

KANT'S KNOWLEDGE OF UNKNOWABLE THINGS IN THEMSELVES:  
An Examination of the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis

By

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## Abstract

This dissertation is an examination of things in themselves as they are presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Chapter 1 deals with Kant's notion of a thing in itself generally. I argue that Kant uses 'things in themselves' in two ways: (1) to refer to logically possible entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances; (2) to signify the thought of empirical objects apart from sensibility. This follows from the fact that the notion of a thing in itself is a function of the understanding, but that our intellectual representations cannot relate to things in themselves.

Chapters 2 and 3 attend to two theses of things in themselves: (1) they are unknowable; (2) they are non-spatiotemporal. Thesis (1) seems to render any judgment of things in themselves epistemically unjustifiable, thereby undermining Kant's right to maintain either thesis (1) or (2). Thesis (2) seems to rest on an invalid argument and, consequently, fails to rule out the possibility that things in themselves are spatiotemporal (the traditional neglected alternative). Chapter 2 focuses on establishing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis (i.e. if  $x$  is intuited *a priori*, then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori* intuition). I argue that the Identity Thesis secures a valid argument for thesis (2). Chapter 3 demonstrates that Kant's argument for the transcendental ideality of space (and time) entails that our sensible representations cannot relate to things in themselves. Since neither our sensible, nor our intellectual, representations can relate to things in themselves, thesis (1) actually expresses a subtler claim: we cannot cognize things in themselves through our representations. I argue that this is neither self-undermining, nor does it undermine thesis (2); however, it does restrict us to a weak reading of thesis (2), such that it cannot rule out the possibility of a strong structural isomorphism obtaining between things in themselves

and space and time (a new neglected alternative). I conclude by arguing that this new neglected alternative does not present Kant's cognitive theory with any serious difficulties.

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## Table of Contents

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Abstract.....   | iii              |
| Acknowledgments .....   | iv               |
| <b>Chapter 0: Introduction .....</b>  | <b>1</b>         |
| <b><i>§0.1 Kant’s General Project, a Problem, and a Possible Solution .....</i></b>   | <b><i>1</i></b>  |
| <i>§0.1.1 Kant’s Project.....</i>   | <i>1</i>         |
| <i>§0.1.2 The Problem.....</i>  | <i>4</i>         |
| <i>§0.1.3 A Possible Solution .....</i>   | <i>5</i>         |
| <b><i>§0.2 My General Project and Some Specifics.....</i></b>   | <b><i>6</i></b>  |
| <i>§0.2.1 My Project.....</i>   | <i>6</i>         |
| <i>§0.2.2 Some Specifics.....</i>   | <i>7</i>         |
| §0.2.2.1 Chapter 1: An Outline .....  | 9                |
| §0.2.2.2 Chapter 2: An Outline .....  | 11               |
| §0.2.2.3 Chapter 3: An Outline .....  | 13               |
| <b>Chapter 1: The Problematic Thing in Itself, the Objective Validity Problem,<br/>and the Noumenal Causation Thesis .....</b>      | <b>18</b>        |
| <b><i>§1.1 Chapter 1 Introduction.....</i></b>  | <b><i>18</i></b> |
| <i>§1.1.1 My Interpretation of Kant’s Things in Themselves and My Argumentative<br/>        Strategy.....</i>                       | <i>19</i>        |
| <b><i>§1.2 The Applicability of ‘Noumena’ to Things in Themselves .....</i></b>   | <b><i>24</i></b> |
| <b><i>§1.3 The Dissertation’s Noumena, The Modification of Kant’s Cognitive<br/>    Theory, and The Appearing Argument.....</i></b> | <b><i>25</i></b> |
| <i>§1.3.1 The Dissertation’s Cognitive Theory and Its Noumena .....</i>   | <i>26</i>        |
| §1.3.1.1 Kant’s Cognitive Theory in the Dissertation .....  | 27               |
| §1.3.1.2 Two Characterizations of the Distinction <sub>ID</sub> .....   | 28               |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| § 1.3.1.3 The Argument for the Ontological Distinction <sub>1D</sub> .....   | 32        |
| § 1.3.2 <i>The Objective Validity Problem, Kant’s Modification of his Cognitive Theory, and the Appearing Argument</i> ..... | 35        |
| § 1.3.2.1 The “Recounting” and the Modification of Kant’s Cognitive Theory.....  | 37        |
| § 1.3.2.2 The Objective Validity Problem.....  | 40        |
| § 1.3.2.3 The Appearing Argument as an Objection .....   | 45        |
| § 1.3.2.3.1 The Appearing Argument and the Objective Validity Problem .....  | 46        |
| § 1.3.2.3.2 Confirmation in the B-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” .....                                     | 49        |
| <b>§ 1.4 <i>Kant’s Considered View of Things in Themselves in the Critique</i>.....</b>                                      | <b>51</b> |
| § 1.4.1 <i>The Argument from the Consequences of the Objective Validity Problem</i> .....                                    | 52        |
| § 1.4.1.1 The Modification of Kant’s Cognitive Theory and Noumena in the Negative Sense.....                                 | 53        |
| § 1.4.1.2 Logical Possible Entities and Noumena in the Negative Sense .....  | 53        |
| § 1.4.1.3 Thinking Empirical Objects Apart from Sensibility and Noumena in the Negative Sense.....                           | 55        |
| § 1.4.2 <i>The Argument from Textual Evidence</i> .....  | 55        |
| § 1.4.3 <i>The Argument from the Possibility of Kant’s Practical Project</i> .....   | 58        |
| <b>§ 1.5 <i>The Objective Validity Problem, the Doctrine of Ignorance, and the Noumenal Causation Thesis</i> .....</b>       | <b>60</b> |
| § 1.5.1 <i>The Objective Validity Problem and the Doctrine of Ignorance</i> .....  | 61        |
| § 1.5.2 <i>The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Noumenal Causation Thesis</i> .....   | 62        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Kantian Intuitions and the Identity Thesis .....</b>   | <b>65</b> |
| <b>§ 2.1 <i>Chapter 2 Introduction</i>.....</b>  | <b>65</b> |
| <b>§ 2.2 <i>The Identity Thesis, the Non-spatiality Argument, and Intuitions</i>.....</b>                                    | <b>68</b> |
| § 2.2.1 <i>The Identity Thesis and the Non-spatiality Argument</i> .....   | 68        |
| § 2.2.2 <i>The Identity Thesis and Intuitions</i> .....  | 70        |
| <b>§ 2.3 <i>Kantian Intuitions</i>.....</b>  | <b>71</b> |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| §2.3.1 <i>An Introduction to Intuitions: ‘Anschauung’ and the Two General Criteria in Concreto</i> .....                      | 73         |
| §2.3.1.1 ‘Anschauung’ and Intuitions .....  | 74         |
| §2.3.1.2 The Two Criteria <i>in Concreto</i> .....  | 75         |
| §2.3.2 <i>The Formal Requirements</i> .....   | 78         |
| §2.3.2.1 The Strong Formal Requirements .....   | 78         |
| §2.3.2.1.1 Strong Satisfaction and the Formal Requirements of Singularity .....   | 79         |
| §2.3.2.1.1.1 The Singularity Criterion and a Single Object .....  | 79         |
| §2.3.2.1.1.2 Singular Representations and Singular Terms .....  | 80         |
| §2.3.2.1.1.3 Singularity and the Case of Strong Satisfaction .....  | 81         |
| §2.3.2.1.2 The Formal Requirements of Immediacy .....   | 82         |
| §2.3.2.1.2.1 The Immediacy Criterion and the Epistemic Role of Intuitions .....   | 83         |
| §2.3.2.1.2.2 A Disanalogy between Intuitions and Singular Terms .....   | 83         |
| §2.3.2.1.2.3 Alternative Readings of the Stufenleiter .....   | 85         |
| §2.3.2.1.2.4 Immediacy and the Case of Strong Satisfaction .....  | 89         |
| §2.3.2.2 The Weak Formal Requirements .....   | 90         |
| §2.3.2.2.1 Hallucinations and Weak Satisfaction .....   | 91         |
| §2.3.3 <i>The Weak Formal Requirements, A priori intuitions, and the Identity Thesis</i> .....                                | 92         |
| §2.3.3.1 <i>A priori</i> intuitions and the Weak Formal Requirements .....  | 92         |
| §2.3.3.2 <i>A priori</i> Intuitions and the Identity Thesis .....   | 94         |
| §2.3.4 <i>A priori Concepts, A priori Intuitions, and the Transcendental Ideality Argument</i> .....                          | 95         |
| §2.3.4.1 <i>A priori</i> Concepts and the Properties of Things in Themselves .....  | 96         |
| §2.3.4.2 <i>A priori</i> Intuitions and the Transcendental Ideality Argument .....  | 96         |
| <b>Chapter 3: Kant’s Transcendental Ideality Argument, The Doctrine of Ignorance, and the Non-Spatiotemporal Thesis</b> ..... | <b>100</b> |
| <b>§3.1 Introduction</b> .....  | <b>100</b> |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| §3.1.1 An Outline of Chapter 3.....  | 102        |
| <b>§3.2 The Non-spatiality Argument and the Sensibility Argument.....</b>            | <b>105</b> |
| §3.2.1 The Corresponding Formal Arguments and Their Premises.....                    | 106        |
| §3.2.2 The Four Claims.....  | 109        |
| <b>§3.3 The Transcendental Ideality Argument and the Four Claims .....</b>           | <b>109</b> |
| §3.3.1 A General Overview of the Transcendental Ideality Argument .....              | 110        |
| §3.3.1.1 The Introduction: a General Treatment.....                                  | 112        |
| §3.3.1.2 The Metaphysical Exposition: a General Treatment.....                       | 115        |
| §3.3.1.3 The Transcendental Exposition: a General Treatment.....                     | 117        |
| §3.3.1.4 The Conclusions: a General Treatment.....                                   | 119        |
| §3.3.2 An Exegetical Tool: Leibniz's Empirical Acquisitionist Theory of <Space>..... | 122        |
| §3.3.2.1 Leibniz's Empirical Acquisitionist Theory.....                              | 123        |
| §3.3.2.1.1 The Requirements of an Empirical Acquisitionist Theory.....               | 123        |
| §3.3.2.1.2 Leibniz's Acquisitionist Story.....                                       | 124        |
| §3.3.2.1.3 Leibniz's Acquisitionist Theory and Its Essential Components.....         | 126        |
| §3.3.2.2 The Transcendental Ideality Argument: a Detailed Treatment.....             | 127        |
| §3.3.2.2.1 Kant's Synthetic Argumentation .....                                      | 128        |
| §3.3.2.2.1.1 The Apriority Argument .....  | 128        |
| §3.3.2.2.1.2 The Formal Argument .....   | 131        |
| §3.3.2.2.1.3 The Argument to Geometry.....   | 135        |
| §3.3.2.2.1.4 The Singularity Argument .....  | 135        |
| §3.3.2.2.1.5 The Immediacy Argument .....  | 138        |
| §3.3.2.2.1.6 The Four Claims and the Synthetic Argumentation .....                   | 139        |
| §3.3.2.2.2 Kant's Analytic Argumentation .....                                       | 140        |
| §3.3.2.2.2.1 The Explanation of a Transcendental Exposition .....                    | 141        |



|   |            |
|---|------------|
| §3.3.3.2.2 The Argument from Geometry .....   | 143        |
| §3.3.3.2.3 The Four Claims and the Analytic Argumentation .....   | 147        |
| §3.3.3.3 The Antecedency Argument .....   | 147        |
| §3.3.4 <i>The Four Claims, the Non-spatiality Argument, and the Sensibility Argument</i> .....            | 149        |
| <b>§3.4 <i>Determinations of the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-Spatiotemporality Thesis</i></b> ..... | <b>150</b> |
| §3.4.1 <i>The Doctrine of Ignorance and Knowing Things in Themselves</i> .....                            | 151        |
| §3.4.1.1 The Commitments Undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance .....                                     | 152        |
| §3.4.1.2 Three Basic Kinds of Judgments and the Doctrine of Ignorance .....                               | 154        |
| §3.4.1.3 The Doctrine of Ignorance, Itself, and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis .....                    | 157        |
| §3.4.1.3.1 The Doctrine of Ignorance and Itself .....   | 157        |
| §3.4.1.3.2 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis.....                            | 161        |
| §3.4.1.3.2.1 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Weak Non-spatiality Thesis .....                           | 162        |
| §3.4.1.3.2.2 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Strong Non-spatiality Thesis.....                          | 164        |
| §3.4.2 <i>The (Weak) Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and the Neglected Alternative</i> .....                 | 166        |
| §3.4.2.1 The Strong Isomorphism Objection and the Problem of the Neglected Alternative .....              | 167        |
| §3.4.2.1.1 Disarming the Strong Isomorphism Objection.....  | 169        |
| <b>Bibliography</b> .....   | <b>172</b> |

## **Chapter 0: Introduction**

### §0.1 Kant's General Project, a Problem, and a Possible Solution

#### §0.1.1 Kant's Project

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter *Critique*), Kant sets out to examine the faculties of human cognition and, in doing so, argues for a particular theory of cognition. The motivation for this examination stems from a deep-seated dissatisfaction that Kant has with the state of metaphysics during his time. More specifically, Kant was distressed at the seeming inability for progress to be made in metaphysics. He says,

[M]etaphysics has... to be regarded as a battle-ground quite peculiarly suited for those who desire to exercise themselves in mock combats, and in which no participant has ever yet succeeded in gaining even so much as an inch of territory, not at least in such manner as to secure him in its permanent possession.<sup>1</sup> (Bxv)

Thus, Kant's purpose in examining the faculties of human cognition is to acquire self-knowledge that will 'decide as to the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics in general' (Axii).

There are three subject matters of metaphysics that are of particular concern to Kant: God, the soul, and free will. The difficulty of these subject matters specifically, and the subject matter of metaphysics more generally, is that they all lie outside of human experience. Nevertheless, metaphysicians are in the business of making judgments about these subject matters: (e.g. 'the soul is immortal'). Since these metaphysical judgments are not grounded (i.e. epistemically justified) in experience, Kant wants to know by what right they are asserted (i.e. *quid juris*). That is, he wants to know how they are *known* by metaphysicians.

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes of the *Critique* come from Norman Kemp Smith's translation (Kant 2007). Per the norm, all citations of the *Critique* are in-text and given according to the A- and B-edition pagination.

Kant's first step in determining how, or whether, metaphysical judgments are grounded is to consider the nature of metaphysical judgments more generally. He does so by categorizing judgments along two dimensions. First, a judgment can be categorized in terms of the relation that obtains between its subject concept and predicate concept. If the judgment's predicate concept is already contained in its subject concept, then the judgment is an analytic, or explicative, judgment. For example, 'bachelors are unmarried' is an analytic judgment, because <unmarried> is contained in <bachelor> as part of its intension.<sup>2</sup> However, if the judgment's predicate concept is not already contained in its subject concept, then the judgment is a synthetic, or an ampliative, judgment. For example, 'bachelors are messy' is a synthetic judgment, because, contrary to how it may seem, <messy> is not contained in <bachelor> as part of its intension. Secondly, judgments can be categorized in terms of whether they are grounded in experience (i.e. epistemically justified by experience). If a judgment is grounded in experience, then it is an *a posteriori* judgment. For example, 'some bachelors are messy' is grounded by my frequent experience of bachelors being messy. If a judgment is not grounded in experience, then it is an *a priori* judgment. For example, precisely because <unmarried> is contained in <bachelor>, I do not need to experience bachelors being unmarried in order to be assured that none are married.

Ignoring *a posteriori* analytic judgments as an overdetermining case, these two categorizations give us three basic kinds of judgments: *a priori* synthetic judgments, *a posteriori* synthetic judgments, and *a priori* analytic judgments. Metaphysical judgments, because they are never aided by experience, and because they endeavor to add new information about its subject matter, are *a priori* synthetic judgments. Consequently, in determining how, or whether,

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<sup>2</sup> I often use '<...>' as a device for signifying a concept. So, for instance, instead of saying 'the concept of a bachelor', I will often say '<bachelor>'.

metaphysicians know what they claim, Kant turns to asking how *a priori* synthetic cognition (i.e. knowledge) of objects is possible.

The difficulty in grounding synthetic judgments *a priori* should be readily apparent. First, consider cases of grounding judgments that are relatively straightforward. Analytic judgments can be grounded *a priori*, because the subject concept is, itself, the source of the legitimacy of the judgment. For example, since <unmarried> belongs to the intension of <bachelor>, nothing can belong to the extension of <bachelor> without also belonging to the extension of <unmarried>. Accordingly, I am entitled to ‘all bachelors are unmarried’ without needing to appeal to experience. In the case of synthetic judgments, it is relatively clear how they can be grounded *a posteriori*. For instance, if I experience a bachelor being messy, then I am entitled to ‘some bachelors are messy’. Furthermore, as I continue to never meet a cleanly bachelor in experience, I have a wider and wider body of evidence supporting ‘all bachelors are messy’. But in synthetic judgments that can only be grounded *a priori* (as in the case of metaphysical judgments), the judgment lacks each of the sources of legitimacy that are available to *a priori* analytic judgments and *a posteriori* synthetic judgments. For, on the one hand, being a synthetic judgment, its subject concept does not contain its predicate concept and, therefore, no analysis of the subject concept can license the claim. For example, since, in ‘the soul is immortal’, <immorta> is not contained in <soul>, I cannot know that the judgment is true simply by examining the subject concept. And, on the other hand, being that the subject of the judgment is never available to us in experience, we have no recourse to an experience that supports the claim. For example, since I can never experience a soul, I can never witness a soul being immortal.

Faced with the seemingly impossible task of determining how *a priori* synthetic judgments can be grounded, Kant creates transcendental philosophy for the purpose of acquiring knowledge

that ‘is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*’ (B25). More specifically, in the *Critique*, Kant sets out to examine how the faculties of human cognition make possible *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects. That is, he sets out to determine how the faculties of human cognition can license *a priori* synthetic judgments. While Kant argues that the faculties of human cognition do, in fact, license some *a priori* synthetic judgments, he, at the same time, severely limits the scope of human cognition. Namely, Kant maintains that things in themselves (e.g. God and the soul) are non-cognizable (call this the ‘Doctrine of Ignorance’). So much, then, for traditional metaphysics.

### §0.1.2 The Problem

Given Kant’s Doctrine of Ignorance, one may very well worry that, in the course of examining our cognitive faculties, Kant accidentally finds himself right back on the battle-ground of metaphysics, engaging in mock combats and claiming territory to which he has no title. In fact, in the course of examining the faculties of human cognition, Kant seems to maintain both the Noumenal Causation Thesis and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. The Noumenal Causation Thesis holds that things in themselves cause us to cognize certain appearances (i.e. objects of experience). The Non-spatiotemporality Thesis holds that things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal. Now, if things in themselves are non-cognizable, then they are never objects of experience. However, both of the above theses are synthetic judgments about things in themselves. Accordingly, both theses are *a priori* synthetic judgments of things in themselves – seemingly the very metaphysical claims that Kant’s transcendental investigation is supposed to curtail. Furthermore, the Doctrine of Ignorance is, itself, expressed as an *a priori* synthetic judgment of things in themselves: ‘things in themselves are non-cognizable’. Thus, not only does the Doctrine of Ignorance seem to undercut the possibility of epistemically justifying both the Noumenal

Causation Thesis and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, but, by its own lights, the Doctrine of Ignorance seems to undercut the possibility of its own epistemic justification.

### §0.1.3 A Possible Solution

If Kant cannot legitimately maintain that things in themselves are non-cognizable, then perhaps we may reenter the battle-ground of metaphysics with the renewed hope that we may claim some territory for good. Or, we can redouble Kant's appeal for peace and begin with the hypothesis that the Doctrine of Ignorance does not preclude its own epistemic justification. For given that Kant argues for the Doctrine of Ignorance, he must take there to be at least one means through which *a priori* synthetic judgments about things in themselves can be grounded. Moreover, whatever Kant means to convey with 'things in themselves are non-cognizable', it must be subtler than it seems.

Applying a strategy similar to Kant's adjudication of metaphysical judgments, I ask this transcendental philosopher, "By what right have you come into possession of the Doctrine of Ignorance?" In adjudicating metaphysical judgments, Kant seeks to illuminate how we can have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects in general. In adjudicating Kant's own *a priori* synthetic judgments of things in themselves – in particular, the Doctrine of Ignorance, the Noumenal Causation Thesis, and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis – I seek to illuminate the philosophical pressure that leads Kant to adopt the Doctrine of Ignorance. This will have three interconnected effects. First, it will determine, with precision, the content expressed by the Doctrine of Ignorance. Second, it will determine, more precisely, what judgments of things in themselves are rendered epistemically unjustifiable by the Doctrine of Ignorance – call being rendered epistemically unjustifiable by the Doctrine of Ignorance the 'epistemic problem'. And third, it will determine what judgments of things in themselves, if any, are not subject to the epistemic problem. If the

Doctrine of Ignorance does not subject itself to the epistemic problem, then there is, at least in principle, one means through which *a priori* synthetic judgments of things in themselves can be grounded. Accordingly, any *a priori* synthetic judgment that can trace its lineage through the same means will be, in principle, epistemically justifiable. As a result, Kant's entitlement to the Noumenal Causation Thesis and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis (or any other *a priori* synthetic judgment of things in themselves) can be adjudicated by determining whether it is grounded in the same manner as the Doctrine of Ignorance.

## §0.2 My General Project and Some Specifics

### §0.2.1 My Project

Corresponding to the above discussion, a major aim motivating my project is to understand how the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains knowledge of things in themselves. This requires identifying the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. Moreover, I am interested in the consequences that the Doctrine of Ignorance has with respect to three theses, each of which expresses an *a priori* synthetic judgment about things in themselves: the Noumenal Causation Thesis, the Doctrine of Ignorance, and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. I will argue that the Noumenal Causation Thesis is subject to the epistemic problem. Since the Doctrine of Ignorance expresses a claim about things in themselves, there exists the worry that it subjects itself to the epistemic problem, in which case it is self-enfeebling (i.e. it would render non-cognizable the claim that things in themselves are non-cognizable). I will argue that it does not. And while I will argue that the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is not subject to the epistemic problem, I will show that the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance restrict how we are to understand it.

Now, although the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is not subjected to the epistemic problem, it is faced with another problem, the problem of the neglected alternative. Kant argues for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis in the “Transcendental Aesthetic”. In fact, it figures as a piece of Kant’s argumentation for the claim that space and time are transcendently ideal (i.e. the claim that space and time are merely subjective, but, nonetheless, make possible some *a priori* synthetic cognitions). Call this the ‘transcendental ideality argument’. The problem of the neglected alternative is motivated by the thought that Kant’s argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is invalid (call this the ‘*non sequitur* problem’); namely, that even if the transcendental ideality argument succeeds in securing the claim that our subjective conditions for intuiting objects are spatiotemporal, it fails to exclude the possibility that things in themselves may also be spatiotemporal, perhaps by mere coincidence. At face value, then, the problem of the neglected alternative can be avoided if the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis can be shown to be valid. Accordingly, another major aim of my project is to supply a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports it. Furthermore, I aim to determine whether this suffices for circumventing the problem of the neglected alternative. While I provide an argument that overcomes the *non sequitur* problem, I argue that the constraints of the Doctrine of Ignorance prevent Kant from neglecting another similar problem that, at face value, seems problematic. However, I believe the putative problem surrounding this new neglected alternative can be disarmed.

### §0.2.2 *Some Specifics*

Undertaking these two general aims immediately presents three considerable difficulties. First, each of the three theses of interest (i.e. the Doctrine of Ignorance, the Noumenal Causation Thesis, and the Non-spatiotemporal Thesis) is about things in themselves. However, Kant’s notion



of a thing in itself is vexing and is, consequently, the subject of controversy. It seems prudent, then, to elucidate Kant's notion of a thing in itself as it is presented in the *Critique*. Accordingly, Chapter 1 is largely devoted to determining Kant's notion of a thing in itself. Second, much of the subject matter of my investigations, both general and specific, is deeply interwoven. Two cases merit acknowledgment from the outset. One is that Kant's notion of a thing in itself is, in part, a function of some of the specific commitments undergirding Kant's Doctrine of Ignorance. Thus, Chapter 1 will not only illuminate Kant's notion of a thing in itself, but it will also identify some of the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. The other is that the transcendental ideality argument not only supports the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, but it is also tasked with securing some of the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. Specifically, it secures that sensibility – a faculty of human cognition – is not an avenue through which we can cognize things in themselves. Accordingly, at the same time I endeavor to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, I will also aim to show that the transcendental ideality argument secures the claim that we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves. I pursue these two tasks in Chapter 3. Lastly, the *non sequitur* problem coincides with an argumentative gap that is present in the transcendental ideality argument, or at least in Kant's presentation of it. Consequently, in order to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, I must first demonstrate that Kant is entitled to a premise that is not explicitly stated in Kant's presentation of it. I call this premise the 'Identity Thesis'. Chapter 2 is devoted to showing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis. Before turning to Chapter 1, I want to provide a general outline for each of the three chapters.

### §0.2.2.1 Chapter 1: An Outline

Chapter 1 is spent mostly on arguing for the problematic view of things in themselves; the view that Kant sometimes uses ‘things in themselves’ (and its cognates) (1) to denote logically possible entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances (i.e. no things in themselves are appearances) and (2) to signify the consideration of empirical objects apart from their relation to sensibility.<sup>3</sup> The initial difficulty in arguing for this position – or any position on things in themselves – is that Kant, in the *Critique*, never sets aside a section dedicated to discussing his notion of a thing in itself. Quite the contrary, ‘things in themselves’ is introduced with Kant’s announcement of the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, as though the term should be readily understood (see A26/B42). That notwithstanding, in “The Ground of the Distinction of all Objects in general into Phenomena and Noumena” (hereafter “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”), Kant strongly suggests that all and only noumena are things in themselves. Consequently, much of Chapter 1 is spent on investigating noumena.

Kant provides two extensive discussions of his notion of a noumenon. Chronologically, the first is found in his inaugural dissertation: *De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Forma et Principiis* (hereafter *Dissertation*). The second is found in “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” – a section of the *Critique*. Accordingly, I turn to these as resources for elucidating Kant’s notion of a thing in itself.

In examining the *Dissertation*, perhaps the most pertinent revelation is that the distinction between phenomena and noumena is a function of Kant’s cognitive theory. Specifically, noumena

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<sup>3</sup> See §1.1.1 for why I name my view ‘the problematic view’. In short, I intend my view to coincide with the *Critique*’s <noumenon>, which Kant asserts is a problematic concept (B310). ‘The problematic view’ may also seem suiting since Kant’s inclusion of both an ontological and epistemic distinction<sub>AT</sub> has been the cause of a protracted debate over the nature of his distinction<sub>AT</sub>. This, though, is not the reason for its name.

are objects that are cognized merely through the resources of the understanding (i.e. the intellectual human cognitive faculty), which is tantamount to assigning human cognition a non-sensible intuition. This fact is significant, because Kant's cognitive theory differs in the *Critique*, particularly in that the understanding is deprived of the ability of cognizing objects independently of the cognitive contributions of sensibility. Without sensibility, the understanding can only think objects. That is, the understanding is still in the position of forming judgments, but, without sensibility, there is no cognitive relation that assures us that an object falls under a judgment's concepts (i.e. its subject and predicate concepts).

In examining "The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena", perhaps the most pertinent revelation is that Kant's notion of a noumenon has two senses: a positive sense, and a negative sense. A noumenon in the positive sense is "an *object of a non-sensible intuition*" (B307). Consequently, the noumena of the *Dissertation* are noumena in the positive sense. In contrast, a noumenon in the negative sense is "a thing so far as it is *not an object of our sensible intuition*" (ibid.). This, Kant tells us, is the noumenon of the *Critique*. Therefore, if something satisfies the definition of a noumenon in the negative sense, then it satisfies Kant's notion of a thing itself. That is, the definition of a noumenon in the negative sense sets the requirement for whether an object is a thing in itself.

With the above requirement in hand, my central argument for the problematic view of things in themselves turns on three facts about the cognitive theory that Kant offers in the *Critique*: (1) human cognition requires the joint cognitive contributions of sensibility and the understanding; (2) sensibility and the understanding are separate, and their powers are, therefore, separable; and (3) while cognition requires epistemic justification, thinking only requires consistency. From these three points, I argue that the *Critique's* cognitive theory must admit two things. First, it must admit

of the logical possibility of entities that are, in principle, never objects of sensibility (i.e. entities that are never appearances). Second, it must admit that we can think objects apart from their relation to sensibility. That is, it must admit of the problematic view of things in themselves.

Furthermore, in the course of examining noumena, I investigate the objective validity problem – the problem that causes Kant to modify his cognitive theory from the one offered in the *Dissertation* to the one offered in the *Critique*. The objective validity problem concerns the problem of how *a priori* concepts of the understanding relate to objects. I argue that Kant's solution to the objective validity problem precludes the possibility of a cognitive relation obtaining between our *a priori* concepts and things in themselves such that we can be assured that things in themselves belong to the extension of our *a priori* concepts. This has two effects. First, it enables me to identify three specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance: (1) that we are unable to cognize things in themselves through our *a priori* concepts, (2) that we are unable to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuition of them, and (3) that we are unable to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances. Second, since Kant maintains that <causality> numbers among our *a priori* concepts, it entails that the Noumenal Causation Thesis is subjected to the epistemic problem. Now consider a general outline of Chapter 2.

#### §0.2.2.2 Chapter 2: An Outline

Chapter 2 is devoted to showing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis: the thesis that, if  $x$  is intuited *a priori* (i.e. we have an *a priori* intuition of  $x$ ), then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori* intuition.<sup>4</sup> This is a preparatory task for Chapter 3. For

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<sup>4</sup> My intent is for the Identity Thesis to be amenable to many readings of the nature of the representational content of *a priori* intuitions. Thus, I am intentionally being vague about what 'representational content' ranges over, with the

Chapter 3 is directed, in part, at showing that the transcendental ideality argument supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. However, Kant's presentation of the transcendental ideality argument does not seem to include the necessary premises for securing that claim. Accordingly, I begin Chapter 2 by demonstrating that the Identity Thesis has the resources to bridge the argumentative gap that is seemingly present in the transcendental ideality argument.

Then I turn to arguing that Kant is, in fact, entitled to the Identity Thesis. Specifically, the Identity Thesis is entailed by the requirements involved in a representation's being both *a priori* and intuitive (i.e. being an *a priori* intuition). Consequently, the first task of this argument is to detail the formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition. On the one hand, the formal requirements must be derived from the two general criteria that Kant gives for a representation to be an intuition: the singularity criterion and the immediacy criterion. In short, I argue that the singularity criterion maintains that an intuition can only have one object in its extension, and I argue that the immediacy criterion maintains that an immediate cognitive relation must obtain between that object and human sensibility. On the other hand, the formal requirements must be able to accommodate two cases of intuitions. First, they must be able to accommodate cases in which we intuit robust objects (i.e. things in themselves or empirical objects, such as chairs, tables, etc.). Second, they must be able to accommodate cases of when our intuitions are hallucinations, (i.e. cases in which a robust object does not correspond to the intuition). The second case is important, because the intuition does not take a robust object in its extension, but it is an intuition nevertheless. Consequently, the object that does belong to its extension (i.e. the hallucinated object) must be reducible to the intuition's representational content (call objects that are reducible

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exception that it ranges over something that is necessarily mental in nature. However, on my own reading, *a priori* intuitions are formal intuitions, which include, not only the *a priori* sensible manifold of the forms of sensibility as its representational content, but also the *a priori* conceptual content that is required for unifying the *a priori* sensible manifold into a cognizable object. See B160-1.

to an intuition's representational content 'weak object'). Corresponding to these two cases, I develop two sets of formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition: the strong formal requirements and the weak formal requirements. Satisfaction of the former requires a cognitive relation with a robust object, while satisfaction of the latter requires a cognitive relation to a weak object.

The second task of my argument is to show that *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements. The argument turns on the fact that an intuition requires an immediate cognitive relation between it and its object. In the case of an *a priori* intuition, that relation cannot be the product of some interaction between the mind and some robust object, for such a relation would entail that the intuition is empirical, not *a priori*. In other words, in the case of *a priori* intuitions, the immediate cognitive relation must obtain antecedent to any particular relation that a robust object can instantiate with human cognition. It follows that *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements. Consequently, for any *a priori* intuition, its object is a weak object, which is reducible to the representational content of the intuition in question. That is, the Identity Thesis follows. Now consider a general outline of Chapter 3.

#### §0.2.2.3 Chapter 3: An Outline

Chapter 3 is composed of two parts. In the first part, I provide an exegesis of Kant's transcendental ideality argument. I do so for two reasons. First, it allows me to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports a valid argument for the claim that we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves. This, in turn, enables me to identify the remaining specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance: (4) our *a priori* intuitions are unable to relate to things in themselves, and (5) that our empirical intuitions are unable to relate to things in themselves. Second, it allows me to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports a

valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, thereby absolving Kant of the *non sequitur* problem. My strategy for showing that the transcendental ideality argument supports these two arguments consists of three steps. First, I provide formal presentations of each argument. Second, I identify the premises in need of support and distill them into four claims. Lastly, in my exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument, I show that Kant argues for these four claims.

The exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument sets the stage for the second part of Chapter 3. In the second part, I consider whether the Doctrine of Ignorance subjects itself to the epistemic problem (i.e. whether it is self-enfeebling), how it restricts the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, and whether the resolution of the *non sequitur* problem suffices for circumventing the problem of the neglected alternative. I will treat these considerations in turn. However, I must first consider what kinds of judgments of things in themselves are not precluded by the Doctrine of Ignorance.

