal pronouns and possessives whenever he refers to transcendental apperception. The use of personal pronouns indicates that the impersonal feature of transcendental apperception is necessarily linked to the consciousness of reflective *individuals*. The question which must be addressed concerns the nature of this conceptual link.

The key to understanding the role of “I think” in transcendental synthesis is to see why reflective self-awareness must involve *both* personal and impersonal aspects. The formidable difficulty of grasping the unity of both is due to the fact that the two kinds of representations that we possess — singular representations and general representation — are inapt for an account of what genuine uses of “I think” express. “I think” is neither an intuition nor a concept. Indeed, I will show in Chapter 12 that “I think” is inherently ambiguous in Kant’s theory. “I think” must express both an *empirical proposition* and a pure representation of the self. The empirical proposition “I think” indicates empirically certain knowledge of *self-existence*. Given Kant’s principle of significance, “I” in the empirical proposition “I think” must refer to an *empirical* complex object. This does not rule out the phenomenological fact that self-consciousness must also involve a pure represen-

²⁴ See for example Strawson (1966) Part Two II/7.

²⁵ See for example Allison (1983: 282).

²⁶ This is Keller’s main claim in his book *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness* (1998).

tation of the self as the simple and self-identical subject of a manifold of intuitions.

In other words, Kant's concept of the subject contains two heterogeneous parts. One aspect of his concept of the subject can satisfy the features of simplicity and self-identity but not that of existence and objectivity. The entity that can satisfy the claim to self-existence is an empirical complex object that cannot satisfy the simplicity and self-identity that are part of "I think". Nevertheless, the pure representation of the self that underlies all acts of thinking must be manifested in the reflective temporal consciousness of particular individuals. Although both aspects are logically distinct, they are necessarily connected. Empirical knowledge of self-existence must be part of reflective self-consciousness.

As I will show, the fact that "I think" is inherently ambiguous can be established if one is willing to grant all the features that Kant ascribes to self-consciousness and sensible intuitions. The first relevant feature is that self-awareness of oneself as the subject of a manifold of intuitions must involve an a priori representation of oneself as a simple and self-identical subject. The second feature is the non-intuitive character of reflective self-awareness. Immediate awareness that a representation is "my" representation is not founded on *self-intuition*. The third feature is the conceptual link between self-awareness, self-ascription and the notion of the *synthetic unity* of a manifold of intuitions in a single consciousness.²⁷ The fourth feature is that objects immediately given in intuitions do not necessarily "owe their identity as particulars to the identity of the persons whose states or experiences they are" (Strawson 1959: 97).²⁸

²⁷ The conceptual link between these notions is pointed out by Strawson, (1966: 98-99).

²⁸ Strawson implicitly assumes the quoted claim also in *The Bounds of Sense*. Kant's interpreters often overlooked the fact that, in Kant's theory, an immediate *object* of intuition is not necessarily a state of some individual particular subject. As I will show in Chapter 13, all versions of the contrary claim are committed to the supposition that the personal possessive term "mine" indicates a *unique relation*. They assume that the positing of one and only one particular, self-identical individual *object* could have explained the fact that some past and present experiences are *jointly* unified in a single consciousness accompanied by an "I think". According to this supposition, the relation "co-consciousness" is equivalent to the relation of "co-personality" or to the relation of "co-substantiality". Kant's arguments in the Paralogism undermine this supposition.

My suggestion is that the features responsible for the inherent ambiguity of “I think” reflect the two heterogeneous sides of Kant’s concept of the subject, namely, the fact that it is both an intuiting receptive subject and a spontaneous thinking subject. In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant maintained that awareness of the *synthetic* unity of the manifold of intuitions is a condition for *reflective consciousness of identity* (B 133-34). As some commentators have noted, the mere fact that self-consciousness presupposes the capacity to make judgments is insufficient for establishing the claim that the required judgments must employ pure concepts.²⁹ As I will show in Chapter 11, this objection does indeed reveal a gap in Kant’s argument in the Transcendental Deduction. However, this gap can be addressed if the proof of the objective validity of categories is directed at objects of spatiotemporal intuitions.

What does it mean to conceive of oneself as an intuiting subject? The standard objection to Kant’s transcendental idealism assumes that the required relations involved in sensible intuitions are Strawson’s A-relations. Yet, this claim is clearly incompatible with Kant’s conclusion in the Paralogisms. It entails that reflective awareness of self-identity involves knowledge that the subject is an individual noumenon distinct from other individual noumena. Nevertheless, immediate awareness of an object of an intuition entails empirical knowledge of self-existence. It therefore involves implicit *objective* judgments that are made about the *self* represented as an *object*. The question is whether the required objective judgments are based on the supposition that the subject is *given* to herself as a self-identical object, or whether the judgments that spell out the conditions presupposed by the objective spatiotemporal determination of *all* objects (including objects that are distinct from the empirical subject), and therefore conditions that are presupposed by the objective spatiotemporal determination of a *manifold of intuitions in one consciousness*, make possible the *self-positing* of the empirical subject as an individual spatiotemporal complex object.

Kant argues for the second possibility. The referent of “I” is not merely *given* as a self-identical object in first-person states of awareness. The analytic unity of consciousness must be linked to the synthetic unity. As will be shown in Chapters 13 and 14, the synthetic unity of a manifold of intuitions in a single consciousness must involve a priori judgments that make possible the *objective* spatiotemporal deter-

²⁹ For example, see Guyer (1987), Chapter 5.

mination of *all* empirical objects. These determinations are not merely given in intuition. They are based on our capacity *to think and make judgments*; that is, they are necessarily related to “I think”. The empirical knowledge of self-existence that is necessarily part of “I think” means that “I think” must involve an act of positing oneself a *priori* as an empirical spatiotemporal object *within the empirical world*. The general capacity to make judgments that determine the synthetic connection between the intuitions in one consciousness therefore precedes the empirical knowledge that one is an empirical object.

Kant does not explicitly emphasize the link between apperception and knowledge that one exists as a spatiotemporal object in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He explicitly establishes this conceptual link in the *Opus postumum*:

Consciousness of itself (apperceptio) is an act through which the subject makes itself in general into an object. It is not yet a perception (apprehensio simplex), that is, not a sensible representation, for which it is required that the subject is affected by some object and that intuition becomes empirical; it is, rather, pure intuition, which under the designation of space and time, contain merely the formal element of composition (coordinatio et subordinatio) of the manifold of intuition, and which, thereby [contain] an a priori principle of the synthetic knowledge of the manifold — which, for this reason, represents the object in appearance. (22: 413)

Apperception is an act of positing oneself as an object.

“I am” is the logical act which precedes all representation of the object; it is a verbum by which I posit myself. I exist in space and time and thoroughly determine my existence in space and time (*omnimoda determinatio est existentia*) as appearance according to the formal conditions for the connection of the manifold of intuition. (22: 85)

The conceptual link between pure apperception and empirical knowledge of self-existence is manifested by the kind of a priori judgments that determine the *synthetic* unity of apperception. A priori knowledge that the categories are applicable to all intuitions must be presupposed by the objective temporal order of intuitions. This condition can be satisfied only if the subject can posit herself as an object among others within a broad conception of objectivity that is determined by the required synthetic a priori judgments. Positing oneself as an object of

intuition cannot merely be assumed. The heterogeneity of the pure “I think” and the nature of the self-positing object of intuition require a transcendental account that establish their synthetic unity.

In other words, any claim to self-existence involved in self-consciousness must be based on what one is allowed to know. One is not allowed to claim that one *knows* that one exists as a noumenal substance. Self-knowledge of existence as an individual that is linked to “I think” must naturally be knowledge that one exists as a *determined individual* in time. Mere givenness in time does not suffice for such knowledge. Self-knowledge of existence as a determined individual must therefore be related to the conditions of the possibility of knowledge of how one is determined in time. These conditions are the schematized categories that determine how one must be related and connected to other individual objects if one is to exist in the *same* time as these.

The inherent ambiguity of “I think” is therefore the key to understanding why self-consciousness is the transcendental basis for explaining the applicability of the categories to objects of intuitions that are given in the forms of intuition. Transcendental apperception cannot be separated from the consciousness of individual thinking beings. For this reason, it must be linked to transcendental synthesis. “I exist” is an empirical assertion. Empirical knowledge of self-existence is possible only if “I” exists as a spatiotemporal object. The individual subject is empirically certain that she exists. Yet, she cannot know that she is an object independently of her capacity to make synthetic a priori judgments that determine the synthetic unity of her representations. In order for that knowledge to be possible, she must know the a priori conditions that make the temporal determination of her sensible intuition possible. Reflective awareness of the conditions that must be satisfied by all possible objects of intuition underlies the necessary unity of the two aspects of the subject of experience. As I hope to show in the following chapters, the synthetic a priori principles are both the conditions that determine the concept of an object and the conditions that determine the possibility of a relation to an object.

Part One

A priori Knowledge

Chapter 2

KANT'S CONCEPT OF THE A PRIORI

1. *Introduction*

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant aims to establish the grounds for the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. What does the term “a priori” mean in Kant’s writings? How is skepticism about a synthetic a priori knowledge relevant to the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge? What is the nature of the argument that establishes a “Copernican revolution” in epistemology? Raising these questions might seem odd to scholars familiar with Kantian exegesis who might ask if there is a need to address them again. There are many often incompatible interpretations and reconstructions of what Kant means by the term “a priori”, some of which will be discussed in the present chapter. There are not very many interpretations of the argument that proceeds from apriority to a Copernican revolution in epistemology. The relevance of skepticism is rarely a subject of inquiry. Nevertheless, the above questions cannot be separated from one another. The meaning of the term “a priori” in Kant’s writings determines the sense in which skepticism is relevant to the possibility of a priori knowledge. The fact that skepticism is indeed relevant to the possibility of a priori knowledge poses constraints that must be met by any account of this concept. The relevance of skepticism determines the nature of the argument that proceeds from apriority to a Copernican revolution.

In the First Part of this book I defend two claims, the first of which is that the complex relations between the answers to the above questions are not apparent if one does not heed the fact that Kant’s position incorporates two different concepts of apriority. One concept, “a priori_c”, originates from thinking about concepts and intuitions in abstraction from their role in a priori judgments. The second concept, “a priori_j”, is based on the concept of judgment. Indeed, Kant’s texts resist a clear-cut distinction between these concepts. They are, nevertheless, distinct concepts.

The second claim is that although “a priori_j” is the concept relevant to a priori knowledge, these two concepts are equally important for establishing the doctrine of transcendental idealism.

Why was Kant committed to this concept of a priori knowledge when it seems to have less problematic alternatives? I would like to suggest

that there are two basic reasons that explain this choice which underlies Kant's epistemic theory as a whole. The first is the supposition that knowledge of the existence of an object must be based on a sensible intuition of an object. As Kant observes, if one accepts this supposition, one is bound to acknowledge that not all the "problematic" judgments that one can make satisfy this constraint. In other words, the distinction between "real possibility" and "mere possibility" is required by the nature of the entities involved in synthetic a priori knowledge which are "I think", time, space, and the categories. Although the architectural order of the *Critique of Pure Reason* seems to suggest the opposite, Kant did not form his concept of the a priori merely by means of an analysis of the abstract concept of judgment which he then applied to science and knowledge. Rather, as I hope to establish in the following chapters, it was rather his awareness of the intricate relations between the elements of synthetic a priori knowledge that were the source of Kant's concept of the a priori.

In interpreting the two concepts of apriority, I will mainly address four features of a priori knowledge: (a) independence of experience, (b) subjectivity, (c) emptiness, and (d) necessity and strict universality. The present chapter uncovers the main features of apriority_j and apriority_c, the differences between them and the importance of this distinction for the doctrine of transcendental idealism. In Chapters 3 and 4, I will examine the relevance of skepticism about a priori knowledge to the possibility of such knowledge.

2. *Independence of Experience*

Within Kant's writings, the term "a priori" is attributed to concepts, intuitions, judgments, synthesis, and faculties. In the introduction to the first *Critique*, Kant presents the main feature of the a priori. A priori knowledge is "knowledge that is independent of experience" (A 1/B 2). "Independence of experience" seems to be the characteristic common to all the entities classified as a priori. Nevertheless, this allegedly common feature indicates more than one concept. The term "independence of experience" has different meanings when applied to concepts, intuitions or judgments. Kant's designation of independence of experience as a characteristic common to all entities classified as a priori veils this ambiguity.

To begin with, the term "a priori" in the above quotation is used as

an attribute of knowledge. Given that knowledge is based on judgment, it is natural to regard "judgment" as the basic entity classified as a priori. In this case, independence of experience indicates a kind of *justification*.¹ A proposition is known a priori if it is not based on empirical *justification*. Does "independence of experience" mean justified independently of experience? If so, in what sense are concepts and intuitions a priori? One answer is that concepts and intuitions are a priori if they can serve as the basis for a priori judgments. Indeed, according to Kant, the intuition of space is a subjective representation "from which we can derive a priori synthetic propositions.." (B 44). Intuitions are a priori because a priori judgments can be based on them. This is stated even more clearly where concepts are concerned. Concepts are predicates of possible judgments (A 68/B 93).

In the above account, however, it seems that there are two distinct routes of logical precedence between a priori concepts, a priori intuitions and a priori judgments. Given that the apriority of concepts and of intuition should be explicated in terms of their ability to serve as a basis for a priori judgments, "justified independently of experience" is only indirectly ascribed to concepts and intuitions. Concepts are "justified" independently of experience only if they are used in judgments justified independently of experience; that is, they presuppose these judgments. But, a priori judgments are allegedly based on a priori concepts and intuitions. If so, it seems that concepts and intuitions are a priori independently of their role in a priori judgments. This is clearly manifested by a priori intuitions. Their apriority cannot be explicated merely by noting their role in a priori judgments.

The fact that there are two routes of logical precedence does not suffice to establish the existence of two distinct notions of apriority. It might be argued that an adequate concept of apriority must bind together the apriority of representations that are parts of a whole judgment and the apriority of judgments. However, how can the relations between the apriority of concepts and the apriority of judgments be characterized in more precise terms? A promising answer is to maintain that the content of a priori concepts is spelled out by means of an a priori judgment.² If this suggestion is endorsed, it follows that for every a priori concept there are some a priori judgments that spell out its content. These judgments must at least explain why the role of a priori

¹ This was Frege's view in *The foundations of Arithmetic*, (1980: 3).

² See Parsons (1992: 63).

concepts within a priori judgments determines the *a priori significance* of a priori concepts. As we shall see below, the relation between the apriority of concepts and the apriority of judgments is incompatible with this supposed correlation between concepts and judgments. In order to examine why this is the case, I will first consider the apriority of judgments.

3. *The Apriority of Judgments*

How is “justified independently of experience”, related to “necessity” and “strict universality”? Recent interpretations provide two incompatible answers to this question. The first answer stresses the role of the concept of a priori warrant in the interpretation of the concept of a priori knowledge. Yet, according to this answer, a priori warrant does not involve “necessity” and “strict universality”. The second answer emphasizes the modal features of a priori judgments, but is unable to account for justifiability independently of experience. My claim will be that a priori judgments are justified independently of experience precisely *because* they are judgments in which one is conscious of the necessity of the judgment. Though this is a familiar philosophical concept of apriority, commentators almost never identify it with Kant’s concept of the apriority of judgments, presumably because they believe that it cannot cohere with Kant’s overall position.

The first approach is defended by Philip Kitcher (1982: 220), according to whom Kant’s investigation of the “province of pure reason” oscillates between two enterprises, namely, one that is epistemological and one that is metaphysical. The epistemological enterprise connects apriority to a priori warrant. The metaphysical undertaking connects apriority to necessity. According to Kitcher, the concept of a priori knowledge is primarily epistemic.³ To say that X knows a priori that *p* is to say that X has an a priori warrant for *p*. A priori warrant for *p* is a process that produces X’s knowledge that *p*. The conditions of a priori warrants are the following:

1. α is an a priori warrant for X’s belief that *p* if and only if α is a process such that, given any life *e*, sufficient for X for *p*, then
 - a. Some process of the same type could produce in X a belief that *p*.

³ See also Philip Kitcher (1980; 1984).

- b. If a process of the same type were to produce in X a belief that p then it would warrant X in believing that p .
- c. If a process of the same type were to produce in X a belief that p then p . (Philip Kitcher, 1982: 219)

The total sequence of experiences that X has had up to a time t' is X's life at t' . A priori knowledge is knowledge that a subject has regardless of what her experiences may have been. The conditions of a priori knowledge explain how this knowledge is independent of experience. In Kitcher's account a priori knowledge does not entail the necessity of the proposition known. Moreover, Kitcher maintains (1982: 221) that the attempt to connect the epistemic concept "a priori" with the metaphysical concept "necessity" is a hopeless enterprise.

A notable difference between Kitcher's position and that of Kant concerns a distinction between a priori judgments and empirically certain judgments. Kitcher cannot account for this aspect of Kant's position. According to Kitcher, the proposition "I exist" is known a priori. It is known regardless of what experiences the subject had up to a time t . Nevertheless, this type of knowledge is not, according to Kant, an instance of a priori knowledge but rather of an "empirical assertion that is indubitably certain" (B 274).⁴ "I exist" is contingent. Although this judgment is certain for the person that makes it, the proposition that it expresses (that the *particular* subject exists) is not a necessary proposition. Epistemic certainty is compatible in this case with the contingency of the proposition judged.

"I exist" is just one type of empirically certain judgment. Other examples are "I feel pain", "I have visual experiences of a red thing" or "I am thinking about the number 2". The subject that makes these judgments asserts something about her own mental states. This type of judgment therefore differs from necessary judgments such as "5+7=12" that are not made about the subject's mental life.

How, we may ask, are apriority and certainty related if certainty is not equivalent to apriority? Kant characterizes a priori judgments as follows:

⁴ This claim coheres with Kant's more general contention that knowledge of actual existence of *an object* can never be established on a priori grounds no matter whose existence is at stake. It must appeal to sensible intuitions and sensible intuitions are empirical.

First, then, if a proposition is thought along with its **necessity**, it is an *a priori* judgment; if it is, moreover, also not derived from any proposition except one that in turn is valid as a necessary proposition, then it is absolutely *a priori*. **Second**: Experience never gives its judgments true or strict but only assumed and comparative **universality** (through induction), so properly it must be said: as far we have yet perceived, there is no exception to this or that rule. Thus if a judgment is thought in strict universality, i.e., in such a way that no exception at all is allowed to be possible, then it is not derived from experience, but is rather valid absolutely *priori*. (B 3-4)

An a priori judgment is a judgment in which one is *conscious of the necessity* of the proposition and of its strict universality.⁵

What are the conceptual relations between apriority, certainty and necessity? There are three characteristic marks of certainty: infallibility, indubitability and incorrigibility. The difference between these modes of certainty and their relation to Kant's concept of the a priori will be discussed in Chapter 3. In the present context, I will explain why the criteria of a priori judgments imply that a priori judgments are necessarily indubitable, and why consciousness of necessity implies that one is certain of the necessity of one's a priori judgment.

A priori judgments are judgments in which one is conscious of the necessity and strict universality of the proposition expressed by the judgment. If so, the subject that makes the judgment cannot be aware of reasons that could undermine the truth of her judgment. Assume that someone wants to protect both the necessity of an a priori judgment and the possibility of doubt. For that purpose, she maintains that the concept of an a priori judgment merely requires that one *believe* that the content of the a priori judgment that one makes is necessarily true. She nevertheless denies that the concept of an a priori judgment requires that the proposition one accepts in making the judgment be indubitable. In making an a priori judgment, a person accepts a proposition that she believes to be necessarily true or necessarily false. However, one can accept that a proposition is necessarily true and deny that one is *certain* of the truth or falsity of the proposition without being inconsistent.

⁵ As Parsons (1992: 91) notes, both criteria of apriority employ the concept of necessity.

It should be noted that the claim that there is a gap between *accepting or judging* that a proposition is a necessary proposition and the claim that it is indubitable implies inconsistency. If a person accepts that a proposition p is a necessary proposition (true or false) and denies that she is certain that the proposition is true (or false), she must be conscious of some possible reasons that are incompatible with the truth (or falsity) of proposition she accepts. However, one cannot both *accept* that p is a *necessary* proposition, which allows no exception, and also claim that there are conceivable grounds for the possibility of the negation of this proposition, i.e., for the fact that one might be mistaken in accepting it. If one accepts that a proposition is necessarily true in such a manner “that no exception is allowed as possible”, one cannot both *accept* that it is necessarily true and that it could be false without being involved in a contradiction. One can at best accept that the proposition is *possibly* necessary and that there might be conceivable grounds for its falsity. In addition, one could claim that a proposition is either necessarily true or necessarily false without knowing whether it is true or false. But in both cases one would not accept p as a necessary truth, that is, one will not be conscious of the necessity of the proposition.

Geometrical propositions exemplify the way in which the criteria of a priori judgments are exemplified:

For geometrical propositions are all apodictic, i.e., combined with *consciousness of their necessity*, e.g., space has only three dimensions; but such propositions cannot be empirical or judgments of experience, nor inferred from them (introduction II). (A 25/B 41) (my italics)

It is clear from the above passage that geometrical propositions are justified independently of experience *because* one is conscious of their necessity. Consciousness of necessity is the reason for the independence of experience.

It is important to add that Kant does not distinguish between analytic and synthetic a priori judgments or between different types of synthetic a priori judgments in terms of apriority. Analytic judgments, mathematical judgments and the synthetic a priori principle of understanding do not differ in terms of what “a priori” stands for. Given that possible experience is presupposed, the a priori principles based on the concepts of the understanding are *apodictically certain*:

Now all of pure reason in its merely speculative use contains not a single synthetic judgment directly from concepts. For through ideas, as we have shown, it is not capable of any synthetic judgments that would have objective validity; through concepts of the understanding, however, it certainly erects secure principles, but not directly from concepts, but rather always only indirectly through the relation of these concepts to something entirely contingent, namely **possible experience**; since if this (something as object of possible experiences) is presupposed, then they are of course apodictically certain, but in themselves they cannot even be cognized *a priori* (directly) at all. (A 736-737/B 764-765)

The explicit issue dealt with in the above passage concerns the limits of knowledge based on pure reason. A priori knowledge is restricted to the limits of possible experience. The apriority of judgments is assumed to be equivalent to apodictic certainty. If something is presupposed as object of possible experience, the principles of the understanding are apodictically certain. If one abstracts from an object of possible experience, one is not left with a priori principles that are not apodictically certain, but rather with principles that in themselves can never be known a priori. Hence, in this case too, apriority is equivalent to apodictic certainty.

As we shall see in Chapter 3, the inconsistent combination of consciousness of necessity and awareness of possible falsity is equivalent to what Kant terms “subjective necessity”. One may assume that Kant thought that subjective necessity is inapt for a priori knowledge since he was aware of the inconsistency involved in the concept of subjective necessity.

4. *Apriority and Necessity*

As I noted above, Kitcher believes that linking the epistemic concept “a priori” and the metaphysical concept “necessary” is a hopeless enterprise. According to Kitcher (1982: 221), the equivalence of apriority and necessity fails in two ways. On the one hand, some necessary propositions are not known a priori.⁶ On the other hand, some propositions might be known independently of experience without being necessary. Kant is indeed committed to the equivalence of apriority

⁶ See Kripke (1980) and Putnam (1975).

and necessity. But even if this equivalence fails in one direction, it can be denied that it must fail in the other direction. In this case, a priori knowledge would not merely be knowledge independent of experience but rather knowledge *of a necessary proposition*; that is, knowledge in which one is certain of the necessity of the proposition. A priori knowledge of necessity differs from a posteriori knowledge of necessity. The a posteriori grounds for accepting a necessary proposition fall short of providing certainty. The proposition accepted is necessarily true *if* it is true and necessarily false if it is false. If water is H₂O, then water is necessarily H₂O. But the proposition that water is H₂O is accepted on the basis of empirical evidence. For all we know, it might turn out that the natural stuff that fills rivers and lakes, which we call water, is not H₂O. It is therefore not certain that water is H₂O. The claim that there are necessary propositions that can be known a posteriori is compatible with Kant's claim that a priori knowledge is knowledge in which one is conscious of the necessity of the proposition. A priori propositions are in this case a particular kind of necessary propositions.

If it had been demonstrated that it is not possible to grasp a proposition along with its necessity, then linking the concepts of necessity and of apriority would have been proven a hopeless enterprise. However, in this case, a priori (certain) knowledge is not possible, since it can be shown that such knowledge must incorporate consciousness of necessity.

This is particularly evident in Kitcher's account of apriority. We may first note that the subject that knows a priori that p must *know* that she has a priori warrant for p . Claiming that one knows a priori that p without *knowing* that one has a priori warrant for p is counter-intuitive. If, indeed, one's a priori knowledge that p entails that one *knows* that one's warrant for p is a priori, then Kitcher's definition of a priori knowledge involves consciousness of the necessity of a proposition. For if a subject S knows a priori that p , she knows that she has a priori warrant for p . Say that the a priori warrant that she has for p is W . If W is a priori warrant for p , then *it is not possible* that W and $\sim p$. Hence, if S knows a priori that p , she knows that necessarily if W holds then p ; that is, she is conscious of the necessity of the proposition. This does not suffice for the claim that a priori knowledge is possible, for there might be other grounds for claiming that it is not. Also, it does not suffice to establish that all the knowledge that Kant depicted as a priori is indeed

a priori.⁷ It does suggest, however, that to the extent that a priori knowledge essentially involves a priori warrant, it must involve consciousness of necessity.

It might be argued at this point that the conceptual connection between “certainty”, “necessity” and “apriority” can be avoided if one maintains that the content of a priori knowledge consists of either non-judgmental representations or propositions the objects of which are a priori pure objects. In the first case, the claim is that the assumed factual presence of a priori concepts in one’s mind cannot be empirically explained even though the question of whether a priori concepts are *true of* objects of experience is left unanswered by noting the non-experiential origin of these concepts. It seems that if the term “a priori” merely depicts the non-empirical origin of non-judgmental representations, necessity and universality are not conceptually linked to apriority. The claim that a priori concepts are necessarily true of *all* possible objects is precisely what this account regards as an open question. But the claim that a priori non-judgmental representations are known to have non-empirical origins presupposes that it is known that they cannot originate from experience. Hence, it must be based on a priori judgments in the previous sense. In any case, it is clear that an account that points out the non-experiential origins of non-judgmental representations cannot be an account of a priori judgments for the obvious reason that non-judgmental representations are not judgments.

The second possibility regards a priori knowledge as comprising a

⁷ What Putnam (1983) characterizes as the historical argument against a priori knowledge in his reexamination of Quine’s “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (1953) obviously applies to Kant. Kant maintained, for example, that Euclidean geometry is necessarily true.

My purpose in the present book will be to make manifest the distinct layers of apriority that operate in Kant’s theory that have different degrees of generality. The fact that Euclidean geometry turned out to be false of the physical world does not entail that every part of Kant’s theory of knowledge is open to the same charge. I will later attempt to show that the Kantian claim according to which there are synthetic a priori conditions of the possibility of experience is to a large extent defensible.

I believe it is a historical mistake not to pay attention to the fact that a priori judgments are in Kant’s view judgments in which one is certain of their necessity. This mistake can affect one’s interpretation of his entire theory of knowledge. The fact that Euclidean geometry, which was an a priori science for Kant, is not true with regard to the physical world seems to corroborate the claim that a priori claims to knowledge are not necessarily true. But nothing that Kant says corroborates this supposition. What seems to provide justification for this assumption, namely, the present status of Euclidean geometry, is for Kant a paradigm of apodictic knowledge.

priori propositions that are about thought (intentional) objects. The question of whether a priori concepts involved in a priori knowledge are true of empirical objects is left unaccounted for. Here too, "independence of experience" is not conceptually linked to "necessity" and "universality". Whether or not this account of a priority can be defended will not be my concern here. In the next few sections I will explain why it fails as an interpretation of Kant's position. Two features of Kant's position that are incompatible with this account are Kant's claim that the only possible objects of knowledge are empirical objects that are given in sensible intuition and his claim that synthetic a priori knowledge must involve pure intuitions.

5. *A Priori Judgments and Syntheticity*

The problem that my account of the apriority of judgments raises with regard to the nature of synthetic a priori judgments may be stated as follows: a priori judgments are judgments in which one is conscious of their necessity. Logically possible judgments are judgments that do not entail a contradiction. The judgment "the straight line is not the shortest line between two given points" is not self-contradictory. Synthetic a priori judgments are synthetic. Their negation is logically possible. How can synthetic a priori judgments be both necessary judgments and judgments whose negations are logically possible?

Kant's answer pertains to two distinct and related issues: the distinction between logical possibility and real possibility and the claim that synthetic a priori judgments necessarily employ pure intuitions.

What do the terms "real possibility" and "logical possibility" mean in Kant's theory? In what sense is the appeal to intuitions within synthetic a priori judgments relevant to this distinction? There are two types of answers to this question the first of which interprets "real possibility" and "logical possibility" in terms of possible worlds and truth in a possible world. According to Brittan (1978: 24), analytic judgments are true in every possible world.⁸ They express logical truths or are

⁸ Brittan uses the terms "sentence", "statement" and "proposition" instead of "judgment" in order to indicate "the object of judgment rather than the act of judging" (1978: 15). However, changing Kant's terms thus eliminates the epistemic connotation of Kant's term "judgment". The primacy of judgment is an essential feature of Kant's logic. "Proposition", an assertoric judgment (Logic § 30), is a species of "judgment". For this reason I will continue to use the term "judgment".

reducible to logical truths. Synthetic judgments, whether a priori or a posteriori, are not analytic, since their negations do not entail a contradiction. The content of a synthetic a priori judgment represents a logical possibility, a space of logically possible states of affairs. However, not every logical possibility is really possible. Logical possibility therefore seems to be broader than real possibility. “Synthetic a priori truths describe the class of “really possible” worlds”. They are true in every really possible world (Brittan, 1978: 22). True synthetic a posteriori judgments are true in or of the actual world. False synthetic a posteriori judgments are true in or of some really possible world but not in or of our world (Brittan, 1978: 24).

What is a really possible world according to Brittan? Such a world can be envisaged from two viewpoints. It is either a world structured by our perceptual capacities and conceptual abilities that are quasi-psychological brute facts or a world whose limits and general form are given by the categories (Brittan, 1978: 21). According to Brittan, these two viewpoints are related to two distinct issues that should be kept separate:

One is his [Kant’s] attempted proof that only a certain kind of world, a “sensible world” is a really possible world for us. The other is the distinction, fundamental to his project, between possibility and real possibility. We might reject the proof, and the claim that inevitably and object of experience for us must have certain general features, and yet still want to make out a contrast between possible and really possible worlds, the latter being, for example, that set of worlds compatible with the most general principles of physical theory (at a given point in time). Unless we can make such a contrast, in any case, the distinction between analytic and synthetic *a priori* sentences, on which so much of Kant’s case depends, collapses. (Brittan, 1978: 23)

The first alternative is that “really possible” worlds are sensible worlds. However, Brittan thinks that one can reject the proof (that is, the Transcendental Deduction) that objects of sense experience are necessarily objects that instantiate the categories and be left with a distinction between “possibility” and “real possibility”. According to the revised distinction, really possible worlds are worlds compatible with the general principles of physical theory at a given point in time. Synthetic a priori judgments are necessary, if at all, only relative to a given

conceptual scheme. However, objects of experience are not necessarily objects that must have certain general features. In other words, the generic concept of an object of experience is not a concept of an object that necessarily instantiates a certain categorical scheme.

Disregarding for a moment the questions of what the term “real” means in the above reconstruction and of how it is related to the apriority of synthetic a priori judgments, we may ask another question: According to this reconstruction, in what sense are synthetic a priori judgments *a priori*? The answer presumably relies on a distinction between pure science and applied science. Pure science consists of a set of consistent and coherent pure theories. The logical non-contradictoriness of the negation of the axioms of these theories, say the axioms of Euclidean geometry, mean that alternative theories are logically possible. Each such set of theories is pure in the sense that it makes no appeal to experience. Given these theories, the synthetic a priori judgment is true. It is true or false in the set of worlds depicted by means of each of these incompatible sets of theories. In this context, “a priori” primarily means “independence of experience”, not “necessary and strictly universal”.

According to this conception, a really possible world would be a world that we can experience. Pure intuitions enter this picture precisely at this point. They are supposed to determine which world we can experience. There are alternative pure sciences, say pure geometries, but as Kant supposedly tells us, there are no alternative pure intuitions for us. Pure intuitions provide a model for just one set of pure theories, say, for Euclidean geometry. They select one of the incompatible pure theories from the other alternatives. Given that we can conceive alternative pure theories and that we can have no sense of what pure intuitions distinct from ours might be like, it is clear that pure intuitions have no role in constructing the pure theory itself. They merely serve a justificatory role. Pure intuitions determine which of the incompatible logically possible synthetic a priori judgments is true of our possible experience.

Notwithstanding some important differences, the main features of this line of interpretation can be traced to the writings of some of Kant's most distinguished interpreters.⁹ This reading undoubtedly has some advantages. It is sensitive to the Kantian distinction between

⁹ See Friedman's (1992: 98-99) discussion of this point.

concepts and intuitions and it explains the sense in which the concepts involved in synthetic a priori judgments are distinct concepts. It also allows the conceivability of skepticism.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this reading raises some insurmountable exegetical difficulties.

It should be noted that the notion of a synthetic a priori judgment becomes a hybrid when interpreted as meaning “a judgment that is true in every really possible world”. There are two distinct senses in which such a judgment is synthetic according to this interpretation, and two senses in which it is a priori. The first sense in which it is a priori concerns the way in which it is arrived at (independently of experience). It is synthetic because it is not analytic. It is synthetic in a second sense because it is true in the actual world that is one of the worlds which are really possible. It is a priori in a second sense, because it is known to be necessary with regard to our possible experience. The first sense in which a synthetic judgment is a priori is that the content of the judgment is known a priori. However, what we know are thoughts detached from the “real” objects they are supposed to be about. The second sense in which a judgment is synthetic and a priori does not primarily concern knowledge but rather truth in possible worlds. The appeal to pure intuitions is supposed to bridge the gap between the metaphysical properties of synthetic a priori judgments and their epistemic properties. A judgment is not merely true in every really possible world but is known to be true in every really possible world independently of experience, only on the basis of pure intuitions.

This, however, could not have been Kant’s position. Kant thought that it is possible to know, independently of experience, that a synthetic a priori judgment is true in every really possible world. Yet, if Kant’s position was the above, it is incomprehensible how one could have such knowledge. The appeal to pure intuitions does not help explain how synthetic a priori knowledge is possible. What seems to give the impression that pure intuitions can secure a priori knowledge is the fact that pure intuitions do not originate from experience but rather precede every possible experience. However, an important feature of the distinction between the two aforementioned meanings of the term “synthetic a priori judgment” is that pure intuitions are not involved in the act of conceiving a synthetic a priori judgment. One conceives a

¹⁰ Skepticism about a priori knowledge is presumably based on the logical possibility of the negation of the content of synthetic a priori judgments.

synthetic a priori judgment independently of pure intuitions. This means that one does not know a priori by merely making the synthetic a priori judgment which of the equally conceivable alternative incompatible synthetic a priori judgments is true in every really possible world. If one can know a priori which of the alternatives is “really possible”, one must have a priori knowledge of the properties of one’s pure intuitions independently of the fact that one makes these synthetic a priori judgments. However, how could one have such knowledge? The fact that pure intuitions do not originate from experience does not solve this problem but makes it even less comprehensible how one can have such knowledge. Friedman presents the matter as follows:

Consider the case of geometry for example. It is supposed to be logically possible that space have either a Euclidean or a non Euclidean structure. Only the Euclidean structure is really possible, however, and pure intuition is supposed to tell us this. Yet it is extremely difficult to conceive, I think, how pure intuition could perform such discrimination. Thus, it is supposed to be logically possible that any particular triangle I construct or encounter should be either Euclidean or non-Euclidean: the sum of its angles could (logically) be equal to 180° or could (logically) be equal to $180^{\circ} \pm .000001$, say. How is pure intuition possibly able to distinguish these two cases? Of course, within Euclid’s axiomatization of geometry we can *prove* that the angles of any triangle that we construct must sum to exactly 180° (*Elements*, Book I, Prop. 32). On the present conception, however, other axiomatizations, essentially different from Euclid’s are supposed to represent logical possibility as well. The problem is then to see how pure intuition can select one such possibility from the class of all logically possible axiomatizations, and this, I think, is quite impossible. (Friedman, 1992: 103)

Pure intuitions are supposed to select one possibility out of equally consistent incompatible alternatives. But the claim that pure intuitions can serve this role is problematic. Why can there not be deviant pure intuitions or pure imagination that provide a model of the deviant (from *our* viewpoint) possibilities? Moreover, how can we know that *our* pure intuitions or pure imagination are not what is deviant? The very idea that the role of intuitions within synthetic a priori judgments of pure mathematics is to provide a model for these judgments

makes the *a priori* character of these judgments “absolutely unintelligible”.¹¹

6. *Problematic, Assertoric, and Apodictic Judgments*

In my view, it is erroneous to suppose that Kant thought that pure intuitions “justify” synthetic a priori judgments. What seems to be at stake here is precisely the reconciliation of the two main features of a synthetic a priori judgment, that is, the fact that the predicate is not contained in the concept of the subject even though the synthetic a priori judgment is *known* to be a necessarily true judgment. For example, the synthetic a priori mathematical judgments pass from one determination A to another different determination B, although both are *necessarily connected*. Intuitions have a constitutive role in synthetic a priori judgments. A non-analytic judgment in which there is no relation to intuitions is not a synthetic a priori judgment. Such judgments are merely problematic judgments. In other words, two mutually incompatible non-analytic judgments are not both *synthetic a priori judgments*. Intuitions are not required *for* the verification of synthetic a priori judgments but rather as one of the characteristics of their content.

The alleged distinction between mere representational content and synthetic a priori knowledge echoes the logical distinction that Kant makes between problematic assertoric and apodictic judgments. In the Jescha Logic the distinction is stated as follows:

This moment of modality indicates, then, only the way in which something is maintained or denied in judgment: whether one does not settle anything concerning the truth or untruth of a judgment, as in the problematic judgment, The soul of man may be immortal; or whether one determines something concerning it, as in the assertoric judgment, The soul of man may be immortal; or finally, whether one even expresses the truth of a judgment with the dignity of necessity, as in the apodictic judgment, The soul of man must be immortal. This determination of the merely possible or actual or necessary truth concerns only the *judgment it self*, then, not in any way the thing about which we judge. (9: 108-109)

In a problematic judgment one does not determine anything about the truth or falsity of the judgment. Nevertheless, problematic judgments

¹¹ See also Parsons (1964), Philip Kitcher (1975).

must at least be logically possible. An assertoric judgment determines something about the truth of the judgment. In apodictic judgments, the truth is determined with the “dignity of necessity”.¹² For Kant, a “proposition” is an *assertoric* judgment. The distinction between judgments in general and propositions is one between problematic judgments and assertoric judgments.¹³ The distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments itself is one between two kinds of *propositions*.¹⁴ Problematic judgments are neither analytic nor synthetic.

One could have concluded that the fact that Kant uses sentences that contain the same subject terms and the same predicate terms in order to express the problematic and the assertoric judgments is indicative of a commitment on his part to a distinction between representational content and knowledge. However, the distinction between the representations and the various judgments that employ them is not one between *types of judgments*.

Thus, Kant's use of sentences that contain the same subject terms and the same predicate terms is not meant to indicate that the distinction dealt with is one between a propositional content and kinds of knowledge, but rather that this distinction pertains to general logic, and is one that *abstracts* from content.¹⁵ General logic abstracts from the content of the judgment; not so transcendental philosophy. The concept “synthetic a priori judgment” is part of transcendental philosophy and not of general logic.

7. *Intuitions, Synthetcity, and Consciousness of Necessity*

Kant's example seems to imply that the intention expressed in a judgment must be distinguished from the conditions for the satisfaction of

¹² In making the distinction between the modalities of judgments, Kant uses sentences that contain the same subject terms and the same predicate terms in order to represent the content judged: “the soul of man” and “is immortal”. This is an indication of the fact that Kant's concept of the modality of judgments is primarily epistemic. The distinction between the types of the modalities of judgments represents the manner in which the content is judged. Kant's concept of a proposition is itself epistemic.

¹³ “on the distinction between problematic and assertoric judgments rests the true distinction between judgments and propositions...a problematic proposition is a *contradictio in adjecto*” (9: 109).

¹⁴ See Jescha Logic, §34 (9: 110).

¹⁵ The fact that the assertoric judgment used here “the soul of man is immortal” expresses a transcendental illusion indicates that the distinction is merely meant to be a logical distinction.

the content asserted. It might be argued that this distinction should be interpreted as meaning that a judgment represents the conditions for its satisfaction. The question of whether these conditions are satisfied is not answered by the mere fact that the judgment represents them. Intuitions are required for the fulfillment of the conditions of satisfaction expressed by the synthetic a priori judgment, but they are not part of its representational content. However, in contrast to the above suggestion, there is plenty of textual evidence that supports the claim that synthetic a priori judgments involve intuitions *as part of their content*. A judgment is synthetic a priori only if the relation between the concepts is recognized as necessary. This relation cannot be represented as necessary independently of intuitions. Pure intuitions are essential for representing *the necessity of the connection* between the concepts that make the judgment. In other words, if there is no relation to intuitions, the judgment is not a synthetic a priori judgment.

A clear expression of the interrelations between syntheticity, necessity and intuitions appears in the following passage:

What usually makes us believe here that the predicate of such apodictic judgments already lies in our concepts, and that the judgment is therefore analytic, is merely the ambiguity of the expression. We **should**, namely, add a certain predicate to a given concept in thought, and this necessity already attaches to the concepts. But the question is not what we **should think** in addition to the given concept, but what we **actually think** in it, though only obscurely, and there it is manifest that the predicate certainly adheres to those concepts necessarily, though not as thought in the concept itself, but by means of the intuition that must be added to the concept. (B 17)

Synthetic a priori judgments are necessary judgments. The predicate of such a judgment is necessarily related to the subject. The fact that the negation of such a judgment is not self-contradictory, is not a reason to think that the judgment is not necessary. Rather, this indicates that the predicates do not necessarily relate to each other in virtue of “what is thought in them” but rather in virtue of “the intuition added to them”.

These claims seem to conflict with two distinct claims that Kant makes about metaphysical judgments. Metaphysical judgments such as “The world must have a first beginning” are allegedly synthetic a priori although they allow no relation to intuitions. Given that one

is disposed to make such judgments, it seems that there should be a way to characterize synthetic a priori judgments independently of any relation to intuitions. However, Kant's position is subtler than implied by this suggestion. Here is how Kant explicates the synthetic a priori character of metaphysical judgments:

In metaphysics, even if one regards it as a science that has thus far merely been sought but is nevertheless indispensable because of the nature of human reason, **synthetic a priori cognitions** are supposed **to be contained**, and it is not concerned merely with analyzing concepts that we make of things *a priori* and thereby clarifying them analytically, but we want to amplify our cognition *a priori*; to this end we must make use of such principles that add something to the given concepts that was not contained in them, and through synthetic *a priori* judgments go so far beyond that experience itself cannot follow us that far, e.g., in the proposition "The world must have a first beginning", and others besides, and thus metaphysics, at least as far as **its end is concerned**, consists of purely synthetic a priori propositions. (B 18)

Metaphysics has thus far "merely been sought". It does as yet not qualify as a science. While pure mathematics and natural science (*Physica*) are given as sciences containing synthetic a priori judgments, there is no equivalent assumption with regard to metaphysics. If such a science *can be* pursued, it must contain synthetic a priori judgments. In other words, metaphysics contains synthetic a priori judgments "as far as its end is concerned". The reason for Kant's final conclusion that there are no synthetic a priori judgments in metaphysics is precisely the absence of any possible relation to intuitions. For example:

Now all of pure reason in its merely speculative use contains not a single direct synthetic judgment from concepts. For, through ideas, as we have shown, it is not capable of any synthetic judgments that would have objective validity. (A 737/B 765)

But if we consider these principles of pure understanding in themselves as to their origin, then they are anything but cognitions from concepts. For they would not even be possible *a priori* if we did not bring in pure intuition (in mathematics) or the conditions of a possible experience in general. That everything that happens has a cause cannot at all be inferred from the concept of what happens in general; rather, it is this prin-

ciple that shows how one can first get a determinate experiential concept of what happens.

Thus the understanding cannot yield synthetic cognitions from concepts at all...(A 301/B 357)

No synthetic a priori judgment employs only pure concepts. Intuitions are required in order to establish the *apriority* (necessity) of synthetic a priori judgments as a result of their being *synthetic*. They would not have been possible a priori (they would not have been synthetic a priori judgments) if “they did not bring in intuition”.

8. *Logical Possibility, Real Possibility and Objective Reality*

How could intuitions be part of synthetic a priori judgments in a way that does justice to their apriority? In contrast to the common assumption, Friedman believes that it is a mistake to think that pure intuitions provide models. Only empirical objects can provide models. According to Friedman, pure intuitions are relevant to mathematical thinking in a different and more basic sense. They are necessary for the rigorous representation of arithmetical or geometrical concepts and propositions primarily because Kant’s logic lacks the means for representing them otherwise.¹⁶

The concept “schema” unifies pure intuitions and pure concepts. Schemata are not images, since no image can express the generality of a mathematical concept. Rather, they are rules for the synthesis of imagination. For example, the schemata of geometrical concepts are “rules for the synthesis of imagination with respect to pure figures in space” (A 141/B 180). As Friedman notes (1992: 129), schemata have two roles, that is, “they serve to generate the pure concepts of mathematics, and also when embodied in particular constructive activities *in concerto* to provide objects (namely, images) for these concepts”. This dual role is clearly expressed in the following passage:

Now in mathematics a postulate is the practical proposition that contains nothing except the synthesis through which we first give ourselves an object and generate its concept, e.g., to describe a circle with a given line from a given point on a plane; and a proposition of this sort cannot be proved, since the procedure that it demands is precisely that through which we first generate the concept of such a figure. (B 287)

¹⁶ See Friedman (1992) Chapter 2, section 4.

The claim that intuitions are required in order to represent pure concepts is also expressed in the following passage:

We cannot think of a line without **drawing** it in thought, we cannot think of a circle without **describing** it, we cannot represent the three dimensions of space at all without **placing** three lines perpendicular to each other at the same point... (B 154)

Hence, it is not possible to think of a line or a circle without the pure intuition of space. According to Friedman (1992: 127), mathematical propositions are known a priori precisely because their truth follows from the mere possibility of thinking or representing them.

Although Friedman's account is an important step towards grasping the role of intuitions in synthetic a priori judgments, it is nevertheless possible to raise some objections to it. Friedman (1992: 101) maintains that Kant does not employ pure intuitions for the purpose of providing objects and objective reality for any concept.¹⁷ It is indeed true that pure intuitions do not provide objects. The only objects that can be known are empirical objects. Yet, objects can be given only by means of intuitions, and pure intuitions are necessary conditions for empirical intuitions. The claim that Kant does not use pure intuitions for the purpose of providing objects is, therefore, somewhat misleading. Pure intuitions determine the *possibility* of knowledge of *objects*.

As the passage below demonstrates, the concept of objective reality does not signify actual objects for Kant but rather possible objects:

A concept that includes a synthesis in it is to be held as empty, and does not relate to any object, if this synthesis does not belong to experience, either as borrowed from it, in which case it is an **empirical concept**, or as one on which, as a *priori* condition, experience in general (its form) rests, and then it is **pure concept**, which nevertheless belongs to experience, since its object can be encountered only in the latter. For whence will one derive the character of the possibility of an object that is thought by means of a synthetic *a priori* concept, if not from the synthesis that constitutes the form of the empirical cognition of objects? That in such a concept no contradiction must be contained is, to be sure, a necessary logical condition; but it is far from sufficient for the objective reality of the concept,

¹⁷ This claim is related to another omission. Friedman's account of the sense in which pure intuitions are required for the rigorous representation of mathematical concepts leaves out the fact that intuitions are singular representations.

i.e., for the possibility of such an object as is thought through the concept. Thus in the concept of a figure that is enclosed between two straight lines there is no contradiction, for the concepts of two straight lines and their intersection contain no negation of a figure; rather the impossibility rests not on the concept in itself, but on its construction in space, i.e., on the conditions of space and its determinations; but these in turn have their objective reality, i.e., they pertain to possible things, because they contain in themselves *a priori* the form of experience in general. (A 220-221/B 267-268)

Concepts have objective reality if they belong to experience, or better, if they pertain to things that could possibly be encountered in experience. They can belong to experience in two ways; they are either “borrowed” from experience or they in themselves contain the *a priori* forms of experience. In order to provide objective reality for a concept one has to show that the concept pertains to things that can be experienced by means of one of the two mentioned ways. Only empirical objects provide objective reality. Pure intuitions do not provide a model, but, together with the categories, they provide the possibility of a model, that is, they determine the concept of an object of possible experience in general. The distinction emphasized by Kant is a distinction between concepts that either can or cannot be constructed in pure intuition. Both are empty, but in a different sense. The former are not really possible, while the latter are really possible.

The last point shows that the concept of objective reality is closely related to the concept of real possibility. A possible knowable object is an object that can be presented to the mind in intuition. A concept is really possible, if it is a concept that can be exhibited in intuition. The states of affairs that are really possible are states of affairs in which possible knowable objects participate.

A prevalent assumption is that Kant’s elemental entities are general concepts and individuals that can be conceived as such independently of the schemata that apply the concepts to the individuals. According to this view, the role of schemata is merely to “mediate” between general concepts and individuals. But at least as the case of mathematics demonstrates, Kant’s elemental entities are not individual objects and general concepts but rather schemata. Schemata are rules for constructing singular representations of individuals. One does not first encounter individuals whose properties are unknown and concepts with regard to which one does not know whether or not they are or can be instan-

tiated. When one is presented with an individual, one immediately recognizes it as a straight line, circle, or triangle because one recognizes it as an individual constructed by means of a given rule. The fact that it is constructed in this way determines its individual nature.

Mathematical concepts are themselves generated by means of schemata:

Now in mathematics a postulate is the practical proposition that contains nothing except the synthesis through which we first give ourselves an object and generate its concept, e.g. to describe a circle with a given line from a given point on a plan; and a proposition of this sort cannot be proved, since the procedure that it demands is precisely that through which we first generate the concept of such a figure. (A 234/B 287)

A priori concept that can be constructed “contains a pure intuitions in itself” (A 719/B 747).

9. Transcendental Use, Empirical Use and the Categories

The question with which I began this chapter was whether it was possible to provide an account of a priori concepts by means of a priori judgments, or whether Kant's position allows one to spell out the content of a priori concepts by means of a priori judgments. Kant's epistemology contains three kinds of a priori concepts: mathematical concepts, categories and ideas (of pure reason). The differences between the various kinds of a priori concepts invite different answers to the above question. The best candidate for a judgment that specifies the content of an a priori concept is the definition of the concept. Mathematical concepts can be defined and their definition is synthetic (A 729/B 757). The judgments that specify the content of mathematical concepts must be synthetic. We may, therefore, grant the fact that the content of mathematical concepts is spelled out by means of their a priori definitions, at least where their contribution to the truth of the whole judgment is concerned. The significance of mathematical concepts is indeed conditioned by the judgments that we take to be necessarily true. Nevertheless, a mathematical concept is conceivable even if any synthetic use of the concept involved would amount to a necessarily false judgment. “Anything one likes can serve as a logical predicate” (A 596/B 624). A combination of concepts that constitute its logical (in contrast to real) definition can be the basis of analytic

judgments. For example, the judgment “a space enclosed between two straight lines has two lines” seems to be analytically true. Such judgments are, to be sure, about concepts. But this feature of Kant’s position emphasizes the fact that the realm of concepts and what they make conceivable is wider than the realm of really possible states of affairs. In what follows, I will demonstrate the importance of this idea to Kant’s doctrine of transcendental idealism.

The distinction between conceivability and real possibility is particularly significant with regard to the categories, which cannot be defined (A 241/B 299, A 728/B 756). Therefore, if the content of a category can be specified by means of a priori judgments, this is possible only if one presents a list of all judgments in which they are meaningfully used. Now consider the following claim:

1. Necessarily the set of all a priori judgments in which a category is used spell out its content.

Kant’s theory contains counter-examples to (1). The concept “category” seems to allow a “transcendental use” (not with respect to possible experience). A transcendental use of pure concepts “consists in its being related to things in general and **in themselves**; its empirical use, however, in its being related merely to **appearances**, i.e., to objects of possible **experience**” (A 238-9/B 298). Transcendental use of the categories is *conceivable* primarily due to the distinction between pure concepts and pure intuitions:

As far as their origin is concern, the categories are not grounded on sensibility, as are the **forms of intuition**, space and time; they therefore seem to allow an application extended beyond all objects of the senses... (B 305)

Also, through mere concepts nothing is thought. But:

If, on the contrary, I leave out all intuition, then there still remains the form of thinking, i.e., the way of determining an object for the manifold of a possible intuition. Hence to this extent the categories extend further than sensible intuition, since they think objects in general without seeing to the particular manner (of sensibility) in which they might be given. (A 254/B 309)

Nevertheless, no a priori judgment, neither analytic judgments nor synthetic judgments, is merely based on the categories. An example of an

alleged transcendental use is represented by the sentence “everything contingent has a cause” (A 243/B 301) in which the use of the categories does not involve a relation to sensible intuition. As Kant clarifies, this is not use in which something is asserted about a concept.

An alleged transcendental use of pure concepts does not suffice for synthetic judgments. To be more precise, a transcendental use is not a real use of a concept at all. A transcendental use of a concept must be within synthetic judgment. Judgment (in the transcendental sense) is the subsumption of an object under a concept. But objects are given by means of intuitions. A transcendental use of pure concept is not acceptable for that very reason. It allows no such subsumption of an object under a concept.

It may therefore be advisable to express ourselves thus: The pure categories, without formal conditions of sensibility, have merely transcendental significance, but are not of any transcendental use, since this is impossible in itself, for they are lacking all conditions of any use (in judgments), namely the formal conditions of the subsumption of any sort of supposed object under these concepts. Thus since (as merely pure categories) they are not supposed to have empirical use, and cannot have transcendental use, they do not have any use at all if they are separated from all sensibility, i.e., they cannot be applied to any supposed object at all; rather they are merely the pure form of the employment of the understanding in regard to objects in general and of thinking, yet without any sort of object being able to be thought or determined through them alone. (A 248/B 305)

What *seems to be* “transcendental use” actually amounts to “transcendental significance”. However, what is transcendental significance? A concept has transcendental significance if at least two conditions are satisfied: (a) it is a logically possible concept (i.e., it does not entail a contradiction), and (b) it does not origin from sensibility (i.e., it has intellectual origin). Judgments expressed by sentences such as “everything contingent has a cause” are merely problematic judgments. They merely express logical possibility. Assertoric judgments, however, are propositions. Though the categories “extend further than sensible intuition” in thinking an object in general

...they do not thereby determine a greater sphere of objects, since one cannot assume that such objects can be given with-

out presupposing that another kind of intuition than the sensible kind is possible, which, however, we are by no means justified in doing. (A 254/B 309)

Intellectual origin that is part of the “transcendental significance” of the categories does not indicate a greater sphere of objects. A different way of expressing the same idea is to claim that there is no relation to objects merely by means of “pure concepts”.

The transcendental significance of the categories does not by itself base any assertoric judgment:

The merely transcendental use of the categories is thus in fact no use at all, and has no determinate or even, as far as its mere form is concerned, a determinable object. From this it also follows that the pure category does not suffice for any synthetic *a priori* principle, and that the principles of pure understanding are only of empirical but never of transcendental use; but nowhere beyond the field of possible experience can there be any synthetic *a priori* principles. (A 247-248/B 304)

It is therefore not generally true that it is possible to specify the content of *a priori* concepts by means of the set of meaningful *a priori* judgments. The categories possess transcendental significance due to their intellectual origin. They are employed in judgments only if sensible intuitions are provided. But their conditions of meaningful use do not spell out their “transcendental significance”.

The distinction between “meaningful use” of a category and its “transcendental significance” is not merely an unnecessary consequence of Kant’s position that can easily be eliminated. It results from the differences between pure concepts and pure intuitions. Our pure intuitions are not the only kind of pure intuitions conceivable; other forms of sensible intuitions are (merely) conceivable and so is intellectual intuition. However, as far as discursive thought is concerned, the pure concepts of the understanding have no alternative. The transcendental significance of the categories therefore seems to allow the “mere possibility” of synthetic *a priori* judgments that are based on forms of intuitions different from our forms of intuitions.

“Mere possibility” could be interpreted as denoting negative possibility. Negative possibility results from the previously mentioned distinction between pure intuitions and pure concepts. Pure concepts seem to be more general than pure intuitions since they do not originate from sensibility. Other forms of intuitions that differ from ours are therefore

conceivable. This is merely a negative possibility, because we can have no knowledge of other forms of intuition. In this case, “mere possibility” indicates the fact that it is not possible to deny that there are other forms of intuition.

Within Kant's theory, there is, therefore, a sense in which concepts are a priori that is different from that in which judgments are a priori. Concepts are pure if they contain “nothing that belongs to sensation” (A 20 / B34). Another way of expressing the same idea is to claim that a priori concepts and a priori intuitions cannot be abstracted from sensation. Maintaining that a priori judgments are not abstracted from experience is manifestly nonsensical.

10. A Priori Knowledge and Transcendental Idealism

How are the implicit distinctions involved in Kant's concept of a priori knowledge related to the doctrine of transcendental idealism? As I noted earlier, the apriority of judgments is the basic sense in which *knowledge* is a priori. Although analytic judgments may be regarded as representing claims to knowledge in which no real object is known, for Kant, knowledge in the “weighty” sense is, knowledge of objects. The range of “real possibility” overlaps with that of “possible knowledge”. Where “possible knowledge” and “real possibility” are concerned, all problematic, non-analytic, logically consistent judgments that are incompatible with synthetic a priori judgments are necessarily false. The logical possibility of such judgments does not constitute a reason to “really” doubt whether synthetic a priori judgments are necessary judgments known to be necessary. The problematic non-analytic, logically consistent judgments do not assert anything about objects since they are not propositions.

The distinction between the apriority of concepts, intuitions and judgments and the primacy attributed by Kant to synthetic judgments in determining the realm of real possibility plays an important role in Kant's overall epistemic system. The transcendental, merely possible use of pure concepts is use beyond the realm of real possibility. Real possibility is determined by the kind of pure intuitions we possess and is mirrored by the kind of synthetic a priori judgments that we can make. The distinction between transcendental use and real use and the distinction between real possibility and logical possibility indicate that our knowledge has limits. As we shall see, these limits do not jeopardize the

justifiability of the claim to certainty and necessity which is involved in synthetic a priori knowledge. We cannot transgress them in order to question our claims to synthetic a priori knowledge, for no objective proposition is asserted by means of these problematic judgments.

As I will show in the next chapter, the last claim spells out the nature of Kant's response to the skeptical challenge with regard to synthetic a priori claims to knowledge. The reason that underlies the skeptical challenge is the distinction between conceivability and real possibility. The response to this challenge is to reveal the nature of this distinction and to provide an account of the possibility of synthetic a priori claims to knowledge. Nevertheless, as Kant's account demonstrates, the transcendental, problematic use of reason cannot undermine claims to synthetic a priori knowledge. However, it fulfills a limiting negative function. The inevitability of the doctrine of transcendental idealism results from both aspects of Kant's concept of the a priori: the distinction between the apriority of concepts, intuitions, and judgments and the link between real possibility and possible knowledge. It is with regard to possible knowledge and real possibility that the apriority of judgments in general and synthetic judgments in particular is epistemically prior to the apriority of concepts and intuitions.

Chapter 3
SKEPTICISM AND A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE

1. Introduction

In an oft-quoted passage, Kant declares that Hume woke him from his dogmatic slumber. Does Kant's critical theory aim to provide a response to skepticism? If so, to which kind of skepticism?

The relevance of skepticism to Kant's transcendental project has been a matter of some controversy. The question that divides Kant's interpreters is whether the skeptical problem addressed by the Transcendental Analytic concerns our knowledge of the external world or whether it concerns the objective validity of the categories.¹ Indeed, the task of showing that sensible experiences must involve knowledge of objects in the "weighty" sense can be regarded as distinct from the task of demonstrating that pure concepts are objectively valid. A skeptic who purports to undermine the possibility of a certain type of synthetic a priori knowledge would maintain that, regardless of whether or not we have empirical knowledge of an objective world, objective knowledge need not involve the categories of the understanding. But is it possible to establish the objective validity of pure concepts without providing an account of objectivity?² My claim will be that an account of objectivity must be part of a response to skepticism about a priori

¹ According to Strawson (1966: 88), the main argument of the transcendental deduction purports "to establish that experience necessarily involves knowledge of objects, in the weighty sense"; i.e., to provide a proof of objectivity as a response to a skeptical argument that aspires to undermine knowledge of the external world. Ameriks (1978; 2003), disagrees with Strawson. Ameriks maintains (1978: 273) that "it is necessary and profitable to understand the deduction as moving from the assumption that there is empirical knowledge to a proof of the [a priori] preconditions of that knowledge". The goal of Kant's Transcendental Analytic is to establish the objective validity of the categories. This differs from a justification of the claim that objects of our sensible experiences must be objects in the weighty sense. By pointing out this distinction, Ameriks strives to weaken the relevance of skepticism to Kant's epistemology.

² According to Ameriks, Kant's regressive argument assumes that there is empirical knowledge. The inadequacy of the regressive argument was pointed out in Kant's time by Maimon:

Kant posits at the very outset experience with respect to objects (i.e. the use of synthetic judgments which express necessity and universal validity) and demonstrates the reality of pure concepts and judgments in that they are the conditions of experience. Their reality is then hypothetical; so that if with Hume I

knowledge due to the nature of Kant's concept of the a priori.³ The possibility that we possess a priori concepts together with sensible experiences and no empirical knowledge is incompatible with Kant's concept of the a priori.⁴ In allowing this possibility, a "regressive" argument amounts to an inadequate interpretation of synthetic a priori knowledge and of the relevance of skepticism to the possibility of such knowledge.

In order to reveal the sense in which skepticism is indeed relevant to Kant's theory, I will distinguish between two kinds of skepticism about a priori knowledge that differ in terms of the meaning each assigns to the term "a priori". My claim will be that the kind of skepticism that is relevant to Kant's theory assigns the meaning stated above in Chapter 2 to the term "a priori". However, one difficulty faced by this interpretation concerns the distinction between "*quid facti*" and "*quid juris*". According to the received interpretation, this distinction points out two layers of the a priori. The answer to the "quid facti" singles out concepts that are part of the "mixed fabric of human cognition" (A 85/B 117). It is assumed that the existence of these concepts "in the mind" leaves unanswered the question of objective validity (of concepts) or truth (of judgments). It is believed that the answer to the question "quid juris" removes this gap. As I will show, this interpretation misconstrues Kant's distinction. My claim is that the answers to

deny the fact that we have judgments of experience which express necessity and universal validity and explain these as the operation of association of concepts, then I cannot concede that there is a science of nature, strictly speaking. Our knowledge of nature is without certainty, and consists only of hypotheses and assumptions (Maimon, 1793: 203-204).

Why must one suppose, as does Kant, that our sensible experiences amount to empirical knowledge? It is clear that a regressive argument can be successful even if it has turned out that there is no empirical knowledge. The categories could be known as conditions of the possibility of empirical knowledge even if our experiences did not constitute empirical knowledge. The question is whether this possibility is compatible with the necessity and universality of a priori concepts.

³ This is also Guyer's position. According to Guyer (1987: 67), Strawson and Ameriks' respective interpretations are not entirely unconnected, for "the anti-skeptical deduction is clearly meant to show that knowledge of objects external to the self is not only necessary but also requires *a priori* knowledge of the objective validity of the categories".

⁴ It is precisely this possibility that is pointed out by Maimon's skeptical charge. Nevertheless, my claim will be that whether or not Kant's theory can establish the objective validity of the categories, it is not vulnerable to this kind of skeptical charge.

“quid facti” and “quid juris” are related to two different procedures for acquiring a priori concepts. The procedure related to “quid facti” is that of empirical abstraction, whereas the procedure related to “quid juris” is that of the Transcendental Deduction. Empirical abstraction can explain the possession of pure a priori concepts only if one *presupposes* that empirical objects are a priori laden. Yet, empirical abstraction is inadequate as a deduction of pure concepts since it cannot account for the *necessity* of a priori concepts.

The second question to be addressed is the role of the fact of “scientific cognition a priori” (B 128) within Kant’s response to Hume’s skepticism. It is in this context that the regressive argument is introduced. Interpretations that attribute a regressive assumption to Kant are presumably based on Kant’s contention that we possess scientific cognition a priori. Nevertheless, my claim is that Kant’s supposition is intended above all to undermine Hume’s “empiricism in principles” and not to introduce the seemingly dogmatic assumption that we are allowed to assume pre-theoretically that we possess objective experience. It is only the reality of *mathematical knowledge* that Kant allows us to assume pre-theoretically. Where mathematical knowledge is concerned, Hume’s argument must indeed be regarded as involving a mistake which contains two parts: commitment to “empiricism in principles” and the absence of proper distinctions between analytic and synthetic judgments and between a priori and a posteriori judgments. Stated in Kant’s language, Hume’s “empiricism in principles” entails that synthetic a priori cognitions are *generally* impossible. But a principle that could be used to undermine the certainty of mathematical knowledge must be erroneous in some way. “Empiricism in principles” is incompatible with mathematical knowledge because “empiricism in principles” entails that all kinds of synthetic a priori claims to knowledge are impossible. “Empiricism in principles” must therefore be abandoned. Yet, the removal of “empiricism in principles” does not suffice as a response to the doubt that concerns non-mathematical kinds of synthetic a priori claims to knowledge. Freed from “empiricism in principles”, Hume’s problem can be rephrased by means of terms that are foreign to Hume’s language as follows: it is conceivable (within Kant’s own conceptual scheme) that objects can be *given* in intuition “without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding” (A 89/B 122). This claim pertains to the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. If the concept of

an objective world that does not employ the categories were really possible, a priori judgments and concepts would not be possible. Hume's problem is transformed into a problem that concerns transcendental synthesis, i.e., of how sensible intuitions and pure concepts can together form empirical knowledge of objects and why they must form such knowledge together. "Empiricism in principles" is the reason why the problem revealed by Hume appeared to have no possible solution. However, the refutation of "empiricism in principles" is insufficient as a solution of this problem.

2. *Two Kinds of Skepticism*

Let us begin with a schematic presentation of Hume's argument viewed from a Kantian vantage point.⁵ The argument begins by explaining why synthetic a priori claims to knowledge must be justified independently of experience, why a priori propositions cannot be known on the basis of empirical evidence and why a priori concepts cannot be formed by means of abstraction from empirical objects. Notwithstanding this fact, a priori concepts and judgments have "a tendency inherent in them" to be asserted about empirical objects (principles of the understanding) or to be applied to empirical objects (categories). The final step is to explain why there can be neither a priori justification nor empirical justification for the claim that a priori concepts must be true of empirical objects and empirical states of affairs. Synthetic a priori knowledge is therefore impossible.

However, the conclusion of this argument seems to leave an important question unanswered. Does the skeptic allow us to have some kind of a priori knowledge while denying that we possess synthetic a priori knowledge or does she deny that we possess any type of a priori knowledge? If the skeptic allows us to have some kind of a priori knowledge, what is the content of this knowledge? There are two incompatible answers to these questions. Although something is known a priori in both cases, what is known is different in each case. One answer is to claim that the skeptical argument does not undermine *the fact* that we possess a priori concepts and a priori judgments and that we know a priori *the content* of our a priori concepts and judgments. Nevertheless, although we know the content of our a priori concepts and judgments, we do not know whether these concepts are instantiated by empirical objects

⁵ On the history of the influence of Hume's writings on Kant see Kuehn (1983).

or whether the a priori judgments we are disposed to make are true of these objects. The possession of a priori concepts and a priori knowledge of the content of a priori thoughts is assumed to be compatible with this claim. It is assumed that the concepts “exist in our minds” independently of whether they are true of empirical objects.

A different interpretation maintains that it follows from the meaning of Kant’s term “a priori concept” that such a concept must be a necessary concept of objects. Here too something is known a priori independently of experience. One knows a priori *the conditions* that must be satisfied by such concepts, conditions that are part of the meaning of the *generic* term “a priori concept”. But knowledge of these conditions does not entail that one *possesses a priori concepts* of objects or that one can make synthetic a priori judgments. If there were reasons to think that the alleged a priori concepts are not necessary, these would also be reasons to claim that the alleged concepts are not a priori concepts.

The difference between these two possibilities concerns the content of the term “a priori knowledge”. According to the first interpretation, the truth of the skeptical charge does not rule out the fact that one possesses a priori concepts of objects and that one has the capacity to make synthetic a priori judgments. According to the second interpretation, if the skeptical charge is true, then there are no a priori concepts of objects and we do not have the capacity to make synthetic a priori judgments. The alleged a priori concepts and judgments at best represent illusions of knowledge.

Which of these two kinds of skepticism did Kant consider to be important and valuable? Which of the two did he intend to address? Kant’s writings include evidence that seem to justify both lines of interpretation. Needless to say, the answer to this question is important for an understanding of the nature of his response to skepticism.⁶

⁶ In spite of its importance, Kant commentators ignore the distinction between the two kinds of skepticism. Consider for example how Guyer presents the task of a transcendental deduction. According to Guyer (1992: 125), a transcendental deduction has to establish the objective reality and the objective validity of the categories. “A concept has objective reality if it has at least some instantiation in experience but objective validity only if it applies to all possible objects of experience”. But different answers to this question are invited by the two interpretations of the skeptical charges. According to the first interpretation, the call for a *proof* that a priori concepts such as the concept “cause” have “objective reality” and “objective validity” is required by the fact that a priori knowledge of the content of concepts and judgments that exist in our minds is *compatible* with the possibility that the judgment “every alternation must have a cause” is *false*. In other words, according to this reading, what is in need of proof is that a priori concepts that one possesses

Although the majority of Kant's interpreters do not raise the question of the nature of the skeptical problem addressed by Kant's *Transcendental Analytic*, they implicitly assume that this problem was related to the first of the above two kinds of skepticism.⁷ To be sure, this reading is not entirely misguided, but the textual evidence that supports the second reading is stronger. Moreover, it coheres better with Kant's epistemic theory. It is clear that the interpretation of Kant's concept of the a priori presented in Chapter 2 is compatible only with the second of the above-suggested kinds of skepticism.

independently of whether they are exhibited by objects of experience are true of the objects of experience, and that a priori judgments that one can make independently of whether they are true or false of these objects are true. According to the second reading, this presentation of the task of a transcendental deduction is nonsensical. For according to this reading, in making an a priori judgment one is conscious of the necessity of the proposition. If one has reasons to think that the alleged a priori concepts are not true of empirical objects or that the alleged a priori judgments are possibly false, these would be reasons to disqualify them as a priori.

⁷ Howell (1992) is a lucid example of this approach. According to Howell, the task of a transcendental deduction is the following:

Kant's goal in the *Transcendental Deduction* is to prove the objective validity of the categories. By the categories Kant means certain *a priori* concepts that are yielded to us by our understanding, or faculty of thought. These concepts include those of substance, cause and effect, and extensive spatial magnitude. Kant counts such concepts as *a priori* on the ground that they originate in operations or capacities of our mind that are independent of those mental operations involved in our having sense experience. Kant also counts these concepts as *a priori* because, as he sees it, we take them to apply with necessity and strict universality to all objects (or to all objects of a certain group). And he has, earlier, taken necessity and strict universality to be the marks of the *a priori* (both of judgments that are known *a priori* and, in a slightly different sense, of concepts that are possessed and utilized *a priori*). Yet — and here the question of the objective validity of the categories emerges — suppose that we regard the categories as *a priori* in this latter sense. Then it is still hardly obvious that the categories do apply with necessity and strict universality to all objects of the relevant group. Hence the problem arises of deducing the categories of the understanding — of justifying our right to employ those categories as though they did apply in that way to all such objects. (Howell, 1992: 1)

As Howell notes, even if one regards the categories as necessary and strictly universal concepts it is not obvious that the categories apply with necessity and strict universality to all objects of a relevant group.

3. *Subjective Origin and the “Question of Fact”*

There are three features of Kant’s position that seem to invite the first of the above reading: Kant’s distinction between concepts and intuitions, the “subjectivity” of the a priori and the distinction between “quid facti” and “quid juris”. To begin with, the distinction between concepts and intuition seems to allow the truth of the skeptical conclusion. Pure concepts and pure intuitions differ with regard to what establishes their objective reality. If any object appears, then it must appear in space and time. Pure concepts do not represent such conditions:

The categories of the understanding, on the contrary, do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all, hence objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding, and therefore without the understanding containing their *a priori* conditions. Thus a difficulty is 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. (A 89-90/ B 122)

Since pure concepts are subjective conditions of thinking and since they are not forms of intuition their objective reality must be questioned.

The distinction between “quid facti” and “quid juris” is stated as follows:

Jurists, when they speak of entitlements and claims, distinguish in a legal matter between the questions about what is lawful (*quid juris*) and that which concern the fact (*quid facti*)...

Among the many concepts, however, that constitute the very mixed fabric of human cognition, there are some that are also destined for pure use *a priori* (completely independently of all experience), and these always require a deduction of their entitlement, since proofs from experience are not sufficient for the lawfulness of such a use, and yet one must know how these concepts can be related to objects that they do not derive from any experience. (A 84-85/B 116-117)

The “quid facti” question is usually understood as the question of

whether our epistemic inventory includes pure concepts. The common assumption is that Kant answers this question affirmatively and that his answer is not dependent on a positive answer to the “quid juris” question. According to the above quotation, objects may appear without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding. This claim seems to imply that experiences of objects that do not involve pure concepts are possible. That is, that an account of the objective world that requires no appeal to pure concepts is conceivable. According to the second quotation, such possibility appears to be compatible with the fact that pure concepts are part of the “mixed fabric of human cognition”. Taken together, these claims suggest the first of the above interpretations. The answer to “quid facti” presumably emphasizes the subjective origin of the pure concepts. The subjective origin of pure concepts is in this context equivalent to their non-experiential origin. Pure concepts are possibly not instantiated by objects (appearances) of experience. A priori judgments are possibly false.

4. *Apriority and Skepticism*

According to the first of the above-mentioned readings, the “possession” of a priori concepts and the ability to make a priori judgments is not sufficient for knowledge that they apply to objects of the relevant group with necessity and strict universality. It might be expected that if a priori concepts and judgments allow the skeptical charge, this is either due to some features of apriority as such or to some feature of the combination of apriority and syntheticity. However, a careful reading of Kant’s texts proves that neither apriority as such nor the combination of a priority and syntheticity is compatible with skepticism in the above sense.

We may begin by stating the position ascribed to Kant by the first reading. According to this reading, Kant is apparently committed to the following statements:

- (a) We possess a priori concepts and the ability to make a priori judgments.
- (b) Possessing a priori concepts and the ability to make a priori judgments is not sufficient for claiming that one knows something of the objects given to one.
- (c) Skepticism results from properties related to *apriority*: the objec-

tive origin of all modes of a priori knowledge and the emptiness of the a priori.

(d) Only synthetic a priori judgments are doubtful.

If Kant was indeed committed to the conjunction of all these statements, then he can be said to have been committed to an inconsistent position. To begin with, it is agreed that analytic judgments are indubitable. Analytic judgments are a priori judgments. Therefore, some propositions are known a priori with certainty.

It might be argued that although analytic judgments are instances of a priori knowledge, analytic judgments are not instances of knowledge of objects. When one makes an analytic judgment, one knows nothing about an object. However, this was not Kant's position. Kant did indeed think that immediate knowledge of the existence of objects could not be based on analytic judgments. But this claim is not equivalent to the claim that nothing is known about real objects by means of analytic judgments. The principle of contradiction is a principle that is sufficient for the truth of analytic judgments (A 151/B191). It is also a "general though merely negative criterion of all truth" (A151/B 190). One *can know* that "no predicate pertains to a thing that contradicts it" (A151 / B 190). Hence one knows something about objects by means of analytic judgments. If analytic a priori judgments are instances of knowledge, skepticism cannot be founded on apriority as such. Otherwise, *all* a priori claims to knowledge would be open to the skeptical charge. In other words, (c) and (d) are incompatible together.

In order to resolve this inconsistency, one may grant the claim that analytic judgments are instances of knowledge. Skepticism with regard to a priori modes of knowledge is not entailed by features that belong to apriority as such. (d) is incompatible with (c) and (c) is false. No feature that belongs to the concept "a priori", i.e., to what all a priori claims to knowledge share, can be the reason for the possibility of skepticism about a priori knowledge. Rather, skepticism results from the combination of syntheticity and apriority. Hence (c) has to be eliminated and (b) becomes (b'):

(b') if one makes a *synthetic* a priori judgments one does not yet possess a sufficient reason for claiming that one knows anything about the objects given to one.

However, Kant never held (b'). The judgments of mathematics are a

counter-example to (b'). They are synthetic a priori and they are indubitable. Indeed, mathematical knowledge does not involve any assumption that concerns the existence of empirical objects. But for Kant this never means that empirical facts may be introduced as a refutation of mathematical claims to knowledge.⁸ Moreover, according to Kant, if an epistemic theory contains a thesis that undermines mathematical claims to knowledge, this would be *a reason to rule out the theory*. One of the passages in which Kant makes this claim is the following:

The **empirical** derivation, however, to which both of them [Locke and Hume] resorted, cannot be reconciled with the reality of the scientific cognition *a priori* that we possess, that namely of **pure mathematics** and **general science of nature**; and is therefore refuted by the fact. (B 127-128)

The reality of scientific synthetic a priori cognition of pure mathematics is assumed to be a fact that refutes a position that cannot be reconciled with it. A similar claim is stated in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Hume's position is described there as an "empiricism in principles" that introduces "along with it the most rigorous skepticism with respect to the whole natural science" (5:52). Mathematics escaped Hume's assault since he considered it to be analytic. But if Hume's empiricism in principle is accepted, "a universal skepticism will have to follow (though it would, admittedly, concern only the learned)" (5: 52). Even mathematics, "a science, so highly esteemed for its apodictic certainty" (5: 52) cannot escape the charge of skepticism. However, if Hume's skeptical argument applies to Mathematics, this would not be another skeptical problem that should be resolved. Rather, it would be an indication that a position committed to "empiricism in principles"

⁸ It worth noting that although mathematics is "highly esteemed for its apodictic certainty", an account of its objective validity is required:

There are, however, pure principles *a priori* that I may nevertheless not properly ascribe to the pure understanding, since they are not derived from pure concepts but rather from pure intuitions (although by means of the understanding); the understanding, however, is the faculty of concepts. Mathematics has principles of this sort, but their application to experience, thus their objective validity, indeed the possibility of such synthetic *a priori* cognition (its deduction) still always rests on the pure understanding. (A 159-160/B 198-199)

It is clear that the reason why one requires an account of the objective validity of mathematics, of how it is applicable to object of experience, is not that mathematical synthetic a priori judgments are *possibly false*.

is *epistemically inadequate* since it cannot be reconciled with the fact that there is scientific synthetic a priori knowledge.

5. *Necessity and Subjective Necessity*

It might be assumed that a priori concepts and judgments are susceptible to the skeptical charge, because a priori knowledge is not entailed by the necessity and strict universality of a priori concepts and judgments.⁹ However, what might the term “necessity” mean, if it is assumed that a priori knowledge is not entailed by the mere “existence” of (necessary) a priori concepts and judgments? A possible answer is to claim that “necessity” means “subjective necessity”, a term often employed by Kant in this context. It might seem to be the case that when a subject recognizes the necessity of an a priori concept or judgment, she merely reports how she conceives things; that is, that it is not possible *for her* to conceive or imagine that the negation of the synthetic a priori judgment that she makes is possibly true or that the objects that she experiences do not instantiate these concepts. Nevertheless, it is objectively possible that the negations of a priori judgments are true and it is objectively possible that a priori concepts are not instantiated by anything.

Kant consistently denies this view. Kant thinks that it is a mistake to construe “necessity” as “mere subjective necessity”. The latter concept cannot be the criterion of an a priori concept or judgment. The passage below is just one of many places where Kant denies that the necessity of a priori judgments is equivalent to “subjective necessity”:

The famous Locke, from neglect of this consideration, and because he encountered pure concepts of the understanding in experience, also derived them from this experience, and thus proceeded so **inconsistently** that he thereby dared to make attempts at cognitions that go far beyond the boundary of all experience. David Hume recognized that in order to be able to do the latter it is necessary that these concepts would have to have their origin *a priori*. But since he could not explain at all how it is possible for the understanding to think of concepts that in themselves are not combined in the understanding as still necessarily combined in the object, and it never occurred to him that perhaps the understanding itself, by

⁹ This is suggested by Howell (1992: 1).

means of these concepts, could be the originator of the experience in which its objects are encountered, he thus driven by necessity, derived them from experience (namely from subjective necessity arisen from frequent association in experience, which is subsequently falsely held to be objective, i.e., custom). (B 127)

“A priori origin” is incompatible with “subjective necessity”. Hume “driven by necessity” succumbed to “subjective necessity, i.e., custom”, because he could not explain to himself how “these concepts would have their origin a priori”. Concepts would have their origin a priori if the understanding is the originator of experience by their means. Hume introduced subjective necessity since he failed to see how a priori concepts could have their origin a priori.

A similar claim is made in the following passage:

[...] the concept of cause, which asserts the necessity of a consequent under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily implanted in us, of combining certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation. 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. (B 167-168)

In contrast to the first quotation, in the above passage, “subjective necessity” is not a synonym for “custom”. As we shall see later, the position to which Kant refers here is Crusius’s position rather than that taken by Hume.¹⁰ In this context, “subjective necessity” means a subjective predisposition for thinking implanted in us by our creator (B 167). An account of a priori principles that employs this concept would be incompatible with the *necessity* of the a priori. Subjective necessity

¹⁰ In the *Enquiry Concerning the Clarity of the Principles of Natural Theology and Ethics*, Kant refers to Crusius as a philosopher who denies that the principle of contradiction is “the universal highest principle of all thought” and emphasizes the presence of immediately certain unprovable propositions. “[T]heir correctness would be understood from the nature of our understanding” (2: 293-294). In a letter to Marcus Herz (February 21, 1772), Kant refers to Crusius position as one of the inadequate positions that should be replaced by Critical philosophy. As Engstrom notes (1994: 361), Crusius represents the “middle course” mentioned in the beginning of the above passage. On Crusius’ influence on the development of Kant’s philosophy see also Friedman, (1992: 22-24), Walker (1978: 4-5). I will discuss this topic in Chapter 4.

merely refers to properties of the subject, that is, to her constitution. To claim that the subject cannot help thinking that her representations are causally related would be merely to claim that the necessity here is merely subjective necessity. In contrast, the “objective necessity” of their connection indicates that they are *combined in the object*. I will return to this passage later.

As already noted in Chapter 2, “impossible to think otherwise” and “known to be (really) possibly false” jointly entail a contradiction. The term “subjective” added to the term “necessity” is meant to distinguish two kinds of necessity. Yet, as I noted earlier, if a judgment is recognized as necessary, it is not possible for the subject making the judgment to claim that the negation of the judgment is possible. In making an a priori judgment, the subject is conscious of the *necessity* of the judgment. If the required “necessity” is “subjective necessity”, then the subject must be aware of some reasons that might prove the judgment false. Therefore, the real possibility of the negation of the judgment must be both conceivable and inconceivable for the subject.

It might be argued that the skeptical charge is based on the gap between “inconceivable” and “impossible”. One may argue, for example, that the negation of an a priori judgment might be *epistemically* inconceivable and nevertheless metaphysically *really* possible. It is clear however, that given that the subject making the judgment is aware of this distinction, epistemic inconceivability becomes subjective necessity. Any theory that allows for such a gap would therefore have to be ruled out in an account of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition. As will be shown, this is the nature of Kant’s argument from the reality of synthetic a priori cognitions to a Copernican revolution in epistemology. The elimination of this gap consists of the following three issues: (a) to present an account of the mind and intentionality in which the realm of really possible objects is identified with the realm of possible objects of experience (b) to claim that the necessity involved in synthetic a priori *knowledge* concerns only the realm of really possible objects, (c) to claim that no additional metaphysical (a priori) knowledge that one possesses can undermine the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge.

We may therefore conclude that no property related to apriority as such or to the combination of syntheticity and apriority can be the reason for the skeptical charge. Kant’s position resists such clear-cut identification of the source of the skeptical problem.

6. *Synthetic A Priori Knowledge and Knowledge of the External World*

If one is persuaded by the first of the above-mentioned readings, one cannot avoid noticing the similarity between skepticism about a priori knowledge and Cartesian skeptical arguments regarding our knowledge of the external world. In both cases, skepticism seems to leave us with some kind of certain knowledge. In the Cartesian case, one is left with knowledge of one's ideas to which one has privileged access. In the Kantian case, one is left with pure concepts that "exist" in our minds to which one is assumed to have the same kind of epistemic access. Thus, the justificatory project of a transcendental deduction seems to be closely related to the Cartesian epistemic enterprise.¹¹ However, it can be shown that this apparent resemblance indicates the shortcomings of this reading. For Cartesian skepticism with regard to knowledge of the external world and the Kantian problem of objective reality have almost nothing in common.

First, in the Cartesian case, one must prove that one's *ideas* apply to external *objects*. While one has direct immediate and non-inferential knowledge of one's ideas, the existence of the external object is known only by means of an inference. The skeptic emphasizes the difficulties related to the possible "correspondence" between mind-independent objects and states of affairs that are not immediately accessible to the mind, and ideas to which one has immediate and privileged access. But in the Kantian case, one has to demonstrate that *pure concepts* apply to sensible *appearances*, both of which are *mind-dependent*. Appearances are immediately given in intuition and concepts are parts of our judgmental reflective capacities. In other words, the Kantian problem is internal to what in Descartes' terms would be the realm of ideas. It is not a problem of "correspondence" between mind-independent entities and entities that are essentially mind-dependent but rather a problem of synthesizing two kinds of mind-dependent representations. Kant's problem is therefore more basic than Cartesian skepticism with regard to knowledge of the external world. It applies to what is left untouched by Cartesian skeptical arguments.¹²

The difference between these two epistemic programs is made explicit when a feature shared by these two enterprises is shown to be re-

¹¹ See, for example, Allison (1986).

¹² In addition, in Kant's theory, "external" in the empirical sense means "being an object in space". Space is a pure form of representation and one is immediately acquainted with objects in space.

lated to their differences. The first chapter of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* includes arguments that seem to undermine our knowledge of the external world. However, if one reads *Meditations on First Philosophy* to the end, one realizes that these arguments are refutable. One can have knowledge of the external world.¹³ Assuming that Descartes' account is adequate, what could the epistemic modality of the skeptical charge presented in the first chapter be? Is it *really true* that we know nothing about external objects? The answer is clearly no. For as the rest of the *Meditations on First Philosophy* establishes, there are positive knowable reasons incompatible with the conclusion of the generic skeptical arguments (God's existence, God's benevolence, etc.). In other words, although the generic claim that one can have knowledge of the external world on the basis of one's ideas is doubtful from a given epistemic perspective, it is indubitable according to the overall epistemic view presented in the *Meditations on First Philosophy*. A distinction between conceivability and truth is therefore implicit in Descartes' argument.

A similar distinction is required in the Kantian case. Given that, as Kant thought, a transcendental deduction to pure concepts is available, an account of an objective world of experience that does not involve the pure concepts of the understanding is *not really possible*. Nevertheless, this conclusion does not rule out the conceivability of the skeptical charge. In other words, given that a transcendental deduction is available, the skeptical charge is both conceivable and *not really possible*.

There is, therefore, an obvious difference between the two programs. In the Cartesian case, the distinction is a distinction between *conceivability and truth*, while, in the Kantian case, the distinction is one between *conceivability and real possibility*. In Descartes' case, it is conceivable but *false* that we know nothing about the "external" world. It is conceivable because it is *really possible*. The reason why it is assumed not to be true that we do not know anything about the external world has nothing to do with the content of the statements in question. In the Kantian case, the conceivability of the skeptical charge does not entail its real possibility. An account of the objective world that does not employ the categories is conceivable but *not really possible*.

Finally, Cartesian skeptical arguments that aim to undermine knowledge of the external world leave intact knowledge of ideas. Ideas of which we have certain knowledge have at least the following feature:

¹³ Descartes (1985).

the judgments that we can form by means of these ideas such as “there is a chair in front of me” are contingent judgments. Ideas can represent possible objects and states of affairs independently of whether these objects and states of affairs exist in the actual world. In the Kantian case, however, pure concepts are necessary concepts of objects and pure judgments are necessary judgments. They can represent possible objects and generic states of affairs independently of whether these objects exist but not independently of whether an experienced object instantiates these concepts. I will return to this point later.

Taken together, these clarifications establish the inadequacy of the first of the aforementioned readings.

7. *Quid Facti*

I now turn to examine the alternative reading mentioned above, which I think should be favored. As I noted earlier, Kant’s distinction between “quid facti” and “quid juris” seems to present this reading with an important difficulty. A common assumption is that the affirmative answer to the “quid facti” question, the claim that we possess a priori concepts and judgments, reveals their non-empirical origin. It is assumed that the answer to the “quid juris” question *justifies* their applicability to experience. In other words, it is assumed that the answer to “quid facti” leaves “quid juris” unanswered.¹⁴ If these assumptions are true, then my claim that a priori judgments cannot be both “part of the mixed fabric of human cognition” and possibly false appear to be inconsistent with Kant’s text.

As I will show now, the claim that Kant’s answer to the “quaestio facti” singles out a priori concepts and that the answer to the “quid juris” justifies their applicability to experience misconstrues the distinction between these two questions.

The “quid facti” question appears in the context in which the need for a transcendental deduction is stated. There are two distinct facts about the a priori that appear in the paragraph introducing the transcendental deduction. Neither of them, however, appear as part of an answer to the “quaestio facti”, which is the question of how one may come to possess a priori concepts. Let us first consider a passage in which Kant explains the need for a transcendental deduction to a priori concepts:

¹⁴ See, for example, Paton (1936: 314-316) and Körner (1955: 56-59).

Among the many concepts, however, that constitute the very mixed fabric of human cognition, there are some that are also destined for pure use *a priori* (completely independently of all experience), and these always require a deduction of their entitlement, since proofs from experience are not sufficient for the lawfulness of such a use, and yet one must know how these concepts can be related to objects that they do not derive from any experience. I therefore call the explanation of the way in which concepts can relate to objects *a priori* their **transcendental deduction**, and distinguish this from the **empirical deduction**, which shows how a concept is acquired through experience and reflection on it, and therefore concerns not the lawfulness but the fact from which the possession has arisen. (A 85/B 117)

The first sentence states a fact about a priori concepts. It is a fact that the mixed fabric of human cognition contains concepts that are destined for *pure use*. The apriority of concept is equivalent to pure use. Given that “use” in this context means applicability to objects, it is part of the concept “a priori concept” that such a concept is destined to be *applied a priori* to objects. In this context, pure use is equivalent to *lawful use*. A priori concepts therefore have two necessary conditions: (a) they are destined to be applied a priori; (b) their use is lawful.

It is important to note that the lawfulness of pure use is an essential feature of these concepts. The main questions addressed in this passage, namely, the question of why a *transcendental* deduction is required for pure concepts and why an empirical deduction should be disqualified, pertain to this feature. It is the *lawfulness* of a priori use that explains why a transcendental deduction is required. Empirical deduction cannot account for the lawfulness of a priori use.

The lawfulness of a priori use is equated in the present context with apriority. Kant does not claim that “lawfulness” implies “subjective origin”. The subjectivity of a priori concepts is not mentioned at all in this context. The “quaestio facti”, which is the question of how one may come to possess a priori concepts, is not related to the fact stated in the first sentence of the above quotation. Kant addresses the “quaestio facti” as part of his explanation of why empirical deduction to pure concepts is an idle endeavor:

Such a tracing of the first endeavors of our power of cognition to ascend from individual perceptions to general concepts is

without doubt of great utility, and the famous Locke is to be thanked for having first opened the way for this. Yet a **deduction** of the pure *a priori* concepts can never be achieved in this way; it does not lie down this path at all, for in regard to their future use, which should be entirely independent of experience, an entirely different birth certificate than that of an ancestry from experiences must be produced. I will therefore call this attempted physiological derivation, which cannot properly be called a deduction at all because it concerns a *quaestio facti*, the explanation of the **possession** of a pure cognition. It is therefore clear that only a transcendental and never an empirical deduction of them can be given, and that in regard to pure *a priori* concepts empirical deductions are nothing but idle attempts, which can occupy only those who have not grasped the entirely distinctive nature of this cognition. (A 86-87/B 118-119)

An empirical deduction is equivalent to Locke's method of abstraction: from individual perception to general concept. This "attempted physiological derivation" is tantamount to "the explanation of the possession of a pure cognition". Such an explanation concerns the "quaestio facti". One cannot be satisfied with an answer to the "quaestio facti" precisely since such an answer to this question is equivalent to empirical abstraction. Such a procedure is incompatible with the lawfulness of a priori use.

Although the method within which an answer to the "quaestio facti" is given is inadequate as an account of a priori use, it has some merits. It might explain in an insufficient manner how a priori concepts could become part of Human knowledge. Kant himself conducts such an empirical abstraction in the introduction to the second edition of the Critique:

Not merely in judgments, however, but even in concepts is an origin of some of them revealed *a priori*. Gradually remove from your experiential concept of a **body** everything that is empirical in it — the color, the hardness or softness, the weight, even the impenetrability — there still remains the **space** that was occupied by the body (which has now entirely disappeared), and you cannot leave that out. Likewise, if you remove from your empirical concept of every object, whether corporeal or incorporeal, all those properties of which experience teaches you, you could still not take from it that by means of which you think of it as a **substance** or as **dependent**

on a substance (even though this concept contains more determination than that of an object in general). (B 5-6)

In this context, a priori concepts are revealed to the mind by abstracting them from empirical objects. The empirical objects from which one abstracts are given with their conditions of objectivity. The data from which one abstracts is, in other words, a priori laden. But although such a method reveals to the mind that it is possible to remove the properties “which experience teaches” from the objects of experience and to be left with some general features of these objects, it cannot account for the *lawfulness* of a priori use that is an essential part of the content of the abstracted concepts. In other words, the fact that one might acquire pure concepts in this manner presupposes what needs to be explained and cannot be explained by means of this method, namely, the lawfulness of pure use.

One could mistakenly assume that the deficiency of empirical abstraction primarily pertains to the justification of a priori concepts and not their acquisition. However, in B 127, Kant identifies both Locke’s and Hume’s derivation of a priori concepts as empirical. But “the unfolding of the experience in which they [a priori concepts] are encountered, is not their derivation (but their illustration), since they would thereby be only contingent”. (A 94/B 127-128). In other words, the fact that a priori concepts are encountered in experience cannot explain why they must be encountered. The unfolding of experience cannot explain future use (A 87/B 119). Locke omitted this consideration. Hume recognized that any account of the necessity of a priori concepts must show that these concepts “must have their origin a priori” (B 127). It is the *necessity* of a priori concept that implies their *a priori origin*, not their subjectivity. In the present context, the contrast is between “a priori origin” and what might be termed “empirical origin”. It is not that a priori origin implies that the concepts are not yet applied to objects. A priori concepts are encountered in the unfolding of experience. But the fact that they are encountered in this way cannot be equated with their “origin”. This type of derivation cannot explain their alleged necessity.

It is therefore clear that, in the context in which they are asked, Kant does not conceive the “quaestio facti” and the “quid juris” as two questions which both need to be addressed within the same epistemic enterprise. The fact that human cognition contains concepts that are destined for pure lawful use is simply stated and is not presented as

an answer to a question. In this context, each of these questions is related to a different “deduction” that aims to provide an account that explains the alleged presence of these concepts in our mind. It is the nature of this fact and the queries that it involves that concern Kant most.

8. *The “Fact” of Pure Science*

The claim that human cognition includes concepts destined for pure use is not the only a priori fact mentioned in the sections introducing the transcendental deduction. Another fact is stated in the following passage:

The **empirical** derivation, however, to which both of them [Locke and Hume] resorted, cannot be reconciled with the reality of the scientific cognition *a priori* that we possess, that namely of **pure mathematics** and **general science of nature**; and is therefore refuted by the fact. (B 127-128)

We actually possess scientific cognition a priori. Kant’s examples are pure mathematics and general science of nature. Locke’s (dogmatic) empirical derivation cannot account for the modal features of scientific a priori knowledge. According to Kant, Hume’s skeptical empirical derivation of a priori concepts was sensitive to their modal features. But a priori concepts such as the concept of cause

so obviously contains the concept of a necessity of connection with an effect and a strict universality of rule that it would be entirely lost if one sought, as Hume did, to derive it from a frequent association of that which happens with that which precedes and a habit (thus a merely subjective necessity) of connecting representations arising from that association. (B 5)

Hume brings Locke’s procedure of empirical derivation to its culmination but reduces the objective necessity of a priori concepts to mere subjective necessity. According to Kant, the claim that the necessity contained in the concept “a priori concept” is nothing but mere subjective necessity amounts to the *elimination* of a priori concepts.¹⁵ Hume’s em-

¹⁵ As Bird suggests (1962: 84), although it is natural to believe that the property of apriority is ascribed to the categories in the metaphysical deduction, “[I]t would be just as natural to think that this elusive property is ascribed to the categories on the basis of the Transcendental Deduction”. In other words, the categories are not a priori independently of a Transcendental Deduction.

pirical derivation which his skeptical charge is based on is therefore incompatible with *the reality* of scientific a priori cognition.¹⁶

What role does the fact of scientific cognition have within Kant's response to skepticism? If the "scientific cognition a priori" referred to in this passage contains the concepts and judgments challenged by the skeptic, the conclusion of the skeptical argument must be false. For if a skeptical argument that challenges the a priori claims to knowledge is sound, then the alleged a priori concepts and judgments do not exist. How can Kant both maintain that skepticism about a priori knowledge must be false and that skepticism about a priori knowledge is a key to the critique of pure reason? Moreover, isn't the assumption that scientific cognition a priori is real a dogmatic assumption? Indeed, the reality of "scientific cognition a priori" is incompatible with a sound skeptical charge. However, one seems to be allowed to choose between these two incompatible options. One can either regard a priori scientific knowledge as a "real fact" or approve the conclusion of the (valid) skeptical argument. What might justify favoring the reality of scientific a priori knowledge over the truth of the skeptical conclusion?

As I already noted, the concern that Kant might be involved in a dogmatic unjustified philosophical choice was already expressed in Kant's time by Maimon and in the writing of many other commentators. Here is how Maimon presents his argument in his first book:

Herr Kant assumes as a fact beyond doubt that there are judgments of experience (which express necessity) and then he proves their objective validity by showing, that without them experience would be impossible; experience is possible since it has reality in accordance with his assumption and therefore these concepts possess objective reality. However, I doubt this fact itself, that is, *the fact that there are empirical judgments* and for this reason I am unable to prove their objective validity in this manner, but only the possibility of their objective validity. (1790: 80)

According to Maimon, Kant's argument begins with an unjustified dogmatic assumption. Kant assumes that we have experiences of objects.

¹⁶ Engstrom (1994) maintains that Hume's skepticism is disproved before the deduction because empirical derivation is an inadequate account of the possession of a priori concepts. As I will show later, the inadequacy of the empirical derivation does not entail the inconceivability of skepticism about a priori knowledge.

He then deduces pure concepts by claiming that they are the conditions of “real” experience. However, since it can be denied that we have experiences of objects, one can at best claim that if one had experiences of objects, a priori concepts would be their conditions. This claim is obviously insufficient as a response to Humian skepticism.

Kant never addressed this allegation explicitly. Nevertheless, it is possible to provide a response on his behalf. As I will show below, Maimon’s assault misconstrues the role of the fact of scientific a priori cognition.

The role of the fact of scientific cognition a priori in Kant’s response to skepticism is implied from the following two passages. The first appears in the *Prolegomena*:

Hume being prompted to cast his eye over the whole field of *a priori* cognitions in which human understanding claims such mighty possessions (a calling he felt worthy of a philosopher) heedlessly severed from it a whole, and indeed its most valuable province, namely, pure mathematics; for he imagined its nature or, so to speak, the state constitution of this empire depended on totally different principles, namely, on the law of contradiction alone; and although he did not divide judgments in this manner formally and universally as I have done here, what he said was equivalent to this: that mathematics contains only analytical, but metaphysics synthetical, a *priori* propositions. In this, however, he was greatly mistaken, and the mistake had a decidedly injurious effect upon his whole conception. But for this, he would have extended his question concerning the origin of our synthetical judgments far beyond the metaphysical concept of causality and included in it the possibility of mathematics *a priori* also, for this latter he must have assumed to be equally synthetical. And then he could not have based his metaphysical propositions on mere experience without subjecting the axioms of mathematics equally to experience, a thing which he was far too acute to do. (4: 272-273)

The topic of the above passage is not Hume’s skeptical conclusion with regard to the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. Rather, it is Hume’s claim that “metaphysical propositions [are based] on mere experience” that is contested. In order to reveal Hume’s mistake, one must interpret Hume’s original statements by means of statements that employ the Kantian distinction between “analytic a priori”, “synthetic a

priori” and “synthetic a posteriori”. Hume made two related mistakes. In Kant’s terms, Hume’s first mistake is that mathematics contains only *analytic* judgments. His second mistake consists in the claim that metaphysical concepts, such as the metaphysical concept of cause, are based on mere experience.

One might ask why, according to Hume, metaphysical propositions are based on mere experience? The answer is that in making this claim Hume is implicitly committed to two claims. The first is that all metaphysical propositions are synthetic, while the second claim is that all synthetic propositions can only be based on experience. The second claim is what Kant refers to as “empiricism in principles”. If this claim is true, there clearly can be no resolution of Hume’s skepticism. It implies that there can be no synthetic a priori propositions. According to Kant, it is the claim that *all* synthetic a priori propositions can only be based on mere experience that is incompatible with the reality of mathematical knowledge. Mathematical knowledge is both synthetic and a priori. If Hume had realized that mathematical propositions are not analytic, he would have recognized that his commitment to empiricism in principles must be mistaken.

A similar argument is found in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

David Hume, who can be said to have really begun all the assaults on the rights of pure reason which made a thorough investigation of them necessary, concluded as follows. The concept of *cause*, is a concept that contains the *necessity* of the connection of the existence of what is different just insofar as it is different, so that if A is posited I cognize that something altogether different from it, B, must necessarily also exist. But necessity can be attributed to a connection only insofar as the connection is cognized a priori; for, experience would enable us to cognize of such a conjunction only that it is, not that it is necessarily so. Now it is impossible, he says, to cognize a priori and as necessary the connection between one thing and *another* (or between one determination and another altogether different from it) if they are not given in perception. Therefore the concept of a cause is itself fraudulent and deceptive and, to speak of it in the mildest way, an illusion to be excused insofar as the *custom* (a *subjective* necessity) of perceiving certain things or their determinations as often associated along with or after one another in their existence is insensibly taken for an *objective* necessity of putting such a connection in the objects themselves; and thus the concept of a cause is acquired

surreptitiously and not rightfully — indeed, it can never be acquired or certified because it demands a connection in itself void, chimerical, and untenable before reason, one to which no object can ever correspond. So, with respect to all cognition having to do with the existence of things (mathematics thus remaining excepted) *empiricism* was first introduced as the sole source of principles, but along with it the most rigorous *skepticism* with respect to the whole of natural science (as philosophy)...

...But in the end that science, so highly esteemed for its apodictic certainty, must also succumb to *empiricism in principles* on the same ground on which Hume put custom in the place of objective necessity in the concept of cause; despite all its pride, it must consent to lower its bold claims commanding a priori assent and expect approval of the universal validity of its propositions from the kindness of observers who, as witnesses, would not refuse to admit that what the geometer propounds as principles they have always perceived as well, and who would therefore allow it to be expected in the future even though it is not necessary. In this way Hume's empiricism in principles also leads unavoidably to skepticism even with respect to mathematics and consequently in every *scientific* theoretical use of reason (for this belongs either to philosophy or to mathematics). I leave each to appraise for himself whether (in view of such a terrible downfall of the chief branches of cognition) the common use of reason will come through any better and will not instead become irretrievably entangled in this same destruction of all science, so that from the same principles a *universal* skepticism will have to follow (though it would, admittedly, concern only the learned). (5: 52)

This passage contains many of the ideas discussed before and may serve to sum them up. Kant is explicit here about the common fate of mathematical and metaphysical knowledge if Hume's method had been applied to both. The syntheticity of mathematical and causal judgments means that the concepts used in these judgments do not logically imply each other. In both cases, they are connected in the objects of the judgment. If Hume's empiricism in principles is accepted, mathematics, according to Kant, will have the same fate as metaphysics. In both cases, the necessary connection asserted in the judgment has to be established by empirical means. This would mean that no claim to necessary

synthetic connection between “one thing and another” could be established.¹⁷

Hume did not notice the devastating results of his empiricism in principles because he lacked the proper distinction between the Kantian types of judgments. Kant’s argument assumes that the reader will be reluctant to doubt mathematical knowledge. It therefore seems that one is again faced with a choice between two options, namely, Hume’s empiricism in principles on the one hand, and the reality of mathematical knowledge on the other.¹⁸

What is the nature of the skeptical problem about a priori knowledge which is revealed by the skeptical challenge? It is clear that merely repeating Hume’s original claim cannot single out the skeptical problem. Hume’s original claim is made within a theory that contains an error, that is, empiricism in principles. “Scientific cognition a priori” refers primarily to mathematical knowledge. The fact of scientific cognition a priori is used in Kant’s argument for the purpose of undermining Hume’s empiricism in principles. Yet, undermining Hume’s empiricism in principles does not suffice for the purpose of establishing the objective validity of the categories. Kant’s transcendentalism does indeed respond to skepticism that aims to undermine claims to synthetic a priori knowledge. However, if Kant’s aim was to remove a real skeptical problem that is somehow revealed by Hume’s contentions, the skeptical problem must be spelled out *within Kant’s theory* without implying the mistake that is part of Hume’s contention. In assessing Kant’s response, one must remember Hume’s mistake. The pro-

¹⁷ The fact that causal statements assert necessary existential connection and that mathematics abstracts completely from the existence of objects is irrelevant to this common fate. All that matters is that a synthetic connection between concepts in a judgment can be established only a posteriori.

¹⁸ Wasn’t Kant dogmatic in favoring the latter over the former? This seems to be a particularly pressing question in light of the current state of mathematical knowledge. Nevertheless, Kant and his contemporaries did not share our views. Mathematics is conceived by Kant to be a paradigm of secure knowledge “the most resplendent example of pure reason happily expanding itself without assistance from experience” (A 712/B 740). Mathematical knowledge is better justified than any metaphysical theory. It serves as a benchmark by means of which the adequacy of a metaphysical theory and a theory of knowledge are judged. Kant’s response does indeed depend on the assumption that mathematical knowledge is synthetic. The above analysis once again reveals the centrality of this assumption to his overall epistemic enterprise. It indicates the relation between two parts of the origin of his Copernican revolution, namely, the discovery of the syntheticity of mathematical knowledge and recognition of the importance of Humian skepticism about a priori knowledge.

blem cannot merely be how a priori concepts that exist in thought whether or not the skeptical challenge can be overcome apply to objects of sensible intuition. For if the skeptical challenge cannot be overcome, the unavoidable conclusion is that a priori concepts are “mere fantasy of the brain” (A 91/B 123). I will address this important question in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

THE SKEPTICAL PROBLEM

1. *Givenness, A Priori Concepts and the Skeptical Problem*

There are two problems which need to be resolved by an adequate account of a priori knowledge. One of these problems is mentioned by Kant explicitly, while the other can be recovered from what Kant says in this context as well as from his intellectual development. In the present section, I will address the problem which Kant mentions explicitly.

The passage in which Kant states the problem is the following:

The categories of the understanding, on the contrary, do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition at all, hence objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding, and therefore without the understanding containing their *a priori* conditions. Thus a difficulty is revealed here that we did not encounter in the field of sensibility, namely how **subjective conditions of thought** 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. (A 89-90/B 122)

The following questions may guide us in interpreting the skeptical problem stated in this passage:

- a. The first sentence asserts that the categories do not represent conditions under which objects are given in intuition. Does Kant claim that the *objects* given are not related to the functions of the understanding or that the *givenness* of objects is not related to the functions of the understanding?
- b. What is *given* in intuition? In other words, what does the term “object” signify in this context?
- c. What does “can” mean in “objects *can* indeed appear to us ...”?

Kant’s distinction between concepts and intuitions is primarily an epistemic distinction which I will discuss in Chapter 6. In the present context I will merely specify the features of “intuition” that are relevant to the skeptical problem. The following two questions must be raised in this context: (a) What does one know about objects on the basis of

their being given in intuition that one could not have known by any other means? (b) What is the nature of the *objects* given in intuition? It is relatively easy to provide an answer for question (a). One knows that an object given in intuition exists since one is affected by it. For us, knowledge of existence can only be based on sensible intuitions. Yet the fact that the categories are not conditions under which objects are *given* does not entail that the objects that are given are not determined by the categories. In other words, the answer to the first question leaves the answer to the second question unsettled.

It is important to be clear as to what Kant means when he grants us intuitions of objects. There are two possibilities that should be ruled out. The first is the assumption that intuitions are sensations. This supposition is refuted in the *Stufenleiter*:

The genus is **representation** in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it stands the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A **perception** that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a **sensation** (*sensatio*); an objective perception is a **cognition** (*cognitio*). The latter is either an **intuition** or a **concept** (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former is immediately related to the object and is singular; the latter is mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things. (A 319-320/B 376-377)

Intuitions are kinds of cognitions, that is, *objective perceptions*. They are distinct from sensations. An object of an intuition is an object to which one is immediately related. Hence, nothing in Kant's theory suggest that in granting that we have intuitions Kant *only* grants sensations.¹

The second possibility that has to be ruled out is represented by the claim that in claiming that we have intuitions of objects, Kant only grants us one type of intuition, namely, intuitions of objects of inner sense.² The supposition that such intuitions are the only intuitions that are allowed is in fact the content of the skeptical idealistic contention:

Idealism (**I** mean **material** idealism) is the theory that declares the existence of objects in space outside us to be either merely doubtful and **indemonstrable**, or else false and **impossible**; the **former** is the **problematic** idealism of Descartes, who declares only one empirical assertion (*assertio*), namely **I am**, to be indubitable; the **latter** is the **dogmatic** idealism of Berkeley, who

¹ Compare Bird (1962), Chapter 1 and 4. I will discuss this point in Chapter 6.

² This seems to be Strawson's position (1966: 237).

declares space, together with all the things to which it is attached as an inseparable condition, to be something that is impossible in itself, and who therefore also declares things in space to be merely imaginary. (B 274)

Kant is explicit about the nature of the question that idealism involves.

The question about the latter [**immediate** consciousness of the existence of outer things] would be whether we have only an inner sense but no outer one, rather merely outer imagination. (B 276-277)

Idealism denies the claim that we possess *outer intuitions*, that is, intuitions of objects of outer sense. What would have to be proven in order to establish the claim that we possess outer intuitions? The answer appears in the beginning of the footnote added to the preface of the second edition.

The only thing I can really call a supplement, and that only in the way of proof, is what I have said at [B] 273 in the form of a new refutation of psychological **idealism**, and a strict proof (the only possible one, I believe) of the objective reality of outer intuition. (B XXXIX)

The refutation of idealism establishes the *objective reality of outer intuition*.³ But what would it mean for outer intuitions to be objectively real? It would at least mean that the objects given in intuition, which are distinct from the particular intuiting subject, are ordered in space outside each other and next to each other. This is precisely the condition which cannot be satisfied by objects that belong only to inner sense since they only possess temporal order.⁴

It is clear that proving the objective reality of *outer intuition* is a task that differs from proving the objective validity of the categories. The former kind of proof is a response to doubts concerning our knowledge of the existence of outer (spatial) objects of outer sense. For Kant, this question is equivalent to the question of whether we possess outer sense and not merely outer imagination. In contrast, the proof that establishes the objective validity of the categories *presupposes* the

³ Compare Engstrom (1994: 365). The transcendental deduction is not meant to respond to Cartesian skepticism.

⁴ In the refutation of idealism, Kant denies that consciousness of a self as determined in time is possible without a representation of a permanent that is represented by means of outer intuition.

givenness of objects of inner *and* outer sense. In other words, it presupposes that we possess inner and outer intuitions. The proof should rule out the alleged possibility that *objects* given in intuition do not obey the categories. The question or doubt that such a proof aims to resolve is whether there can be empirical knowledge of a spatiotemporal world of objects based merely on the human receptive capacity to intuit objects and not also on the spontaneous capacity to think and judge by means of pure concepts. It aspires to ascertain the necessary applicability of a priori concepts to the intuited objects that are given in space and time.

We may now proceed to the other two questions raised earlier: What does the term “object” stand for? What specific meaning should be attributed to the modal verb “can” in Kant’s claim that “objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding”? The answer to the latter question reveals the various layers of Kant’s response to skepticism with regard to a priori knowledge and their complicated relations, the real reasons for such doubts and the false presuppositions that it involves. In order to reveal what the term “can” means in this context, one must first examine the difficulties related to the meaning of the term “object”. As is well known, Kant uses the term “object” in a variety of ways.⁵ One can call “everything, and even every representation, insofar as one is conscious of it, an object” (B 234). Even words that denote metaphysical non-sensible concepts are “objects in thought” (A 735/B 763). This meaning of “object” is contrasted with “object” in the “weighty” sense: “only what this word is to mean in the case of appearances, not insofar as they are (as representations) objects, but rather only insofar as they designate an object, requires a deeper investigation” (B 235). Objects in the “weighty” sense are empirical objects. An empirical object can be given in intuition without involving the functions of the understanding. But is an object given in intuition — an object that “can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to functions of the understanding” — the thing or things in themselves or the empirical object? Although an answer to this question is far from simple, there are sufficient reasons to rule out the claim that the objects given in intuition are things in themselves. Things in themselves are not spatiotemporal and the objects given in intuition are spatiotem-

⁵ See Allison (1983: 135-136).

poral. Things in themselves are unknowable while the objects of intuitions are knowable.⁶

If “object” neither stands for mere representations nor for things in them themselves but for empirical objects, then it is possible to spell out the sense of “can” employed in the skeptical contention. The question that has to be addressed is whether “can” means “really possible” in this context. If “can” does indeed mean “really possible”, no rejoinder to the skeptic is tenable. The categories are necessary concepts of objects. A priori judgments are necessary judgments. If it were really possible that the categories do not apply to objects given in intuition, a deduction that is supposed to establish the objective validity of the categories could merely be proof that the categories are *contingently true* of objects given in intuitions. It cannot establish the *necessity* of the categories. It would be incoherent in this case to even try to deduce their necessity. Therefore, if Kant is consistent, the term “can” does not mean “really possible” in this context. If one presupposes (as does Kant) that a deduction is feasible, “can” must mean “merely possible” or “conceivable but not really possible”. If the feasibility of a transcendental deduction is suspended, one cannot assign a determinate sense to “can” in this context.