With the five specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance in hand, I am able to determine more precisely what the Doctrine of Ignorance expresses. I argue that it expresses the claim that a thing in itself is not cognizable through any putative cognitive relation that might be supposed to obtain between it and the representations of our cognitive faculties (for the reason that no such cognitive relation can be established). Accordingly, the Doctrine of Ignorance precludes any synthetic judgment of things in themselves whose purported legitimacy rests on some cognitive relation with things in themselves. Conversely, the Doctrine of Ignorance does not preclude the legitimacy of analytic consequences of <thing in itself> (by ‘analytic consequence of <thing in itself>’, I mean a judgment regarding things in themselves, such that that judgment is logically entailed by some set of judgments that (1) must include at least one analytic judgment of things in themselves and (2) for any synthetic judgment in the set, it must be a

synthetic judgment that is not about things in themselves). Analytic consequences are not precluded by the Doctrine of Ignorance for two reasons. First, an analytic judgment of things in themselves is one in which the judgment's subject concept is <thing in itself> and its predicate concept is contained in <thing in itself>. Accordingly, its legitimacy does not rely on some putative cognitive relation that is supposed to obtain between the representations of our cognitive faculties and a thing in itself. Rather, its legitimacy is a function of the fact that, since the predicate concept is contained in <thing in itself>, any object that falls under <thing in itself> must also fall under the predicate concept. Second, my definition of 'analytic consequence of <thing itself>' excludes any synthetic judgments of things in themselves that meet either of the following two cases: (1) its purported legitimacy rests directly on a putative cognitive relation to things in themselves or (2) its purported legitimacy rests indirectly on a putative cognitive relation to things in themselves, in that the lineage of its purported legitimacy can be traced back, as a series of logical consequences, to at least one synthetic judgment of things in themselves that meets case (1). Thus, if the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>, then their legitimacy will not rest on the putative cognitive relations to things in themselves that the five specific commitments bar. Rather, their legitimacy will rest on the legitimacy of analytic judgments of things in themselves and, if there are any, the legitimacy of synthetic judgments that are not about things in themselves.

Now, in order to determine whether the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>, I must review the arguments that support them, checking to see whether any of their premises rely on a putative cognitive relation with things in themselves. Accordingly, I review both Kant's arguments for the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance and his argument for the Non-



spatiotemporality Thesis. Review of these arguments shows that the five specific commitments and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis are all analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. It follows that the Doctrine of Ignorance does not subject itself to the epistemic problem and, therefore, is not self-enfeebling. Furthermore, it follows that the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is not subjected to the epistemic problem. However, the Doctrine of Ignorance does restrict the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis to a particular reading, which I turn to consider.

*Prima facie*, there are two senses in which something is spatial. In the first sense, something is spatial if and only if it is space or is structured by space. In the second sense, something is spatial if and only if it is similar to space (e.g. has a three-dimensional structure) or it is structured by something that is similar to space. This applies, *mutatis mutandis*, for time. Accordingly, there are two possible readings of the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis: (1) things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal in the sense that they cannot relate to space or time (call this the ‘Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis’); (2) things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal, not only in that they cannot relate to space or time, but also in that they cannot be spatiotemporal-like (call this the ‘Strong Non-spatiotemporality Thesis’). I argue that the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains Kant to the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, because a valid argument for the Strong Non-spatiotemporality Thesis would require a premise that is neither about our cognitive faculties, nor an analytic consequence of <thing in itself>. Consequently, the Strong Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is, itself, not an analytic consequence of <thing in itself> and is, therefore, subjected to the epistemic problem.

The fact that the Strong Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is subjected to the epistemic problem entails that Kant is still faced with the problem of neglecting an alternative. For, although Kant can give a valid argument for the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, the Weak Non-

spatiotemporality Thesis cannot exclude the possibility that some things in themselves are spatiotemporal-like. In particular, it does not rule out that some things in themselves share the same structural features of space or time, in which case a strong structural isomorphism might obtain between some things in themselves and space and time. Such a structural isomorphism seems to face Kant's cognitive theory with the following problem. If a thing in itself is structurally isomorphic with space, then our *a priori* synthetic judgments of the structural features of space will also hold true of that thing in itself, but Kant intends for those judgments to only apply legitimately to space and the appearances structured by it. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, for time. It seems to follow, contra Kant's intention, that these *a priori* synthetic judgments can be legitimately applied to some things in themselves. However, I argue that the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is sufficient for barring any cognitive relation with such putative things in themselves, thereby entailing that we could never be assured that those *a priori* synthetic judgments are applicable to a thing in itself. From this, it follows that even if those judgments do hold for some things in themselves, any application of those judgments to them would be epistemically unjustified. I now proceed to Chapter 1.

## **Chapter 1: The Problematic Thing in Itself, the Objective Validity Problem, and the Noumenal Causation Thesis**

### **§1.1 Chapter 1 Introduction**

Generally speaking, my project is an examination of three theses that appear in the *Critique*: (1) the Doctrine of Ignorance, which states that we cannot know things in themselves; (2) the Noumenal Causation Thesis, which states that things in themselves cause us to cognize certain appearances; and (3) the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, which states that things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal. More specifically, I am interested in how the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains knowledge of things in themselves and the consequences this has with respect to the above three theses. But note that each of these three theses makes a claim about things in themselves. Correspondingly, the most straightforward task of this chapter is to elucidate Kant's notion of a thing in itself (as it is presented in the *Critique*). However, understanding Kant's notion of a thing in itself requires an examination of Kant's cognitive theory, especially with respect to how that theory is modified from the theory he offers in the *Dissertation* to the theory he offers in the *Critique*.

The Doctrine of Ignorance, of course, is a product of the cognitive theory that Kant offers in the *Critique*, and, as it turns out, the modification I will be examining coincides with some of the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance; in particular, those commitments that undercut the Noumenal Causation Thesis. Accordingly, I also aim, in this chapter, to (1) identify three of the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance, (2) show why Kant cannot be construed as maintaining the Noumenal Causation Thesis on theoretical grounds (i.e. grounds that legitimately establish "what *is*" the case, as opposed to "what *ought to be*"), and (3) explain why Kant talks, in the *Critique*, as if he is committed to the Noumenal Causation Thesis

(A633/B661). But since Kant's notion of a thing in itself takes the lion's share of my attention in this chapter, I begin by situating my position among the three broad interpretations of Kant's thing in itself and by outlining my argumentative strategy for my interpretation.

### *§1.1.1 My Interpretation of Kant's Things in Themselves and My Argumentative Strategy*

Kant's notion of a thing in itself, as it appears in the *Critique*, has generated a seemingly endless flow of exegetical and philosophical controversies. What is not controversial is that things in themselves are to be contrasted with appearances (or things as they appear). Call the distinction between appearances and things in themselves the 'distinction<sub>NAT</sub>'. The disagreement is between three broad camps. Some commentators maintain that Kant's distinction<sub>NAT</sub> contrasts two ontologically distinct sets of objects, (1) such that things in themselves are one set and appearances are the other, and (2) such that things in themselves have absolute reality, whereas the existence of appearances somehow depends upon things in themselves.<sup>5</sup> Other commentators maintain that Kant's distinction<sub>NAT</sub> contrasts two ontologically distinct sets of properties of objects, such that things in themselves are the intrinsic properties of objects and appearances are the extrinsic

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Guyer, P.F. Strawson, and James Van Cleve are all examples of commentators that interpret Kant's distinction<sub>NAT</sub> as being between two sets of ontologically distinct objects. On Guyer's interpretation, Kant does not actually posit an additional set of entities other than empirical objects. That is, things in themselves are not some ghost-like entities that underlie empirical objects. He says that "denying that Kant means to postulate a second set of objects in addition to the ordinary furniture of the universe... is of little avail... But he does something just as unpleasant – namely, *degrade* ordinary objects to mere representations of themselves, or *identify* objects possessing spatial and temporal properties with mere mental entities" (Guyer 1987: 334-5). In contrast, both Strawson and Van Cleve interpret Kant as not really being committed to appearances, in fact, being entities and, therefore, interpret Kant as being committed only to the existence of things in themselves. For instance, Strawson says of things in themselves, "There exists the sphere of supersensible reality, of things, neither spatial nor temporal, as they are in themselves", and he says of the appearances making up the physical world, "Apart from perceptions, they are really nothing at all" (Strawson 1966: 236 & 237). And Van Cleve says that his virtual-object theory of appearances holds "that appearances are intentionalia and that intentionalia are logical constructions out of states of perceivers. It follows that appearances do not, strictly speaking, form a second class of existents alongside things in themselves, since they are only constructions out of noumenal beings and their states" (Van Cleve 1999: 150).

properties.<sup>6</sup> Yet other commentators maintain that the distinction<sub>AT</sub> is between two ways of considering objects. Things as they are in themselves are objects considered apart from our *a priori* subjective conditions, whereas things as they appear are the same set of objects considered in relation to our *a priori* subjective conditions.<sup>7</sup> I, on the other hand, will argue both that ‘things in themselves’ (and its cognates; e.g. ‘things as they are in themselves’), in the *Critique*, is sometimes to be understood as denoting logically possible entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances, i.e. phenomena (I will often call these ‘things in themselves, as putative entities’) and that it is sometimes to be understood as signifying the

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<sup>6</sup> Rae Langton is a prime example. She says, “To say that we know the external appearances of things, but not the things as they are in themselves, is to say that we know the extrinsic, but not the intrinsic, properties of substances” (Langton 1998: 37). But Lucy Allais offers another. On her view, “properties which belong only to things as they appear are dependent on both objects and subjects, and a fortiori are mind-dependent.” (Allais 2004: 674). She uses a non-naïve direct realist position as an analogy. A non-naïve direct realist must be able to accommodate illusions and, thus, be able to coherently say, in certain situations, that the object does not appear how it really is. Take the illusion of a stick being bent when being partially submerged in water. The direct realist cannot mentalize the appearance of the bent stick. Nonetheless, no such appearance of the stick would exist without subjects to perceive it. Hence, appearances are mind-dependent to the extent that they require the possibility of subjects to perceive the object of which they are appearances. However, they are not mental entities. Kant’s theory differs from the direct realist in that the direct realist is committed to appearances to often reflect how the object really is. Whereas Kant takes them to never do so. Things in themselves on Allais’ view is “not the notion of a separate kind of thing which we do not have knowledge, but simply the idea that the things of which we have knowledge have a nature in themselves, that is entirely mind-independent” (Allais 2004: 677). Allais’s view is superior to Langton’s in that it attempts to accommodate Kant’s idealism, while Langton ignores it. However, both Langton and Allais attribute a view to Kant in which he is committed to objects having intrinsic or mind-independent properties (i.e. the objects as they are in themselves). In contrast, Setiya argues that the contrast is between mind-dependent properties that attach to the object and mind-independent properties, if it has any. (Setiya 2004: 63-88). Not only does Setiya’s position accommodate Kant’s idealism, but it fully appreciates just how ignorant we are supposed to be of things as they are in themselves. That is, we do not even know whether they exist.

<sup>7</sup> The major proponent of this interpretation is Henry Allison. Allison maintains that the *a priori* conditions are epistemic conditions. By an epistemic condition, Allison means “a necessary condition for the representations of objects, that is, a condition without which our representations would not relate to objects or, equivalently, possess objective reality.” (Allison 2004: 11). Epistemic conditions are subjective in that “they reflect the structure and operations of the human mind” (ibid.). They are objective, or have an objectivating function, in that “they condition the objectivity of our *representations* of things” (ibid.). Given this view, we may still want to know how those things that are considered in two ways really are. But central to Allison’s view is the repudiation that there is an answer to the question of how things are: “It is, however, just the assumption that there must be some standpoint-independent fact of the matter, which is implicit in any ontological reading of transcendental idealism, that is called into question by the interpretation advocated here” (Allison 2004: 47).

consideration of empirical objects apart from our *a priori* subjective conditions. Because I intend for my interpretation to coincide, in part, with Kant's assertion that <noumenon> is a problematic concept, I call my interpretation of Kant's notion of things in themselves the 'problematic view of things in themselves'. A problematic concept has three characteristics: (1) it is an indeterminate concept (i.e. we cannot be assured that any object belongs to its extension); (2) it is a logically consistent concept (i.e. it is not self-contradictory); and (3) it is connected to cognitions of objects such that it limits their pretensions (B310).

Broadly construed, my argument for the problematic view is to show that things in themselves are a function of Kant's cognitive theory. More specifically, Kant's notion of a thing in itself is intimately bound up with the powers, and limitations, that Kant assigns to the human understanding in the *Critique*. Thus, on the one hand, I must show that things in themselves are a function of Kant's cognitive theory, and, on the other hand, I must show why the cognitive theory of the *Critique* entails the problematic view. More narrowly, however, this requires several steps.

The first step of my strategy is to argue that Kant views all and only noumena to be things in themselves. This entails that an investigation into noumena is an investigation into things in themselves. This is significant because Kant never offers an extensive discussion of things in themselves, at least not under the title of 'things in themselves'. However, he offers an extensive discussion of noumena in two places: one place is in his *Dissertation*; the other place is in "The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena". Consequently, the *Dissertation* and "The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena" serve as resources in examining Kant's notion of a thing in itself.

The second step is to offer an extensive investigation into noumena. This step, however, is complicated by several factors. First, noumena of the *Critique* differ from noumena of the *Dissertation*. A noumenon of the *Dissertation* is a noumenon in the positive sense: an *object* of a

*non-sensible intuition...*” (B307). In contrast, a noumenon of the *Critique* is a noumenon in the negative sense: “a thing so far as it is *not an object of our sensible intuition*” (ibid.). Second, this difference between the *Dissertation* and the *Critique* is a consequence of (1) noumena being a function of our cognitive theory and (2) the cognitive theory of the *Critique* differing from the cognitive theory of the *Dissertation*. Specifically, the understanding (or intelligence) in the *Dissertation* is assigned a real use, which is tantamount to assigning humans an intuitive intellect (i.e. a non-sensible intuition). In the *Critique*, however, Kant limits the understanding to a logical use, which limits its role to the exposition of phenomena and to making experience possible. Thus, third, an extensive investigation into noumena is tied up with (1) the question of why Kant’s cognitive theory changes between the *Dissertation* and the *Critique* and (2) the question of how they differ. Lastly, “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” – one of our two resources for investigating noumena – includes, in the A-edition, a seemingly logically compelling argument that conflicts with Kant’s assertion that the understanding is limited to a logical use. I will call this the ‘appearing argument’. In short, it states that, because there is an appearance (i.e. an appearing), there must be something that causes the appearance (i.e. there must be something doing the appearing).

In separating out these interconnected issues, I begin with examining the noumena of the *Dissertation*, since Kant’s notion of a noumenon is first introduced there. Two things are aimed at in that examination: (1) an illustration that noumena are a function of Kant’s cognitive theory, especially in that they are the objects cognized by the real use of the understanding (i.e. intelligence), and (2) a demonstration that noumena, in the *Dissertation*, are objects that are ontologically distinct from phenomena and, more specifically, are replete with properties independent of any relation with human cognition. Next, I turn to examining why Kant’s cognitive

theory changes and how it changes. In short, it changes because of the objective validity problem – the problem of how representations relate to objects, especially *a priori* representations – and it changes by limiting human understanding to a merely logical use. Since Kant’s inclusion of the appearing argument may be erroneously read as a retraction of Kant’s assertion that the understanding only has a logical use, I end this step by showing that Kant does not regard the appearing argument to be logically compelling, even though he regards it to be psychologically compelling.

The third step includes a series of arguments for my interpretation of Kant’s notion of a thing in itself. I first bring to bear the consequences of my examination of the objective validity problem. More specifically, I draw the consequences of how the modification of Kant’s cognitive theory must affect his conception of noumena and, therefore, how he must understand things in themselves in the *Critique*. In short, this illuminates how the *Critique’s* cognitive theory entails the problematic view of things in themselves. Second, I consider other evidence for the claim that Kant adopts the problematic view of things in themselves: (1) in “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”, Kant offers textual support for the problematic view, and (2) the project of *Critique of Practical Reason* can get off the ground only if Kant’s cognitive theory admits of both things in themselves, as putative entities, and of our capability of thinking empirical objects apart from sensibility.

The final (main) section (§1.5) of this chapter reflects on how the examination of Kant’s modification of his cognitive theory bears on the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance and on the question of whether Kant can be committed to the Noumenal Causation Thesis. In particular, the consequences of the objective validity problem (i.e. how it forces Kant to modify his cognitive theory) illuminate three specific commitments that bear directly on why



we cannot cognize things in themselves (or why the thought of empirical objects apart from sensibility is not cognition of the object), and, as a result, belong under the heading of the Doctrine of Ignorance. Incidentally, two of these commitments make it impossible for Kant to be consistently committed (on theoretical grounds) to the Noumenal Causation Thesis. I now turn to the first step of my argument.

### §1.2 The Applicability of 'Noumena' to Things in Themselves

In illuminating Kant's notion of a thing in itself, I will be investigating his notion of a noumenon. Accordingly, I turn to "The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena" to show that Kant considers all and only noumena to be things in themselves, thereby licensing an investigation into noumena as being an investigation into things in themselves. Pertinent to my present concern is the fact that he applies 'noumena' to things in themselves on several occasions, thereby suggesting that 'noumena' and 'things in themselves' range over the same entities (or ways of considering things). Consider the passages in question:

The concept of a *noumenon* – that is, of a thing which is not to be thought as object of the senses but as a thing in itself, solely through a pure understanding – is not in any way contradictory. (A254/B310)

Further, the concept of a noumenon is necessary to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge. The remaining things to which it does not apply are entitled noumena... (A254-5/B310)

What our understanding acquires through the concept of a noumenon, is a negative extension; that is to say, understanding is not limited through sensibility; on the contrary, it itself limits sensibility by applying the term noumena to things in themselves (things not regarded as appearances). (A256/B312)

Now whence, I ask, can the understanding obtain these synthetic propositions, when the concepts are to be applied, not in their relation to possible experience, but to things in themselves (noumena)? (A259/B314)

Because I am arguing for the problematic view of things in themselves, it is worthwhile to briefly mention that, congruent with the problematic view, (1) the second and fourth passages suggest that things in themselves are entities that are ontologically distinct from the objects of experience (i.e. appearances), while (2) the first and third passages suggest that ‘things in themselves’ is shorthand for ‘things regarded apart from sensibility’. At any rate, in all four cases, ‘noumena’ is applied to things in themselves, such that ‘noumena’ and ‘things in themselves’ are coextensive. The first passage asserts that a noumenon is a thing thought as a thing in itself. The second asserts that noumena and things in themselves are the entities that sensible intuition does not apply to. The third passage asserts that Kant applies ‘noumena’ to things in themselves. And, in the fourth passage, by placing ‘noumena’ in parentheses immediately after ‘things in themselves’, Kant intimates that noumena and things in themselves are the same things. Consequently, all and only noumena are things in themselves and, therefore, an investigation into noumena is an investigation into things in themselves. I now turn to the second step of my strategy.

### §1.3 The Dissertation’s Noumena, The Modification of Kant’s Cognitive Theory, and The Appearing Argument

The previous section has licensed an investigation into noumena as being equivalent to an investigation into Kant’s notion of a thing in itself. However, as aforementioned, an extensive investigation into noumena is entangled with an investigation into the modification of Kant’s cognitive theory and with an investigation into the appearing argument. More specifically, Kant’s notion of a noumenon evolves over time and along with the evolution of his cognitive theory. These are entangled with the appearing argument, because, as we will see, if it is a logically compelling argument, it suggests that Kant is mistaken both in modifying his cognitive theory and modifying his notion of a noumenon. In order to separate these issues out, I have chosen to proceed

in accordance with the order in which Kant's conception of a noumenon evolves. Consequently, this section (§1.3) is, itself, broken into two (sub)sections (§1.3.1 and §1.3.2). Broadly construed, the first examines the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory and notion of a noumenon, while the second examines the modification of Kant's cognitive theory (both the cause of the modification and manner in which it is modified) and defends it against the apparent consequences of the appearing argument. I turn to the first (sub)section.

### §1.3.1 *The Dissertation's Cognitive Theory and Its Noumena*

As just mentioned, this section examines the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory and its notion of a noumenon, but, more specifically, I have two aims. One is to illustrate that an object is a noumenon, in part, because it is an object that is cognized by the real use of the understanding (i.e. intelligence). Accordingly, I begin this section by laying out the basic elements of Kant's cognitive theory in the *Dissertation*. My second aim is to demonstrate that the noumena of the *Dissertation* are objects that are ontologically distinct from phenomena and are replete with their properties independent of any relation to human cognition. As we will see, Kant offers two characterizations of the *Dissertation's* distinction between phenomena and noumena (hereafter  $\text{distinction}_{\text{ID}}$ ). On one characterization, the  $\text{distinction}_{\text{ID}}$  appears to be ontological (i.e. a distinction between two sets of objects that have no members in common). However, on the other characterization, it appears to be an epistemic distinction (i.e. a distinction between two different ways of cognizing the same set of objects). In the examination of these characterizations, it will become evident that the  $\text{distinction}_{\text{ID}}$  is a function of Kant's cognitive theory, but, moreover, I will argue that the examination of the characterizations is insufficient for determining whether the  $\text{distinction}_{\text{ID}}$  is ontological or epistemic. Consequently, I turn to arguing that the  $\text{distinction}_{\text{ID}}$  is primarily an ontological distinction. I proceed to the basic elements of the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory.

### §1.3.1.1 Kant's Cognitive Theory in the Dissertation

The projects of the *Dissertation* and the *Critique* share an underlying motivation, namely, Kant's dissatisfaction with metaphysics. Kant considered metaphysics to be the most important field of human study, yet, at the same time, thought very little progress had been made in it. Both the *Dissertation* and the *Critique* are attempts at providing the correct method for metaphysical investigation so as to put it upon the secure path of a science. Furthermore, the methods offered by each are informed by the cognitive theory that Kant held at the respective times. Leibniz's cognitive theory was dominant at the time of the *Dissertation* (as well as at the time of the *Critique*), and it maintains that human cognitions are, fundamentally, all of the same kind. Accordingly, on the Leibnizian theory, the major difference between cognitions is their clarity: the extent to which they are distinct or indistinct.<sup>8</sup> The *Dissertation* is largely a repudiation of this view. There, Kant maintains that we have cognitions of different kinds, the kind of cognition being a function of which cognitive faculty an object is cognized through: sensibility or the intelligence (i.e. the understanding). Kant defines the two faculties of human cognition in the following way:

SENSIBILITY is the receptivity of the subject through which it is possible that its power of representation should be affected in a certain manner by the presence of some object. INTELLIGENCE (rationality) is the faculty of the subject through which it is able to represent things which cannot by their own characters act upon the senses.<sup>9</sup> (ID §3)

In comparison to one another, sensibility is a mode of cognition that is passive, while the intelligence is active. Sensibility is passive in that it requires the presence of an object to affect it

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<sup>8</sup> As Emily Carson notes in presenting the Marquise du Châtelet's exposition of the Leibniz-Wolffian view of space and geometry: "The key features of [the Leibniz-Wolffian] view... are, first, that sensibility is conceived of as the confused perception of the real objects of the understanding, the existence of which is established by the understanding..." (Carson 2004: 170).

<sup>9</sup> All quotes from Kant's *Dissertation* come from Handyside's translation (Kant 1928) unless specified otherwise. I cite the *Dissertation* using in-text citations of the *Dissertation*'s numbered sections.

in order for its power of representation to produce representations. The intelligence is active in that, in representing an object, it is not acted upon by that object and, consequently, must somehow reach out to it.

In the *Dissertation*, Kant maintains that each mode can be a source of genuine cognition (i.e. a source of genuine knowledge). The representations of sensibility can count as sources of genuine cognition in two ways: (1) they bear witness to the objects that cause them and (2) the objects of experience, being sensible representations, can agree with the sensible predicates attributed to them in judgment (i.e. in principle, the objects of experience can satisfy the conditions of truth). The intelligence has two uses: a logical use and a real use. The former contributes to sensible cognition through the act of reflection upon appearances, which is “the only path from appearances to experience” and, therefore, is the path from appearances to phenomena (i.e. the objects of experience) (ID §5). The latter use, however, is a source of cognition of objects independent of sensibility. What we will soon see in his two characterizations of the distinction<sub>ID</sub> is that Kant draws that distinction based on the fact that humans have these two distinct sources for cognizing objects. I proceed to an examination of the two characterizations in question.

#### §1.3.1.2 Two Characterizations of the Distinction<sub>ID</sub>

In the *Dissertation*, Kant offers two characterizations of the distinction<sub>ID</sub>: one appears, *prima facie*, to be an ontological distinction, while the other appears, *prima facie*, to be an epistemic distinction. Here, I want to do two things. The first is to draw your attention to the fact that both characterizations are a function of how the object is given to our cognition, and the second is to argue that the characterizations, themselves, are insufficient for determining whether the distinction<sub>ID</sub> is best understood as being ontological or epistemic.

The following passage offers the distinction<sub>ID</sub> in its ontological guise:

The object of sensibility is the sensible; that which contains nothing save what must be known through intelligence, is the intelligible. The former was called, in the schools of the ancients, phenomenon; the latter, noumenon. (ID §3)

On its face, this passage claims that sensibles (i.e. phenomena) are one set of objects, while intelligibles (i.e. noumena) are another set. Furthermore, the set that an object belongs to is a function of whether it is cognized through sensibility or through the intelligence. If it is cognized by sensibility, then it is a phenomenon, but if it is cognized by the real use of the intelligence, then it is a noumenon. However, even though this formulation of the distinction<sub>ID</sub> has an ontological air to it, it can nonetheless, in its present form, be plausibly rendered as an epistemic distinction, because it is unclear what ‘sensible’ refers to.<sup>10</sup> If sensibles are the objects that must be present to affect our power of representation, thereby causing us to have representations, then it is possible for one object to be both a phenomenon and a noumenon, in which case, <phenomenon> and <noumenon> merely track an epistemic distinction, not an ontological one. But if the sensibles are objects caused by the presence of an object to sensibility (as they are worked up by the logical use of the intelligence), then, barring a direct realist view of cognition (in which the content of our empirical representations is numerically identical with the objects that cause them), no object is both a phenomenon and a noumenon. Thus, the ontological guise of the distinction<sub>ID</sub> is not actually sufficient for determining whether the distinction<sub>ID</sub> is an ontological distinction. So now I turn my attention to the second characterization.

The second characterization, at first glance, suggests that sensibles (i.e. what comes to us sensitively) are to be construed as the objects that cause us to have sensible representations, in

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Guyer also acknowledges this lack of clarity, but he notes it in its epistemic guise: “Kant is somewhat ambivalent about which objects are being classified as appearances [i.e. sensibles] and which are being classified as things as they are [i.e. intelligibles]” (Guyer 1987: 15). However, I argue below in §1.3.1.3 that Kant means ‘sensibles’ to refer to phenomena and ‘intelligibles’ to refer to the objects that cause phenomena.

which case, our two cognitive faculties simply offer us two different ways in which an object can be cognized:

This shows us that what come to us sensitively are representations of things as they appear, and what we get in the intellectual way are representations of things as they are.<sup>11</sup> (ID §4)

Here, Kant construes his distinction<sub>ID</sub> between things as they appear, which correspond to phenomena, and things as they are, which correspond to noumena. Again, note that whether an object is a phenomenon (i.e. thing as it appears) or a noumenon (i.e. thing as it is) is determined by which cognitive faculty it relates to. For, if we cognize the object through sensibility, then it is a thing as it appears, but, if we cognize it through the real use of the intelligence, then it is a thing as it is. This characterization suggests an epistemic distinction because it seems that one and the same object can be cognized through our sensibility and our intelligence. Thus, one and the same object can come “before us sensitively” (i.e. be a thing as it appears) and come “in the intellectual way” (i.e. be a thing as it is).<sup>12</sup> But upon closer inspection of it, it is not obvious that Kant is

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<sup>11</sup> This quote is taken from Jonathan Bennet’s online translation of Kant’s *Dissertation* (2010: 5). Bennet’s translation, in this case, better reflects the Latin than Handyside’s translation: “patet, sensitive cogitate esse rerum repraesentationes, uti apparent, intellectualia autem, sicuti sunt.” Handyside’s reads: “It is clear, therefore, that things sensitively apprehended are representations of things *as they appear*, while things intellectually known are representations of things *as they are*.” (Kant 1928: 44) This suggests that the distinction is not between two ways of representing *things*, but a distinction between two kinds of *representations*: the representations that are sensitively apprehended versus the representations that are intellectually known.

<sup>12</sup> Carson notes that “[t]his is a difficult characterization to understand. It seems as though Kant is saying that the intellect represents as they “really are” the very same things which sensibility represents *only* as they appear (Carson 2004: 176). The interpretation of this distinction<sub>ID</sub> that Carson is referring to is the one offered by Michael Friedman: “the intellectual faculty of understanding or reason by which we represent the underlying monadic realm as it is in itself, and the new faculty of sensibility by which we represent this underlying reality as it appears to creatures like ourselves.” (Friedman 1992: 31). Carson takes issue with interpreting the distinction<sub>ID</sub> being between two ways of cognizing “the underlying monadic realm as it is in itself”. Instead, she argues that “[i]t is primarily a distinction between cognition that depends on subjective conditions and cognition that does not” (Carson 2004, 179). The “subjective conditions” she appeals to are space and time, and she deflates intellectual cognition to general or abstract cognitions. To the extent that Friedman’s interpretation of ‘things as they appear’ is to be construed as the underlying reality literally showing up to us, albeit under the subjective conditions of space and time, and, therefore, to the extent that his interpretation is to be construed as the properties of these underlying monadic entities as being cognized under the subjective conditions of space and time, Carson’s argument against Friedman’s interpretation is good. For she notes that this, in all practicality, collapses Kant’s cognitive theory into the Leibniz-Wolffian theory. Namely, since

offering a mere epistemic distinction. Aside from Kant's apparent discussion of two ways in which one thing can be cognized, it is unclear what he means by 'what comes before us sensitively' and, *a fortiori*, it is unclear what he takes us to be cognizing when we represent a thing as it appears. Is the thing that "comes before us sensitively" the object that causes the sensibility to produce representations, or is it those representations thereby produced? This second characterization, therefore, leaves it an open question whether the objects that are sensibly apprehended are the same objects that we represent "in the intellectual way". Thus, the mere examination of these two characterizations is insufficient for settling whether Kant means for his distinction<sub>ID</sub> to be understood epistemically or ontologically. I settle this question by arguing that Kant must conceive the distinction<sub>ID</sub> as being ontological.

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both sensibility and the intelligence cognize the properties of monads, and since only the intelligence cognizes them how they really are, cognitions of them by sensibility are, in comparison, merely confused representations. But either Friedman is not taking seriously Kant's definition of 'things as they appear' or Carson is giving a straw man against Friedman's position. As we will see in §1.3.1.3, Kant defines 'things as they appear' in terms of modifications of the subject. Quite opposed to our ordinary sense of 'appear', in the *Dissertation*, when an object appears, neither it nor its properties literally show up to us. In sensibility, what we have access to are the modifications those objects cause in us. Hence, we should not construe the distinction<sub>ID</sub> as being between how objects literally *show* to us and how they *really* are, but between how the object is and the modifications it causes in a subject. On this interpretation of the distinction<sub>ID</sub>, appearances do not collapse into confused representations of how things really are, because the informational content of appearances do not inform us whatsoever about the properties of the objects that cause them. As we will see in §1.3.1.3, the appearances represent things as they are only to the limited extent that they bear witness to their existence. Furthermore, Carson's argument for her interpretation is wanting. First, space and time are not the only subjective conditions present in the *Dissertation*. Kant acknowledges that the concepts of the understanding in their real use are "laws in born in the mind" (ID §8). Hence, the cognitions from the intelligence are not free from subjective conditions. Second, generality is not sufficient for cognitions to "pass out of the class of sensitives" (ID §5), and this leads into the third point. If the cognitions of the intelligence are nothing more than cognizing with generality and in abstraction from space and time, then we are left wondering what the real use of the understanding cognizes. If it is the appearances (i.e. modifications of the subject), then it is not the real use, but the logical use, which works appearances up into phenomena (i.e. objects of experience), and, as the previous point notes, no matter the generality of the logical use, it will not pass out of being sensible cognitions. But Kant tells us what the intelligence cognizes: those objects that "cannot by their own characters [i.e. properties] act upon the sense"; that is, those objects (and their properties) that are exempt from this subjective condition [i.e. modifications of the subject] (ID §3 & §4).



### §1.3.1.3 The Argument for the Ontological Distinction<sub>ID</sub>

Three things are required for demonstrating that the distinction<sub>ID</sub> is ontological: (1) it must be shown that Kant regards phenomena as being a kind of object, (2) likewise, it must be shown that Kant regards noumena as being a kind of object, and (3) it must be demonstrated that no phenomena are noumena. The first two points are relatively easy to show. The third point, though, is a little more involved, for it requires a closer examination of the causal component to the *Dissertation*'s cognitive theory. In particular, you will recall that the *Dissertation*'s definition of 'sensibility' informs us that our power of representation is affected by the presence of an object.<sup>13</sup> In order to demonstrate that Kant's distinction<sub>ID</sub> satisfies the above requirements, I turn to arguing three points: (1) Kant's causal story, in fact, demonstrates that phenomena are numerically distinct from the objects that cause us to cognize them, (2) Kant regards phenomena as being a kind of object, and (3) the object that causes us to cognize phenomena are noumena. I treat these in order.

Generally, if  $x$  causes  $y$ , then  $x$  and  $y$  are numerically distinct. But this general rule does not hold for all cognitive theories. For instance, if our sensible epistemic apparatus is constituted such that the representations caused by the presence of an object are nothing more than that object showing through to us, then the fact that the object causes our representations of it is insufficient for demonstrating that our representations are numerically distinct from their causes. However, that possibility is clearly ruled out by Kant when he explains why "things sensitively apprehended are representations of things *as they appear*" (ID §4). The following is his explanation:

[A]ll sensitive apprehension depends upon the special nature of the subject, in so far as it is capable of being modified in diverse ways by the presence of objects; and these modifications may differ in different subjects in accordance with variations in the nature of these subjects. (ID §4)

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<sup>13</sup> See §1.3.1.1 for the *Dissertation*'s definition of 'sensibility'.