Nevertheless, Kant does think that “can” *as used by the skeptic* means “really possible”. The skeptic’s use of this term is based on two reasons. One reason concerns the applicability of the categories to things in themselves. In the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* Kant claims that there is no hope for providing a rejoinder to the skeptic if the objects at stake are things in themselves: “I have no notion of such a connection of things in themselves, how they can either exist as substances, or act as causes, or stand in community with others (as parts of a real whole)” (4: 310). The other reason that seems to assign the meaning of “really possible” to “can” is suggested by the distinction between concepts and intuitions. Concepts do not represent conditions under which objects are given. One cannot know that objects must be related to the pure concepts on the basis of their being given. However, according to Kant, this does not constitute a reason to think that it is really possible that they do not obey the categories.

Kant’s explicit problem is, therefore, the following. What reasons do we have to claim that although the categories are not necessary condi-

⁶ I will discuss this issue in detail in Chapters 8 and 9.

tions for the *givenness* of objects they are, nevertheless, necessarily applied to the *objects* intuited? This is not a problem that concerns knowledge of the “outer” world. The objective reality of outer intuitions is presupposed. Presupposing inner and outer intuitions does not imply the possession of empirical *knowledge*. Whether inner and outer intuitions constitute empirical knowledge is left undetermined at the state in which the problem is presented.

2. *Subjective Necessity, Private Validity, Objective Validity*

According to Kant, an answer to the skeptic is possible only if one approves of his Copernican revolution in epistemology. That the objects of our knowledge are appearances and not things in themselves is a fundamental part of this theory. However, why can there be no rejoinder to the skeptic if the objects of our knowledge are things in themselves? Why does a priori knowledge require that the objects of our knowledge are appearances?

So far I have presented the “necessity” and “lawfulness” of the categories as the features that require a transcendental deduction. Yet, for Kant, the a priori origin of pure concepts also means that they have subjective origin. Kant uses the term “subjective conditions” when he presents the question of the transcendental deduction: “how **subjective conditions of thought** should have **objective validity**, i.e., yield conditions of the possibility of all cognition of objects” (A 89-90/B 122). What difficulty is inherent in the claim that the categories qua necessary concepts of objects are “subjective conditions”? What meaning should be ascribed to the term “subjective” in this context?

Let us begin with the first question. Let us assume that a priori concepts have subjective origin. A priori knowledge cannot result from experience. Indeed, this claim does not imply that objects given in intuition do not instantiate the pure concepts. But if the claim that a priori concepts are necessary concepts merely means that particular subjects “cannot think them otherwise than true”, then given all “one cannot think otherwise than true”, a priori concepts could be false of the objects given in intuition. In this case, “cannot think otherwise than true” is not a reason that establishes truth. It can easily be seen that this kind of validity is that of *subjective necessity*.

As I already noted, Kant uses the term “subjective necessity” in or-

der to indicate a kind of inadequate validity.⁷ This kind of inadequate validity has at least two distinct species. The first is the Humian habit, which is committed to “empiricism in principles”. However, “empiricism in principles” is not required in order to characterize a claim to a priori knowledge as based on mere “subjective necessity”. A rational allegedly innate predisposition to think that a proposition “cannot be otherwise than true” could have the same kind of validity as the Humian habit. As we shall see, in this case subjective necessity is equivalent to *private validity*.⁸ This was a possibility with which Kant was familiar from the writings of Crusius. Kant’s realization that positions such as Crusius’ are susceptible to the threat of private validity underlies his thought that a Copernican revolution must be part of a rejoinder to the skeptic.

One place where Crusius’ position is proclaimed by Kant as relevant to skepticism about a priori knowledge is the letter to Herz, 1772. In this letter, Kant rejects three philosophical positions as “*deus ex machina*” answers to this question. The first two are those of Plato and Malebranche, while the third is that of Crusius. The difference between Crusius’ position and the Wolffian school is presented by Kant in the prize essay (1763) as follows:

In our times, the philosophy of Herr Crusius tries to give to metaphysical knowledge quite a different form, by refusing to attribute to the Law of Contradiction that prerogative of being the universal and highest principle of all knowledge. He introduces many other immediately certain and unprovable propositions and asserted that their correctness would be understood from the nature of our understanding, according to the rule that what I cannot think of as otherwise than true is true. (2: 293-294)

⁷ See Chapter 3, section 5.

⁸ In my view, the fact that Kant’s deduction addresses the problem of private validity indicates that Kant’s Transcendental Deduction is sensitive to the inter-subjective character of our concepts as a vital part of his epistemic project of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. A different view is held by Strawson (1966: 151): “Kant’s treatment of objectivity is managed under a considerable limitation, almost, it might be said, a handicap. He nowhere depends upon, or even refers to, the factor on which Wittgenstein, for example, insists so strongly: the *social* character of our concepts, the links between thought and speech, speech and communication, communication and social communities”. Several authors disagree with Strawson. See for example Arendt (1982), O’neill, (1989) and Butts (1988). The implicit recognition of the inter-subjective character of our concepts becomes explicit in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. See in particular, sections §18-§22 (5: 236-40).

Kant's main concern in this essay is to compare mathematical certainty with philosophical and metaphysical certainty. He accepts Crusius' claim that there are many immediately certain and unprovable material propositions in philosophy. These propositions are the primary material of human understanding, "propositions that contain the foundations of other knowledge". (2: 295). These material principles "constitute as Crusius rightly says, the foundations and firmness of human reason... they are the stuff of explanations, and the data, from which inference can be drawn with certainty, even when one has no explanation" (2: 295). Nevertheless, the prize essay already contains traces of Kant's dissatisfaction with Crusius' general rule of certainty:

As far as the highest rule of all certainty is concerned, which this famous man proposed placing at the head of all knowledge, and therefore at the head of metaphysical knowledge too; that *what I cannot think of as otherwise than true is true*, etc., it is easy to see that this proposition could never be the foundation of the truth of any branch of knowledge. For when one admits that no other foundation of truth can be given, except that one cannot possibly hold it for other than true, one gives to understanding that no further basis for truth can be given, and that the knowledge is unprovable. Now there may be, of course, many unprovable pieces of knowledge; but the feeling of conviction with respect to them, although an avowal of their truth, is not an argument for it. (2: 295)

Kant does not question the truth of the propositions "one cannot think otherwise than true" but rather this type of justificatory ground. The feeling of conviction is not a reason that may justify the truth of a proposition.

The relevance of the problem which Kant discerned in Crusius' theory to the problem he addressed in the Transcendental Deduction is evident in the letter to Reinhold (May 19 1789). In this letter, he comments on Eberhard's *Philosophisches Magazin*. On page 156 of the first volume of the *Philosophisches Magazin*, Eberhard makes the following claim:

[...] as soon as the power of representation has in accordance with its necessary laws thought something as possible and as independently actual, that thing is possible and independently actual.

Kant's comment on this claim is as follows:

Here he talks of necessary laws, and so on, without noticing that in the *Critique* the task is just this: to show which laws are objectively necessary, and how we are authorized to assume them valid for the nature of things, that is, how they can possibly be synthetic and yet a priori. For otherwise we are in danger (like Crusius, whose language Eberhard uses here) of taking a merely subjective necessity based on habit or on our inability to imagine an object any other way) for an objective necessity. (11: 41)

By "subjective necessity", Kant means the same kind of validity ascribed to a judgment by Crusius' highest law of thought. This is evident in the following passage from the *Blomberg Logic*.

Certainty is nothing but subjective necessity in the quality of a judgment.... Many judgments are so constituted that their opposite appear to me to have to be completely impossible, and it is thereby necessary *subjective*.

Every thing that is true is just for that reason at the same time certain subjective. Objective necessity is just really truth. (24: 142-143)

It is interesting to note that in the *Blomberg Logic* Kant does not regard subjective necessity as a defective kind of certainty or validity, although he was highly critical of it in the prize essay. Moreover, it appears that in this passage Kant's view appears to be that truth entails subjective necessity (and therefore also objective necessity!). One may explain this inconsistency by noting that Kant did not at that time possess the means for distinguishing between subjective necessity and objective necessity.

The *Blomberg Logic* is dated somewhere around 1770, i.e., before the transition to the critical period. In the *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic* (1792), Kant's treatment of these issues changed, and the differences between his views in both periods can help us understand the reasons for his critique of Crusius' confusion of subjective necessity with objective necessity. Consider the following passage in the *Dohna-Wundelacken Logic*:

Belief is a holding-to-be-true that is subjectively sufficient but objectively insufficient with consciousness. Believing is distinct from knowing, then, in that it is incapable of proof. Believing

is a private holding-to-be-true, sufficiently certain only for me.
Hence I cannot yet say I know it (24: 732).

The same reasons underlying Kant's dissatisfaction with the basis of certainty provided by Crusius' law that are stated in the prize essay are indirectly expressed in the above passage. There is, however, a new element in this passage. All beliefs whose basis for certainty is only their subjective sufficiency are classified here as a *private holding-to-be-true*. Kant makes the same claim in the *Critique*.

Taking something to be true is an occurrence in our understanding that may rest on objective grounds, but that also requires subjective causes in the mind of him who judges. If it is valid for everyone merely as long as he has reason, then its ground is objectively sufficient, and in that case taking something to be true is called **conviction**. If it has its ground only in the particular constitution of the subject, then it is called **persuasion**.

Persuasion is a mere semblance, since the ground of the judgment, which lies solely in the subject, is held to be objective. Hence such a judgment also has only private validity, and this taking something to be true cannot be communicated. Truth, however, rests upon agreement with the object, with regard to which, consequently, the judgments of every understanding must agree (*consentientia uni tertio consentiunt inter se*). The touchstone of whether taking something to be true is conviction or mere persuasion is therefore, externally, the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human being to take it to be true. (A 820/B 848)

If a judgment is *only* subjectively certain, it is a judgment that has its grounds in the nature of the subject, and not in the object. Such a judgment only has *private validity*, and must be distinguished from knowledge. A judgment that is objectively valid is a judgment that is necessarily valid for everyone. The criterion that distinguishes persuasion from conviction, that is, that distinguishes a judgment that has only private validity from an objectively valid judgment, is the ability to communicate the judgment.

In the prize essay, Kant was already aware of the undesired results of Crusius' law due to what he later recognized as the private validity of some of the judgments that conform to Crusius Law. This later became a major problem. A judgment recognized *only* as subjectively necessary

which conforms to Crusius' law has private validity. If a judgment is only subjectively necessary, it is not necessarily valid for every human being. Subjective necessity cannot provide the basis for the validity of the categories for every human understanding.

In the *Prolegomena*, Kant recapitulates the major epistemic conclusion he has arrived at by using the following argument:

Such a necessary agreement of the principles of possible experience with the laws of the possibility of nature can only proceed from one of two causes: either these laws are drawn from nature by means of experience, or conversely nature is derived from the laws of the possibility of experience in general and is quite the same as the mere universal conformity to law of the latter. The former is self contradictory, for the universal laws of nature can and must be known *a priori* (that is independently of all experience) and be the foundation of all empirical use of the understanding; the latter alternative therefore alone remains. (4: 319-320)

Since there are only two possible explanations of how the transcendental laws of the possibility of nature are *necessarily* in agreement with the principles of possible experience, and how they might have *objective validity* and since one of these explanations (namely, that those laws are drawn from nature by means of experience) is ruled out as self contradictory, one is left with the Kantian answer, i.e., with the Copernican turn. Nevertheless, there is another possible explanation for the objective validity of the universal laws of nature. This additional alternative is alluded to in a footnote attached to the last quoted passage:

Crusius alone thought of a compromise: that a spirit, who can neither err nor deceive, implanted these laws in us originally. But since false principles often intrude themselves, as indeed the very system of this man shows in not a few instances, we are involved in difficulties as to the use of such a principle in the absence of sure criteria to distinguish the genuine origin from the spurious, since we never can know certainly what the spirit of truth or the father of lies may have instilled into us. (4: 319-320)

Crusius' third possible explanation is that the laws that are subjectively necessary, which one cannot think of as otherwise than true, are in agreement with the objects of nature because God, the creator of nature, implanted them in us. God guarantees the pre-established har-

mony between these laws which we are “unable to think other than true” and the objects of nature. According to Kant, this suggestion raises two different kinds of difficulties. First, since it is possible to err even when one is completely convinced of the certainty of one’s judgment, one needs some criteria by which to evaluate the truth of one’s judgment.⁹ Second, if one tries to establish the objective validity of one’s concepts and judgments from the outside by appealing to divine preformation one is forced to assume the goodness of the divine entity that implanted these law in oneself without being able to prove it by means that differ from Crusius’ law, i.e., without having any real justification.

The “third” possibility was the one that most disturbed Kant.¹⁰ The private validity of a subjectively necessary judgment is not stated explicitly as a possible source of the difficulties with which Crusius’ solution is involved. An explicit expression of the relevance of private validity to the problem of the Transcendental Deduction appears at the end of the Transcendental Deduction in the second edition of the *Critique*. At the beginning of paragraph 27, Kant presents the same argument he used in the *Prolegomena* and then says the following:

If someone still wanted to propose a middle way between the only two, already named ways, namely, that the categories were neither **self-thought** *a priori* first principles of our cognition nor drawn from experience, but were rather subjective predispositions for thinking, implanted in us along with our existence by our author in such a way that their use would agree exactly with the laws of nature along which experience runs (a kind of **preformation-system** of pure reason), then (besides the fact that on such a hypothesis no end can be seen to how far one might drive the presupposition of predetermined predispositions for future judgments) this would be decisive against the supposed middle way: that in such a case the categories would lack the **necessity** that is essential to their concept. For, e.g., the concept of cause, which asserts the necessity of a consequent under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on a subjective necessity, arbitrarily im-

⁹ Kant is at least indirectly referring to the problem of the Cartesian circle. It is clear from the context of Kant’s footnote that the appeal to a “Copernican revolution” is meant to avoid this problem.

¹⁰ This is also apparent in the long footnote to the preface of the *Metaphysical Foundation of Science*, in which he declares his intention to remedy the obscurity of the first edition Transcendental Deduction. (4: 476)

planted in us, of combining certain empirical representations according to such a rule of relation. 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; which is precisely what the skeptic wishes most, for then all of our insight through the supposed objective validity of our judgments is nothing but sheer illusion, and there would be no shortage of people who would not concede this subjective necessity (which must be felt) on their own; at least one would not be able to quarrel with anyone about that which merely depends on the way in which his subject is organized. (B 167-168)

The middle course mentioned here is Crusius' theory. This was how Kant described Crusius' position in the letter to Marcus Herz and in the *Prolegomena*. The theory rejected in the above quotation is the following: a subject cannot think of some general laws as other than true. Since the subject is unable to conceive of them as other than true, these laws are indeed true. According to Kant, it is precisely such an explanation that the skeptic most desires. All the objectively necessary laws are in fact *only* subjectively necessary. They possess only private validity.¹¹ For if an alleged law is only subjectively necessary, some *could* justifiably refuse to admit this subjective necessity. Subjective necessity indicates only the special character of the subject, or "the way in which his subject is organized". If a law merely appears necessary to me, it does not follow that it must appear necessary to every other subject. According to Kant, this means undermining the *necessity* of the categories "that is essential to their concept".

The problem of private validity was clearly not Hume's original problem. Nevertheless, through Hume's argument, Kant realized that subjective necessity is not a sufficient ground for a priori knowledge. Crusius' position was an example of a possible theory that is not com-

¹¹ For a different reading of this passage see Engstrom (1994: 361-362). Engstrom maintains (1994: 359) that the Transcendental Deduction does not aim at a refutation of skepticism. He assumes however that the alleged skepticism is Cartesian skepticism that concerns our knowledge of the external world. It is clear that the problem of private validity that originates from Crusius philosophy concerns a priori knowledge and not the objective reality of outer sense. In other words, even though Kant did not mean to respond to the Cartesian problem that concerns our knowledge of the external world, he did respond to a distinct skeptical problem that concerns synthetic a priori claims to knowledge.

mitted to Hume's "empiricism in principles" and is nevertheless incompatible with the demands of apriority and objective validity. The less-known problem of private validity can be therefore stated as follows: How can it be that a priori concepts have subjective origins and are nevertheless *not merely subjectively necessary*. The shift to a Copernican revolution in epistemology was meant to enable one to respond to this question. As we shall see in the next chapters, it demanded not only the revision of our concept of object and objectivity but also of our concept of the subject of experience.

Part Two

Transcendental Idealism

Chapter 5

THE TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALITY OF SPACE AND TIME: THE PROBLEM

1. Introduction

Kant's transcendental idealism consists in the claim that the objects of our knowledge are appearances and not things in themselves. Transcendental idealism is presented by Kant as the main result of the arguments included in the Transcendental Aesthetic. These arguments purportedly establish that space and time are forms of intuition. According to Kant, if space and time are forms of intuition, this implies that they are not features of things as they are in themselves. That the objects of our knowledge are appearances and not things in themselves is claimed by Kant to be entailed by the status of space and time as forms of intuition.

Each step in Kant's argument raises difficult questions. Why do the arguments presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic prove that space and time are forms of intuition? How is the claim that space and time are not features of things in themselves related to the claim that space and time are forms of intuition? Why does the claim that space and time are not features of things in themselves entail the claim that the objects of our knowledge must be appearances and not things in themselves? Kant never provided explicit answers to any of these questions.

One way to unravel this web of questions is to begin with an answer to the third of the above questions. Such an answer begins with the claim that knowledge of objects is knowledge of individuals. As Kant clarifies in the Amphiboly, spatiotemporal representations of objects are sufficient and indispensable for us in order to individuate objects. The claim that spatiotemporal representations are the only kind of individuating representations we possess is related to the claim that concepts qua general representations cannot individuate objects. The arguments of the Transcendental Aesthetic explain why space and time are not concepts. Their internal structure clarifies why they suffice for individuating objects that exist in them. Knowledge of objects, be they appearances or things in themselves, presupposes knowledge of their individuating features. If it is known that features, which are indispensable and sufficient in order for us to individuate objects, cannot be

features of things in themselves, one can possess no knowledge of individual objects as they are in themselves. One lacks a necessary condition for the knowledge of objects.

However, why are space and time not features of things in themselves? The common answer begins with the following claim:

(a) Space and time are *subjective* forms of intuition.

(a) is entailed by the claim that these representations do not originate from experience. Indeed, the arguments of the metaphysical and transcendental exposition of the concepts of space and time establish that space and time are a priori and singular. According to the received interpretation, the claim that space and time are *subjective* forms of representation is entailed by the apriority and singularity theses. The other claim is the following:

(b) Space and time are not properties of things in themselves.

Claim (b) is assumed to be entailed from (a).

This step in Kant's alleged argument is obviously questionable. It involves two notorious difficulties. The first problem is that it is not self-evident that "is only subjective" follows from apriority.¹ This is apparent with regard to Kant's arguments in the metaphysical and transcendental exposition of the concepts of space and time. The features of space and time that these arguments introduce do not imply the claim that space and time are subjective. The second difficulty is that even if the apriority of space and time implies subjectivity, the arguments of the metaphysical and transcendental exposition seem to be compatible with the fact that they are also properties of things in themselves.² Both difficulties are related. The intended result would have been attained, if the arguments of the metaphysical and transcendental exposition of the concepts of space and time could have established that space and time can only be subjective forms of intuition. However, there is no explicit argument in the Transcendental Aesthetic that establishes that entities which possess the features ascribed by Kant to space and time can only be *subjective* forms of intuitions.

A reconstruction of an argument for the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves that aspires to deduce this claim from the claim

¹ See Parsons (1992: 81).

² The last objection is known in the secondary literature as "the problem of the neglected alternative". See Vaihinger (1922: 134-151); Allison (1983: 111-114).

that space and time are subjective forms of representation was anticipated by Reinhold and recently developed by Allison (1983: Chapter 5, section 4). Nevertheless, as will be shown in section 2, Allison's interpretation falls short of establishing the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal. Another argument recently presented by Guyer (1987, Chapter 16) aspires to deduce the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves by basing the subjective origin of space and time on the claim that the modality of the statement "objects of experience are necessarily spatial (temporal)" is a *de re* modality. I will discuss Guyer's argument in section (3) and will show that his reconstruction also fails.

Kant's transcendental idealism is apparently committed to both (a) and (b). In order to reassess the coherence and plausibility of Kant's transcendental idealism, the question of how (a) is related to (b) and how both are related to the epistemic role assigned by Kant to space and time must be revived. My intention in this part of the book is to reveal the fact that a better reconstruction of an argument for transcendental idealism is tenable if one reverses the order of dependency between (a) and (b). I will argue that the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal can be deduced directly from the singularity and apriority of space and time and from the concept of a thing in itself without violating the unknowability of things in themselves. Given other conditions, the subjectivity of space and time in Kant's sense, namely, the fact that they are forms of intuition, can be derived from the claim that space and time are not properties of things in themselves. One may justifiably add these conditions only if the arguments that establish the transcendental ideality of space and time are related to the arguments that establish the objective validity of the categories. This is related to a fundamental feature of Kant's theory as a whole, that is, the fact that it is impossible to detach one concept involved in synthetic a priori knowledge from the other concepts. The systematic interdependence of the concepts dealt with in Kant's first *Critique* will be fully revealed only in the final part of this book. In the present context, I will merely state the features required for the transcendental ideality of space and time without discussing how pure concepts are involved in establishing their truth.

Each of the claims below is necessary for the transcendental ideality of space and time.

1. There is one time (space). Each finite time (or space) is part of one and the same time (space) (and is therefore related to each other part of time)
2. Time (space) is an a priori representation.
3. Time (space) of immediate perception and real (that is, objective) time (space) are one and the same time (space).
4. Pure time (space) of the imagination and pure real (objective) time (space) are one and the same time (space).
5. Time (space) is not a property of things in themselves.
6. Time (space) cannot exist by itself.
7. Time (space) cannot be perceived by itself.
8. Time (space) has subjective origin.

Any representation that has these features may be regarded as a pure intuition. As I will claim below, (5) can be derived from (1)-(4), and (8) from (5)-(7) and the features of the concept of a thing in itself. If such an argument is indeed sound, then transcendental idealism is both a powerful and plausible position.

The main reason why transcendental idealism is considered to be a philosophically perplexing position is, I believe, its commitment to (3) and (4). Claims (3) and (4) represent the immediacy thesis from two vantage points. A notable feature of the metaphysical exposition of space and time is the absence of an explicit argument that purports to establish the identity of space represented in the imagination, perceptual space and real space. The features ascribed by Kant to space and time can explicitly determine only the singularity and apriority of space and time. The transcendental exposition of space can establish that space must *also* be immediately presented in the imagination. However, Kant does not explicitly present an argument that claims that space presented immediately in perception and in the imagination is the same “real” space in which real objects exist. As will be shown in Chapter 7, the identity of space and time in the required sense can be established on the basis of the singularity and apriority of space. Nevertheless this argument leaves two issues unexplained. The first is whether “ α exists in space” implies “being spatially (and temporally) related to all other entities that are in space”. The second is whether “ α exists in space” implies “necessarily, α can be intuitively (immediately) represented in space”. Both claims are required in order to achieve Kant’s intended goals. However, the apriority and singularity

of space and the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves seem to be compatible with the possibility that space of immediate perception is identical to real space, although objects of immediate perceptions might not be spatially related to objects that exist in real space. The apriority of space is based, *inter alia*, on the claim that space can be conceived as empty (that it does not depend on the properties and relations of objects that may exist in it). Therefore, space immediately presented in perception or imagination may be identical to real space without requiring that all spatially represented objects are spatially (and temporally) related.³ The problem is not merely that Kant's arguments in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* allows the possibility of distinct spatial and temporal systems of possible objects (w_1), (w_2) such that objects that belong to (w_1) are spatially and temporally related to all objects in (w_1) and are not spatially and temporally related to any object in (w_2). This claim is compatible with the claim that objects that belong to (w_1) do not coexist in the same space with objects that belong to (w_2). Other claims are required in order to avoid this difficulty. One claim concerns the distinction between imagination, and intuition, between spatial representations and intuitions of spatial objects.⁴ Spatial intuitions of objects are intuitions of objects that are spatially *and* temporally individuated and not merely temporally individuated. Spatial representations of the imagination are only individuated in time. If an object can be individuated only in time, the object does not exist in space but only in time. Outer spatial intuitions are objectively real only if the objects of the intuition exist in space, and are therefore individuated in space.⁵ Hence, the following additional premise must be added to Kant's theory:

- A. For any x and for any y , (1) if x exists in space and y exists in space, then x is individuated in space (and not only in time) and y is individuated in space (and not only in time); (2) if x and y exist in space, then x and y are spatially and temporally related (and not merely temporally related).

³ The possibility that real space and perceptual immediate space are correlated by means of pre-established harmony is discussed by Allison as part of an argument that purports to explain why space is only a form of intuition. See Allison (1983: 110).

⁴ This distinction is made in the *Refutation of Idealism*. See B 276-278.

⁵ As I already noted in Chapter 4, the main task of Kant's argument in the *Refutation of Idealism* is to prove "the objective reality of outer intuitions" (B xxxix).

It might be claimed that this additional premise can only be justified by means of the arguments presented in the Transcendental Analytic. Indeed, the conclusion of the argument of the Refutation of Idealism establishes (B) with regard to time.

- B. For any x and any for any y , (1) if x exists in time and y exists in time, then x is individuated in time (and not only in space) and y is individuated in time (and not only in space); (2) if x and y exist in time, then x and y are *spatiotemporally* related (and not merely temporally related).

(B) Can be regarded as a temporal counterpart of (A). I will discuss Kant's argument for (B) in Part Three. In any event, (A) is an independent claim implicitly presupposed by the Transcendental Analytic. It must be added to Kant's system as possessing the same status as the claim that our intuitions must be spatiotemporal. It should be noted, that neither (A) nor (B) imply that the categories are objectively valid. (A) merely states that if an object exists in space, it must be individuated in space (and not merely temporally individuated) and, therefore, given the singularity thesis, it must be spatially related (and not merely temporally related) to all other such objects. The question of whether the categories provide the necessary form of objects that may exist in space is not resolved if one accepts (A)

Adding (A) as an unproved premise is necessary for establishing the claim that one can be immediately related in perception only to one spatial world of real objects. Moreover it must be possible for one to be immediately related to real spatial objects if such a world of objects exists. Nevertheless, adding (A) does not considerably affect Kant's position. As we shall see, (A) implies that (3)-(4) are true about space. With regard to time, many interpreters take (3)-(4) to be intuitively true. The source of the uneasiness related to Kant's transcendental idealism is presumably the claim that space has the same features. However as I will show below, the reasons used in order to undermine the plausibility of (A) (and of (3)-(4)) with regard to space can be shown to be parallel to similar reasons which undermine the plausibility of (3)-(4) with regard to time. The claim that it is conceivable that a person may be perceptually (immediately) related to more than one coherent set of spatial objects can be established only if one leaves the singularity of time untouched. A similar argument can be presented in which similar reasons can be used in order to undermine

the singularity of time and the unity (in one time) of all temporal representations. The singularity of time and the unity of temporal representations are conceptually linked to the singularity of space and the unity of spatial representations. This conceptual link would not be enough for anyone endeavoring to defend the Kantian position independently of (A) as a response to a skeptical charge. But it does explain why the claim that existing in time *must be* certain while the claim that existing in space is doubtful is deeply questionable.

Although adding (A) to Kant's theory is necessary for the argument for the transcendental ideality of space and time, (A) does not suffice to establish the transcendental ideality of space and time. Therefore, (C) and (D) must also be added:

- C. If an object *x* exists in space, it must be possible for someone to be immediately (perceptually) acquainted with *x*.

(C) is not implied by (A). If it were really possible that all our spatial representations are representations in which no object is immediately presented as existing in space and if spatial objects were not objects that a subject must be able to immediately perceive, (A) would have been satisfied and (C) not. However, (C) is entailed by two other claims:

- D. An "I think" must accompany all our *intuitions*. (B 131-132)
E. We possess synthetic a priori knowledge.

(D) and (E) are not immediately evident. I will present the reasons that justify (D) and (E) in the following chapters.

2. *From Epistemic Conditions to Transcendental Idealism*

The claim that the objects of our knowledge are appearances and not things in themselves must be founded on what we are allowed to know. However, how can one know that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal if one knows nothing about them? If knowledge of objects presupposes intuitions and space and time are necessary for intuiting individual objects, all objects that may be given are spatiotemporal. But since we know nothing about things in themselves, we do not know if they are spatiotemporal. Why does the fact that we lack such knowledge sanction the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal?

The problem of the neglected alternative is indirectly related to another question. What is the argument that establishes transcendental idealism? Recent interpreters provide different answers to this question. Allison's answer is based on the concept "epistemic condition". An epistemic condition is as follows:

- (a) A condition necessary for the representation of an object or an objective state of affairs. (Allison, 1983: 10)

An epistemic condition is distinct from an ontological condition:

- (b) A condition of the possibility of the being of things. (Allison, 1983: 11)

According to Allison (1983: 8), the arguments of the "metaphysical exposition" that establish the apriority and intuitivity of space and time establish the transcendental ideality of space and time by showing that space and time are sensible epistemic conditions. There are two distinctions between an appearance and a thing in itself implicit in Kant's theory, namely, an empirical distinction and a transcendental distinction. The distinction between "appearance" and "thing in itself" is a distinction between two ways in which empirical objects can be considered. Since space and time are epistemic conditions and epistemic conditions are merely necessary conditions for the representation of objects, it would be a category mistake to claim that space and time could be properties of things in themselves. As Allison notes (1983: 112), Reinhold anticipated this argument. If space and time are forms of representation, they cannot be properties of things in themselves, unless one is willing to hold that things in themselves are representations. Hence, the subjectivity of space and time is assumed to be deduced from the status of space and time as epistemic conditions. Since space and time are subjective forms of intuition, the empirical objects that appear "in them" can be transcendently conceived (though not empirically) by abstracting from all properties that involve space and time.

Allison's argument is presented by Guyer (1987: 337) as follows:

1. By showing that external objects can be represented only by means of the representation of space, the Transcendental Aesthetic shows space to be an epistemic condition, a necessary condition for the representation of objects.

2. The concept of a thing in itself is, however, precisely a *conception* of a thing which excludes any epistemic conditions necessary for the representation of objects.
3. Therefore, things in themselves are *conceived* without reference to space.
4. Things in themselves cannot *be* spatial.

As Guyer notes (1987: 337), this argument confuses “claims about concepts with claims about things”. The argument establishes only the claim that there are ways to conceive things in themselves that do not involve space and not that things in themselves are not spatial.⁶

Allison’s definition of an epistemic condition is indeed vulnerable to Guyer’s criticism. An epistemic condition is defined as a condition necessary for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs. According to Allison, an epistemic condition does not coincide with an ontological condition. However, the claim that an epistemic condition cannot *also* be an ontological condition is not entailed by Allison definition.⁷ It is clear that alternative concepts of epistemic conditions, the definitions of which include the claim that they are necessary for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs, are consistent concepts, although their definition is incompatible with the claim that such conditions cannot indicate properties of things in themselves:

- (c) An epistemic condition = Df (1) a feature of objects or objective states of affairs that is necessary for the representation of objects

⁶ In his response to Guyer, Allison claims (1996: 9) that since “the phrase “an sich selbst” in “Ding an sich selbst betrachtet” functions adverbially to modify “betrachtet” rather than adjectively to modify “Ding”, the claim that he confuses claims about concepts with claims about things is mistaken. Nevertheless, the main question that has to be addressed concerns Allison’s notion of representation. Allison appears to think that the mere fact that a given feature is a necessary condition for the representation of objects entitles one to claim that this feature cannot be a feature of the objects represented by it. This supposition is, however, highly questionable. It seems to confuse the fact that a representation could be conceived as an object that has its own properties (properties that are not properties of the represented object), either as a sensible sign or as the meaning of signs, with the fact that a representation is an intentional entity that *means* an object or an objective state of affairs. The fact, that as an object, the representation has features that are not the features of the object *of* the representation is compatible with the fact that what the content of the representation ascribes to the represented thing is what is true of the object of the representation.

⁷ For a similar criticism of Allison’s position, see Falkenstein (1989: 267).

or objective states of affairs; (2) a feature necessary for the being of things (an ontological condition)

and

- (d) An epistemic condition = Df (1) a feature of objects or objective states of affairs that is necessary for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs; (2) a feature of objects or objective states of affairs that is not an ontological condition; (3) a contingent feature of things-in-themselves.

Premise (2) in Guyer's presentation of Allison's argument seems to rule out the claim that an epistemic condition can also be an ontological condition. But this premise is questionable. There is no reason that justifies the general contention that if a feature of objects and objective states of affairs is necessary for the representation of objects and objective states of affairs, one can conceive individual things that actually exist which do not necessarily instantiate these features. The fact that a concept is necessary for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs does not rule out the possibility that qua epistemic condition, it is an instance of (b) or (c). If space is an instance of (b), things in themselves are necessarily spatial. If space is an instance of (c), space is a contingent feature of things in themselves.⁸

In order to defend the Kantian claim that things in themselves cannot be spatial, the following definition of an epistemic condition is required:

- (e) An epistemic condition = Df (1) a condition necessary for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs that; (2) cannot represent any feature of things as they are in themselves.

⁸ An apparent exegetical deficiency of Allison's definition is that it assigns the same status to space and time and to the categories. According to Allison, the latter are epistemic conditions in the same sense as the former. Nevertheless, Kant's writing do not include an independent argument from the necessity of the categories for representing objects and objective states of affairs to the claim that things in themselves *have no categorical structure*. Kant's claim is rather that the categories can have "sense and meaning" only if they are applied to appearances. The transcendental ideality of empirical objects is presupposed by the necessary applicability of the categories and it does not follow from the necessity of the categories. In other words, for Kant, the transcendental ideality of space and time is *the* reason for characterizing empirical objects as appearances and not as things in themselves. See also Ameriks (2003).

If space and time are transcendently ideal, they must be epistemic conditions of type (e). The fact that they are such conditions must be founded on the nature of space and time.⁹ The question why the features of space and time make them epistemic conditions as stated by (e) is unexplained by Allison.

3. *From De Re Necessity to Non-spatiality*

In contrast to Allison, Guyer believes that the transcendental exposition in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* has a pivotal role in establishing transcendental idealism. According to Guyer, transcendental idealism is primarily intended to account for the possibility of a priori knowledge. The transcendental ideality of space and time is assumed to be entailed by three claims. Guyer's first claim (1987: 262) is that "to have a *a priori* knowledge of a property of objects is to know that it attaches to objects (in some class) universally and necessarily". Guyer's second claim (1987: 366-367) is that necessity and universality are co-extensional in the following sense: if a property is a necessary property of some objects, it must be a necessary property of every object *which instantiates it*. Stated differently, it is not possible that a property is a necessary property of some objects and a contingent property of other objects. This is considered by Guyer to be compatible with his claim that a priori knowledge is knowledge that a property is necessarily attached to objects in some class.

Guyer third claim is the following:

⁹ It is interesting to note that Allison implicitly realizes that this must be so. As he points out (1983: 102-103), no explicit argument that establishes Kant's general conclusion in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* by using the results of the metaphysical and transcendental expositions of space and time as premises is found in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. In reconstructing the "only if" part of Kant's argument, the claim that space and time can function as epistemic condition only if they are forms of intuition, Allison appeals to the particular properties of space and time. Yet, the argument that he provides (1983: 107-108), namely, the claim that there are only three alternative accounts of space and time, the Newtonian, the Leibnizian and the Kantian, and that the first two cannot function as epistemic conditions (in Allison's sense) is not convincing. That space and time are conditions that meet (c) or (d) cannot be dismissed by claiming that space and time are necessary conditions for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs. This could be true, even if (c) or (d) are true. Both are compatible with the possibility that space and time are Newtonian. As we shall see later, the identity of subjective space and real space can be established a priori without any appeal to the dubious "pre-established harmony" assumption.

But to know that it attaches to objects (in that class) universally and necessarily is to know that it attaches to any particular object (in the class) independently of experience of that object, thus even prior to experience of it. But, Kant assumes, it is not possible to know independently of experience of it that an object genuinely has, on its own, a certain property. Therefore, space and time, which are known *a priori*, cannot be genuine properties of objects and can be only features of our representations of them. (Guyer, 1987: 362)

According to Guyer, Kant holds that *a priori knowledge* implies that the object of such knowledge, the object that necessarily instantiates some property, cannot be a thing in itself. According to Guyer (1987: 362), Kant's claim can be understood only if one notes that the necessity involved in the claim that the perceptual objects are spatial is not the conditional *de dicto* necessity

- (1) Necessarily (if x is an object and we perceive x, then x is spatial).
(Guyer, 1987: 362)

But that of absolute *de re* necessity

- (2) If (x is an object and we perceive x) then necessarily (x is spatial). (Guyer, 1987: 366)

Guyer maintains that Kant is committed to (2) and not merely to (1). (1) is susceptible to the charge of the neglected alternative, while (2) is not susceptible to this charge. According to Guyer, the non-spatiality of things in themselves is entailed by the claim that the objects of our knowledge are necessarily spatial.

How does the argument which proceeds from absolute necessity to non-spatiality work? After presenting the distinction between the two above kinds of necessity, Guyer says that Kant does indeed assume that we know *a priori* not (1) but (2).

He [Kant] then assumes, reasonably enough, that this cannot be known of objects that are spatial independently of us, for of such objects we could at best know that they are spatial, but only *contingently* rather than *necessarily* so. So instead he concludes that we can know any object to be *necessarily* spatial only if it is, in the end, an object of our own creation. (Guyer, 1987: 364)

It is important to note that Guyer's argument only shows that if space were not an *a priori* representation, we could not have known that the

objects we perceive are necessarily spatial. This claim does not rule out the possibility of the neglected alternative. As Guyer realizes, his reconstruction of Kant's argument might seem to suggest that it is possible that synthetic a priori propositions are necessarily true of appearances and contingently true of things in themselves. Yet Guyer believes that this cannot be the case:

Only the assumption of the absolute necessity expressed by assumption 2 instead of the merely conditional necessity expressed by assumption 1 gives rise to an argument for transcendental idealism by excluding Trendelenburg's missing alternative. Or, as Kant's argument suggests, on the excluded alternative the synthetic propositions at stake would be necessarily true of our *representations* of them but only *contingently* true of the objects themselves, but given the coextensionality of universality and necessity (B 4), this would undermine the necessity and thus the apriority of these propositions. On Kant's conception, spatiality cannot be necessarily true of some objects (representations) and contingently true of some others (things-in-themselves), for then it is not necessarily true of any object at all; if it is to be true of any object at all, it must be necessarily true of all objects of which it is true. (Guyer, 1987: 366)

However, this argument involves a false principle that concerns the attribution of properties to objects. As I noted above, Guyer holds that if spatiality is a necessary feature of some objects, spatiality must be a necessary feature of all objects it is true of. But the claim that a certain property is a necessary property of some objects does not entail that if it is a property of an object, it is a necessary property of that object. For instance, benevolence can be a necessary property of God and a contingent property of benevolent finite persons.

Kant's claim that perceptual objects are necessarily spatial is equivalent to the claim that perceptual objects are *appearances* rather than things in themselves.¹⁰ Kant believed that this is related to the fact that

¹⁰ Van Cleave (1999: 8-9) thinks that transcendental idealism is neither the two-world thesis nor the one-world thesis but rather the thesis that regards appearances as virtual objects. Although I disagree with Van Cleave's claim that appearances are merely states of awareness of sensing and intuiting (for reasons that will be presented in the following chapters), his claim that appearances are not things in themselves and are nevertheless objects of predications can serve as the basis for an account of the claims that empirical objects are necessarily spatiotemporal.

space is a pure intuition. As Kant states in the transcendental exposition, the content of the judgments of geometry requires that space be a pure intuition. Yet, the route from necessity only leads to non-spatiality indirectly. The claim that things in themselves are not spatial is related to the fact that space and time are *pure intuitions*. The conclusion of the chapter “on space” corroborates this assumption:

Space represents no property at all of any things in themselves nor any relation of them to each other, i.e., no determination of them that attaches to objects themselves and that would remain even if one were to abstract from all subjective conditions of intuition. For neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited *a priori*. (A 26/B 42)

The claim that an entity is a pure intuition seems to imply almost immediately that it cannot represent any feature of things in themselves. Such an argument cannot begin with the assumption that pure intuitions are “innate” dispositions and then deduce by means of the dubious assumption that a property that is known *a priori* cannot indicate any feature of things in themselves. This type of argument raises both the problem of the neglected alternative and the inconsistencies involved in the notion of subjective necessity discussed in the preceding chapters. As I noted earlier, an interpretation that endorses this type of argument must face the fact that there is no parallel argument in Kant’s writings that proceeds from apriority to non-causality (of things in themselves) or from apriority to non-substantiality (of things in themselves). The argument for non-spatiality must be based on apriority and intuitivity. I hope to demonstrate that such an argument can be reconstructed from Kant’s writings.

Chapter 6

THE SINGULARITY AND IMMEDIACY OF INTUITIONS

1. *The Ambiguity of the Term “Intuition”*

Kant’s doctrine of transcendental idealism is based on the claim that space and time are pure intuitions. The meaning of the term “intuition” in Kant’s theory has been the subject of a long and fruitful controversy. My concern in the present section is to explicate the role of intuitions in empirical knowledge and empirical judgments. The question with regard to their role in mathematical knowledge will not be addressed in detail.¹

Let us begin by stating the basic features involved in the concept of intuition.

1. Intuitions are singular representations of objects. (A 320/B 377)
2. Intuitions are immediate representations of objects. (A 320/B 377)
3. Objects are immediately given in intuitions. (A 19/B 33)
4. Intuitions are sensible for us. They belong to our capacity to be affected by objects. (A 19/B 33)
5. One may know that objects exist only on the basis of intuitions. (A 601/B 629).

(1)-(5) above constitute a problem rather than an analysis of a concept. The two parts of the problem are to understand why these features are connected to one another and how they may cohere together. The first part of the problem has received incompatible solutions in the secondary literature. According to Hintikka, intuitions are mainly singular representations. Immediacy is a corollary of singularity.² In contrast to Hintikka, Parsons doubts whether the singularity and immediacy conditions within Kant’s philosophy boil down to one and the same thing.³ A possible source of this controversy is that the term “immediacy” is ambiguous in contexts in which Kant applies it to “intuition”. In the *Stufenleiter*, Kant characterizes intuitions as a kind of *objective* perception:

¹ I agree with Thompson (1972: 315) who notes that the role of intuitions in empirical judgments is essential in order to understand Kant’s term “intuition”.

² See Hintikka, (1969: 42). Hintikka’s claim is mainly based on the *Stufenleiter*.

³ See Parsons (1983).

The genus is **representation** in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it stands the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A **perception** that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a **sensation** (*sensatio*), an objective perception is a **cognition** (*cognitio*). The latter is either an **intuition** or a **concept** (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former is immediately related to the object and is singular; the latter is mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things. A concept is either an **empirical** or a **pure concept**, and the pure concept, insofar as it has its origin solely in the understanding (not in a pure image of sensibility), is called *notio*. A concept made up of notions, which goes beyond the possibility of experience, is an **idea** or a concept of reason. (A 319-320/B 376-377)

Sensations and intuitions are perceptions in that they involve consciousness. “Intuition” is distinguished from “sensation” in that the latter refer to states of the subject while intuitions are objective. According to this passage, intuitions are representations. Immediacy is a relation that intuitions seem to have *qua representations* to objects. A distinction between intuitions qua representations and the kind of relation that they have to the objects represented is therefore implicit here. An incompatible characterization of the connection between “intuition” and “immediacy” is found in the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic.

In whatever way and through whatever means a cognition may relate to objects, that through which it relates immediately to them, and at which all thought as a means is directed as an end, is intuition. This, however, takes place only insofar as the object is given to us; but this in turn, is possible only if it affects the mind in a certain way. The capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility. Objects are therefore given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions; but they are **thought** through the understanding, and from it arise concepts. But all thought, whether straightaway (*directe*) or through a detour (*indirecte*), must ultimately be related to intuitions, thus, in our case, to sensibility, since there is no other way in which objects can be given to us. (A 19/B 33)

In the above passage “intuition” is not a cognition (representation) but rather that through which a cognition is immediately *related* to an object. The fact that “intuition” necessarily involves relation to

an object as part of what this term means is also indirectly stated in the footnote to the preface to the second edition where Kant addresses the question of the objective reality of outer sense: "...for outer sense is already in itself a relation of intuition to something actual outside me" (B xl).

These passages seem to suggest that a distinction should be drawn between "intuition" and "singular representation" as well as between "intuition" and "immediate relation to an object". As I noted, intuitions are also the only epistemic means for knowledge of the existence of objects. The crucial question is how singularity and immediacy are related to knowledge of the existence of an object. I suggest that the latter, that is, immediate knowledge of the existence of an object, is necessary and sufficient for an intuition. "Intellectual intuition" and "sensible intuition" commonly share this feature.⁴ The existence of the object of sensible intuition is established by means of the fact that the subject is affected in a certain way. A singular representation is part of an intuition only if there are reasons to claim that it conveys immediate knowledge of the existence of an object, and if there is an object represented by means of this intuition. However, not all singular representations are intuitions. Similarly, the immediate relation of a representation to an object does not suffice for knowledge of the existence of an object. In this case, the representation (that is, a concept) immediately related to an object is not an intuition.

Singular representations: regarding "intuition", the term "immediacy" signifies the immediate givenness of the object. In this context, givenness implies existence. A representation is singular if a representation does not represent objects by means of features that an object shares with other objects. Kant's theory includes counter examples to the claim that an object is given by means of the mere fact that one possesses a singular representation of that object. The most salient counterexample is represented by the ideal of pure reason.⁵ According to Kant, we have the concept "the sum total of all possibility" (A 573/

⁴ The immediate knowledge of the existence of an object is satisfied by an intellectual intuition since the object is produced by means of the act of thinking it (B 138-139).

⁵ As Thompson notes (1972: 316), the concepts of space and time and arithmetical concepts such as the number 12 and the sum of 7 and 5, are obvious exceptions to the claim that concepts are general representations. However, Thompson thinks that these concepts involve the notion of pure intuition. This is not the case with regard to the ideal of pure reason.

B 601). This concept is the “transcendental substratum” presupposed by the proposition that “everything existing is thoroughly determined” (A 573/B 601) and it can never be exhibited *in concreto*. As Kant notes, “only in this one single case is an — in itself universal — concept of one thing thoroughly determined through itself, and cognized as the representation of an individual” (A 576/B 604). The ideal of pure reason is a concept that is a singular representation of a merely possible individual. It does not represent its object by means of features that the object shares with other objects. Although the ideal is a singular representation, “it is self-evident that with this aim — namely, solely that of representing the necessary thoroughgoing representations of things — reason does not presuppose the existence of a being conforming to the ideal” (A 577-578/B 605-606). No object *is given* to the mind by means of the ideal of pure reason.⁶

Immediacy: Kant explicates the term “immediate” by contrasting it with the term “mediate” (A 68/B 93). A representation relates to an object immediately, if it either does not relate to it by means of other representations, or if it does not relate to it by means of an inference. A counterexample to the claim that all representations immediately related to objects are intuitions is Kant’s claim that the subject terms of judgments relate immediately to appearances (A 68/B 93). The subject term of a judgment applies immediately (non-inferentially) to appearances. As Kant clarifies in the Schematism, concepts apply immediately (non-inferentially) to their objects by means of schemata. However, the appearances to which they are immediately applied are the undetermined objects given in empirical intuition. Conceptual knowledge is therefore mediate knowledge of objects not because concepts are ascribed to objects only by means of an inference, but rather because they apply to an object only if they apply to an intuitive representation of an object.

The fact that one possesses a singular representation of an object does not suffice to claim that an object is given, or that one knows

⁶ The ambiguity of Kant’s distinction between concepts and intuitions is also pointed out by Sellars. As Sellars notes (1968: 7), “Kant’s use of the term ‘intuition’, in connection with human knowledge, blurs the distinction between a special sub-class of *conceptual* representations of individuals which, though in some sense a function of receptivity, belong to the framework which is in no sense prior to but essentially includes general concepts, and a radically different kind of an individual which belongs to sheer receptivity and is in no sense conceptual”.

that an object represented by the singular representation exists. However, it is clear that for Kant an intuition involves singular representations. In order to explicate the sense in which intuitions express immediate knowledge of existence of objects if the object “affects the mind in a certain way”, a distinction between an intuitive singular representation of an object and the object represented is required.

2. Singular Representations, Intuitions and the Object of Sensible Intuition

What does the singularity of sensible intuitions consist of? An indirect answer would be to spell out the features related to concepts. Concepts represent objects by means of general features that can be found in several objects. For every concept, there are species that relate to it as a genus. There is no “*infima species*”. Intuitions do not represent objects by means of general features. Given that objects are individuals, it might be assumed that the singularity of intuitions is based on the individuality of the objects that they represent. If this assumption is true, intuitions seem to possess the semantic properties of singular terms that refer directly to their objects.⁷ That the singularity of intuitions is based on the individuality of the objects represented in them seems to be confirmed by the following passage:

Since only individual things, or individuals, are thoroughly determined, there can be thoroughly determined cognitions only as *intuitions*, but not as concepts; in regard to the latter, logical determination can never be regarded as complete. (9: 99)

Only individuals are thoroughly determined. Thoroughly determined cognitions are intuitions. This claim suggests that intuitions are singular representations by virtue of the fact that they are cognitions of thoroughly determined objects. However, since objects are immediately given in intuitions, it follows that intuitions are singular representations because thoroughly determined objects are given in intuitions. Needless to say, this claim has disastrous implications for Kant’s epistemol-

⁷ As Thompson (1972) has shown, Kantian intuitions are not to be identified with singular terms. For a different position, see Howell (1973). On this subject, see also Parsons (1983).

ogy. It is obviously incompatible with the main claim of Kant's Transcendental Analytic:

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. (A 258, B 314)

The fact that the object given in intuition need not be conceived as thoroughly determined and that, consequently, the singular representations involved in intuitions does not consist in the all-side determination of the individual object given in them is confirmed by the following passage from the Transcendental Aesthetic:

The effect of an object on the capacity for representation, insofar as we are affected by it, is **sensation**. That intuition which is related to the object through sensation is called **empirical**. The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is called **appearance**.

I call that in the appearance which corresponds to sensation its **matter**, but that which allows the manifold of appearance to be intuited as ordered in certain relations I call the **form** of appearance. Since that within which the sensations can alone be ordered and placed in a certain form cannot itself be in turn sensation, the matter of all appearances is only given to us *a posteriori*, but its form must all lie ready for it in the mind *a priori*, and can therefore be considered separately from all sensation. (A 20, B 34).

Appearances are the *undetermined* objects of empirical intuitions. A different reading of the above passage from the Logic is therefore required.

It should be noted that the term "singular representation" is ambiguous. A singular representation might be "singular" with respect to what it represents (the object) and it might be singular qua representation. This ambiguity can be eliminated, if the singularity of the *representation* grounds the *individuality* of the object immediately given in it but not the fact that it is given. This is clearly the only possibility that is compatible with Kant's epistemology. As we shall later see, it is also indispensable for establishing the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal. In empirical intuitions, undetermined objects are immediately given. An appearance is an individual distinct from

all other individuals in that all appearances are “ordered in certain relations”. But undetermined objects (appearances) are not all-side determined individuals.⁸

What could singular representations that represent undetermined objects be? Such representations must be representations that represent objects by means of features sufficient for individuating undetermined objects without requiring an appeal to other conceptual determinations of the object. This is clearly stated in the following passage as a feature of space and time:

Of course, if I know a drop of water as a thing in itself according to all of its inner determinations, I cannot let any one drop count as different from another if the entire concept of the former is identical with that of the latter. But if it is an appearance in space, then it has its place not merely in the understanding (under concepts), but also in the sensible outer intuition (in space), and since the physical places are entirely indifferent with regard to the inner determinations of the things, a place = *b* can just as readily accept a thing that is fully similar and equal to another in a place = *a* as it could if the former were ever so internally different from the latter. Without further conditions, the difference in place already makes the multiplicity and distinction of objects as appearances not only possible in itself but also necessary. (A 272/B 328)

Spatiotemporal intuitive features of undetermined objects (appearances) are sufficient for individuating undetermined objects. Spatial intuitions and temporal intuitions involve singular representations because space and time individuate appearances. Appearances can be distinguished from the pure spatiotemporal singular representations that individuate them “since the physical places are entirely indifferent with regard to the inner determinations of the things”. However, a particular spatiotemporal position is only sufficient and not necessary for individuating the objects that appear in space and time. An appearance can occupy a place=*b* as it can occupy a place=*a*: because “a place = *b* can just as readily accept a thing that is fully similar and equal to an-

⁸ How can these claims be reconciled with the above passage from the Logic? The way out is to deny the assumption that intuitions are representations of fully determined objects. If an object is given as fully determined, this mode of givenness is an intuition. But this is not our kind of intuition. Where our kind of intuition is concerned, the only entity that is singular in an intuition is the representation that precedes the appearances that are given to us by which appearances are intuitively represented.

other in a place = *a* as it could if the former were ever so internally different from the latter". (A 272/B 328)

As Kant clarifies in the *Stufenleiter*, appearances cannot be equated with mere subjective sensations. Intuition is an objective cognition in which objects are immediately given. The fact that appearances are undetermined does not entail that they are merely subjective states. It clearly does not consist in the fact that appearances are general entities but rather that appearances are singular modes of givenness of objects. As we will later see, the concept of an empirical object allows the possibility of appearing in many different ways. The appearance of a man wearing a white shirt in the lecture room on Sunday afternoon and a man wearing a red shirt on Tuesday afternoon can either be the appearances of one and the same man or of two men. They cannot both be appearances of one and the same man and of different men. This can be known a priori. But one cannot determine by means of intuitions alone which possibility is realized or whether either one of them is true. The question of whether appearances are appearances of one and the same object or of different objects is not settled by their spatiotemporal location. The term "determination" is intended by Kant to indicate both an epistemic act and an objective meta-property of things that is also expressed by the term "synthesis". The whole purpose of Kant's *Transcendental Analytic* is to explicate the sense in which "[the] same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in intuition" (A79/B 104-105). Undetermined objects are objects of intuitions that *abstract from* all forms of synthesis and are given as such in intuition. According to Kant, objects can be determined only if intuitions and concepts are employed in conjunction, that is, only if the undetermined objects of intuition are synthesized. The reason why one must posit objects that appear in many different ways is indeed left unspecified in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. But nothing that Kant says in this part of the *Critique* implies that appearances are not fully individuated in space and time.⁹

3. *Sensible Intuition, Immediate Relation and Appearances*

So far I have explained why singular representations involved in sensible intuitions can be distinguished from the objects given in intuition.

⁹ See also Chapter 4, section 1.

My next task will be to explain the sense in which sensible intuitions involve relations to objects given in them and how the relational character of sensible intuitions is relevant to *immediate* knowledge of the existence of an object. My claim is that immediate knowledge of the existence of an individual object is based on an immediate awareness of a relation between the intuiting subject and the object intuited. Stated differently, one may know that an individual object exists only if one is aware of a relation between oneself and the object, that is, only if one is aware of the relation implicit in “affection”. I suggest that where empirical, sensible intuitions are concerned, “immediacy” indicates the epistemic priority of awareness of a relation between oneself and the object intuited over awareness of the object given in intuition. One can have no immediate knowledge that an object *exists* independently of awareness of a relation. Let us recall that the latter is constitutive of an intuition.¹⁰

The relational character of intuitions is also relevant to the interpretation of the term “appearance” in Kant’s writings. Kant thought that all appearance statements have an existential presupposition. According to Kant, the predicates that one attributes to the “something” that appears do not represent properties of things in themselves. Nevertheless, “appearance” must not be confused with “is an illusion”. This point is stressed in the passage below:

If I say: in space and time intuition represents both outer objects as well as the self-intuition of the mind as each affects our senses, i.e., as it **appears**, that is not to say that these objects would be a mere **illusion**. For in the appearance the objects, indeed even properties that we attribute to them, are always regarded as something really given, only insofar as this property depends only on the kind of intuition of the subject in the relation of the given object to it then this object **as appearance** is to be distinguished from itself as object **in itself**. Thus I do not say that bodies merely **seem** to exist outside me or that my

¹⁰ That sensible intuitions involve relations is apparent from the theory ascribed by Strawson to Kant in Part IV of *The Bounds of Sense*. As I noted in the introduction to this book, Strawson believes that the relations involved in sensible intuitions are A-relations that hold between supersensible things in themselves. Interpretations that regard Kant as necessarily committed to double affection — empirical affection and transcendental affection — make a similar assumption. As I mentioned in the introduction, as far as Kant’s epistemic goals are concerned, Kant’s doctrine of transcendental idealism can and must avoid commitment to the objective reality of noumena (including A-relations). The appropriate relations left are spatiotemporal relations.

soul only **seems** to be given if I assert that the quality of space and time — in accordance with which, as condition of their existence, I posit both of these — lies in my kind of intuition and not in these objects in themselves. It would be my own fault if I made that which I should count as appearance into mere illusion. (B 69)

An appearance statement assigns a property to an object: “the rose is red”, “the table is round”. The statement as a whole presupposes that an appearance can serve as evidence that something distinct from the perceptual state itself really exists. This does not apply to illusion statements. In their case, there is no such existential presupposition.

Appearance predicates are predicates of something that are applied to it *on the basis of a relation* that holds between the subject and “something”.