The reason Kant gives for equating the things apprehended – a kind of representation – with things as they appear, is that the things apprehended are modifications of the subject caused by the presence of an object. Being modifications of the subject, “phenomena are, properly, appearances, not ideas, of things, and express no internal and absolute quality of the objects... [and] so far as they are sensual concepts or apprehensions, they bear witness, as being caused, to the presence of an object...” (ID §11).<sup>14</sup> Since phenomena are modifications of the subject and, therefore, cannot express the absolute properties of the objects that cause them, the objects that cause phenomena must be numerically distinct from them. I now turn to arguing that Kant regards phenomena as being a kind of object.

The fact that Kant discusses phenomena as being sensible apprehensions, and therefore as being modifications of the subject, may raise doubts about whether he considers them to be objects. However, Kant assigns the intellect a logical use (as opposed to its real use), which has the task of working appearances up into objects of experience:<sup>15</sup>

Thus the only path from appearance to experience is by reflection according to the logical use of intellect. The common concepts of experience are called empirical, and its objects phenomena... (ID §5)

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<sup>14</sup> Guyer finds this position of Kant’s perplexing. He says, “Paradoxically, Kant appears to think that a passive reception of an external stimulus reveals more about the constitution of the *mind* than of the object, whereas an active creation of a representation better reflects the independent fact than the mere nature of the mind” (Guyer 1987: 15). Never mind the question of passive reception vs. active creation. The difficulty of how the properties of our representations could be the same as the properties of those objects that cause us to have those representations is central to Kant’s distinction between things as they appear and things as they are.

<sup>15</sup> To the contrary, Guyer claims that Kant, in the *Dissertation*, “advances a theory in which the faculty of *intuiting* objects functions independently of any other faculty to provide a system for representation of external objects, and in which an ability to *conceive* of objects... has no clearly demarcated function at all” (Guyer 1987: 14). This is unequivocally false, and for two reasons. First, sensibility – the faculty of intuiting – requires the logical use of the intelligence – the faculty of conceiving – for representing objects of experience and, therefore does not “function independently of any other faculty to provide a system of representation of external objects”. Second, our pure concepts of the intelligence are employed in representing things as they are (i.e. representing the noumena that cause us to cognize phenomena), and, therefore, our ability to conceive objects do have a “clearly demarcated function”. For instance, <causality> – one of our *a priori* concepts – enables phenomena to bear witness to the noumenal objects that cause them.

Thus, as we see, even though phenomena are sensual apprehensions, Kant also regards them as being the objects of experience. This is further evidenced by why we can have perfectly true knowledge of phenomena:

On the other hand, to take judgments about what is known by sense, the truth of a judgment consists in the agreement of its predicate with the given subject. But the concept of the subject, so far as it is a phenomenon, can be given only by its relation to the sensitive faculty of knowledge; and it is by the same faculty that sensitively observable predicates are also given. Hence it is clear that the representations of subject and of predicate arise according to common laws, and so allow of a perfectly true knowledge. (ID §11)

Here, Kant offers a variant of a correspondence theory of truth, namely, one in which a judgment is true just in case the predicates asserted of the subject of that judgment agree with the properties the subject in fact has. In the above passage, we see that it is precisely because phenomena have their origin as modifications of the subject that sensible predicates, which have the same origin, can agree with them, thereby making possible knowledge of objects of experience.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Kant regards phenomena as being a kind of object, namely, objects of experience. The only thing that remains to be shown is that the objects that cause phenomena are noumena.

In light of the causal component of the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory, a brief reexamination of the two characterizations of Kant's distinction<sub>ID</sub> will suffice for determining that the objects that cause phenomena are noumena. First, on Kant's second characterization, he asserts that "things intellectually known are representations of things *as they are*" (ID §4). But, on Kant's first characterization, the objects intellectually known are intelligibles, which are also identified as

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<sup>16</sup> Contrary to this, Guyer maintains that "in all cases the objects represented are clearly conceived to be objects which exist quite independently of the representations of them" (Guyer 1987: 15). Guyer maintains this for two reasons: (1) he fails to recognize that, in the *Dissertation*, Kant assigns phenomena an epistemic role of bearing witness to the existence of the objects that cause them (see §1.3.2.3.1), and (2) he maintains that the only objects picked out by 'noumena' and 'things as they are' are God and moral perfection, and never the objects that cause phenomena. Now, certainly Kant conceives the objects that cause us to have representations to exist independently of those representations, but those are the many noumena that phenomena bear witness to.

being noumena. It follows that noumena are things as they are. Now, Kant's reason for asserting that these intellectually known things are things as they are is that "whatever is exempt from this subjective condition [i.e. the modifications of the subject] regards only the objects" (ibid.). That is, noumena are things as they are, precisely because they do not consist of the properties involved in the modification of the subject; rather, they are replete with their properties independent of any relation to human cognition. Since the objects in question in the previous quote are the objects that affect sensibility, it follows that the objects that cause us to cognize phenomena are noumena.

I have just argued that Kant regards phenomena and noumena to be kinds of objects and that, since noumena cause phenomena, no noumena are phenomena. Consequently, it follows that the distinction<sub>ID</sub> is an ontological distinction. Furthermore, it follows that, on Kant's cognitive theory in the *Dissertation*, sensibility (plus the logical use of the intelligence) and (the real use of) the intelligence, together, open the field of two ontologically distinct kinds of objects for our cognition. Sensibility enables our cognition of phenomena, while the intelligence enables our cognition of noumena. I now turn to examining the modification of Kant's cognitive theory.

### *§1.3.2 The Objective Validity Problem, Kant's Modification of his Cognitive Theory, and the Appearing Argument*

In the previous (sub)section, I demonstrated that the distinction between phenomena and noumena is a function of Kant's cognitive theory. Significantly, the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory, unlike Kant's predecessors, assigned humans with two separate cognitive faculties: sensibility and the intelligence (i.e. the understanding). Furthermore, on the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory, objects can be cognized through either faculty. Objects that we cognize through the sensibility (together with the logical use of the understanding) are phenomena. Objects that we cognize through (the real use of) the understanding are noumena. I also, in the previous

(sub)section, demonstrated that, in the *Dissertation*, the distinction between phenomena and noumena is ontological. Phenomena are objects of experience. Noumena are their numerically distinct causes and are replete with properties independent of any relation they have to human cognition.

After writing the *Dissertation*, Kant considered a significant challenge to the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory. In the case of sensibility, it was evident to Kant how sensibility enabled our cognition of objects. Namely, since phenomena and sensible predicates both have their sources in the modifications of the subject, it is possible that, in judgments about phenomena, the subject concept can agree with the predicate concept. Consequently, we can have perfectly true knowledge of the objects of experience. But, in the case of the understanding, it is not evident that we are justified in attributing intellectual predicates to noumena in our judgments of them. Ultimately, as we will see, this is because it is not evident how our intellectual concepts relate to noumena such that we are (epistemically) entitled to apply them to noumena.

I have, thus far, simply asserted (1) that the noumena of the *Dissertation* differ from the noumena of the *Critique* and (2) that Kant's cognitive theory changes from the *Dissertation* to the *Critique*. Accordingly, in this (sub)section, I first want to show that Kant, in the *Critique*, modifies his cognitive theory such that he thinks it is impossible for us to establish the objective validity of <noumenon> (i.e. it is impossible for us to determine whether any objects belong to the extension of <noumenon>). Incidentally, this will also suggest that Kant regards the appearing argument to be logically unconvincing. Second, I aim to illuminate the problem – the objective validity problem – that inevitably led Kant to modify his cognitive theory and to regard the objective validity of <noumenon> to be unestablished by our cognitive faculties. At the same time, the examination of the objective validity problem helps to provide insight into how Kant's notion of

a noumenon is modified in the *Critique*. I proceed to showing that Kant, in the *Critique*, modifies his cognitive theory such that he thinks it is impossible for us to establish the objective validity of <noumenon>.

#### §1.3.2.1 The “Recounting” and the Modification of Kant’s Cognitive Theory

In §1.2, I argued that all and only noumena are things in themselves, thereby licensing an investigation into noumena as also being an investigation into things in themselves. As aforementioned, Kant discusses noumena extensively in two locations: the *Dissertation* and “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”. §1.3.1 constitutes an investigation into what the *Dissertation* has to say about noumena. Here, I begin the investigation of what “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” has to say about noumena. In particular, I want to start with a difficult segment of the A-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”. In this segment, Kant offers a “recounting” of the philosophical developments of the “Transcendental Aesthetic” as they pertain to the objective validity of <noumenon>. The difficulty lies in the fact that Kant’s description of the “Transcendental Aesthetic” is, on his view, false, which is why I put ‘recounting’ in scare quotes. But despite this difficulty, reviewing this segment is worthwhile because it illustrates that Kant’s modification of his cognitive theory affects both his conception of noumena and whether he regards the appearing argument to be logically compelling.

In considering this segment, I first want to consider Kant’s “recounting” and offer a description of the events that take place in it. Second, I will consider a passage that follows immediately after the “recounting” – one that illustrates that Kant regards his “recounting” to be a false description of the “Transcendental Aesthetic”. Third, I draw out the consequences of these passages. The following is Kant’s “recounting”:

Appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called *phaenomena*. But if I postulate things which are mere objects of understanding, and which, nevertheless, can be given as such to an intuition, although not to one that is sensible – given therefore *coram intuitu intellectuali* – such things would be entitled *noumena (intelligibilia)*.

Now we must bear in mind that the concept of appearances, as limited by the Transcendental Aesthetic, already itself establishes the objective validity of *noumena* and justifies the division of objects into *phaenomena* and *noumena*, and so of the world into a world of the senses and a world of the understanding (*mundus sensibilis et intelligibilis*), and indeed in such manner that the distinction does not refer merely to the logical form of our knowledge of one and the same thing, according as it is indistinct or distinct, but to the difference in the manner in which the two worlds can be first given to our knowledge, and in conformity with this difference, to the manner in which they are in themselves generically distinct from one another. For if the senses represent to us something merely *as it appears*, this something must also in itself be a thing, and an object of a non-sensible intuition, that is, of the understanding. In other words, a [kind of] knowledge must be possible in which there is no sensibility, and which alone has reality that is absolutely objective. Through it objects will be represented *as they are*, whereas in the empirical employment of our understanding things will be known only *as they appear*. (A248-50)

The passage begins by introducing the reader of the *Critique* to the distinction between phenomena and noumena – a distinction he first introduces in the *Dissertation*. The categories are the *a priori* concepts of the understanding. Thus, we see in the passage that, in introducing the distinction between phenomena and noumena, Kant maps phenomena onto appearances that have undergone the logical use of the *a priori* concepts of the understanding. Furthermore, he suggests that, if there are objects that are objects only of the understanding, then they are noumena. Hence, Kant begins this passage with the very same distinction between phenomena and noumena that he offers in the *Dissertation*. It, then, turns (1) to the claim that the “Transcendental Aesthetic” establishes the objective validity of <noumenon>, (2) to referencing his *Dissertation* with “*mundus sensibilis et intelligibilis*”, (3) to two descriptions of that distinction (phenomena vs. noumena, and things represented as they appear vs. things represented as they are), and (4) to offering a variant of the appearing argument, which is what purports to establish the objective validity of <noumenon> and

justify the division of phenomena and noumena into two worlds. Thus, the above passage reads as Kant affirming that the noumena of the *Critique* are the same as the noumena of the *Dissertation* and, furthermore, that the appearances of the “Transcendental Aesthetic” justifies the objective validity of <noumenon>, because, through the existence of appearances, we can cognize that noumena in fact exist. However, the “recounting” takes on a different character once the reader pushes past it. Immediately following the “recounting”, Kant says,

If this [recounting] be so, it would seem to follow that we cannot assert, what we have hitherto maintained, that the pure modes of knowledge yielded by our understanding are never anything more than principles of the exposition of appearance... (A250)

To maintain that “the pure modes of knowledge yielded by our understanding are never anything more than principles of the exposition of appearance” is to limit the *a priori* concepts of the understanding to a logical use. That is, the major difference between the cognitive theory of the *Dissertation* and the *Critique* is that the understanding does not have a real use. But, if Kant’s description of the “Transcendental Aesthetic” in his “recounting” is to be accepted, then Kant must accept that the understanding does have a real use.

Kant is in no way to be construed as suddenly accepting that the understanding has a real use. The “Transcendental Analytic” is spent on, among other things, demonstrating that the *a priori* concepts are limited to the exposition of appearances. Simply put, Kant expends too much effort in the *Critique* in establishing this limitation of the understanding in order to drop it in the span of two paragraphs. Consequently, the “recounting” of the “Transcendental Aesthetic” is false. In particular, he does not regard it as establishing the objective validity of <noumenon>. Nevertheless, it does offer a quick rehearsal of Kant’s implicit reasoning in the *Dissertation*. Specifically, Kant assumes in the *Dissertation* that the appearing argument is logically compelling, but, since it entails a real use of the understanding, he no longer, in the *Critique*, regards it as such.



Because the appearing argument is psychologically compelling, I will, later, take the time to show why it is defective on Kant's view. But, before I can, I must investigate why Kant felt compelled to modify his cognitive theory and the specific consequences of that modification. Thus, I turn to examining the objective validity problem.

### §1.3.2.2 The Objective Validity Problem

A concept has objective validity if an object actually belongs to its extension. However, we are not always in a position to know whether a concept is objectively valid and, therefore, we are not always assured that a concept has legitimate application to objects. So, for instance, I know that my empirical concept <red> is objectively valid because I acquired <red> by seeing red objects of experience (e.g. fire hydrants, stop signs, blood, etc.). Thus, for empirical concepts, their objective validity is guaranteed because, in the acquisition of the concepts, I experienced (some of) the objects to which they apply. But not all of our concepts are acquired by the observation of an object that possesses the corresponding property (of the concept in question). For example, I cannot, in the same way, know whether <fate> is objectively valid, because I did not acquire it through the experience of a fated object. The objective validity of <fate>, therefore, remains a problem.<sup>17</sup> Now, in both the *Dissertation* and the *Critique*, Kant maintains that the understanding

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<sup>17</sup> Guyer states the objective validity problem in the following way: “the problem of how representations which must somehow be connected with the nature of the cognitive subject itself, in order to be known *a priori*, can also provide insight into objects which exist independently of this subject of knowledge” (Guyer 1987: 11). While I take this to be a species of the objective validity problem, it fails to capture that *a posteriori* representations must also relate to objects in order to be cognitions of them. Thus, the general form of the objective validity problem is the following: our representations must be related to objects in order to be cognitions of them. Thus, in the *Critique*, Kant is not solely concerned with how our *a priori* representations relate to objects – in this case, make them possible – but also how empirical representations relate them. On the other hand, the species of the problem that Guyer captures is what gives Kant occasion to consciously address the objective validity problem. Béatrice Longuenesse agrees with me here. She maintains that the specific problem of how *a priori* concepts of the understanding relate to objects “leads Kant to examine more generally the relation between representations and objects of representations” (Longuenesse 1998, 18).

has several inborn *a priori* concepts (e.g. <causality>, <possibility>, <necessity>, <substance>, etc.) (ID §8). Between writing the *Dissertation* and the *Critique*, Kant became aware that, in the *Dissertation*, he merely took it for granted that the *a priori* concepts of the understanding have objective validity with respect to noumena.<sup>18</sup> He writes, in a letter, to Marcus Herz:

In my dissertation I was content to explain the nature of intellectual representations in a merely negative way, namely, to state that they were not modifications of the soul brought about by the object. However, I silently passed over the further question of how a representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be possible.<sup>19</sup>

This worry about the objective validity of our *a priori* concepts is what eventually leads Kant to modify his cognitive theory. Kant offers two formulations of the objective validity problem.<sup>20</sup> One occurs in the famous letter to Marcus Herz. The other occurs in the “Transcendental Analytic” and intimates Kant’s solution to the problem. Accordingly, in considering the objective validity problem, I will consider these formulations in turn.

Examination of the first formulation reveals why the objective validity of *a priori* concepts is dubious, including whether they are objectively valid with respect to noumena. Examination of the second formulation reveals Kant’s general plan, in the *Critique*, for demonstrating their objective validity. The following is the first formulation:

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<sup>18</sup> Guyer denies that the real use of the intellect applies to things in themselves that appear to us as phenomena (or, in my terminology, the objects that cause us to have phenomena). He does so because he believes only God and moral perfection are cognized through the real use of the intellect (1987: 17). This view is incorrect. First, the pure concepts of the understanding, “are representations of things *as they are*” (ID §4). And ‘things as they are’ refers to “whatever is exempt from this subjective condition [i.e. modifications of the subject]”, which, in turn, “regards only the objects” (ibid.). The extension of <noumenon>, then, includes not only God and moral perfection, but any object that causes us to have phenomena. Second, as we saw above, in the appearing argument, Kant seems to maintain that cognizing appearances entails a distinct thing causing us to cognize it. He further seems to rely on the appearing argument to establish the objective validity of <noumenon>. But this could not even be a remotely plausible argument if the objects that putatively cause us to have appearances are not noumena (i.e. the things cognized by the real use of the intelligence).

<sup>19</sup> (Kant 2009: 313).

<sup>20</sup> See Guyer (1987: 11-24) for an extensive discussion of the objective validity problem.

I asked myself this question: What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call “representation” to the object? If a representation comprises only the manner in which the subject is affected by the object, then it is easy to see how it is in conformity with this object, namely, as an effect accords with its cause, and it is easy to see how this modification of our mind can *represent* something, that is, have an object... Similarly, if that in us which we call “representation” were active with regard to the object, that is, if the object were itself created by the representation... the conformity of these representations to their object could be understood... However, our understanding, through its representations, is neither the cause of the object... nor is the object that cause of our intellectual representations...<sup>21</sup>

Here, we see that Kant is worried about how a representation can “*represent* something, that is, have an object”, or, as I like to put it, Kant is worried about how a representation can take an object in its extension and, therefore, be a representation *of* that object. Two cases seem straightforward to him. First, if an object causes us to produce a representation, then, through that causal relation, the representation can take the object into its extension. Second, if a representation causes an object to exist, then, again, through that causal relation, the representation could take the object in its extension. The problem in the case of our *a priori* concepts is that they are neither caused by noumena nor do they cause them. If they were caused by noumena, they would be empirical concepts, not *a priori* ones. And if they were the causes of noumena, we would be gods, not the (unfortunately) limited beings that we are. Therefore, even if noumena were to belong to the extensions of <causality>, <substance>, etc., there is no straightforward kind of relation that obtains between noumena and our *a priori* concepts, such that we would be epistemically justified in applying those concepts to them. Consequently, it is questionable whether the understanding has a real use, for it has a real use only if it we are epistemically justified in applying its concepts to noumena.

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<sup>21</sup> (Kant 2009: 312-3)

The reformulation of the objective validity problem suggests a way in which the *a priori* concepts of our understanding can have objective validity:

There are only two possible ways in which synthetic representations and their objects can establish connection, obtain necessary relation to one another, and, as it were, meet one another. Either the object alone must make the representation possible, or the representation alone must make the object possible. In the former case, this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible *a priori*... In the latter case, representation in itself does not produce its object in so far as *existence* is concerned [i.e. unlike God's representations]... None the less the representation is *a priori* determinant of the object, if it be the case that only through the representation is it possible to *know* anything *as an object*... Now there are two conditions under which alone the knowledge of an object is possible, first, *intuition*, through which it is given, though only as appearance. secondly, *concept*, through which an object is thought corresponding to this intuition... Now all experience does indeed contain, in addition to the intuition of the sense through which something is given, a *concept* of an object as being thereby given, that is to say as appearing.<sup>22</sup> (A92-3/B125-6)

In the first formulation, we saw that Kant worried about whether a causal relation obtained between the object and representation. However, since <causality> is one of the *a priori* concepts of the understanding, that very relation is called into question by the objective validity problem.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, in the reformulation, Kant replaces talk of causal relations with talk of the relation of making possible. Nevertheless, the spirit of the problem remains the same. If objects make possible our *a priori* concepts, they would be empirical concepts, not *a priori* ones. And if our *a priori* concepts make possible objects in the sense of creating them in accordance with our will, then we would be gods, not the limited beings we are. However, in the reformulation, Kant offers a third way in which we could be assured of the objective validity of our *a priori* concepts, namely,

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<sup>22</sup> Here I am following Longuenesse in understanding this passage of the "Transcendental Deduction" as a reformulation of the objective validity problem, as well as understanding the passage as intimating Kant's solution to the problem (Longuenesse 1998: 20).

<sup>23</sup> Here I follow Longuenesse, who notes, "[T]he very notion of a causal connection has been put into question... This explains the cautious formulation he adopts here..." (Longuenesse 1998: 22).

if they make possible our cognition of objects generally. If our *a priori* concepts make possible the cognition of objects generally, then we would know, for any object we cognize, that it must belong to the extensions of our *a priori* concepts. For, if they did not have the corresponding properties in question (e.g. causal properties), we would not cognize them.

Assuming that our *a priori* concepts do in fact make possible our cognition of objects – a claim that Kant goes on to argue – the clear upshot of this third option is that we would be epistemically justified in applying our *a priori* concepts to the objects we cognize. However, it secures the objective validity of our *a priori* concepts at a cost. As we will see in Chapter 3, the cognitive theory of the *Critique* retains the *Dissertation's* position that we only sensibly intuit phenomena. Because we do not sensibly intuit noumena, and because no making possible relation (or causal relation) obtains between our *a priori* concepts and noumena, the third option only assures that our *a priori* concepts are objectively valid of phenomena (i.e. of appearances).<sup>24</sup> In other words, Kant secures the objective validity of our *a priori* concepts at the cost of a real use of the understanding. Kant argues for the third option in the “Transcendental Deduction”, and, as a consequence, he limits the understanding – even its *a priori* concepts – to a merely logical use. Before turning to an examination of the appearing argument, I briefly want to consider the consequences that this limitation has on Kant's conception of a noumenon.

The modification of Kant's cognitive theory from the *Dissertation* to the *Critique* can appropriately be thought as an enfeeblement of the understanding. But aside from that, the basic elements of the cognitive theory remains the same. Kant, in the *Critique*, still maintains that humans have two separate cognitive faculties: sensibility and the understanding. Sensibility has

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<sup>24</sup> As Guyer maintains, the objective validity problem remains “a problem only on the very supposition that the objects to which the pure concepts of the understanding will be applied are conceived to exist independently of the human mind” (Guyer 1987: 23). And, as Longuenesse notes, “[T]he preposition *as* [in “to know anything *as an object*”] signals the internalization of the object within the representation” (Longuenesse 1998: 23).

the power of receiving representations, while the understanding has the power of bringing these representations under the concept of an object. However, in the *Critique*, human cognition takes place only if the two faculties are exercised jointly. Being enfeebled, the understanding cannot cognize objects on its own, like Kant imagined it could in the *Dissertation*. Nevertheless, being that the faculties are separate, Kant maintains that their powers are separable. Thus, even though it does not amount to the cognition of an object, the understanding can, nonetheless, think an object apart from sensibility. It follows that, since noumena are a function of the understanding, <noumenon> is, likewise enfeebled: “the proud name of an Ontology... must, therefore, give place to the modest title of a mere Analytic of pure understanding” (A247/B303). In the *Critique*, noumena are no longer the objects we cognize alone through the understanding. They are things we can think as not being objects of sensibility – that is, they are noumena in the negative sense. In the following (main) section (§1.4), I will argue that noumena in the negative sense makes room for both an ontological and epistemic distinction. For present purposes, it suffices to have demonstrated that the modification of Kant’s cognitive theory results in a modification of how he conceives noumena. I now proceed to considering the appearing argument.

### §1.3.2.3 The Appearing Argument as an Objection

I have been arguing that Kant’s notion of a noumenon is intimately connected to the cognitive powers of the understanding and that, because Kant’s view of the understanding evolves such that it goes from having a real use to being limited to a logical use, Kant’s conception of a noumenon evolves from that of being an object that is cognized only through the understanding to being an object thought only through the understanding. The fact that the appearing argument is used in the A-edition of the “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” may be thought to challenge my position. For, in the “recounting”, Kant suggests that the “Transcendental Aesthetic”

establishes the objective validity of <noumenon>. Kant reasons in the following way. First, the “Transcendental Aesthetic” demonstrates that the objects of our sensibility are appearances (i.e. phenomena). Second, the existence of phenomena, coupled with the appearing argument, demonstrates that some noumena exist. Consequently, we are assured that <noumenon> is objectively valid. Now, Kant certainly accepts that the “Transcendental Aesthetic” establishes that the objects of sensibility are phenomena. This leaves three possibilities: (1) Kant contradicts himself, (2) my argument has gone awry, or (3) even with the existence of phenomena, the soundness of the appearing argument is dubious. While I have already suggested that Kant must not regard the appearing argument to be logically compelling, it is, nonetheless, psychologically compelling. Thus, in defense of Kant and myself, I turn to arguing that point (3) is the case. First, I show that, in the *Dissertation*, Kant assigns phenomena an epistemic role in cognizing noumena. Second, in light of this epistemic role, I offer two deductively valid versions of the appearing argument. Third, given the objective validity problem, I show that the soundness of either version of the appearing argument must remain, at best, questionable. Consequently, neither can be relied upon. Lastly, because the segment in which the “recounting” occurs was rewritten in the B-edition, I turn to showing that the B-edition differs merely in the presentation of the content. I proceed to the examination of the appearing argument.

#### §1.3.2.3.1 The Appearing Argument and the Objective Validity Problem

The first variant of the appearing argument occurs in the *Dissertation*. Recall that, in the *Dissertation*, a causal component is integral to Kant’s cognitive theory. Specifically, noumena cause us to cognize phenomena. Accordingly, in the *Dissertation*, Kant assigns phenomena a limited epistemic role with respect to cognizing noumena: “For, in the first place, so far as [phenomena] are sensual concepts or apprehensions, they bear witness, as being caused, to the

presence of an object – which is opposed to idealism” (ID §11). That is, Kant maintains that we can know that noumena exist from the fact that phenomena exist, precisely because noumena cause phenomena. Evidently, since Kant, in the *Dissertation*, cashes phenomena out in terms of the modifications of the subject, he was keen to assign phenomena an epistemic role that protects him from the charge of being an empirical idealist. However, pertinent to present purposes is the fact that the epistemic role in question enables us to cognize the existence of noumena from our cognition of phenomena, even though phenomena, in the *Dissertation*, are unable to represent the absolute and internal properties of noumena. Since this epistemic role of phenomena is made possible by the assumption that noumena cause them, call this epistemic role the ‘causal epistemic role’. Now consider the variant of the appearing argument that occurs in Kant’s “recounting”:

For if the senses represent to us something merely *as it appears*, this something must also in itself be a thing, and an object of a non-sensible intuition, that is, of the understanding. In other words, a [kind of] knowledge must be possible in which there is no sensibility, and which alone has reality that is absolutely objective. Through it objects will be represented *as they are*, whereas in the empirical employment of our understanding things will be known only *as they appear*. (A249)

In this variant, Kant appeals to the jargon of the *Dissertation*; namely, ‘as they appear’ and ‘as they are’. Recall that, in the *Dissertation*, things as they appear are the phenomena (i.e. sensibles). And further recall that Kant calls phenomena ‘things as they appear’ because they are the modifications of the subject. Accordingly, in light of the fact that Kant assigns the phenomena of the *Dissertation* a causal epistemic role, the first sentence of this variant can be recast in a couple of ways:

- (AA1) If the subject is modified (i.e. appearances or phenomena exist) and the modifications have a causal epistemic role, then there exists a noumenon.
  
- (AA2) If the sensibility of a subject is modified (i.e. appearances or phenomena exist), then there exists a corresponding noumenon.



Correspondingly, we have two ways of running the appearing argument:

- (P1) The subject is modified and the modifications have a causal epistemic role.
- (AA1) If the subject is modified and the modifications have a causal epistemic role, then there exists a noumenon.
- (C) There exists a noumenon.

and

- (P1') The sensibility of a subject is modified
- (AA2) If the sensibility of a subject is modified, then there exists a corresponding noumenon.
- (C') There exists a corresponding noumenon.

Both arguments are formally valid. The former argument accords with the *Dissertation's* variant of the appearing argument, because (P1) assigns phenomena (i.e. the modifications of the subject) the causal epistemic role. Notice that, on this variant, (AA1) has the virtue of being obviously true, for phenomena have a causal epistemic role only if they are caused by noumena. Therefore, if we assume the subject is modified (i.e. phenomena exist) and the modifications have a causal epistemic role, it must be true that a noumenon exists. However, as we have seen, the objective validity problem calls into question whether noumena belong to the extension of our *a priori* concepts. Significantly, <causality> ranks as one of our *a priori* concepts, and since we are, therefore, not (epistemically) entitled to apply <causality> to noumena, it follows that we cannot know whether a causal relation obtains between phenomena and noumena (i.e. obtains between sets of modifications of the subject and noumena). Thus, even if noumena are the causes of our cognition of phenomena, we are not in the position to legitimately posit such a relation from which we could infer the existence of noumena from our cognition of phenomena. In short, the objective validity problem precludes a causal epistemic role of phenomena. Consequently, (P1) is false and, therefore, the former variant of the appearing argument is unsound. Accordingly, the latter argument must accord with the variant of the appearing argument found in the "recounting". (P1')

has the virtue of being true, at least according to the “Transcendental Aesthetic” of the *Critique*. However, without the inclusion of the causal epistemic role, not only *are we* not in the position to know whether (AA2) is true, but also, by the objective validity problem, *we cannot* know whether it is true. Therefore, on either case, given the objective validity problem, the appearing argument cannot entitle us to the judgment that noumena exist. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi once said, “I cannot enter into Kant’s system without the thing in itself, I cannot stay in the system with it”. The same appears to be true of Kant.<sup>25</sup> I now turn to defending my use of the A-edition of the “Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”.

#### §1.3.2.3.2 Confirmation in the B-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”

As aforementioned, Kant discusses noumena extensively in two locations: the *Dissertation* and “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”. Since Kant first introduced them in the *Dissertation*, I began my investigation into noumena there. At §1.3.2.1, my investigation into noumena turned to examining what “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” had to say about noumena. Up until now, I have focused on the A-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” because it illustrates the effect that the objective validity problem had on the progression of Kant’s thought from the *Dissertation* to the *Critique*, thereby setting the stage for its effect on how he conceives things in themselves. More specifically, the appearing argument

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<sup>25</sup> With reference to Kant’s thing in itself, the German says, “Mit dieser Voraussetzung darin zu bleiben ist platterdings unmöglich, weil die Überzeugung von der objectiven Gultigkeit unserer Wahrnehmung von Gegenständen ausser uns als ding an sich, und nicht als blos subjectiver Erscheinungen, dieser Voraussetzung zum Grunde liegt, und eben so die Überzeugung von der objectiven Gultigkeit unserer Verstellungen von den nothwendigen Beziehungen dieser Gegenstände auf einander und ihrer wesentlichen Verhältnisse als objectiv realer Bestimmungen. Behauptungen, welche sich aus seine Art und Weise mit der kantischen philosophie bereinigen lassen, da diese durchaus damit umgeht zu beweisen: dass sowohl die Gegenstände als ihrer Verhältnisse, blos subjective Wesen, blosse Bestimmungen unseres eigen Selbstes, und ganz und gar nicht ausser uns vorhanden sinds” (Jacobi 1983: 223-4). My paraphrase of Jacobi is influenced by George di Giovanni’s rendering: “Without the presupposition [of the “thing in itself,]” I was unable to enter into [Kant’s] system, but with it I was unable to stay within it.” (di Giovanni 2014: §1 ¶10).

represents what Kant had found psychologically compelling in the *Dissertation* and what his audience would likely find psychologically compelling after reading the “Transcendental Aesthetic”, while, at the same time, affording him the opportunity to explain why the appearing argument is, nonetheless, not logically compelling. But since that segment of the A-edition was rewritten in the B-edition, I turn to arguing that the B-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” provides the same content as the A-edition.

The content of the A-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” is unfortunately unartfully presented. The appearing argument is psychologically compelling. Thus, by including it in the “recounting”, readers of the *Critique* are, at a minimum, likely to be confused by the segment in question.<sup>26</sup> In fact, as we have seen, Kant was, himself, duped by the appearing argument in the *Dissertation*. In contrast, the B-edition presents the content in a much more straightforward manner. First, in both editions Kant informs us that the *a priori* concepts are not objectively valid with respect to any non-sensible object:

Since, then, as pure categories merely, they are not to be employed empirically, and cannot be employed transcendently, they cannot, when separated from all sensibility, be employed in any manner whatsoever, that is, they cannot be applied to any ostensible object. (A248/B305)

But instead of proceeding to give a false description of the “Transcendental Aesthetic”, as he does in the A-edition, Kant immediately warns his reader that “we are here subject to an illusion from

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<sup>26</sup> Case in point on the psychological compulsion of the appearing argument, Allais relies on it in her defense of a one world interpretation of the *Critique*:

As noted above, defenders of the ‘two-world’ view appeal to Kant’s use of the word ‘representations’; equally important, I suggest, is the way he uses the term ‘appearances’. Kant says repeatedly that his notion of appearances *implies* the existence of the things which appears, and that it would be absurd to suppose otherwise (Bxxvi, A251-2, *Proleg*: 315); virtual objects, phenomenalist objects, or Berkeleyan objects simply do not *imply* the existence of things of which they are appearances. (Allais 2004: 661)

Unfortunately for her one-world interpretation, I have shown that Kant does not think that appearances imply the existence of things in themselves (or things as they are in themselves in the sense of having non-mentally-determined properties).

which it is difficult to escape”, and, a page later, he warns that “[a]t the very outset... we come upon an ambiguity which may occasion serious misapprehension” (B305-6). Namely, Kant thinks that, in entitling certain entities ‘phenomena’ – the consequence of the “Transcendental Aesthetic” – we will think intelligible entities (i.e. noumena) as being connected to them:

The understanding, when it entitles an object in a [certain] relation mere phenomenon, at the same time forms, apart from that relation, a representation of an *object in itself*, and so comes to represent itself as also being able to form *concepts* of such objects. And since the understanding yields no concepts additional to the categories, it also supposes that the object in itself must at least be *thought* through these pure concepts, and so is misled into treating the entirely *indeterminate* concept of an intelligible entity, namely, something in general outside our sensibility, as being a *determinate* concept of an entity that allows of being known in a certain [purely intelligible] manner by means of the understanding. (B307-8)

The first sentence of the above passage is an allusion to the appearing argument, although Kant wisely refrains from giving it outright so as not to confuse the reader. Instead, he unequivocally states that we are misled into thinking we cognize the intelligible entity and, therefore, are misled into believing that we are assured of the objective validity of <noumenon>. Consequently, we see that the content between the A-edition and B-edition of “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena” is the same; only their presentations differ. This completes my investigation into noumena, and now I turn to a series of arguments for the problematic view of things in themselves.

#### §1.4 Kant’s Considered View of Things in Themselves in the Critique

In this section, I offer a series of arguments for the problematic view; the view that (1) sometimes Kant means ‘things in themselves’ to denote logically possible entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances (and, therefore, are replete with properties independent of any relation to human cognition) and (2) sometimes Kant means ‘things in

themselves' to signify the consideration of empirical objects apart from sensibility. I offer three arguments in favor of the problematic view.

The first argument picks up where my investigation into noumena leaves off. In short, because noumena in the negative sense are a function of Kant's cognitive theory, a careful consideration of that cognitive theory, as it stands in the *Critique*, will show that it admits of noumena in the negative sense. These include logically possible entities that are ontologically distinct from appearances and empirical objects considered apart from sensibility. The second argument may be thought as supporting the first argument, for it argues for the same conclusion by appealing to textual evidence found in "The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena". In the third argument, I argue that, because Kant's project in the *Critique of Practical Reason* requires it, the *Critique's* cognitive theory must admit of both things in themselves, as putative entities, and of our capability of thinking empirical objects apart from sensibility. I turn to these arguments in order.

#### *§1.4.1 The Argument from the Consequences of the Objective Validity Problem*

Here, I argue that the problematic view of things in themselves is entailed by Kant's cognitive theory as it was modified by the objective validity problem (i.e. is entailed by the *Critique's* cognitive theory). First, I recap how the *Critique's* cognitive theory entails that <noumenon> is an indeterminate concept (i.e. we cannot be assured of its objective validity). Accordingly, we are only entitled in applying <noumenon> in its negative sense. Since I argue that all and only noumena are things in themselves, it follows that the requirements for being a noumenon in the negative sense are the same requirements for being a thing in itself. Second, I set out those requirements. Third, arguing from the features of the *Critique's* cognitive theory, I show that it admits of things in themselves, as putative entities, and these things in themselves

satisfy the requirements. Fourth, again arguing from the features of the *Critique's* cognitive theory, I show that it allows for us to think empirical objects apart from sensibility, which is to think a noumenon in the negative sense. I proceed to the argument.

#### §1.4.1.1 The Modification of Kant's Cognitive Theory and Noumena in the Negative Sense

In my investigation of noumena, I demonstrated that noumena are intimately connected to the powers of the understanding. For instance, if the understanding is assigned a real use, like Kant had done in the *Dissertation*, then the objects cognized through the real use are noumena. However, the objective validity problem led Kant, in the *Critique*, to limit the understanding to a logical use, for Kant could only secure the objective validity of our *a priori* concepts at the cost of a real use of the understanding. Limiting the understanding to a logical use entails that we cannot be assured of the objective validity of <noumenon>. Consequently, in the *Critique*, Kant limits the sense of 'noumena' to its negative sense. Since I have argued that all and only noumena are things in themselves, it follows that the requirements for a thing in itself in the *Critique* are the very requirements for an object to be a noumenon in the negative sense. In accordance with Kant's definition of 'noumena in the negative sense', the requirement in question is to be a thing so far as it is not an object of sensibility. I now turn to arguing that the *Critique's* cognitive theory admits of things in themselves, as putative entities, and these things in themselves satisfy the above requirement.

#### §1.4.1.2 Logical Possible Entities and Noumena in the Negative Sense

First, unlike the *Dissertation's* cognitive theory, the *Critique's* requires the joint exercise of sensibility and the understanding for the cognition of objects. It follows that, on the *Critique's* theory, all cognizable objects are objects of sensibility (i.e. objects that can be sensibly intuited).

Second, because the cognitive faculties are separate, the powers of sensibility and the understanding are separable, although, for the reason given above, we cannot cognize objects through either faculty when separated. However, one power of the understanding is to make judgments of objects (i.e. to think objects). Therefore, since the cognitive faculties are separable, the *Critique's* cognitive theory must admit that we can think empirical objects apart from how they are given in sensibility. Third, the only constraint of thinking objects is for the content of the thought to be logically possible. As Kant says, "I can *think* whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself" (Bxxvi). In contrast, cognition includes additional constraints over and above the mere logical possibility of its object. Objects of human cognition must also accord with our *a priori* representations. For instance, they must have causal properties, be spatiotemporal, etc. Because the cognition of objects includes these additional constraints over and above mere logical possibility, it follows that, while all cognizable objects are thinkable, not all thinkable objects are cognizable (i.e. some thinkable objects are non-cognizable). These logically possible entities that are non-cognizable are non-cognizable only because we cannot sensibly intuit them. For, if we could sensibly intuit them, then we could legitimately apply our concepts to them and, therefore, could cognize them. Two things follow: (1) these logically possible entities, if they exist, are not objects of sensibility, and (2) if they exist, they are ontologically distinct from appearances (i.e. there would be no overlap in membership between appearances, which are all objects of sensibility, and non-cognizable logically possible entities). As a result of point (2), the *Critique's* cognitive theory admits logically possible entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances. From point (1) it follows that these logically possible entities satisfy the condition of being a thing so far as it is not an object of sensibility. This satisfies one half of the problematic view. I now turn to arguing for the other half.

### §1.4.1.3 Thinking Empirical Objects Apart from Sensibility and Noumena in the Negative Sense

I have already argued that all cognizable objects are objects we can sensibly intuit. Now, because cognizable objects are the objects we sensibly intuit, cognizable objects are empirical objects. And because cognition requires the joint exercise of sensibility and the understanding, we cognize empirical objects only if they relate to sensibility. However, I have also already argued that all cognizable objects are thinkable objects. Therefore, all empirical objects are thinkable. Since sensibility and the understanding are separate faculties, their powers are separable. It follows that, for any empirical object that we cognize, we can think it apart from its relation to sensibility and, *a fortiori*, apart from its sensible properties. This is to consider an empirical object apart from its relation to sensibility, which is to consider it so far as it is not an object of sensibility. The other half of the problematic view is, therefore, satisfied. Before turning to the textual evidence that supports my contention, it is worth noting that, for reasons given above (§1.4.1.1), in being able to consider empirical objects apart from sensibility, we are in the position to acknowledge the logical possibility that empirical objects have properties that are, in principle, non-sensible and, therefore, non-cognizable.

### §1.4.2 *The Argument from Textual Evidence*

In the previous argument, I argued that the problematic view is entailed by the *Critique's* cognitive theory. In short, the understanding's power to form thoughts is separable from the sensibility's power to give a sensible manifold. Consequently, (1) we can think non-cognizable objects, and (2) we can think empirical objects apart from sensibility. In the former case, these logically possible entities are things in themselves, because they cannot, in principle, be objects of sensibility. In the latter case, we are regarding an object as it is in itself, for we are regarding the



object apart from sensibility. I now argue for the same claim by drawing upon textual evidence from “The Ground of Phenomena and Noumena”. I argue for the two cases in turn.

Consider a passage in which it is clear that Kant claims that logically possible non-cognizable entities are noumena in the negative sense:

If the objective reality of a concept cannot be in any way known, while yet the concept contains no contradiction and also at the same time is connected with other modes of knowledge that involve given concepts which it serves to limit, I entitle that concept problematic. The concept of a *noumenon* – that is, of a thing which is not to be thought as object of the senses but as a thing in itself, solely through a pure understanding – is not in any way contradictory. For we cannot assert of sensibility that it is the sole possible kind of intuition. Further, the concept of noumenon is necessary, to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge. *The remaining things to which it does not apply, are entitled noumena, in order to show that this knowledge cannot extend its domain over everything which the understanding thinks* [my emphasis]. But none the less we are unable to comprehend how such noumena can be possible, and the domain that lies out beyond the sphere of appearances is for us empty. *That is to say, we have an understanding which problematically extends further, but we have no intuition, indeed not even the concept of a possible intuition, through which objects outside the field of sensibility can be given, and through which the understanding can be employed assertorically beyond that field* [my emphasis]. The concept of a noumenon is thus a merely *limiting concept*, the function of which is to curb the pretensions of sensibility; and it is therefore only of negative employment. At the same time it is no arbitrary invention; it is bound up with the limitation of sensibility, though it cannot affirm anything positive beyond the field of sensibility. (A254-5/B310-11)

In the above passage, Kant offers a definition of noumena in the negative sense: “a thing which is not to be thought as object of the senses but as a thing in itself, solely through a pure understanding”. Given this definition and the *Critique’s* cognitive theory, Kant maintains that we cannot know whether <noumenon> is objectively valid. That is, we cannot know whether an object belongs to its extension. However, he goes on to note two things: (1) <noumenon> is not contradictory and, therefore, at least admits of the logical possibility that some objects belong to its extension, and (2) it is a non-arbitrary concept in that it serves to remind us that the objects we

sensible cognize are not replete with their properties – at least not all of their properties – independent of human cognition. Point (1) opens up the logical space for entities to exist that cannot, in principle, be sensibly cognized. If such an entity were to exist, it would be ontologically distinct from appearances. That is, it would be a logically possible entity that, if it exists, is ontologically distinct from appearances. Moreover, it satisfies the definition of ‘noumena in the negative sense’, and, since all and only noumena are things in themselves, it follows, in accordance with the problematic view, that such an entity is a thing in itself. For textual evidence of the other half of the problematic view, consider this passage:

If by ‘noumenon’ we mean a thing so far as it is *not an object of our sensible intuition*, and so abstract from our mode of intuiting it, this is a noumenon in the *negative* sense of the term. (B307)

Again, Kant offers the definition of a noumenon in the negative sense: “a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition”. He, then, goes on to give one way in which an object counts as a noumenon in a negative sense, namely, if we consider an object in abstraction from our sensible intuition of it. If we are sensibly intuiting the object, then it is an empirical object. Furthermore, to abstract our sensible intuition of the empirical object is possible only because we can think the object apart from sensibility. Because it is literally false that an empirical object is a noumenon, the above passage demonstrates that Kant sometimes uses ‘noumena in the negative sense’ to signify the consideration of empirical objects apart from their relation to sensibility. Again, since all and only noumena are things in themselves, Kant sometimes uses ‘things in themselves’ as signifying a manner by which we consider empirical objects; namely, as apart from their relation to sensibility. I now turn to show that Kant’s project in the *Critique of Practical Reason* requires the *Critique’s* cognitive theory to license the logical possibility of there being

entities that are ontologically distinct from appearances, and to think empirical objects apart from sensibility.

#### *§1.4.3 The Argument from the Possibility of Kant's Practical Project*

Here, I offer a buttressing argument for the problematic view. My strategy is to demonstrate that Kant's project in the *Critique of Practical Reason* requires Kant to adopt the problematic view of things in themselves. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant investigates morally right and wrong action. Specific to my purposes is that, on Kant's view, morally right action requires the existence of God, an immortal soul, and a free will. Thus, in order to think ourselves as moral agents, it must be rational for us to believe in God, to believe we have immortal souls, and to believe we have free wills. I will first argue that rational belief in God and in having an immortal soul requires the logical possibility of entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances. Then I argue that rational belief in having a free will requires that we can think empirical objects apart from their relation to sensibility. I now proceed to these arguments.

God and the immortal soul are objects that, in principle, we never sensibly cognize. Consequently, God and the immortal soul cannot be appearances. Now, suppose that the *Critique's* cognitive theory does not allow for the thought of entities that are ontologically distinct from appearances. That is, suppose that the thought of such entities is necessarily self-contradictory. Given this supposition, the only objects that are thinkable for us are appearances. Since God and the immortal soul cannot be appearances, it follows that God and the immortal soul are unthinkable and, therefore, are not logically possible entities. But, if they are not logically possible, it is irrational to believe they exist. Consequently, the project of the *Critique of Practical Reason* requires that the *Critique's* cognitive theory admit of logically possible entities that, if they

exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances. As Kant says, “I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*” (Bxxx).<sup>27</sup> I now turn to arguing that the project of the *Critique of Practical Reason* also requires that we can think empirical objects apart from their relation to sensibility.

Because <causality>, being an *a priori* concept of the understanding is assigned, by the *Critique*, with the task of making possible our cognition of objects, it follows that objects as appearances (i.e. empirical objects in relation to sensibility, which are, therefore, subject to the *a priori* conditions of cognition) are causally determined (i.e. are unfree). Consequently, the “visible acts” of our soul are causally determined (Bxxviii). So suppose that I could not think the soul apart from its relation to sensibility (i.e. the visible acts that it effects). It would follow that I could not help but regard the soul as being unfree in its actions. However, in thinking the soul as a thing

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<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Strawson notes, “The proof of our necessary ignorance of the supersensible safeguards the interests of morality and religion by securing the supersensible realm from our scepticism as well as from our knowledge” (Strawson 1966: 22). In contrast, Allison, who reads only an epistemic distinction<sub>AT</sub> in the *Critique*, complains that Kant is often construed as using practical reason as an epistemic entrée into cognizing the supersensible, but that Kant only means for practical reason’s superiority over theoretical reason “to be construed in axiological rather than ontological terms” (Allison 2004: 48). However, Desmond Hogan, who reads an ontological distinction<sub>AT</sub> in the *Critique*, maintains that “[t]he view that Kant treats the relevant morally-grounded assent as ‘non-epistemic’ is however mistaken. Kant’s later writings deny theoretical knowledge of the reality of absolute freedom, but they persistently affirm knowledge of that reality (both ‘*Wissen*’ and ‘*Erkenntnis*’) on practical grounds.” (Hogan 2009a: 60). But even if Hogan is right, it cannot be helpful in the context of the *Critique Pure Reason*, because Kant maintains that the *Critique of Pure Reason* makes the practical project possible, not vice versa: “I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*” (Bxxx). Furthermore, certainly practical reason would not provide us *a priori* synthetic cognitions with the same epistemic status as those from theoretical reason. But these issues miss the point at hand. First, part of Kant’s practical project is (1) the claim that we are constrained to think ourselves as moral beings, and (2) the claim that the possibility of moral beings rests on the existence of God, the immortal soul, and free will. Second, God and the immortal soul are, necessarily, never objects of experience. And third, the *Critique of Pure Reason* offers, in part, a theory of human cognition; a theory of our capacity and our limitations in theoretical reasoning. If that theory does not include the possibility to think logical possible entities that are ontologically distinct from objects of experience, then Kant’s cognitive theory does not allow the possibility to think God and the immortal soul. And if we cannot think God and the immortal soul, then we cannot think ourselves as moral beings, as Kant maintains we do. Thus, the question is not whether practical reason allows us to cognize ontologically distinct entities, which is what both Allison and Hogan address. Rather, the question is whether Kant’s practical project could get off the ground if Kant did not make it a part of his cognitive theory to make possible the thought of things in themselves as logically possible entities ontologically distinct from objects of experience. The answer, as we have seen, is no he could not.

in itself (i.e. apart from its relation to sensibility), I can think the soul as freely determining its actions. As Kant says,

But though I cannot *know*, I can yet *think* freedom; that is to say, the representation of it is at least non self-contradictory, provided due account be taken of our critical distinction between the two modes of representation, the sensible and the intellectual... (ibid.)

Therefore, the project of the *Critique of Practical Reason* requires that the *Critique's* cognitive theory allow for empirical objects to be thought apart from its relation to sensibility. I now turn to considering how the objective validity problem bears upon the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Noumenal Causation Thesis.

### §1.5 The Objective Validity Problem, the Doctrine of Ignorance, and the Noumenal Causation Thesis

I have argued that the problematic view of things in themselves is entailed by Kant's cognitive theory as it was modified in response to the objective validity problem. In fact, my attention in this chapter has largely been taken up by determining Kant's notion of a thing in itself. However, my examination of the objective validity problem, and its effects on Kant's cognitive theory, also illuminates some of the commitments involved in the Doctrine of Ignorance and shows why Kant cannot have theoretical grounds for maintaining the Noumenal Causation Thesis. I end this chapter by examining how the objective validity problem has the effect of denying us avenues for cognizing things in themselves, which, in turn, reveals some of the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. Furthermore, I examine how these commitments undermine any theoretical grounds for maintaining the Noumenal Causation Thesis. I treat these in turn.

### §1.5.1 *The Objective Validity Problem and the Doctrine of Ignorance*

Recall that the Doctrine of Ignorance maintains that we cannot cognize things in themselves. Part of the aim of my general project is to make the Doctrine of Ignorance more precise by considering the commitments that undergird it. Accordingly, I aim to identify commitments of Kant that prevent our cognitive apparatus from enabling our cognition of things in themselves. I argue, here, that the objective validity problem entails three such commitments: (1) our inability to cognize things in themselves through our *a priori* concepts, (2) our inability to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuition of them, and (3) our inability to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances. I begin by recapping the objective validity problem and its effects. Then I turn to showing that each of the three commitments is entailed.

The thrust of the objective validity problem, as it applies to things in themselves, is that there cannot be any relation between *a priori* concepts and the things in themselves, such that we can be assured that things in themselves belong to the extensions of our *a priori* concepts. For, if things in themselves established such a relation, then our concepts would be empirical, not *a priori*. And, if our *a priori* concepts established such a relation, then we would be gods who can create things in themselves in accordance with our will. Thus, even if things in themselves do belong to the extension of our *a priori* concepts, we can never legitimately apply our *a priori* concepts to them. Kant's solution to the objective validity problem is to demonstrate that our *a priori* concepts make possible our cognition of objects, for, if that is the case, then we know that, for any object we cognize, it must belong to the extensions of our *a priori* concepts. Accordingly, we are assured that we can legitimately apply our *a priori* concepts to cognizable objects. However, because no relation obtains between *a priori* concepts and things in themselves, and because we cannot

sensibly intuit things in themselves, this solution precludes us from legitimately applying our *a priori* concepts to things in themselves. Since we cannot legitimately apply our *a priori* concepts to things in themselves, it follows that we are unable to cognize things in themselves through our *a priori* concepts. Moreover, because Kant's solution denies the understanding a real use, thereby limiting it to a logical use, we cannot cognize objects through the understanding without the contributions of sensibility. Consequently, our thoughts of empirical objects in abstraction of their relation to sensibility cannot offer us any knowledge (i.e. cognition) of the empirical objects. Therefore, we are unable to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuitions of them. Lastly, one of our *a priori* concepts, according to Kant, is <causality>. It follows from Kant's solution to the objective validity problem that <causality> cannot be legitimately applied to things in themselves, in which case, it is illegitimate to presume that causal relations obtain between appearances and things in themselves. In other words, we are not entitled to assume that phenomena have a causal epistemic role. As a result, we are not, through the cognition of phenomena, entitled to the claim that noumena exist. Hence, it follows that we are unable to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances. Thus, Kant is committed to the above three commitments. I now turn to demonstrating why two of these commitments undermine any theoretical ground for the Noumenal Causation Thesis.

#### *§1.5.2 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Noumenal Causation Thesis*

The Noumenal Causation Thesis maintains that things in themselves cause us to cognize appearances. Here, I aim to show why Kant cannot regard himself as having theoretical grounds for the Noumenal Causation thesis. But I also aim to offer two explanations for why Kant, in the *Critique*, talks as if he is committed to noumenal causation. I treat these in turn.

Theoretical reason aims at determining what is the case. Because our cognitive apparatus is precisely the means by which we determine how the world is, the limits of theoretical reason are intimately bound up with the limits of our cognitive faculties. As demonstrated above, the Doctrine of Ignorance maintains, in part, that we are unable to cognize things in themselves through our *a priori* concepts. Since <causality> is one of our *a priori* concepts, it follows that we cannot legitimately apply it to things in themselves. Because of this limitation of our cognitive faculties, Kant has removed the theoretical grounds for maintaining the Noumenal Causation Thesis. But before turning to the next chapter, I want to offer a couple reasons for why Kant talks, in the *Critique*, as if he is committed to noumenal causation.

First, we have seen on Kant's cognitive theory that, even though we cannot cognize things in themselves, we are, nonetheless, capable of thinking them. And while we are able to recognize that the application of our *a priori* concepts, including <causality>, is illegitimate, they are, nonetheless, the concepts that we have available for thinking. Consequently, in thinking things in themselves, if we are not constrained to think them as having causal properties, we are at least prone to. Moreover, we have seen that, in connection to the realization that a sensible object is an appearance, the understanding thinks an object in itself in connection to the appearance. As a result, we are constrained, or prone, to think an object in itself as causing us to cognize an appearance, even though, at the same time, we are in a position to recognize that we cannot know whether any object in itself causes our cognition of appearances. Since it is natural for us to talk (or write) in the manner in which we think, it is unsurprising for Kant to talk as if he is committed to noumenal causation.



Second, Kant persistently talks as if he is committed to the Noumenal Causation Thesis because he is, in fact, committed to it, but on practical grounds instead of theoretical ones.<sup>28</sup> Specifically, as we have seen, Kant argues that, in order to think ourselves as moral agents, it must be logically possible for us to think of our souls as freely acting. This includes its visible acts (i.e. its “effects in the sensible world”). Therefore, Kant’s practical project implicitly requires a commitment to the Noumenal Causation Thesis, if only in the limited case of souls causing visible acts. Since the *Critique* anticipates his practical project, Kant’s persistent apparent commitment to the Noumenal Causation Thesis is not surprising, even though his commitment is based on practical grounds, not theoretical ones.

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<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Hogan (2009b) maintains that the Noumenal Causation Thesis is grounded on Kant’s commitment to libertarian freedom, which, in turn, is rational to believe on practical grounds. He says that noumenal affection is indispensable “when Kant’s libertarian position is followed into the CPR’s [i.e. *Critique*’s] transcendental idealist framework’ (2009b: 522). Hogan’s argument draws on Kant’s commitment that we have empirical cognition of other agents, and his consistent rejection of non-interactionist positions with respect to mind and body (e.g. Leibniz’s pre-established harmony, Malebranche’s occasionalism, mere coincidence, etc.). Since libertarian freedom is possible only to noumenal agents, there must be noumenal affection if we are to have empirical cognition of other agents. However, Kant, in the *Critique*, cannot be read as grounding the Noumenal Causation Thesis on libertarian freedom, since the claim that souls have free will is precisely the kind of *a priori* synthetic judgment (i.e. metaphysical judgment) that Kant wants to know whether have any theoretical grounds for. If Kant, in the *Critique*, proceeds in the way that Hogan suggests, he would be begging the question. My position is merely intended to explain why Kant is found making a metaphysical claim he has no theoretical grounds for, namely, he overzealously anticipates the practical grounds that license rational belief in noumenal causation.

## **Chapter 2: Kantian Intuitions and the Identity Thesis**

### *§2.1 Chapter 2 Introduction*

Recall that one major aim motivating my project is to understand how the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains our knowledge of things in themselves. Furthermore, I am interested in the consequences it has for three theses of things in themselves: the Noumenal Causation Thesis, the Doctrine of Ignorance, and the Non-Spatiotemporality Thesis. Thus, on the one hand, I am interested in identifying the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance, since this will determine more precisely how the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains knowledge of things in themselves. And, on the other hand, I am interested in applying those specific commitments (or the Doctrine of Ignorance more precisely understood) to the above three theses, since this will demonstrate whether a thesis is subject to the epistemic problem or whether we are restricted to a certain understanding of a thesis. The Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, however, faces another serious problem aside from the implications of the Doctrine of Ignorance. The argument supporting it is typically thought to be a *non sequitur*. Hence, even if its premises imply that our forms of sensibility are spatiotemporal, things in themselves may coincidentally be spatiotemporal as well (i.e. the problem of the neglected alternative).

The previous chapter made some important inroads with respect to my general project. First, it establishes the problematic view of things in themselves: (1) sometimes ‘things in themselves’ denotes logically possible entities that, if they exist, are ontologically distinct from appearances (and, therefore, are replete with properties independent of any relation to human cognition) and (2) sometimes Kant means ‘things in themselves’ to signify the thought of empirical objects apart from sensibility. Second, it identifies three of the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance: (1) that we are unable to cognize things in themselves through our *a priori*

concepts, (2) that we are unable to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuition of them, and (3) that we are unable to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances. And third, it demonstrates that the Doctrine of Ignorance undercuts any theoretical grounds that one might offer for the Noumenal Causation Thesis. Because <causality> is one of our *a priori* concepts, it follows from commitments (1) and (3) of the Doctrine of Ignorance that we cannot have epistemic justification for maintaining that things in themselves cause us to cognize appearances. Thus, at this juncture, I have succeeded in partially determining the commitments that undergird the Doctrine of Ignorance, and I have succeeded in demonstrating that the epistemic problem holds for the Noumenal Causation Thesis.

Looking forward, my project has two general tasks that remain to be completed. On the one hand, I must identify the rest of the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. And on the other hand, I must determine whether Kant can reasonably be interpreted as having a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. These two tasks, however, are deeply intertwined. Kant's cognitive theory maintains that there are two separate cognitive faculties: sensibility and the understanding. Correspondingly, the Doctrine of Ignorance maintains that things in themselves cannot be cognized by either faculty. The previous chapter identifies the commitments that prevent the cognition of things in themselves through the understanding. Therefore, the former task requires an examination of why things in themselves cannot be cognized through sensibility. In the *Critique*, Kant offers the transcendental ideality argument (for space and time) in support of the claim that things in themselves cannot be cognized through sensibility. Incidentally, Kant also offers the transcendental ideality argument in support of the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. Accordingly, both tasks require an examination of the transcendental ideality argument. On the one hand, the examination of the transcendental ideality argument will

reveal the specific commitments corresponding to why things in themselves cannot be cognized through sensibility. And, on the other hand, I aim to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis.

However, the direct examination of the transcendental ideality argument must be forestalled until the next chapter. As aforementioned, the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is typically thought to be a *non sequitur*. By the same token, commentators typically regard there to be an argumentative gap in the transcendental ideality argument (i.e. this argumentative gap corresponds with why the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is typically regarded as being a *non sequitur*). Specifically, in Kant's presentation of the transcendental ideality argument, it does not seem to follow from the fact that we have *a priori* intuitions of space and time that (1) things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal and (2) space and time are *nothing* but the forms of sensibility. Accordingly, I cannot hope to demonstrate that the transcendental ideality argument supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis from a mere examination of Kant's presentation of it. However, I do not believe such an argumentative gap exists. Rather, it appears to exist for two interconnected reasons: (1) commentators have failed to appreciate the role that intuitions (as opposed to concepts) play in the transcendental ideality argument and (2) Kant makes use of an unstated premise that I call the 'Identity Thesis': if  $x$  is intuited *a priori* (i.e. we have an *a priori* intuition of  $x$ ), then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori* intuition.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, the present chapter has three aims: (1) to show how the Identity Thesis bridges the putative gap (i.e. to show how it provides a valid argument for

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<sup>29</sup> Again, my intent is for the Identity Thesis to be amenable to many readings of the nature of the representational content of *a priori* intuitions. Thus, I am intentionally being vague about what 'representational content' ranges over, with the exception that it ranges over something that is necessarily mental in nature. However, on my own reading, *a priori* intuitions are formal intuitions, which include, not only the *a priori* sensible manifold of the forms of sensibility as its representational content, but also the *a priori* conceptual content that is required for unifying the *a priori* sensible manifold into a cognizable object. See B160-1.

the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis); (2) to indicate why we can expect that intuitions play a fundamental role in closing that gap; and (3) to argue that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis. The point of the former two aims is to motivate the last one. Thus, before arguing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis, I proceed to the former two points.

## §2.2 The Identity Thesis, the Non-spatiality Argument, and Intuitions

Here I consider two motivating factors for arguing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis. The first is that the Identity Thesis secures a premise that Kant does not appear to argue for in his presentation of the transcendental ideality argument and, furthermore, that premise bridges the putative argumentative gap (i.e. that premise provides Kant with a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis). Second, there is reason for expecting that Kant's argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis turns on key differences between *a priori* intuitions and *a priori* concepts, and my argument for the Identity Thesis, in fact, turns on these differences. I proceed to these considerations in order.

### *§2.2.1 The Identity Thesis and the Non-spatiality Argument*

With respect to the transcendental ideality argument, I will only be examining Kant's arguments that deal with space, for the arguments that deal with time parallel them. Accordingly, the following is my representation of Kant's non-spatiality argument, the argument for the claim that things in themselves are non-spatial:

#### The Non-spatiality Argument

- (NP1) Space is reducible to the representational content of our original representation of space
- (NP2) Anything that is structured by the representational content of our original representation of space is cognizable *a priori*
- (NI1) Anything that is structured by space is cognizable *a priori* (from NP1 and NP2)

- (NP3) Things in themselves are only cognizable empirically
- (NI2) Things in themselves are not cognizable *a priori* (from NP3)
- (NI3) No things in themselves are structured by space (from NI1 and NI2)
- (N::) All things in themselves are non-spatial (from NI3)

First, note that, if this is Kant's argument for the non-spatiality thesis, then Kant has a valid argument for it. That is, there are no gaps. However, as it will come to light in the following chapter, Kant's presentation of the transcendental ideality argument only supports (NP2) and (NP3). Consequently, it is apt to think of (NP1) as representing the putative gap that needs to be bridged. The following extension of the non-spatiality argument secures (NP1) and, therefore, is a means for bridging the putative gap:

- (eNP1) Our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition (i.e. we intuit space *a priori*)
- (IT) If  $x$  is intuited *a priori*, then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of the *a priori* intuition
- (eNI1) If space is intuited *a priori*, then space is reducible to the representational content of the *a priori* intuition (from IT)
- (NP1) Space is reducible to the representational content of our original representation of space (from eNP1 and eNI1)

First, note that this extension of the non-spatiality argument is, itself, a valid argument for (NP1). Second, it is non-controversial that Kant argues for (eNP1) in the transcendental ideality argument. Since (NP2), (NP3), and (eNP1) are supported by the transcendental ideality argument, the only missing part is (IT) – the Identity Thesis. Therefore, if I can show that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis (and given the paralleling non-temporality argument), then I will have bridged the putative gap in Kant's argument. This is one reason, then, for arguing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis. I now turn to the other reason.

### §2.2.2 *The Identity Thesis and Intuitions*

Recall that the reason for providing Kant with a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is to resolve the *non sequitur* problem, for the *non sequitur* problem engenders the problem of the neglected alternative. The hope, then, is that, if the *non sequitur* problem can be resolved, the problem of the neglected alternative can be avoided. But it should be noted that Kant's apparent neglect of the possibility that things in themselves are spatiotemporal, even granting his claim that the forms of our sensibility are spatiotemporal, is rather puzzling. One aim of the transcendental ideality argument is to demonstrate that, on the side of sensibility, we have two *a priori* representations: an *a priori* representation of space and an *a priori* representation of time. On the side of the understanding, Kant argues that we have several *a priori* representations, one being our *a priori* representation of causality. However, in the case of the understanding's *a priori* representations, Kant does not neglect the possibility that things in themselves might possess the corresponding properties. For example, he does not deny the possibility that they possess causal properties. Indeed, quite apart from denying that things in themselves can have causal properties, Kant insists on the logical possibility that they have them.

What is the difference between these two cases? The most obvious difference is that the *a priori* representations of sensibility are intuitions, while the *a priori* representations of the understanding are concepts. This suggests that the differences between *a priori* intuitions and *a priori* concepts ought to explain why Kant believes that things in themselves could have causal properties, but, at the same time, believes that they cannot be spatiotemporal.<sup>30</sup> Correspondingly,

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, Guyer's interpretation has the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis turning on the connection between apriority and necessity. He maintains that the problem of the neglected alternative is "excluded by the fact that we have *a priori* knowledge of the feature, for this involves necessity – and properties that attach to things in themselves could at best be known to do so *contingently but not necessarily*" (Guyer 1987: 359). But this

my argument for the Identity Thesis turns on the requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and intuitive (i.e. for being an *a priori* intuition), whereas I will also show that the requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and conceptual (i.e. for being an *a priori* concept) do not entail an equivalent identity thesis for *a priori* concepts (e.g. if *x* is conceived *a priori*, then *x* is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori* concept).<sup>31</sup> Consequently, not only would the Identity Thesis bridge the putative argumentative gap, but it accords with our expectation that both the transcendental ideality argument and the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis ought to turn on the differences between *a priori* intuitions and *a priori* concepts. I now proceed to that argument.

### §2.3 Kantian Intuitions

In the previous section, I demonstrated that the Identity Thesis can close the argumentative gap in the transcendental ideality argument, thereby providing Kant with a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. Moreover, I argued that we should expect both the transcendental ideality argument and the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis to turn on facts about *a priori* intuitions, which is precisely how I argue for the Identity Thesis. In this section, I argue that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis.

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explanation fails to explain why Kant does not maintain that things in themselves are non-causal. For, on Kant's view, we have an *a priori* concept of causality and we know *a priori* that, qua experience, every event has a cause.