The predicates of appearance can be attributed to the object in itself, in relation to our sense, e.g., the red color or fragrance to the rose; but the illusion can never be attributed to the object as predicate, precisely because that would be to attribute to the object for itself what pertains to it only in relation to the senses or in general to the subject, e.g., the two handles that were originally attributed to Saturn. What is not to be encountered in the object in itself at all, but is always to be encountered in its relation to the subject and is inseparable from the representation of the object, is appearance, and thus the predicates of space and of time are rightly attributed to the objects of the senses as such, and there is no illusion in this. On the contrary, if I attribute the redness to the rose in itself, the handles to Saturn or extension to all outer objects **in themselves**, without looking to a determinate relation of these objects to the subject and limiting my judgment to this, then illusion first arises. (B 70)

It is nonsensical to suppose that because roundness and redness are not properties of things in themselves, roundness is a property of the perceptual state of the subject affected by things in themselves. Roundness is a property ascribed to “something” that appears only if the subject stands in a certain relation (intuiting) with “something” and if the subject to which “something” appears has certain capacities to intuit things.

The fact that appearance predicates behave like predicates of objects is the reason for the aforementioned ambiguity related to the term “in-

tuition". Knowledge of existence is based to the relation of affection. The singular representations that are attributed to the appearing object are based on the subject's sensible capacity to intuit things. It is important to note, however, that it is not possible to determine on the basis of experience that the "immediately given" object is not spatiotemporal. Moreover, since spatiotemporal representations are the only means available for representing individual objects, and for representing "myself" as distinct from the object given in intuition that affects me, immediate awareness of a relation between the object given and the affected subject is possible only if the subject *represents herself in space and time*. This is indeed implied in the following passages:

By means of outer sense (a property of our mind) we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all as in space. (A 22/B 37)

For in order for certain sensations to be related to something outside me (i.e., to something in another place in space from that in which I find myself), thus in order for me to represent them as outside <and next to> one another, thus not merely as different but as in different places, the representation of space must already be their ground. (A 23/B 38)

The implicit presupposition that self-individuation involves spatial representations is made explicit in the *Opus postumum*:

The "I am" is not yet a proposition (*propositio*), but merely the copula to a proposition; not yet a judgment. "I am existing" contains apprehension, that is, it is not merely a subjective judgment but makes myself into an object of intuition in space and time. Logical consciousness to what is real, and progresses from apperception to apprehension and its synthesis of the manifold. (22: 95-97)

Kant's claims are puzzling in more than one respect. They are clearly committed to the claim that spatiotemporal intuitions immediately represent objects that exist in space and time. The first question that requires an answer concerns the justification of this claim and its relation to the transcendental ideality of space and time. Also, Kant's claim that spatiotemporal individuals are appearances cannot be established on the basis of experience and gives rise to a second question: what might be the reasons that establish the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves? Finally, since the individuation of objects is not possible

for us without spatiotemporal representations and since the term “appearance” presupposes that an appearance is an appearance *of* a given object, one may wonder as to what might justify the claim to knowledge of the identity and individuality of *the object* which appears, that is, the object abstracted from the features that pertain to it by virtue of the relation that it has to the subject. In the next three chapters, I will present my reconstruction of Kant’s answers to the first two questions. I will show that the third question is unanswerable. As will become clear in Chapter 9, the fact that it is unanswerable does not affect Kant’s argument for the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves.

Chapter 7

THE IMMEDIACY OF SPACE AND TIME

1. *Introduction*

Kant's arguments for the apriority and intuitivity of space and time are presented in the metaphysical and the transcendental expositions in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*. I will not examine them in detail here. I will assume that space and time do indeed have the features Kant ascribed to them. My main concern will be to examine the sense in which space and time are immediate representations and why this is entailed by the features attributed to space and time in the metaphysical exposition and the transcendental exposition. The immediacy thesis to be explored is a conjunction of two claims:

- (a) The pure space (time) in which entities are represented in the imagination is identical to space (time) of immediate perception and to space (time) in which spatial objects exist.
- (b) If an individual object exists in space (time), then necessarily one *is able* to perceive it as existing in space (time).

I will begin by examining (a).

2. *The Singularity of Space, the Apriority of Space and the Immediacy Thesis*

Kant's first argument for the apriority of space presents space as a precondition for representing objects outside each other and outside the intuiting subject herself. As a precondition for representing objects outside each other space could not have been abstracted from prior given spatial objects.¹ The second argument establishes that one can conceive an empty space but cannot conceive objects represented outside each other and outside the perceiver herself without presupposing the concept of space. An immediate result of these arguments is the denial of a Leibnizian concept of space. According to Kant, a Leibnizian concept of space undermines claims to geometrical synthetic a priori knowl-

¹ As Warren notes (1998: 210), Kant's first apriority argument means that in representing an object in space, "a distinct representation, and thus, a distinct capacity is presupposed, namely, a capacity to represent the spaces which the object occupy".

edge. Apriority is a feature of space required by an account of the possibility of geometrical synthetic a priori knowledge. Space is not determined by features of the objects existing in it. Every object that exists in space inherits the properties of space. Also, since objects that exist within space do not determine space, one may conceive possible objects that could have existed in space. Space as such does not determine which of the possible objects are the objects that actually exist in it.

Kant has two arguments for the claim that space is an intuition. The arguments in the metaphysical exposition establish the singularity of space. The first argument establishes the claim that “space is not a general concept of relations of things in general” (A 24/B 39). Every finite space is a limitation of one indefinitely extendable space.² Particular spaces are parts of one and the same unique space. The second argument deduces the singularity of space from the fact that it is an infinite magnitude.

The metaphysical exposition of space contains no argument that establishes the immediacy of space. The immediacy of space is apparently a necessary part of the claim that space is a form of intuition. Are there Kantian grounds that warrant (a)? Let us begin by presenting a simple argument that proves by means of claims made in the Transcendental Aesthetic that space and time of immediate perception must be identical to space and time in which real spatiotemporal objects exist.³ According to the singularity thesis, every finite, determinate space is a limitation of a unique individual space. Every finite space is part of the single space. Given that necessarily every part of space is spatially related to every other part of that single space, the following statement follows from Kant’s singularity thesis:

1. If S_1 is a finite space and S_2 is a finite space, then necessarily S_1 is spatially related to S_2 .

All spatial points and regions are unique individual points and unique individual regions. Every such point and every such region is distinguished from every other point or region in that they are spatially re-

² In the *Metaphysical foundation of Natural Science*, Kant claims that absolute empty space is an *idea*. Such a space is “nothing that belongs to the existence of things” (4: 563). It serves as a rule that makes possible the representation of every real space as a movable space.

³ For the sake of parsimony, the argument will refer only to space, although it applies equally to space and time.

lated and connected. However, (1) is true only if it is *assumed* that there is just one space. If S_1 were a finite space that is part of w_1 and S_2 a finite space that is part of w_2 , then S_1 would not be spatially related and connected to S_2 .

It should be noted, however, that this objection is incompatible with Kant's apriority thesis. Given that objects that exist in space do not determine space, and that for Kant space is Euclidean, what might be the difference between w_1 and w_2 ? One could argue that w_1 and w_2 may be two numerically different spaces, even if there is no other difference between them. This suggestion seems to be supported by Kant's denial of Leibniz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles. However, Kant's denial of this principle is based on the supposition that two objects might be different even if there is no conceptual or qualitative difference between them (A 263-264/B 319-320). In this case, numerical difference is based on difference in location in space and time (A 281-282/B 337-338). It presupposes pure intuitions.⁴ In other words, Kant does not deny the claim that two numerically distinct individuals are distinguished by something. His claim is that if two objects exist at the same time but differ with respect to their location, this suffices for individuation. It is not possible to know that two things are numerically different, if there are no conceptual differences and no spatiotemporal intuitive differences. Therefore, there can be no two spaces that share all possible features and are nevertheless numerically different, without presupposing another form of intuition (which we do not possess). Since there can be no two spaces, the space of immediate perception as well as the space in which one represents objects in the imagination must be the space in which these objects exist.

⁴ Falkenstein thinks (1989) that it is conceivable that there are two distinct spaces, an experienced space and a transcendental real space. As Falkenstein observes, the conceivability of a transcendental real space is all that the argument of the neglected alternative requires. It should be noted, however, that the terms "experienced space" is ambiguous in the context of Kant's theory. It could refer to either experienced *spatial objects* and their spatial relations or the *space* in which these objects exist (and are experienced). It is clear that the space which is the topic of Kant's discussion in the Transcendental Aesthetic is the latter rather than the former. Space is irreducible to spatial properties and relations between empirical objects. The question is whether space which can be conceived as empty as stated by the second apriority argument can also be conceived as numerically different from an alleged transcendental real space. Kant's argument seems to allow not the conceivability of two whole spaces but rather of two systems of spatial objects. I will address this possibility later.

3. *Spatial Objects and Spatial Representations*

The identity of space of the imagination, space of immediate perception and real physical space follows from the conjunction of Kant's apriority and singularity theses. Nevertheless, the reasons that establish their identity render Kant's position vulnerable to the following threat. Since one has spatial representations when one imagines and dreams and since space of the imagination is identical to real space, it is at least conceivable that all our immediate spatial representations are dream-like images and that they nevertheless "exist" in space without violating the singularity and a priority of space. If objects that really exist in space are immediately perceived as being in space (B 276-278), the singularity of space seems to allow the possibility that dream-like entities are the only objects of which one is immediately aware as existing in space. If dream-like entities "exist in space", then since there are no spatial relations between dream-like spatially represented entities and objects that "really" exist in space, it follows that the identity of real, perceptual and imagined space is compatible with the possibility that there are spatial entities that exist in space which are not spatially related to other entities that exist in space, although the space in which these entities supposedly exist is one and the same. This is not merely an innocent corollary of Kant's position. This possibility undermines the singularity thesis. If objects are individuated in space by the fact that they occupy a certain region *in it*, then since it is assumed that the singularity of space implies that every finite space is part of one whole space, how can it be that two objects are thus individuated and are not spatially related? This problem cannot be explained away by claiming that space is merely a form of representation. If, as Leibniz thought, space would be reducible to properties of things in themselves and their relations, the problem is avoided. But this will not do for Kant, since, according to Kant, spaces and space as a whole are represented as individuals.

Strawson expresses the above concern in the following passage:

To say that there is only one space is to say at least that every spatially related object is spatially related to every other such object. It is to say that there is only one system of spatially related things. To this it might be objected that there do in fact exist spatially independent systems of spatially related things. For example, the elements of one person's (X's) visual image may have spatial relations to each other, and so may the

elements of another person's (Y's) visual image. But it makes no sense to inquire about the spatial relations between elements in X's visual image and elements in Y's visual image. They have no common space. Further, it makes no sense to inquire about the spatial relations between elements in my visual image and parts of my body or objects in my room. The space which includes the ink-bottle on my table does not include the ink-bottle in my mind's eye. The ink-bottle in my mind's eye does not take up or occupy any part of the space to which my physical inkbottle belongs. (Strawson, 1966: 63)

This objection contains an implicit distinction between spatially related *objects* and spatially related visual *images*. The objection assumes that the uniqueness of space implies that every spatial object is spatially related to every other spatial object. However, the above objection supposes that there are sets of entities such that each entity that belongs to one set has spatial relations to every other entity that belongs to this set but is not spatially related and cannot be spatially compared and differentiated from other spatially related entities that belong to another set. Images that belong to the personal lives of distinct persons are assumed to be spatially related to each other and are not spatially related to images that belong to the mental lives of other persons, or to real spatial objects.

It should first be noted that it is not self-evident that this objection undermines the identity of the domain of immediately perceived (in contrast to imagined) *spatial objects* and the domain of *objects* that "really" exist in space. It would have been an objection to that effect only if one would have assumed that every entity immediately represented in space necessarily belongs to the private mental life of the person that has it. Such an entity inherits its identity from the person who is immediately aware of it. The claim that some entities (images that are spatially related to some other images) are not spatially related to other spatial entities (namely, objects that exist in space and images of different persons), does not entail the claim that *all* entities immediately presented in space are merely temporal images.⁵ Nor is this claim implied by the claim that all spatially represented entities of immediate awareness could be dream-like entities. Nevertheless, this ob-

⁵ This claim is apparently incompatible with Kant's main contention in the Refutation of Idealism. Whether the claim that we must represent enduring spatial objects in order to be conscious of ourselves as determined in time can be established will be examined in Chapter 15.

jection calls for a distinction between “existing in space” and “spatial representation”, which makes possible the distinction between spatial objects and spatial images. The latter distinction is not explicitly made in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*.

A clue as to what might be a basis for this distinction can be found in the following considerations. One may assume with the above objection that “to say that there is only one space is to say at least that every spatially related object is spatially related to every other such object”. If images that are parts of the mental life of a given person are spatially related to all other images of that person, then they might be kinds of spatial objects. But this is clearly not satisfied by images that belong to the private mental life of persons. Say that in my imagination I represent a triangle in space and another triangle next to this triangle. These two triangles are spatially distinguished. But say that tomorrow I imagine two triangles that are qualitatively and quantitatively identical to the first two and are spatially related in exactly the same manner. Are these two triangles identical to the triangles previously imagined by me? If not, are they spatially related to the triangles I imagined yesterday? Do they occupy the same finite space or a different finite space? How can one determine the spatial relations between them? The most plausible answer is that we cannot determine the spatial positions of all the images that we represent in the imagination. The assumption that *all* spatial images belonging to one person are spatially related therefore begs the question. The fact that each person can represent to herself *images* that are spatially related to some *images* in imagination is not a counterexample to the claim that all spatiotemporal *objects* are spatially related to all other spatiotemporal objects.

One may try to search for a distinction between spatial representations and spatial objects by nothing that space and time are for Kant forms of intuition. Intuitions are singular and immediate representations of *objects*. As noted above, “intuition” is a kind of objective perception in that the appearance given in it is “ordered and placed in a certain form”. At the present stage of the *Critique*, one may conceivably assume that appearances possess only spatiotemporal order. But appearances should not be identified with sensations, even where spatiotemporally individuated appearances are concerned. Sensations are the subjective modes of affection that abstract from the form in which appearances are ordered in certain relations. We may assume that the term “object” (in the “real” sense) implies that the object is individ-

uated. My suggestion is that in Kant's theory the term "object of an intuition" stands for an entity that is individuated by some singular representation in the intuition. "Temporal object" refers to an entity distinct from the temporal representation that is temporally individuated. By the same token, in Kant's theory, "spatial object" should mean a spatially represented entity distinct from the spatial representations themselves that can be *spatially individuated* by being distinguished from all other similar spatial entities. The fact that a representation has spatial features or temporal feature does not suffice to claim that the representation is a representation of a spatial object or a temporal object. A necessary condition for being a spatial object is that the object be spatially represented in such a manner that it can be spatially individuated. As we shall later see, a sufficient condition for being a spatial object involves the pure concepts of the understanding since spatial objects can be represented only by means of temporal sequences of representations.⁶

If spatial objects must be individuated in space, temporal images that possess spatial features are not spatial objects. Strictly speaking, only spatial objects exist in space. Spatial intuitions are immediate representations of spatial objects. Although Kant does not explicitly make this claim in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, the above suggestion is intimately related to the claim that intuitions are singular representations of objects immediately given in them. If spatial intuitions involve singular representations of objects immediately given in them, the objects of spatial intuitions must be spatially individuated. This is commonly agreed where time is concerned. The immediate undetermined objects of temporal intuitions are individuated in time. But there are no relevant differences with respect to the term "intuition" between spatial and temporal intuitions in Kant's theory. If one abstracts from all other conditions of experience, images should be conceived as existing only in time. The question of whether an entity can exist only in time or whether it must be regarded as inheriting its identity and existence from a spatial object is addressed in other parts of the *Critique*.

⁶ According to Kant, apprehension is always successive. Spatial objects and objective states of affairs are also represented in apprehension by means of a successive sequence of representations. As Kant's arguments in the "Analogies of Experience" establish, the schematized category of community (reciprocity between agent and patient) must be presupposed by our capacity to represent objects as simultaneously coexisting in space. See Melnik (1973), Chapter 3, and Guyer, (1987), Chapter 11. I will discuss this issue in Chapter 14.

The following principle should therefore be part of Kant's theory.

- (A) For any x and any y , (1) if x exists in space and y exists in space then x is individuated in space (and not only in time) and y is individuated in space (and not only in time); (2) if x and y exist in space then x and y are spatially and temporally related (and not merely temporally related).

As I noted in Chapter 5, although (A) is necessary for the immediacy thesis, (A) is not sufficient for it. The possibility that objects which exist in space can never be immediately perceived is incompatible with the transcendental ideality of space and time and compatible with (A). The fact that pure space of immediate perception is identical to pure space in which real objects exist and that "exist in space" means "individuated in space" seems to leave open the possibility that an object is individuated in space without it being necessary in principle that the object can immediately be perceived in space. The following principle should therefore be added:

- (C) If an object x exists in space, it is must be possible for someone to be perceptually acquainted with x .

The remaining question is whether Kant's theory contains reasons that justify (C). I will address this question in Part Three of this book.

4. Immediacy, Temporal Individuation and Spatial Individuation

Let us examine a different concern expressed in the following passage from Quinton's paper:

Suppose that on going to bed at home and falling asleep you found yourself to all appearances waking up in a hut raised on poles at the edge of a lake. A dusky woman, whom you realize to be your wife, tells you to go out and catch some fish. The dream continues with the apparent length of an ordinary human day, replete with an appropriate and causally coherent variety of tropical incident. At last you climb up the rope ladder to your hut and fall asleep. At once you find yourself awaking at home to the world of normal responsibilities and expectations. The next night life by the side of the tropical lake continues in a coherent and natural way from the point at which it left off. And so it goes on. Injuries given in England leave scars in England, insults given at lakeside complicate la-

beside personal relations...Now if this whole state of affairs came about it would not be very unreasonable to say that we lived it two worlds. (Quinton, 1962: 141).

According to Quinton it is conceivable that:

- (1) There might exist two spatiotemporal worlds w_1, w_2 in which spatiotemporal objects exist such that every spatiotemporal object existing in w_1 is spatially related to every other spatiotemporal object existing in w_1 and is not spatially related to any spatiotemporal object existing in w_2 .
- (2) It is possible that *one and the same person* is perceptually related (though not at the same time!) to objects and objective states of affairs belonging to w_1 and w_2 .

Quinton's counterexample supposedly undermines the conjunction of "uniqueness" and "immediate givenness" with regard to space. As Quinton's myth indirectly suggests, if it is conceivable that one immediately perceives spatial objects that are not spatially related, then space is not unique. Yet, if space is unique, every object that appears in space must be spatially related to every other object. Also, if space is a form of intuition, a person can be immediately related to spatial objects. Hence, given this myth, either the assumption that we immediately intuit spatiotemporal objects is false or the assumption that space is unique is false.

In order to assess this objection, one should first distinguish between two claims implied by it. The first is the claim that it is conceivable that one might be perceptually related to two possible sets of *objects* such that objects that belong to the first set are not spatially related to objects that belong to the second set. The second is that one might have *empirical evidence* that one is related to two such sets. Needless to say, the second claim depends on the first claim. If it were not conceivable that one could be perceptually related to two possible sets of objects such that objects that belong to the first set are not spatiotemporally related to objects that belong to the second set, then no empirical evidence could have corroborated the claim that there are such sets of objects. In this case, one of the spatial worlds in which Quinton's imagined person lives would have to be a dream world or an illusion no matter how coherent it might appear to be. Sophisticated explanations that explain the fact that one *seems* to perceive two such sets of objects are always tenable. Hence the conceivability of such a counterexample

must be based on a priori grounds. Such an account contains two parts. The first part must explain the sense in which (a) different internally coherent spatial worlds of *objects* that do not cohere with one another are *conceivable*. This follows directly from Kant's apriority thesis. Space is not determined by the features of the objects that exist in it. The second part must show that (b) it is conceivable that *one and the same* experiencing subject can be immediately related to spatial objects that are not spatially related. This is implicitly presupposed by Quinton's thought experiment.⁷ Another related presupposition implicit in Quinton's thought experiment is that (c) the temporal order of our experiences can be determined even in cases in which one is *physically* present in two spatial worlds.⁸ It should be noted that the question one has to face is not whether (a)-(c) are conceivable, but whether they are really possible. It can be shown, however, that Kant's theory contains reasons to claim that the grounds for the real possibility of (a) undermine (c). The same grounds which supposedly allow one to claim that there are two distinct spatial worlds of spatial objects which are not spatially related allow one to claim that there are two temporal worlds of temporal objects which are not temporally related.

Quinton assumes that an experiencing subject could be aware of herself as physically present in two spatial worlds. Since what are supposedly her bodies in the two spatial worlds cannot be identical, she cannot identify herself with any of them. Her internal self-awareness of her identity cannot be based on the identity of the bodies through which she is aware of herself as being bodily present in each of these worlds. Therefore, her identity is not determined by the fact that she has a body. The question is whether she can in this case be conscious of her experiences as having taken place in one single time.

It should be noted that if the subject is not identical with any particular body (and no other conditions are added), there are no reasons to rule out the possibility that she might appear to herself as being bodily present in each world by means of an indefinite number of bodies. Since the concept of personal identity employed here is conceptually disconnected from the uniqueness of a body, no conceptual barriers forbid one to endorse this possibility. By the same token, there

⁷ Compare Swinburne, (1968, Chapter 2).

⁸ This possibility is presented by Wilkerson (1976: 35). Wilkerson maintains (1976: 32) that although there are "pressing grounds for disagreeing with Kant about the unity of space", the unity of time must be presupposed.

are no reasons to rule out the possibility that she might participate as a spatial object (a different object in each case) in events that “objectively” succeed one another in time. Since she repeatedly shifts from one spatial world of objects to another, and from one body to another, then if no other conditions are added, there seems to be no reason why, if she falls asleep in w_1 , she must awake in w_2 at a time represented in w_2 , by means of spatiotemporal and causal relations between spatiotemporal objects and events in w_2 , as being before the “objective” time in which she fell asleep in w_2 . The only way to rule out this possibility is to claim that in each world temporal succession is causally determined and that the succession of her states of consciousness must reflect the causal determination of the events that she observes. If this were true, then given the temporal asymmetry of causal relations, it would not have been possible for her to participate in events that causally determined events represented as experiences in her memory. But since she is not identical as an experiencing subject to any of the bodies in each world, and since it is assumed that she could be physically present in spatial worlds of objects that do not and cannot causally interact, this type of explanation is not acceptable. One may assume only that her *experiences* are successive, that she might be bodily present and that she participates in events that first took place in 2004 (in w_1) and then in 300 B.C (in w_1) without violating the succession in her internal experiences. Indeed, one must distinguish here between the *subjective temporal order* of her experiences and the *objective temporal order*. In this case, an unbridgeable gap is created between the subjective order of her experiences and the objective order of the events that she experiences. The supposition that the time of w_1 is identical to w_2 assumes that the temporal events can be temporally correlated and related to the temporal events in w_2 . However, since the temporal events in w_1 can be related to the temporal events in w_2 only by means of the temporal series of experiences of the experiencing subject, and since if no other conditions are added, the subjective order of experiences does not indicate the objective order (given that this order must mirror the causal determination of events), there is no reason to claim that the time of w_1 is identical to the time of w_2 . Given the Kantian supposition that the subject must be individuated at least as a temporal object, which objective time serves to individuate the subject? One may assume that *it is possible* that the subject is a spatially and causally determined object that suffers from systematic *temporal* hallucinations or

that she is a temporal object that merely imagines living in two spatial worlds. If so, she cannot possibly have empirical knowledge of her identity. How can she determine which of these two possibilities is true? Quinton's imagined case provides no means to answer this question.

Indeed, the above argument invokes concepts that are not discussed in the Transcendental Aesthetic: self-consciousness of self-identity, consciousness of temporal determination and a distinction between a subjective temporal sequence and an objective temporal sequence. Kant addresses these concepts in the Analytic. The fact that an account of these concepts is required in order to establish the singularity of space and time attests to the above-mentioned systematic relatedness of the elements of synthetic a priori knowledge. This is explicitly stated in the following passage:

We have above traced the concepts of space and time to their sources by means of a transcendental deduction, and explained and determined their *a priori* objective validity... With the **pure concepts of the understanding**, however, there first arises the unavoidable need to search for the transcendental deduction not only of them but also of space, for since they speak of objects not through predicates of intuition and sensibility but through those of pure *a priori* thinking, they relate to objects generally without any conditions of sensibility; and since they are not grounded in experience and cannot exhibit any object in *a priori* intuition on which to ground their synthesis prior to any experience, they not only arouse suspicion about the objective validity and limits of their use but also make the **concept of space** ambiguous by inclining us to use it beyond the conditions of sensible intuition, on which account a transcendental deduction of it was also needed above. (A 87-88/B 119-121)

I will address this topic in Part Three.

Chapter 8
THE NON-SPATIOTEMPORALITY OF THINGS IN
THEMSELVES

1. Introduction

Transcendental idealism is assumed to be established by the following claims:

1. Every synthetic claim to knowledge is based on intuitions that involve singular representations of individual objects.
2. Spatiotemporal representations are the a priori, singular and immediate representations of objects.
3. Every real object that can be given to us is spatiotemporal.
4. Things in themselves are not spatiotemporal.

In the previous chapters I gave some of Kant's reasons in support of (1) and (2). In the present chapter my task will be to reveal Kant's reasons for (3) and (4). The fulfillment of this task is equivalent to establishing that space and time are epistemic ideal conditions as stated by definition (e) in Chapter 5, section 2: an epistemic ideal condition is (1) a condition necessary for the representation of objects or objective states of affairs that (2) does not represent any feature of things as they are in themselves. As I will show in this chapter, given that space and time are a priori, singular and unique and given that they are indispensable (for us) and sufficient for individuating undetermined objects and necessary conditions for the individuation of empirical objects, space and time are epistemic ideal conditions as stated by (e).

I begin by presenting an outline of the argument and will then justify each step separately.

2. An Outline of the Argument

My argument is based on a distinction between individuating conditions and identity, which is implicit in the theory presented by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in his related writings. If one knows that an individual object is given, one must know how to distinguish the object from every other object. Knowledge (in the problematic sense) of the intrinsic features that constitute the individual essence of an individual object entails the knowledge of why the object is distinct from

every other object, why it is the individual object that it is and not anything else. I will show that the generic *concept* of a thing in itself is the concept of a thing whose identity is determined only by its intrinsic features. According to Kant, relations that an individual has to other individuals cannot constitute the individual essence of a thing in itself. The upshot of this claim is that a thing in itself is the individual that it is independently of any relations that it has to other individuals. The claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal is made about things that are individuals in the above sense.

If an individual object were known as it is in itself, it would be known to be distinct from every other object on the basis of knowledge of its intrinsic nature. But the only knowable individuating features of actually existing objects that are sufficient for individuation cannot be part of the individual essence of objects. They are spatiotemporal singular representations of individual objects, which are conditions by means of which one can distinguish an individual object from all other coexisting objects. As I will show below, Kant had plausible reasons to claim that the individuating features provided by space and time — spatiotemporal locations — cannot be part of the merely conceivable intrinsic features of an object. Our capacity to distinguish empirical objects from one another must involve spatiotemporal locations. But due to the apriority of space and time, these unique features that distinguish a given empirical object from all other empirical objects can be ascribed to indefinitely many possible objects and they could have been the distinguishing features of indefinitely many actually existing objects. The upshot of Kant's apriority thesis is that spatiotemporal *locations* are not reducible to relations between objects that occupy them, even if experiences of spatiotemporal locations must be based on experiences of objects that occupy them. Empirical objects that actually exist do not necessarily exist. Actually existing objects could have existed in a different place at the same time. The spatiotemporal location of an empirical object distinguishes it from every other coexisting empirical object only if it actually exists in the given spatiotemporal location. Since actual existence cannot be part of the individual essence of any thing as it is in itself, spatiotemporal location cannot be part of the individual essence of a thing as it is in itself.

In other words, the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves follows from the singularity, apriority and indispensability of space and time. The claim that we only know appearances is entailed by the claim

that every knowable individual is for us spatiotemporal. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal does not entail knowledge of the actual existence of things in themselves. Rather, the claim only implies the mere possibility of their existence that is based on the generic concept of pure reason of a thing in itself.

3. *Space and Time Qua Indispensable Conditions of Individuation*

I will begin with Kant's supposition that the pure intuitions of space and time are indispensable and only sufficient for the individuation of appearances. The main supposition of Kant's epistemic theory is that an object can only be immediately given by means of an intuition. A concept never relates immediately to an object "but is always related to some other representation of it" (A 68/B 93). Intuitions have matter and form. The matter is "what corresponds to sensation" (A 20/B 34). The form is "that which allows the manifold of appearance to be intuited and ordered together" (A 20/B 34). Only the forms of intuition, in particular space, can be regarded as a priori objective. In contrast to the sensible qualities of taste, smell and sight that are not objective determinations of the object that appears, space necessarily belongs to the appearance given in intuition:

Besides space, however, there is no other subjective representation related to something external that could be called *a priori* objective. Hence this subjective condition of all outer appearances cannot be compared with any other. The pleasant taste of a wine does not belong to the objective determinations of the wine, thus of an object even considered as an appearance, but rather to the particular constitution of sense in the subject that enjoys it. Colors are not objective qualities of the bodies to the intuition of which they are attached, but are also only modifications of the sense of sight, which is affected by light in a certain way. Space, on the contrary, as a condition of outer objects, necessarily belongs to their appearance or intuition. Taste and colors are by no means necessary conditions under which alone the objects can be objects of the senses for us. They are only combined with the appearance as contingently added effects of the particular organization. (A 28-29/B 44)

As I showed in Chapters 6 and 7, the singularity of space and time explain why a spatiotemporal representation is a singular representa-

tion. Since there are no *infima species* (9: 97), and since there is only a singular use of a concept, singular representations must have the character of spatiotemporal representations. They must be particular determinations of forms of intuition.

Space and time are for us the only forms of intuitions. Kant presents this claim as an unexplained fact. Since this claim is not a logical truth, other forms of intuitions are conceivable in a problematic way, though we have no clue as to what they might be.

Although space and time are indispensable for the individuation of objects, they are merely sufficient for individuating them. Spatiotemporal locations are completely indifferent to the inner determinations of the objects that they differentiate. Physical places are “entirely indifferent with regard to the inner determinations of the things, a place = *b* can just as readily accept a thing that is fully similar and equal to another in a place = *a* as it could if the former were ever so internally different from the latter” (A 272/B 328). But, difference of places at a given time suffices for the numerical difference of the objects of the senses. Two qualitatively and quantitatively identical drops of water might nevertheless be numerically different (A 263/B 319).¹

¹ Warren (1998: 193) argues that Kant’s critique of Leibniz’s principle of the identity of indiscernibles should not be interpreted by means of the claim that spatiotemporal positions (and therefore space and time) are necessary for distinguishing empirical objects from other such objects. It seems that Warren supposes that Kant’s position is that qualitative identity *can* indeed sufficiently distinguish an object from all other objects. In other words, we possess empirical means other than space and time that are sufficient for individuating objects. According to Warren, the main point of Kant’s critique of Leibniz is that qualitative identity and differences in spatiotemporal locations need not coincide.

Although I agree with Warren’s main claim in this paper, namely, that Kant’s argument for the apriority of space in the Transcendental Aesthetic does not employ the claim that space and time are indispensable for individuation, his other claim, namely, that space and time are not indispensable for individuation is, in my view, inadequate as an interpretation of Kant’s position for the following reasons. It is not clear what the term “qualitative identity” means and how it relates to the *identity* of empirical objects. It is clear from Kant’s example that two things might be qualitatively identical and nevertheless numerically different things. Given that “numerical difference” applies to two *numerically different individuals*, the fact that differences in spatiotemporal locations suffice for the numerical difference of qualitatively identical individuals clarifies that the latter kind of “identity” is insufficient for distinguishing one object from another. The fact that differences in spatiotemporal location can actually coincide with differences in the qualitative features of the objects can hardly establish the claim that qualitative identity is insufficient for numerical identity only in cases in which there are differences in spatiotemporal locations. The claim that qualitative identity is necessarily insufficient for individuation can be traced to Kant’s claim in the *lectures on Logic* that, for finite minds, there are no *infima species*.

4. *The Concept of a Thing in Itself*

I now turn to discuss Kant's concept of a thing in itself. As I noted in Chapter 5, the charge of the neglected alternative seems to result from the conjunction of two claims, namely, that we know nothing about things as they are in themselves and that we know that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal. An answer to this problem is made possible if one distinguishes between the generic concept of a thing in itself and knowledge that concerns the nature of an individual thing as it is in itself.² When Kant claims that we possess no knowledge of things as they are in themselves, he claims that no given individual object is known as a thing-in-itself. This is not incompatible with the claim that we possess *a concept* of a thing in itself. The concept of a thing in itself provides the general metaphysical features of things in themselves. The neglected alternative is avoided if the generic concept of a thing in itself suffices for establishing the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal.

Kant does not provide a systematic account of the concept of a thing in itself. The features of the concept of a thing in itself are discussed in several different passages. One of these passages is the following:

For confirmation of this theory of the ideality of outer as well as inner sense, thus of all objects of the senses, as mere appearances, this comment is especially useful: that everything in our cognition that belongs to intuition (with the exception, therefore, of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure and the will, which are not cognitions at all) contains nothing but

The claim that the apriority of space is not *based on* its being a *necessary* condition for the individuation of objects is compatible with its being such a condition. (compare Allison, 1983: 83). As I will show below, the apriority of space and its indispensability for individuation of empirical objects is important for the argument that establishes the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves.

² Rescher makes a similar claim. According to Rescher (2000: 19), things in themselves "are not natural objects but...mere *Verstandeswesen*", that is, creatures of the understanding that are the correlates of certain mechanism of our understanding. However, Rescher does not distinguish between the meanings of the terms "transcendental object" and "noumenon". The exact meaning of these terms is a notorious exegetical difficulty since Kant is inconsistent in his use of these terms (compare Allison, 1983, Chapter 11; Schrader, 1967). Nevertheless, although there are many cases in which Kant uses these terms synonymously, the places in which he distinguishes between them clarify that only the "transcendental object" can really be interpreted as a creature of the understanding. As I will show later, the *noumenon* is a creature of pure reason.

mere relations, of places in one intuition (extension), alteration of places (motion), and laws in accordance with which this alteration is determined (moving forces). But what is present in the place, or what it produces in the things themselves besides the alteration of place, is not given through these relations. Now through mere relations no thing in itself is cognized; it is therefore right to judge that since nothing is given to us through outer sense except mere representations of relation, outer sense can also contain in its representation only the relation of an object to the subject, and not that which is internal to the object in itself. (B 66-67)

Everything in our cognition that belongs to intuition contains “nothing but mere relations”. A thing in itself cannot be cognized by means of relations. These claims raise at least two questions: (a) Why is it not possible to cognize a thing as it is itself by means of relations? (b) Why are all the features of the objects of intuition mere relations? A partial answer to the first question is found in the distinction between the inner and the outer in the Amphiboly:

The **inner** and the **outer**. In an object of the pure understanding only that is internal that has no relation (as far as the existence is concerned) to anything that is different from it. The inner determinations of a *substantia phaenomenon* in space, on the contrary, are nothing but relations, and it is itself entirely a sum total of mere relations. We know substance in space only through forces that are efficacious in it, whether in drawing others to it (attraction) or in preventing penetration of it (repulsion and impenetrability); we are not acquainted with other properties constituting the concept of the substance that appears in space and which we call matter. As object of the pure understanding, on the contrary, every substance must have inner determinations and forces that pertain to its inner reality. Yet what can I think of as inner accidents except for those which my inner sense offers me? — namely that which is either itself **thinking** or which is analogous to one. Thus because he represented them as *noumena*, taking away in thought every thing that might signify outer relations, thus even **composition**, Leibniz made out of all substances, even the constituents of matter, simple subjects gifted with powers of representation, in a word, **monads**. (A 265-266/B 321-322)

Kant here repeats the claims that a thing in itself cannot be cognized by means of relations and that relations are all we may know about the

individuals that are given to us. However, this passage contains a clue that might explain why things in themselves cannot be cognized by means of relations. Substances as merely possible individual objects of the pure understanding must contain inner determinations and forces that pertain to their *inner reality*.³

Some commentators interpret these claims as if Kant meant to say that relations are not real when reality is considered as it is in itself.⁴ It is assumed that Kant's argument is that we do not know reality as it is in itself, because all we can know are relations that are not real when reality is considered as it is in itself. However, Kant does not claim here that things in themselves cannot be related to other things in themselves. A more charitable interpretation is that Kant regards the concept of a thing in itself as a concept of a thing the identity of which is specified by means of inner determination. The fact that relations cannot be part of the inner determinations or individual essence of things in themselves does not imply that things in themselves cannot be related to other things in themselves.⁵ It merely states that their

³ The notion "inner reality" is related to the notion "essence" in the preface to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*:

Essence is the first inner principle of all that belongs to the possibility of a thing. Therefore, one can attribute only an essence to geometrical figures and not a nature (since in their concept nothing is thought that would express existence). (4: 468)

The term "nature in its formal meaning" therefore refers to the first inner principle that belongs to the existence of a thing. As this passage clarifies, these inner principles indicate the essence of things that exist or may exist, i.e., objects. Inner determinations, as far as existence is concerned, have no relation to anything that is different from it (from the object of the pure understanding).

⁴ For example, see Guyer (1987: 367-368).

⁵ For a similar line of interpretation see Langton (1998). However, my interpretation differs from Langton's interpretation in the following respect. According to Langton, Kant's claim that we do not know things as they are in themselves is equivalent to the claim that our knowledge is confined to relational properties of objects and that we cannot know the intrinsic properties of objects. According to Langton, the fact that we cannot know the intrinsic properties of objects is entailed by the fact that we can know objects only in so far as they *affect us* (1998: 23). It should be noted, however, that according to this interpretation the transcendental ideality of space and time is both irrelevant and dispensable when Kant's claim to the unknowability of things in themselves is at stake. Also, the distinction between "phenomena" and "noumena" is neither a distinction between two modes of considering things nor between two kinds of things but rather between "two

identity or individual essence does not consist of and does not depend on the relations in which they could take part.

The fact that this is what Kant had in mind is apparent in his discussion of the ideal of pure reason. As I mentioned in Chapter 6, an ideal of pure reason is an idea “not merely *in concreto* but *in individuo*, i.e., as an individual thing which is determinable, or even determined, through the idea alone” (A 568/B 596).

Through this possession of all reality, however, there is also represented the concept of a **thing in itself** which is thoroughly determined, and the concept of an *ens realissimum* is the concept of an individual being, because of all possible opposed predicates, one, namely that which belongs absolutely to being, is encountered in its determination. Thus it is a transcendental **ideal** which is the ground of the thoroughgoing determination that is necessarily encountered in everything existing, and which constitutes the supreme and complete material condition of its possibility, to which all thinking of objects in general must, as regards the content of that thinking, be traced back. It is, however, also the one single genuine ideal of which human reason is capable, because only in this one single case is an — in itself universal — concept of one thing thoroughly determined through itself, and cognized as the representation of an individual. (A 576/B 604)

Every thing, as to its possibility, stands under the principle of thoroughgoing determination (A 571/B 599). The complete concept of every individual presupposes the idea of the sum total of the material of all possibility (A 572/B 600). Complete determination can never be exhibited *in concreto*. But the idea of the sum total of all material for possibility “refines itself to a concept thoroughly determined a priori” (A 574/B 602). The ideal, the concept of the sum total of all possibility “is a concept that comprehends all predicates as regards their transcendental content not merely **under itself**, but **within itself**; and the thoroughgoing determination of every thing rests on the limitation of this **ALL** of reality..”. (A 577/B 605)

different classes of properties of the same set of entities” (1998: 13). If so, one wonders why according to Kant things in themselves are unknowable. The claim that we can have no knowledge of the intrinsic properties of things is compatible with the fact that we know the relational properties of *things in themselves* (that include spatiotemporal properties!).

A concept of an “in itself universal” is a representation of an individual, that is, a concept of one thing thoroughly determined through itself. The ideal of pure reason, the concept of the sum total of all possibility is the only concept of an individual determined through itself that we possess a priori. But this is not the only conceivable concept. Complete determination presupposes transcendental negation, in contrast to mere logical negation (A 574/B 602). Every completely determined concept of an individual thing is derived from the ideal of pure reason by means of transcendental negation. The ideal of pure reason is “the original image (*prototypon*) of all things, which all together as defective copies (*ectypa*), take from it the matter for their possibility” (A 578/B 606). The ideal of pure reason provides an *archetype* of a thing in itself.

The ideal of pure reason shares important features with pure intuitions. It is a unique concept of a fully determined individual and is therefore a singular representation. Like the relation of spaces to space and times to time, it does not subsume all reality under itself but contains it in itself. Nevertheless, Kant does not regard the ideal as a pure intuition but rather as a concept of an individual. The main difference between the ideal and pure intuitions is that the ideal is not a form of an object that can be given in sensible intuition. Although the ideal represents an individual thing, the capacity to represent it in thought does not involve knowledge of existence. The ideal is an a priori concept of the being (or reality) of all beings that does not serve as the basis for the knowledge of existence of an object which corresponds to it.

Thus all the possibility of things (as regards the synthesis of the manifold of their content) is regarded as derivative, and only that which includes all reality in it is regarded as original. For all negations (which are the sole predicates through which everything else is to be distinguished from the most real being) are mere limitations of a greater and finally of the highest reality; hence they presuppose it, and as regards their content they are merely derived from it. All manifoldness of things is only so many different ways of limiting the concept of the highest reality, which is their common substratum, just as all figures are possible only as different ways of limiting infinite space. Hence the object of reason’s ideal, which is to be found only in reason, is also called the **original being** (*ens originarium*); because it has nothing above itself it is called the

highest being (*ens summum*), and because everything else, as conditioned, stands under it, it is called the **being of all beings** (*ens entium*). Yet all of this does not signify the objective relation of an actual object to other things, but only that of an **idea** to **concepts**, and as to the existence of a being of such preeminent excellence it leaves us in complete ignorance. (A 578-579/B 606-607)

Indeed, the fact that we possess a meta-concept of complete concepts of individuals echoes Leibniz's complete concepts of individual substances.⁶ The main difference between Leibniz and Kant is that no such concept, not even the concept of an individual that contains the material of all possibility in itself, implies existence. Possessing this concept does not involve knowledge of the existence of the intentional object of the concept. A complete concept of an individual in itself contains every feature relevant to the identity of the individual whose concept it is without presupposing the existence of the individual. The possibility of an individual as a unique, fully determined individual is derived directly from the ideal, that is, from a concept of pure reason. One may know what this possible individual is, what constitute its "inner nature" by directly inspecting the complete concept that comprises its individual essence. But knowledge of an individual's inner nature presupposes nothing less than knowledge of all reality, which for us is completely impossible.

5. *Substantia Phaenomenon*

Let us now turn to the second question raised above: why is a spatiotemporal substance — *substantia phaenomenon* — "nothing but relations... a sum total of mere relations" (A 265/B 321)? This question can be divided into two sub-questions: (a) In what sense is the concept of the thing that occupies spatiotemporal places (the concept of a material object) a concept that consists of "a sum total of mere relations? (b) In what sense are spatiotemporal places mere relations? In the pre-

⁶ It is important to note that Kant's claim does not imply that we possess complete concepts of individuals. The possession of the ideal does not entail that one possesses knowledge of the inner determinations of the individual represented by it. The same is true with regard to concepts of individual things that can be derived from the ideal. Strictly speaking, Kant allows us to have only a *concept* of complete concepts of things in themselves. This is the concept of a thing in itself.

sent section I will discuss the features of Kant's concept of matter that are relevant to the claim that *substantia phaenomenon* is a sum total of relations. The second question will be addressed in the following sections.

In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Phoronomy*, matter is defined as "the movable in space" (4: 480). Matter is what can be moved in space. The movable in space is relative space: "That space which is itself movable is called material, or also relative" (4: 480). In contrast to relative space, the space "in which all motion must finally be thought (and which is therefore itself absolutely immovable) is called pure, or also *absolute space*" (4: 480). Although absolute space is necessarily presupposed by relative space, it is not an object of experience: "It cannot be an object of experience, for space without matter is no object of perception, and yet it is a necessary concept of reason, and thus nothing more than a mere *idea*". (4: 559) This claim is related to another key claim that Kant makes in this context, namely, that "all motion that is an object of experience is merely relative" (4: 481). The space that can be perceived is a movable space. Empirical space is "the totality of all objects of experience, and itself an object of experience" (4: 481). Kant's main point is that an empirical spatial object of experience must itself be conceived as movable relative space:

But this, as material, is itself movable. But a movable space, if its motion is to be capable of being perceived, presupposes in turn an enlarged material space, in which it is movable; this latter presupposes in precisely the same way yet another; and so on to infinity. (4: 481)

The notion of material, relative, and movable space therefore presupposes the indefinite extendibility of empirical space. Empirical space possesses the same features ascribed to space by the arguments of the metaphysical exposition. Each movable space belongs to one and the same space and is spatially related to all other movable spaces. Since all motion is relative, one can determine by empirical means the place of a movable space only relative to another movable space. Nevertheless, the concept of a relative space requires absolute space in order to characterize each empirical space as movable:

Rather, one must think a space in which the latter can be thought as moved, but which depends for its determination on no further empirical space, and thus is not conditioned

in turn — that is, an absolute space, to which all relative motions can be referred, in which everything empirical is movable, precisely so that in it all motion of material things may count as merely relative with respect to one another, as alternatively-mutual, but none as absolute motion or rest (where, while one is said to be moved, the other, in relation to which it is moved, is nonetheless represented as absolutely at rest). Absolute space is therefore necessary, not as a concept of an actual object, but rather as an idea, which is to serve as a rule for considering all motion therein merely as relative; and all motion and rest must be reduced to absolute space, if the appearance thereof is to be transformed into a determinate concept of experience (which unite all appearances). (4: 559-60)

The necessary presupposition of absolute space is therefore not of an actual object but of a rule that makes possible the characterization of all material spaces as movable spaces. It is a necessary presupposition of experience since it makes possible the transformation of undetermined appearances to determined experience.

The main reason that explains the claim that absolute space is not an actual object is Kant's denial of actual infinity and his related claim that links the notions of an object of experience to that of possible experience. Both are also found in his treatment of the other features of the concept "material object".

The relational character of the features that constitute matter is also evident in Kant's analysis of the concept of matter in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Dynamics*. Matter fills space by means of two fundamental moving forces, repulsive force and a force of attraction (4: 497). Kant reduces the notion of impenetrability to the notion of a repulsive force. Repulsive forces are forces of extension in space that have degrees. Beyond every given force, a greater force must be admitted (4: 449). The third proposition is: "Matter can be compressed to infinity; but can never be penetrated by a matter, no matter how great the compressing force of the latter may be" (4: 501). The main reason why matter cannot be penetrated is that "in order to penetrate the matter, its compression into an infinitely small space would be required, and hence an infinitely compressive force would be required; but such a force is impossible" (4: 501). This claim is explicitly stated as a refutation of what Kant characterizes the mathematical concept of matter which he attributes to Lambert:

Lambert and others called the property of matter by which it fills space *solidity* (a rather ambiguous expression), and claim that one must assume this in everything *that exists* (substance), at least in the outer sensible world. According to their ideas the presence of something *real* in space must already, through its concept, and thus in accordance with the principle of non-contradiction, imply this resistance, and bring it about that nothing else can be simultaneously in the space where such thing is present. But the principle of noncontradiction does not repel a matter advancing to penetrate into a space where another is found. Only when I ascribe to that which occupies a space a force to repel every external movable that approaches, do I understand how it contains a contradiction for yet another thing of the same kind to be penetrated into the space occupied by a thing (4: 497-498).

Lambert's theory of matter is committed to the assumption that impenetrability is implied by the mere existence of something real in space. The real individual thing that exists in space resists penetration on the basis of its mere concept. Impenetrability is based on the law of non-contradiction. By claiming that impenetrability is the manifestation of a repulsive force of various degrees, Kant stresses the relational character of impenetrability and denies physical reality to the absolute, conceptually-based notion of impenetrability:

According to the purely mathematical concept of impenetrability (which presupposes no moving force as originally belonging in matter), matter is not capable of compression except insofar as it contains empty spaces within itself. Hence matter as matter resists all penetration utterly and with absolute necessity. However, according to our discussion of this property, impenetrability rests on a physical basis. For expanding force first makes matter itself possible, as an extended thing filling its space. But this force has a degree which can be overpowered, and thus the space of its extension can be diminished, that is, penetrated up to a certain amount by a given compressing force, but only in such a way that complete penetration is impossible, because this would require an infinite compressing force; *therefore the filling of space must be viewed only as relative impenetrability.* (4: 502)

Matter therefore fills space by means of relative impenetrability. Its repulsive force is not derived from any principle that constitutes the intrinsic nature of an individual substance. It possesses a determinate

repulsive force only relative to other repulsive forces, that is, to its capacity to fill space. The same is true with regard to the other fundamental force — the force of attraction. The degree of each force is determined relative to the other existing movable spaces which can be experienced.⁷

Though matter is indefinitely divisible, indefinite divisibility does not entail that an actual infinite is given (4: 507). The quantity of matter is defined as the number of its movable parts. Since matter is infinitely divisible, the quantity of matter “can be estimated in comparison with every other matter only by its quantity of motion at a given velocity” (4: 537). Hence, the concept of matter is fully reduced to “nothing but moving forces” (4: 78). Every knowable objective property of matter is therefore a relational feature of a material object. It is a feature that a given material object possesses only on the basis of the relations that it has to the other coexisting material objects.

6. *Spatiotemporal Locations and the Individual Essence of Things in Themselves*

The claim that everything we may know about empirical objects is nothing but relations of place seems to provide an initial justification for the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal. If all the knowable spatiotemporal features of objects are relations and relational properties and if relations cannot be part of the individual essence of things in themselves, then things in themselves are conceivable independently of spatiotemporal locations. But this argument can hardly justify the claim that things in themselves *are not* spatiotemporal. It involves two problems the first of which concerns the claim that all spa-

⁷ Although Kant thinks that the notion of magnitude of a thing does not require comparison with others, the measure of a thing is a “comparative concept”:

That something is a magnitude (*quantum*) may be cognized from the thing itself, without any comparison with another; if, that is, a multitude of homogeneous elements together constitute a unity. But how great it is always requires something else, which is also a magnitude, as its measure. However, since in the judging of magnitude not merely the multitude (number) but also the magnitude of the unit (of the measure) is involved, and the magnitude of this latter in turn always needs something else as a measure with which it can be compared, we see that any determination of the magnitude of appearances is absolutely incapable of affording an absolute concept of a magnitude but can afford at best only a comparative concept. (5: 248)

tiotemporal features of objects are mere relations. In particular, it seems that spatiotemporal places are inexplicable by means of relations or relational properties even though they entail relations. Indeed, since, as noted above, empirical space is relative movable space, knowledge of absolute empirical location is impossible. But with regard to every finite space, the relative positions and change of positions of objects must be determined, even if empirical space is indefinitely extendable. Moreover, given Kant's claim that absolute space must be presupposed by empirical space, the notion of a determined spatiotemporal location and change of locations indicates a basic individuating feature that objects must possess independently of relations that they have to other objects, although the fact that they possess these features entails that they are spatiotemporally related to all other coexisting spatiotemporal objects. The apriority thesis states that space and time can and must be conceived independently of any object existing in them. They are singular in that every finite space and every finite time are limitations of a unique space and a unique time. Spatiotemporal locations are *unique* and are not relational features of objects. If an object occupies a spatiotemporal location, the fact that it does should be considered a unique feature of the object.

It might be added at this point that the individuality of the material objects to which moving forces are ascribed seems to have been left unexplained by Kant's metaphysical account of matter. The uniqueness of spatiotemporal locations seems to provide an explanation of this issue. Difference in space at a given time is a sufficient indication that two objects are numerically different. Given the impenetrability of material objects, spatiotemporal locations of objects are unique features of objects that they cannot share with other coexisting numerically distinct objects. Spatiotemporal locations can provide objects with features that they uniquely satisfy, even if these unique features entail relations to other coexisting objects.

The second problem is that even if everything in our cognition that belongs to intuition contains nothing but mere relations, things in themselves could be spatiotemporal. The claim that space and time cannot be properties of things in themselves since spatiotemporal features are mere relations seems to be justifiable only if one accepts the problematic supposition that relations are not real. But if one denies this supposition, things in themselves could be spatiotemporal even if relations cannot be part of their intrinsic nature.

These two problems cannot be separated. If spatiotemporal places are unique features of the objects that occupy them, then spatiotemporal features of objects are not merely relations between objects. In this case, the question is how exactly spatiotemporal locations qua singular individuating features of objects are related to the concept of an individual essence of a thing in itself. As I shall demonstrate below, the claim that spatiotemporal predicates that ascribe spatiotemporal positions to individual objects are part of the individual essence of things in themselves involves insurmountable difficulties. On the other hand, if one denies that the spatiotemporal features of objects include predicates that ascribe unique spatiotemporal positions to individual objects that are irreducible to relations between real objects and their inner features, one is left without an account of the individuating nature of spatiotemporal places. Given Kant's apriority and singularity thesis, space and time are irreducible to relations between objects and their intrinsic nature. Spatiotemporal places must be conceived as unique independently of the supposed identity of objects that exist "in them".

As we shall see below, the claim that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal can be justified by the inadequacy of both incompatible answers. The transcendental ideality of space and time is not based on the claim that they represent mere relations, although this claim is true. Rather, it is based on the fact that they denote relations only if they stand for unique features of objects, that is, only if these objects occupy spatiotemporal places. But the uniqueness of spatiotemporal places cannot be related to an intrinsic feature of a thing in itself. The numerical difference of objects that exist in given different spatiotemporal places derives from the uniqueness of spatiotemporal locations. In other words, spatiotemporal places are necessarily individuating features of actually existing objects that cannot be part of the individual essence of things in themselves. Space and time indicate mere relations between empirical objects without undermining the uniqueness of spatiotemporal places, but rather as a result of the nature of spatiotemporal places. Since the individuating predicates that assign spatiotemporal places to empirical objects cannot be part of the intrinsic nature of things in themselves, the fact that objects possess unique spatiotemporal places renders this object a *substantia phaenomenon*, that is, a sum total of mere relations.

Why are spatiotemporal predicates that assign unique spatiotemporal

locations not parts of the individual essence of objects in themselves? Let us reconsider the main premises of Kant's implicit argument. The singularity thesis entails that any point or region in space is unique. The apriority thesis states that spatiotemporal locations can be conceived independently of an object that appears in them. Though spatiotemporal locations are unique, more than one possible object may appear in the same spatiotemporal location. "Physical places are entirely indifferent with regard to the inner determinations of the things, a place = b can just as readily accept a thing that is fully similar and equal to another in a place = a as it could if the former were ever so internally different from the latter" (A 272/B 328). Space and time do not determine the number of possible objects that could have occupied a given spatiotemporal location. An indefinite number of possible individuals could have occupied a given spatiotemporal location. The additional premise is that spatiotemporal places, the points in space-time in which objects actually exist, cannot be shared with other coexisting objects.⁸

The apriority thesis therefore entails that a predicate that assigns a given spatiotemporal location can be an attribute of indefinitely many possible things. But if a predicate that assigns a given spatiotemporal location is an attribute of indefinitely many possible things, how could a spatiotemporal location be an actual attribute of only one thing that actually exists? It seems as if the concepts of distinct possible individual "objects in themselves" whose distinct individual essence includes "is at P_1/t_1 " are all admissible. But what kind of an attribute might "is at P_1/t_1 " be in this case? It should first be noted that if being at P_1/t_1 is an attribute of an indefinite number of possible objects, then all these objects must be distinguished by means of other attributes. This by itself does not rule out the possibility that spatiotemporal locations are parts of the individual essence of the objects of which they are the attributes. "Is a man" may be part of the individual essence of an object, although indefinitely many possible men may be conceived, all of which must be distinguished by some marks. However, if being at P_1/t_1 is part of the individual essence of more than one object in itself,

⁸ This claim is not merely based on the arguments of the Transcendental Aesthetic. It requires the concept of impenetrability that presupposes the applicability of the pure categories. However, this need not be regarded as a deficiency of Kant's position. Rather, it points out the systematic internal dependence of the transcendental representations involved in synthetic a priori knowledge. I will discuss this point in the following chapters.

then since physical places are completely indifferent to the objects that occupy them, the individual concepts of all possible individual objects “in themselves” that are possibly in space and time contain the predicate “is at P_1/t_1 ”. In other words, it is not only the case that physical places are “entirely indifferent with regard to the inner determinations of the things”, but things in themselves are indifferent to physical places. The individuating feature of spatiotemporal unique predicates is completely lost if one endorses the supposition that unique spatiotemporal predicates are part of the individual essence of a thing in itself.