<sup>31</sup> Guyer also maintains that the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis must turn on the apriority of our representations of space and time. He says, "[T]he reduction of space and time to mere representations, the identification of them with pure intuitions rather than with the *objects* of such singular representations, will hardly following without an additional argument that apriority entails subjectivity or transcendental ideality" (Guyer 1987: 348). However, we fundamentally disagree on the role that the apriority of our representations of space and time play in securing the subjectivity of space and time. Guyer interprets it as turning on the connection between apriority and necessity (see footnote 30). I, on the other hand, view it as turning on the fact that the apriority of our intuitions of space and time entail that it must have an immediate cognitive relation to its object antecedent to any non-empirical relation to robust objects (see §2.3.3.1).



The general strategy of the argument is to demonstrate that the Identity Thesis is entailed by the requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and intuitive. If the Identity Thesis is entailed by the requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and intuitive, then it is available to Kant so long as he can successfully argue that we have *a priori* intuitions.

The first step of my strategy is to provide an introduction to Kant's notion of an intuition. First, from the etymological considerations of 'Anschauung' – the German word that is translated as 'intuition' – I show that Kant intimates that many intuitions are perception-like. While this is an oversimplification of intuitions, it does offer a helpful heuristic in thinking about them. Second, I provide the two general criteria that Kant gives for a representation to be an intuition: the singularity criterion and the immediacy criterion. Over the course of the argument, I draw out more specific requirements that must be satisfied in order to satisfy these two general criteria. As an entrée into this argument, I argue that Kant's purpose in giving the singularity and immediacy criteria is to delineate those representations involved in representing things *in concreto* from representations involved in representing things *in abstracto*. This offers a toehold in analyzing the singularity and immediacy criteria, because the characteristics of our representations of things *in concreto* will suggest what characteristics a representation must possess in order to satisfy the singularity and immediacy criteria.

The second step is to begin arguing for the formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition. I argue for two mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive sets of formal requirements. First, I argue for what I will call 'the strong formal requirements'. The strong formal requirements include (1) the formal requirements for the singularity criterion to be satisfied, (2) the formal requirements for the immediacy criterion to be satisfied, and (3) the requirement that a thing in itself or empirical object (e.g. an ordinary object such as a table, chair, book, etc.)

belongs to the extension of the representation in question. Second, I argue for what I will call ‘the weak formal requirements’. The weak formal requirements include (1) the formal requirements for the singularity criterion to be satisfied, (2) the formal requirements for the immediacy criterion to be satisfied, and (3) the requirement that a weak object belongs to the extension of the representation in question. A weak object is neither a thing in itself nor is it an empirical object. Rather, like a hallucination, it is reducible to the representational content of our intuition of it.

The third step is to argue that, because of its apriority, an *a priori* representation can be an intuition only if it satisfies the weak formal requirements. From the requirements of the weak formal requirements, it will follow that only weak objects belong to the extensions of *a priori* intuitions. And from what weak objects are, the Identity Thesis follows.

Finally, before turning to the next chapter, I will demonstrate that the requirements for a representation to be *a priori* and conceptual do not entail an equivalent identity thesis for *a priori* concepts. Furthermore, I will elaborate on the role that *a priori* intuitions have in Kant’s transcendental ideality argument. I now turn to the first step of the argument.

### §2.3.1 *An Introduction to Intuitions: ‘Anschauung’ and the Two General Criteria in Concreto*

As aforementioned, my general strategy is to demonstrate that the Identity Thesis is entailed by the requirements for a representation to be an intuition, and this requires determining those requirements. But before taking on this task, it will be helpful to have a rough idea of what intuitions are. Accordingly, in this section, I first consider what the etymology of ‘Anschauung’ intimates about (sensible) intuitions. Second, I consider the two criteria that Kant gives for representations to be intuitions and the purpose for offering those criteria. I turn to these considerations in order.

### §2.3.1.1 ‘Anschauung’ and Intuitions

As mentioned earlier, the German word that is translated into the English ‘intuition’ is ‘Anschauung’. The root of ‘Anschauung’ corresponds to the verb ‘schauen’ and the noun ‘Schau’. ‘Schauen’ means to look or to see, while ‘Schau’ means vision or show (i.e. show in the sense of exhibition). Thus, with respect to its connection to ‘schauen’, ‘Anschauung’ connotes that intuitions involve the act of looking upon. And with respect to its connection to ‘Schau’, ‘Anschauung’ connotes two things about intuitions: (1) intuitions are closely related to vision, and (2) intuitions involve something showing up or being exhibited.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the connotations of ‘Anschauung’ suggest that the representations that are intuitions are imagistic in nature, like in the case of perception.<sup>33</sup> Hence, thinking of intuitions as being perception-like is a helpful heuristic to have in mind as I examine the singularity and immediacy criteria.

However, it should be mentioned that, while Kant surely intends for German readers to draw the etymological connection between the connotations of ‘Anschauung’ and perception – he

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<sup>32</sup> As Jaakko Hintikka notes, “There is an obvious connection in German between the term *Anschauung* and the verb *schauen* (to view)” that “suggests an intimate relation between the notion of intuition and the senses, especially the sense of sight” (Hintikka 1969: 38). Of course, given the importance of vision to our day to day lives, it naturally attracts the investigation of philosophers. However, the use of ‘Anschauung’ should not be taken to only have a connection with sight, but all the senses, including what Kant terms ‘inner sense’.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Parsons reads the immediacy criterion to involve an imagistic aspect. He says that immediate relation to objects “evidently means that the object of an intuition is in some way directly present to the mind, as in perception” (Parsons 1992: 44). Setiya (2004: 66) maintains a similar view. If intuitions do have such an imagistic aspect, it may seem that ‘perception’ would have been a better English translation of ‘Anschauung’ than ‘intuition’. But arguing against Parsons’ construal of the immediacy criterion, Hintikka notes that ‘Anschauung’ “had been introduced into the German Philosophical terminology... as a translation of the (mediaeval) Latin term *intuitus*” (Hintikka 1969: 40). For instance, “Descartes could even contrast intuitions to the ‘fluctuating testimony of the senses’ as well as to ‘the blundering construction of imagination’” (ibid.: 41). And he further notes that the relationship between sensibility and intuition does not follow analytically from <intuition>. Thus, even if the intuitions of human beings must directly present objects to the mind as in perception, it does not follow that that is a requirement for intuitions simpliciter. However, if we limit our scope to human intuitions, then, as my interpretation of the immediacy criterion suggests, there is a robust sense in which intuitions are perception-like. Namely, their representational content is presentational (e.g. involving a myriad of colors, sounds, tactile sensations, etc.), unlike the representational content of abstract concepts.

is, after all, largely concerned with our experience of objects and, *a fortiori*, empirical intuitions – he does not mean to suggest that all intuitions are like perceptions. That is because Kant maintains both that God, if he exists, has intellectual intuitions and some of the intuitions that humans have are *a priori* intuitions. God, if He exists, is not a dependent being like humans. Thus, He would not have senses and, therefore – however His intuitions are like – they would not contain the myriad of sensations that are involved in human perception. Furthermore, *a priori* intuitions, by definition of ‘*a priori*’ are intuitions without sensations. Thus, unlike empirical intuitions, *a priori* intuitions cannot be perception-like with respect to the objects they relate to. Accordingly, while the connotations of ‘*Anschauung*’ suggest that sensible intuitions are perception-like representations – and so, thinking of sensible intuitions as being perceptions may sometimes prove a useful heuristic – it should be noted that not all sensible intuitions are, in fact, perception-like. I now turn to the two general criteria and the purpose that Kant has for offering them.

#### §2.3.1.2 The Two Criteria *in Concreto*

Kant classifies several species of representation, including intuitions, in his famous *Stufenleiter*. He says the following:

There is no lack of terms suitable for each kind of representation, that we should thus needlessly encroach upon the province of any one of them. Their serial arrangement [i.e. *Stufenleiter*] is as follows. The genus is *representation* in general (*repraesentatio*). Subordinate to it stands representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A *perception* which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state is *sensation* (*sensatio*), an objective perception is *knowledge* (*cognitio*). This is either *intuition* or *concept* (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former relates immediately to the object and is single, the latter refers to it mediately by means of a feature which several things may have in common. The concept is either an *empirical* or a *pure concept*. The pure concept, in so far as it has its origin in the understanding alone (not in the pure image of sensibility), is called a *notion*. A concept formed from notions transcending the possibility of experience is an *idea* or concept of reason. (A320/B377)

We see that Kant specifies two general criteria for a representation to be an intuition: (1) the representation must relate immediately to the object, and (2) the representation must be single.<sup>34</sup> The former is the immediacy criterion, and the latter is the singularity criterion. Kant juxtaposes the criteria for intuitions with the criteria for concepts: (1) the representation must relate mediately to its object, and (2) the content of the representation must (i), in principle, be shareable by multiple objects (ii) by means of the shareability of the content that is related to the representation's object. The former is the mediacy criterion, and the latter is the generality criterion. Drawing from the singularity and immediacy criteria, my aim is to determine the formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition. Unfortunately, the immediacy and singularity criteria are vague, even when juxtaposed with the mediacy and generality criteria. Specifically, it is unclear what it

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Howell suggests four criteria for intuitions: “[i]ntuitions are (i) singular representations (ii) given to us (iii) immediately and (iv) sensible in nature. These features are distinct. “Singular” classifies the representation itself via its denotation, “immediate” the representation’s relation to its denotation, “given” how that relation is established, and “sensible” the stuff composing the representation” (Howell 1973: 209). But (iv) does not apply to the case of God’s intuition. Furthermore, contra Howell, I read ‘immediate’ as descriptive of how an object is given. For illustration, consider the following passage:

...I can only know what may be contained in the object in itself if the object is present and given to me. Of course, even then it is incomprehensible how the intuition of a thing that is present should allow me to cognize it the way it is in itself, since its properties cannot migrate over into my power of representation... (Prol. §9)

In this passage, Kant entertains that aspect of the Leibnizian cognitive theory, in which we cognize things as they are. He, then, considers two relations that, on their face, appear to count as the noumenal object being given. In the first, Kant has us merely suppose that the noumenal object is present, or given, to the subject without providing details. But the second relation informs us that, in the first, the noumenal object is not present to the mind such that it can be cognized. Whatever the first relation might be, it is helpful to think of the noumenal object as causally interacting with the noumenal epistemic apparatus of the subject. In the second relation, the properties of the noumenal object are present, or being given, to the mind for cognition. What we see is that Kant finds it incomprehensible that the former relation can entail the latter. And although, because he is entertaining the consequences of the Leibnizian cognitive theory, Kant calls the former relation an ‘intuition’, it is evident that, on his view, it cannot succeed in executing the basic function of an intuition, which is to enable our cognition of the object to which it relates. Consequently, for Kant, not any kind of relation between an object and a subject, in which the object can be reasonably construed as being given to the subject, suffices for the subject to have an intuition of the object. In the intuition of it, the object must be given, or presented, to the mind of the subject for its cognition. This, it seems to me, is the sense of ‘immediate’: that the object be present to the mind.

is for a representation to be single and what it is for the relation between a representation and an object to be immediate.

In clarifying the singularity and immediacy criteria, it is helpful to consider Kant's purpose in introducing them. Kant sometimes draws the distinction between concepts and intuitions as, respectively, those representations of things *in abstracto* and those representations of things *in concreto* (ID §1). Typical examples of representing an object *in abstracto* include those instances in which you think about an object that is not in your presence, or when you think about a kind of object. In these instances, the representations have a representational content that is abstract and is, in principle, applicable to several objects. Consequently, the purpose of the mediacy and generality criteria is to delineate those representations involved in representing objects, or kinds of objects, *in abstracto*. In other words, Kant introduces the mediacy and generality criteria as criteria for concepts, because he believes that, if a representation satisfies both criteria, then it is the kind of representation used in representing objects, or kinds of objects, *in abstracto*.

In contrast, typical examples of representing objects *in concreto* include those vivid representations had when an object is in your presence. In these instances, the representations have a representational content that is presentational (e.g. they involve vivid representations like colors, notes, timbres, tactile sensations, scents, etc.) and presents only one object to the mind. Consequently, the purpose of the singularity and immediacy criteria is to delineate those representations involved in representing objects *in concreto*. In other words, Kant introduces the singularity and immediacy criteria as criteria of intuitions, because he believes that, if a representation satisfies both, then it is the kind of representation involved in our representation of objects *in concreto*.

This suggests that Kant's purpose in offering the singularity criterion is to ensure that an intuition can have only one object in its extension, and the purpose in offering the immediacy criterion is to ensure that an intuition, in tandem with the satisfaction of the singularity criterion, presents the object to the mind for its cognition. With these suggestions in mind, I turn to developing the formal requirements from the immediacy and singularity criteria.

### *§2.3.2 The Formal Requirements*

In this section (§2.3.2), I argue for two mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive sets of formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition: the strong formal requirements and the weak formal requirements. The main difference between these two requirements is that the former is satisfied by having a robust object (i.e. a thing in itself or an empirical object) in its extension, while the latter is satisfied by having a weak object in its extension (i.e. an object that is reducible to the representational content of that intuition). Accordingly, the question of whether an intuition satisfies the strong formal requirements is settled by the question of how it satisfies the singularity criterion; either with a robust object (call this 'strong satisfaction') or with a weak object (call this 'weak satisfaction'). Consequently, in developing the strong formal requirements, I will consider a case in which a representation strongly satisfies the singularity criterion. Then, in developing the weak formal requirements, I will consider a case of a representation that weakly satisfies the singularity criterion. I turn to the development of these formal requirements in turn.

#### *§2.3.2.1 The Strong Formal Requirements*

Here I begin the development of the strong formal requirements. Since the strong formal requirements are one set of requirements that a representation can satisfy in order to be an intuition, I must examine both the formal requirements for the singularity criterion to be satisfied and the

formal requirements for the immediacy criterion to be satisfied. And since I am developing the strong formal requirements, both the requirements for the singularity criterion and the immediacy criterion must be developed with respect to a case of strong satisfaction.

In developing the strong formal requirements, I first consider the formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion. Then I turn to considering the formal requirements for the satisfaction of the immediacy criterion. The combination of these requirements gives us the strong formal requirements. I now turn to the formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion.

#### §2.3.2.1.1 Strong Satisfaction and the Formal Requirements of Singularity

Previously in §2.3.1.2, I suggested that Kant offers the singularity criterion because it ensures that an intuition can have only one object in its extension. I begin my development of the formal requirements of singularity by offering a more direct argument for that claim. Second, I explore its significance by drawing an analogy between singular representations and singular terms. Third, I consider a case of strong satisfaction in order to draw out the formal requirements for strongly satisfying the singularity criterion. I proceed to the argument.

##### §2.3.2.1.1.1 The Singularity Criterion and a Single Object

In the *Stufenleiter*, Kant contrasts the singularity criterion with the generality criterion, thereby offering a way of understanding the singularity criterion; namely, through a better understanding of the generality criterion. The generality criterion states that the representational content of a concept must be, in principle, shareable. For illustration, consider an example of an empirical concept. People with ordinary vision will come to experience several objects of the same color, for example red. The property of redness, therefore, is shareable. By abstracting away



the differences between these objects, the understanding forms, for itself, the concept of red (i.e. <red>). As a result, <red> represents, in the abstract, a single kind of property that several objects, in the concrete, can possess. This is what constitutes the generality of <red>. In other words, <red> is a general representation because, in principle, multiple objects can be red and, therefore, multiple objects can belong to the extension of <red>, in particular, any red object, even those red objects we have not seen. If a representation is general because, in principle, it can include multiple objects in its extension, then, by contrast, a representation is singular because only one object can belong to its extension.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it stands to reason that a representation satisfies the singularity criterion if and only if only one object can belong to its extension.

#### §2.3.2.1.1.2 Singular Representations and Singular Terms

Given that the singularity criterion requires that only one object can belong to its extension, there is an analogy between singular representations and singular terms. A term is singular just in case either (1) it can have only one object in its extension and it does have an object in its extension or (2) it can have only one object in its extension, but fails to have an object in its extension.<sup>36</sup> For

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<sup>35</sup> In contrast, Kirk Wilson interprets the contrast between the generality of concepts and the singularity of intuitions to be a contrast between their mereological structures: “[w]hereas for concepts the parts are subordinated to the whole and the whole is contained with the parts, it follows that the parts of an intuition are contained *within* the whole and that the whole is greater than any individual part” (Wilson 1975: 254). As a result, Wilson interprets the singularity criterion as requiring that the representation has a unitary spatiotemporal structure. It may be that all sensible intuitions happen to satisfy the singularity criterion by having a unitary spatiotemporal structure, since, as an object of consciousness, it, thereby, has the requisite unity for being an individual object. Nevertheless, the reason why it satisfies the singularity criterion is because of that individuality or singularity.

<sup>36</sup> Both Hintikka and Parsons construe intuitions as being analogous to singular terms. Hintikka says, “[W]e may say that Kant’s notion of intuition is not very far from what we would call a singular term”; hence, an “intuition is for Kant a ‘representation’... which refers to an individual object or which is used *as if* it would refer to one” (Hintikka 1969: 43). And Parsons says that the singularity criterion “seems quite clear. It can have only one individual object” (Parsons 1992: 44). Although intuitions and singular terms are analogous with respect to having a unique object in their extensions, as I discuss later in detail, there are important disanalogies between the two. First, Kant’s concern with intuitions is that they relate to an object in such a way that we have synthetic cognitions of the objects through that intuition, while the primary function of singular terms is simply to denote an object. Instead of construing intuitions as being the analogues of singular terms, Howell construes them as singular demonstrative terms; this fits

instance, consider the singular term ‘the tallest man in the room’. ‘The tallest man in the room’ is a singular term because only one object can belong to its extension. However, in some cases it is referring, while in other cases it is not. For instance, in the case in which no adult males are in the room, then ‘the tallest man in the room’ fails to refer to an object and, therefore, fails to have any object in its extension. But in those cases in which there is one adult male who is taller than all the other adult males in the room, then the ‘the tallest man in the room’ refers to one and only one object; namely, the tallest man in the room. The same holds of abstract singular representations, *mutatis mutandis*, for example, <the tallest man in the room>, which combines <tallest>, <man>, and <in the room> in order to form a singular representation. Later, I will argue for a similar feature for singular representations of objects *in concreto* (i.e. intuitions), although, admittedly, its analogy with singular terms is weaker.<sup>37</sup> For now, I turn to developing the strong formal requirements of singularity from a case of strong satisfaction.

#### §2.3.2.1.1.3 Singularity and the Case of Strong Satisfaction

In developing the formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion, I want to consider an instance in which it is assumed that a thing in itself is being empirically intuited, for this guarantees that a robust object is being intuited. First, suppose that if an object were to causally interact with our epistemic apparatus, it would cause modification in

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well with my contention, since proper use of a demonstrative requires the presence of the unique object to be denoted by it (Howell 1973: 207). However, insofar as their singularity is concerned, intuitions are analogous to both. But, it would be incorrect to construe either as the formal counterpart of intuitions, because, (1) as Parsons notes, definite descriptions rely on multiple general concepts to secure its unique referent (see footnotes 38 and 40) and (2) as Manley Thompson notes, singular demonstratives “are conspicuously representations of concepts” (Thompson 1972: 329).

<sup>37</sup> See §2.3.2.2.1. There I argue that an intuition either refers to a robust object (i.e. to either an empirical object or thing in itself) or a weak object (i.e. the representational content of the intuition as it is united by the understanding). If an intuition refers to a robust object, then it satisfies the strong formal requirements for being an intuition. But if it refers to a weak object, then it satisfies the weak formal requirements.

the subject, thereby producing representations of that object. Furthermore, suppose along with the Leibnizian cognitive theory that those representations present the object as it is. In this case, it is plausible to maintain that the sensible representation satisfies the singularity criterion by being the effect of a unique object. That is, the unique object in question belongs to the representation's extension precisely because it caused that representation. These considerations suggest the following formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity requirement: for some representation,  $x$ , to strongly satisfy the singularity criterion (1) there must be a robust object,  $y$ , (2)  $x \neq y$ , (3)  $x$  relates to  $y$  such that  $y$  belongs to  $x$ 's extension (e.g. by a causal relation), and (4) if  $z$  belongs to  $x$ 's extension, then  $z = y$ . I now turn to developing the formal requirements for the satisfaction of the immediacy criterion.

#### §2.3.2.1.2 The Formal Requirements of Immediacy

Recall that I am developing the strong formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition. The formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion partially determines the strong formal requirements. What remains is the determination of the formal requirements for the satisfaction of the immediacy criterion.

Previously in §2.3.1.2, I suggested that Kant offers the immediacy criterion because it ensures that the representation has the epistemic role of presenting the object to the mind for its cognition. I begin my development of the formal requirements of immediacy by offering a more direct argument for that claim. First, I show that Kant intends for intuitions to have the epistemic role in question. Second, I argue that the singularity criterion cannot succeed in securing that role for intuitions. Consequently, the burden falls to the immediacy criterion. Then I turn to meeting an objection. After arguing that the immediacy criterion secures the epistemic role of intuitions, I

consider the same case of strong satisfaction that was given above, in order to draw out the formal requirements for satisfying immediacy.

#### §2.3.2.1.2.1 The Immediacy Criterion and the Epistemic Role of Intuitions

For Kant, human cognition is discursive. That is, the object of cognition must be brought under concepts in a judgment for cognition of it to take place. This is why Kant famously says, “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (A51/B75). The role of intuitions, then, is to establish a cognitive relation with an object such that it can be brought under concepts. For instance, consider the following passage:

In whatever manner and by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects, *intuition* is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought as a means is directed. But intuition takes place only in so far as the object is given to us. This again is only possible, to man at least in so far as the mind is affected in a certain way. (A19/B33)

According with my contention, Kant defines ‘intuition’, in part, (1) as the means through which a mode of knowledge (i.e. cognition) relates to its objects and (2) as the means through which the objects are brought under concepts (i.e. thought). Hence, the above passage informs us that intuitions are the means for bringing objects under concepts. What I aim to argue is that the singularity criterion cannot secure this epistemic role, therefore leaving the burden on the immediacy criterion. I now turn to that argument.

#### §2.3.2.1.2.2 A Disanalogy between Intuitions and Singular Terms

Earlier, we saw that an analogy exists between singular representations and singular terms indicating that the point of the singularity criterion was to secure that, if a representation satisfied it, then it could have only one object in its extension. There also exists an important disanalogy between intuitions and singular terms. Namely, intuitions play a crucial role in human cognition

in that they enable synthetic cognitions of objects. For illustration, consider the singular term ‘the tallest man currently living’. Suppose that I have never met, read, heard, etc. anything about the tallest man currently living. I do not even know whether such a man exists (although, at the time of writing this, such a man does, indeed, exist). And further suppose, for no particular reason, I decide to speculate about the tallest man currently living, and I say to a friend, “I bet the tallest man currently living could not dunk a basketball without jumping.” Since there is a tallest man who is currently living, ‘the tallest man currently living’ succeeds in referring to him, but, through that mere referential relation, I do not come to know anything more about the man. All I know of him is that, if he exists, he is an adult male, he is taller than all other adult males, and, as of now, he is alive. But I know this only through the mere descriptive content that fixed the referent. The same holds of general concepts. By using the general concepts <tallest>, <man>, <current>, and <living> together, I can construct an abstract, though singular, representation; namely <the tallest man currently living>.<sup>38</sup> But, through this singular representation, all I can know of such a man, if he exists, is what falls out analytically: that he is an adult male, he is taller than all other adult males, and, as of now, he is alive. What I cannot know either merely from the descriptive content of the singular term, or merely from the part concepts of <the tallest man currently living>, is that the tallest man currently living is named ‘Sultan Kösen’, resides in Turkey, and measures over 8 feet tall. What this demonstrates is that the existence of a referential relationship between a representation and an object is not sufficient for our synthetic cognition of that object through that representation. Therefore, since the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion only secures a referential relation between a representation and a robust object, it is not, by itself, sufficient for

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<sup>38</sup> This is an illustration of Parsons’ point that the “idea of a singular representation formed from concepts seems quite natural to us” (Parsons 1992: 45). Furthermore, it demonstrates that the satisfaction of the singularity criterion does not entail satisfaction of the immediacy criterion. As Parsons continues, “Such a representation would relate to a single object if to any at all, but it hardly seems immediately” (ibid.).

guaranteeing that the representation plays the epistemic role that Kant takes intuitions to have. The burden, therefore, falls onto the immediacy criterion for securing that the relationship between a singular representation and an object is not merely referential, but also allows for the cognition of the object through it. Consequently, according to Kant, a singular representation is an intuition only if the representation also presents the object to the mind such that our concepts can be applied to them. But pertinent to my present purpose is that the epistemic role of intuitions is to present the object to the mind such that it can be cognized. I now turn to consider an objection.

#### §2.3.2.1.2.3 Alternative Readings of the Stufenleiter

It may be objected that the singularity and immediacy criteria are not numerically distinct as I have suggested they are, for it is reasonable to read Kant's definition of 'intuition' in the Stufenleiter as suggesting that the immediacy criterion is reducible to the singularity criterion. Recall Kant's definition:

This is either *intuition* or *concept* (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former relates immediately to the object and is single, the latter refers to it mediately by means of a feature which several things may have in common. (A320/B377)

One *prima facie* plausible way of reading 'by means of a feature which several things may have in common' is to read it as informing us of the nature of the mediacy criterion, such that the mediacy of concepts is a function of their generality.<sup>39</sup> That is, when Kant claims that concepts relate to their objects mediately by means of a feature (i.e. Merkmal) that multiple objects can have in common, 'by means of' is read as specifying *what* makes a concept mediate. Hence, Kant's answer to what makes a concept mediate is its generality (i.e. its shareable content). This reading reduces the mediacy of concepts to its generality, and, since concepts are offered in contrast to

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<sup>39</sup> This accords with Hintikka's (1969: 42) reading of the passage. Below, I argue that this reading is incorrect.

intuitions, this reading suggests that the immediacy of intuitions is, likewise, reducible to its singularity.<sup>40</sup> If this reading is right, then the immediacy criterion is satisfiable by strongly satisfying the formal requirements for singularity or weakly satisfying them.

I think such an objection is misguided for two reasons, which I treat here in turn. First, as discussed earlier, a merely referential relationship between a singular representation and its object does not guarantee that the object can be cognized through that representation. Thus, if the immediacy criterion were reducible to the singularity criterion, nothing would ensure that intuitions play the essential role in cognition that Kant assigns them. This, it seems to me, is sufficient reason for rejecting this reading. But second, there is another *prima facie* plausible

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<sup>40</sup> This is how Hintikka reads the immediacy criterion. He says, “[A]nother way of saying that *Anschauungen* have an immediate relation to their objects is to say that they are *particular* ideas or ‘representations’ (*Vorstellungen*) in contradistinction to general representations or concepts” (Hintikka 1969: 42). Later, Thompson adopts a similar reading, although he denies that intuitions have a kind of linguistic entity as a formal counterpart: intuitions “refer to an object immediately because they somehow mark characteristics peculiar to that object alone” (Thompson, 1972: 316). In contrast to Hintikka, Parsons seems to take the immediacy criterion to be the fundamental of the two criteria, because (1) he notes that general concepts, being analogous to general terms, can be employed together to refer to a unique object, and (2) he believes Kant takes it axiomatically that “[w]hat is immediately present to the mind are individual objects” (Parsons 1992: 45). I disagree with both Hintikka and Parsons. I disagree with Hintikka, because the immediacy has to do with the epistemic role of intuitions for cognition, while singularity determines that intuitions can have only one object in their extensions. I disagree with Parsons because an uncoordinated manifold of representations must be immediately present for the understanding to unite (i.e. the transcendental synthesis of productive imagination) it into an intuition. Wilson, on the other hand, regards the immediacy as being the “isomorphic *identity* between an intuition and its object” (Wilson 1975: 265). Wilson asserts that this isomorphic identity is established by Kant’s doctrine of transcendental idealism: “[t]he implication of transcendental idealism is that we must *identify* the appearance *qua* object of intuition with the intuition itself” (ibid.). And that is because, transcendently, appearances are mere representations of the mind. I agree that, for sensible intuitions, the doctrine of transcendental idealism is important for satisfying the immediacy criterion, not because it guarantees an isomorphic identity between an intuition and its empirical object, which it does, but because it explains how a mode of cognition is immediately related to its object. The whole difficulty of intuiting noumenal objects, according to Kant, is the impossibility of their properties being presented to the mind, even if they are present to us in some other sense. Appearances and their properties, on the other hand, because they are, transcendently, mere representations, are present to the mind. Thus, I take the singularity and immediacy criteria, for sensible intuitions, to work hand in hand to pick out representations that allow us to cognize single, unique, objects. Namely, representations (1) whose content is presentational, and (2) whose content is about, at most, one object. Immediacy, by itself, includes manifolds that do not relate to one and only one object. Singularity, by itself, includes certain combinations of general (abstract) concepts that refer to one and only one object. Thus, neither, alone, is sufficient for determining the kind of representation Kant is interested in.

reading of ‘by means of a feature which several things may have in common’, namely, one in which ‘by means of’ is read, not as specifying *what* makes the representation mediate, but as specifying, in part, the *manner* in which the mediacy takes place. This, I argue, is the correct reading.

In the *Stufenleiter*, the immediacy of an intuition describes the relation between a representation and its object. Mediacy, being the counterpart of immediacy, should do the same.

The following passages indicate that this is precisely how Kant views it:

In whatever manner and by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects, *intuition* is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought as a means is directed... Objects are *given* to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yields us *intuitions*; they are *thought* through the understanding, and from the understanding arise *concepts*. But all thought must, directly or indirectly, by way of certain characters, relate ultimately to intuitions... (A19/B33)

Now the only use which the understanding can make of these concepts is to judge by means of them. Since no representation, save when it is an intuition, is in immediate relation to an object, no concept is ever related to an object immediately, but to some other representation of it, be that other representation an intuition, or itself a concept. Judgment is therefore the mediate knowledge of an object, that is, the representation of a representation of it. In every judgment there is a concept which holds of many representations, and among them of a given representation that is immediately related to an object. (A68/B93)

In the first passage, Kant defines ‘intuition’, in part, as the means by which thought is directed at objects. Hence, one epistemic role of intuitions is to serve as a medium through which objects can be thought. Since, on Kant’s view, thinking is done through concepts, it follows, by the same token, that intuitions serve as a medium through which objects are brought under concepts. The same point is reiterated in the second passage. There, Kant notes that no concept is ever related to an object immediately, and, if a concept relates to an object, it does so by relating to a representation that is immediately related to an object. That is, it does so by relating to an intuition. Hence, a concept is mediate in that, if it relates to an object, it does so through intermediary



representations, one of which must be an intuition (i.e. a representation that relates immediately to the object).<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, quite apart from specifying what makes a representation mediate, Kant's purpose in saying 'a feature which several things may have in common' is to specify the kind of features (i.e. Merkmale), or marks, that are constitutive of concepts. Consider the following passage:

A mark is a partial representation (which), as such (is a ground of cognition). It is either intuitive (a synthetic part): a part of intuition or discursive: a part of a concept, which is an analytic ground of cognition.<sup>42</sup> (R 2286; 16:299-300)<sup>43</sup>

In this passage, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of features: intuitive and discursive.<sup>44</sup> Intuitive features are constitutive of representations of objects *in concreto*. More specifically, intuitive marks are singular instances of universal properties (i.e. abstract particulars or tropes). In contrast, discursive features are the individual concepts that belong to the intension of a

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<sup>41</sup> Houston Smit and I agree here. He says that "the mediacy of a concept's relation to an object consists in its relating to an object by means of a further representation of that object" (Smit 2000: 263). But ultimately, he leaves us with a merely negative sense of an intuition's immediacy: "an intuition can be characterized... as its not relating to an object by means of some other representation of that object" (ibid.). However, he does (in my opinion, rightly,) suggest that a positive formulation of the immediacy of intuitions can be acquired by examining Kant's notion of synthesis. I believe the positive formulation I give below coheres with this suggestion, in that the sensible data to be unified (i.e. synthesized) are present to the mind in such a way that our concepts can organize them.

<sup>42</sup> Here I am following Smit's analysis of the mediacy and generality criteria in the *Stufenleiter* (2000: 254). Smit argues that Hintikka, Parsons, and Howell's reading of the mediacy and generality criteria and, therefore, their reading of the immediacy and singularity criteria, are affected by not recognizing this distinction between Merkmale (i.e. features, marks, characteristics, etc.), such that they "in effect equate all marks with discursive ones" (Smit 2000: 259). Since the immediacy and singularity criteria are contrasted with the mediacy and generality criteria, they are all led, falsely, to conclude that intuitions do not relate to their objects by way of marks (i.e. Markmale).

<sup>43</sup> (qtd. in Smit, 2000: 254)

<sup>44</sup> (Smit, 2000: 260). See Smit (2000: 247-254) for a discussion of Kant's Merkmale (i.e. marks, features, etc.). In short, a mark is a property that can have both natural existence and intentional existence and, therefore, can belong both to the thing and to our representation of it. Our representations of a thing can be whole or partial. Kant's whole representation is a descendent of Leibniz's notion of a complete concept. That is, we have a whole representation of a thing only insofar as our representation of it includes nothing more and nothing less than all of its marks. A partial representation, then, is a representation of a thing that includes only a proper subset of all of its marks. Marks are, therefore, essentially partial. See Smit (2000: 254-260) for a discussion of intuitive marks versus discursive marks. In short, a mark is intuitive if it is a proper subset of an intuition. It is discursive if it is a part of a concept (e.g. <male> is a part of <bachelor>). Discursive marks are universal properties, and intuitive marks are singular instances of universal properties (i.e. abstract particulars or tropes).

representation *in abstracto* (e.g. <adult>, <male>, and <unmarried> are each discursive marks of <bachelor>). Thus, discursive features are universal properties, which is why, as Kant puts it, several things may have them in common. Pertinent to my purposes, though, is that, since there are two kinds of features, Kant's purpose in saying 'which several things may have in common' is to clarify which of the two kinds of features he has in mind. Therefore, Kant's point in saying 'a feature that several things may have in common' is to stress the generality of concepts, not to explain what makes a representation mediate.<sup>45</sup> I now turn to developing the formal requirements for the immediacy criterion.