One way of defending the claim that predicates such as “is at P_1/t_1 ” are parts of the individual essence of things in themselves is to deny the claim that more than one object can be at P_1/t_1 by claiming that objects necessarily have certain relations to all other coexisting objects as part of their identity. However, this suggestion entails that relations must be part of the individual essence of things in themselves, contrary to what the concept of a thing in itself implies. As we shall see below, things the individual nature of which is determined by their relations to other coexisting things are appearances, not things in themselves.⁹

7. *Spatiotemporal Predicates and Existence*

The fact that “is at P_1/t_1 ” is an irregular attribute is also revealed by a different and more important consideration. As I noted above, Kant’s apriority thesis entails that if “is at P_1/t_1 ” were part of the individual essences of objects in themselves, it would be part of the individual essence of an indefinite number of possible objects. It therefore would not be an individuating feature of these *possible* objects. But no two such objects which have “is at P_1/t_1 ” as part of their individual essence can coexist at the same time in the same place. However, how can one explain the fact that unique spatiotemporal predicates do not distin-

⁹ As I already mentioned, Kant’s concept of a thing in itself can no doubt be traced to the philosophy of Leibniz. It is important to note, however, that the exclusion of relations to other individuals as part of the individual essences of individuals in themselves is not only part of Leibniz’s position but is also part of Hume’s position. The individuality of the impressions does not consist in the relations of an individual perception to other perceptions. Hume’s claim that individuals are not necessarily related to other individuals results directly from this fact. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, in particular Book I, Part I/vii and Book I, Part III/iii.

guish possible objects where the concept of their individual essence is concerned, and nevertheless distinguish objects *that actually exist* from all other coexisting objects? The only possible answer is that “is at P_1/t_1 ” individuates o_1 only if o_1 *exists* at P_1/t_1 . This is clearly false with regard to ordinary predicates such as “is a man”. It is also false, though in a different sense, with regard to Leibnizian complete concepts. A Leibnizian complete concept individuates a possible object without entailing that the object exists. The fact that an object exists at P_1/t_1 *distinguishes* the given object from all other coexisting objects. But since an indefinite number of possible objects could have existed at P_1/t_1 , “is at P_1/t_1 ” can distinguish o_1 from other coexisting objects only if o_1 *actually exists* at P_1/t_1 , in contrast to Leibnizian complete concepts.

The fact that spatiotemporal predicates of this kind are individuating predicates is an essential feature of these predicates. But they can individuate objects only if they involve *existence*. Since such spatiotemporal predicates are individuating predicates and since they do not determine the identity of the objects that they distinguish (an object distinguished by means of these predicates might have existed in different places), the meaning of “is at P_1/t_1 ” must be “exist at P_1/t_1 ”. This feature of spatiotemporal predicates is clearly incompatible with Kant’s claim that existence is not a predicate. It is also incompatible with the independent general metaphysical contention, which is not uniquely Kantian, that existence cannot be part of the concept of contingent objects. Since the identity of contingent objects must be conceivable independently of whether they exist or do not exist, “is at P_1/t_1 ” cannot be a genuine feature of things conceived through their individual essence, that is, their inner determinations. Rather, it refers to a *mode of knowledge of existence*. “exists at P_1/t_1 ”.

8. *The Theological Argument: Existence in Space and Time and Existence*

Is there another way to defend the claim that the individual essence of things in themselves includes spatiotemporality? There seems to be one such way that has so far not been examined. No predicate that assigns a particular spatiotemporal location can be part of the individual essence of a thing in itself. However, it might be argued that even if no particular spatiotemporal predicate is included in the essence of things in

themselves, being in space and time as such is included in the individual essence of things in themselves. A thing in itself does not necessarily exist at some definite place, but it must exist somewhere and sometime. If this were true, then spatiotemporality would be included in the individual essence of things in themselves. In this case, it would be impossible for them to exist if they did not exist in space and time.

Kant's answer to this line of thought consists of the following argument. The above objection presupposes the following metaphysical principle: everything that exists must exist somewhere and sometime. This was a principle that was familiar to Kant from the work of Crusius.¹⁰ An implicit rejection of this principle appears in Kant's theological argument.

In natural theology, where one conceives of an object that is not only not an object of intuition for us but cannot even be an object of sensible intuition for itself, one is careful to remove the conditions of time and space from all of its intuition (for all of its cognition must be intuition and not **thinking**, which is always proof of limitations). But with what right can one do this if one has antecedently made both of these into forms of things in themselves, and indeed ones that, as *a priori* conditions of the existence of things, would remain even if one removed the things themselves? — for as conditions of all existence in general they would also have to be conditions of the existence of God. (B 71)

As Kant observed, the claim that everything that exists must exist somewhere and sometime cannot be justified. It is incompatible with the *conceivability* of the existence of a non-spatiotemporal individual such as God, “the original image (*prototypon*) of all things, which all together as defective copies (*ectypa*), take from it the matter for their possibility” (A 578/B 606). Indeed, how can one justify the claim that things in themselves cannot exist if they do not exist in space and time? Given that it is conceivable (although not knowable) that things exist even if they do not exist in space and time, being in space and time is not a necessary condition for the existence of things in themselves.

¹⁰ See “Enquiry concerning the clarity of the principle of natural theology and ethics” (2: 293-94).

9. *Are Spatiotemporal Attributes Phenomenal Features of Things in Themselves?*

So far, the argument presented has established that existing in space and time cannot be part of our concept of the individual essence of a thing in itself. No appeal was made to the subjectivity of space and time, to the claim that space and time represent phenomenal properties rather than real properties of things in themselves. The claim that spatiotemporal predicates cannot be part of the individual essence of things in themselves leaves open two possibilities. The first is that spatiotemporality and spatiotemporal predicates refer to contingent features of things that they instantiate independently of whether they are intuited by anyone. The second is that spatiotemporality represents a phenomenal property that is ascribed to things on the basis of “the representational capacities of the subject affected by them” (B 72). Knowing whether spatiotemporality is a phenomenal property of things in themselves or whether it is a contingent property of things in themselves seems to be impossible, if one can have no knowledge of things in themselves over and above what the generic concept of a thing in itself allows. Yet, *if one assumes that the objects given to us in sensible intuitions are things in themselves*, the main features of spatiotemporal predicates suffice to claim that spatiotemporality is a phenomenal property of things in themselves.

Spatiotemporal predicates indicate modes of existence of objects and modes in which objects are known to exist by means of sensible intuition. The individuating features of the forms of intuition are indispensable for us in order to differentiate an individual from all other coexisting individuals. But none of these individuating features could be features of things as they are in themselves. This point is the upshot of Kant’s theory. The term “appearance” is a quasi-technical term which primarily denotes individuals *that can be known as individuals* only on the basis of differentiating features that cannot be part of the intrinsic nature of any individual thing in itself. These features serve their role as differentiating features since they necessarily entail relations to other co-existing individuals by means of which an individual is distinguished from the other individuals.

An important result of this theory is that we do not possess *knowable* means for determining the identity of spatiotemporal objects. Given the other a priori conditions of objectivity, the fact that drop d_1 appears in

P_1/t_1 and another drop d_2 in P_2/t_1 means that d_1 is *not* d_2 . The fact that d_1 is not d_2 is neither derived by means of purely logical negation nor by means of transcendental negation. d_1 is not d_2 since each appears at a given time in a different place. Their identity cannot be determined by means of their *actual* spatiotemporal location. Spatiotemporal locations are indifferent to the objects that exist in them. The qualitative part of an empirical object also cannot determine its identity. Qualitatively identical objects could have existed in different places. One knows that d_1 is not d_2 since they exist in different places. The supposition that they are distinct individuals by virtue of the fact that they exist in different places is an important physical fact. But a world in which d_1 exists where d_2 exists and d_2 where d_1 exists is physically indistinguishable from the actual world.

Although spatiotemporal places are singular representations, the fact that they cannot constitute the identity of any object implies that the only thing that can be established through them is that d_1 is *not* d_2 . Hence, every spatiotemporal individual is known as an individual only on the basis of what establishes it *not to be* other coexisting spatiotemporal individuals. If these are the knowable conditions that distinguish objects, there can be no conclusive empirical answer to the question regarding the identity of empirical objects. I suggest that such individuals are appearances. The fact that empirical objects are nothing but the sum total of mere relations suffices to characterize them as appearances, *independently of whether empirical objects are identical to a thing or things in themselves that merely appear in space and time.*¹¹

Indeed, the claim that objects that exist in space and time must be things in themselves, that is, that empirical objects that exist in space and time have individual essence that does not depend on how they are distinguished from other coexisting things, cannot merely be justi-

¹¹ At this point, it is important to stress that the mere possibility that empirical objects are identical to some things in themselves does not involve the inconsistencies that are part of the concept of subjective necessity discussed in the previous chapters. The mere possibility that empirical objects are in fact identical to some non-spatiotemporal things in themselves does not undermine the knowledge of necessity that is part of the concept of synthetic a priori knowledge even if this type of knowledge necessarily presupposes pure intuitions. The mere possibility that empirical objects are identical to some things in themselves would be inconsistent with synthetic a priori claims to knowledge only if “mere possibility” meant “possibly true”. However, in Kant’s theory “mere possibility” does not mean “possibly true”, but rather “neither true nor false”. A judgment that is merely a problematic judgment and that can have only this status is neither true nor false.

fied by the above reasoning. Its justification requires the metaphysical contention made in the Transcendental Dialectic that “Everything existing is thoroughly determined” (A 573/B 601), which is a principle of pure reason. The fact that Kant’s conceptual scheme of knowledge of objects can provide no empirical criteria of identity seems to encourage one to posit things in themselves as objects of sensible intuition. However, since the claim that everything that exists is thoroughly determined is a principle of pure reason *that cannot be exhibited in concreto*, the claim that the objects of our senses are things in themselves can only be made in Kant’s “merely problematic sense”. Since the concept of a thing in itself is a concept of pure reason the possession of which does not entail the *existence* of things in themselves, and since the characterization of empirical objects as appearances is based merely on features of this generic concept, Kant’s theory is compatible with the “mere” possibility that there are no things in themselves, that is, that reality includes only empirical objects that are not things in themselves in Kant’s theoretical sense. These things can be compared and distinguished from each other. They can be conceived as individuals although the notion of an individual’s essence, that is, of the intrinsic, non-relational features that determine their identity, is not applicable to them. Kant never discusses this possibility explicitly. Yet, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, Kant has an argument which undermines *the claim to knowledge* of the identity of the objects of sense experience and noumena.

Chapter 9

APPEARANCES, THE TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT AND THE NOUMENON

1. Introduction

What are appearance statements about in Kant's theory? Which objects satisfy them? These questions can be addressed in two ways. The first is to claim that objects that appear are things in themselves, while the second approach is to claim that objects that appear are spatiotemporal *empirical substances*.¹ However, both answers to these questions raise difficulties. In view of my earlier analysis of the term "a priori" in Kant's epistemic writings, the first possibility seems to be incompatible with claims to a priori knowledge. If the "thing" or "things" that appear were identical to things in themselves, the result would be what Parsons termed (1992: 84) the "distortion view". The claim that objective knowledge necessarily involves *our* pure representational capacities entails that we *know* that our *supposed* claim to knowledge is *false*. We know that our a priori indispensable conditions of knowledge of objects distort the real nature of the objects that appear, since this view is committed to the following assumptions: (a) We know that things in themselves cannot be spatiotemporal; (b) some necessary propositions are known by us a priori; (c) these necessary propositions are true only of spatiotemporal objects; (d) we *know* that the objects that appear, the objects about which we make our perceptual statements are non-spatiotemporal things in themselves. Any position that accepts (a)-(d) is committed to the same inconsistencies involved in the concept of subjective

¹ According to the second possibility, a complete account of spatiotemporal objects must involve the categories. The applicability of the categories makes the distinction between appearances and the enduring spatiotemporal substances given through them possible. The distinction between appearances and enduring substances is clearly not a distinction between an appearance and a thing in itself but a distinction between an *empirical object* given in a multiplicity of modes of givenness and one of its modes of givenness. The main goal of the Analytic of Principles is to provide an account of the conditions that appearances must satisfy if they are to designate objects (B 235). As Kant notes in the Analytic of Principles, "to give an object, if this is again not meant only mediately, but it is rather to be exhibited immediately in intuition, is nothing other than to relate its representation to experience" (A 156/B 195). As Henrich notes (1994: 152), "in as much we judge, we are immediately related to objects". Complex objects are the elemental entities of Kant's theory of judgment. A theory of mere sense data amounts to secondary knowledge. Appearances are attributed to objects as their properties.

necessity discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. It is not possible to simultaneously claim to *know* that a judgment is a necessary judgment and also know that it could be false where objects given to one in intuition are concerned. A way that is devoid of this must be found to characterize knowledge that space and time are not properties of things in themselves.

The first of the above possibilities involves another problem. If knowledge of individuals presupposes spatiotemporal individuation, the “thing” that appears that is not an appearance cannot be *known* as an individual. The identity of empirical substances and things in themselves is in principle unknowable.² It seems as if this difficulty can be avoided if the identity of empirical objects and things in themselves is regarded as entailed by the characterization of empirical objects as appearances and by the fact that claims such as “I see a tree in front of me” imply the existence of something distinct from the self. However, as I will show below, Kant’s theory is subtler and more complex. We have already seen that the fact that empirical objects are not things in themselves must be based on the features of the generic concept of a thing in itself. If these features are the grounds that justify the claim that empirical objects are not things in themselves, it does not follow that things in themselves are the objects that appear in the transcendental sense. Empirical objects could be distinct in kind from things in themselves without implying that they are identical to things in themselves. This might lead one to suppose that empirical substances could be non-Kantian things in themselves. But Kant has other reasons for claiming that empirical substances are not things in themselves. The most important reason is the role of “I think” in knowledge of objects.

As a result, then, there seem to be no sufficient reasons for maintaining either that empirical substances are identical to things in themselves or that empirical substances are non-Kantian things in themselves. My aim in the present chapter will be to reconstruct Kant’s reasons for renouncing the claim to knowledge of the reality of noumena.

² According to Strawson (1966: 254-255), this is precisely the sense in which the application of the distinction appearance/thing in itself violates Kant’s principle of significance. See also my discussion of this topic in Chapter 1.

2. *The “Twofold Meaning” Theory*

Kant’s *Critique* contains arguments that facilitate interpretations in both of the aforementioned ways. The texts that corroborate the distortion view are texts in which the issue dealt with is moral freedom. The passage quoted below is just one example:

Yet the reservation must also be well noted, 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. For otherwise there would follow the absurd proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears. 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; if its deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding is correct, and hence the principle of causality applies only to things taken in the first sense, namely insofar as they are objects of experience, while things in the second meaning are not subject to it; then just the same will is thought of in the appearance (in visible actions) as necessarily subject to the law of nature and to this extent **not free**, while yet on the other hand it is thought of as belonging to a thing in itself as not subject to that law, and hence **free**, without any contradiction hereby occurring. (B xxvi-xxviii).

Kant’s argument in the above passage vacillates between two options. The passage begins with the seemingly innocent claim that even if empirical objects cannot be cognized as things in themselves, they can be thought of as things in themselves. It would otherwise be absurd to characterize empirical objects as appearances. The concept of a thing in itself that makes the classification of empirical objects as appearances

possible does not entail the reality of noumena. However, in the above passage, Kant's position is that an entity can be classified as an appearance only if "something" that is not an appearance appears.³ The modest distinction between appearances and things in themselves implicit in the above passage is a distinction between objectively real empirical objects and merely conceivable things in themselves.⁴ There is, however, a second voice that reverberates in this passage. The distinction between appearances and things in themselves is required because it is assumed that empirical objects are *identical* to things in themselves. The reality of things in themselves is considered as relevant to the reality of our moral freedom. It is implicitly assumed that qua free moral agents we must *exist* as empirical objects. As moral agents, we must therefore be both identical to empirical spatiotemporal objects and distinct from them.⁵

Kant's solution portrays the distinction between things in themselves and appearances as a distinction between two "meanings" in which the same object is envisaged. But how can one claim to know that empirical objects individuated by their spatiotemporal features are identical to things about which nothing particular is known?⁶ It goes without saying that this philosophical move opens Kant to all the hazards of the distortion view.

³ This was clearly Kant's position in the *prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. In response to the accusation that transcendental idealism is, in fact, empirical idealism, Kant claims that, in contrast to empirical idealism, transcendental idealism admits the mind independent existence of empirical objects. According to Kant, all spatiotemporal empirical features of objects have the same status as secondary qualities (4: 289-90).

⁴ As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the general features of the concept "thing in itself" suffice to establish the claim that empirical objects cannot be known as things in themselves. This claim allows one to conceive the existence of things in themselves (in the merely problematic sense) that are not subject to the principles of the understanding.

⁵ The identity of the thing in itself and an empirical object is presumably required because, according to Kant's theory of knowledge, only empirical individual objects are objectively real. If freedom is to be *our* freedom and not merely freedom of some conceivable entity, then the free thing "in itself" has to be identical to some empirical object. The thing that appears and the thing in itself must be known to be "one and the same thing". This cannot be established if one does not appeal to the general contention that some individual that is not an appearance must be the object that appears in the appearance.

⁶ This difficulty is stated by Parsons (1992: 90) as follows: "we know certain objects in experience, and we can think these very objects as they are in themselves. But our very individuation of objects is conditioned by the forms of intuition and the categories. How can we possibly have any basis for even thinking of, for example, the chair on which I am sitting "as it is in itself", when there is no basis for

3. *The Transcendental Object and the Noumenon*

I will now demonstrate that the first edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* includes an argument that implicitly addresses the undesired results entailed by the distortion view and the notion of subjective necessity. This argument corroborates the modest reading of the distinction between things in themselves and appearances. It coheres better with the theory of knowledge presented in the first *Critique*. It was omitted in the second edition and one can only speculate as to why it was omitted. The argument is presented in the chapter called "The ground of the distinction of all objects in general into *phenomena* and *noumena*" and it begins with the following passage:

Now one might have thought that the concept of appearances, limited by the Transcendental Aesthetic, already yields by itself the objective reality of the *noumena* and justifies the division of objects into *phenomena* and *noumena*, thus also the division of the world into a world of the senses and of the understanding (*mundus sensibilis et intelligibilis*), indeed in such a way that the difference here would not concern merely the logical form of the indistinct or distinct cognition of one and the same thing, but rather the difference between how they can originally be given to our cognition, in accordance with which they are in themselves different species. 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 our understanding, in which things are only cognized

the assumption that reality as it is in itself is divided in such a way that any particular object corresponds to this chair?" In "The Transcendental Aesthetic", Parsons maintains that the only possible reply to the objection raised with regard to the claim that we can think the objects we know in experience *as these very objects* as they are in themselves is the one suggested by Prauss, (1974: 39): "When one considers *this chair* as it is in itself, "this chair" refers to an empirical object, so that its consideration as an appearance is presupposed". But if empirical objects are appearances, something that is not an appearance serves as the basis for characterizing them as appearances. Presenting the distinction between appearances and things in themselves as based on the "distinction between empirical objects and representations" (as Parsons seems to suggest) would not allow one to account for the Kantian "dogmatic" claim that things in themselves are not what appearances appear to be.

as they appear. Thus there would be, in addition to the empirical use of the categories (which is limited to sensible conditions), a pure and yet objectively valid one, and we could not assert, what we have previously maintained, that our pure cognitions of the understanding are in general nothing more than principles of the exposition of appearances that do not go *a priori* beyond the formal possibility of experience, for here an entirely different field would stand open before us, as it were a world thought in spirit (perhaps also even intuited), which could not less but even more nobly occupy our understanding. (A 249-250)

The argument in this passage presents a problem that aspires to reveal an inconsistency in Kant's theory of knowledge. It begins with the assumption that the Transcendental Aesthetic presupposes the objective reality of the noumena in characterizing all objects of the senses as appearances: if the senses represent something as it appears, then that thing must be conceived as something that is not an appearance and therefore as an objectively real noumenon. The last part of this passage states the undesirable implication of this supposition with regard to Kant's theory of knowledge. According to Kant's theory, the categories are applicable only to appearances. However, if noumena are objectively real, it seems that there must be "a pure and yet objectively valid" use of pure concepts.

It should be noted that this claim is entailed by the supposed objective reality of the noumena only if one assumes that the categories are applicable to all objectively real objects. Kant could have argued that the categories are applicable only to appearances and not to noumena even if noumena are objectively real. This claim would have meant a commitment on Kant's part to the distortion view and with it to the inconsistencies involved in the concept of subjective necessity. The fact that Kant does not even consider this possibility, that he takes the claim that noumena are objectively real to imply that they must conform to the concepts and principles of pure understanding is, in my view, a clear indication that he is aware of the undesired results of a such a move.

After stating the problem, Kant presents a solution that is based on a carefully thought out distinction between the concepts "transcendental object" and "noumenon".

All our representations are in fact related to some object

through the understanding, and, since appearances are nothing but representations, the understanding thus relates them to a **something**, as the object of sensible intuition: but this something is to that extent only the transcendental object. This signifies, however a something = X, of which we know nothing at all nor can know anything in general (in accordance with the current constitution of our understanding), but is rather something that can serve only as a correlate of the unity of apperception for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition, by means of which the understanding unifies that in the concept of an object. This transcendental object cannot even be separated from the sensible *data*, for then nothing would remain through which it would be thought. It is therefore no object of cognition in itself, but only the representation of appearances under the concept of an object in general, which is determinable through the manifold of those appearances. (A 250-251)

The transcendental object is the object of sensible intuition, that is, the object presupposed by the concept of an appearance.⁷ The transcendental object is distinct from the appearances, but it cannot be known independently of appearances. It cannot be separated from sensible data, for then “nothing would remain through which it would be thought”.⁸ This does not necessarily indicate that the transcendental object must be a sensible object, but rather the kind of epistemic access we have to it. The concept of a transcendental object is part of knowledge that is based on appearances.⁹

Kant’s argument proceeds with the claim that the positing of a transcendental object of sensible intuition is compatible with the claim that the categories do not represent any special object of their own (A 251). The positing of a transcendental object implies no knowledge of the objective reality of objects as they are in themselves:

⁷ As Allison notes (1983: 242-246), Kant is not consistent in how he uses the term “transcendental object”. “Transcendental object” is sometimes identified with “noumenon”. I will refer here to the meaning of this term as it is used in the context of the present discussion.

⁸ For a similar reading, see Bird (1962: 79-80). Bird thinks that the transcendental object is sharply distinguished from the noumenon. According to Bird, Kant’s claim that the transcendental object is unknown is meant to show, “that it [the transcendental object] presents us with an equation containing unknown terms”. My suggestion is that Kant leaves the relation between the transcendental object and the noumenon undecided.

⁹ For a similar interpretation see Rescher (2000: 19).

The understanding accordingly bounds sensibility without thereby expanding its own field, and in warning sensibility not to presume to reach for things in themselves but solely for appearances it thinks of an object in itself, but only as a transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance (thus not itself appearance), 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); it therefore remains completely unknown whether such an object is to be encountered within or without us, whether it would be canceled out along with sensibility or whether it would remain even if we took sensibility away. (A 288/B344-345)

The reality of the transcendental object is based on sensible givenness. The transcendental object cannot be separated from the sensible *data*. It is the object that appears to our senses, that is, the object of sense perceptions. Its epistemic function is to be the correlate of the unity of apperception.

The concept of a noumenon and that of a transcendental object share several features. Yet, the concept of the noumenon is required when it is acknowledged that

...the word "appearance" must already indicate a relation to something the immediate representation of which is, to be sure, sensible, but which in itself, without this constitution of our sensibility (on which the form of our intuition is grounded), must be something, i.e., an object independent of sensibility. (A 252)

The noumenon is an object *independent of sensibility*. The concept of the noumenon does not signify a determinate cognition of anything (A 252). It serves a negative epistemic function which is to limit our claims to knowledge. The noumenon can serve this negative function since it contains an additional seemingly positive feature that is not a feature of the transcendental object; namely, it is an object independent of sensibility. Indeed, in order to serve this epistemic function, the following must also be assumed:

But in order for a noumenon to signify a true object, to be distinguished from all phenomena, it is not enough that I **liberate** my thoughts from all conditions of sensible intuition, but I must in addition have ground to **assume** another kind of intuition than this sensible one, under which such an object

could be given; for otherwise my thought is empty, even though free of contradiction. To be sure, above we were able to prove not that sensible intuition is the only possible intuition, but rather that it is the only one possible **for us**; but we also could not prove that yet another kind of intuition is possible, and, although our thinking can abstract from that sensibility, the question still remains whether it is not then a mere form of a concept and whether any object at all is left over after this separation. (A 252-253)

The epistemic need to conceive the noumenon as a “true object” renders it an object of an intuition different from our own. Nevertheless, the noumenon can be only conceived as an object of an intuition different from our own in the problematic sense. We know nothing of such intuition. As far as our knowledge is concerned, the question of whether any object is left after sensible data is eliminated remains unanswered. But the fact that the noumenon is, as far as our knowledge is concerned, a completely undetermined object of non-sensible intuition suffices to distinguish it from the transcendental object.

The object to which I relate appearance in general is the transcendental object, i.e., the entirely undetermined thought of something in general. This cannot be called the **noumenon**; for I do not know anything about what it is in itself, and have no concept of it except merely that of the object of a sensible intuition in general, which is therefore the same for all appearances. (A 253)

The transcendental object is one and the same for all appearances. This should not be interpreted as meaning that all appearances are referred to one and the same object; rather, as far as our knowledge is concerned, we can make no distinction between the objects that are given in sensible intuition. If we abstract from sensible intuition, then no criteria for the individuation of empirical objects are left. Hence the claim that we know nothing about the transcendental object and the claim that it is “one and the same in all appearances” indicate the limits of our kind of knowledge. In contrast, the noumenon conceived as a “true object” of an intuition different from our intuition need not be conceived as “one and the same” for all intuition. But when thus conceived, *it is not conceived as the object of the senses.*

No step in Kant's argument commits him to the supposition that noumena must be objectively real. Noumena need not be regarded as the non-sensible objects of sensible intuition but rather as intentional entities represented by means of a concept of pure reason. In contrast to what the initial supposition falsely assumes, noumena serve their limiting epistemic function without being objectively real.

The concept "transcendental object" and the concept "noumenon" therefore represent two perspectives from which the limits of our kind of knowledge are envisaged. The meaning of the term "appearance" requires both concepts, but for different reasons. The transcendental object is the object of the senses, which is distinct from sense perceptions. The noumenon can be conceived as a true object only if it is conceived as an object of a non-sensible intuition. As I noted earlier, it is an object represented by a concept of pure reason.

The upshot of Kant's argument in this part of the *Critique* is that no rational grounds unify the concept of an object of pure reason, which conforms to the maxim of being thoroughly determined, with the object of the senses, that is, the transcendental object. No argument can unify them. Nor can any argument separate them. In other words, there is an essential gap in our capacity to know that is related to the kind of intuition that we possess and to the fact that we are endowed with reason.¹⁰

There are therefore two independent considerations involved in the distinctions between appearances and things in themselves. The general features of the concept of a thing in itself provide the most important basis for this distinction. The general features of the concept of a thing in itself suffice to claim that empirical objects are not things in themselves. However, in order to depict empirical spatiotemporal objects as appearances, an additional claim is required. The objects of empirical sense perception must be noumena. In the first edition, Kant's conclusion is that it *cannot be known* that the objects of sense perception are

¹⁰ Kant's argument in the first edition chapter on the distinction between noumena and phenomena is necessary for establishing the coherence of transcendental idealism. Why did Kant omit it in the B version? Here one can only speculate. The fact that Kant's moral theory requires the distinction between things in themselves and appearances as a distinction between two meanings in which one and the same thing is envisaged neither indicates that it is compatible with Kant's transcendentalism nor that it is entailed by it. When the first edition was written, Kant had not yet elaborated the details of his moral theory. The question of whether Kant's moral theory can cohere with his theory of knowledge will not be discussed in the present book.

noumena. But the claim that one can *know* that space and time indicate phenomenal features of things in themselves depends on the supposition that the objects given in sensible intuition are objectively real noumena. If my interpretation is correct, this claim is false. As far as Kant's theory of knowledge is concerned, Kant's transcendental idealism is not committed to this claim. One may be satisfied with the modest claims that as far as one knows spatiotemporal objects are not things in themselves, and that space and time could in the problematic sense be phenomenal features of objects.

The reason for why our claims to knowledge cannot be fully satisfied by spatiotemporal empirical objects and why such objects are not to be regarded as things in themselves is not only based on Kant's commitment to a concept of reason. Its other source is found in an issue not discussed in the Transcendental Aesthetic, namely, the role of "I think" in constituting knowledge of objects. "I think" is systematically ambiguous in Kant's theory. The "I" of reflective self-awareness is detached from particular spatiotemporal and causal relations, although it must be *posited* as a particular spatiotemporal object. This systematic ambiguity does not suffice to establish the claim that one can know that "I" in "I think" refers to an objectively real thing in itself. However, it suffices for denying the identity of a reflective thinking subject with a *particular* spatiotemporal object. I will address these issues in Part Three of this book.

4. *The Relational Character of Spatial Intuitions*

The claim that space and time must be subjective forms of intuition seems to imply that the intuiting subject is a non-spatiotemporal individual. Yet this reading is clearly incompatible with the two claims established previously, namely, that the argument for the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves does not depend on knowledge that things in themselves are objectively real and that it does not entail that non-sensible things in themselves are objectively real. However, these claims leave the subjectivity of space and time somewhat unsettled. I now turn to examine the sense in which spatiotemporality entails subjectivity, even if one renounces the reality of noumena.

The concept of a sensible intuition was analyzed in Chapter 6 as possessing the following features:

1. Intuitions convey immediate knowledge of the existence of objects.
2. An intuition presupposes a relation between an intuiting subject “affected in a certain manner” and an object.
3. Immediate knowledge of the existence of an object is based on knowledge of a relation between subject and object that precedes knowledge of existence of the object of an intuition.
4. An individual object is represented in an intuition by means of a singular representation. The singularity of the representation does not consist in the individuality of the object. Rather, the singular intuitive representation determines the object as an individual.
5. Our only immediate awareness of the existence of individuals is of spatiotemporal undetermined objects.
6. Subjective sensations must be involved in sensible intuitions.

The question that must be addressed is whether (1)-(6) is a consistent set and, if it is, whether it also allows for the subjectivity of spatiotemporal representations. The main difficulty is to see how (1)-(3) could be compatible with (4)-(5). According to a prevalent view that is partially supported by Kant’s relevant writings, Kant’s theory of knowledge is committed both to transcendental affection and empirical affection. We may assume that affection is a relation between two objects that are “outside” each other. Two objects are “outside” each other in the empirical sense, if they are spatially outside each other. They are transcendently “outside” each other, if they are two distinct non-sensible individuals. “Outside” in the empirical sense neither implies nor is implied by “outside” in the transcendental sense. Nevertheless, a subject must be transcendently affected by “something”, if she has empirical intuitions. This is supposed to be entailed by the claim that intuition involves knowledge of existence. This interpretation facilitates an account of the subjectivity of space and time. However, within this interpretation, noumena must be regarded as objectively real.

If the basis for empirical intuition is transcendental affection, (5) is incompatible with (1)-(3). It is false to claim that our only immediate awareness of individuals is by means of spatiotemporal representations. If “outside” in the transcendental sense is known to be necessarily involved in every empirical intuition in which an object is recognized as being “outside” in the empirical sense, other undesired conclusions

follow. Given that affection is a causal concept, one must presuppose causal relations between non-sensible objects, as many of Kant's critics already noted in his time. It is now incumbent upon us to see whether it could be claimed that spatiotemporal representations of objects must involve a relation and that they must involve subjectivity without raising these difficulties.

We may begin by discerning a feature of empirical spatial representations often left unnoticed by commentators. "Intuition" is a kind of "objective cognition". An important feature of spatial *empirical* intuitions is that, in representing an object in space, one must represent oneself as spatially related to the represented object and therefore as being in space.¹¹ "Intuition" involves a relation between the intuiting subject and the intuited object. Sensible intuition conveys knowledge of existence of an intuited object only if it involves such a relation. If one is not allowed to presuppose the objective reality of transcendental affection, the relevant relations must be spatiotemporal relation. Nevertheless, as we shall see, this suggestion is vulnerable to a serious objection.

Let us first try to see how one might explicate the conceptual link between immediate awareness of a relation and knowledge of existence. In this context, this means that immediate knowledge of the existence of a spatial object that is distinct from the intuiting subject is possible only if immediate awareness of the *spatial relation* between the subject and the intuited object epistemically precedes knowledge of the existence of the object intuited. The concept of a *spatial representation* of an object need not involve a relation. But the mere representation of spatial objects does not suffice for knowledge of existence and therefore not for *spatial intuitions*. If the concept of a spatial intuition includes the immediate awareness of a relation between the subject and the intuited object, the object of the intuition can be known immediately to exist in space on the basis of spatial intuitions. The fact that one must perceive the spatial relation and hence perceive that one is spatially located seems to be corroborated by the phenomenal features of spatial representations. One is intuitively aware of an object located in space only if one is perceptually aware of oneself as being

¹¹ This is true both with regard to empirical spatial intuitions and empirical spatial imagination, although in the latter case no spatial object is immediately perceived. As I claimed in Chapter 7, the claim that a spatial intuition of an object implies that the object that exists in space is individuated in space must be added to Kant's theory of knowledge.

spatially related to the perceived object; e.g., “I see this tree there from here”.¹²

The epistemic priority of immediate awareness of a relation over knowledge of existence of the intuited individual indicates another important feature of Kantian intuitions. Immediate awareness of spatial relations inextricably involves a demonstrative element. A spatial object may be represented *in thought* by means of states of awareness that do not involve any demonstrative term without raising the need for representing a spatial relation between a subject and an object. Nevertheless, this would not suffice for immediate knowledge of *existence*. “Now I see this there from here” would be the paradigmatic case of an intuition. Spatial, empirical intuitions irreducibly involve immediate awareness of a spatiotemporal relation between the spatiotemporally located subject and the spatiotemporal object.

The irreducible demonstrative element involved in spatial intuitions is one aspect of their subjectivity. Another aspect is their necessary relation to an “I think”. Two other presuppositions are the claims that space and time do not exist by themselves and that they cannot be perceived through themselves.¹³ Taken together, these aspects establish the claim that spatiotemporal intuitions must involve subjectivity. Space and time are not irreducibly subjective because empirical intuition involves transcendental affection. They are irreducibly subjective since knowledge of existence is based on immediate awareness of a relation and since spatiotemporal objects must be objects that are possibly objects of empirical intuition.

The main claims of this interpretation are therefore the following:

- (a) Space and time are a priori and singular.
- (b) Space and time cannot exist by themselves.
- (c) Space and time cannot be perceived through themselves.
- (d) It is not possible for objects to exist in space and time, if it is not possible to know that they exist on the basis of intuition.

¹² Let us recall that one must distinguish between intuitions and images.

¹³ That space and time do not exist by themselves means that they could be apprehended only if spatiotemporal objects are apprehended. The claim that it must, in principle, be possible to immediately perceive spatiotemporal objects is not entailed by the claim that space and time do not exist by themselves. As we shall later see, the claim that it must, in principle, be possible to immediately perceive spatiotemporal objects must be presupposed by the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. It is compatible with the claim that objects of immediate perception may exist even if they are not immediately perceived. These claims will be examined in Part Three of this book.

- (e) Immediate knowledge of the existence of an object in space and time is based on immediate perceptual awareness of a spatiotemporal relation between oneself and the object intuited that essentially involves demonstrative elements.

This line of interpretation might raise the following objection. Immediate awareness of a spatial relation is part of the content of what one actually *sees*, which the relation is. If the subject immediately perceives the spatial relation, she must perceive herself as spatially located. But what might the nature of the subject be if she can both immediately perceive the spatial relation in which she stands with the intuited object and herself as spatially located? If the subject were identical to some individual spatiotemporal object, if each of her states, properties and capacities were necessarily states, properties and capacities of some spatiotemporal object, it would seem irrational to claim that she immediately perceives a relation in which an object distinct from her is immediately recognized as existing. The phenomenal state of immediate awareness of a relation would in this case both be a state of a spatiotemporal *individual* and a state that represents the *causal relations* between the subject's states and the object immediately known to exist. However, how can phenomenal states possess both features? Given that all the subject knows are her states, knowledge of causal relations is possible only by means of a causal inference from the effect to the cause. In this case, the only entity the subject can immediately know to exist are her subjective states. Immediate knowledge of the existence of an object in space is therefore undermined and with it intuitive awareness of location in space.

A response to this objection is available if one is willing to endorse two claims. The first claim is that even though phenomenal states of immediate awareness of a relation do not suffice as a basis for knowledge of causal relations, they may express causal relations between the self-located subject and an object or objects in space. Such causal relations could be part of the *content* of the phenomenal states of immediate awareness of a relation involved in an intuition of an object.¹⁴

¹⁴ This interpretation of Kant's philosophy of mind is closer to content externalism than what might be expected. The content of an individual's subjective state is determined by the causal relations it has to the objects it is about. The subjective state expresses its content and therefore, in the case of intuition, entails the existence of the object it is about. Some of the prominent advocates of externalism in the theory of content, such as Taylor Burge and Hilary Putnam, acknowledge their debt to Kant. In particular, see Putnam (1981).

It might be objected that in contrast to what this rejoinder supposes, mere spatial relations do not express causal relations. The spatial features of spatial immediate awareness of a relation do not involve causal relations. Spatial relations are conceivable independently of causal relations. This is clearly corroborated by spatial imagination. One can construct a triangle in one's imagination and, have spatial dreams or spatial hallucinations.

In order to respond to this objection, one must, as in the other cases, distinguish between the various goals involved in Kant's enterprise. As I previously demonstrated, the reality of spatial imagination does not rule out the reality of spatial intuitions. Phenomenal immediate presentation of a spatial relation *can also* immediately express causal relations between the subject located in space and a distinct spatial object.¹⁵ The fact that causal relations are not recognized merely on the basis of the phenomenal properties of an immediate perception of a spatial relation attests to the relative content independence of claims asserting spatial relations and claims asserting causal relations. But relative content independence does not entail that immediate spatial experiences of *objects* are impossible, or that they are possible even if the relevant phenomenal states do not express causal relations. As will be shown in Part Three, the relative content independence of spatial re-

In his recent work, Burge extended his theory of content to immediate states of reflective awareness and knowledge of content. In particular, see Burge (1988). According to Burge, judgments such as "I am now thinking" or "I judge that water is more common than mercury" are self-verifying (1988: 649). He calls these judgments "basic self-knowledge". Basic self-knowledge consists in a reflective judgment which involves thinking a first order thought that the judgments itself is about. The reflective judgment inherits the content of the first order thought. As Burge points out, the capacity to make basic self-knowledge judgments should be sharply distinguished from the perceptual model. Reflection is not the same thing as inner perception. Although the concept of objective perception allows the possibility of perceptual mistakes, there may be no mistakes in basic self-knowledge. Basic self-knowledge judgments are self-verifying because they inherit their content from these first order judgments they are about. The content of perceptual states is determined by their (causal) relations to the perceived objects. Therefore, reflective awareness of a perceptual (intuitive) state is awareness of a relation.

For a defense of a position similar to Burge's position, see K. Flavey and J. Owens, (1994). For a criticism of this position, see Boghossian (1989).

¹⁵ Intuitions are blind, if intuitive states of awareness do not involve explicit knowledge of causal relations. This does not mean that the relation involved in an intuition is not causal. Commentators that claim that transcendental affection is necessarily involved in empirical intuition also assume this. The difference between both positions is that spatiotemporal causal relations are in principle knowable while A-relations are unknowable in principle.

lations and causal relations is only one of the reasons why transcendental synthesis is required.

A necessary condition that is part of the above position is that immediate awareness of a spatial relation is committed to a distinction between the subject of immediate awareness and the subject posited as a spatiotemporal object. One may be immediately aware of a relation between oneself and a spatial object only if one is allowed to make this distinction. Therefore, the “I” of immediate awareness cannot be identical to the spatially represented “I” that is spatiotemporally related to a world of spatiotemporal objects, spatiotemporal relations of which the “I” is immediately aware. It is precisely due to this feature of Kant’s theory that it seems as if it requires transcendental affection. As we shall later see, Kant thought that he had powerful reasons for claiming that the “I think” which must accompany all intuitions cannot possibly be identical to a spatiotemporal object known to exist by means of sensible intuitions. Nevertheless, although Kant’s claim can be defended, it does not entail the objective reality of transcendental affection or of noumena. Rather, it reveals the incompleteness of our kind of knowledge with regard to the concept of identity. As I will show in the next part of this book, the “I think” fulfills a crucial role in transcendental synthesis. It can only fulfill this role if it is assigned the character that Kant ascribed it. I now turn to examine the arguments that establish its presence in our cognitive world and transcendental synthesis in general.

Part Three

Transcendental Synthesis

Chapter 10

THE CONCEPT OF TRANSCENDENTAL SYNTHESIS

1. Introduction

Kant's aim in the *Transcendental Analytic* is to establish the objective validity of the categories as a response to skepticism regarding the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. This kind of skepticism derives from the distinction between pure concepts and pure intuitions. Pure intuitions are necessary conditions for intuiting objects. The categories do not represent conditions under which objects are *given*. If it were really possible for the objects given in intuition not to be related to the categories, then the categories would be mere "fantasy of the brain", that is, illusory concepts (A 91/B 123-124). The question is whether it is possible to have experiences of objects merely on the basis of one's receptive sensible capacity to intuit spatiotemporal objects. It must be demonstrated that objects given in inner and outer intuition must conform to the categories even if the latter are not conditions of their being given in intuition. Thus, an analysis of the concept of a knowable *object* is required.¹

To presuppose the existence of two kinds of *objects* of experience —

¹ The claim that Kant operates with two (or more) senses of "object" is a commonplace in the secondary literature. In the first edition, Kant notes that "all representations, as representations, have their object, and can themselves be objects of other representations in turn" (A 108). In the *Second Analogy*, Kant says "Now one can, to be sure, call everything, and even every representation, insofar as one is conscious of it, an object, only what this word is to mean in the case of appearances, not insofar as they are (as representations) objects, but rather only insofar as they designate an object, require a deeper investigation" (A 189-190/B 234-35). Prauss (1971) suggests a distinction between "objective objects" (spatiotemporal objects) and "subjective objects" (see especially §6, 81-101 and §16, 292-321). Strawson (1966: 73-74), distinguishes between a general conception of an object that comprises whatever counts as a particular instance of a general concept and objects in the "weighty" sense. According to Strawson, the deduction is concerned with objects of the latter kind. Allison (1983: 136), believes that the relevant concept of an object is the judgmental or logical one. However, Allison's position is vulnerable to the following objection. Anything that can be thought can be an object of judgment (in this broad sense of "object"). This sense of "object" includes numbers, propositions and concepts. The claim that the categories (in particular the categories of relations) are applicable to these objects is clearly false. In the rest of this part of the book, I will assume, as does Strawson, that objects that furnish the categories with objective validity and objective reality are objects in the "weighty" sense.

objects of intuition that do not conform to the categories and complex objects that conform to the categories — would be incompatible with the necessity and universality of the categories. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the required account of “object” and “objectivity” was not meant to be a response to skepticism regarding knowledge of the external world. The problem of objective validity is a more basic one and is in some respects neutral with regard to this problem.

Kant’s account of objective validity is presented in the Transcendental Deduction and the Analytic of Principles. Why does Kant separate his account of objective validity into two separate chapters? What are the reasons for this architectonic choice? As I will show below, the answer to this question is related to the distinction between pure concepts and pure intuitions. This distinction makes it possible to conceive merely possible forms of intuition that are distinct from space and time. Kant’s goal in the Transcendental Deduction is to establish the necessity of the categories with regard to discursive thought in general, and not merely for creatures that possess our forms of intuition. This is particularly apparent in the B deduction, in which the main concepts — “Transcendental I”, “manifold of intuition”, “transcendental imagination”, “judgment”, and “transcendental synthesis” — do not include any reference to particular features related to space and time.² As some commentators have suggested, the deduction is incomplete as it stands, since achieving its goal requires appeal to arguments found in other parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in particular in the System of all Principles of Human Understanding and the Refutation of Idealism.³ Whether or not the deduction is incomplete, the fact that there is no explicit reference to space and time generates insurmountable difficulties in evaluating the philosophical content of the main concept dealt with in the Transcendental Analytic, namely, “transcen-

² As Kant himself declared in the note to the Preface to *The metaphysical foundations of science*, (4: 474) the proof of the objective validity of the categories is to be carried out from the concept of judgment itself. Since the notion of judgment is the basic notion of discursive thought and since judgment is not conditioned by features related to space and time, ignoring these features is natural to the project of the B deduction.

³ This claim underlies the interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction presented by Strawson (1966). In interpreting the Transcendental Deduction, Strawson employs arguments that appear in the Analogies of Experience. Guyer (1987: 133) claims that a promising line of argument for establishing the objective validity of a priori concepts is only hinted at in the Transcendental Deduction and must be completed with arguments found in the Analogies of Experience and the Refutation of Idealism. See also Allison (1983: 136).

dental synthesis". As I will show below, the meaning of this phrase can be grasped more easily when the features of space and time are referred to explicitly and when the Transcendental Deduction is conceived as part of one overall argument which includes the arguments of the Analytic of Principles and the Paralogism of Pure Reason.

Therefore, in assessing Kant's account of the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge, my approach will partly be reconstructive. As I will demonstrate, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and the related relevant writings contain a sound argument that establishes synthetic a priori knowledge. Transcendental idealism is presupposed by this argument. The question of whether one can present an argument that establishes the objective validity of the categories with regard to discursive thought in general is irrelevant to the coherence of the epistemic theory presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

2. Intellectual Synthesis and Figurative Synthesis

In the B deduction, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of transcendental synthesis:

This synthesis of the manifold of sensible intuition, which is possible and necessary *a priori*, can be called **figurative** (*synthesis speciosa*), as distinct from that which would be thought in the mere category in regard to the manifold of an intuition in general, and which is called combination of the understanding (*synthesis intellectualis*); both are **transcendental**, not merely because they themselves proceed *a priori* but also because they ground the possibility of other cognition *a priori*. (B 151)

The distinction between the two kinds of transcendental synthesis mirrors the two steps of Kant's argument in the Transcendental Deduction.⁴ Intellectual synthesis consists in the applicability of the categories to the manifold of intuitions. It abstracts from particular kinds of forms of intuition. It presupposes that "the manifold of intuition must already be given prior to the synthesis of the understanding and independently from it" (B 145). The feature of intuitions presupposed by intellectual synthesis is that they comprise a *manifold* (and in themselves contain a manifold) *given* prior to and independently of this synthesis. Figurative

⁴ As Kant notes in the argument that ends in § 20, only "the beginning of a deduction of pure concepts of the understanding has been made" (B 144). See also Henrich (1969).

synthesis does not merely presuppose “givenness” and “manifold” but also pure intuitions. In figurative synthesis, the understanding determines “the form of sense a priori in accordance with the unity of apperception” (B 152). The faculty by means of which this synthesis is carried out is transcendental imagination. Figurative synthesis is therefore a synthesis *of pure concepts and pure intuitions*. It is a synthesis in which pure concepts that belong to spontaneity determine pure forms of intuition. Since pure forms of intuition are necessary conditions for objects *given* in sensible intuition, the categories are necessarily applicable to objects of intuition if they determine pure forms of intuition.

There is, nevertheless, a sense in which figurative synthesis abstracts from reference to *our* pure forms of intuition. Kant does not explain how the categories determine *a particular kind* of forms of intuition but all conceivable kinds. Transcendental imagination, the faculty in which figurative synthesis is executed is not limited to a particular kind of forms of intuition.⁵

To be sure, space and time are explicitly mentioned in § 26. But, as Kant declares, his aim in this place is to demonstrate

[...] the possibility of cognizing *a priori* **through categories** whatever objects **may come before our senses**, not as far as

⁵ For a different position, see the interpretation presented by Heidegger (1990; 1997). The priority given to time, imagination and schemata in Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant’s *Analytic* is related to this difference.

For a related interpretation, see Longuenesse (1998), Chapter 8 and Waxman (1991), Chapter 2. Longuenesse, in fact, blurs the distinction between forms of intuition and formal intuition, as well as that between forms of intuition and pure concepts. “Space and time as presented in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* are products of figurative synthesis” (1998: 221). Also, “the *synthesis sepciosa* that produces this intuition is also prior to any concept, and *even to the categories*, even though it is a “determination of sensibility by the understanding”. Yet, she also maintains (1998: 223) that “space and time, as formal intuition, are the first, most original “effect of the understanding on sensibility”. Within these formal intuitions are achieved the figurative synthesis...”.

Hence, this interpretation endangers Kant’s transcendental distinction between pure concepts and pure intuition. The fact that this distinction is required can be pointed out if the following difficulty is noted: what could the claim that *pure* space and *pure* time of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* are products of *synthesis sepciosa* mean? If the claim is that pure space and pure time of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* are entities that are *already determined by the categories*, this means that *empty* pure space and *empty* pure time are determined by concepts such as “substance” and “cause and effect”. Kant’s position is that it must be possible to conceive pure space and pure time as empty. But the claim that *as such* they are determined by the categories of relation is incoherent. On this subject see Senderowicz (2004).

the form of their intuition but rather as far as the laws of their combination is concerned..." (B 159).

The concept that is the topic of Kant's investigation in the present context is that of the synthesis of apprehension. "Synthesis of apprehension" means "the composition of the manifold in an empirical intuition" (B 160). The categories are required for the possibility of the synthesis of apprehension since it involves the *abstract* concepts "composition" and "combination". These concepts must be part of the *generic* concept "form of intuition". No particular feature of space and time and of spatiotemporal objects (succession, simultaneity, the distinction between two kinds of temporal sequences etc.) is presented in this context as a feature that requires the applicability of the categories. Indeed, the transition from the characterization of space and time as "forms of sensible intuition" to the claim that they are represented "also [as] intuitions themselves (which contain a manifold), and thus with the determination of the unity of this manifold in them" (B 160) emphasizes the fact that space and time must involve the combination of a manifold.⁶

An interesting question raised by the arguments of the Transcendental Deduction is why one requires both steps of the deduction in order to furnish pure concepts with objective validity. In other words, why is the first step that connects pure apperception to the concept of judgment insufficient? It would be a mistake to think that the first step of the Transcendental Deduction abstracts from intuitions. The manifold of intuitions is assumed to be unified in the concept of an object on the basis of the conceptual link between "objective judgment" and "pure apperception". A better answer would be to claim that both

⁶ In my view, it is a mistake to interpret the claim that space and time are represented as *intuitions* that contain a manifold as if Kant means to claim that *pure* space and *pure* time are represented as comprising a manifold. In this case, the categories presupposed by the concept "combination" would have determined the manifold of pure spaces and pure times and not the manifold of temporal intuitions and spatial intuitions. This claim would have conflicted with Kant's main contention in the Transcendental Aesthetic that space and time are singular representations. Yet the fact that Kant uses the term "intuitions" in the plural is indicative of the fact that he is referring to the manifold of spatiotemporal entities. There is indeed a sense in which the categories determine space and time. Nevertheless, as I will show in the next chapters, the categories do not determine space and time directly but rather do so by means of the concept of a *possible object of experience*. Since space and time are objectively real only if objects are given in them, then if these objects must be conceived as involving a combination of a manifold of (empirical) intuitions, the categories indirectly determine space and time. See also Senderowicz (2004).

steps are required since the argument of the first step employs an abstract concept of intuition that makes it difficult to explain away what seems to be conceivable on the basis of the nature of the undetermined objects given in intuition. The first step provides reasons to claim that the categories must be applicable to all intuitions without involving an account that explains what is wrong with the supposition that objects given in intuition might be not related to the categories. It is only if one can explain why pure concepts must determine the unity of the synthesis of the manifold given in pure intuitions that one can explain what the distinction between givenness and spontaneity allows one to conceive. This can be achieved if it can be demonstrated that the categories are conditions for “the synthesis of all apprehension” (B 161), yet “not as far as their form of intuition but rather as far as the laws of their combination are concerned” (B 159).

Kant’s desideratum — to prove the objective validity of the categories with regard to discursive thought in general — seems to leave his concept of transcendental synthesis unclear. This is particularly true with regard to the arguments for figurative synthesis. If (a) the categories must be presupposed by the concept of combination; if (b) the synthesis of apprehension must involve combination; and (c) if pure intuitions must involve the synthesis of apprehension; then (d) the categories are applicable to the objects given in sensible intuition. But what might be the reasons that justify each of these claims? The connection between the forms of judgments and the categories stated in the metaphysical deduction might provide some justification for (a). Yet this connection is notorious for the difficulties that it involves. Kant’s other claim that “since in us a certain form of sensible intuition is fundamental, which rests on the receptivity of the capacity for representations (sensibility), the understanding, as spontaneity, can determine the manifold of given representations in accord with the synthetic unity of apperception, and thus think a priori synthetic unity of the apperception of the manifold of **sensible intuition**” (B 150) can at best establish the claim that the categories *can apply* to objects of the senses, that is, that they *can* somehow determine pure forms of sensibility. But why must they apply? And how is this transcendental act executed? What is the meaning of “determine” in this context and how can it accomplish what it is meant to accomplish? In order to see what “transcendental synthesis” actually means to Kant, let us try to see how it is manifested in our kind of knowledge.

3. *Transcendental Synthesis: Content and Exhibition*

In an important passage in the *prolegomena*, Kant characterizes pure reason by means of the metaphor of an organized body.

But pure reason is a sphere so separate and self-contained that we cannot touch a part without affecting all the rest. We can do nothing without first determining the position of each part and its relation to the rest; for, as our judgment within this sphere cannot be corrected by anything without, the validity and use of every part depends upon the relation in which it stands to all the rest within the domain of reason. As in the structure of an organized body, the end of each member can only be deduced from the full conception of the whole. It may, then, be said of such a critique that it is never trustworthy except it be perfectly complete, down to the most minute elements of pure reason. In the sphere of this faculty you can determine and define either everything or nothing. (4: 263-264).

The end of each member of pure reason is determined by the whole. Their meaning and significance are evaluated on the basis of their contribution to the whole. Understanding Kant's solution to the problem of synthetic a priori knowledge is tantamount to understanding how a priori concepts, intuitions and faculties involved in empirical knowledge are interrelated.

I will begin by schematically presenting the complex relations of dependencies that unify the elements of synthetic a priori knowledge. An account of the coherence and plausibility of this network of relations will be presented in the following chapters.

The idea underlying the arguments of the *Transcendental Analytic* is based on a distinction between content and exhibition. The content of each a priori representation involved in empirical knowledge — the “I think”, time, space and the categories — does not involve the other a priori representations that comprise the conditions for the possibility of empirical knowledge. However, each of these representations cannot be *exhibited* to the mind *through itself*. Each of them can be exhibited only if empirical objects are given and if all the other representations are exhibited, either directly or indirectly. There is, therefore, a network of dependencies between the elements of synthetic a priori knowledge that grounds the possibility of empirical knowledge of objects. None of these representations is reducible to the other. Nevertheless, although

the relevant conditions of exhibition do not affect the content of each representation, *being exhibited* is an essential feature of the representations involved. Space, time and the categories must be exhibited. The possibility of being exhibited is part of their essence.

A representation can be exhibited in the Kantian sense, if it is possible to be perceptually aware of it. Space and time are entities to which one must have perceptual access. The categories are exhibited, if an object of empirical intuition exhibits them. Although sensible appearances necessarily exhibit space and time, the latter are not perceivable through themselves. Space and time are forms of intuition and are not in themselves perceptual objects.⁷ They can be exhibited only if objects are given. The “I” that thinks can be reflectively aware of its necessary identity but cannot perceive itself. The “I think” can be conscious of its identity only on the basis of the fact that it is conscious of the conditions that determine the possibility of the synthetic unity of a manifold of intuitions in one consciousness.⁸ The categories are empty and devoid of sense and meaning, if they are not exhibited in intuitions (A 246). For us, the exhibition of the categories necessarily depends on the exhibition of necessary temporal relations, that is, on their schemata. But the representation of time depends on the applicability of the categories, in particular the categories of relation. Time is exhibited only if enduring substances and their states are perceived.⁹ Temporal determination is impossible, if the categories are not applied.¹⁰ The categories determine time series, time content and time order among appearances (A 145/B 184-85). But the categories acquire objective validity, that is, they are exhibited in intuition by determining time and indirectly space.

⁷ “Time is not something that would subsist for itself...” (A 33/B 49). “Even space and time, as pure as these concepts are from everything empirical and as certain as it is that they are represented in the mind completely *a priori*, would still be without objective validity and without sense and significance if their necessary use on the objects of experience were not shown” (A 156/B 195).

⁸ “I think...is an act of spontaneity, i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility” (B 132). “...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 consciousness in these representations...**” (B 133).

⁹ This point is the main issue discussed in the Analytic of Principles. I will consider this point in Chapter 14.

¹⁰ Since time is a *form of intuition*, if enduring objects and their states were not represented as having a determinate position in time, time would not be exhibited. In other words, the fact that time cannot be perceived by itself is not merely a limitation that concerns our kind of knowledge. Pure time necessarily cannot be perceived.

As Kant attempts to establish in the Refutation of Idealism, the representation of time does not only depend on the categories. Time can be exhibited only if *spatial* substances are exhibited (B 275-278). Empirical space can be experienced only if time is involved. The subjective given consists of a succession of appearances.¹¹ Knowledge of coexistence in space is possible only if simultaneously existing interactive substances are presupposed.¹² But the fact that this is how space and spatial objects are represented is irrelevant to their *spatial properties*.

Finally, intuitions are necessarily “intuitions for”. They are kinds of objective cognitions. Every spatiotemporal intuition is a representation that can be accompanied by an “I think”.¹³ But the “I think” can represent herself, be conscious of her a priori, necessary identity in all her possible representations, only if the representations themselves are synthesized by means of rules prescribed by the pure concepts of the understanding. I suggest that “transcendental synthesis” is the network of these dependencies between the elements of pure synthetic knowledge.

As I noted earlier, the dependencies between the elements of pure knowledge do not affect the content of each representation involved. The content independence of each representation means that the propositional content of first order judgments which involve the representation or an aspect of the empirical object indicated by the representation, say judgments about space or judgments about the spatial aspect of an empirical object, do not involve the other representations that are necessary for the purpose of representing space. For example, first order judgments that ascribe spatial properties and relations to spatial representations do not involve any temporal feature, the thinking “I” or the pure concepts. Judgments about temporal succession among representations do not involve spatial representations directly. The autonomy of content of time qua a form of intuition and the categories means that (a) the representation of time cannot be analyzed by means of temporal relations between objects and their states,¹⁴ and (b) causal relations and causal laws cannot be analyzed

¹¹ This is the one of the main suppositions of Kant’s argument in the Analogies of Experience. See, for example, A 192/B 237.

¹² See A 211-12/B 257-58.

¹³ Kant’s claim in the B deduction is that the spontaneous “I think” must be able to accompany all representations that come before thought, i.e., intuitions. See B 131-32.

¹⁴ This point was established in the Transcendental Aesthetic.

only by means of temporal relations.¹⁵ It is only at the level of the epistemic and metaphysical meta-theory of a priori knowledge, which is the theory that concerns the nature of these representations, that the a priori representations are shown to be dependent on the other representations.

Another important feature of Kant's theory is that the content independence of the various elements involved in pure knowledge cannot be explicated by means of positing *distinct sets of knowable objects*. As I showed in Chapter 2, the distinction between concepts and intuitions cannot be understood by postulating distinct domains of knowable objects. The fact that the pure category and schematized category are distinct does not mean that the categories have a "wider sphere of objects" (A 254/B 309). The same is true with regard to all the other representations. The content independence of space and time does not mean that there could be spatial objects in the "weighty" sense that are not temporal or that there could be temporal objects in the "weighty" sense that are not spatial. There are no spatial objects if the schematized categories are not exemplified. The "I" that "thinks" is distinct from every spatial and temporal object. But this does not mean that it denotes a kind of non-spatiotemporal object. The fact that all the representations involved in synthetic a priori knowledge must, by their nature, be exhibited by *empirical objects* and that the same domain of objects is assigned to each of these representations explains why they must be all unified in a network of dependencies relation.

Transcendental synthesis is therefore based on two distinct ideas, namely, the content independence of the elements that it involves and the identity of the domain of real objects assigned to each representation. Kant's arguments in the *Transcendental Analytic* aspire to demonstrate that empirical objects can exhibit a transcendental representation only if empirical objects exhibit all other transcendental representations. On the other hand, we can experience objects only if they exhibit the transcendental representations. Transcendental synthesis — the necessary synthetic unity of the transcendental representations — determines the concept of an object of possible experience. The synthetic unity of the various elements involved in synthetic a priori knowledge is based on the concept of an object of possible experience.

¹⁵ See Melnik (1973: 24).

How is transcendental synthesis assumed to provide an answer to the question of objective validity? As I mentioned earlier, Kant's answer is presented by means of two lines of arguments, which are the Transcendental Deduction and the Analytic of Principles. The argument of the Transcendental Deduction begins with the claim that intuitions must be accompanied with the representation "I think". It then aims to show that the conditions of the possibility of this representation are the same conditions that confer objective validity upon the categories. These conditions explain why the categories must be applicable to intuitions of objects. The second line of argument in the Analytic of Principles aims to demonstrate why the categories must be applicable to spatiotemporal objects, if representations of determinate temporal relations are possible and, therefore, if the exhibition of time itself is possible. Kant's account of objective validity can be grasped in its full force only if these two lines of argument converge. My purpose in this part of this book will be to show how this task can be accomplished.

Chapter 11

THE TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION AND TRANSCENDENTAL SYNTHESIS

1. *The Features of Transcendental Apperception*

Transcendental self-consciousness is the Archimedean point of transcendental synthesis. What is transcendental self-consciousness and how does it make transcendental synthesis possible? I will begin by presenting the main features that Kant ascribed to transcendental apperception. There are two classes of such features, positive and negative respectively. The positive class includes:

- (a) *Simplicity* — the representation “I think” is a simple representation that contains no manifold. (A 355, B 135)
- (b) *Identity* — pure apperception is consciousness of the necessary numerical identity of the subject. (A 107, B 133-34)
- (c) *Apriority* — consciousness of “the identity of consciousness” expressed by the pure “I think” is **a priori** consciousness of identity. The subject is a priori conscious of its numerical necessary self-identity. (A 107, B 133-34)
- (d) *Originality* — “I think” is an original representation. (B 132)

The negative class includes:

- (e) Pure apperception is not an intuition. (B 135)
- (f) Pure apperception is not consciousness of an empirical self. (A 107)
- (g) Pure apperception is not consciousness of a substance. (A 350)
- (h) Pure apperception is not consciousness of simple being. (A 355)
- (i) Pure apperception is not consciousness of self-identical person that persists in time. (A 363)

According to Kant, genuine utterances of “I think” have all the above features. The first question one has to address is whether all these features are consistent with one another, that is, whether “transcendental apperception” is a consistent concept. The second question is whether there are reasons to claim that transcendental apperception is part of our cognitive world, even if the features of “transcendental apperception” do not jointly entail a contradiction. The third question concerns the mode in which one can distinguish transcendental from empirical

apperception. Finally, assuming that transcendental apperception is real, why is it linked to consciousness of necessary (that is, transcendental) synthesis of the manifold? As we shall see, both versions of the Transcendental Deduction do not include sufficient answers to these questions. The reality of transcendental apperception is simply assumed in this chapter. In addition, Kant does not succeed in clarifying how and why transcendental apperception must presuppose a priori rules of synthesis.

2. *Why is the Proposition “I Think” Must be Able to Accompany All My Representations” Analytic?*

I will begin by stating what can be positively established on the basis of the argument presented in the Transcendental Deduction. Kant’s argument begins as follows:

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. The representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called **intuition**. Thus all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the **I think** in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered. But this representation is an act of **spontaneity**, i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it the **pure apperception**, in order to distinguish it from the **empirical** one, or also **original apperception**, since it is that self-consciousness which, because it produces the representation **I think**, which must be able to accompany all others and which in all consciousness is one and the same, cannot be accompanied by any further representation. I also call its unity the **transcendental** unity of self-consciousness in order to designate the possibility of a priori cognition from it. (B 131-132)

As Kant indicates in the above quote, it must be possible for an “I think” to accompany all intuitions — the representations that “can be given prior to all thinking”. But if it must indeed be possible for an “I think” to accompany intuitions, then all the elements that are part of synthetic a priori knowledge share a common feature. Pure intuitions of space and time are *subjective* forms of representation. Pure concepts of the understanding are necessarily part of our *conscious ca-*

capacity to judge. More generally, reason is linked to first-person consciousness. A creature endowed with reason must possess such consciousness. The fact that “I think” must be able to accompany all representations explains why this spontaneous conscious act has prospects for serving as the focal point of transcendental synthesis.

According to Kant, the claim that “I think must be able to accompany all representations” is analytic (B 135). What are Kant’s reasons for this claim? The above quotation suggests that it must be self-evident to the readers of the *Critique* that a priori conceptual capacities involve first-person reflective consciousness. However, the analyticity of the claim that “I think” must be able to accompany all intuitions requires clarification. Kant’s reason is that “...the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me,” if it were not related to an “I think”. This claim suggests an implicit distinction between intuitions that are not accompanied by an “I think” and are therefore nothing to “me,” and intuitions that have *cognitive value* that an “I think” must be able to accompany. One may assume that the latter is the intended analytic proposition.

The fact that a representation that cannot be accompanied by an “I think” would be as good as nothing “for me” seems to imply that although the representation is nothing “for me,” it might nevertheless be something.¹ If an intuition can be “my” intuition but “nothing for me,” if in other words, the generic concept of an intuition is not a concept of a representation that involves self-consciousness, then the claim that an “I think” must accompany all my representations is not merely non-analytic but possibly false. Given the above distinction, only one kind of intuition possesses cognitive value.

The problem raised by the alleged distinction between two kinds of intuitions is that this distinction seems to presuppose that the reason why intuitions have cognitive value is precisely the fact that an “I think” is able to accompany an intuition. But “I think” is not an intuition and intuitions come before all thought. Therefore, there is nothing in the intuition or in the “I think” that can explain how the distinction between these two kinds of *intuitions* can be drawn. Indeed, no such distinction between two kinds of intuitions is found in Kant’s writings. Let us recall that intuitions are classified in A 320/B 376 as objective perceptions. Given that objective perceptions must

¹ Kant suggests that such intuitions are possible in his letter to Marcus Herz dated May 1789 (11: 51-52).

have cognitive value, intuitions must also have cognitive value. In other words, it is this concept of an intuition that renders the first sentence of § 16 analytic.

Nevertheless, the above distinction between two kinds of intuitions does point out a difficulty in Kant's theory. A prevalent allegation is that the claim that an "I think" must be able to accompany all experiences is incompatible with the reality of unconscious mental states, an assumption with which Kant was no doubt familiar through the work of Leibniz.² Another charge is that Kant's use of the first person pronoun term "I" seems to imply that he aims to base the objective validity of pure concepts on an individual's conscious mental states. If so, the concepts of object and of objectivity are apparently linked to a condition that threatens to render them merely subjective. If transcendental self-consciousness were indeed the Archimedean point of transcendental synthesis, the latter would not, in this case, have possessed even initial plausibility in constituting synthetic a priori knowledge. These two allegations are surely connected. If it is assumed that transcendental "I think" denotes a *particular* subject and that intuitions are the *private* particular mental states of that subject, then the claim that the subject can be aware of all her mental states commits Kant's theory to a problematic form of subjectivism.

The fact that Kant's conceptual scheme demands a different account of the relevant concept of an intuition is apparent when one notices that the above two allegations employ non-Kantian concepts of a subject of experience, of an intuition, an appearance and a relation between them. It assumes that, in a particular context of use, the "I" merely denotes a self-identical particular *individual*. Moreover, it assumes that appearances are occurrences and processes that owe their identity to the individual object to which "I" refers. It therefore assumes that all acts of intuition indicate a kind of self-knowledge of the private mental states of the subject and therefore that the relation "mine" that holds between "I think" and her appearances is based on the fact that the intuited appearances owe their identity to the subject that has them. As I will later demonstrate, all these assumptions are false. The appearances which must be accompanied by an "I

² See for example Castañeda, (1990). Castañeda argues that the phenomenon of blind sight is a counterexample to the claim that an "I think" must accompany all the representations of an individual that has the ability to make this statement. See also Guyer (1980; 1987).

think are not necessarily mental states that owe their identity to a particular subject.³ The “I think” that must accompany all intuitions is the transcendental “I”. Although “I” must *also* refer to the individual subject that uses this term reflectively, Kant’s transcendental “I” does not merely refer to an individual. The simplicity and the consciousness of identity it expresses are not to be identified with the simplicity and the identity of a *particular* individual. Transcendental apperception — reflective consciousness of necessary numerical identity — is not consciousness of the identity of a mental or a physical object. The nature of the entities involved in the relation “mine” therefore do not allow one to assume that appearances are mental states individuated by their relation to a particular subject.

Kant’s claim in the beginning of §16 can be defended, if some changes are introduced. I suggest that the relevant concept of an intuition is the concept of an intuition that can serve as empirical evidence.⁴ Objective knowledge is theoretical, empirical knowledge which must employ intuitive evidence. One may assume that not all intuitions can serve as intuitive evidence. To the extent that empirical knowledge must involve reflective capacities, an “I think” must accompany the intuitions that may serve as evidential grounds for or against an empirical judgment, if they are to have any role in empirical knowledge. An intuition that cannot be accompanied by an “I think” would have no role within it. It can neither corroborate nor refute a theory or a proposition.⁵

A full response to the above allegations can be grasped only after the nature of transcendental self-consciousness has been realized. At this point, I would only like to explain how it might be carried out if the goals of Kant’s analytic are effectively established. A Kantian rejoin-

³ As Kant argues in the third paralogism, although intuitions cannot be shared at the moment in which they are experienced they can *at a later time* be the memory states that are self-ascribed by another individual. I will discuss this idea in Chapter 13.

⁴ See for example Posy (1981; 1986). That intuitions are evidential grounds is compatible with their being singular representations immediately related to objects.

⁵ As McDowell persuasively argues (1994: 9), Kantian intuitions combine receptivity and spontaneity: “We should understand what Kant calls “intuitions — experiential intake — not as bare getting of extra conceptual given, but as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content.” McDowell connects this concept of an intuition to the justificatory role that intuitions have in experiential knowledge. The interpretation that will be provided in the following chapters is compatible with this position.

der may be based on the Kantian distinction between sensations, intuitions and appearances (the undetermined objects of intuition). Kant's main intention in the *Transcendental Analytic* is to claim that the intuited object must obey the a priori rules that are the forms of empirical scientific laws. Given the results of Kant's *Transcendental Analytic*, the object that appears in sensible intuition instantiates the categories and is subject to empirical scientific laws. Postulating theoretical unobserved entities that constitute the object intuited — the object of sensible intuition — is compatible in this sense with Kant's concept of sensible intuition. This is also true when the subject conceives herself as an object. A subject that conceives herself as a psychological object may ascribe unconscious representations to herself *on the basis of some psychological theory* if the postulation of such a theory is systematically related to intuitions. The claim that an "I think" must be able to accompany the latter does not entail that every property instantiated by the immediately given object is or can be intuitively known in the empirical sense. Nevertheless, the postulation of properties, states and events of the object intuited that are not intuitively known must be based on intuitive *evidence* and is therefore compatible with Kant's main contention in §16. It is this relation between "I think," "intuition," and "objective knowledge" that Kant's conceptual scheme requires.

3. *The Shortcomings of the Main Argument of the Transcendental Deduction*

We may now return to Kant's argument. The second part of the argument appears in the following passage:

Namely, this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis. For the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject. The later relation therefore does not yet come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by my **adding** one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis. Therefore it is only because I 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. (B 133-134)

So far I have addressed the analyticity of the first sentence of §16. Kant's argument aims to establish the applicability of pure concepts to objects of intuition based on the fact that an "I think" must be able to accompany all intuitions. The Transcendental Deduction is carried out by pointing out the relations between the presuppositions that "I think" involves. Three such presuppositions are implied in the above passages.

- (1) "I think" is not an intuition.
- (2) Self-consciousness of identity expressed by "I think" should be distinguished from empirical consciousness of identity.
- (3) Self-consciousness of identity is possible only if the self-ascribed representations are synthesized.

The consciousness involved in the act "I think" is not an intuition. This means that self-consciousness of the numerical identity of the subject of the manifold of intuitions is not based on *self-perception*. The subject's knowledge that she is a self-identical subject is not based on self-intuition. Also, her knowledge that all her representations are indeed *her* representations is not based on knowledge of what determines her identity without regard being paid to the manifold she self-ascribes and to her knowledge that she intuits each of the appearances included in the manifold of "my representations". In other words, she does not know that each of the representations which she calls "mine" are *collectively* her representations because she is immediately and reflectively conscious of her self-identity *independently of* the knowledge that all the elements of the manifold are her representations. Since "I think" is not self-intuition, she must know that all her representations are her representations by immediately and reflectively ascribing them to herself *without knowing what determines her identity* over and above the fact that she is the subject that has them all.

The fact that reflective self-consciousness of identity is not based on intuition therefore indicates that a subject can know that she is the identical subject of the manifold of her representations only on the basis of the fact that she is immediately and reflectively aware *of them*. The third presupposition is therefore linked to the first one. Awareness that *a manifold* of intuited objects is combined together in one state of consciousness is possible only if the subject reflectively recognizes that

there are some features that the intuited appearances have in common. “My” representations must be synthesized, that is, connected to each other not merely by being accompanied by the representation “I think”. As Kant notes, awareness of such connections between the objects intuited presupposes concepts and a capacity to judge. It is only if the subject can make judgments such as “Fa & Fb” that the subject can be reflectively aware of her self-identity. Hence, this argument reveals the central role that conceptual and judgmental capacities serve in making possible reflective self-consciousness of identity.

If Kant’s argument ends at this point, it falls short of providing the intended result. Kant’s intention is not merely to claim that we know a priori that the objects intuited must be subjects of acts of predication and therefore that they must exemplify *some* concepts. His goal is also to explain why the pure categories must be applied to objects given in intuition. Kant’s second step in the second edition is to present an analysis of the concept of an object that aspires to disclose the necessary correlation between “object,” the unity of apperception and the categories. “An object...is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united” (B 137). The unity of the object determined by the *concept* of an object is linked to a unifying act, that is, an act that unifies a manifold of intuitions.⁶ Kant’s intended goal is to demonstrate that the same functions that make up the concept of an object must be the functions that underlie the possibility of reflective awareness. Self-consciousness must involve a synthesis of the manifold of intuition. An object can be “something for me” only if it can be an object of reflective awareness. Therefore, transcendental synthesis would be established, if it were shown that there is *one* account of objectivity and of self-consciousness within which the applicability of the categories is conceived as necessarily linked to the synthetic unity of a manifold in one consciousness and to the concept of an object of possible experience.

The claim that the categories are the basic a priori concepts of objects that objectively unify a manifold of intuitions is unexplained in Kant’s theory. What requires an explanation, however, is how these *general* concepts can unify appearances in order to form objects. The applicability of the categories to a manifold of intuitions is not tantamount to the applicability of general concepts of *pre-given objects*.

⁶ This need not mean that an object “comes into being” through such an act, though Kant’s words sometime invite this interpretation.

The latter presupposes that we possess a concept of an empirical object of an intuition that is not determined by the categories, contrary to Kant's main intention! The generality of the categories is the generality of *forms*. They do not represent general properties that some objects of experience may possess while others do not. If the categories apply to objects, then the objects to which they apply must exhibit them, if they *are* objects. In this context, applicability means determining an object as an object and not merely "being true of". This can easily be grasped where concepts such as "substance" are concerned. Unifying a manifold of appearances in order to form a substance determines the objective relations between the unified appearances. The applicability of the concept "substance" to a manifold of appearances renders the appearances included in the manifold predicates of objects, that is, modes of presentation of objects.⁷

Kant's final step brings together the synthesis of intuitions presupposed by the analytic unity of self-consciousness and the basic a priori concepts that determine the form of an object through the concept of an objective judgment. The task is to explain why "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" (A 79/B 104-105). The categories are presented at this stage as the basic forms of an objective judgment.⁸ Since the categories provide the forms of objective judgments, all acts of self-consciousness seem to entail that the categories are the concepts exhibited in the *synthesis of intuitions*. Since it was assumed that "I think" must accompany all "my intuitions," it appears that the categories are necessarily applicable to intuitions.

It is important to note, however, that there is a gap between the first step and the second and the third steps in Kant's argument which the Transcendental Deduction is unable to bridge. The first step explains why the analytic unity of consciousness must involve consciousness of a synthesis of intuitions. The claim that judgments are involved in acts of consciousness "I think" is entailed by the claim that the analytic unity of consciousness must involve consciousness of a synthesis of intuitions. The second and the third steps explain how forms of objects and forms of objective judgments are related. Nevertheless, the above argument

⁷ See Henrich (1994: 151-152.).

⁸ This is developed in §18-§20 in the B deduction.

leaves unanswered the question of why the categories are the concepts presupposed by the analytic unity of consciousness, that is, why the synthetic judgments presupposed by “I think” must be the objective judgments that are singled out by the second and the third step.

This difficulty is aggravated by Kant’s distinction between the subjective unity of consciousness and the objective unity of consciousness. If the *analytic unity* of consciousness is connected to the subjective (synthetic) unity, there seems to be no reason to rule out the possibility that one can be self-conscious without making an objective judgment, that is, without presupposing that intuitions are synthesized by means of a priori concepts of objects. Since such a synthesis involves judgments, it also involves concepts. But these concepts need not be a priori concepts that apply to each and all elements included in the manifold. A concatenation of conceptual links, as expressed in the following opened set of statements “Fa&Ga&~Ha&~Fb&Gb&Hb&~Fc&~Gc&Hc&Ic ...,” is compatible with the conclusion of this argument.⁹ Therefore, Kant’s argument leaves the main questions of the deduction unanswered. Why must the objects intuited obey the categories? Why must the capacity to make *synthetic a priori judgments* be part of reflective awareness of the numerical identity of the subjects of a manifold of representations?

The conceptual link between the applicability of the categories and “I think” is also stated in the first edition:

For this unity of consciousness would be impossible if in the cognition of the manifold the mind could not become conscious of the identity of the function by means of which this manifold is synthetically combined into one cognition. Thus the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of oneself is at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances in accordance with concepts, i.e., in accordance with rules that not only make them necessarily reproducible, but also thereby determine an object for their intuition, i.e., the concept of something in which they are necessarily connected; for the mind could not possibly think of the identity of itself in the manifoldness

⁹ See also Guyer (1987: 139-140). As Guyer notes, Kant’s argument can establish only that necessarily consciousness of self-identity is possible only if the representations are synthesized by some concepts, but not that if one can be conscious of one’s numerical self-identity, the synthesis that unifies together the representations that the self-identical subject recognizes as “mine” is a *necessary synthesis*.

of its representations, and indeed think this *a priori*, if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its action, which subjects all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, and first makes possible their connection in accordance with *a priori* rules. (A 108)

Pure “I think” is the “I think” that must accompany all intuitions. Pure self-consciousness is possible only if the self-conscious subject is conscious of “the identity of the function by means of which the manifold is synthetically combined”, if the rules that synthesize the manifold are *a priori* rules. The purity of transcendental apperception seems to require pure rules of synthesis. If the “I think” that must accompany all intuitions is pure apperception, it must be conscious (as part of the original act “I think”) of the necessary synthesis of the manifold according to the *a priori* rules of the understanding. However, what justifies the claim to the presence of “pure self-consciousness” in one’s cognitive world? How can one distinguish “pure self-consciousness” from “empirical self-consciousness”? Why must *pure* “I think” involve consciousness of a *necessary* synthesis?

As I noted earlier, both versions of the Transcendental Deduction do not contain an answer to these questions, nor can such an answer be reconstructed from them alone. In order to decipher this puzzle, I will begin by clarifying the difficulties raised by the above second question, namely, the mode in which transcendental and empirical self-consciousness are related and distinguished. This will be the task of the next chapter.

Chapter 12

THE INHERENT AMBIGUITY OF “I THINK”

1. *The Two Meanings of “I think”*

How is transcendental self-consciousness related to empirical self-consciousness? How can one distinguish between them? A notable feature of Kant’s discussion of these notions is his constant use of the personal pronoun “I” in order to denote transcendental apperception and the personal possessive “mine” in order to denote the relation between the thinking subject and the manifold of her experiences. This linguistic feature is the source of the perplexity inherent in Kant’s discussion. Naturally enough, Kant also uses “I” in order to denote *empirical* apperception. The fact that Kant never uses expressions that do not contain demonstratives when he talks about transcendental apperception indicates that a *genuine use* of the first-person pronoun is linked to transcendental apperception.

Let us recall that Kant uses the term “representation” as a genus that has intuitions, concepts and judgments as a species (9: 91). “I think” might express a judgment if it means (a) “I am conscious of myself,” or (b) “I am identical to myself”.¹ It does not express a judgment if it means either (a) “I judge that...” or (b) “I am aware of ...”.

What kind of representation is the representation “I think”? A preliminary answer to this question is found in the following footnote that appears in the Paralogism in the Second Edition:

The “I think” is, as has already been said, an empirical proposition, and contains within itself the proposition “I exist”. But I cannot say “Everything that thinks, exists”; for then the property of thinking would make all beings possessing it into necessary beings. Hence my existence also cannot be regarded as inferred from the proposition “I think”, as Descartes held (for otherwise the major premise, “Everything that thinks, exists” would have to precede it), but rather it is identical with it. It expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., a perception (hence it proves that sensation, which consequently belongs to sensibility, grounds this existential proposition), but it precedes the experience that is to determine the object of perception through the category in regard

¹ This is how Brook (1994) interprets transcendental self-consciousness. I will consider his interpretation later.

to time; and here existence is not yet a category, which is not related to an indeterminately given object, but rather to an object of which one has a concept, and about which one wants to know whether or not it is posited outside this concept. An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real, which was given, and indeed only to thinking in general, thus not as appearance, and also not as a thing in itself (a noumenon), but rather as something that in fact exists and is indicated as an existing thing in the proposition "I think". For it is to be noted that if I have called the proposition "I think" an empirical proposition, I would not say by this that the I in this proposition is an empirical representation; for it is rather purely intellectual, because it belongs to thinking in general. Only without any empirical representation, which provides the material for thinking, the act I think would not take place, and the empirical is only the condition of the application, or use, of the pure intellectual faculty. (B 422-423)

"I think" expresses *both* an empirical proposition and a pure representation. "I" stands for an a priori representation. But if it were not used in an empirical proposition, "the act I think would not take place".

"I think" expresses a *reflective* act of thinking. One may assume that the "I think" that must be able to accompany all representations is the pure representation of oneself and not the empirical proposition expressed by "I think". However, as this note clarifies, the pure representation "I think" *must be* related to the empirical propositions expressed by "I think". In other words, "I think" is necessarily ambiguous. In every case where one is aware of a *pure* "I", one makes an *empirical* judgment. This ambiguity cannot be eliminated, since the "I" that thinks exists and existence can be established only by means of empirical judgments.² As we shall see later, one can explicate the sense of pure "I" only by pointing out that pure "I" is neither a concept nor an intuition.

The inherent ambiguity of "I think" is apparently the reason why Kant always denotes transcendental apperception by means of first-person pronouns and never by means of expressions that do not contain demonstratives. It is part of the content of "I think" that the pure state of awareness it expresses can be manifested only in empirical use. In every empirical use, "I" refers to an individual person reflectively aware of herself. "I" is necessarily connected to the mode in which a parti-

² I will address this issue in Chapter 13.

cular person is aware of herself. Yet, as we shall see, the content of this state of awareness cannot be explicated by means of the fact that "I" refers to a particular person that uses it.³

2. *Self-Identity and Reflective Self-Awareness of Identity*

The inherent ambiguity of "I think" is related to the set of features ascribed by Kant to transcendental apperception. This ambiguity is the source of the conflicting accounts of Kant's transcendental apperception that are found in the secondary literature. Notwithstanding the perplexities associated with the idea of a pure subject of experience, it is far from evident that all the features ascribed by Kant to transcendental apperception are consistent with one another. I suggest that this is the implicit question faced by Kant's interpreters. Many share the assumption that the features ascribed by Kant to transcendental apperception cannot cohere. The disagreement between interpreters can be attributed to their respective resolution of the above ambiguity. Each interpreter has omitted some of the features Kant ascribed to transcendental apperception. Each interpreter omits different features. Each interpreter endeavors to avoid the ambiguity by making explicit what he or she takes to be Kant's defensible insight. This results in important changes in Kant's original theory.

There are two main lines of reconstruction that represent the two sides of the ambiguity. The first assumes that if apriority can be related to apperception, it must be related to some *proposition*. The main feature stressed by this line of interpretation is the *identity* of the subject of experience. Two distinct and conflicting sub-approaches can be discerned here, one that points out the primacy and importance of "simplicity", "reflectivity" and the fact that "I" is an indexical term and the sub-approach that views these features as not essential to Kant's goals. The second approach relates apriority to the representation of the subject. Although this approach seems at least to be more faithful to Kant's official position, it is unable to account for the connection between the identity of the subject and Kant's constant use of first person pronouns.

³ The nature of this non-referential "content" which is ascribed to pure apperception will be discussed in Chapter 13.

3. *The Primacy of Self-Identity*

I begin by examining the first of the two approaches mentioned above. As I noted earlier, this approach assumes that a priori claims to self-identity involved in self-consciousness should be explained by the referential function of “I”. What requires an explanation is the unity of consciousness and the relation that subjects of experience have to their representations. Interpreters that endorse this approach think that there is a conceptual link between consciousness of self-identity and the relation that representations have to one *particular*, self-identical subject. But which aspect of knowledge of self-identity constitutes this relation? Is it the *identity* of the subject that conditions the relation that representations have to one particular, self-identical subject, whether or not the subject is reflectively aware of her identity, or the *reflective* capacity to be self-conscious of “my” self-identity? Within this approach, interpreters seem to have two different views regarding the answers to these questions.

Patricia Kitcher supports one possible answer. According to Kitcher (1982; 1990), Kant thought that Hume’s doubts with regard to knowledge of causal relations were related to his doubts with regard to personal identity. Kant’s response to Hume consists in the claim that both the representational capacities and the identity of the representing subject are grounded in causal relations among representations. Reflective consciousness of self-identity is not a condition that must be satisfied by a representation if the representation can be “my representation”.⁴ The fact that “I” can reflectively know “myself” to be such a subject is not a feature related to the possibility of *representing* something. Representations need not be accompanied by reflective self-consciousness in order *to be* “mine”. The unity of consciousness is not conditioned by the reflective capacity to be self-aware of the representations that belong to the self-identical subject.

Whatever the merits of this reconstruction, it clearly leaves Kant’s constant use of sentences containing first-person indexical terms entirely unexplained and with it, the primacy and importance of reflection and reflective knowledge to Kant’s overall critical project. Another related feature which is left out is the simplicity of the representation “I think”. Finally, it is clear that Kitcher’s reconstruction does not al-

⁴ According to Patricia Kitcher (1982: 66), “Kant mistakenly assumes that in judging itself we must recognize the process leading to judgment”.

low for the pure "I". Pure "I" can serve its transcendental role only if it is manifested in *reflective* self-awareness. Hence, she avoids the ambiguity by eliminating some of the features responsible for it.⁵

4. *The Primacy of Self-Ascription*

In contrast to Kitcher, Strawson links reflective self-awareness of identity to the "mine" relation in a way that Kitcher's interpretation does not allow:

The notion of a single consciousness to which different experiences belong is linked to the notion of self-consciousness, of the ascription of an experience or state of consciousness to oneself. It is not necessary, in order for different experiences to belong to a single consciousness, that the subject of those experiences should be constantly thinking them as *his* experiences; but it is necessary that those experiences should be subject to whatever condition is required for it to be *possible* for him to ascribe them to himself as *his* experiences. (Strawson, 1966: 98)

The "mine" relation and the notion of a single consciousness are linked by the notion of self-consciousness. An experience belongs to a single consciousness if the experience is subject to whatever conditions required by the possibility of *self-ascription*. Self-ascription and self-consciousness are presented in Strawson's account as indistinguishable. Self-ascription is the basis for the reflective awareness of the relation "mine" that the reflective subject has towards her representations. The *fact* that a representation is "mine" is conceptually linked to the capacity to be *reflectively* self-aware of "my" identity as a single consciousness. In other words, "mine" conceptually implies self-awareness and not merely self-identity.

But how precisely are self-consciousness of identity, self-identity and self-ascription related? According to Strawson, does the capacity to self-

⁵ Kitcher acknowledges her departure from Kant's original position. Like many other commentators, she implicitly assumes that the content of the indexical term "I" is fully spelled out by its referential function, by the fact that, in each genuine context of use, it refers to one individual subject. This supposition coheres with Kitcher's functionalist contention that Kant's deduction demonstrates the conceptual relations between consciousness of self-identity and causal relations. In this sense, omission of the first-person indexical does not detract from Kant's philosophical insight, but rather serves to reveal it. For her recent views on this matter see Patricia Kitcher (1999).

ascribe a manifold of experiences *constitutes* self-identity? What exactly is “I” conscious of when “I” is self-conscious of the identity of a single consciousness of self-ascription? A commonsensical “obvious” response would be to claim that the identity of a single consciousness is the identity of the *particular* subject of this single consciousness. The claim to self-identity involved in all uses of the term “I” is explained by means of the fact that “I” is a deictic term that in each context of use refers to the particular individual using it. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that Strawson’s position is as simple as that. The link between self-ascription and self-consciousness is left unexplained by this account.

Strawson can be interpreted as claiming that at least three a priori propositions are involved in “I think”:

- (1) The notion of a single consciousness to which different experiences belong is conceptually linked to the notion of self-consciousness.
- (2) Self-consciousness is conceptually linked to self-ascription.
- (3) Consciousness of a *single* consciousness is consciousness of self-identity.

The following propositions follow from (1)-(3):

- (4) The notion of a single consciousness is the notion of a subject that is self-conscious of her self-identity as a particular object.
- (5) If the subject of a single consciousness is self-conscious of her self-identity, she must be able to self-ascribe experiences.
- (6) If an experience belongs to a single consciousness, it must be possible for the self-conscious and self-identical subject to self-ascribe the experience.

However, it should be noted that even though self-consciousness of identity conceptually implies self-ascription, Strawson does not say that the self-identity of the particular subject *is determined* by self-ascription. Self-ascription is relevant only to *knowledge* of identity and not to the fact that one is self-identical. The last claim is apparent in Strawson’s distinction between criterionless self-ascription and empirical criteria for identity.⁶ Criterionless self-ascription involves consciousness of *identity*. Empirical knowledge of identity is based on empirical criteria.

⁶ The distinction between criterionless self-ascription and empirical criteria of identity is an important part of Strawson’s interpretation of the Paralogism. See Strawson (1966: 163-169).

Although self-awareness of self-identity that is part of criterionless self-ascription *is not based* on empirical criteria of identity, "I" refers to a particular subject because, "even in such a use, the links with those [empirical] criteria are not in practice severed" (Strawson, 1996: 165).⁷

The appeal to empirical criteria of identity accords with the two main features of Strawson's interpretation: the assumption that knowledge of identity that is part of self-consciousness is exhausted by the referring function of "I" and the claim to a conceptual relation between "single consciousness," "self-consciousness" and "self-ascription". Criterionless self-consciousness of identity is the act in which "I" refers to an individual that *cannot fail* to know that it refers to herself. It is assumed that the meaning of "I" is its referential character, i.e., to refer to an object identical to itself. *A priori* knowledge of self-identity expressed by "I think" is therefore equivalent to the claim that one cannot fail to refer to the particular individual that one happens to be by using the term "I".⁸ Yet, Self-identity is not determined by self-consciousness of identity or self-ascription. Rather, consciousness of identity *presupposes* self-identity.

There are two features that are ascribed by Kant to transcendental apperception which are particularly important for this account of first-person self-knowledge of identity. The first feature consists in the fact that "I think" is not an intuition and the second feature is the simplicity of "I think". According to this approach, Kant's claim that "I think" is not an intuition means that knowledge of the identity of the self involved in "I" thoughts is not based on self-perception or self-intuition. First-person knowledge of identity indicates a peculiar *epistemic mode* of consciousness of identity. It is assumed that Kant's term "transcendental apperception" denotes this epistemic mode of knowledge of identity. The distinction between transcendental and empirical apperception is not a distinction between two entities for which

⁷ Strawson's use of the phrase "not in practice severed" might give the impression that this position allows for a notion of identity of a subject of criterionless (immediate) self-ascription that can be severed, though not in practice, from a notion of identity that is linked to empirical criteria of identity. But Strawson's position is that even in this case, a priori knowledge of identity should be explained by the referring function of "I".

⁸ Strawson's position is close to Shoemaker's claim that first-person thoughts are "immune to error through misidentification with respect to the term "I" ". See Shoemaker (1984), Chapter 1. The simplicity of the "I think" means that reference to ourselves and "knowledge of ourselves as ourselves" is not mediated by any set of properties or descriptions.

there are distinct criteria which determine their respective identities but two modes of awareness of one and the same entity. It is therefore clear that according to this approach, simplicity should be disconnected from the claim that “I” expresses consciousness of self-identity. Also, none of the relevant a priori judgments allow for a pure representation of the self.⁹ The simplicity of the epistemic mode of knowledge of self-identity related to first-person thoughts does not entail the simplicity of the self-identical object to which “I” refers. Each of these features is related to a different aspect involved in self-conscious experiences. Apriority is the apriority of *identity*, simplicity is the simplicity of the *epistemic mode* of reflective consciousness of self-identity and “identity” is the identity of the object to which “I” refers.

Thus, though Strawson’s approach ascribes an important role to reflective self-knowledge and is able to partially explain Kant’s constant use of first person terms, the ambiguity of “I think” is explained away by omitting some of the features attributed by Kant to the representation “I think” as well as the unity of the entity that is supposed to manifest them all. “I” cannot indicate the reality of something that cannot be identified with a particular object.

If the underlying suppositions of Strawson’s approach are accepted, then Kant’s theory involves irresolvable contradictions. For example, consider the following two passages from the second paralogism:

For the unity of a thought consisting of many representations is collective, and, as far as mere concepts are concerned, it can be related to the collective unity of the substances cooperating in it (as the movement of a body is the composite movement of all its parts) just as easily as to the absolute unity of the subject. Thus there can be no insight into the necessity of presupposing a simple substance for a composite thought according to the rule of identity. (A 353)

But the simplicity of my self (as soul) is not really **inferred** from the proposition “I think,” but rather the former lies already in every thought itself. The proposition **I am simple** must be regarded as an immediate expression of apperception, just as the supposed Cartesian inference *cogito, ergo sum* is in fact tautological, since the *cogito (sum cogitans)* immediately as-

⁹ Criterionless self-ascription cannot be identified with a pure representation of the self. Criterionless self-ascription involves consciousness of the identity of a single consciousness that is possible only on the basis of the self-ascription of experiences.

serts the reality. But **I am simple** signifies no more than that this representation **I** encompasses not the least manifoldness within itself, and that it is an absolute (though merely logical) unity. (A 354-355)

According to the first passage, for all I know, "it is possible that I am not simple" is true. According to the second passage, the certainty of "I am simple" is equivalent to the certainty of the Cartesian *cogito*. It is clear that "I am simple" cannot be analyzed as meaning "the mode in which I am aware of myself is simple (criterionless)". If the term "I" has the same sense in both judgments, if it is used in both in order to refer to (one and the same) particular individual, the contradiction is unavoidable. According to the first sentence, "I am simple" might be false, while according to the second sentence, "I am simple" is known with certainty; that is, it is indubitable and infallible.¹⁰

It might be argued that the incompatibility between Strawson's position and Kant's position merely shows that the concept "transcendental apperception" which possesses all the features Kant assigned to it is impossible. Nevertheless, the prospect of an alternative interpretation that may save the coherence of Kant's transcendental apperception

¹⁰ Brook (1994: 175) suggests a possible resolution of this contradiction. He argues that the above contradiction results from confusing the mode in which I *refer* to myself and "what I really am". The fact that I am inclined to conceive myself as simple is an illusion created by features of the representation "I think". The main feature responsible for this "transcendental illusion" is the simplicity of the representation "I think" which is interpreted as a mode of reference to "ourselves as ourselves" without identifying ourselves by means of some property or a relation. Brook labels this capacity "apperceptive self-awareness". Reference to oneself as oneself non-ascriptively is empty. The representation "I" is simple precisely due to this emptiness. However, the simplicity of the representation in the above sense is not an indication of the simplicity of the object referred to. In other words, the representation "I" invites *the transcendental illusion* of the simplicity of the thinking self precisely because of the capacity for "non-ascriptive self reference", "possibly, I am not simple" is true because the capacity to refer to oneself non-ascriptively is not conditioned by the simplicity of the *individual* to which "I" refers. Hence, the certainty ascribed by Kant to the simplicity of the "I think" is at best the simplicity of how one *appears* to oneself when one is conscious of oneself as oneself in apperceptive self awareness. More precisely, this claim of certainty results from confusing the properties of the mode of representation of an individual as a subject and the properties of the individual that is represented in this mode of representation.

Though I agree with some points in Brook's analysis, he seems to leave out the positive sense in which we are reflectively aware of ourselves as simple. The claim that we *appear* to ourselves as simple, namely, that simplicity is not a real feature of the transcendental subject that thinks is incompatible with Kant's position. I will discuss this point in the next chapter.

is suggested by the tension implicit in Strawson's interpretation. As I noted above, the notion of a single consciousness is conceptually linked to "self-consciousness" and "self-ascription". A self-conscious subject that self-ascribes a manifold of experiences must conceive herself as a single consciousness. It is clear, however, that self-awareness of a single consciousness that is linked to *self-consciousness* and self-ascription constitutes criterionless self-consciousness. As I already noted, Strawson thinks (1966: 165) that when "I" is used in criterionless self-consciousness, it doesn't "lose its role of referring to a subject, since "I" can be used without criteria of subject-identity and yet refer to a subject". "I" can refer to an empirically identified object (subject), since *in practice*, the link between criterionless self-consciousness and empirical criteria of subject-identity are not severed. But what could the features of the link between criterionless self-consciousness and empirical criteria of identity be if these features can explain why in practice the former are not severed from the latter? The answer could be found in Strawson's claim that criterionless self-awareness is necessarily an aspect of *self-ascription* that he no doubt shares with Kant. In self-ascribing a manifold of representations, one *must* conceive oneself as a single consciousness. But this conceptual link suggests that the notion of a *single consciousness* involved in self-consciousness cannot be severed from the capacity to *self-ascribe a manifold* of representations. In other words, it suggests that consciousness that one is indeed a single consciousness (and not merely a self-identical object) *is determined by* self-ascription. Since consciousness that one is a single consciousness (that is conceptually linked to self-ascription) involves no empirical criteria of identity and since the identity of the referent of "I" *is not determined by self-ascription*, what reasons does one have to claim that there can be no conceptual gap between consciousness of *identity* (of the empirical object) and consciousness of the *identity of the single consciousness* of self-ascription?

If an "I think" were able to self-ascribe experiences that are necessarily the experiences of *one and only one* particular individual, the gap would be eliminated. In this case, the connection between criterionless self-consciousness cannot be severed from empirical knowledge of identity. Nevertheless, as we shall see later, Kant's concepts of intuition and of objective experience do not allow one to claim that "my experiences" or "my intuitions" are *necessarily* the experiences of one particular empirical object. No feature of the events or the relations that are

the objects of immediate states of awareness entails that necessarily only one particular spatiotemporal individual can be the subject of this immediate relation. I will discuss this point in Chapter 13.

5. "I Think" as "Something in General = x "

The epistemic differences between a priori knowledge of identity that is linked to "I think" and knowledge of oneself as an object might suggest that the "I" does not refer to anything in particular. This is how Allison presents the matter:

Kant does not deal explicitly with the problem of reference, but instead tends to pose the issue in straightforwardly epistemological terms. Thus he insists upon the need for sensible intuition as that through which alone a particular thinking subject can be given to the mind (itself) as object. Nevertheless, it is clear that these two ways of characterizing the problem with the Cartesian cogito come to very much the same thing. In fact, if anything Kant's account cuts deeper because it shows that the reason why there is no particular, individuating content to which the I can be attached is that the representation of it is "purely intellectual". Because of this, 'I' designates only "something in general," which is to say that it does not refer to anything at all. (Allison, 1983: 282)

Allison stresses the second part of the above-mentioned ambiguity, that is, the purity of the "I" qua representation of a thinking self.¹¹ We are given to ourselves as particular individuals only through sensible intuition. Sensible intuitions convey individuating content. But "I think" is not an intuition. Rather, it is a "purely intellectual" representation. In contrast to Strawson who regards genuine uses of "I" as referring to particular individuals without requiring any explicit criteria of identity, Allison maintains that "I" in "I think" does not refer to anything at all. It denotes "something in general". It does not refer, since it is "purely intellectual". Although Allison maintains that a "particular

¹¹ Allison (1983: 280) believes that Kant fails to distinguish clearly between empirical and transcendental apperception. I claim that this is essential to Kant's position. Allison's "alternative view" merely reiterates this. The claim that apperception is actually consciousness of the activity of thinking (1983: 290) leaves unexplained the fact that the activity of thinking is the activity of thinkers, namely, that it is always "I" that thinks, an "I" that is *known to exist*. As I will claim in the next chapter, this failure to disconnect empirical and transcendental apperception is both harmless and unavoidable.

thinking subject can be given to the mind (itself) as object” only if sensible empirical intuitions are provided, Allison severs the referential function of “I” in “I think” (that is linked to the fact that “I think” expresses an empirical judgment) from the pure intellectual representation of oneself expressed by “I think”. Since these two are disconnected, it seems as though awareness of the pure intellectual representation “I think” is possible independently of making the empirical judgment “I think”.

Notwithstanding the fact that this approach cannot account for Kant’s terminological choice, it is difficult to grasp what one could be aware of when one is aware of a “purely intellectual” representation. Allison maintains that when one thinks the thought “I think,” *there is* indeed “something” that one is aware of. One is aware of “something in general”. This claim ascribes to Kant the problematic position that in thinking the thought “I think” or in being reflectively aware of a representation (intuition) as “mine,” one is aware not of oneself but of *nothing in particular*.¹² But what kind of entity might this “something in general” be? Since the representation “I think” is not an intuition, and since “I” does not stand for an object, it might be assumed that it is either a concept or a judgment. If it is a concept, what concept is it? One possible answer is that it is the concept of a thinking individual. Nevertheless, if “I think” were a concept, or better yet, if it expressed a concept, the result would be the incoherent conclusion that in being reflectively aware of my self-identity as a thinking “I,” I am aware of the identity of a concept of a thinking thing in general! In other words, this claim leaves the fact that “I think” is reflective *self*-awareness and that reflective awareness of self-identity is necessarily a *real* (in contrast to merely possible) self-relation completely unexplained.

Another possibility is that “I think” represents a whole judgment. In making the *judgment* “I think,” I intend a thing in general as the subject of this judgment. Since a thing in general is nothing particular, this rules out the *numerical identity* of the “I” in “I think”. Yet, a “thing in general” neither thinks nor acts. For Kant’s purposes, the disastrous results that follow from this position is that an “I think” thought is possible, even if *nothing particular* would recognize this thought as *her* thought.

¹² For a similar claim, see Henrich (1994: 185).

This was clearly not Kant's position. Kant does not claim that, when we are conscious of our self-identity as thinking subjects, we are not conscious of anything in particular. We are conscious of a being that thinks. Given that every genuine use of "I" is necessarily real, every genuine use of "I" must *employ* intuitions, whether it be in "I judge that..." or in "I am aware of ...as mine" or in "I think", "I think" is a representation *that must accompany intuitions*. The claims to identity and simplicity that are part of the content of transcendental apperception represent only formal conditions of thought. The pure representation expressed in "I think" is neither a pure intuition nor a pure concept. It does not individuate an individual and it does not represent a general feature of things by means of some common marks.

We may conclude this chapter with the claim that the inherent ambiguity attributed to "I think by Kant" is not an unintended feature he ascribed to reflective self-consciousness. The shortcomings of the philosophical interpretations which endeavored to overcome this inherent ambiguity indicate that it cannot be eliminated without losing an important feature self-consciousness that is part of our capacity to be reflectively self-aware of our self-identity. As we shall see in the next chapter, simplicity, identity and originality are indeed part of this representation. Yet, no knowable object that can be the referent of "I" can meet the features revealed in reflective self-knowledge.

Chapter 13
SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND TRANSCENDENTAL
SYNTHESIS

1. Introduction

In Kant's theory of experience, transcendental apperception serves as the Archimedean point of transcendental synthesis. How can a pure representation of the self be relevant to transcendental synthesis? My first task in the present chapter will be to explore the Kantian reasons for the reality of transcendental apperception. Then I will single out the role of transcendental apperception in transcendental synthesis. As I will demonstrate, the answer to the above question is inherent in the ambiguity of "I think". I will begin by outlining the main points of the argument made in the present chapter.

As several commentators noted, some of the features Kant ascribes to the pure "I" serve as the basis for Hume's denial of the reality of the consciousness of an absolute self.¹ The uniqueness of Kant's concept of a subject of experience becomes clear when one comprehends both the similarities and the differences between Hume and Kant's respective positions.

The main idea that underlies Hume's theory is that experience consists of a collection of epistemically independent perceptions. These do not include awareness of *one* subject that accompanies each of them and all of them that is distinct from the collection of perceptions.² Kant endorses two important points in Hume's theory: the epistemic independence of *individual intuitions* (one can have one empirical intuition without having the other) and the claim that no individual intuition included in a given manifold is indicative of one *particular subject* to which a *manifold* of intuitions is ascribed. The main difference between the two thinkers concerns the positive role of reflective awareness of a manifold in a single consciousness. In contrast to Hume, Kant emphasizes the identity and simplicity of the self-conscious "I" as the subject of a single consciousness. Hume does not distinguish between a continually changing manifold of states of awareness and the awareness

¹ See, for example, Rosenberg (1986); Chisholm (1994).

² Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), Book 1, part 4, §§4, 6.

of a continually changing manifold.³ Awareness of a continually changing manifold is inexplicable in Hume's theory of mind.⁴ As I will demonstrate below, the representation of a single consciousness of such continually changing manifold is irreducible to the concept of a continually changing manifold of perception. This is precisely why the "I" of reflective awareness must represent itself as simple, original, self-identical and empty.

It is one thing to reveal the reality of an entity by means of an argument that singles out the limits of a given position and the conditions of possibility that it must presuppose. It is a different thing to explain how such an entity is possible. Kant's position obviously has an important advantage over Hume's. Yet recognizing this advantage does not eliminate the obscurity related to the transcendental "I". The simplicity, self-identity and emptiness of the logical pure "I" renders it impossible for this representation to determine the existential relations between the manifold included in the single consciousness of a *particular* subject. Yet, the *transcendental* "I" is a transcendental "I". How can it be the case that a *particular* subject is aware of a manifold of intuitions in one consciousness, if the elements of the manifold are *existentially* independent?⁵ The claims that we *must* presuppose a subject of experience and that given the nature of the manifold of experiences the *representation* of a self-identical subject must be conceived as original, simple, and empty, strengthen the need to explain how such a representation could be a representation of something that exists as an individual. If what determines the single consciousness is the empty and original representation of self-identity, this argument seems to be unable to explain how it is possible to belong to a single particular consciousness.

Two related and important features of Kant's argument should be introduced at this point. The first feature is the fact that reflective self-awareness "I think" must be related to the empirically certain judgment "I exist" and the second feature is that the manifold recognized as "mine" by "I think" is a manifold of empirical intuitions.⁶ The

³ For a similar claim, see Rosenberg (1986: 509).

⁴ Compare Waxman (1991), Chapter 4.

⁵ The need to postulate real existential relations between representations is emphasized by Patricia Kitcher (1982; 1990).

⁶ The elements synthesized in a single consciousness are *intuitions*. Kant's main intention in the *Analytic* is to explain why the categories apply to intuitions by showing why intuitions must be synthesized by the categories. The identity of

thinking subject must in our case be an intuiting subject who is “affected by objects” (A 19/B 33). The reflective “I think” self-ascribes *intuitions*, which are the representations that are given prior to all thinking. “I think” and “I intuit” are two heterogeneous aspects of the subject. An intuiting subject must naturally be conceived as some kind of real object. The pure “I think” does not denote the existence of anything.⁷ Yet, the intuiting subject and the thinking “I” cannot be separated. On the one hand, “I think” must be able to accompany all intuitions. On the other hand, “the thoroughgoing identity of the apprehension of a manifold given in intuition contains a synthesis of the representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis” (B 133). As will be shown, the applicability of the categories to intuitions by means of the making of objective judgments is required

the “I” of a single consciousness is a necessary condition for the capacity to be aware of the unity of a manifold of *intuitions*, i.e., of singular and immediate representations of undetermined objects.

This presupposition seems to have been misrepresented by Allison (1983: 138-140). According to Allison, the identity of “I think” is a necessary condition for the possibility of complex *thought*. Although the identity of the “I” is apparently a condition for thinking, this portrayal of the transcendental role of the transcendental “I” is misleading. All thoughts are complex in that they must minimally include a subject and a predicate. But it is misleading to suppose that the “I” of the subject term must be identical with the “I” of the predicate term. If thought is necessarily judgmental, if “I think” is “I judge,” there is no sense in which the “I”s could be different. The subject term that stands for a particular entity and the predicate term that stands for a general concept do not form a manifold equivalent to a manifold of intuitions. The unity of thought or judgment is therefore not a unity of distinct and complete disparate entities. One can at best claim that the “I” of the *sensible sign* that expresses the subject term could be different from the “I” of the *sensible sign* that expresses the predicate term. Only in this sense is the identity of a subject a non-trivial condition for complex thought.

In other words, it is clear that the unity of the manifold of intuition does not coincide with the unity of complex thought but rather with the unity of an *object* determined by thought. All intuitions unified in the concept of an object are *singular and immediate* “complete” representations. They can be ordered in many ways. No such entity is a general entity, i.e., a concept. Hence no combination of intuitions can be a complex thought.

Although the “I” of the concepts must be identical to the “I” of intuitions, this is not what Kant singles out in the present context. His claim is that all intuitions (the representations that are given prior to all thinking) must be accompanied by an “I think”. This leaves untouched the claim that the unity of the object must be correlated with the unity of thought.

⁷ All existential claims must be based on intuitions. The claim that “I think” is not an intuition, that it does not suffice to establish the existence of anything, does not mean that “I intuit” does not entail existence.

precisely in order to determine the unity of the thinking subject and the intuiting subject (and therefore also of the claim to self-existence).

My claim will be that the unity of the thinking subject and the intuiting subject is found in the concept “self-positing”. This concept is not dealt with explicitly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant introduces it only in the *Opus postumum*. Yet its traces can be detected in the main line of the argument presented in the Transcendental Analytic. The introduction of “self-positing” in the *Opus postumum* makes explicit what is implicit in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As I will shown below, within Kant’s theoretical philosophy, self-positing means that self-consciousness must involve an a priori act of determining oneself as an empirical object among others in the world — the only kind of knowable object that can satisfy the claim to self-existence — by means of the capacity to make objective judgments.⁸ Self-positing does not undermine the heterogeneity of the intuiting and the thinking “I” but rather presupposes it. It is required *by virtue* of the nature of the spatiotemporal manifold of intuitions and the nature of the pure “I” that must be able to accompany them.

Most commentators agree that the subject of experience must be an object of some kind. Two questions need to be addressed in this context. The first question concerns the kind of object the “I” can know itself to be, while the second question concerns the relations between self-consciousness and the knowledge that one is an object. Kant’s theory does not allow one to *know* that “I” denotes a noumenon. Moreover, given that the pure, simple, logical “I” that must be part of all empirical acts of self-consciousness is not a representation of an object, the supposition that this “I” refers to a noumenon is useless as part of a solution to the problem that concerns the unity of the intuiting “I”

⁸ To be sure, the idea of self-positing is a central theme in Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge*. As is well known, Kant disapproved of Fichte’s theory as presented in his *Science of Knowledge*. See in particular the letter to J.H. Tiefentrunk, April 5 1798, and Kant’s open letter on Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge* from August 7, 1799. Yet, according to Zöller (1995: 125), “For Fichte our bodily existence in the spatiotemporal world comes about by having our intelligible being subjected to the laws of discursive thought”. This seems to be a point of similarity between Fichte and Kant. Nevertheless, Kant’s theory emphasizes the link between the capacity to make synthetic a priori judgments and consciousness of the self as a posited spatiotemporal object without introducing the noumenal realm.

and the thinking “I”. As I will show below, this is one of the conclusions of Kant’s arguments in the Paralogism. The distinction between “I *think*” and “I *intuit*” must be presupposed even if “I” denotes a noumenon.

The claim that “**I think must be able** to accompany all my representations [intuitions]” (B 131) is an expression of the required unity of the thinking and the intuiting “I”. As Kant’s claim indicates, the relation that unifies the thinking and the intuiting (affected) “I” is the relation “mine”. The question that needs to be addressed concerns the nature of this relation.

“Mine” naturally signifies the relation between a particular representation and an individual subject. In addition, it signifies a relation between each element included in a given manifold of representations and the other elements that belong to the same particular consciousness. It is thus natural to hold the idea that “mine” *primarily* denotes a relation between a particular subject and a particular representation and only *derivatively* a connection between the elements of the manifold of representations that relate to one particular subject. However, this is precisely the supposition that Kant’s theory undermines.

The relation “mine” indicates an important problem within Kant’s theory that results from the fact that this theory is committed to an implicit distinction between the relation of “co-consciousness” and “co-personality”. The former does not entail the latter. This distinction is required by the nature of the temporal manifold of intuitions and the nature of the pure “I” that must be able to accompany them. An immediate implication of this distinction is that in Kant’s theory, “mine” cannot stand for a unique relation that holds individually between each element of a given manifold included in a single consciousness and necessarily the one and only one object that “I” denotes. “I think” is an empty and simple logical subject. The *individual* appearances that “I think” must be able to accompany do not owe their identity to the subject that experiences them. As a result of this, “mine” must denote functions that primarily determine the *synthetic unity* of the individual representations. By that they also determine the (empirical) object that “I” denotes. Although these functions can determine objects with empirical, “moderate” identities “necessary and sufficient for practical use” (A 365), they do not determine an ob-

ject with necessary identity.⁹ The possible empirical objects that “I” can denote do not possess absolute identity.¹⁰

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 14, the empirical relations that determine the unity of the temporal intuitions that belong to a single empirical consciousness, that is, that determine the empirical identity of the subject as an object among others in the world, can be specified only by determining the objective relations that hold between an empirical “I” and the objects (distinct from the empirical “I”) that are given in intuition. This claim seems to be paradoxical. Yet, the upshot of Kant’s theory is that the synthetic unity of an individual’s consciousness presupposes an objective viewpoint that must be part of one’s *personal* self-conception. The claim that *self-awareness* — awareness of oneself as a *particular* individual — is possible only within an objective, non-personal viewpoint that encompasses and precedes the personal, that the *synthetic*, empirical unity of apperception is, in other words, a particular mode of *objective unity*, entails that a non-personal objective viewpoint must be part of *all* personal viewpoints. A particular individual must know that she *exists* as a particular complex empirical object. She can know herself as such only by *positing herself* as an empirical object by applying the a priori functions that constitute this a priori framework of objectivity.¹¹

⁹ This means that it is false to assume that all the representations unified together in the single consciousness A (the relation that constitutes the empirical identity of the subject), that are immediately and reflectively accessible to A, cannot be unified with other representations that are now unified in the single consciousness of B. This is precisely the supposition undermined by some of Kant’s arguments in the Paralogism.

¹⁰ As Henrich notes (1994: 180), Kant rejected the strict concept of identity.