#### §2.3.2.1.2.4 Immediacy and the Case of Strong Satisfaction

In developing the formal requirements for the immediacy criterion, I proceed in the same way in which I developed the formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion. Consider a case in which it is *prima facie* plausible that a thing in itself is empirically intuited. Suppose that, in an object's causal interaction with a subject's sensibility, the subject is modified such that it produces a representation of that object. And further suppose that the representation presents the object as it is. In this case, it is plausible to maintain that the sensible representation satisfies the immediacy criterion by presenting the object, as it is, to the mind for its cognition. These considerations suggest the following formal requirements: for some representation  $x$  to satisfy the immediacy criterion, (1) there must be an object of experience,  $y$ , (2) a relation must obtain between  $y$  and a subject's sensibility such that  $y$  can be cognized by the subject through  $x$ , and (3)  $x \neq y$ . But recall that the function of the singularity criterion is to secure that only one object can belong to an intuition's extension. Hence, requirements (1) and (3) belong

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<sup>45</sup> As Smit says, "The import of the phrase is to specify what the generality, not the mediacy, of a concept consists in" (Smit 2000: 261).

to the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion, not the immediacy criterion. Therefore, for some representation  $x$  to satisfy the immediacy criterion, (2) a relation must obtain between  $y$  and a subject's sensibility such that  $y$  can be cognized by the subject through  $x$ .<sup>46</sup> I now turn to considering the weak formal requirements.

### §2.3.2.2 The Weak Formal Requirements

My present aim has been to develop the formal requirements for intuitions (simpliciter). Thus far, I have developed the formal requirements for the strong satisfaction of the singularity criterion and the satisfaction of the immediacy criterion. Combined, these give us the strong formal requirements: for a representation,  $x$ , to be an intuition (A) there must be a robust object,  $y$ , (B)  $x \neq y$ , (C)  $x$  relates to  $y$  such that  $y$  belongs to  $x$ 's extension, (D) if  $z$  belongs to  $x$ 's extension, then  $z = y$ , and (E) a relation must obtain between  $y$  and the subject's sensibility such that  $y$  can be cognized by the subject through  $x$ . In order to develop the formal requirements for intuitions (simpliciter), I must now develop the weak formal requirements. In doing so, I turn to consider the case of hallucinations.

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<sup>46</sup> It may seem that I am following Parsons in maintaining that Kant holds whatever satisfies the immediacy criterion satisfies the singularity criterion, since I regard  $y$  as taking an object (Parsons, 1992: 45). However, note that it is the singularity criterion that guarantees that  $y$  is an object, not the immediacy criterion. While Parsons maintains that satisfaction of the immediacy criterion entails satisfaction of the singularity criterion, but not vice versa (see footnote 40), Smit maintains that they are mutually entailing (Smit, 2000: 265). His reason is that "[w]hat makes an objective perception singular – its being contained in the form of intuition – is also what renders its relation to an object immediate" (ibid.). But as we have seen earlier, <the tallest man currently living> is singular, but it is not contained in a form of intuition. Thus, (1) Parsons regards satisfaction of the immediacy criterion as entailing satisfaction of the singularity criterion, but not vice versa, (2) Hintikka regards them to be mutually entailing because he considers the immediacy criterion to be a corollary of the singularity criterion, (3) Smit takes them to be mutually entailing, because it is the form of intuition that makes a perception both singular and immediately related to its object, and (4) I take them to be working hand in hand in securing that intuitions are representations that guarantee an immediate cognitive relation with objects, rather than one entailing the other.

### §2.3.2.2.1 Hallucinations and Weak Satisfaction

Recall that, earlier, I drew an analogy between singular representations and singular terms.<sup>47</sup> There, I noted that singular representations like singular terms can either be referring or non-referring. Similarly, though admittedly the analogy is weaker, intuitions can either refer to robust objects or weak objects. If we were to intuit things in themselves, or when we intuit empirical objects (e.g. tables, chairs, books, etc.), a robust object corresponds to that intuition. But consider the case of hallucinations.

In the case of a hallucination, I represent something *in concreto* (i.e. its representation involves vivid representations like colors, notes, timbres, tactile sensations, scents, etc.). Consequently, in hallucinating something, I am intuiting it (i.e. I have an intuition of it). However, when I hallucinate something, there is not a robust object corresponding to what I hallucinate. Thus, if I hallucinate a person, I am not intuiting an actual person. Nevertheless, I am still thinking something as an object. What is this thing I am thinking as an object? It cannot be a thing in itself, and it cannot be an empirical object. There is, therefore, nothing left for it to be except the representational content of my intuition (as it is combined by the understanding). This suggests that hallucinations (1) do not take robust objects in their extensions, (2) do take weak objects in their extensions, and (3) weak objects are reducible to the representational content of their corresponding intuitions. In turn, these considerations suggest the following weak formal requirements: for a representation,  $x$ , to be an intuition (A') there exists a weak object,  $y$ , such that (B')  $x$  relates to  $y$  such that  $y$  belongs to  $x$ 's extension, (C') if  $z$  belongs to  $x$ 's extension, then  $z = y$ , and (D') a relation must obtain between  $y$  and the subject's sensibility such that  $y$  can be cognized

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<sup>47</sup> See §2.3.2.1.1.2.

by the subject through  $x$ . I now turn to argue that *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements, from which the Identity Thesis will follow.

### §2.3.3 *The Weak Formal Requirements, A priori intuitions, and the Identity Thesis*

I have just previously developed two sets of formal requirements such that, a representation is an (sensible) intuition if and only if it satisfies one of the two sets of formal requirements; either the strong formal requirements or the weak formal requirements. These formal requirements are exhaustive because the immediacy criterion requires that an intuition be in an immediate relation to some object. It is merely a question, then, of whether it relates to a robust object or a weak object. Thus, I can now give the formal requirements (simpliciter) for a representation to be an intuition: a representation,  $x$ , is an intuition if and only if, either it satisfies the strong formal requirements (i.e. (A) - (E)) or it satisfies the weak formal requirements ((A') - (D')).

Recall that the purpose of drawing out the formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition is to demonstrate that *a priori* intuitions must satisfy the weak formal requirements, for, if *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements, then the Identity Thesis will follow. Accordingly, I begin this section by arguing that *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements. Then I use that fact to argue for the Identity Thesis. I proceed to those arguments.

#### §2.3.3.1 *A priori* intuitions and the Weak Formal Requirements

In this section, I argue that *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements, because (1) they are, by hypothesis, intuitions, but (2) they cannot satisfy the strong formal requirements. Consider what Kant says, in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (hereafter *Prolegomena*), about *a priori* intuitions in general:

If our intuition had to be of the kind that represented things *as they are in themselves*, then absolutely no intuition *a priori* would take place, but it would always be empirical. For I can only know what may be contained in the object in itself if the object is present and given to me. Of course, even then it is incomprehensible how the intuition of a thing that is present should allow me to cognize it the way it is in itself, since its properties cannot migrate over into my power of representation; but even granting such a possibility, the intuition still would not take place *a priori*, i.e., before the objects were presented to me, for without that no basis for the relation of my representation to the object can be conceived...<sup>48</sup> (Prol. §9)

In this passage, Kant is considering the kind of situation I used in developing the strong formal requirements for singularity and the formal requirements for immediacy. In the present case, Kant is assuming, along with the Leibnizian cognitive theory, that all sensible intuitions present things in themselves to the mind for their cognition. We have seen that, in order for a subject to cognize an object, along with its properties, a relation must instantiate between the object and the subject's sensibility such that the object belongs to the intuition's extension. This, simply speaking, is what it is for an intuition to be an intuition *of* that object. For instance, in order for me to have an intuition of the Statue of Liberty, the Statue of Liberty must relate to my sensibility such that it belongs to the extension of the intuition in question. Now, an *a priori* intuition, being an intuition, must have an immediate cognitive relation with the object that is in its extension. Furthermore, a thing in itself is replete with its properties independent of any relation to human cognition. That is, a thing in itself is determined antecedently to any relation to human cognition. Since things in themselves are determined antecedently to any relation to human cognition, any subsequent cognitive relation that is conceived to obtain between human cognition and a thing in itself must be empirical. As a result, a thing in itself cannot belong to the extension of an *a priori* intuition, for, otherwise, that *a priori* intuition would also be an empirical intuition, but this is a

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<sup>48</sup> (Kant 2004: §9). I cite the *Prolegomena* using in-text citations of the *Prolegomena*'s numbered sections.

contradiction. Furthermore, as an analytic consequence of <empirical object>, if an empirical object belongs to the extension of an intuition, then it is an empirical intuition, not an *a priori* one. Therefore, *a priori* intuitions cannot satisfy the strong formal requirements for being an intuition, because *a priori* intuitions cannot have robust objects in their extension. However, since *a priori* intuitions are intuitions nonetheless, they must, and can only, satisfy the weak formal requirements. I now turn to arguing for the Identity Thesis.

### §2.3.3.2 *A priori* Intuitions and the Identity Thesis

The Identity Thesis states the following claim: if  $x$  is intuited *a priori* (i.e. we have an *a priori* intuition of  $x$ ), then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori* intuition. Consider any *a priori* intuition of something. An intuition is an intuition of  $x$  just in case  $x$  relates to the intuition such that  $x$  is the only object that belongs to the intuition's extension. This is true by what is meant by 'of  $x$ ' in the expression 'an intuition of  $x$ '. I just argued in the previous section that *a priori* intuitions can only satisfy the weak formal requirements. Therefore, by the weak formal requirements, the thing we have an *a priori* intuition of must be a weak object. That is,  $x$  must be reducible to the representational content of the *a priori* intuition. It, therefore, follows that, if  $x$  is intuited *a priori* (i.e. we have an *a priori* intuition of  $x$ ), then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori* intuition, which is what I aimed to prove. The following passage suggests that Kant appreciates this fact:

Space, represented as *object* (as we are required to do in geometry), contains more than mere form of intuition; it also contains *combination* of the manifold, given according to the form of sensibility, in an *intuitive* representation, so that the form of intuition gives only a manifold, the formal intuition gives unity of representation. (B160)

Of course, Kant maintains that we intuit space *a priori*. In the above passage, when Kant entertains representing space as an object, he does not appeal to a robust object to which our intuition of

space relates. Instead, he appeals to the manifold given by our form of outer intuition as it is combined by the understanding (i.e. he appeals to the representational content of our intuition of space).<sup>49</sup> This accords with my contention. Before turning to the next chapter, (1) I want to show that an equivalent identity thesis for *a priori* concepts is not forthcoming and (2) I want to discuss the role that *a priori* intuitions play in Kant's transcendental ideality argument.

#### §2.3.4 *A priori Concepts, A priori Intuitions, and the Transcendental Ideality Argument*

I have just argued that the Identity Thesis follows from the formal requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and intuitive. As a result, if Kant successfully argues that we intuit things *a priori*, then those things will be reducible to the representational content of that intuition. Recall that the point of arguing for the Identity Thesis was to bridge the argumentative gap in the transcendental ideality argument, thereby resolving the *non sequitur* problem. Furthermore, the hope in resolving the *Critique* of the *non sequitur* problem is to avoid the problem of the neglected alternative. At the beginning of this chapter, I observed that Kant's neglect of the possibility that things in themselves could be spatiotemporal, even if we grant that the forms of our sensibility are spatiotemporal, is rather puzzling, for, in the case of our *a priori* concepts, he is not at all tempted into making this apparent mistake. In this section, I first explain why having an *a priori* concept, say of causality, does not even tempt Kant into maintaining that things in themselves cannot have causal properties. Then I turn to explaining how, in the transcendental

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<sup>49</sup> Similarly Setiya regards our original representation of space to be identical to space. He says, "Suppose that the sense-datum of space stands for space itself by way of an isomorphism of *identity*" (Setiya 2004: 75). And he also says, "Space *just is* the structural particular that figures in outer sense as something to which we have a direct cognitive relation (without affection), and in relation to which we represent outer objects, through sensation" (ibid.: 77). He also notes one of the upshots of such an interpretation. Namely, it explains why Kant conflates our original representation of space and space throughout the transcendental ideality argument (ibid.: 79). This seems to me to be basically right. The Identity Thesis, or the reasons undergirding the Identity Thesis, explains why Kant is entitled to such a claim.



ideality argument, *a priori* intuitions are intended to forestall the problem of the neglected alternative. I proceed to those explanations.

#### §2.3.4.1 *A priori* Concepts and the Properties of Things in Themselves

Because of the generality criterion, the extension of concepts is analogous to the extension of universals: if an object possesses the corresponding property in question, then it belongs to the concept's extension (e.g. if a stop sign is red, then it belongs to the extension of <red>). Note, then, that in contradistinction to intuitions, the question of whether an object belongs to a concept's extension is independent of the question of whether some epistemic relation obtains between the object and the subject (e.g. it is independent of whether we can legitimately apply that concept to the object in question). For example, if I cannot legitimately apply <red> to an object because it is hidden from me, that object may be red nonetheless and, therefore, belong to the extension of <red>. As a result, it is not even tempting to think that, because I have an *a priori* concept of causality, things in themselves cannot have causal properties. It would only be tempting, if the mediacy and generality criteria entailed that objects possess a property only if we can legitimately apply the corresponding concept to the object. The generality criterion, however, does admit of this entailment. I now turn to considering how *a priori* intuitions, in the transcendental ideality argument, are intended to forestall the problem of the neglected alternative.

#### §2.3.4.2 *A priori* Intuitions and the Transcendental Ideality Argument

Thus far, I have shown that the Identity Thesis bridges the putative gap in the transcendental ideality argument. What I want to do here is to expand upon the role that *a priori* intuitions have in the transcendental ideality argument. In doing so, I first consider the case of the

singular term ‘Vulcan’. Then I point to some analogies and disanalogies between the case of ‘Vulcan’ and Kant’s argumentative strategy in the transcendental ideality argument.

‘Vulcan’ is a proper name that was introduced by Babinet to refer to a hypothetical planet, specifically to the planet whose orbit is intra-mercurial and that Le Verrier believed to cause perturbations in Mercury’s orbit. Consequently, if (1) a planet’s orbit is intra-mercurial and (2) it causes the perturbations in Mercury’s orbit, it is none other than the planet Vulcan. The problem, however, is that no object actually satisfies that descriptive content. According to traditional theory, then, ‘Vulcan’ is a non-referring singular term; however, Nathan Salmon proposes an alternative theory in which, while it is true that ‘Vulcan’ fails to refer to a concrete object, it, nonetheless, refers to an abstract object – what he terms a ‘mythical object’.<sup>50</sup>

For the purpose of expounding Kant’s argumentative strategy, assume Salmon’s theory is correct. Further assume that, through the mere inspection of ‘Vulcan’, we could come to know that it referred to an abstract object. Given these assumptions, we would, at the same time, be able to know that no concrete object is both intra-mercurial and causes perturbations of Mercury’s orbit. For, if such an object existed, the assumption that ‘Vulcan’ refers to an abstract object would be false. Keeping this in mind, I now turn to consider part of Kant’s argumentative strategy in the transcendental ideality argument.

In the transcendental ideality argument, Kant offers two expositions of our representations of space and time. From the inspection of these representations, he argues that our original representations of space and time are *a priori* intuitions. From the Identity Thesis, it follows that our original representations of space and time refer to weak objects. Thus, while in the case of singular terms, it is rather doubtful that the mere inspection of the term will settle whether it refers

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<sup>50</sup> For more on Salmon’s theory of singular terms and mythical objects, see *Metaphysics, Mathematics, and Meaning* (2005: 101-107).

to a concrete object or abstract object, it is implicit to the argumentative strategy of the transcendental ideality argument that the inspection of our representations can (at least sometimes) determine whether it refers to a robust object or a weak object. Now, in the case of ‘Vulcan’, its referent is a function of a set of descriptive content. Given the above assumptions, it fixes that the referent is an abstract object. In contrast, the referents of our original representations of space and time are not a function of any descriptive content. Rather, similar to the way that demonstratives fix their referents, the referents of our original representation of space and time are fixed by the immediate relation they have with their objects. Specifically, in the case of intuitions, it is the immediate cognitive relation. But since the referents of our original representations of space and time are weak objects, they cannot be things in themselves. Furthermore, since our *a priori* intuitions of space and time are our original representations of space and time, they fix the subject matter of the debate concerning the nature of space and time. That is, the question of whether claims about space and time are true is a function of whether those claims agree or disagree with the weak objects that are referred to by our respective *a priori* intuitions of them. If it turns out that things in themselves cannot relate to the weak objects, space and time, it would, at the very minimum, be very tempting to conclude that things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal.

Thus, we see that *a priori* intuitions, unlike *a priori* concepts, at least offer the potential of knowing that things in themselves cannot possess their corresponding properties (e.g. spatiality and temporality), because *a priori* intuitions, unlike *a priori* concepts, can refer only to one object and that object must be a weak object. If the possession of the corresponding property (e.g. spatiality or temporality) is a function of relating to the weak object in question (e.g. space or time), and if things in themselves cannot relate to weak objects, then we can know that things in themselves cannot have those properties (e.g. they are non-spatial or non-temporal). This is why

Kant is willing to deny that things in themselves are spatiotemporal, but not willing to deny that things in themselves have causal properties. I now turn to the next chapter, in which I will have the opportunity to provide a detailed examination of the transcendental ideality argument.

## **Chapter 3: Kant's Transcendental Ideality Argument, The Doctrine of Ignorance, and the Non-Spatiotemporality Thesis**

### **§3.1 Introduction**

Recall that I am interested in identifying the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance, and I am interested in resolving Kant's argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis of the *non sequitur* problem. On the one hand, identifying the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance will enable me to determine how the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains knowledge of things in themselves. This will, in turn, enable me to consider the implications that the Doctrine of Ignorance has for three theses of things in themselves: (1) the Noumenal Causation Thesis, (2) the Doctrine of Ignorance, and (3) the Non-spatiotemporality thesis. On the other hand, resolving the *non sequitur* problem offers the hope of providing Kant with an argument that avoids the problem of the neglected alternative. Both Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 have made progress towards these two goals. Before turning to the focus of the present chapter, consider what progress has been made.

First, in Chapter 1, I identified three of the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance: (1) that we are unable to cognize things in themselves through our *a priori* concepts, (2) that we are unable to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuition of them, and (3) that we are unable to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances. Furthermore, I demonstrated that, as a result, the Doctrine of Ignorance subjects the Noumenal Causation Thesis to the epistemic problem, namely, because <causality> is one of our *a priori* concepts, it follows from commitments (1) and (3) that Kant cannot have theoretical grounds for maintaining the Noumenal Causation Thesis. Second, in Chapter 2, I provided Kant with a valid argument for the claim that things in themselves are non-spatial; namely, the non-

spatiality argument. Since Kant's argument for the claim that things in themselves are non-temporal parallels the non-spatiality argument, I took the non-spatiality argument, by extension, to represent a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. Furthermore, in Chapter 2, I maintained the following two claims: (1) Kant's presentation of the transcendental ideality argument (of space) supports all but one premise of the non-spatiality argument and (2) the Identity Thesis, together with Kant's presentation of the transcendental ideality argument, supplies that one seemingly unsupported premise. Consequently, Chapter 2 focuses on showing that Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis on independent grounds. In particular, the Identity Thesis is entailed by the requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and intuitive.

Given my interests, three things still need to be completed: (1) I must show the consequences, if any, that the Doctrine of Ignorance has for both itself and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis; (2) I must show that the transcendental ideality argument does, in fact, support the non-spatiality argument and, by extension, supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis; and (3) given how the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts how we are to understand the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, I must determine whether Kant avoids the problem of the neglected alternative. These three points represent the focus of this chapter. They are also deeply intertwined. First, in order to complete point (1), I must identify the remaining specific commitments that undergird the Doctrine of Ignorance. The three commitments I have identified only represent why the *understanding* cannot be a means through which we cognize things in themselves. Since we cognize objects through two cognitive faculties, both sensibility and the understanding, it still remains for me to determine why *sensibility* cannot be a means through which we cognize things in themselves. More specifically, I must determine why we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves, for (1) we can sensibly cognize something only if we can

legitimately bring it under concepts and (2) I have already shown, in Chapter 1 (§1.3.2.2), that we cannot legitimately bring anything under concepts unless it is sensibly intuited. The argument that secures the claim that we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves is none other than Kant's transcendental ideality argument (of space and time) – the very argument intended to secure the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. In fact, the argumentative strategies for the two claims are overlapping. Second, those argumentative strategies must be consistent with the Doctrine of Ignorance. Otherwise, the very argument that supports both the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and the Doctrine of Ignorance will be subjected to the epistemic problem. Third, if we are careful to make the argumentative strategy for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis consistent with the constraints of the Doctrine of Ignorance, then, even if the *non sequitur* problem is resolved, it appears that Kant is still faced with the problem of neglecting an alternative. Before turning to these three points, I want to outline my strategy for treating them.

### §3.1.1 An Outline of Chapter 3

The present chapter is broken up into three main sections. The first two sections are devoted to arguing that the transcendental ideality argument supports both the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and the claim that we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves. I have been asserting this to be the case, but it must be argued for. The third section, itself, can be broken into two parts. The first is devoted (1) to determining what kind of knowledge of things in themselves is barred by the Doctrine of Ignorance, (2) to examining whether the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis are subject to the epistemic problem, and (3) to examining how the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is restricted by the Doctrine of Ignorance. The second is devoted to determining whether Kant, in the *Critique*, is still faced with the problem of

the neglected alternative, even if the *non sequitur* problem is resolved. I proceed to consider these sections in more detail.

The first section sets the stage for my argument that the transcendental ideality argument supports the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and the thesis that we do not sensibly intuit things in themselves (call the specific argument for this thesis ‘the sensibility argument’). My argumentative strategy is to examine Kant’s presentation of the transcendental ideality argument and simply show that, in it, Kant argues for the premises that are in the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument. Thus, in this first section, I (1) give a formal presentation of the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument in which their premises are listed and (2) identify which of those premises require support from the transcendental ideality argument.

With those premises in hand, the second section aims to show that they are, indeed, supported by Kant’s presentation of the transcendental ideality argument. This, of course, requires an exegesis of that presentation, which is not a light task. The transcendental ideality argument is notoriously difficult and has been a constant source of both philosophical and exegetical controversy. Accordingly, I break this section into three parts. The first offers a general overview of the transcendental ideality argument, given merely for the purpose of orienting ourselves with respect to the argument. The second part is dedicated to arming myself with a powerful exegetical tool. In the transcendental ideality argument (of space), Kant argues, in part, that we acquire our original representation of space *a priori*. This is in direct opposition to Leibniz’s empirical acquisition theory of our original representation of space. In fact, many of the arguments that are intended to support Kant’s *a priori* acquisitionist theory is, at the same time, aimed at undermining Leibniz’s empirical acquisitionist theory. Thus, by acquainting ourselves with Leibniz’s theory, we arm ourselves with a guide for interpreting the various argumentative



strategies that Kant employs in the transcendental ideality argument. The third part offers a systemic exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument, with the purpose of showing that Kant argues for those premises that were identified in the first section. This exegesis serves two roles. First, it demonstrates (1) that Kant has a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and, therefore, that that argument is absolved of the *non sequitur* problem and (2) that the transcendental ideality argument is the source of Kant's contention that we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves. Second, it sets the stage for the arguments in the third section, which operates, in part, by reflecting more carefully on Kant's argumentative strategy employed in the transcendental ideality argument.

As mentioned earlier, the third section is, itself, broken into two parts. The first is aimed at fully determining the Doctrine of Ignorance and discerning what kinds of putative knowledge of things in themselves are rendered epistemically unjustifiable and what kinds are not precluded by the Doctrine of Ignorance. I will argue that the Doctrine of Ignorance only bars the legitimacy of synthetic judgments of things in themselves whose purported legitimacy requires a cognitive relation to obtain between the representations of our cognitive faculties and things in themselves. Conversely, the Doctrine of Ignorance does not bar the legitimacy of analytic consequences of <thing in itself> (by 'analytic consequence of <thing in itself>', I mean a judgment regarding things in themselves, such that that judgment is logically entailed by some set of judgments that (1) must include at least one analytic judgment of things in themselves and (2) for any synthetic judgment in the set, it must be a synthetic judgment that is not about things in themselves). That is, it does not bar the legitimacy of analytic judgments of things in themselves, for their legitimacy is grounded upon the fact that their predicate concepts are contained in their subject concepts. Furthermore, since the Doctrine of Ignorance is aimed at things in themselves, it does not bar the

legitimacy of any synthetic judgments that are not about things in themselves. Consequently, if there are synthetic judgments of things in themselves that are logical consequences of analytic judgments and synthetic judgments that are not about things in themselves, then their legitimacy is, likewise, not barred by the Doctrine of Ignorance. Thus, I aim to show that the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis are, themselves, analytic consequences of <thing in itself> and, therefore, are not subject to the epistemic problem. With respect to the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, I argue that things in themselves are non-spatial (and non-temporal) in the sense that things in themselves cannot be space (or time) or be structured by space (or time). The second part is aimed at determining two things: (1) whether the kind of non-spatiality in question is sufficient for barring the problem of neglecting an alternative (I argue that it does not); and (2) whether the problem of the neglected alternative is, in fact, a problem for Kant's cognitive theory. I now turn to the first section.

### §3.2 The Non-spatiality Argument and the Sensibility Argument

I have been asserting that the transcendental ideality argument supports the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument. I now begin arguing for that claim. My argumentative strategy is simply to show that Kant, in the transcendental ideality argument, argues for the premises that are contained in the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument. The responsibility of the present section is to present those premises and to distill them into four claims that require further argumentative support. Accordingly, this section is broken into two parts. In the first part, I provide formal presentations of the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument, and I determine which premises require support from the transcendental ideality argument. In the second part, I distill the (otherwise) unsupported premises into four claims. I

proceed to giving the formal presentations of the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility arguments.

### §3.2.1 *The Corresponding Formal Arguments and Their Premises*

Here I present two formal arguments corresponding to the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument, both of which are deductively valid. First consider the non-spatiality argument:

#### The Non-spatiality Argument

- (eNP1) Our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition (i.e. we intuit space *a priori*)
- (IT) If  $x$  is intuited *a priori*, then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of the *a priori* intuition
- (eNI1) If space is intuited *a priori*, then space is reducible to the representational content of the *a priori* intuition (from IT)
- (NP1) Space is reducible to the representational content of our original representation of space (from eNP1 and eNI1)
- (NP2) Anything that is structured by the representational content of our original representation of space is cognizable *a priori*
- (NI1) Anything that is structured by space is cognizable *a priori* (from NP1 and NP2)
- (NP3) Things in themselves are only cognizable empirically
- (NI2) Things in themselves are not cognizable *a priori* (from NP3)
- (NI3) No things in themselves are structured by space (from NI1 and NI2)
- (N:.) All things in themselves are non-spatial (from NI3)

The non-spatiality argument consists of four premises: (eNP1), (IT), (NP2), and (NP3). Only one of these does not require the support of the transcendental ideality argument: (IT), or the Identity Thesis. (IT) does not require the support of the transcendental ideality argument, because, as I argued in the previous chapter, Kant is entitled to the Identity Thesis on independent grounds. In particular, it is entailed by the requirements for a representation to be both *a priori* and intuitive.

Thus, with respect to the non-spatiality argument, I only need to elucidate how the transcendental ideality argument supports (eNP1), (NP2), and (NP3). Now consider the sensibility argument:

#### The Sensibility Argument

- (SP1) If something is sensibly intuited, it is intuited either empirically or *a priori*
- (SP2) Things in themselves cannot be sensibly intuited *a priori*, and they cannot be structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space or time)
- (SP3) If something cannot be sensibly intuited *a priori*, and it cannot be structured by *a priori* intuitions (space), then it cannot be cognized *a priori*
- (SI1) No things in themselves are cognizable *a priori* (from SP2 and SP3)
- (SP4) All (human) empirical intuitions of things are structured by *a priori* intuitions
- (SP5) For any (human) intuition of something, if it is structured by an *a priori* intuition, then the thing is cognizable *a priori*
- (SI2) No intuitions of things in themselves are structured by an *a priori* intuition (from SI1 and SP5)
- (SI3) No things in themselves are intuited empirically (from SI2 and SP4)
- (SI4) Things in themselves cannot be sensibly intuited *a priori* (from SP2)
- (SI5) It is not the case that things in themselves are intuited either empirically or *a priori* (from SI3 and SI4)
- (S:.) It is not the case that things in themselves are sensibly intuited (from SP1 and SI5)

It consists of five premises: (SP1) - (SP5). However, (SP1) does not require the support of the transcendental ideality argument and (SP3) is only partially supported by the transcendental ideality argument. (SP1) does not require the support of the transcendental ideality argument, because empirical and *a priori* intuitions exhaust the kinds of human sensible intuitions there are. Thus, if we sensibly intuit something, it is either intuited empirically or *a priori*. (SP3) relies, in part, on the transcendental ideality argument, but it also relies, in part, on the consequences of the objective validity problem that was examined in Chapter 1. For illustration, consider how the consequent of (SP3) follows from its antecedent.

Assume a thing, *c*, (whatever it may be) that cannot be sensibly intuited *a priori* and cannot be structured by *a priori* intuitions. The transcendental ideality argument aims, in part, to establish that an object can be cognized *a priori* (1) if it is the (weak) object that is intuited *a priori* or (2) if

it is structured by an *a priori* intuition (of space). Consequently, *c* cannot be cognized *a priori* through a relation to an *a priori* intuition, whether that be a reference relation or a structuring relation, since doing so contradicts our assumption. But it might be that objects are cognizable *a priori* through our *a priori* concepts. However, in Chapter 1 (§1.3.2.2), we saw that our *a priori* concepts are objectively valid only of empirical objects. For in order to cognize an object *a priori*, we must have the assurance that some *a priori* representation is objectively valid of the object. Otherwise, we are left unassured whether the properties we assign to the object, in a judgment, actually agrees with it, and we would, therefore, be epistemically unjustified in making that judgment. Thus, if we cognize *c a priori* by means of our *a priori* concepts, then *c* is an empirical object. And if *c* is an empirical object, then it is empirically intuited. By (SP4), *c* will be structured *a priori*. This, however, contradicts our assumption. Given that we can only intuit something empirically or *a priori*, it follows that, if something cannot be sensibly intuited *a priori* and it cannot be structured by *a priori* intuitions, then it cannot be cognized *a priori*.

The above argument shows that (SP3) requires additional grounds independent of those offered by the transcendental ideality argument. Namely, it requires the claim that our *a priori* concepts can only be legitimately applied to empirical objects. This, we saw in Chapter 1, is supported by Kant's solution to the objective validity problem. Given those independent grounds, (SP3) will be supported by the transcendental ideality argument so long as that argument supports (SP4). Thus, with respect to the sensibility argument, I only need to elucidate how the transcendental ideality argument supports (SP2), (SP4), and (SP5). I now turn to distilling the premises of the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument into four claims.

### §3.2.2 *The Four Claims*

I have argued that only six premises need to be shown to be supported by the transcendental ideality argument: (eNP1), (NP2), (NP3), (SP2), (SP4), and (SP5). However, these premises can be distilled down into four claims. First, note that, because Kant argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition of space, (NP2) and (SP5) can be treated as logical equivalents. Accordingly, I only need to show that the transcendental ideality argument supports one of these claims. Second, the conjunction of (SP2) and (SP3) entails (SI1), which is logically equivalent to (NP3). Accordingly, given the above argument for (SP3), I only need to show that Kant argues for (SP2) and (SP4). As a result, two of the six premises are overdetermining and, therefore, only the following four claims need to be shown to be supported by the transcendental ideality argument: (1) our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, (2) all (human) empirical intuitions of things are structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), (3) if something is structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), then it is cognizable *a priori*, and (4) things in themselves can neither be intuited *a priori*, nor can they be structured by *a priori* intuitions. I now turn to demonstrating that these four claims are, in fact, supported by the transcendental ideality argument.

### §3.3 *The Transcendental Ideality Argument and the Four Claims*

In the previous section, I provided two formal arguments corresponding to the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument, both of which are valid. Consequently, if I can show that the transcendental ideality argument supports the non-spatiality argument, I will have, at the same time, resolved the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis of the *non sequitur* problem. Furthermore, if I can show that the transcendental ideality argument supports the

sensibility argument, then I will be in a good position for identifying the remaining specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. In the present section, I aim to demonstrate that the transcendental ideality argument, in fact, supports the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument. In order to do this, I will show that Kant, in the transcendental ideality argument, argues for the following four claims: (1) our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, (2) all (human) empirical intuitions of things are structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), (3) if something is structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), then it is cognizable *a priori*, and (4) things in themselves can neither be intuited *a priori*, nor can they be structured by *a priori* intuitions.

Showing that Kant argues for these four claims requires an exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument. As aforementioned, the transcendental ideality argument has been a constant source of both philosophical and interpretive controversy. Accordingly, for the purpose of orienting ourselves with respect to it, I begin this section with a general overview of the transcendental ideality argument. Then I consider Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory of our original representation of space so as to arm myself with an exegetical tool that will aid me in providing an accurate interpretation of Kant's various argumentative strategies. Finally, I provide a systematic exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument, with the aim of showing that Kant argues for the four claims in question. I now proceed to the general overview.