¹¹ The claim that transcendental apperception is related to an impersonal viewpoint is defended by Keller (1998). There are, however, important differences between my account and his. Keller identifies the impersonal viewpoint with transcendental apperception. This impersonal viewpoint is part of our conceptual capacity to make judgments which in principle we share with all other human beings. According to this interpretation, to represent oneself impersonally means to represent oneself from the standpoint of *any* possible individual subject. The numerical *identity* of the “I think” is tantamount, in this case, to the *singularity* of this impersonal standpoint that is distinct from the notion of personal identity. The relation between an “I” that thinks and the impersonal standpoint is indirectly established by means of the claim that representations and thoughts must presuppose particular subjects that think and compare them. There is no other internal relation between subjects that think and a transcendental “I”. The portrayal of the impersonal viewpoint as an “I think” is therefore artificial. The impersonal standpoint is not an “I think”. It signifies the alleged unique rational standpoint that must be shared by all “I’s that *think*. This is precisely what Kant characterized in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as the *regulative idea* of the common sense.

An important feature of Kant's theory is that the complex empirical object that "I" denotes, that is determined by the synthetic relations that unify the manifold of intuitions, cannot satisfy the claims to simplicity, absolute identity and originality related to the pure "I think". This is precisely why self-consciousness must be linked to *self-positing*, why the object that "I" denotes is not "merely given" as "being there". There is a gap between the "I" that satisfies the claim to objectivity and existence, and the thinking pure "I" that cannot be eliminated within Kant's conceptual scheme. It results from the nature of the entities unified in a single consciousness, the kind of synthetic relations that unify them and the features of "I think". "I" cannot only denote an empirical object and it is not possible to know that "I" denotes a thing in itself (which is unknowable!) and an empirical object. Although the representation of the numerically identical "single consciousness" is conceptually linked to the necessary synthetic unity of consciousness, it cannot be reduced to it.¹² The pure representation "I think" is a necessary *correlate* of the necessary synthetic unity of apperception. Consciousness of the numerical identity of the subject (A 107) is not tantamount to the synthetic unity of consciousness. The latter underlies all relation to an object that must involve the determination of oneself as an empirical object.

The solution to the problem pertaining to the "mine" relation is therefore to connect the awareness of oneself as an object to one's reflective capacity to make objective judgments which determine one's existence as a complex object.¹³ Consciousness of oneself as an object is

Although according to Kant, this idea must be part of a non-skeptical epistemology, he never equates it with transcendental apperception. The role of transcendental apperception in transcendental synthesis in establishing the necessary applicability of the categories to sensible intuitions is lost if one supports this position.

¹² Henrich points out the difference between "numerical identity" and "unity". As Henrich notes (1994: 180), although Kant rejected the strict concept of identity, Kant's theoretical approach nevertheless interprets "self consciousness as something "pure," original, unchangeable," as the "fixed and abiding" self (A 107) beyond all flux".

¹³ The most simple, natural position is to claim that being an object *conditions* the capacity to be *self-conscious*. The capacity to be reflectively aware of "my identity" is explained in this case as the property of a particular kind of object, which is that of thinking objects. The fact that the unity of the thinking "I" and the intuiting "I" cannot be explained in this way is related to the fact that the capacity to be aware of a manifold in a continually changing "single consciousness" cannot be an *objective property* of anything, neither of an empirical object nor of a *noumenon*. Therefore, the unity of the thinking and intuiting "I" cannot be explained by claiming that "I" refers to an unknown *noumenon* that knows itself only as it

not merely presupposed by reflective awareness. It is possible only by means of the capacity to make objective synthetic judgments about the *objects* of consciousness. As I will show in Chapter 14, such objective judgments can determine the individual subject as a complex object by determining the objective spatiotemporal relations of the manifold of one's intuition. The synthetic a priori judgments of the understanding are the a priori forms of these objective judgments. They represent the general necessary conditions that temporal appearances must satisfy if they can be determined in time. As I will show in Chapter 14, the applicability of the categories must entail that one is an object among others in the world, and this can be achieved only if the categories apply to *all* possible appearances.¹⁴

The transcendental ideality of space and time, the analytic unity of self-consciousness and the character of spatiotemporal intuitions jointly imply that the temporal determination of a single consciousness is possible only if intuitions satisfy the a priori conceptual conditions for temporal determination. Therefore, the primacy of the objective standpoint, the reality of pure "I think," the transcendental ideality of space and time and the conceptual link between self-consciousness and pure judgments all comprise one idea.

2. *The Bundle Theory and the Temporal Concept of Experience*

It is widely accepted that individual acts of intuition are logically and epistemically independent. Yet, awareness of a manifold of logically and epistemically independent appearances, together in *one* consciousness, is an immediately certain phenomenological fact. Some of the appearances occur at the same time, others are remembered and joined to the presently experienced appearances. The epistemic independence of individual appearances entails that each of the appearances could have been experienced separately. The subject of the manifold of appearances must therefore distinguish herself from each of them. She is the *single* consciousness that experiences them all.¹⁵

appears, that is, as an empirical object. These are precisely the conclusions that can be drawn from the chapters of the Paralogism. Compare Pippin (1987: 470).

¹⁴ For a similar claim, see Melnik, (1973: 93).

¹⁵ As Brentano (1973: 160) notes, "When someone thinks of and desires something, or when he thinks of several objects at the same time, he is conscious not only of different activities, but also of their simultaneity...It is clear, rather, that the inner cognition of one and the inner cognition of the other must belong to the same real unity".

But what is the nature of this single consciousness, if the only evidence the subject has when she knows herself to be such a subject is how she is appeared to? There are several possible answers to this question. The first consists in Hume's claim that a subject can identify herself only with a manifold of perceptions. This claim either means that the single consciousness is a complex object constructed from all the perceptions it actually includes at a given moment or an object identical with some of these perceptions. Both these possibilities are refutable. The logical and epistemic independence of appearances (or perceptions) entails that even though the subject of experience knows that she is the subject of a given collection, she could have had one of these experiences without having the other. The concept of a temporal experience naturally involves the supposition that an experiencing subject *now knows* that she can be the subject of *new experiences* without knowing which experiences. The fact that it is possible for her to be the subject of new experiences that will be recognized together with the past experiences in a single consciousness is compatible with the claim that the present collection of experiences belongs to her single consciousness or that the elements of this collection are *now* recognized as "mine". If the subject must be able *to recognize* the new experiences as *new* experiences that are added to the former collection in one consciousness, the new experiences added to the present collection of experiences do not affect the fact that she is now a single consciousness. Given that all experiences are temporal for us, all experiences *currently recognized* as "my" experiences were new in the past. Say that E_0 is now a past experience. There therefore must have been a moment at which it was added to what were then past experiences. At that time, it must have been possible for the subject to be aware of herself as a single consciousness independently of E_0 . Recognizing E_0 as a new experience could not have changed her knowledge that she is a single consciousness. Otherwise it would not be possible for her to recognize E_0 as a *new* experience of this single consciousness.

If all the past perceptions now recognized as "mine" were at some past time new for "me," the subject cannot be identical to a complex object that consists of some of the experiences or perceptions. For given that it is essential for a temporal experience to be new at some point in time, and that reflective subjects reflectively *know* this, a subject can *now* say that she *will be* the self-identical and simple subject of all her present and future experiences. In other words, she is *a priori* con-

scious of her identity as a *single consciousness*. She must conceive herself as simple and self-identical independently of all perceptions or experiences.¹⁶

An argument similar to this one is implicit in the passages that introduce the threefold synthesis in the first edition. Kant's arguments reveal that the presence of a representation of a single consciousness is a necessary presupposition involved in the concept of a temporal experience. The faculty of imagination must reproduce single intuitions. Each such act of reproduction presupposes a *present* state of awareness that re-produces a *previous* intuition. The synthesis of imagination is, however, blind. Reproduction in the imagination is insufficient for consciousness that the *presently* re-presented or remembered object is identical to an object of past experience. Whether or not the possibility to re-present past experiences presupposes enduring objects is questionable at this stage. Nevertheless, it is clear that the capacity to re-present experiences, presupposes that the act of re-presenting and the act of intuiting must both be parts of a single consciousness. The notion of a single consciousness must therefore be part of the concept of temporal experience:

Without consciousness that that which we think is the very same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain. For it would be a new representation in our current state, which would not belong at all to the act through which it had been gradually generated, and its manifold would never constitute a whole, since it would lack the unity that only consciousness can obtain for it. 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.

The word "concept" itself could already lead us to this remark. For it is this **one** consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation. This consciousness may often only be weak, so that we connect it with the generation of the representation only in the effect, but not in the act itself, i.e., im-

¹⁶ For a similar argument, see Rosenberg (1986: 518).

mediately; but regardless of these differences one consciousness must always be found, even if it lacks conspicuous clarity, and without that concepts, and with them cognition of objects, would be entirely impossible. (A 103-104)

3. *The Bundle Theory and the Concept of an Intuition*

The argument presented so far is sufficient to refute Hume's theory of self-consciousness. If a subject of experience conceives herself merely as a bundle of continually changing perceptions, she must represent herself a priori as self-identical and simple. The identity of a single consciousness that is irreducible to a collection of empirical perceptions is required by a Humian concept of experience. But this argument provides no clue as to how the features of transcendental apperception, simplicity and a priori knowledge of the numerical identity of a single consciousness, could be relevant to the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. Moreover, a priori knowledge of identity must here be regarded as a corollary of simplicity and simplicity, in turn, must be regarded as a corollary of emptiness. Emptiness seems to be entailed by the epistemic independence of perceptions and the impossibility to be *sensibly* acquainted with a self-identical self. Perceptions can co-occur in all possible combinations. A priori knowledge of identity and simplicity is merely a manifestation of this fact. Emptiness, in other words, means that the subject is nothing in particular. But this is merely another way of saying that a representation of a single consciousness which is distinct from a bundle of perceptions is, in fact, a representation of nothing. The response to the contention that a numerically identical single subject cannot be nothing at all, since if it were indeed nothing at all, it would be impossible to explain why immediate states of awareness cannot be shared by two subjects when they are actually experienced consists in the claim that this is precisely what this position leaves entirely unexplained.

At this point, one could object that the above bewildering contention is arrived at by confusing intuitions and their objects. Moreover, this contention confuses the claim that *acts* of intuition are logically and epistemically independent individual facts with the claim that intuitions are logically and epistemically independent *objects*. Although this confusion might apply to Hume's account, it is not true of Kant's position. The claim that intuitions are logically and epistemically inde-

pendent *objects* disregards the relational character of intuitions pointed out by Kant, that is, the fact that they involve affection, which means the awareness of a relation. If intuitions must involve immediate awareness of relations between subjects and “something,” the claim that the only possible kind of empirical object with which the subject is identical is a collection of intuitions is manifestly false.¹⁷ This claim either means that the subject is an object that consists of appearances, that is, the *objects* of intuition, or of acts of intuition. The former possibility simply disregards the relational character of intuitions, while the latter is committed to the incoherent supposition that an individual subject can be composed out of *acts of intuiting*. Given the relational character of intuitions, the claim that intuitions comprise the only empirical *evidence* for the identity of a single consciousness seems to allow for the possibility that the identity of the single consciousness in which a manifold of intuitions is unified *is* itself the identity of an object.¹⁸

4. *The Identity of the Subject*

The claim that the identity of the single consciousness of self-awareness must be the identity of an object can be interpreted in two conflicting ways that sustain the conceptual link between reflective self-awareness and the concept of a single consciousness.¹⁹ The “Cartesian” line of interpretation is to claim that although the subject cannot identify herself qua thinking object with an object presented to her in sensible intuition, she can know that she is identical to some non-sensible object that is unknowable as it is in itself. The fact that the subject has no knowledge of the inner features of the thing in itself denoted by “I,” is irrelevant to the fact that she must know that she is indeed such a thing.²⁰ The “Strawsonian” line of interpretation is to claim that the

¹⁷ Compare Shoemaker (1996), Chapter 1.

¹⁸ As Chisholm claims (1994: 105), “for in being aware of ourselves as experiencing, we are, *ipso facto* aware of the self or person — of the self or person as being affected in a certain way”.

¹⁹ For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to them as “Cartesian” and the “Strawsonian” lines of interpretation.

²⁰ See, for example, Chisholm’s (1981: 89) account of the unity of consciousness: “We asked above: what is meant and presupposed by saying that hearing and seeing are part of the same consciousness? Kant would say that hearing and seeing have been ‘united in a single consciousness’. But I think it would be clearer if we put the matter this way: One has been able to identify a subject of hearing with a subject of seeing. And one has done this without recourse to a middle term and without appeal to any set of common properties”.

subject can and must identify herself with an object of intuition, whose identity is the identity of the single consciousness. If the relevant relations must be relations between *objects*, the subject is presented to herself in self-consciousness as an object.

The single consciousness of *self-awareness* is the single consciousness of a manifold of past and present intuitions that are self-ascribed by the subject of the single consciousness. What could justify the claim that the object with which the subject identifies herself in each single act

As this passage clarifies, awareness of a manifold of intuitions in the same consciousness does not merely presuppose the empty identity of the subject of the single consciousness but *the identification* of the subject of hearing with the subject of seeing. It is important to note that, in Chisholm's theory, such acts identify one particular object that has an individual essence. According to Chisholm (1981: 75), all beliefs are direct attributions. The *content* of any such attribution "is the property I thereby attribute to myself". Yet, although "I" is the object of these attributions, "my individual essence" is not part of their content (1981: 75). It is clear that since the contents of direct attributions are properties, "I" must be merely a referring term that refers to an object with a particular individual essence. Although knowledge of the individual essence is not part of acts of self-attribution, that is, of what is presented to the mind, such knowledge entails the knowledge that "I" is the object that instantiates these properties. Hence, every case in which I am aware of seeing and hearing is a case in which I identify the same object (that is, I myself) that instantiates the respective properties. In other words, according to Chisholm, on the basis of the metaphysical presuppositions of the theory of intentionality, one is allowed to know that the subject of the manifold of acts of direct attributions must be a self-identical object without knowing what constitutes its identity.

As I will later show, Kant's arguments in the Paralogism undermine Chisholm's metaphysical presuppositions. One difference between the two thinkers is that the unity of consciousness is for Kant primarily the unity of the manifold of intuitions, while for Chisholm it is the unity of the contents of direct attribution, that is, *of a manifold of properties*. The main point of difference between Chisholm and Kant concerns the mode in which the principle of the unity of consciousness is interpreted. This principle is stated by Chisholm as follows: "For every x, if (i) it is certain for x that he is F and certain for x that he is G and if (ii) x considers whether he is both F and G, then it is certain for x that he is both F and G" (1981: 88). According to Chisholm, "x" must denote an object to which the metaphysical notion of identity is applied. In contrast, although Kant accepts an analogous principle, this principle does not entail that "x" must denote an object to which the respective metaphysical notion of identity must be applied. According to Kant, this principle could be true even if "x" did not denote such an object, if, for example, "x" resulted from the fission or fusion of substances. This is the essence of the above-mentioned distinction between co-personality and co-consciousness implicit in Kant's theory.

One immediate result of Kant's position is that knowledge of one's identity *as an object* is not entailed by the truth of the above principle, that is, by the claim that the subject must represent herself as the one subject of a single consciousness in which a manifold of intuitions is united. In Kant's theory, knowledge of oneself as an object is possible only on the basis of the mode in which the subject appears to herself as an *empirical object*. I will return to this point later.

of intuition must be identical to the objects of all other acts of intuition that are part of the same single reflective self-consciousness? Two incompatible answers are available. Both begin with a distinction between immediate experiences and immediate objects of awareness. The first answer maintains that the identity of appearances is determined by the identity of one and only one object which "I" refers to. Appearances owe their identity to the subject that is aware of them. The identity of the subject of *all* the possible objects of intuition of a single consciousness is therefore easily established. For if appearances owe their identity to the subject that has them, a particular subject cannot be aware of an appearance as the content of her state of awareness without being at least implicitly aware of her identity (whether or not she knows what constitutes her identity). The second answer is committed to a more subtle link between the identity of the subject of sensible intuitions and the identity of the objects of these intuitions. The underlying supposition is not that objects of immediate sensible intuitions owe their identity to the subject but rather that the identity of the subject is linked to the identities of these objects. Spatiotemporal individual routes are assumed to be necessary and sufficient for individuating a single consciousness of reflective self-consciousness.

Although these two answers differ, they share the assumption that the claim to the identity of a single consciousness involved in first-person self-conscious "I" thoughts entails that two intuitions cannot be recognized as "my" intuitions, if the referent of "I" of one intuition is not the same object as that referred to by the "I" of the other intuition.

In order to reveal the source of Kant's disagreement with both of the above positions, we may begin by stating what he shares with both. All three positions agree that if I intuit something *now*, no one else can share my experience. Kant's disagreement with both of the above positions is related to the second feature of temporal experiences, namely, the unity of consciousness. Past experiences can be remembered. A reflective memory of a past experience involves a distinction between the remembered past experience and the present experience of remembering. Nevertheless, the subject of the experience of remembering is identical to the subject of the past experience since the past experience has the same relation to "my" single consciousness as the present experience of remembering. In contrast to Kant, both these positions assume that the following must be true. Let there be two subjects S_1 and S_2 . At a given moment t_0 , S_1 experiences E_1 and S_2 experiences E_2 . E_2

is not an immediate experience contained in the consciousness of S_1 , and E_1 is not an immediate experience of S_2 . Now, according to the above-mentioned positions, since when E_2 is actually experienced, E_2 is recognized by S_2 as her immediate experience and is not recognized by S_1 as his immediate experience, and E_1 is not recognized as the immediate experience of S_2 , then E_1 and E_2 cannot be unified by means of the relation “mine”. They cannot be *recognized* as the past immediate experiences of another subject S_3 (that is not identical with S_1 and S_2). “Mine,” in other words, denotes a *unique relation* that can be specified only by appeal to *the identity* of the *object* denoted by “I”. Since “mine” refers to a unique relation in each context, no two experiences that were not related in the past by means of this relation can *now* be elements of a single consciousness.

Kant denies this supposition. According to him, such unique relations do not determine the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions in a single consciousness. That a subject is *now* reflectively aware of a multiplicity of past and present experiences in a single consciousness does not entail that each of the remembered experiences must have been the immediate states or experiences of a complex object (the subject) that now remembers them as her experiences. The fact that two reflective individuals were differentiated in the past by the fact that one had the relation “mine” with E_1 and not with E_2 and the other with E_2 and not with E_1 does not entail that E_1 and E_2 *cannot* be unified in a single consciousness.²¹ Yet, the subject that is aware of E_1 and E_2 together as “my past experiences” in a single consciousness must represent herself a priori as a self-identical and simple subject of this manifold.

5. *The Second Paralogism*

The claims that the simplicity and identity of the pure representation “I think” cannot be based on any metaphysical “objective” presuppositions, or, in other words, that “I think” must be regarded as original, is established in the Paralogism chapters. Kant justifies his claims by

²¹ This notion of an experience that does not entail the personal identity is dubbed in current philosophical discussions that explore the relations between memory and personal identity “quasi memory” or “q-memory”. See for example Parfit (1975) and Shoemaker (1984), Chapter 2. For a discussion and criticism of the relevance of these views to Kant’s notion of the identity of the subject see Ameriks (2000), Chapter 4.

arguing in two directions. He first asks whether simplicity and self-identity that are part of reflective self-consciousness must consist in corresponding properties of non-empirical objects. He demonstrates that a negative answer to the first question is compatible with the claim that a pure representation of the subject of a manifold of intuitions is a representation of a simple and self-identical subject.

In the Second Paralogism in the first edition, Kant examines an argument that deduces the claim that a thinking subject must be a simple substance from the claim that reflective thought contains a multiplicity of parts that are bound together:

Suppose that the composite were thinking; then every part of it would be a part of the thought, but the parts would first contain the whole thought only when taken together. Now this would be contradictory. For because the representations that are divided among different beings (e.g., the individual words of a verse) never constitute a whole thought (a verse), the thought can never inhere in a composite as such. Thus it is possible only in **one** substance, which is not an aggregate of many, and hence it is absolutely simple. (A 352)

Kant has two related objections. The first is the claim that the unity of reflective thought that consists of many representations is collective and is therefore compatible with the fact that it has the *collective unity* of substances at least “as far as mere concepts are concerned” (A 353). The concepts of thought and of a thinking being are compatible with both kinds of metaphysical foundations. The unity of thought does not entail the simplicity of a substance. The argument for substantial simplicity presupposes that the simplicity of the thinking substance is compatible with the idea that substances have a (logically and epistemically independent) multiplicity of modes or representations. The multiplicity of representations could all be modes of one simple substance, although the substance does not possess the capacity to be reflectively aware of all of them in one thought.²² Therefore, the mere fact that they are all modes of a simple substance cannot explain why they are parts of one reflective thought. In other words, since collective unity is sufficient for the unity of thought and since the simplicity of

²² This was Leibniz’s position. In the hierarchy of monads, those that belong to the lower type have no capacity for reflection. The difference between reflective and non-reflective monads is qualitative. Only monads that belong to the reflective type are endowed with reason. See Leibniz, *Monadology* (Leibniz, 1989).

substances is not sufficient for the unity of thought, reflective self-awareness of a multiplicity in one thought is not reducible to the simplicity of a substance. As far as our metaphysical knowledge is concerned, the simplicity of the pure "I" of reflective thought must therefore be considered original.

Although it is not possible to know that the simplicity of the pure "I" is based on the simplicity of substances, Kant does not claim that reflective self-awareness has no metaphysical foundation. One can merely claim that no metaphysical contention that concerns the nature of a thinking being is justifiably entailed by our *grounds for evidence*, which is reflective awareness of a manifold in a single consciousness.

6. *The Third Paralogism*

Kant draws a similar conclusion in the Third Paralogism in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The fact that the simple and numerically identical representation "I think" is present at *all times* does not indicate that a self-identical person endures in all times. The source of the transcendental illusion is that it is assumed that reflective self-awareness establishes the continual existence of the subject of self-awareness from remembered past times up to the present moment. Kant does not challenge the capacity for representing continuous existence at different times. It is the claim that "consciousness of the numerical identity of the self in different times" necessarily implies my continual existence in different times that is questioned.²³

If I want to cognize through experience the numerical identity of an external object, then I will attend to what is persisting in its appearance, to which, as subject, everything else relates as a determination, and I will notice the identity of the former in the time in which the latter changes. But now I am an object of inner sense and all time is merely the form of inner sense. Consequently, I relate each and every one of my successive determinations to the numerically identical Self in all time, i.e., in the form of the inner intuition of my self. On this basis the personality of the soul must be regarded not as inferred but rather as a completely identical proposition of self-consciousness in time, and that is also the cause of its being valid *a*

²³ The systematic ambiguity of "I think" is particularly notable in this context. The sense of the indexical terms "I," "my," "in me," "my self" shifts from the personal distinguishing sense to the non-identifying transcendental sense.

priori. For it really says no more than that in the whole time in which I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of this time as belonging to the unity of my Self, and it is all the same whether I say that this whole time is in Me, as an individual unity, or that I am to be found with numerical identity, in all of this time.

The identity of person is therefore inevitably to be encountered in my own consciousness. But if I consider myself from the standpoint of another (as an object of his outer intuition), then it is this external observer who originally considers **me** as **in time**; for in apperception **time** is properly represented only **in me**. Thus from the I that accompanies — and indeed with complete identity — all representations at every time in **my** consciousness, although he admits this I, he will still not infer the objective persistence of my Self. For just as the time in which the observer posits me is not the time that is encountered in my sensibility but that which is encountered in his own, so the identity that is necessarily combined with my consciousness is not therefore combined with his consciousness, i.e., with the outer intuition of my subject. (A 361-363)

Kant's argument contains two premises, the first of which assumes a distinction between internal time consciousness and objective temporal determination. The difference between internal time consciousness and objective temporal determination is clarified when the differences between internal temporal awareness, the mode in which time and temporal events are represented "*in me*," and the mode in which "I myself" can be represented by an outside observer are clarified. The claim that such a distinction can be made is conveyed by means of the following thought experiment:

An elastic ball that strikes another one in a straight line communicates to the latter its whole motion, hence its whole state (if one looks only at their positions in space). Now assuming substances, on the analogy with such bodies, in which representations, together with consciousness of them, flow from one to another, a whole series of these substances may be thought, of which the first would communicate its state, together with its consciousness, to the second, which would communicate its own state, together with that of the previous substance, to a third substance, and this in turn would share the states of all previous ones, together with their consciousness and its own. The last substance would thus be conscious of all the states of all the previously altered substances as its

own states, because these states would have been carried over to it, together with the consciousness of them; and in spite of this it would not have been the very same person in all these states. (A 363-364)

The upshot of Kant's idea is that internal temporal awareness is continuous in terms of the mode in which past experiences are internally represented. I represent myself as having existed continuously from past times until this moment by representing a sequence of experiences. The fact that this is so is a necessary feature of internal temporal consciousness. Nevertheless, a given reflective temporal act of awareness always occurs at some finite interval of time such that the temporal content that is *represented* in this act extends beyond the moment in which the temporal act of awareness occurs. This means that internal temporal self-awareness, which is the representation of myself as continually existing in previous times, is compatible with the possibility that I began to exist only a few moments ago even though, in my internal time consciousness, I *represent myself* as having continually existed for, say, the last thirty years. Only an outside observer can establish the fact that a given internal temporal representation is an illusion.

The possibility of temporal illusions does not suffice to refute the claim that the persistence of "I think" at all times entails a person's continual existence. In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the additional premise is the claim that a subject may be *caused* to represent herself internally as existing in previous times, such that she represents real past events in her internal temporal self-awareness. Someone did actually experience what she represents as her past experiences; someone did actually perform the actions she represents as her past actions. But even though she internally represents herself *as if* she had experienced these experiences, and even though someone did experience experiences that are qualitatively identical to her illusory past experiences, she *was not* the subject of these experiences. An objective past event is represented in her internal time consciousness, even though she *was not the person* who experienced it. She was merely caused to represent herself as if she had experienced it.

This account is fraught with difficulties. In particular, it falls short of leading to the intended conclusion. Kant must show that there is a sense in which consciousness of self-identity related to "I" is not equivalent to personal identity. But the argument in the A edition *presupposes* this equivalence and does not undermine it. This argument

establishes only that a subject can internally represent a real past experience *as if* she was the subject of this immediate past experience, even though she in fact *was not*. The fact that she had merely been caused to represent herself as if she were the subject that immediately experienced it presupposes that “I” now refers to *herself* and not to the subject of the past experience. In other words, it presupposes that she is *not identical* to the subject whose experiences she seems to be able to represent as if they were her experiences.

This flaw in Kant’s argument is remedied in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It might be argued that Kant’s position in the first edition is already implicitly committed to the supposition that the representations of simplicity and self-identity must be part of self-representation in internal temporal consciousness regardless of whether this internal time conscious is illusory or real. This in itself suggests that there is some sense in which the subject *could have been* the subject that experienced the experiences represented in her inner sense. This “could have” at least means that no feature of the experiences themselves or of self-consciousness of numerical identity rules out the possibility that the representing subject could have been the subject of these experiences. What Kant had to explain was why the use of “I” is not committed to knowable individuating features that necessarily distinguish the reflective person indicated by “I” from all other persons. The possibility of adequately representing someone else’s real past experience in one’s internal time consciousness was insufficient for that purpose. Kant had to show that one could adequately represent someone else’s real past experience in one’s internal time consciousness such that instances of the schematic judgment “this was “my” experience” *would not be false*. It had to be demonstrated that internal temporal awareness is insufficient for the purpose of individuation. If the only basis for distinguishing a self-identical person from other persons is internal temporal awareness and its relation to objective states of affairs that are the content of internal temporal awareness, there can be no knowable features that determine the absolute self-identity of persons. Kant comes to this conclusion in the second edition:

Such a possibility is the division of a **simple substance** into several substances, or conversely, the fusing together (coalition) of several substances into a simple one. For although divisibility presupposes a composite, what it requires is not necessarily

a composite made up of substances, but merely a composite of degrees (of several faculties) of one and the same substance. Just as one can think of all the powers and faculties of the soul, even that of consciousness, as disappearing by halves, but in such a way that the substance always remains; so likewise one can without contradiction represent this extinguished half as preserved, yet not in it but outside it; only since everything real in it, consequently having a degree, and so its whole existence, lacking in nothing, has been halved, another particular substance would arise outside it. For the multiplicity that was divided already existed previously, yet not as a multiplicity of substances, but rather of that reality as a quantum of existence in it, and the unity of substance was only a way of existing, which through this division alone is transformed into a plurality of subsistence. But in this way too several simple substances could once again fuse together into one, and nothing would be lost except merely the plurality of subsistence, since the one substance would contain the degree of reality of all the previous ones together in itself. (B 416-417)

This passage seems to be one of speculative metaphysics. This was clearly not Kant's intention. Kant first contends that as far as our knowledge is concerned, no reason justifies the impossibility of fusion and division of substance. The only kind of knowledge of real substances that we possess, that is, of empirical spatiotemporal substances, cannot be used in order to justify this claim. He then argues that the features of reflective awareness of a manifold of experiences are compatible with the conceivability of division and fusion of thinking beings. If two persons A and B were fused together to form a third person C, C would be able to represent the past experiences of A and B in her internal time consciousness as her experiences. Yet some of the experiences C represents as her experiences are past experiences that could not have been together the *immediate experiences* of one *empirical* subject.

Kant's arguments in the Paralogism of Pure Reason therefore demonstrate the incongruity of self-consciousness of self-identity and empirical self-representation in internal consciousness. The consciousness of numerical identity and simplicity that is part of reflective awareness leads one to believe that the representation of numerical identity and simplicity must be the representation of a simple self-identical object. But there can be no knowable criteria that determine the personal or substantial identity of the reflective "I think" of experiences. Immedi-

ate internal reflective awareness cannot provide such criteria, nor can there be “external” spatiotemporal criteria. Internal self-awareness is insufficient and external spatiotemporal criteria can in principle be incongruent with internal self-awareness. Given that a subject can be self-conscious of her personal identity only if she self-ascribes experiences, that is, only if she is aware of herself *as* the single subject of the manifold of her spatiotemporal intuitions, there can be no criteria other than the empirical that may establish her particular personal or substantial identity. The reality of our capacity to represent ourselves a priori as simple and numerically identical single consciousness revealed in reflective self-awareness cannot be spelled out as consisting in *personal* or substantial identity.

The possessive term “mine” used by subjects in order to refer to the relation that unifies a multiplicity of intuitions or experiences cannot therefore be regarded as indicating a unique relation whose uniqueness is in each context determined by the personal or substantial identity of the particular subject that has them. The a priori identity and simplicity of the “I think” is phenomenologically verifiable. Yet, this phenomenological fact is not merely compatible with the contingency of the “mine” relation. Within transcendental idealism, it entails the contingency of this relation.

7. *Transcendental Idealism and Transcendental Apperception*

Let us now see how Kant’s transcendental idealism allows for the reality of transcendental apperception. As I stated in Chapter 6, the concept of an empirical intuition includes the following elements: (a) a spatiotemporal representation of an object (b) a spatiotemporally self-located intuiting subject, (c) a spatiotemporal relation between the subject and the object, (d) an immediate awareness of the spatiotemporal relation between the spatiotemporally located subject and the spatiotemporal object (e) sensation. Hence the concept of an intuition consists of two kinds of elements: an “objective” kind that includes (a)-(d) and a subjective kind that includes (e). As I showed in Chapter 8, the apriority and singularity of space and time imply that spatiotemporal locations provide individuating conditions that are not equivalent to identity conditions. It is precisely due to this fact that the concept of spatiotemporal intuition is compatible with the reality of transcendental apperception.

It should be noted, that no essentially personal feature is part of the objective components of an intuition. The intuitive element individuates the intuiting subject but cannot constitute her personal identity because the intuiting subject is also a reflective self-conscious subject. A person that intuits an object in space must be spatiotemporally located. Nevertheless, someone different from her could have had intuitions identical in their (a)-(d) “objective” components to her intuitions. This leaves affection or sensation as the only “personal” part of an intuition. Indeed, affection also signifies an internal kind of awareness, that is, self-awareness of sensation or of “being affected in a certain manner”. Nevertheless, internal temporal self-awareness cannot be an infallible basis of *individuating* criteria, not to mention of identity criteria.

“I think” is an act that cannot be detached from internal self-awareness. The representations, of which “I” is reflectively aware involve sensations and modes of affection. Since internal awareness is insufficient for individuation and since spatiotemporal locations and relations are contingently attached to a particular person, cases that reveal the incongruity of empirical individuation and self-consciousness of simplicity and identity are conceivable within the limits of transcendental idealism.

8. *Self-Consciousness and Objective Judgments: Self-Positing*

My argument has so far established the reality of the transcendental “I”. However, how is transcendental apperception related to transcendental synthesis? Let us begin by illuminating the conceptual necessity that links self-consciousness to one’s reflective capacity to make objective judgments about oneself. I have so far examined three alternative positions. The Humian position is unable to account for the claim to self-identity that is part of the reflective awareness of a single consciousness. The other two positions that were examined are immune to this defect. They both assume that the synthetic connections between the manifold of self-ascribed intuitions is determined by the identity of the object that constitutes the single consciousness. In revealing the distinction between “co-personality” and “co-consciousness,” Kant departs from both positions. The subject must represent herself as the simple and self-identical subject of a single consciousness. Yet, this presupposition does not entail that the subject is a simple object or that consciousness of self-identity and simplicity expresses the strict identity

of an object. All three positions concede that reflective awareness of a manifold of perceptions involves implicit objective judgments, that is, that reflective awareness must be related to the capacity to make objective judgments about “myself”.²⁴ I suggest that the question that separates Kant’s position from the other positions is whether the capacity to make objective judgments about oneself, *to self-ascribe experiences*, depends on a broad conception of objectivity, whether this conception and its conditions of possibility precedes and determines the subject as a particular object. In the “Cartesian” case, the condition presupposed by self-ascription of the temporal manifold of sensible perceptions is my being an intelligible *object*. In the “Strawsonian” case, the condition presupposed is the conceptual necessity that links the *identity* of the particular thinking object to material, re-identifiable, mind independent objects. In both cases, the numerical identity of the thinking object is presupposed as a condition for the possibility of these judgments and is not determined by the capacity to self-ascribe experiences. In contrast to the other positions, Kant’s position is that the objective judgments that one makes about oneself, in which one self-ascribes experiences, do not merely assume that the subject is *given* as an experiencing, self-identical object that experiences each *individual* experience separately. If this were the case, awareness of the synthetic unity of the manifold of experiences would not be a condition in order for an experience to be “mine”. It would merely be a condition for *verifying* that a manifold of experiences is “mine”. A manifold of individual experiences would be “mine,” even if it were impossible for “me” to know that they are synthetically unified. This is precisely the supposition that Kant undermines. Awareness of the synthetic unity of the manifold of self-ascribed experiences in a single consciousness is a necessary condition for conceiving oneself as an experiencing, knowable *object*.

With regard to each individual act of intuition, the affected subject must conceive herself as an object that actually existed at the time in which the experience was experienced. Yet, the “I think” that accom-

²⁴ Rosenberg (1986: 511) makes a closely related claim. According to Rosenberg “[it] is the requirement of truth of the form (3) [I think (X+Y)] be knowable prior to and independently of identities of the form of (2) [the ‘I’ that thinks X = the ‘I’ that thinks Y], therefore which yields the possibility of a priori knowledge of objects — that is of a priori general metaconceptual description of every system of (“first-level) descriptive concepts which is possible for such passive, apperceptive, temporally discursive intelligences that we are”.

panies a manifold in a single consciousness does not entail the identity of one and only one complex object, the alleged object of all the experiences represented in the single consciousness. In addition, individual appearances do not indicate a particular thinking complex object. The pure "I think" and the manifold of separated intuitions are insufficient for self-knowledge of existence as an empirical complex object. Such knowledge cannot merely be based on the pure "I think", or on the fact that a particular appearance is the immediate object of awareness.

Knowledge that one exists as a complex temporal object is not optional for a subject that conceives herself as the subject of a manifold of experiences. An "I" that thinks must be an "I" that exists (as an individual thing) and an "I" that intuits. Self-consciousness must involve objective judgments about oneself. Since "I think" is not an intuition, and since it does not trivially entail that "I" refers to some object in the world, the capacity to make the required objective judgments necessitates another condition. Consciousness of oneself as an object is *conditioned by* awareness of the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition. As we shall see in the next chapter, the judgments that determine the unity of the manifold of intuitions must be judgments that (a) determine objects of intuition, (b) that determine the experiencing subject as an empirical object and (c) judgments in which the spatiotemporal relation between the object intuited and the intuiting subject is determined. In other words, consciousness of *self-existence as an object* must be based on the act in which a relation to a world of objects of consciousness that is distinct from oneself is established. The objective judgments which self-ascribe experiences must therefore be made on the basis of an objective viewpoint from which the intuiting subject is determined as an object related to the objects of intuitions and distinguished from them. The synthetic unity of the past and present manifold of intuitions that are represented in a single consciousness as "my" experiences are the basis for self-knowledge of self-existence as a particular empirical object, not vice versa.

This epistemic priority is expressed in the claim that the necessary synthetic unity of apperception is a condition presupposed by the analytic unity of apperception. The subject conceives herself as an object on the basis of this objective synthesis of the manifold. If "I think" can accompany the manifold of intuition, that is, if it can be reflectively aware of a manifold in a single consciousness, the subject must appear

to herself as a determined complex, empirical object related to other objects. Hence, the objective viewpoint is a condition for awareness of oneself as a particular object. This epistemic priority is a unique feature of persons that distinguish them from mere objects.²⁵

Awareness of the necessary conditions that must be satisfied by a temporal manifold of appearances in order for this manifold to be temporally determined forms the basis for awareness of oneself as a complex object. This claim is only implicit in the *Critique of pure Reason* but is made explicit in the *Selbstsetzungslehre* in the *Opus postumum*. As Kant clarifies there, the object of intuition that is the referent of “I” in “I exist” is not merely given in the “I think” but is a result of an act of self-positing.

The logical consciousness of myself (*sum*) contains no determination but the real consciousness of intuition (*apperceptio*). “I am” is the logical act which precedes all representation of the object; it is a verbum by which I posit myself. I exist in space and time and thoroughly determine my existence in space and time (*omnimoda determinatio est existentia*) as appearance according to formal conditions for the connection of the manifold of intuition. (22: 85)

“I think” must be linked to “I exist”. Yet, note the following:

The “I am” is not yet a proposition (*propositio*), but merely the copula to a proposition; not yet a judgment. “I am existing” contains apprehension, that is, it is not merely a subjective judgment but makes myself into an object of intuition in space and time. Logical consciousness to what is real, and progresses from apperception to apprehension and its synthesis of the manifold. (22: 96-7).

Consciousness of oneself *as an object of intuition* is the product of a synthetic act. Without self-positing in space and time, “I think” would not be an “I exist”. The first synthetic act of consciousness is that by which the subject makes itself an object of intuition; not logically (analytically) according to the rule of identity, but metaphysically (synthetically) (22: 85). To the extent that self-consciousness must involve self-knowledge of existence, self-consciousness and self-positing are necessarily bound

²⁵ As we shall see in the next chapter, it is related to the conditions that must be satisfied by objects of intuition, if knowledge of temporal determination is possible.

together. *The transcendental "I" is self-positing.* There must be an act of self-positing that is part of pure reflective self-consciousness.

The necessity that binds self-consciousness and self-positing explains the role of transcendental apperception in transcendental synthesis. Self-positing is a spontaneous act. It is an act in which the manifold of intuitions is determined in order to posit the subject as an object.

Consciousness of itself (apperceptio) is an act through which the subject makes itself in general into an object. It is not yet a *perception (apprehensio simplex)*, that is, not a sensible representation, for which it is required that the subject is affected by some object and that intuition becomes empirical; it is, rather, pure intuition, which, under the designation of space and time, contain merely the formal element of the composition (*coordinatio et subordinatio*) of the manifold of intuition, and which, thereby [contain] an a priori principle of the synthetic knowledge of the manifold — which, for that reason represents the object in appearance. (22: 413).

Apperception is an act of positing oneself as an object. As Kant clarifies here, self-positing does not require empirical knowledge of oneself but rather knowledge of the conditions that determine that one is a complex object in space and time. Self-positing is not an empirical act. Knowledge that one is a complex object in space and time is the result of pure, objective synthesis. Self-positing is an act in which “pure intuition, which under the designation of space and time, contains merely the formal element of composition” (22: 413). But self-positing is consciousness that one is a spatiotemporal object. “I am an object of thought (*cogitabile*) and of intuition (*dabile*)” is the first act of knowledge (22: 79).

How can knowledge of the conditions of spatiotemporal determination in general be sufficient for the knowledge that one is a spatiotemporally determined object? Does knowledge of myself as a (determined) spatiotemporal object not constitute empirical knowledge of myself? In other words, how can transcendental synthesis be a priori and nevertheless be connected to self-positing as part of self-consciousness? Knowledge that one is posited in space and time as an individual is equivalent to the knowledge that one is posited as an object. No empirical knowledge of oneself as a spatiotemporal object of spatiotemporal intuitions can satisfy this requirement. Empirical knowledge is based on empirical evidence. Such claims to knowledge are empirically

refutable. The claim that I must be posited as a spatiotemporal object does not entail that I actually possess empirical knowledge that individuates me as such an object. For all I know, I might be a brain in a vat.²⁶ Yet, if a subject knows a priori that as an existing “I” she must be posited as an object in space and time, she knows a priori that she must be posited as a determined object. The fact that empirical knowledge of the distinguishing features of the required spatiotemporal object is in principle refutable will not affect this knowledge.

It is important to note, that the link between self-positing and self-consciousness does not imply that the claim to identity and simplicity of the thinking subject of a “single consciousness” is reducible to the identity and simplicity of the posited object. One can always construct imaginary cases in which spatiotemporal individuation will be incongruent with the internal, “from within” aspect. Yet, the link between self-positing, self-consciousness and transcendental synthesis indicates that there must be *an objective explanation* that synthesizes the spatiotemporal experiences in one consciousness by determining their temporal features and by connecting the experiences represented in a single consciousness to objects and objective states of affairs.

Let us explain this feature of Kant’s theory by means of the following example. Assuming that a subject is posited in space and time and assuming that the fusion of brains is conceivable, if a person C has sufficient grounds for knowing that her brain resulted from the fusion of the brains of A and B, C would in principle be able to explain to herself in what way her memories are memories of experiences of spatiotemporal objects and objective states of affairs that determine her representation of herself as a temporally determined intuiting and experiencing subject. The experiences that she represents in a single consciousness consist of two sequences of two spatiotemporal routes of two physical objects. This single consciousness cannot be identified with a

²⁶ In contrast to Putnam (1981), the conceivable possibility that a self-conscious person is a brain in a vat can from Kant’s point of view be regarded as a *really possible* state of affairs. It is possible that I will never discover which spatiotemporal object I actually am. But it must in principle be *possible* for me to empirically discover that I am a brain in a vat, that this is the best explanation that unifies my immediate experiences. The only condition that has to be satisfied is that it is really possible that the self-conscious subject will discover that she *was* indeed a brain in a vat. She will be able to find out that she was a brain in a vat if, for example, she will be discovered by some scientists and will be connected to the skull of a human body. The claim that she *was* a brain in a vat must be based on outer intuitions.

single physical object. No one physical object could have had the spatiotemporal history represented in her memory as part of a single consciousness. She could have resulted out of A and D or A and E instead of A and B. In each of these cases, different past experiences are unified in a single consciousness with the past experiences of A. In each of these cases, she could have known that she resulted from the fusion of two past individuals. If she knew this, she would be able to determine how the experiences that she represents are objectively synthesized. Yet, she must represent herself both as an object that exists in space and time and as a simple and self-identical subject of the single consciousness of all the experiences that she ascribes to herself.²⁷ In each of these cases she must be able to make objective judgments that determine the spatiotemporal relations between her past and present experiences.

The conceivability of such cases indicates the distinctiveness of transcendental apperception. Yet, this by no means entails that the capacity for reflective awareness has no “objective” basis, or that anything could be a thinking subject. It merely means that one can possess no knowable reasons to claim that the features of one kind of objects constitute it. Kant’s claim is that one must know a priori the conditions that must be satisfied by the manifold of temporal intuitions if that manifold could be temporally determined. The subject knows a priori that she is posited in space and time, since she knows that pure intuitions in which the manifold of empirical intuitions is given are determined by the a priori principles. As it is linked to self-positing, self-consciousness is the unifying ground of transcendental synthesis.

Why must the a priori principles determine the temporal objects and how can the a priori knowledge that they do determine them be the basis of self-positing? As we shall see in the next chapter, the reason for

²⁷ Although Kant clearly allows for the conceivability of cases of fission and of fusion in which psychological continuity is preserved, the reflective capacity to use concepts and make judgments must be preserved in any radical change. Whether or not this is empirically possible is clearly an empirical question. The conceivability of fission and of fusion merely indicates the fact that reflective awareness of oneself as an object depends on the capacity to make objective, identifying judgments about oneself, which unify the manifold of experiences. The capacity to make such objective judgments must involve the representation of oneself as simple and self-identical. Yet the complex object with which one identifies oneself need not be an object that possesses strict identity. For the relevance of fission and fusion to Kant’s notion of subjectivity see also Ameriks (2000), Chapter 4, sections 6-7.

why self-positing is bound to transcendental synthesis is that the *givenness* of objects is insufficient for *knowledge* of spatiotemporal determination. If Kant's arguments in the *Analytic of Principles* are successful, the applicability of the categories to empirical objects of intuition makes the a priori knowledge that one is posited as a spatiotemporal object possible.

Chapter 14

THE ANALOGIES OF EXPERIENCE

1. *Givenness in Time and Being in Time*

Kant's goal in the *Transcendental Analytic* is to reveal the systematic dependencies between the transcendental representations. In Chapter 13, I claimed that self-positing is linked to the transcendental "I". My task will now be to show how "transcendental synthesis" and "self-positing" are related and why the applicability of the categories to intuitions is equivalent to positing oneself as a spatiotemporal object.

The transcendental distinction between concepts and intuitions — spontaneity and receptivity — allows for the conceivability of the skeptical possibility that threatens to undermine claims to synthetic a priori knowledge. "Objects can indeed appear to us without necessarily having to be related to the functions of the understanding" (A 89/B 122). Being in space and time at least means having a determinate spatiotemporal position and spatiotemporal features. The skeptical supposition is that an object of experience could be the object of spatiotemporal intuitions even if the applicability of the categories is not presupposed. Kant's main intent in the *Analytic of Principles* is to undermine this supposition by claiming that no entity can be determined in time, not even a subjective mental state, if the categories do not apply to objects of sensible intuition.

According to a prevalent interpretative approach, appearances form a "subjective" temporal sequence that can be grasped as a temporal sequence independently of whether the categories are applicable to *objects* given in intuition. Kant's distinction between "subjective temporal order" and "objective temporal order" seems to corroborate this view. This distinction seems to imply that "subjective" temporal order is not linked to "objective" temporal order. It seems as if the temporal determinations of subjective entities that are part of the subjective sequence are not dependent on the conditions of the temporal determinations of objects that belong to the objective sequence, even if these objects can be represented only by means of the subjective sequence! In other words, the applicability of the categories is not presupposed by all beings that are in time as a condition of their being in time, precisely as pointed out by the skeptical supposition. Indeed, if being given in intuition at least means being in time, and if an entity

that is in time must have definite temporal features, it seems to follow that an appearance is determined in time even if the categories are not presupposed.

My claim in the present chapter will be that Kant aims to undermine this supposition in the *Analytic of Principles*. The distinction between givenness and thought, receptivity and spontaneity is indeed a basic Kantian distinction. Givenness in time is not reducible to the non-intuitive conditions of being in time but it is insufficient for being in time. For according to Kant, no object can be determined in time if the categories are not applicable to it. Given that the possession of a determinate position is essential for being in time no object can *be* in time if the categories are not applicable to it. The task of establishing the objective validity of the categories is to show why an entity could be in time only if the categories are applicable to objects given in intuition.

2. *Intuitions and Temporal Determination*

In assessing the arguments of the Analogies and the Refutation of Idealism, there are two distinct issues which should be discerned. The first concerns the reasons why givenness is insufficient for temporal determination, while the second is whether the applicability of the categories to the objects given in intuition adds the missing element required for establishing the possibility of temporal determination.

There are six Kantian reasons that jointly explain why givenness is insufficient for temporal determination and for knowledge of temporal determination:

1. We have temporal *and* spatial intuitions.
2. Space and time are a priori and singular.
3. Space and time forms of intuition.
4. Space and time cannot be perceived by themselves.
5. Successive and simultaneous spatiotemporal events and states are always *given* in succession.
6. The faculties of intuition and of empirical imagination are two distinct faculties of the mind.

I discussed the reasons that confirm (2) and (3) in Part Two of this book. As I claimed in Chapter 3, Kant presupposes (1) in the *Transcendental Analytic*. Kant's main aim there is to demonstrate that the

categories must be applicable to objects of intuition and not to refute skepticism with regard to knowledge of objects that exist in space. It might be argued that in his presupposition of (1), Kant has presupposed too much. Nevertheless, the confirmation of the claim that the categories must be applicable to objects of temporal and spatial intuitions is a far from trivial task. As I noted in Chapter 4, this claim concerns our concept of objectivity and objective knowledge.

A proof of the objective reality of outer intuitions is offered in the Refutation of Idealism. The fact that Kant placed the Refutation of Idealism after the Analytic of Principles indicates that the arguments in the Analytic of Principles do not depend on the Refutation of Idealism.¹ It also indicates that the results of the Analytic of Principles are important for the evaluation of the soundness of the argument of the Refutation. I will discuss this argument in the final chapter of this book.

Premise (4) presupposes the distinction between time and temporal objects. This distinction is entailed by Kant's apriority thesis. The claim that pure time cannot be perceived by itself is intuitively true. The only things that can be perceived are things that endure or change.

Many commentators have criticized (3). A response to the objections commonly raised requires a distinction between a "strong" and a "moderate" interpretations of (3). According to the strong interpretation, what is experienced in any given moment is simple. Complex objects consist of such simple entities that are combined by the imagination. The following seems to be Kant's view in the subjective deduction in the A-edition:

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; for **as contained in one moment** no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity. Now in order for **unity** of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then take together this manifoldness, which action I call **synthesis of apprehension**... (A 99)

As several commentators have noted, Kant's claim is phenomenologically refutable. Kant seems to suppose that we cannot simultaneously be aware of two mental states (for example, feeling pain and having

¹ As Bird notes (1962: 152), Kant's argument in the Analogies can be understood without presupposing the argument of the Refutation of Idealism.

a visual impression of a red ball), or objective states of affairs (for example, seeing that the computer is on the table and seeing that the pen is on the table).² His position seems to be that immediate awareness of the simultaneity of events or states is always the product of synthesis.

There are many difficulties that this claim raises. I will just state the obvious one. It is clear, that what results from the synthesis of apprehension is awareness of simultaneous sensible states. The subject is *now* aware of the manifold of states or events in one consciousness. If so, the reason why one must presuppose a synthesis in order to represent the manifold as a manifold cannot be that it is not possible to be *conscious* of more than one simple impression in a given moment of time. The only conceivable argument Kant has at his disposal for the “strong” interpretation is that one cannot sense more than one impression at a given moment. But this seems to be a dogmatic, unnecessary and unjustifiable claim.

Although the “strong” interpretation is refutable, there is another possible interpretation. Even if one can experience simultaneous events at any given moment of time, it is clear that what can be experienced as such is finite and limited. Awareness of the simultaneity of events and states does not coincide with immediate apprehension of simultaneity. This is particularly evident with regard to the representation of space and spatial objects. Assuming the reality of spatial intuitions, it is not possible to *simultaneously* perceive all simultaneous objects, events and states of which one is aware. According to the “moderate” interpretation, apprehension is always successive relative to what could be *conceived* as simultaneously existing objects and simultaneous states of affairs. Assuming the reality of spatial intuitions, simultaneously existing objects and states of affairs cannot be perceived as such on the basis of apprehension alone. The “moderate” interpretation is the only premise required by the arguments of the Analogies.

The above Kantian reasons jointly entail that givenness cannot serve as the basis for knowledge of temporal determination. Givenness of objects in intuition is a unique feature of experiences. Pure concepts and pure intuitions are empty. If one abstracts from any further condition, each appearance is logically and epistemically independent of the other appearances. If the uniqueness and irreducibility of givenness implies

² Compare Paton (1936), part Two.

that no *object* distinct from the appearance is *given*, (1)-(5) entail the impossibility of knowledge of the temporal determination of appearances. First, it follows from (1) and (5) that the “subjective” sequence of representations is indeterminate. Since the objects and states of affairs are presented in a successive sequence of presentations and since some of these presentations present simultaneously existing objects or parts of objects, the sequence of presentation is indeterminate. Now, it follows from (2) that each temporal position can be occupied by indefinitely many sets of possible objects. Since the assumption is that an appearance given in a particular intuition is existentially independent of appearances given in other acts of intuition, every such appearance could have existed in any possible temporal position. Finally, since pure time is not perceivable, one cannot perceive an interval of time and establish that some objects or states of affairs occupy this interval. Therefore, (1)-(5) entails that it is not possible to *know* the temporal determination of the intuited appearances.

It might be argued that the above argument can only demonstrate that one cannot *know* the time-determination of the individual objects intuited. This claim is apparently distinct from the claim that objects cannot *be* in time if the categories are not applicable. Since intuitions are not conditioned by thought, it seems that one can have experiences of objects that are in time, even if one cannot know their temporal determinations. Indeed, why should the *epistemic* impossibility to know the temporal determination of objects be relevant to the fact that they exist in time? The claim that it is relevant seems to confound an ontological issue that concerns *being* in time with an epistemic issue that concerns *knowledge* of beings in time.

It is precisely for this reason that transcendental idealism is required by an account of the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. The claim that objects cannot be in time if it is not possible *to know* their temporal determinations can be established only if one is committed to the transcendental ideality of time. Yet, even the transcendental ideality of time is not sufficient in order to establish this claim. As I will show in the final chapter of this book, the claim that an object can be in time only if it is *possible to know* its temporal determination is an additional premise of Kant’s transcendental theory. This claim is, in fact, presupposed by his entire theory.

In the next sections, I will assume, as does Kant, that being in time entails possible knowledge of the temporal determinations of the ob-

jects that exist in time. Given that such possible knowledge is necessary, there can be no gap between the conditions that must be satisfied by the possibility of experience and those that must be satisfied by the objects of experience.

I will not present a full analysis of the arguments of the Analogies of experience. Rather, I will emphasize the characteristics of Kant's transcendental concepts which facilitate his response to skepticism about synthetic a priori knowledge. In particular, I will emphasize the role of self-positing as the missing conceptual link required for a response to the criticism commonly voiced against Kant's arguments.

3. *Time and Temporal Objects*

Kant's main conclusion in the Transcendental Aesthetic was that time is an a priori form of intuition. The representation of time is a representation of a singular entity that is irreducible to the representation of temporal relations between objects. Although time can be *conceived* as empty, "time is not something that would subsist for itself" (A 32/B 49).³ In the Principles, Kant's arguments are not meant to reconfirm the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic. Rather, his aim is to demonstrate the synthetic implications that follow from what he established in the Transcendental Aesthetic with regard to spatiotemporal appearances.

The main question of the Analogies can be stated as follows: given that time and space possess the features revealed in the Transcendental Aesthetic, what must be the nature of *temporal objects* that exists in time? The logical distinctness of the variety of features of time permit the conceivability of temporal objects that satisfy some features but not all the features of time. For example, it is conceivable that two subjects may have their respective temporal experiences, although the temporal experiences of one subject will not be temporally related to the experiences of the other subject. Two features of Kant's concept of time can be satisfied here: time can be regarded as a necessary feature of appearances and it is not "something that would subsists for itself" (A

³ This claim already appears in Aristotle's discussion of the concept of time. It is implicit in the conceptual connection between time and change pointed out by Aristotle. It serves an important role in connecting the concept of substance to that of time as expressed by Aristotle's definition of time as the number of motion in respect of "before" and "after". See *Physics*, Book IV. See also Shoemaker, (1984), Chapter 3.

32/B 49). Yet, in this case, it would obviously be impossible to determine the temporal relation between two appearances that belong to the lives of different subjects. There are no such relations. Hence, the singularity of time is not satisfied.

The implicit idea that underlies the arguments of the Analogies and the Refutation of Idealism is that only objects that can satisfy *all* the features of time are really possible. The schematized categories together represent the most basic general features of such really possible objects. Given that time possesses objective reality only if there are objects in time, the necessary applicability of the categories to *objects* that are in time is required for the *objective reality of time*. In other words, if one accepts Kant's concept of time, if one accepts Kant's claim that an "I think" must be able to accompany all intuitions, and if one accepts the related claim that it must be possible to know the temporal determinations of objects and objective states of affairs, then one must admit that the categories are necessarily applicable to temporal objects.

A common criticism is that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* contains two concepts of time: an absolutist concept presented in the Transcendental Aesthetic and a relational concept presented in the Analogies.⁴ However, the necessary applicability of the categories to objects given in intuition does not violate the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic. Time is not reducible to temporal relations and temporal determinations of objects. The categories are not necessarily applicable to *time* but rather to temporal *objects*. It is the possibility of having experiences *of objects* in time that conceptually implies the applicability of the categories:

Since if this (something as object of possible experiences) is presupposed, these principles are indeed apodictically certain; but in themselves, directly, they can never be known *a priori*.
(A 737/B 765)

The synthetic a priori principles of the understanding are apodictically certain, if an object of possible experience is presupposed.⁵ Pure time is not directly related to the pure categories, not even to the schematized category. Time and the categories are synthesized in the concept of a temporal *object* of possible experience. In this sense, empirical intuitions are necessary for the possibility of the a priori transcendental

⁴ For a discussion of this point, see Melnik (1973: 22-30).