### §3.3.1 *A General Overview of the Transcendental Ideality Argument*

The transcendental ideality argument (of space) constitutes part of Kant's engagement with transcendental philosophy – a philosophy that is occupied not “so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*” (A11). In particular, given the representations that human cognition has available to it, Kant wants

to know two things. First, he wants to know whether *a priori* synthetic judgments can be epistemically justified. That is, he wants to know whether we can have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects. Second, if we can have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects, he wants to know how our cognitive faculties manage to do so.

The difficulty in answering this should be apparent. *A priori* cognition of an object is knowledge of an object without having to experience it. Analytic judgments offer easy cases of *a priori* cognitions, because the predicate concept is already contained in the subject concept. Therefore, application of the predicate to an object that falls under the subject predicate is always legitimate, even if the object has never been experienced. For example, in ‘all bachelors are unmarried’, <unmarried> is contained in <bachelor>. Therefore, I know independent of any experience (i.e. I know *a priori*) of bachelors that they are all unmarried. Synthetic judgments, however, are ampliative. That is, the predicate concept attaches additional information to the subject that is not already contained in the subject concept. For example, ‘all bachelors are messy’ is a synthetic judgment, because, although it may seem like it, <messy> is not contained in <bachelor>. Thus, *prima facie*, it seems impossible to have an epistemically justified synthetic judgment without the aid of experience in which we witness the predicate concept and subject concept being connected with one another. Consequently, it seems impossible to have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects at all.

In the transcendental ideality argument, Kant, in part, challenges the, *prima facie*, impossibility of having *a priori* cognitions of objects. The most straightforward task of the transcendental ideality argument (of space) is to argue that space is transcendently ideal. Space is ideal in the sense that space is merely subjective with respect to things in themselves (i.e. things replete with properties independent of any relation to human cognition). Space is transcendental



in that it makes possible *a priori* synthetic cognitions of empirical objects. In fact, Kant means to demonstrate that space makes possible a body of synthetic cognitions – namely, geometric principles – that apply universally (i.e. without exception) to empirical objects with apodictic certainty. As a result, the transcendental ideality of space secures its empirical reality (i.e. secures that space is objectively valid of all empirical objects).

For the purpose of orienting ourselves with respect to this argument, I want to provide a general outline of it. However, Kant gives two presentations of the transcendental ideality argument: one occurs in the A-edition of the *Critique*, and the other occurs in the B-edition. They are roughly the same, but not quite. The B-edition’s presentation of the transcendental ideality argument can be thought to comprise four parts: (1) an introduction leading to the argument, (2) the “Metaphysical Exposition of this Concept [i.e. Space]”, (3) “The Transcendental Exposition of Space”, and (4) “Conclusions from the Above Concepts”. With respect to the last three parts, I will call them ‘the metaphysical exposition’, ‘the transcendental exposition’, and ‘the conclusions’, respectively. My treatment of the transcendental ideality argument considers only the argumentation presented in the B-edition with the exception of one argument that the transcendental exposition is intended to replace. Call this argument ‘the argument to geometry’.<sup>51</sup> I now turn to outlining these four parts.

#### §3.3.1.1 The Introduction: a General Treatment

The introduction defines some of Kant’s technical jargon, draws some of the significant distinctions utilized throughout the *Critique*, and, generally, sets the stage for the transcendental ideality argument. Typically, I will discuss definitions and distinctions once understanding them

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Argument to geometry’ was, as far as I know, first coined by Lorne Falkenstein (1995: 202).

facilitates the understanding of an argument. Presently, I want to consider how Kant sets the stage for the transcendental ideality argument (of space).

One way in which he sets the stage is by presenting the transcendental ideality argument as offering a theory of space in contradistinction to other, prominent, theories:

What, then, are space and time? Are they real existences? Are they only determinations or relations of things, yet such as would belong to things even if they were not intuited? Or are space and time such that they belong only to the form of intuition, and therefore to the subjective constitution of our mind, apart from which they could not be ascribed to anything whatsoever? (A23/B38)

In this passage, Kant offers three alternative theories of the nature of space (and time). The first corresponds to Newtonian substantivalism, the view that space is itself a real entity that contains material entities. The second corresponds to Leibnizian relationalism. Rather than maintaining that space is a kind of entity that contains other entities, Leibnizian relationalism maintains that space is reducible to the distal relations of objects, and these distal relations, in turn, are reducible to accidental properties of immaterial objects. In short, Newton construes space to be a thing in itself (i.e. a thing replete with properties independent of any relation to human cognition), while Leibniz construes space as corresponding to properties of things in themselves. Kant's theory of space maintains that space is such that, (1) it is, in part, the subjective constitution of the mind and (2) it is neither a thing in itself nor an empirical object.

Another way in which Kant sets the stage is by dividing sensibility – the cognitive faculty by which humans have sensible intuitions – into two senses: inner sense and outer sense (A23/B37). Accordingly, Kant draws a distinction between two kinds of intuitions: (1) intuitions that represent our own states (e.g. pains, pleasures, emotions, etc.) to us, and (2) intuitions that represent things as distinct from own states (e.g. chairs, tables, our own bodies, etc.) Thus, inner sense has the epistemic function of enabling our cognition of our own states, while outer sense has

the epistemic function of enabling our cognition of empirical objects (i.e. appearances).<sup>52</sup> In the previous passage, we see that Kant maintains that space belongs “only to the form of intuition”. That is, space is “that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations” (A20/B34). Accordingly, Kant’s aim, in part, is to argue that space, as a subjective condition of the mind, coincides with the epistemic function of outer sense. In this respect, space has two functions: (1) it enables us to empirically intuit objects in that empirical objects are presented to the mind only if they are spatial, and (2) it enables us to empirically intuit objects as being distinct from our own states by ordering objects in spatial locations that are apart from our own bodies.<sup>53</sup> In doing so, Kant identifies space with the form of outer sense in general. Perhaps surprisingly, this illustrates that the transcendental ideality argument has both ontological and epistemic import: space is a particular thing with a particular nature, and part of its nature includes ordering and structuring empirical objects for our cognition. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that Kant is offering a kind of idealism – namely, transcendental idealism – in which we can expect the distinction between ontology and epistemology to be blurred.<sup>54</sup> I now turn to a general treatment of the metaphysical exposition.

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<sup>52</sup> See Falkenstein (1995: 162-3) for an account of how Kant’s predecessors and contemporaries did not understand ‘outer sense’ and its analogues to necessarily imply a spatial sense.

<sup>53</sup> This accords with Henry Allison’s reading: “Here ‘outside us’ clearly means external to or distinct from ourselves and our states. While the fact that such objects are *also* represented as in space is viewed as a specific feature of our outer experience” (Allison 2004: 100).

<sup>54</sup> In the introduction, Kant frames his general project as determining how *a priori* synthetic cognitions are possible, which is an epistemological investigation. Thus, many commentators are confused when Kant turns to ask after the nature of space, which is an ontological investigation. For instance Falkenstein says the following:

Reading this statement, one get the impression that the ensuing passages are to constitute an investigation into the question of what space and time are... However, when one turns to the actual arguments Kant proceeds to give, these expectations are disappointed. The Metaphysical and Transcendental Expositions never address the possibility that space and time might exist independently in their own right, or be determinations or relations of independently existing entities. (Falkenstein, 1995: 147)

And with respect to Kant’s conclusion (a), in which he denies that space represents any property of things in themselves, he says, “[I]t is as if Kant embarks on a project of investigating the nature of space- and time-cognition

### §3.3.1.2 The Metaphysical Exposition: a General Treatment

The metaphysical exposition comprises four arguments. In the order that they appear, I call these ‘the apriority argument’, ‘the formal argument’, ‘the singularity argument’, and ‘the immediacy argument’. These arguments constitute the bulk of Kant’s synthetic, or progressive, argument for the transcendental ideality of space. First, I briefly consider the purpose of these four arguments. Then I consider what it means for them to constitute part of Kant’s synthetic argumentation.

The official point of the metaphysical exposition of space (1) is to provide “the clear though not necessarily exhaustive, representation of that which belongs to” the representation of space and (2) “contains that which exhibits the [representation of space] *as given a priori*” (A23/B38). Correspondingly, the four arguments seem to be intended both to show how we represent space as being (e.g. as a three-dimensional extensive magnitude) and to argue that our representation of space is an *a priori* representation. However, Kant goes beyond merely arguing that our original representation of space is an *a priori* representation. First, in the singularity and immediacy arguments, he argues that our original representation of space is an intuition. Since our original representation of space, then, is an *a priori* intuition, it follows from the Identity Thesis (i.e. if we have an *a priori* intuition of *x*, then *x* is reducible to the representational content of that *a priori*

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without realizing that this is what he is doing, imagining instead that he is somehow still engaged with a question about the ontology of space and time” (ibid.: 148). Allison attempts to ameliorate the surprise of the ontological question by suggesting that Kant’s alternative can “also be seen as an *alternative to ontology*, according to which space and time are understood in terms of their epistemic function... rather than as “realities” of one sort or another” (Allison 2004: 98). Neither Falkenstein nor Allison’s characterization is promising. By identifying space and time with the form of intuition and our subjective constitution, Kant is making a claim about their nature, even though, it, at the same time, intersects with epistemic considerations. As Lisa Shabel says, “Though his burden is not obvious, he seems to regard the characterization of our representation of space... as at least partially descriptive of space itself” (Shabel 2004: 199). It is correct that Kant regards his characterization of our representation of space as descriptive of space itself, and that is because he (1), as I have argued, is entitled to the Identity Thesis and (2) argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition.

intuition) that space is reducible to the representational content of that intuition and is, therefore, merely subjective with respect to things in themselves (i.e. space is ideal). Second, the apriority and formal arguments have the additional task of arguing for the claim that all empirical intuitions (of objects) are structured in our *a priori* representation of space, which is logically equivalent to the claim that our original representation of space is the form of outer sense in general. It is this fact, together with the fact that *a priori* intuitions are producible antecedently to robust objects, that enables us to have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of empirical objects. Furthermore, from the Identity Thesis, it follows that Kant identifies space with our outer sense. Thus, in the metaphysical exposition, Kant argues for both components that make space transcendently ideal, namely, that it is merely subjective with respect to things in themselves, but it makes possible *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects.

Now, these four arguments are a part of Kant's synthetic argument for the transcendental ideality of space. That is, the arguments try "to develop cognition out of its original seeds without relying on any fact whatever" (Prol. §4). Pertinent to our purposes, this means that Kant does not begin with the assumption that geometrical reflection (i.e. the study of space) (1) enables us to have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of space that (2) are universally applicable to empirical objects (with apodictic certainty). Rather than assuming it, the metaphysical exposition constitutes argumentation that is intended to secure these two points. Namely, from space's subjectivity, geometers can study space *a priori* by constructing figures in the imagination, and from the fact that space is the form of outer sense in general, the *a priori* synthetic cognitions acquired by geometers will apply universally to empirical objects. As Kant maintains in the argument to geometry: "[t]he apodeictic certainty of all geometrical propositions, and the possibility of their *a priori* construction, is grounded in this *a priori* necessity of space" (A24). Consequently, the study

of space *a priori* in the imagination entitles us to *a priori* synthetic cognitions of empirical objects. That is, per the task of transcendental philosophy, Kant shows us how space makes possible *a priori* synthetic cognitions. I now turn to a general treatment of the transcendental exposition.

### §3.3.1.3 The Transcendental Exposition: a General Treatment

The transcendental exposition appears to do two things. First, it seems to replace a piece of synthetic argumentation that is presented in the A-edition, but not presented in the B-edition, namely, it is intended to replace the argument to geometry.<sup>55</sup> Second, in lieu of the argument to geometry, it offers Kant's analytic, or regressive, argument for the transcendental ideality of space: Kant's argument *from* geometry. I first discuss the argument from geometry and the argument to geometry. Then I consider why it is a mistake for Kant to have replaced the argument to geometry with the argument from geometry.

The argument from geometry is Kant's analytic argument for the transcendental ideality of space. That is, in contrast to synthetic argumentation, it relies "on something already known to be dependable, from which we can go forward with confidence and ascend to the sources, which are not yet known..." (Prol. §4). This analytic argument is called 'the argument from geometry', because what is "already known and dependable" is that (1) the activity of geometers – namely, the construction of spatial figures in the imagination – gives rise to *a priori* synthetic cognitions of space and (2) these *a priori* synthetic cognitions apply universally to empirical objects with apodictic certainty. From the former point, Kant argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. From the latter point, Kant argues that all empirical intuitions (of objects)

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<sup>55</sup> Falkenstein holds this to be a buttressing argument for the apriority and intuitivity of our original representation of space (1995: 253-5). One in which Kant argues analytically, assuming that geometry is universally applicable to empirical objects. But Kant claims that, in the *Critique*, he argued synthetically, suggesting that what Falkenstein holds to be an assumption in the argument is, in fact, the conclusion.

are structured in our *a priori* representation of space. Again, from the Identity Thesis, the transcendental ideality of space follows. In contrast, the argument to geometry is a piece of Kant's synthetic argumentation, because (1) its conclusion is a consequence of the apriority and formal arguments and (2) that argument, in opposition to the argument from geometry, progresses towards the claim that geometric principles are universally applicable to empirical objects.

In my detailed examination, I argue that Kant, in the transcendental exposition, does provide the argument from geometry.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, I regard Kant's removal of the argument to geometry to be a strategic blunder.<sup>57</sup> As aforementioned, the point of creating transcendental philosophy is to determine whether *a priori* synthetic cognition of objects is possible and, if so, how. Thus, he begs the question if he merely assumes that geometric propositions are a species of *a priori* synthetic cognition that are universally applicable to empirical objects. Consequently, in

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<sup>56</sup> On the standard interpretation, the argument from geometry only seeks to establish that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. Lisa Shabel (2004) offers a novel interpretation. While she agrees with the standard interpretation in that the metaphysical exposition argues for the claim that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, she interprets the transcendental exposition as continuing a synthetic argument for the claim that our original representation of space is a pure form of sensible intuition. Shabel reasons (1) that, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant maintains that he argues synthetically in the *Critique*, (2) since the metaphysical exposition already argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, Kant has no motivation to argue for the same claim in the transcendental exposition, and (3) a novel reading of the transcendental exposition of space (Shabel 2004: 196, 199-200, & 200-08). In contrast to both the standard interpretation and Shabel's, I read Kant as offering an analytic argument for both the claim that our representation of space is an *a priori* intuition and the form of outer sense in general. While Kant does maintain, in the *Prolegomena*, that in the *Critique* he argues synthetically, the *Prolegomena* (1783) was published after the A-edition (1781) and before the B-edition (1787). It is plausible that, between 1783 and 1787, Kant decided to change his argumentative tactics in his revision of the *Critique*. Furthermore, while the metaphysical exposition establishes that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, is the form of outer sense in general, and is meant to ground geometric cognitions, its arguments do not, by themselves, demonstrate how they ground geometric cognitions. And not only does an analytic argument rely "on something already known to be dependable", but it will "also exhibit an area with many cognitions that all arise from these same sources"; that is, in our case, it demonstrates how geometry is grounded in our original representation of space (Prol. §4). Finally, Shabel's novel reading of the Transcendental Exposition does not cohere well to the text.

<sup>57</sup> As Scott Jenkins notes, "If Kant were to appeal to the role played by space in our knowledge of truths of geometry, his critique of reason would once again be part of a metaphysics that assume the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments, not a part of transcendental philosophy in its role as a critique of pure reason" (Jenkins 2010: 351). Hence, Kant's change of strategy from the A-edition to the B-edition is a misstep. However, if we construe Shabel's novel reading (see footnote 56) as informing us what Kant *should* have done in the transcendental exposition, as opposed to what he actually *did*, then we have a readily available synthetic argument to offer Kant.

my detailed examination, I will consider how the argument to geometry, in connection with both the apriority argument and the formal argument, is intended to secure *a priori* synthetic cognitions that are universally applicable to empirical objects. I now turn to a general treatment of the conclusions.

#### §3.3.1.4 The Conclusions: a General Treatment

In this part of the transcendental ideality argument, Kant draws two distinct conclusions from the expositions:

- (a) Space does not represent any property of things in themselves, nor does it represent them in their relation to one another. That is to say, space does not represent any determination that attaches to the objects themselves, and which remains even when abstraction has been made of all the subjective conditions of intuition.<sup>58</sup> (A26/B42)
- (b) Space is nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us. (ibid.)

I will consider these conclusions in turn.

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<sup>58</sup> Allison maintains that Kant's recast of conclusion (a) "suggests that by 'things in themselves' is meant things considered apart (or in abstraction) from their relation to the subjective conditions of intuition" (Allison 2004: 119). By maintaining that 'things in themselves' means "things considered apart", Allison is offering a wholly epistemological interpretation of conclusion (a). This, though, not only fails to fit with the text – Kant says that space does not represent a *property* of things in themselves – but it also fails to take into consideration that conclusion (a) represents a partial denial of the Leibnizian view of cognition. In particular, it denies that our representation of space enables us to cognize, even confusedly, facts about the fundamental existents of the world. Furthermore, it ignores the connection between Kant's definition of noumenal objects in the *Dissertation* – that their properties are exempt from our subjective conditions and modifications of the subject – and the claim that spatial properties do not remain when all of our subjective conditions are abstracted away. Of course, as a result of the transcendental ideality argument, there is a sense in which Allison's interpretation is correct, but only trivially so. Namely, the only way in which a thing in itself, as a putative entity, could be considered is apart from our subjective condition. But the fact that we have a means for considering objects, whether they are things in themselves as putative entities or empirical objects thought apart from sensibility, is a function of humans having two separate, and therefore separable, faculties of cognition.



Conclusion (a) corresponds with (N::) – that all things in themselves are non-spatial.<sup>59</sup> It corresponds with (N::), because it concludes that space does not represent a determination that attaches to the objects themselves (i.e. things in themselves). Consequently, it states that things in themselves are non-spatial. After stating conclusion (a), Kant supports it with a short argument for the claim that things in themselves can neither be intuited *a priori* nor be structured by *a priori* intuitions. Call this ‘the antecedency argument’. Thus, given (SP3) and (SP4), it will also follow from the antecedency argument that things in themselves cannot be cognized *a priori* and, therefore, can neither be intuited *a priori* nor empirically. Therefore, conclusion (a) practically corresponds to (S::) – it is not the case that things in themselves are sensibly intuited – as well. The reason Kant waits to give the antecedency argument until the conclusions is because both the metaphysical exposition and the transcendental exposition require it in establishing conclusions (a) and (b). In fact, as we will see, the antecedency argument employs some of the same reasoning central to the argument I gave for the Identity Thesis. Accordingly, it is not misguided to think of the Identity Thesis as being implicitly supported by the antecedency argument. In any case, since both expositions rely on the antecedency argument, it will be the last argument I examine in my detailed treatment of the transcendental ideality argument.

Conclusion (b) is, properly, the statement of the transcendental ideality of space. Space is transcendental because it is the *a priori* intuitive form of all outer objects and, as such, any *a priori* synthetic cognition of space is also an *a priori* synthetic cognition of empirical objects. Space is

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<sup>59</sup> Kieran Setiya (2004: 67) suggests that conclusion (a) is equivalent to the transcendental ideality of space. But conclusion (a) only maintains the subjectivity of our representation of space in its denial that it represents things in themselves. It does not assert anything from which it makes possible *a priori* synthetic cognition of objects and, *a fortiori*, from which it could be properly entitled ‘transcendental’. However, since conclusion (b) asserts that our representation of space is nothing but the form of outer appearances, it (1) indicates the subjectivity of our representation of space and (2) asserts a fact about our representation of space that does ground *a priori* synthetic cognitions of objects. Therefore, the transcendental ideality of space (and its empirical reality) is most properly stated in conclusion (b).

ideal because, as demonstrated by conclusion (a), it is *nothing* but the form of all appearances of outer sense. The former claim entails that space is objectively valid of all empirical objects, while the latter claim entails that space is merely subjective with respect to things in themselves. In short, space is empirically real, but transcendently ideal.<sup>60</sup> Now that I have given a general treatment of the transcendental ideality argument, I want to turn to considering the exegetical tool I use in interpreting Kant's presentation of it.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Allison maintains that to construe this as a move within ontology would be "seriously misleading, since it suggests that it is a claim about how things "really are" *an sich*. In other words, it invites us to take Kant to be asserting that things are not really spatial but merely seem to us to be so" (Allison 2004: 121). In fact, he goes on to claim that, according to Kant, "it is a mistake to think that space has an *an sich* reality of any sort" (ibid.). But I find this supposed invitation to be misleading. For reading it as a move in ontology suggests that things in themselves (really) are not spatial, while empirical objects (i.e. appearances or things as they appear) (really) are spatial. Furthermore, to read Kant as denying that space has a reality in itself of any sort flies in the face of Kant's assertion that we have *a priori* synthetic cognitions of space. Our *a priori* synthetic cognitions are cognitions of *facts* about space, such as its having three dimensions, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, etc.

<sup>61</sup> Allison construes the transcendental ideality argument in the following way (Allison 2004: 122-8). First, the metaphysical exposition (and the transcendental exposition) argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. Second, in §9 of the *Prolegomena*, Kant informs us "that an *a priori* intuition is possible if and only if it contains or presents to the mind a form of its own sensibility" (ibid.: 123). From this, he gathers that the transcendental ideality argument has two more steps: (1) an *a priori* intuition is not possible if its content is a determination of things in themselves; (2) "if the content of a given intuition is a form or formal feature of objects of intuition (the *intuited*) that pertains to these objects only in virtue of the constitution of the mind (its form of *intuiting*), then that intuition must be *a priori*" (Allison 2004: 123 & 127). From the metaphysical exposition and (1), conclusion (a) following (modus tollens): the content of our representation of space does not represent a property of things in themselves. Conclusion (b) (i.e. the transcendental ideality of space) corresponds to the antecedent of (2). But, then, it does not follow from the metaphysical exposition and (2) (affirming the consequent). In contrast, I interpret the following two claims to follow from the metaphysical exposition: (1) our representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, and (2) our representation of space is the form of outer sense in general. Together with the argument to geometry, Kant is entitled to the following claims: our representation of space is an *a priori* intuition; all human empirical intuitions are structured by our *a priori* intuitions of space; and, if something is structured by our *a priori* intuitions of space, then it is cognizable *a priori*. Under conclusion (a), in the antecedency argument, Kant argues that things in themselves cannot be intuited *a priori*. All of these claims, together with the Identity Thesis, serve to demonstrate that space is subjective with respect to things in themselves (i.e. its ideality). The two claims that all human empirical intuitions are structured by our *a priori* intuitions of space and that, if something is structured by our *a priori* intuitions of space, then it is cognizable *a priori* serve to ground the transcendental nature of space (i.e. demonstrates that space makes possible *a priori* cognition of empirical objects) and its objective validity with respect to empirical objects (i.e. its empirical reality).

### §3.3.2 An Exegetical Tool: Leibniz's Empirical Acquisitionist Theory of <Space>

I have given a general treatment of the transcendental ideality argument such that it reads as supporting the four claims in question. However, I have given it only in the spirit of orienting ourselves to Kant's argument. It must still be demonstrated that it supports those four claims. Since the transcendental ideality argument is notoriously difficult, it will be helpful to arm ourselves with a powerful exegetical tool before turning to my detailed treatment of it. In the transcendental ideality argument, Kant offers an *a priori* acquisitionist theory of our original representation of space. Specifically, he argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. This is in direct opposition to Leibniz's theory. Leibniz argues that our original representation of space is a subjectively constructed concept that has its source in the empirical observation of objects (or, in Kantian parlance, it has its source in the empirical intuition of objects). Moreover, the transcendental ideality argument is not merely aimed at supporting Kant's acquisitionist theory, it is also aimed at undermining Leibniz's. In fact, we saw in §3.3.1.1 that Kant presents his theory of space in opposition to Leibniz's (and Newton's). Furthermore, the transcendental ideality argument is, more generally, a repudiation of Leibniz's cognitive theory:

The philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff, in thus treating the difference between the sensible and the intelligible as merely logical, has given a completely wrong direction to all investigations into the nature and origin of our knowledge. This difference is quite evidently transcendental. It does not merely concern their [logical] form, as being either clear or confused. It concerns their origin and content (A44/B61-2).

As a result, Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory can act as an interpretative guide for part of the transcendental ideality argument. Accordingly, I turn to examining Leibniz's empirical acquisition theory and identifying the essential components that are of interest.

### §3.3.2.1 Leibniz's Empirical Acquisitionist Theory

I begin my examination by considering what requirements an empirical acquisitionist theory of our original representation of space must meet, especially when that original representation is a concept. Second, I set forth Leibniz's attempt at meeting those requirements. And third, I enumerate the essential components of the Leibnizian theory that will be of interest. I turn to these in order.

#### §3.3.2.1.1 The Requirements of an Empirical Acquisitionist Theory

An empirical acquisition theory of some representation,  $x$ , maintains that  $x$ 's origins can be traced back to sensations (i.e. empirical affection) or empirical observations (i.e. empirical intuitions of an object). For example, any plausible empirical acquisitionist theory of <red> must maintain that we come into possession of <red> either by having red sensations or by observing red objects. However, an empirical acquisitionist theory of an original representation is slightly different when the representation in question is a concept. Unlike the example of <red>, if <space> is our original representation of space, and it is acquired empirically, then it must be acquired antecedently to any empirical determination of space (i.e. the object space). Otherwise, as opposed to being a concept, our original representation of space would either be an empirical intuition or an *a priori* intuition. Consequently, one burden of an empirical acquisitionist theory of <space>, as our original representation of space, is to provide a plausible story in which <space> is derived from a set of observations of objects without also presupposing an intuitive representation of space. Moreover, the empirical acquisitionist theory must go on to explain how the mind derives <space> from the empirical observation of these non-spatial things, such that <space> accords with our

ordinary thoughts of space. I turn to considering how Leibniz's empirical acquisition theory of <space> attempts to meet these requirements.

### §3.3.2.1.2 Leibniz's Acquisitionist Story

Leibniz's acquisitionist theory can be broken into three steps. First, Leibniz maintains that the empirical source of <space> is the observation of objects instantiating a certain kind of order with one another. Second, the continued observation of this order eventually causes the mind to subjectively construct <place> (i.e. conceive of there being places, even though no such things actually exist). Places are conceived as being things that are extrinsic to the objects, but also as something that the objects can occupy or leave unoccupied. Third, by conceiving of many "definite" places, the mind conceives of a thing that encompasses all these places. That is, the mind subjectively constructs <space>. I now turn to illustrating these three steps.

First, in offering his story of how we acquire <space>, Leibniz imagines that it begins with people observing a set of objects ordered in a certain way:

They [i.e. people] consider that many things exist at once and they observe in them a certain order of co-existence, according to which the relation of one thing to another is more or less simple. This order is their *situation* or distance.<sup>62</sup>

In particular, Leibniz imagines that people observe objects instantiating distal relations. So, for illustration, the first step in acquiring <space> is for a person, say Sarah, to empirically observe, at  $t_1$ , a set of objects, say  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$ , ordered in certain distal relations. But then Leibniz goes on to imagine the kinds of experiences one would have, if one continues to observe these objects. So suppose Sarah continues observing  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  from  $t_1$  to  $t_2$  while the distal relations (i.e. their ordering) remain the same. In this case, Leibniz maintains that Sarah would experience the objects

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<sup>62</sup> (Leibniz and Clark 1956: 69).

as remaining stationary. But, if from  $t_2$  to  $t_3$ ,  $a$  stops having a coexistent relationship with  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  (i.e.  $a$  no longer has any distal relationship with them), and  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  maintain their distal relations with one another, then, according to Leibniz, Sarah would experience  $a$  to be moving – indeed, she would experience  $a$  to eventually move out of a co-existence relationship – while, at the same time, she would experience  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  to remain as fixed existents.<sup>63</sup> And, if from  $t_3$  to  $t_4$ , a new object  $e$ , not only enters the coexistent relationship with  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$ , but also enters it such that all the distal relations that  $e$  has with  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$ , at  $t_4$ , agree with all the distal relations  $a$  had with them at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ , then, according to Leibniz, Sarah would experience  $e$ , at  $t_4$ , to be occupying the same place as  $a$  did at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ .<sup>64</sup> However, Leibniz maintains that this last experience is misleading. Consider why.

On Leibnizian metaphysics, an accidental property cannot literally inhere in two distinct objects (e.g.  $a$  and  $e$ , in which  $a \neq e$ ). Leibniz says, “[T]wo different subjects... cannot have precisely the same individual affection; it being impossible, that the same individual accident should be in two subjects, or pass from one subject to another”.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the distal relations between  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  (at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ ) and  $e$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$  (at  $t_4$ ) can only *agree* with one another. They cannot literally be the *same* distal relations. But this leaves Leibniz with the following problem: how is it that Sarah experiences  $e$ , at  $t_4$ , as occupying the same place as  $a$  occupied at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ , if the distal relations in question merely agree with one another? He answers, “the mind not contented with an agreement, looks for an identity, for something that should truly be the same; and conceives it as being extrinsic to the subjects”.<sup>66</sup> That is, the mind wants the distal relations in question to be identical. Thus, to satisfy this desire, the mind conceives of a thing as being

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<sup>63</sup> (ibid.: 70).

<sup>64</sup> (ibid.: 69).

<sup>65</sup> (ibid.).

<sup>66</sup> (ibid.).

extrinsic to objects, but also as something that objects can either occupy or leave unoccupied (i.e. it conceives of places). If places exist, then numerically distinct objects, *a* and *e*, would be able to instantiate identical distal relations among the same objects (i.e. *b*, *c*, and *d*) at different times, for, if places exist, then distal relations would be a function of the static order that obtains between places, and not a function of the order that obtains between properties inherent in objects. Thus, in order to have the identity relation that it wants, the mind subjectively constructs <place> and conceives of places as being things that objects can occupy or leave unoccupied.

Now, with Sarah equipped with <place>, Leibniz imagines what will happen as she continues observing objects changing their distal relations. Namely, in continuing to observe *e*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, she will experience the objects as occupying and leaving unoccupied various “definite” places P, Q, R..., adding new ones as the objects instantiate unique sets of distal relations. Noticing that these places can be added indefinitely, she conceives them as occupying, as it were, a larger (in fact, infinite), all-embracing place. Space, Leibniz contends, is “that which comprehends all those places”.<sup>67</sup> Thus, we, thereby, come to subjectively construct <space>. I now turn to isolating the essential components that are of interest with respect to my exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument.

#### §3.3.2.1.3 Leibniz’s Acquistionist Theory and Its Essential Components

In illustrating Leibniz’s empirical acquisitionist theory, several of its essential components become apparent. Two of these components are, in principle, antithetical to an *a priori* acquisitionist theory: (1) our original representation of space is derived from the observation of non-spatial objects; and (2) more specifically, our original representation of space is derived from

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<sup>67</sup> (ibid.: 69).

the observation of objects instantiating distal relations. We will see that Kant, in arguing for his theory of space, aims, at the same time, to undermine these two components. Furthermore, Leibniz's theory (3) requires the parts of space (i.e. places) to precede space, and it (4) regards our original representation of space to be a concept. Kant maintains that both of these points are incongruent with how we represent space. The former is incongruent with the fact that we think of space as being essentially unitary, such that its parts cannot precede it. The latter is incongruent with the fact that we think of space as an infinite extensive magnitude. With these components in mind, I now turn to providing a systematic exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument.

### §3.3.3 *The Transcendental Ideality Argument: a Detailed Treatment*

My aim has been to show that Kant, in the transcendental ideality argument, argues for the following four claims: (1) our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, (2) all (human) empirical intuitions of things are structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), (3) if something is structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), then it is cognizable *a priori*, and (4) things in themselves can neither be intuited *a priori*, nor can they be structured by *a priori* intuitions. This requires providing a systematic exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument. In preparation of this task, I have given a general overview of that argument and have armed myself with a powerful exegetical tool in aiding me to interpret it. I now turn to providing that exegesis. I begin by considering the synthetic argumentation for the transcendental ideality of space, in which I aim to show that Kant argues for the first three of the four claims in question. Then I turn to the analytic argumentation, in which, again, I aim to show that Kant argues for the first three of the four claims. Lastly, I consider the antecedency argument, in which Kant argues for the fourth claim. I proceed to that exegesis.



### §3.3.3.1 Kant's Synthetic Argumentation

Kant's synthetic argumentation includes the apriority argument, the formal argument, the argument to geometry, the singularity argument, and the immediacy argument. I examine these arguments in turn.

#### §3.3.3.1.1 The Apriority Argument

Earlier, I noted that, according to Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory of <space>, our original representation of space is made possible by the empirical observation (i.e. empirical intuition) of objects instantiating a certain order. More specifically, it is eventually derived from the empirical observation of the distal relations that instantiate between objects. The apriority argument is directed at (1) undermining this portion of Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory and (2) maintaining the reverse, namely, that our original representation of space makes possible the empirical observation of distal relations between objects:

Space is not an empirical concept which has been derived from outer experiences. For in order that certain sensations be referred to something outside me (that is, to something in another region of space from that in which I find myself), and similarly in order that I may be able to represent them as outside and alongside one another, and accordingly as not only different but as in different places, the representation of space must be presupposed. The representation of space cannot, therefore, be empirically obtained from the relations of outer appearance. On the contrary, this outer experience is itself possible at all only through that representation. (A23/B38)

Recall that part of the burden of an empirical acquisitionist theory of space is to tell a plausible story in which we acquire a representation through the empirical observations of objects, specifically, one that explains how we derive our representations of space from those observations. Leibniz's story begins with a person empirically observing a set of objects (e.g. *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*) coexisting and having certain distal relations with one another. The above argument proceeds by

considering what would be involved if a person observes objects instantiating distal relations. Specifically, if a person is observing a set of objects instantiating distal relations, those objects must already be represented as having positions in space (i.e. as occupying a place or region of space).