⁵ See also my discussion of this point in Chapter 2.

synthesis and for the synthetic a priori principles. Transcendental synthesis determines the concept of a possible object of experience. It is the concept of a possible object of experience that makes transcendental synthesis possible.

4. *Transcendental Idealism and the First Analogy*

Several interpreters maintain that Kant's arguments in the First Analogy fail to establish their intended goal. I will not argue that all Kant's goals are established by Kant's arguments.⁶ My claim will rather be that if the transcendental ideality of time is presupposed, the applicability of the a priori concept "substance" is successfully established.

Kant's main argument is the following:

All appearances are in time, in which, as substratum (as persistent form of inner intuition), both **simultaneity** as well as **succession** can alone be represented. The time, therefore, in which all change of appearances is to be thought, lasts and does not change; since it is that in which succession or simultaneity can be represented only as determinations of it. Now time cannot be perceived by itself. Consequently it is in the objects of perception, i.e., the appearances, that the substratum must be encountered that represents time in general and in which all change or simultaneity can be perceived in apprehension through the relation of the appearances to it. However, the substratum of everything real, i.e., everything that belongs to the existence of things, is **substance**, of which everything that belongs to existence can be thought only as a determination. Consequently that which persists, in relation to which alone all temporal relations of appearances can be determined, is substance in the appearance, i.e., the real in the appearance, which as the substratum of all change always remains the same. Since this, therefore, cannot change in existence, its quantum in nature can also be neither increased nor diminished. (A 181/B 224-225)

The first sentence in the above passage expresses two distinct claims. The first claim, which was previously made in the Transcendental Aesthetic, is that appearances are necessarily in time. The second claim is

⁶ By this I mean the intention to establish the principle of conservation of mass. Interpreters are divided on this issue. See Paton (1936: 207-14) and Guyer (1987: 230-35).

that temporal relations between appearances can only be represented in time. Time is not reducible to temporal relations. It is a pure intuition in which temporal relations are represented. Since it is assumed that there is one time in which all changes and temporal relations are represented, time itself cannot change. The possibility that time can change is not even conceivable.

Kant's next premise is that time is not perceivable by itself. This claim seems to have been approved by most theories of temporal experience, though for divergent reasons. However, Kant makes this claim on the basis of his doctrine of transcendental idealism. The transcendental ideality of time entails that time is not perceivable by itself. It is not an entity that would subsist for itself, and it therefore cannot be an object of perception. It is important to note, however, that this claim does not imply that time cannot be perceived. Since time is a form of intuition, *it must be perceived if something is perceived.*

There are therefore two related facts connected to the concept of time: time is a necessary representation that underlies all intuitions and pure time cannot be perceived. The latter fact implies that the substratum that *represents* time in general must be encountered in the appearances themselves. Time can be *conceived* as empty. But pure time is not an object of perception. There must therefore be something that can be perceived, which serves as a perceivable substratum that represents time in general. It is possible to exhibit the temporal relations and determinations of the appearances by means of this perceivable substratum. In other words, the need to represent time in perceivable objects, which is a condition necessary for determining the temporal positions and durations of the temporal objects, is the reason why one requires a perceivable substratum that can represent time in general. This condition is not optional, for if temporal appearances are in time, and if they possess temporal positions and durations, time in general must be represented in perceivable objects.

One must note that the relations between appearances and substances are not causal relations. The applicability of the category "substance" to appearances convert appearances into modes, states and changes of substances. If one immediately perceives an appearance, then one immediately perceives a substance.⁷

⁷ According to Guyer (1987: 219-220), Kant's argument contains the following difficulty. Since the permanent that is introduced in order to represent time is not itself directly perceived but rather inferred, it cannot fulfill its role. But if

Why, however, must one posit a substratum *distinct* from the appearances, if time must be perceived when an appearance is apprehended? Appearances necessarily exist in time. Nevertheless, the main feature of appearances, namely, that they begin to exist and cease to be, renders them unsuitable for representing time in general. The possibility that temporally finite appearances are the only existing temporal objects implies possibilities that are incompatible with the nature of time. The substratum that can represent time must be a perceivable object that endures at all times. In other words, it must be a substance.

Melnick (1973) effectively pointed out the incoherence of the position that maintains that appearances could be the only entities that are in time. Since I generally accept his line of interpretation, I will present it briefly and then state my main point of disagreement with his interpretation. According to Melnick (1973: 60), “the First Analogy is concerned with the determination of time magnitude, i.e., with determining (measuring) time intervals”. Melnick thinks that the arguments of the First Analogy are able to demonstrate why measurement of temporal intervals is not possible, if enduring substances are not presupposed. If Hume’s theory were accepted, the measurement of time intervals would be subject to irredeemable errors. That empty intervals of time might exist between any two qualitatively identical appearances is compatible with Hume’s theory. Suppose these appearances are appearances of clocks A and B. At t_1 A reads 4:00. At some time t' between t_1 and t_2 , A ceases to exist. At some time t'' between t' and t_2 , another clock B, qualitatively identical to A, comes into existence and reads at t_2 4:05. It would be impossible to determine the temporal interval t_1 - t_2 by means of these appearances, for the interval t' - t'' is not coordinated with any action. Melnick concludes (1973: 66) that the clock by means of which an interval of time is measured must continue to exist during the measured interval, otherwise the temporal interval would never be known.

the positing of substance transforms appearances to states and changes of substances, then if appearances are immediately perceived, substances are also immediately perceived. The supposition that the existence of substances is *inferred* from the *existence* of appearances, that substances are not directly perceived, is indeed incoherent. It implies that substances are the existentially distinct *causes* of appearances. As such, they cannot be considered as what *endures in* the appearances. The claim that substances cannot be perceived since knowledge that they are perceived cannot be based on *sensible appearances* commits the very same fallacy involved in sense data theories. See Chisholm (1994) and Shoemaker (1996), Chapter 1.

In this context, Melnick makes two distinct claims, the first of which is that “we must be able to determine the temporal intervals between a’ and b’” (1973: 60). He seems to suppose, however, that the positing of substances is required merely for measuring time, that is, for *verifying* the length of temporal intervals. Yet, if one endorses Kant’s transcendental idealism, this account of the role of the positing of substances is inappropriate. The claim that it must be possible to know the temporal determinations of objects is not merely required in order to verify the temporal positions of states and events, but for the objective reality of time.

In order to grasp the consequences of this difference between Melnick’s view and my view, let us examine the second claim that Melnick makes in this context. According to Melnick, the fact that we must be able to determine the temporal intervals between a’ and b’ does not entail that substance or substances have absolute permanence. Just because substances cannot cease to exist *during* the time interval for which they serve as a substratum, this does not mean that they cannot cease to exist at all. If temporally finite substances have overlapping existence, that is, if there are always some substances that exist, substances may go out of existence, even if they do not go out of existence during the interval for which they serve as a substratum.

It is indeed true that if substances come and go out of existence only while another substance exists, then time can be measured. But if it *must be possible* to know the temporal determinations of objects, it is not enough to show that there are conceivable cases that are incompatible with Kant’s claim, although it will be possible in these cases to determine temporal intervals. In addition, one must show that these cases are compatible with the *necessity* of possible perception and with possible knowledge of temporal determination and more generally with the transcendental ideality of time. However, there are cases which are compatible with Melnick’s imagined case that are not compatible with the necessity of possible knowledge of temporal determination, as well as with the transcendental ideality of time. We may assume that if it is possible that substances come into existence and cease to exist such that they will not come into existence or cease to exist during the time in which they serve as a substratum for measuring time, and that there will always be some substances that overlap in their existence, it is also possible that substances come to existence and cease existing without overlapping in their existence. Yet in the latter possibility, there are

empty intervals of time in which nothing exists. If Melnick's case is really possible, there seems to be no reason to rule out the real possibility that there are empty intervals of time in which nothing exists. But in this case, the claims that we must be able to determine temporal intervals and that time does not subsist by itself are manifestly false.⁸

We may therefore conclude that Kant's concept of time at least implies that temporal objects must be substances that endure and that necessarily for every possible time there must be a substance that exists at that time. Substances are distinct from the appearances. They are immediately perceived when an appearance is perceived, although it cannot be *known* that appearances are modes and changes of substances merely on the basis of givenness. Such knowledge must presuppose a self-conscious subject that possesses the capacity to make objective judgments. These results are not enough for the purpose of establishing the physical principle of conservation of mass, but they are enough for the purpose of establishing the synthetic a priori principle of the First Analogy.

5. *Introducing the Second and the Third Analogies*

The First Analogy established that enduring substances must be posited as a substratum for the representation of time in perception. The temporal order of simultaneity and succession is left unexplained by the First Analogy. Given that apprehension is always successive and that the apprehended appearances include simultaneous and successive states of affairs, the temporal order of the appearances is undetermined. Since time cannot be perceived by itself, the order among the appearances must be related to features of the appearances themselves. The Second and the Third Analogies provide the missing transcendental ground for the possibility of knowledge of a determinate time order.

The interpretation of the Second and the Third Analogies to be presented in what follows emphasizes the fact that the gap present in Kant's argument can be bridged only if one adds self-positing which

⁸ If one conjoins the principle of causation to Melnick's case and claims that substances cannot come into being and cease to be without being caused by other existing substances, then Melnick's claim holds. But in this case, one at least accepts the necessity that for any interval of time there *must* be some enduring substance that exists in that interval. Given this change, Kant's main epistemic argument for transcendental synthesis is saved.

was discussed in Chapter 13. Self-positing does not appear explicitly in Kant's discussion in the Second and the Third Analogies. However, as I will demonstrate below, in order to establish the temporal determination of appearances, one must posit oneself as a spatiotemporal object.

In Chapter 12, I claimed that the referential character of the personal pronoun "I" used in "I think" cannot be identified with what "I" expresses. The phenomenon of self-consciousness necessarily involves both awareness of oneself as an *object* and transcendental self-consciousness. "I" used in "I think" *exists* if "I" in "I think" refers to an object. "I exist" is an empirical judgment. If one renounces the claim to the objective reality of noumena, it cannot be known that "I" refers to a noumenon. The intuiting individual to which "I" refers must know that she exists. Knowledge of existence is immediately certain empirical judgment (B 274, B 422-23). The intuiting individual can know that she exists only if she knows that in each act of intuition she exists as an object of sensible intuition. The claim that subjective self-awareness necessarily involves consciousness of oneself as a spatiotemporal object makes possible the response to the criticisms commonly presented in the secondary literature. It explains the sense in which self-consciousness is the basis of transcendental synthesis.

Kant's reason for claiming that apprehension is temporally indeterminate is that apprehension is always successive, although appearances can indicate both simultaneous and successive states of affairs. Being presented with simultaneous objects or parts of objects in apprehension is not optional. It is required by the results of the First Analogy. Given the reality of spatial intuitions, one must be able to represent some successively apprehended appearances as simultaneously existing in space.⁹ Kant's final conclusion is that the necessary applicability of the concepts of cause and effect and of the reciprocity between agent and patient to the appearances is required for the temporal determination of appearances. The distinction between the succession of events and states and the simultaneity of events and states is possible only if causal laws determine the temporal positions of appearances.

Kant's argument in the Second Analogy purports to establish two related claims:

- (a) The irreversibility of the order of appearances can be explained only if appearances exemplify causal relations. Hence, the irre-

⁹ See my account of "exist in space" in Chapter 7.

versibility of the order among appearances is indicative of the fact that appearances are subject to causal laws.

- (b) The applicability of the categories to appearances makes the distinction between subjective and objective temporal orders possible. The temporal order among appearances is irreversible if there is a succession in the object. It is reversible if appearances represent simultaneous objective states of affairs.

Kant's overall argument therefore links the distinction between two temporal orders to the possibility of representing objects by means of applying the categories to appearances.

6. Strawson's "Non Sequitur" Argument

We may begin by examining a notorious charge made by Strawson and others that Kant's argument in the Second Analogy is "a non sequitur of numbing grossness".¹⁰ How could causal relations be relevant to the distinction between subjective and objective temporal orders? Strawson (1966: 136-138) suggests one possible explanation. He first distinguishes between perceptions and their objects: α is a perception of A and β is a perception of B. According to Strawson, causal relations are relevant to the kind of temporal order among appearances, if the following situation holds: α is a perception of A, β is a perception of B, α is causally dependent on A, β is causally dependent on B and A precedes B in time. In this case, it follows with logical necessity that α precedes β . Nevertheless, according to Strawson, Kant's intended conclusion, namely, that the objects of apprehensions are themselves causally determined, cannot be derived from these premises:

Suppose the objective succession in question consists in the succession of state of affairs B upon state of affairs A, in the change, that is to say, from A to B. It is admitted, in the sense and with the qualifications mentioned, as *necessary* that the perception of the second state (B) follows and does not precede the perception of the first state (A). To conceive the sequence of perceptions as the perception of an objective change is implicitly to conceive the order of the perceptions as, in this sense, necessary. But — and here comes the step — to conceive this order of perceptions as necessary is equivalent to conceiving the transition or change from A to B as it-

¹⁰ See Strawson (1966: 137). For a similar argument, see Lovejoy (1906).

self necessary, as falling, that is to say, under a rule or law of causal determination; it is equivalent to conceiving the event of change or transition as preceded by some condition such that an event of that type invariably and necessarily follows upon a condition of that type. (Strawson, 1966: 137-138)

If α necessarily precedes β , it does not follow that A necessarily precedes B. Strawson seems to suppose that his argument presents the only conceivable relevance of causal relations to the distinction between kinds of temporal orders. Causal relations can be relevant to the necessity of the temporal order between the perceptions α and β only if α and β are causally dependent on the objects perceived by their means. It should be noted, however, that according to Strawson, the relation between the perceptions α of A and β of B and the objects A and B which are perceived is causal. α and A and β and B must therefore be existentially distinct. Hence, if there can be a distinction between distinct kinds of temporal orders, one must construe the relations between perceptions and their objects as causal.

However, what might the term “perception” mean in this context and how is it related to “appearance”? “Perception” might either be interpreted as the *act* of perceiving or intuiting an appearance or as the *appearance*. But both interpretations do not cohere with Kant’s theory. The claim that appearances, the immediate objects of intuitions, are the *causes* of intuitions is incoherent within Kant’s conceptual scheme, and so is the claim that appearances are perceptions. For since appearances are the undetermined objects immediately given in intuition, the claim that A, the supposed cause of the appearance α , represents an object that is existentially distinct from α renders this object a thing in itself that exists in time, which is contrary to Kant’s claim. On the other hand, if appearances are the immediate objects of intuition, it cannot be the case that the relation between *perceptions* and their objects is causal.

It might be argued that since the existential distinction between perceptions and their objects does not cohere with Kant’s theory, a possible response to Strawson’s “non sequitur” argument would be to eliminate the supposition that α and β causally depend on A and B, respectively. As Melnick notes, this would be equivalent to identifying α with A and β with B. Yet, the result of this move is the elimination of the distinction between the two temporal orders with which the argument began:

[...] if what is meant by saying that α and β are contents of sense perceptions a and b is that α is to be identified with a and β is to be identified with b (appearances are perceptual acts, not what is perceived) then, “ipso facto” if a is causally determined to precede b , α is causally determined to precede β . But now what justification is there for saying that a is causally determined to precede b ? Not that the order of our apprehensions $a-b$ is bound down to the order of what is apprehended $\alpha-\beta$, for we no longer have two orders (such that one is bound down to the other). The order of our apprehensions and the order of what is apprehended refer now to the very same thing. (Melnik, 1973: 81-82)

If one eliminates the existential distinction between apprehensions and their contents, appearances must be identified with the perceptual acts of apprehending them. But in this case, the distinction between appearances and the acts of apprehending them is eliminated.

If one accepts this claim, Kant’s position is involved in a philosophical dilemma that concerns that content that could be assigned to Kant’s main premise in the Analogies — the claim that there are two kinds of temporal orders among appearances. Kant’s concept “intuition” allows no existential distinction between perceptions and their immediate objects. Yet, as Strawson maintains, there seems to be no other relevant meaning in which the distinction between the two temporal orders could be made. The introduction of the existential distinction might partly solve this difficulty; but this distinction renders Kant’s argument inadequate with regard to its intended results.

Before proceeding any further, let us first consider the solution offered by Melnick to the above problem. According to Melnick (1973: 83), the argument in the Second Analogy purports to “refute the idea that I can determine that appearances are successive merely on the basis of my apprehension”. As he later notes (1973: 83-84), “this claim is not made on the basis of the idea that I might be hallucinating or merely imagining or dreaming; i.e., Kant is saying that if I actually perceive α and actually perceive β , I cannot conclude that α actually precedes β ”.¹¹ It is clear that if the temporal order among some of the

¹¹ It should be noted that “determine” is ambiguous here. It could either mean “knowing what the temporal determination of an appearance is” or “is temporally determined”. Melnick’s other claims imply that it is the first sense that he has in mind. As he maintains, the reversibility and irreversibility of the temporal order among appearances cannot constitute the distinction between two kinds of temporal orders.

immediately apprehended appearances were an order of necessary succession and if necessary succession were explained as based on causal determination, irreversibility would be a criterion for the existence of causal relations. However, according to Melnick (1973: 85), “no case in the order of appearances as successive [is] determinable on the basis of perception alone”. It is impossible to determine the order of appearances on the basis of the “subjective” succession in our perceptions. The only way to solve this problem is to reverse the order of explanation. This is indeed suggested by the following passage:

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. This connection must therefore consist in the order of the manifold of appearance in accordance with which the apprehension of one thing (that which happens) follows that of the other (which precedes) **in accordance with a rule**. Only thereby can I be justified in saying of the appearance itself, and not merely of my apprehension, that a sequence is to be encountered in it, which is to say as much as that I cannot arrange the apprehension otherwise than in exactly this sequence. (A 193/B 238)

According to Melnick (1973: 82), the upshot of the above argument is to rule out the possibility that one can derive the succession of what is apprehended from the succession in the apprehension. Yet, Kant does not merely claim that it is impossible to derive the objective sequence from the subjective sequence. His other claim is that one must derive the subjective sequence of *apprehension* from the objective sequence of *appearances*. This, however, requires an explanation. It is clear that if there is a way out that coheres with Kant’s theory, there has to be a distinction between “apprehension” and “appearance” such that the subjective sequence of apprehension would be derived from the objective sequence of appearances.

7. *The Puzzle of the Second Analogy*

The arguments in The Second Analogy purport to show that *all* succession must be causally determined. Otherwise appearances would

not be temporally determined. In the present section my concern will be to examine the results of this claim with regard to apprehension itself.

We may assume that the applicability of causal laws is required by Kant's claims that (a) apprehension is always in succession; (b) the apprehended appearances might stand for simultaneous states in the object; (c) time cannot be perceived by itself; (d) we must be able to know the temporal determination of appearances. Since time cannot be perceived by itself, one must determine the temporal positions of appearances by some feature of the appearances. Causal laws are supposed to determine the temporal succession of appearances in general. If two appearances are in succession, it does not necessarily follow that they are causally related. However, there has to be some causal explanation that determines the temporal position of each appearance by determining the causal relations between each appearance and the other appearances. Reciprocity between agent and patient determines the simultaneity of coexisting things.

However, what could be the nature of the succession in subjective apprehension if one accepts the conclusions of Kant's arguments in the Analogies? If the only possible way to determine the temporal position of an appearance is to determine its position relative to other appearances, then since acts of perceiving are themselves events in time, their temporal positions must be determined in the same manner. For the argument of the Second Analogy purports to establish that *all* succession must be causally determined. Indeed, it would be irrational to assume that one can generally determine the temporal positions of the appearances without determining the temporal position of the empirical acts of apprehending them. Events of apprehending must be correlated with the other temporal entities if they can exist at one and the same time. If the applicability of the principle of causation is required for the possibility of being determined in time, acts of perceiving must be causally determined.¹² Yet, if the succession of such acts must be causally determined a puzzle must be addressed. One begins with the assumption that the subjective temporal order of apprehension comprises temporal succession without requiring any further condition. The problem is to explain

¹² It should be recalled that Kant's concern is with intuition of objects and not with imagination. Melnick also emphasizes this point.

how one could represent both simultaneous and successive states of affairs in apprehension. The claim is that this is possible only if the second and the third schematized categories of relation are instantiated by the appearances. But the reasons why the universal applicability of these categories is required for temporal determination make apprehension itself causally determined. Since our subjective apprehension is successive, then if *all* succession is causally determined, the succession of apprehension must itself be causally determined. How, however, can this conclusion be compatible with the initial assumption, namely, that the temporal subjective sequence of apprehensions is *not* temporally determined?

One way of showing how both claims could be compatible is to interpret Kant's argument in the Second Analogy as a transcendental argument. This reading begins with the assumption that the subjective sequence of apprehension is temporally indeterminate and ends with the conclusion that if it can be a temporal sequence, it must be causally determined. Although I will ultimately maintain that there is something true in this reading, it nevertheless raises the following difficulty. Kant's assumption was that the subjective temporal sequence of apprehension is indeterminate in terms of the appearances apprehended. He claims that if the second and the third categories of relations were not applicable to the appearances, one would not be able to determine the temporal position of the appearances. A seemingly unexpected result was that subjective apprehension itself is causally determined. But this result seems to undermine the claim to the distinction between two kinds of temporal orders. If being causally determined is the basis for the irreversibility of temporal succession and if apprehension is itself causally determined, this undermines the very assumption that the order of succession in apprehension could be different, that is, the assumption which introduces the need to apply the categories of cause and effect and reciprocal interaction to appearances. If causal laws underlie the irreversibility of temporal order among appearances and if subjective apprehension is itself causally determined, how can one maintain that the temporal order in apprehension could have been different from what it actually was? To be sure, one could have had a different causally determined temporal sequence whose terms were appearances identical in their sensible properties to the appearances included in the first sequence. But the same holds with regard to the causally determined temporal succession "in the object". The boat could have sailed up-

stream instead of downstream.¹³ In other words, the same reasons that allow the temporal reversibility of causally determined temporal sequence of apprehension permit the temporal reversibility of the temporal sequence of appearances. If one does not allow the latter, one must, by the same token, conclude that the reversibility of the temporal succession in subjective apprehension is also not possible. The claim that the temporal order between the appearances might either be reversible or irreversible seems to be undermined by the claim that the general applicability of the categories is required for the temporal determination of *all* entities that exist in time.

8. *Arbitrariness and Indeterminateness*

In order to resolve this puzzle, one must first note that Kant's account presupposes more than one distinction between two kinds of temporal orders. The first distinction is that between arbitrariness and non-arbitrariness. The ultimately non-critical sense in which the subjective sequence of appearances is arbitrary is the sense in which it is regarded as consisting of appearances that may come in any order. The temporal position of an appearance is determined neither by time nor by its relations to other appearances. Since time is an a priori intuition, then if the temporal position of appearances is not determined by the temporal position of other appearances, the fact that an appearance appears at a given moment of time is completely arbitrary. Any appearance could have appeared in any possible moment. It is in this sense that a temporal sequence is arbitrary.

A temporal sequence is indeterminate if one adds the supposition that some of the appearances have a temporal position that cannot be determined by singling out the temporal position of the empirical acts of apprehending them. Some of the successively apprehended appearances are appearances of simultaneously existing objects, parts of objects or simultaneous states of affairs, while others are of a succession of states. The objects of spatial intuitions are the paradigmatic case of appearances whose order "in the object" differs from their order in apprehension.

A subjective sequence could be arbitrary and not indeterminate. Yet it is important to note that the order in apprehension could be a cau-

¹³ Apprehension of a boat sailing upstream is a really possible experience. Compare Bennett (1966: 221-228).

sally determined succession and nevertheless indeterminate relative to the *objects* apprehended.

Although Kant vacillates between indeterminacy and arbitrariness, this vacillation does not harm his position. In fact, Kant's arguments in the Second and the Third Analogies purport to demonstrate that given the reality of inner and outer sense, it cannot be the case that the temporal sequence of apprehension is both arbitrary and indeterminate in the above sense.

9. *Appearances and Acts of Apprehension*

It should be clear by now that Kant's theory has to address two questions. The first concerns the possibility of a distinction between two temporal sequences, namely, a subjective sequence and an objective sequence. The second concerns the sense in which the distinction between two temporal sequences must presuppose that appearances are subject to causal laws.

Two suppositions previously established by Kant may be used in order to distinguish between the temporal order of appearances "in the object" and the temporal order of acts of apprehension. According to the interpretation defended here, appearances are distinct from acts of empirical intuition. Also, as Kant established in the First Analogy, appearances must be states of enduring substances. Since appearances are both the immediate undetermined objects of intuition and states of enduring substances, the temporal order of a sequence of empirical acts of apprehension may differ from the temporal order "in the object" without requiring that an appearance be an existentially distinct cause of the act or that an object be an existentially distinct cause of the appearance. One may immediately apprehend one enduring part of a house and then another simultaneously coexisting enduring part of the same house. The order of acts of apprehending is distinct in this case from the order of appearances in the intuited *empirical objects*.

This account makes possible the three kinds of temporal orders mentioned by Kant: the order of the "subjective" indeterminate sequence of acts of apprehending, the order of a sequence of appearances of successive states of affairs and the order of a sequence of appearances of simultaneous states of affairs. What seems to be left unanswered is why the distinction between the subjective temporal order and objective temporal order must presuppose that appearances are

causally related. In what follows I will present what in my view is the most promising answer to this question.

10. Intuitions, Self-Positing and Temporal Determination

There are two possible ways to explain how the temporal order of apprehension differs from the objective order of the appearances. One possibility is that the order of apprehension could be any possible order where the *object* apprehended is concerned. Another possibility is that nothing that concerns *the apprehending subject* or the relation between the subject and the apprehended objects determines the subjective temporal sequence.

Kant clearly allows the first possibility. The other possibility is not explicitly discussed in the Second Analogy. Nevertheless, Kant's claim that "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" (A 193/B 238) is indicative of his view. It is clear that if the order in the apprehension is arbitrary in the second sense, no constraints determine which objective state of affairs will appear to the subject in the next moment. Yet according to the above quotation, if the subjective sequence can be "derived" from the objective sequence, one at least requires an *objective explanation* of the subjective order in the apprehension, that is, of the fact that A appears to S after B and before C.

The upshot of my discussion in the previous sections was that Kant's solution to the problem of temporal determinateness is committed to the claim that the temporal sequences of empirical acts of apprehension must be objectively determined. An account of how acts of apprehending can be objectively determined requires an account of the nature of the intuiting subject. Yet, a notable feature of Kant's arguments in the *Analytic of Principles* is the absence of such an account. Kant does not explicitly state the conditions that must be satisfied by the apprehending subject in order to make consciousness of temporal determination possible. He is mainly concerned with the necessary applicability of the categories to the objects apprehended, rather than with the nature of the apprehending subject. Nevertheless, one can derive the subjective sequence of apprehension from the objective sequence of appearances only if the subject posits herself as a

spatiotemporal object. As I already noted, this additional condition is stated explicitly in the *Opus postumum*.

In order to see how self-positing can be linked to Kant's account of the possibility of time determination, one must first recall that intuitions signify primarily immediate knowledge of existence. The immediacy of empirical intuitions is indicative of the epistemic priority of awareness of the relation between the intuiting subject and the intuited object. In the case of spatial intuition, the subject is immediately presented to herself in space *together* with the spatial object located in a different place. She is immediately aware of *the spatial relation* between herself as located in space and the object presented in a distinct place. The object of an intuition is not the cause of an intuition but is, rather, an object immediately given in the intuition. Outer sense is a *relation of intuition* to something actual. (B xl).

When one represents objects in outer sense, one represents oneself in space:

By means of outer sense (a property of our mind) we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all as in space. In space their shape, magnitude, and relation to one another is determined, or determinable. (A 22/B 37)

For in order for certain sensations to be related to something outside me (i.e., to something in another place in space from that in which I find myself), thus in order for me to represent them as outside <and next to> one another, thus not merely as different but as in different places, the representation of space must already be their ground. (A 23/B 38)

Outside in the empirical sense means outside in space. When an "I" represents an object outside herself, she represents the object in another place in space in which she finds herself. Therefore, the spatial appearances — the objects of spatial intuitions — do not include merely presentations of the objects that are distinct from the subject. They would be more properly characterized as immediate presentations of complex states of affairs that include the spatial location of the subject relative to the objects given in the intuition.

Kant's discussion in the Transcendental Aesthetic leaves the nature of the relation between the spatially located subject and the spatial object and between the intuiting subject and the object intuited partly unexplained. The question that concerns the nature of this relation is reexamined in the Analogies. It is connected in the present context

to the main question of the Analogies: given the nature of sensible intuition, how can it be that the objects of these appearances are determined in time?¹⁴

All philosophers that claim that the temporal determination of appearances is an unexplained fact are committed to the claim that the order in the apprehension is a fixed order. The difference between Kant's position and the other positions merely concerns the question of whether this fact can be explained in a way that connects the order "in the objects" to the order of empirical *acts of apprehending* while allowing the temporal indeterminateness of the temporal sequence of *appearances*.

There are three kinds of causal relations required by Kant's theory of temporal determination. The first kind includes causal processes that concern the empirical subject; the second includes causal relations between the subject posited as an empirical object and the perceived objects, while the third includes causal relations between states and changes of the perceived objects. Given my discussion so far, it is clear that some of the successively apprehended appearances must be both the causes of states and changes of the empirical subject and parts of the *immediately given* enduring substances. For example, the appearance of the roof of the perceived house, the appearance of the window of the perceived house, and the appearance of the door of the perceived house are *immediately given* in intuition. Although the objects of these respective acts of apprehension are not causally related "in the perceived object", the roof, the window and the door are each part of respective complex states of affairs that are the respective causes of some states of the empirical subject. Thus, although the succession of the appearances of the roof, the window, and the door does not indicate a causal process in the perceived object, the causal relations between the perceptual states of the empirical subject and the states of affairs that involve each respective part of the house is relevant to the fact that each part of the house is perceived. The positing of this type of causal relations will not suffice to explain why the subjective temporal sequence of apprehensions is causally determined. In order for that to be possible, one has to add the causal process that con-

¹⁴ One might suppose that the relational character of intuitions is irrelevant to *temporal* intuitions. However, the distinction between inner sense and outer sense is not a distinction between two domains of objects in the "weighty" sense but rather between two aspects of *experiences* of objects.

cern the empirical subject, for example, the movement of the eyes of the perceiving subject.

It is clear that the fact that the temporal sequence of apprehension is causally determined in the above sense does not affect the causal indeterminateness “in the object” of the temporal sequence of appearances (the undetermined objects of sensible intuition) of each respective act of apprehension. It is in this respect that the subjective temporal sequence of apprehensions is both a temporal sequence that can be “derived ...from the **objective sequence** of appearances” (A 193/B 238), and is indeterminate with respect to the order in the object apprehended.

The fact that the appearances could have been apprehended in a different order therefore means that when the causal relations between states and processes of the empirical subject and the object apprehended are suspended, a different sequence of the same appearances of *the apprehended object* could have been apprehended. On the other hand, if the order of the appearances could not have been different, even when one suspends the causal relations between the self-positing subject and the object, the sequence is objectively irreversible. It is the fact that intuitions are presentations of complex states of affairs that include immediate modes of givenness of enduring empirical *objects* as well as immediate presentations of the phenomenal perceiving subject that makes possible the distinction between reversible and irreversible sequences of appearances. Hence, the aforementioned puzzle can be resolved, if one is sensitive to the distinctions between intuitions, appearances and empirical objects.

The possibility of the temporal determinateness of appearances therefore requires conceiving the relation involved in empirical intuition as a causal relation that holds between the states and changes of the subject posited as an empirical object and the states and changes of the perceived object. In fact, the possibility of the temporal determination of appearances presupposes that the schematized concepts of cause and effect must be applicable to *all* possible appearances. This means that the aforementioned three kinds of causal relations, namely, the causal processes that concern the empirical subject, the causal relations between the empirical subject and the perceived objects, and the causal relations between states and changes of the perceived objects, must be determined by one unified system of causal laws. This is implicitly stated by Kant in the end of the Third Analogy:

From our experience it is easy to notice that only continuous influence in all places in space can lead our sense from one object to another, that the light that plays between our eyes and the heavenly bodies effects a mediate community between us and the latter and thereby proves the simultaneity of the latter, and that we cannot empirically alter any place (perceive this alternation) without matter everywhere making the perception of our position possible; and only by means of its reciprocal influence can it establish their simultaneity and thereby their coexistence of even the most distant objects (though only mediately). Without community every perception (of appearance in space) is broken off from the others, and the chain of empirical representations, i.e., experience, would have to start entirely over with every new object without the previous one being in the least connected or being able to stand in a temporal relation with it. (A 213-14/B 260-61)

According to this account, subjective temporal order is, in fact, an instance of objective order. I suggest that this is the sense in which the applicability of the categories to appearances presupposes that the subject is posited in space and time.

However, one must note that positing oneself as an object in space and time is not equivalent to merely being in space and time. But why is the possibility of the temporal determinateness of the appearances linked to a spontaneous synthetic act of positing oneself as an object in space and time and not merely to *the presupposition* that the apprehending subject exists in space and time? I suggest that an answer to this question could be provided, if one considers the nature of the immediate undetermined objects of sensible intuition. It should be recalled that in the Analogies, Kant's concern is with the temporal indeterminateness of the appearances given in succession. All appearances are given in succession although some of them represent simultaneous states of the perceived objects. The ability to distinguish between successive states and simultaneous states of enduring substances cannot merely be based on the successive sequence of apprehension. If the distinction between successive states and simultaneous states of the apprehended objects is possible, one must order the appearances given in succession by applying concepts that unify them into objects one of which must be the phenomenal subject herself. Indeed, as Kant claims in another context, "with us understanding and sensibility can determine an object only in combination. If we separate them

we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions, but in either case representations that we cannot relate to any determinate object" (A 258/B 314). In other words, the temporal sequence of acts of apprehending must be objectively determined by means of the same kind of judgments which objectively determine the objects apprehended.

The missing claim of the Analogies is therefore that "I exist" contains apprehension, that is, it is not merely a subjective judgment but makes myself into an object of intuition in space and time" (22: 95). The order of apprehension is determined, if the relation between the subject posited as spatiotemporal object and the appearance of the apprehended object is a causal relation, or, in other words, if the subject is posited as a causally determined *object* in space and time *together* with the apprehended objects.

How does this theory cohere with Kant's distinction between the pure self and the empirical self, that is, between the pure representation "I think" and the empirical judgment "I exist"? The causal relation between the embodied subject and the object does not affect the claim that the subject is immediately aware of the spatial relations between herself posited as an empirical object and the object that she perceives. The causal character of the relation involved in intuition does not entail that the relation between *the intuition* and *the object apprehended* is causal. The claim that this relation is causal is incoherent. The fact that a subject is immediately aware of the relation between herself *as appearing* in space and time together with the objects of her intuition, means that she must conceive herself as a thinking and representing transcendental "I" as being distinct from how she *appears to herself in intuition*. Yet not only is it the case that this distinction does not require a transcendental affection in addition to empirical affection but the introduction of double affection to Kant's theory would have shattered Kant's account of time determination and would have rendered his theory vulnerable to all the difficulties emphasized by Strawson. Renouncing the claim to double affection does not undermine Kant's transcendental idealism, but rather reestablishes its coherence. The two distinct modes of self-awareness mentioned above do not indicate two distinct *objects*. The self-conscious, self-identical, and simple "I think" is not a representation of an object. Although the intuiting "I" and the thinking "I" are two heterogeneous entities, the representing, reflective, self-conscious "I think" must be linked to the intuiting,

spatiotemporally located subject of experience. And yet, the presence of the pure representation of the self as self-identical and simple in acts of self-consciousness cannot be explained by an appeal to the features of the only kind of objects that can satisfy the empirical claim to self-existence.

Chapter 15

THE REFUTATION OF IDEALISM

1. *Introduction*

My argument for the coherence of transcendental idealism has so far assumed that we have spatial and temporal intuitions of objects. This supposition seems to be questionable in view of the skeptical charge that concerns our knowledge of the external world. My aim in the present chapter will be to examine Kant's response to this charge *within the limits of his transcendental theory of experience*. I will first attempt to point out Kant's reasons for the claim that this problem must be addressed. I will then examine the shortcomings of Kant's official response. Finally, I will present a reconstruction of a response to this problem that is based on Kant's main claims. A response to the skeptical idealist must make explicit a principle which is implicit in Kant's theory. A more modest response that does not involve such a change can reveal the difficulties and unreasonableness of the skeptical idealist's charge without ruling it out completely.

In order to assess the refutation of skeptical idealism intended by Kant, two related issues should be kept in mind. The problem addressed by Kant *presupposes* the results of the Transcendental Aesthetics. Also, as I noted earlier in the book, the fact that the refutation comes immediately after the arguments of the Analytic of Principles means that the results of the Analytic of Principles, in particular the conceptual relation between the applicability of the categories and the temporal determination of temporal objects, are presupposed by Kant's argument. The problem that Kant addresses in this chapter should be specified on the basis of these presuppositions. If the Refutation of Idealism indeed addresses a question left unanswered by the previous parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's preceding arguments contain a gap that needs to be bridged.

2. *The Problem of the Refutation*

Skeptical idealism is the theory "that declares the existence of objects in space outside us to be either merely doubtful or indemonstrable" (B 274). The skeptical idealist does not maintain that spatial objects are impossible but rather that we *cannot know* that there are such objects.

The skeptical idealist bases her argument on the reality of two distinct faculties of the mind — empirical imagination and outer sense. A proof that aims to refute the skeptical idealist's charge “must therefore establish that we have **experience** and not merely **imagination** of outer things” (B 275). Such a proof is equivalent to a proof of “the objective reality of outer intuition” (B xxxix).

Why does Kant think that one requires a proof that refutes skeptical idealism? In contrast to the argument presented in the Fourth Paralogism in the first edition, Kant's Refutation of Idealism does not respond to this charge merely by spelling out the main theses of the doctrine of transcendental idealism. His argument reveals that this problem requires deeper scrutiny since it is intrinsic to the doctrine of transcendental idealism.¹

Two aspects of Kant's theory of experience provoke the charge of the skeptical idealist. The first concerns the transcendental ideality of space. Although Kant's theory contains a conceptual distinction between spatial intuitions or experiences and spatial imagination, his theory must entail that the *space* presented in the imagination is *the same space* as that of outer perception and that in which *objects* of outer perception exist. Space is an a priori and singular form of intuition. The distinction between outer sense and spatial imagination must therefore be internal to our representational capacities. It cannot be based on the mere fact that we possess a representation of space.

A response to the charge of the skeptical idealists is also required in view of the results of the Analytic of Principles. Kant's arguments in the Analytic of Principles indeed assume that the immediately perceived enduring substances must be spatial substances. Yet, with regard to the reasons that establish the necessary applicability of the categories, it appears to be conceivable that reality in fact includes only temporal non-spatial and causally related substances merely endowed with spatial imagination. In other words, even if one grants Kant's claim that temporal objects must be causally related enduring substances, the question of why these substances must be spatial substances seems to

¹ The question of whether the transcendental idealistic premises of the Fourth Paralogism are also used in the argument of the Refutation of Idealism is a matter of controversy in the secondary literature. See Guyer (1987: 280-289). As I will try to show, transcendental idealism is presupposed by the Refutation.

remain. Why can the enduring substances not be non-spatial, temporal substances?²

3. *The Shortcomings of Kant's Official Argument*

Before examining Kant's official response, let us recapitulate the positive results of Kant's theory of experience which are relevant to the charge made by the skeptical idealist. The most important result is that we *can* indeed have spatial intuitions of objects that exist in space. As I showed in previous chapters, Kant's theory undermines the claim that we can be immediately acquainted *only* with mental states that are modifications of the mental objects we are. We can indeed be immediately acquainted with spatial objects of outer sense, and if we are immediately acquainted with such objects, the categories must be applicable to these objects and we must posit ourselves as such objects. The real possibility of outer sense also entails that it is false to assume that one possesses certain knowledge of the temporal order and duration of one's internal states and that the only thing that is doubtful is whether one is *also* a corporal thing that has spatial intuitions of outer objects. Given the real possibility of outer sense and the singularity of time, one could be a corporal object with temporal illusions precisely as one could be a mental substance with merely spatial imagination. The capacity to entertain the thought "I think" is not indicative of knowledge that one is a particular kind of substance, complex or simple, mental or physical. In other words, Kant has already undermined some of the important presuppositions that were traditionally related to the charge of the skeptical idealist and changed the nature of the problem that has to be addressed.

The argument presented in the Refutation of Idealism is the following:

I am conscious of my existence as determined in time. All time-determination presupposes something **persistent** in perception. This persistent thing, however, cannot be something in me, since my own existence in time can first be determined only through this persistent thing. Thus the perception of this persistent thing is possible only through a **thing** outside me

² As Guyer notes (1987: 283), "even if it is taken for granted that time-determination requires something which endures, it is not obvious why this cannot be the enduring self". For a different view see Collins (1999), Chapter 12.

and not through the mere **representation** of a thing outside me. Consequently, the determination of my existence in time is possible only by means of the existence of actual things that I perceive outside myself. Now consciousness in time is necessarily combined with the consciousness of the possibility of this time-determination: Therefore it is also necessarily combined with the existence of the things outside me, as the condition of time-determination; i.e., the consciousness of my own existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me. (B 275-276)

In the preface to the second edition, Kant added the following emendations:

But this persisting element cannot be an intuition in me. For all the determining grounds of my existence that can be encountered in me are representations, and as such they themselves need something persisting distinct from them, in relation to which their change, and thus my existence in the time in which they change, can be determined. (B xxxix)

The purpose of Kant's argument is not merely to claim that outer sense could be real but that it must be real. The main premise of Kant's argument is a factual premise: "I *am* conscious of my existence as determined in time". He then aims to show that "I" cannot be conscious of "my existence" as determined in time only on the basis of inner perceptions or intuitions. Inner determinations cannot be a basis for the consciousness that one is determined in time since all that can be "encountered in me" are representations. Representations require something persisting which is distinct from them. This was established in the First Analogy with regard to appearances.

The main question that Kant's argument raises is why can't "I" stand for the enduring object of *inner sense* that is distinct from the presentations of immediate states of awareness, and that is nevertheless immediately given in them? Kant clearly allows this where outer experiences are concerned. The whole point of the Refutation of Idealism is to establish that "outer experience is really immediate" (B 276-77). The distinction between appearances and empirical spatial substances is applied here without undermining the immediate relation one has to the spatial enduring substances. The claim that the "persisting element cannot be an intuition in me" is presumably related to the claim that "I think" is not an intuition. Yet, the logically simple, original, self-

identical “I think” is not by itself a representation of an object and is therefore *not* determined in time. This is precisely what Kant’s arguments in the Paralogism demonstrate. The “I” that is determined in time must be an empirical, enduring object. If by “representations” Kant means sensations, visual impressions, internal occurrences and so forth, there seems to be no reason to rule out the claim that the representations are *my* states, conceived as an enduring, empirical substance. In this case I could be *immediately aware* of myself as an empirical enduring substance by being aware of the mode in which I internally appear to myself.

It should be noted that Kant’s argument seems to work precisely since it vacillates between the transcendental “I” and the empirical “I”. Pure “I think” does not indicate consciousness of “my existence” as determined in time. On the other hand, the empirical, “I,” which is the object that satisfies the claim to existence, is an object that must be determined in time. One may assume that the inner appearances of this enduring substance are states and changes of this substance. If, as Kant maintains, temporal appearances must presuppose an enduring substance, there seems to be no reason why “I” in “I exist” cannot stand for the object of inner perception that is conscious of her being determined in time by being reflectively aware of her states.

4. *Transcendental Idealism and Skeptical Idealism*

Although Kant’s official response to the charge of the skeptical idealist is flawed, one could try to reconstruct a better response on the basis of Kant’s relevant claims. The singularity, apriority and transcendental ideality of time must be presupposed. I will try to show that, given these premises, the plausibility of the skeptical idealist’s charge is undermined.

We may begin by restating the two important characteristics of time. Time is irreducible to temporal relations. This at least means that it is possible to distinguish between the temporal positions of objects and the temporal intervals between events and these objects and events. Yet the distinction between temporal positions and intervals and the temporal relations between objects that exist in time does not entail that time “exists” independently of perceivable objects. Temporal positions and intervals are irreducible to relations between objects. But time does not exist if perceivable objects are not exhibited in it.

As claimed in the previous chapter, the exhibition of temporally related objects or appearances is not required merely in order to verify beliefs about temporal positions and temporal intervals. This view seems to imply that time may exist even though it may be unperceived. It is only because one cannot perceive time directly that one may possess only indirect knowledge of temporal intervals and positions by perceiving temporal objects, changes and states. But Kant's position is that time can be perceived and, therefore, it can be an aspect of an existing object only if empirical objects and their states exhibit it. The distinction between the temporally related objects, events and states and the temporal positions and intervals that they occupy does not undermine the fact that time is objectively real only if temporal objects are temporally related, that is, that time is exhibited by objects.

The skeptical idealist claims that it is compatible with Kant's conceptual scheme that one only has spatial imagination and not spatial experiences. This claim could be interpreted in two different ways. It could mean that one in fact only has spatial imagination. That is, the faculty of outer sense that allows one to immediately perceive objects in space is not active for some contingent fact, although one has the capacity for outer intuition.³ The other possibility is that one only has spatial imagination.⁴ One cannot immediately perceive spatial ob-

³ For example, this is depicted in the "brain in a vat" fantasy. If one was always a brain in a vat but could nevertheless be connected to a human body, one is only *contingently* endowed with spatial imagination. Yet it should be noted that even if one is a brain in a vat, the causal relations that determine the temporal positions of the internal experiences are spatiotemporal. In this case, one could be said to only possess "blind" spatial intuitions. One is spatially located and one's internal states are caused by a spatiotemporal object (the computer), although one does not know that one is a brain in a vat.

⁴ According to Allison (1983: 295), the skeptical idealist "merely denies that we can have immediate experience and therefore certainty, regarding the existence of such [spatial] objects". It is clear, however, that the refutation of the claim that we *cannot* have immediate spatial representations does not suffice for establishing the claim that we *have* (outer) spatial experiences nor that we *must* have (outer) spatial experiences. Thus, the claim that we *can have* spatial experiences and the claim that the belief that we have spatial representations is *certain* must be distinguished. The latter is not entailed by the former. Hence, even if Kant has succeeded in refuting the claim that we cannot have immediate experiences of outer object by demonstrating the real possibility and plausibility of immediate knowledge of outer objects, the certainty that we have such experiences is not established. "I think" is not indicative of the kind of object that we are. Although we could be subjects that have outer (spatial) experiences, we could also be subjects that by their nature cannot have such experiences. The latter possibility is precisely what Kant's arguments in the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic leave unresolved.

jects by virtue of the kind of being one is. Kant's text seems to support the latter interpretation.

Given Kant's main claims in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and *Transcendental Analytic*, what is the nature of the world in which the skeptical idealist's charge is true? The first possibility to be examined is a world that consists of mental, non-spatial substances that are not causally related to other similar substances. Each mental substance has the capacity for reflective awareness, spatial imagination and internal temporal consciousness. In such a world, temporal illusions are both possible and incorrigible. It is impossible for such creatures to determine whether the mode in which they internally represent themselves in their internal temporal consciousness is veridical.

However, it seems that as far as Kant's concept of time is concerned, the fact that the subjects that dwell in such a world cannot *know* their temporal determinations does not rule out the possibility that they are determined in time. They may even know a priori that they are determined in time, as Kant would clearly allow, although they do not possess knowledge of their particular temporal determinations. However, the Kantian objection against this alleged possibility is the following. It is assumed that other enduring temporally determined mental substances might exist in this possible world. Yet, how can it be the case that their states and changes are determined *in time* if it is assumed that they are not causally related? Since each substance is disconnected from the other substances, there is no sense in which a state or a change that is part of the life of one substance is temporally related, that is, precedes, follows or is simultaneous to the states and changes of the other substances. The problem is not merely that one lacks knowledge of the required temporal relations. There are no such relations. Given Kant's apriority and singularity theses, and given that time is objectively real only if it is exhibited by temporally related objects, states and events, this world *is not really possible*. Time seems to be exhibited in the life of each such substance. But the singularity and ideality of time cannot be both satisfied in this conceivable world.

One may amend the above kind of possible worlds by adding the condition that the mental substances are causally related to each other. In this case, the singularity of time is not violated. The systematic relation between the possibility of temporal determination and the applicability of the categories is also preserved. Time is not something that would subsist for itself. It must be manifested by the temporal objects,

states and event. In this case, one need not posit an outside observer. One may assume that the temporal determination of one's mental states is not established by internal time consciousness.⁵ In other words, these kinds of worlds seem to be compatible to a large extent with the main results of Kant's analysis of the concepts of space, time, "really possible" objects and the applicability of the categories. If the judgments that involve outer sense are suspended, Kant's synthetic a priori judgments that determine the realm of really possible objects *are true* in these possible worlds. What seems to be entirely lost, however, is the possibility of knowledge of the particular causal relations that determine the particular temporal positions of states, changes and events.

Here is how Kant presents this possibility in the Fourth Paralogism in the First Edition:

Thus I cannot perceive external things, but only infer their existence from inner perception, insofar as I regard this as the effect of which something external is the proximate cause. But now the inference from a given effect to its determinate cause is always uncertain since the effect can have arisen from more than one cause. (A 368)

In the Fourth Paralogism, Kant's response to the skeptical idealist emphasizes the distinction between "external in the empirical sense" and "external in the transcendental sense," between empirical realism, transcendental realism and transcendental idealism. As Kant endeavors to show, transcendental idealism is equivalent to empirical realism. His response to the skeptical charge stresses the fact that external objects are mere representations "in me". "In me" could indeed be interpreted as meaning "represented by me" without entailing that the objects of the representations owe their existence "to me". As I tried to show in previous chapters, this is an adequate and workable interpretation. In addition, outer sense — being presented immediately with spatial objects by means of sensible intuition — is a coherent possibility. Nevertheless, what Kant's theory seems to leave unanswered is why real objects in space *must* be given to us. The analysis of the concepts of space and time and the a priori judgments of the understanding do not suffice as an answer to this question.

⁵ This possibility corroborates Strawson's objection (1966: 127), that there is "no independent argument to the effect that the objective order must be a spatial order" in Kant's theory.

Kant usually emphasizes the impossibility of synthetic a priori knowledge with regard to things in themselves. However, the problem one faces here is not that synthetic a priori principles cannot be true of things in themselves. Rather, the problem seems to be that the synthetic a priori principles of the understanding *are true* in this world, although their truth does not entail the possibility of *empirical knowledge* of the objective world for which they constitute conditions of possibility. The idea that temporal determination implies the possibility of temporal measurement might make a response to this problem possible. For if it is assumed that time cannot be measured by means of the representations of inner sense, and if it is assumed that temporal measurement of temporal intervals requires a movable object in space, then temporal determination entails the reality of outer sense. The mere analysis of the main features of the concept of space, time, the categories and the experiencing subject do not suffice as a corroboration of this claim. In other words, this claim presupposes rather than explains the claim that an object can be determined in time only if it is possible to *know* its temporal determination. Therefore, in order to bridge this gap, an additional premise is required: objects are determined in time only if *it is possible to know* how they are determined in time. This additional premise is implicit throughout Kant's theory. However, what the failure of the above response to the charge of the skeptical idealist reveals is that this claim cannot be established by a philosophical analysis of the transcendental concepts. It is presupposed by the way Kant interprets them.

If one adds this principle as an additional explicit principle to Kant's theory of knowledge, this makes possible a response to the skeptical idealist. If a priori knowledge that one is temporally determined must entail that one can know how one is temporally determined and related to other temporally determined objects, the skeptical idealist's charge and the metaphysical possibilities that it presupposes can be ruled out. For if internal temporal awareness cannot be an adequate basis for knowledge of objective temporal determination, the appeal to outer sense is not optional. If one adds this principle, then the account of the systematic dependencies of time, space and the categories can be completed.

The claim that possible knowledge of temporal determination must be presupposed indicates the affinity between Kant's theory of experience and current anti-realist theories of meaning and truth. Yet if one

interprets transcendental idealism as a version of anti-realism, Kant's theory would have to be significantly amended. It is not clear whether such an interpretation can preserve Kant's distinctions between "real possibility" and "mere possibility," between merely conceivable non-spatiotemporal (unknowable) things in themselves and empirically real objects. The same is true with regard to Kant's distinctions between concepts and intuitions. Let us recall that these distinctions underlie Kant's transcendental idealism and his critique of metaphysics. They indicate the tension between our kind of knowledge and the demands of reason.

Whether or not the claim that it must be possible to know the temporal determinations of appearances and their respective objects entails an antirealist theory of meaning and truth is questionable. The task of answering this question is not within the scope of this book. At any rate, it is clear that the question of whether Kant's theory can provide a response to all the possibilities implied by the charge made by the skeptical idealist leave his main arguments for transcendental idealism untouched. It is irrelevant to his arguments for the transcendental ideality of space and time, to the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves, to the presence of transcendental apperception in our cognitive world and to its role in transcendental synthesis.

Chapter 16

CONCLUSION

My aim in this book was to establish the coherence of Kant's transcendental theory of experience. I hope that I have demonstrated why Kant's doctrine of transcendental idealism is an indispensable part of this theory and how this doctrine can face the criticism leveled against it.

It might be argued, however, that my interpretation is incomplete at least in one important respect. One of my aims in the present book was to show that Kant's theory of knowledge could be freed from a commitment to the objective reality of noumena. Yet, it is clear that Kant's doctrine of transcendental idealism is not only meant to lay the foundations for his theory of knowledge. According to Kant, although objective knowledge and objective truths do not directly involve claims that concern our moral practice and aesthetic experience, his view was that the transcendental theory of experience must consider them both. An account of the possibility of knowledge of empirical objects and empirical truths must be given in terms that do justice to the demands of morality and those of aesthetic experience. But it seems that the notion of transcendental idealism required as a condition *sine qua non* for Kant's theory of freedom is precisely the one implicit in the "twofold meaning" theory. According to this theory, the subject of experience must be considered in two different ways: as an empirical object and as a thing in itself. Yet, if knowledge of the reality of noumena is required by Kant's theory of freedom, then even if the denial of the possibility of such knowledge can save Kant's theory of experience from the charge of incoherence, an interpretation that is based on the denial of the possibility of such knowledge seems to lead to the conclusion that Kant's *overall transcendental theory* cannot be a coherent theory.

The question of how one is to avoid this undesired conclusion within the limits of Kant's transcendental theory is difficult to answer, even if the pursuit of such an answer is, as I believe, a feasible task. Whether such an answer can be pursued or not, it should be noted that the difficulties that concern the alleged knowledge of the reality of noumena, which are discussed in the body of this book, do not allow one to save Kant's theory by endorsing this type of knowledge. Kant's position regarding this important question attests to this. As I showed in Chapter 9, in some contexts, Kant seems to hold the view that the reality of

phenomena entails the reality of things in themselves. Yet, when Kant addressed this issue explicitly, he denied that his transcendental theory of experience is committed to the reality of noumena.

What are the changes required by the task of saving Kant's overall transcendental theory from the charge of incoherence and how much of his original theory can be preserved? I did not attempt to answer this question in the present book. Yet, by way of conclusion, it should be noted that this question is also related to a wide range of other issues that were not discussed in the present book. Grasping the coherence of Kant's theory of experience is important for determining how it could be of value to our current philosophical viewpoint. However, coherence alone does not suffice for truth or correctness. It should be clear by now that there are claims to which Kant is either implicitly or explicitly committed the negations of which cannot be ruled out merely on the basis of a conceptual analysis. Moreover, the plausibility of Kant's theory was at least partly based on his scientific knowledge. It is clear that if one is not only interested in the coherence and historical importance of Kant's work but also in what is still of value for us today, some of Kant's claims must be amended in light of the changes that have occurred in the relevant branches of knowledge. The feasibility of this endeavor cannot merely be established by an interpretative analysis.

This seems to leave the interpreter with the modest task of explicating the meaning of Kant's text and of determining its historical significance. Pursuing the first of these goals was my main intention in the present book. Yet, even when one is engaged in interpretation, disclosing the meaning of the text need not be one's only goal. I suspect that this is always the case where major philosophical works such as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are concerned. The work of many commentators, myself included, seems to be motivated by the belief that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* contains something that continues to be deeply relevant to our philosophical viewpoint. By this I do not merely mean various individual theses which might be scattered here and there in Kant's work, but rather something that pertains to the unity of this work to which the notions of truth or correctness can somehow be applied.

In what sense, however, do the notions of truth or correctness apply to philosophical theories such as the one presented in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*? It is clear that the plausibility of the theory presented in this book does not consist in its scientific completeness. Nor do the

discoveries in mathematics and physics that are “obviously” incompatible with some claims found in Kant’s theory undermine the essence of the philosophical picture that he invites us to share. I would like to suggest that the essence of this picture is unaffected by its incompleteness. It is more reasonable and beneficial to assess its plausibility by noting its ability to reveal the intelligibility of the metaphysical basis of our shared, implicit *self-knowledge*, that is, to make manifest our kind of rationality, self-consciousness, and freedom. This might not be the desired result of a theory that aspires to delineate the necessity, completeness and indispensability of the system of a priori concepts and principles in a scientific manner. Yet, although there are reasons to doubt whether this goal can be realized, Kant’s theory does leave us with something that is both indispensable and important. It is my firm belief that the significance of what Kant left us can be revealed only if his work is interpreted in its own terms. I hope that the present book has made a contribution of value towards this ongoing endeavor.

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