The attack on Leibniz's theory consist of two parts. First, Kant charges Leibniz's theory with circularity. Leibniz maintains that we observe distal relations in our observation of objects irrespective of space, while Kant maintains that the observation of distal relations assumes that we are representing the objects as being located in space.<sup>68</sup> Thus, if Kant is correct, Leibniz must assume that we possess a representation of space in his theory of our acquisition of it. Second, the charge of circularity is undergirded by reflecting on the kind of order involved in distal relations. Importantly, for Leibniz's theory, our acquisition of our original representation of space must take the following sequence: (1) we observe objects coexisting, (2) in attending to the objects' properties we discern an order that obtains between them, and (3) we subjectively conceive of a larger order that (i) fills out all the possible assignments that an object could take with respect to the order in question and (ii) gives an assignment to the objects in question. For illustration, consider color saturation. In observing coexisting objects, I notice that the color of some objects are more saturated than others. As a result, I conceive of a larger graduated saturation order through which I assign the objects a particular degree of saturation. Kant's observation, in the above argument, is that distal relations do not work this way. When we observe objects at a distance from one another, it is not simply that we notice that the two objects share a kind of property (e.g. color), or that they possess the properties at different degrees (e.g. a different level of saturation). Rather, when we observe objects at a distance from one another, what we observe

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<sup>68</sup> Daniel Warren also makes use of the fact that Kant is attacking Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory (1998: 205).

is a segment of space stretching between them. This, though, implies that we represent the objects as having a spatial order (i.e. being situated in space) before observing the particular distal relations they instantiate between them.<sup>69</sup> Thus, in this case, the larger order precedes the particular orders in question. Now, apart from its implicit attack on Leibniz's theory, Kant also means to be demonstrating that the very scenario that is supposed to get an empirical acquisitionist theory off the ground actually suggests that our representation of space is an *a priori* representation. For if our representation makes possible the empirical observation of distal relations, then, since in that scenario our representation of space has not been shown to be empirically acquired, it would seem that that our representation of space must be given *a priori*.<sup>70</sup> I now turn to the formal argument.

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<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Falkenstein says, "What Kant means more exactly is that, in order for us to be able to represent spatiotemporal *relations*, such as simultaneity, succession, or adjacency, among the matters of appearance, these matters must first have been presented to us in a spatiotemporal *order*" (Falkenstein 1995: 170). Falkenstein goes on to contrast this with our representations of color. Namely, he notes that we do not need all of the hues, shades, and tones of color presented to us to determine that crimson and scarlet are closer alike than each is to green. Likewise, Warren notes that, from the empirical observation that object *x* is brighter than object *y*, we can conceptually construct brightness-space in which *x* and *y* occupy different brightness-places. Kant's point, however, is that we cannot empirically observe spatial relations between *x* and *y* without "representing these things as being in, as occupying, something different from them, namely regions of space or locations" (Warren 1998: 198-201 & 205 fn. 33). Both Falkenstein and Warren's account influenced Allison's reading: "it [i.e. our representation of space] must be presupposed as a condition of the possibility of the perception of the relations from which the empiricist account claims it is derived" (Allison 2004: 101-2).

<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Allison notes that the apriority argument aims to establish an epistemic function for our original representation of space. Namely, the reason why our representation of space must be presupposed is that it functions "as a "ground" of the representation of these [distal] relations" (Allison 2004: 102). In contrast, Falkenstein maintains that the fact that 'outer sense' is not defined in terms of space is not "relevant to what he is trying to prove" in the apriority argument (Falkenstein 1995: 164). While it is true that the argument does not turn on the fact that our representation of space is a means for outer sense to execute its function, the apriority argument, nonetheless, illustrates that our representation of space is one means for it to represent things as distinct from our own states. Thus, while, as Warren notes, "the first apriority argument does not depend, as the traditional view claims it does, on the idea that the representation of space is presupposed by all (outer) experience", it does illustrate that our representation of space is presupposed by some outer experiences (Warren 1998: 206). Furthermore, such an illustration helps to prepare the way for the claim that our representation of space is the (i.e. unique) representation by which things are represented as distinct from our own states. Warren, though, reads the apriority argument as only establishing the origin of our original representation of space; namely, that it is non-empirical (Warren 1998: 224).

### §3.3.3.1.2 The Formal Argument

One upshot of the apriority argument is the revelation that distance cannot be observed without presupposing the representation of space. It might be thought that Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist story could avoid begging the question by being modified. For instance, in response to the apriority argument, Leibniz might suggest that we empirically observe some kind of accidental properties of objects – a kind that is not distal – and, from these observations, the mind somehow forms <space>. Call this the 'modified empirical acquisition theory of space'. The formal argument is directed at (1) precluding such a response and (2) establishing that our *a priori* representation of space is the form of outer sense in general:

Space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies [i.e. zum Grunde liegt] all outer intuitions. We can never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can quite well think it as empty of objects. It must therefore be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances, and not as a determination dependent upon them. It is an *a priori* representation, which necessarily underlies outer appearances. (A24/B39)

The second sentence of the paragraph begins Kant's argument. The German of the first clause of that sentence reads, "Man kann sich niemals eine Vorstellung davon machen, daß kein Raum sei..." Kemp Smith translates it in the following way: 'we can never represent to ourselves the absence of space'. A closer translation is 'one can never produce a representation to himself of this; that there is no space'. Its point is to guarantee the impossibility of producing a representation of an object without also producing a representation of space. If we observe something, then we represent space. Thus, Kant maintains that our representation of space is a necessary condition for empirically observing (i.e. empirically intuiting) objects.<sup>71</sup> But in order for the modified empirical

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<sup>71</sup> Allison attempts to downplay the difference between the conclusions of the apriority argument and the formal argument, suggesting that both claim that "the representation of space is *a priori* in the sense of being a condition of outer appearances rather than being either derivable from or coequal with the latter" (Allison 2004: 108). However, in the apriority argument, Kant is specifically worried with whether our representation of space could originate

acquisitionist theory to be possible, it must be possible to empirically observe the accidental properties of objects antecedently to representing space. For, otherwise, we possess the representation of space either before the empirical observation or at the same time with it, in which case our representation of space is not derived from empirical observation and, as a result, must be given *a priori*. Furthermore, since our original representation of space is a necessary condition for having empirical intuitions, it is, with respect to empirical intuitions, a necessary *a priori* representation.

Now consider the second clause of the sentence: ‘though we can quite well think it as empty of objects’. Recall that, in the closer translation of the first clause, Kant says that one can never produce a representation of an empirical object without also representing space. Kant’s observations in the apriority argument suggests that means something stronger. Namely, we can never produce an intuitive representation of an empirical object without representing it as being located in space and, therefore, as being structured spatially.<sup>72</sup> Thus, in the second clause, Kant is asserting that we can produce a representation of space without an empirical object being structured by it.

The fact that Kant is, here, worried about the production of our representation of space signifies that his use of ‘think’ is not meant to refer to the mere act of judgment. Rather it is meant to refer to the activity of geometers when studying space – namely, the activity of constructing

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empirically from the observation of distal relations. Two questions are left open question. Does some other *a priori* representations, such as shpace, make possible our outer empirical observations? Could space be empirically derived from empirical observations other than the empirical observation of distal relations? On my reading, the formal argument closes these questions. The only way we (i.e. humans) have outer experiences, at all, is through our *a priori* representation of space.

<sup>72</sup> This seems to be the same as Allison’s reading. He says, “[T]he claim is that we cannot represent outer appearances without also representing them as in space” (Allison 2004: 105). Setiya maintains that the formal argument argues “that the existence of space does not depend on the existence of objects bearing spatial relations to one another” (Setiya 2004: 78).

spatial images in the imagination.<sup>73</sup> One point that Kant draws is that, since the same *a priori* representation of space that is a necessary condition for the empirical intuition of objects can also be produced in the imagination independent of any empirical objects, facts about space are not reducible to facts about empirical objects. For if, per Leibniz's contention, space were reducible to the accidental properties of objects, it would be impossible to represent space in our imagination without also representing some particular empirical object. On the contrary, given both the apriority argument and the formal argument, empirical observation of objects requires that the objects be represented as occupying (different) regions of space. Accordingly, with respect to empirical objects, our *a priori* representation of space makes observation of them possible. Furthermore, since the objects occupy regions of space and are, therefore, structured by it, facts about space determine some facts about empirical objects.

Pertinent to my purpose of providing this exegesis, it follows from the above considerations that our original representation of space is the form of outer sense in general. In the introduction leading to the transcendental ideality argument, Kant defines the components of empirical objects in terms of form and matter:

That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*; but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the *form* of appearance. That in which alone the sensations can be posited and ordered in a certain form, cannot itself be sensation; and therefore, while the matter of all appearance is given to us *a posteriori* only, its form must lie ready for the sensations *a*

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<sup>73</sup> Allison suggests that "Kant is conducting a thought experiment in which one removes the appearances from space and time..." (Allison 2004: 106). And Falkenstein suggests that Kant might mean that we can think of the space we are experiencing, or could possibly experience, as being empty of objects (1995: 188). Thought experiments in which we merely conceive space as being empty of empirical objects will not be sufficient for demonstrating that "space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies [i.e. zum Grunde liegt] all outer intuitions", for logical possibility outstrips real possibility. On the other hand, the thought experiments of geometers in which they produce our representation of space in the imagination independent of any particular empirical objects demonstrates that, while empirical objects require the representation of space, the representation of space does not require empirical objects.

*priori* in the mind, and so must allow of being considered apart from all sensation.  
(A20/B34)

Both the apriority argument and the formal argument are intended to establish that our original representation of space is given *a priori*. Furthermore, the apriority argument demonstrates that the empirical observation (i.e. empirical intuition) of distal relations is made possible by representing objects as being ordered in regions of space, while the formal argument demonstrates that any observation of empirical objects is impossible without representing them as being structured (i.e. ordered) in space. Consequently, given the above definitions, our original representation of space is a form of outer sense; that is, it enables us to represent objects as being distinct from our states and does so through ordering them in different regions of space from each other and from our own body. But, since Kant maintains that the above considerations hold for all empirical observations of objects, our original representation of space is not simply *a* form of outer sense, but *the* form of outer sense *in general*; it follows, as a corollary, that all human empirical intuitions of things are structured by our *a priori* representation of space.<sup>74</sup> I now turn to the argument to geometry.

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<sup>74</sup> Warren separates two concerns of Kant's: (1) the origin of a representation; (2) the legitimacy (i.e. objective validity) of a representation (Warren 1998: 212-24). He maintains that Kant addresses the latter only after addressing the former, citing Kant's claim that "we have already, by means of a transcendental deduction, traced the concepts of space and time to their sources, and have explained and determined their *a priori* objective validity" (A87/B119). Thus, he claims that the question of legitimacy is addressed only after the metaphysical exposition (Warren 1998: 222-3). But I disagree. For instance, the question of the objective validity of our original representation of space must be answered by Kant prior to grounding the apodictic certainty and universal applicability of geometry in it, for the apodictic certainty and universal applicability of geometry can be secured only if our original representation of space is objectively valid of all empirical objects. This is precisely why the argument to geometry follows the formal argument in the A-edition, because the formal argument is intended to establish the objective validity of our original representation of space for all empirical objects.

#### §3.3.3.1.3 The Argument to Geometry

The conclusion of the argument to geometry is drawn from the results of the formal argument. The formal argument is intended to establish the following claims: (1) the *a priori* representation of space produced in imagination is the same one that structures empirical objects; (2) with no exception, all empirical objects are structured by our representation of space; and (3) because our representation of space structures empirical objects, facts about space determine some facts about empirical objects. From (1), it follows that the representational content of our *a priori* representation of space – namely, the ordering of relations – can be studied *a priori* in the imagination. That is, we can cognize facts about space in the imagination *a priori*. From (2), it follows that if those facts about space that are cognized *a priori* determine facts about empirical objects, they apply universally (i.e. without exception) to all empirical objects. And from (3), it follows that the facts about space that are cognized *a priori* do apply universally to all empirical objects. Accordingly, Kant concludes, “The apodeictic certainty of all geometric propositions, and the possibility of their *a priori* construction, is grounded in this *a priori* necessity of space” (A24). And pertinent to my purposes, the same line of reasoning undergirds the claim that, if something is structured by our *a priori* representation of space, it is cognizable *a priori*. For if (1) something is structured by space, then the empirical object will take on space’s structural features, and (2) the *a priori* cognition of space’s structural features will, therefore, count as *a priori* cognition of empirical objects. I now turn to the singularity argument.

#### §3.3.3.1.4 The Singularity Argument

The apriority and formal arguments, among other claims, are intended to secure the claim that an *a priori* representation of space makes possible our empirical intuitions of objects. The



singularity argument expands upon this claim by inquiring whether this *a priori* representation of space is a concept or an intuition:

Space is not a discursive or, as we say, general concept of relations of things in general, but a pure intuition. For, in the first place, we can represent to ourselves only one space; and if we speak of diverse spaces, we mean thereby only parts of one and the same unique space. Secondly, these parts cannot precede the one all-embracing space, as being, as it were, constituents out of which it can be composed; on the contrary, they can be thought only as *in* it. Space is essentially one; the manifold in it, and therefore the general concept of spaces, depends solely on [the introduction of] limitations. Hence it follows that an *a priori*, and not an empirical, intuition underlies all concepts of space. (A25/B39)

Of course, Kant argues that our *a priori* representation is an intuition. His strategy is two-pronged. On the one hand, Kant aims to show that our representation of space satisfies the singularity criterion – one of the two criteria for a representation to be an intuition. On the other hand, he aims to show that the subjective construction of <space> as an all-embracing place, per the Leibnizian story, presupposes the intuition of an essentially unitary space. Consider these strategies in reverse order.

Recall that on Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory, we must first combine places – what Kant calls 'diverse spaces' – in order to conceive of an all-embracing space (i.e. <space>). Contra Leibniz, Kant argues that the all-embracing space is essentially unitary, in which case, our representation of the all-embracing space could not be acquired by combining diverse spaces together. Before examining the argument that Kant has in mind, consider what Kant means by 'essentially unitary'. Take a bicycle for illustration. A bicycle is composed of material parts, and those parts are, themselves, objects capable of existing apart from the bicycle. However, the bicycle owes its existence to these parts being joined together in a certain manner. In this way we see that the parts are antecedent to the bicycle and the bicycle depends upon the parts, not vice versa. In contrast, to say that space is essentially unitary is to maintain that space is antecedent to

the representation of it as having discrete parts. Furthermore, the existence of its parts depends upon the existence of space.

Kant's argument for the claim that space is essentially unitary is to entertain what follows from assuming Leibniz's position. Assume that an all-embracing space is made possible by the combination of diverse spaces. Combining diverse spaces requires us to connect them. However, connecting them would require situating them in a larger space through which they can be brought together. But, then, several things follow. First, the larger space in question must be all-embracing with respect to the diverse spaces in question. Moreover, the larger space must be essentially unitary, or we will have only succeeded in pushing the problem back. Second, if we represent the diverse spaces as being situated in a larger space, then our representation of this larger space is our original representation of space (and so on if this larger space is situated in an even larger space, etc.), for the larger space makes the diverse spaces possible, not vice versa. Third, since space is essentially unitary the actual manner by which we acquire our concepts of space is through the introduction of boundaries in it (e.g. walls, ceilings, floors, etc.). But then our original representation of space is neither a subjectively constructed concept in the Leibnizian manner, nor is it a concept of a diverse space. For lack of other options, it must be an intuition.

As aforementioned, Kant's other strategy is to argue that our representation of space satisfies the singularity criterion. He does so by simply noting that we think of space as being a single, unique thing. Even Leibniz's empirical acquisitionist theory suggests that we think of space as a particular thing that embraces all other places, since he maintains that it is "that which comprehends all those places."<sup>75</sup> If space is a single thing, then our original representation of space can have only one object in its extension, and it, therefore, satisfies the singularity criterion.

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<sup>75</sup> (Leibniz and Clark 1956 69)

Now, in Chapter 2, I noted that concepts can be brought together to refer to a single, unique object (e.g. <the tallest man currently living>), not unlike how definite descriptions refer uniquely through their descriptive content (e.g. ‘the tallest man currently living’). It follows that the satisfaction of the singularity criterion is not sufficient for demonstrating that a representation is an intuition. However, there are two things to consider in the present case. First, concepts that satisfy the singularity criterion (e.g. <the tallest man currently living>) do so by combining one or more disparate concepts (e.g. <tallest>, <man>, <currently>, and <living>). Accordingly, if a representation of space satisfies the singularity criterion, but not through the combination of disparate concepts, then it is an intuition. Even according to Leibniz’s theory, our original representation of space does not fix its referent through the combination of disparate concepts. Instead, space is the product of the combination of things that fall under one kind of concept, <place>. Consequently, our original representation of space is an intuition. Second, even if Leibniz does intend for the referent of <space> to be fixed by the combination of disparate concepts, Kant argues in the immediacy argument that our representation of space also satisfies the immediacy criterion. In which case, our representation of space satisfies both the singularity and immediacy criteria and must, therefore, be an intuition. I now turn to the immediacy argument.

#### §3.3.3.1.5 The Immediacy Argument

The immediacy argument provides additional reasons for the claim that our original representation of space is an intuition. Kant’s strategy is to show that our representation of space as extensive magnitude is incongruent with its being a concept:

Space is represented as an infinite *given* magnitude. Now every concept must be thought as a representation which is contained in an infinite number of different possible representations (as their common character), and which therefore contains these *under* itself; but no concept, as such, can be thought as containing an infinite number of

representations *within* itself. It is in this latter way, however, that space is thought; for all the parts of space coexist *ad infinitum*. Consequently, the original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, not a concept. (A25/B40)

In the above argument, Kant begins by acknowledging that concepts can, in principle, contain an infinite number of objects. For instance, if there are an infinite number of red objects, then <red> contains an infinite number of objects. Thus, it may seem as if our representation of space is congruent with it being a concept, because we represent space as being capable of containing an infinite number of objects. However, concepts, because they are representations *in abstracto*, contain objects only in the sense of them belonging to a representation's extension (as opposed to its intension), whereas we represent space as containing objects in the sense that they occupy regions of space's extensive magnitude. As Kant stresses with italics, concepts contain objects *under* them, whereas we represent space as containing objects *within* it.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, as Kant, again, stresses with italics, we represent space as *given*; that is, we represent space *in concreto*. Accordingly, it satisfies the immediacy criterion. Since our representation of space satisfies both the singularity and immediacy criteria, it must be an intuition. Before turning to Kant's analytic argumentation, I want to briefly consider which of the four claims have been supported.

#### §3.3.3.1.6 The Four Claims and the Synthetic Argumentation

Earlier, I demonstrated that the apriority argument, the formal argument, and the argument to geometry secure two claims: that all human empirical intuitions of things are structured by our *a priori* representation of space, and that, if something is structured by our *a priori* representation

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<sup>76</sup> While Allison correctly notes that Kant is drawing off the differences of how intuitions and general concepts are structured, he wrongly suggests that it is the impossibility of a general concept with an infinite intension that demonstrates that our representation of space is an intuition (2004: 111). Instead, the difference is that the sense of 'within' that comes with <extensive magnitude> is incompatible with how general concepts are structured. That is, being abstract entities, general concepts do not have magnitudes. Falkenstein takes a similar tack as Allison (1995: 239-40).

of space, it is cognizable *a priori*. And I have just shown that the singularity argument and the immediacy argument both establish the claim that our original representation of space is an intuition. Consequently, Kant's synthetic argumentation secures three of the four claims in question: (1) that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, (2) that all (human) empirical intuitions of things are structured by *a priori* intuitions of space, and (3) that, if something is structured by *a priori* intuitions of space, then it is cognizable *a priori*. I now turn to demonstrating that the same three claims are argued for in Kant's analytic argumentation.

### §3.3.3.2 Kant's Analytic Argumentation

The transcendental exposition follows immediately after the metaphysical exposition and comprises four paragraphs. The first explains what a transcendental exposition is. The argumentation takes place in the second and third paragraphs. The fourth proclaims that Kant's explanation of space is "the only explanation that makes intelligible the *possibility* of geometry, as a body of *a priori* synthetic knowledge" (B41). In this section, I treat the first three paragraphs in turn. I begin with expounding Kant's characterization of a transcendental exposition. We will see that Kant is preparing us for an analytic argument, namely, the argument from geometry. Then, I turn to examining the argument from geometry, which spans both the second and third paragraphs. In the second paragraph, Kant argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, and in the third paragraph, he argues that our original representation of space is merely the form of outer sense in general. I now turn to Kant's explanation of what a transcendental exposition is.

### §3.3.3.2.1 The Explanation of a Transcendental Exposition

Kant informs us that a transcendental exposition is an explanation of a concept. In this case of a transcendental exposition, Kant is giving an explanation of our original representation of space. He says,

I understand by a transcendental exposition the explanation of a concept, as a principle from which the possibility of other *a priori* synthetic knowledge can be understood. For this purpose it is required (1) that such knowledge does really flow from the given concept, (2) that this knowledge is possible only on the assumption of a given mode of explaining the concept. (B40)

The first sentence informs us how we go about explaining our representation of space. We treat the representation of space as a source that makes possible *a priori* synthetic cognitions and ask ourselves what must be true of our representation of space given that it is such a source.<sup>77</sup> For the explanation to genuinely inform us about some of the properties of our representation of space, it must meet two requirements: (1) the *a priori* synthetic cognitions in question – these, in our case, are geometric cognitions – must actually have their source in the concept in question (i.e. our original representation of space); (2) it would be impossible to have the *a priori* synthetic

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<sup>77</sup> In contrast, Shabel reads it as saying that “a transcendental exposition of the concept of space aims to explain the sense in which our concept of space acts as a grounding *principle* for our acquisition of other synthetic *a priori* cognitions” (Shabel 2004: 200). And Allison maintains that “the official task of a transcendental exposition is to show how an *a priori* representation can ground a certain body of synthetic *a priori* cognitions” (Allison 2004: 116-7). But it is our representation of space that is supposed to be the explanandum, and it is the treatment of our representation of space as a source of other *a priori* synthetic cognitions that is supposed to be the explanans. Thus, while the fourth paragraph of the transcendental exposition makes it clear that Kant intends for us to understand how our original representation of space is the source of geometric cognitions (i.e. the *a priori* synthetic cognitions in question), it is not the official task of a transcendental exposition. Its *official* task is to explain a concept. However, it is correct to hold that the *primary* task of the transcendental exposition is to provide insight into how geometric cognitions are grounded, as Falkenstein maintains (1995: 269).

cognitions, unless our representation of space has the properties that we attributed to it in our explanation of it.<sup>78</sup>

What the above passage prepares the reader for is what Kant calls an analytic or regressive argument. As aforementioned, to say that he is arguing analytically is to say that the method relies “on something already known to be dependable, from which we can go forward with confidence and ascend to the sources, which are not yet known, and whose discovery not only will explain what is known already, but will also exhibit an area with many cognitions that all arise from these same sources” (Prol. §4). In our case, geometry is the thing “already known to be dependable”. Geometry is known to be dependable in the following two senses. First, geometric cognitions are clear examples of *a priori* synthetic cognitions. Second, they are universally applicable to empirical objects with apodictic certainty. Geometric cognitions, since they offer *a priori* synthetic cognitions of space, have their source in our representation of space. Thus, after explaining what is involved in a transcendental exposition, Kant turns to arguing that our representation of space must have certain properties given that it is the source of *a priori* synthetic cognitions of space. This is his argument from geometry, and I now turn to a detailed examination of it.

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<sup>78</sup> Shabel reads requirement (1) as inviting us “to reflect on the concept of space in order to determine whether and which synthetic *a priori* cognitions result” (Shabel 2004: 201). But Kant is only requiring that our representation of space is, in fact, the source of the *a priori* synthetic cognitions in question; namely, geometric cognitions. For instance, if we tried to explain our representation of time as the source of our geometric cognitions, we would necessarily have a bad transcendental exposition, since our representation of time is not, in fact, the source of our geometric cognitions. She reads requirement (2) as Kant demanding “that a particular way of understanding the original concept of space must be a necessary condition on our acquiring the new cognitions” (ibid.). But Kant is merely ruling out that there can be alternative ways of making possible the *a priori* synthetic cognitions aside from the explanation of the concept given; that is, aside from the properties attributed to that concepts. For otherwise, we could not be guaranteed that the explanation given is the correct one.

### §3.3.3.2.2 The Argument from Geometry

The argument from geometry spans the second and third paragraphs of the transcendental exposition. Per the previous paragraph, Kant, throughout the argument, is assuming (or, accepting as being known and dependable) two claims: (1) geometric propositions are *a priori* synthetic cognitions, and (2) they apply universally to empirical objects with apodictic certainty. I treat these paragraphs in turn.

In the second paragraph, Kant argues that our representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. It reads as follows:

[1] Geometry is a science which determines the properties of space synthetically, and yet *a priori*. [2] What, then, must be our representation of space, in order that such knowledge of it may be possible? [3] It must in its origin be intuition; [4] for from a mere concept no propositions can be obtained which go beyond the concept – as happens in geometry (Introduction V). [5] Further, this intuition must be *a priori*, that is, it must be found in us prior to any perception of an object, and must therefore be pure, not empirical, intuition. [6] For geometrical propositions are one and all apodeictic, that is, are bound up with the consciousness of their necessity; for instance, that space has only three dimensions. [7] Such propositions cannot be empirical or, in other words, judgments of experience, nor can they be derived from any such judgments (Introduction, II) [brackets are mine]. (B40-1)

In [1], Kant provides the body of *a priori* synthetic cognition known to be dependable. More specifically, he asserts that geometry makes the properties of space known both *a priori* and synthetically. [2] sets the stage for what is to be explained and in what way. Namely, our representation of space is to be explained, and it is to be explained in terms of what properties it must have in order to make the *a priori* synthetic cognitions (i.e. geometric cognitions) in [1] possible.<sup>79</sup> [3] and [5] give us the properties that our original representation of space must have in order to make geometric cognitions possible: our representation of space must be both intuitive

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<sup>79</sup> Shabel maintains that [2] asks, “[H]ow does our representation of space manage to afford us those cognitions that are the unique domain of the science of geometry” (Shabel 2004: 202)? But Kant asks *what* our representation of space is, not *how* it makes geometric cognitions possible.



and *a priori*. [4] explains why our representation must be intuitive. Namely, it would be impossible for our representation of space to be a source of synthetic cognitions if it were a concept. Concepts are exhausted by their part concepts (e.g. <bachelor> is exhausted by <adult>, <unmarried>, and <male>). Consequently, reflection on a concept (i.e. conceptual analysis) can only inform us what is conceptually contained in the concept (i.e. it can only reveal the concept's intension) and, therefore, cannot license judgments that amplify that concept. So, for instance, reflection on <two points> and <straight line> cannot license the judgment that a straight line between two points is the shortest distance between them, because <shortest> is not conceptually contained in either of the concepts. Consequently, the judgment that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points is licensed only if we set the two points in an intuition and, as it were, draw a straight line between them for inspection. [6] and [7] explain why our representation of space must be an *a priori* representation. Namely, geometric cognitions are apodictically certain, but empirical judgments can never license certainty. If geometric judgments were grounded in experience, then no matter how many times experience confirms the judgment, it may, for all we know, be contradicted by some future experience (e.g. even if experience has always confirmed that space is three-dimensional, perhaps someday I will experience it as having four dimensions). Consequently, if geometric principles are apodictically certain, then geometric judgments must be grounded in a non-empirical representation (i.e. an *a priori* representation). Therefore, in the above paragraph, Kant argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition.

In the third paragraph, Kant argues that our original representation of space is merely the form of outer sense in general:

How, then, can there exist in the mind an outer intuition which precedes the objects themselves, and in which the concept of these objects can be determined *a priori*? Manifestly, not otherwise than in so far as the intuition has its seat in the subject only, as the formal character of the subject, in virtue of which, in being affected by objects, it

obtains *immediate representation*, that is, *intuition*, of them; and only in so far, therefore, as it is merely the form of outer *sense* in general. (B41)

Recall that, since this is a piece of Kant's analytic argumentation, he is relying on something that is known and is dependable. Specific to the case at hand, Kant is operating under the assumption that geometers, through the production of spatial figures in the imagination, develop *a priori* synthetic judgments – specifically, geometric principles – that are legitimately and universally applicable to empirical objects with apodictic certainty.<sup>80</sup> In keeping with the official purpose of a transcendental exposition, Kant is seeking to explain our representation of space by considering what properties it must have in order to enable geometers to develop these *a priori* synthetic judgments in this manner. In Kant's initial question, he sets out two requirements that such an explanation must satisfy. First, it must explain how geometers can take up an intuition – specifically an intuition whose content enables us to represent things as being distinct from our own mental states (i.e. an outer intuition) – in the imagination antecedently to any particular relation to a robust object. Second, it must explain how that intuition licenses *a priori* synthetic

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<sup>80</sup> Since Shabel reads the transcendental exposition as carrying on the synthetic argument of the metaphysical expositions, she reads the second paragraph as establishing that “the principles of geometry describe and codify [our] *a priori* cognition of space and spatial relations”, but goes on to note that “the properties of space so described are instantiated by the sensible features of spatial, i.e. *outer*, objects” (Shabel 2004: 205). Now, as I understand it, a synthetic argument should argue that outer empirical objects instantiate the properties of space as determined by our geometric cognitions, but Shabel merely asserts, i.e. assumes, it, which, incidentally, coincides with my analytic reading of the third paragraph. At any rate, the fact that geometric cognitions are apodictically certain of, and universally applicable to, outerempirical objects, even in advance of their presence, naturally leads to the question of how that is possible. Allison (2004: 117-8) reads the above question as arising merely in light of the second paragraph's demonstration that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, but, without the assumption of the universal applicability of the *a priori* synthetic cognition thereby generated, at most what follows is that our original representation of space is *a* form of outer sense, not *the* form of outer sense *in general*. Allison is motivated by the worry that the transcendental ideality argument stands or falls with the argument from geometry, because it is often thought that contemporary geometry conflicts with Kant's views of geometry. The putative problem is that there are multiple internally consistent geometries that are mutually exclusive. Hence, the correct geometric system is an empirical matter, not an *a priori* one. Likewise, I do not see the transcendental ideality argument as standing or falling with the argument from geometry *per se*, but it does stand or fall with whether our representation of space grounds a body of *a priori* synthetic cognitions that are universally applicable to empirical objects.

judgments of all empirical objects. With no explanation, Kant asserts that these two requirements can be met only if our representation of space has two properties: (1) it is subjective, and (2) it is the form of outer sense in general. Although Kant does not provide the reasoning until the antecedency argument, Kant's claim of subjectivity tracks some of the central reasoning undergirding the Identity Thesis. Kant intends for the subjectivity to follow from the fact that intuitions require an immediate cognitive relation with their objects, but our *a priori* intuitions are intuitions we have antecedently to a cognitive relation with robust objects. In any case, from the fact that our intuition of space does not require the relation of some particular robust object, it stands to reason that it can be produced antecedently to any particular robust object, say in the imagination. Now, if our representation of space is not only subjective, but is also the form of outer sense in general, then it can be explained how the *a priori* production of our representation of space in the imagination licenses *a priori* synthetic judgments of empirical objects. First, the form of outer sense, being the form, structures (i.e. orders) all of our empirical intuitions of objects without exception. That is, it entails that all (human) empirical intuitions of objects are structured by our *a priori* intuition of space. Second, from its subjectivity, the space produced in imagination is the same that structures our empirical intuitions of objects. Hence, the *a priori* synthetic cognitions derived by geometers, through their study of space in the imagination, will hold true of empirical objects. If something is structured by our *a priori* intuition of space, it is cognizable *a priori*.<sup>81</sup> Since these two properties work together to explain how geometers can acquire *a priori* synthetic cognitions that are universally applicable to empirical objects, and since no other

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<sup>81</sup> Surprisingly, Shabel (2004) and I read Kant as arguing for the same conclusion here. I say 'surprisingly', because her reading is purported to be synthetic, while I maintain that Kant is continuing his analytic argument. In my defense, I note that, in the third paragraph, Kant has once again attributed properties to our representation of space; namely that (1) it is one way we are subjectively constituted and (2) it is the form of outer sense in general. It, therefore, explains our representation of space, as my reading of the transcendental exposition (i.e. the first paragraph) promises.

plausible explanation seems forthcoming, Kant concludes that our representation of space is merely the form of outer sense in general.

#### §3.3.3.2.3 The Four Claims and the Analytic Argumentation

In the argument from geometry, we see that Kant argues, again, for three of the four claims in question. In the second paragraph of the transcendental exposition, he argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. In the third paragraph, he argues that our original representation of space is merely the form of outer sense, which entails two further claims: that all (human) empirical intuitions of objects are structured by our *a priori* intuition of space, and that, if something is structured by our *a priori* intuition of space, it is cognizable *a priori*. I now turn to consider the antecedency argument.

#### §3.3.3.3 The Antecedency Argument

Both the synthetic and analytic argumentation support three of the four claims in question. Thus, only one claim remains to be shown to be supported by Kant's transcendental ideality argument: that things in themselves can neither be intuited *a priori*, nor can they be structured by *a priori* intuitions. After the metaphysical and transcendental exposition, Kant, in the conclusions, argues for that claim shortly after giving conclusion (a). He states, "For no determinations, whether absolute or relative, can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they belong, and none, therefore, can be intuited *a priori*" (A26/B42).<sup>82</sup> In this argument, Kant means for the scope of 'things' to be limited to things in themselves, for (1) the antecedency argument

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<sup>82</sup> Setiya reads this passage as asserting that spatial properties "cannot attach to objects distinct from our minds... nor can they attach to mental objects" (Setiya, 2004: 73). But Kant means for the assertion to be limited to things in themselves as putative entities, for (1) the context of the paragraph suggests that 'things' refers to things in themselves, and (2) the possibility of *a priori* synthetic cognition of objects depends on the possibility of representing properties of some objects prior to being given their existence in intuition.

follows directly after Kant concludes that things in themselves are non-spatial, indicating that things in themselves are the topic of conversation and (2) as we have seen in both the synthetic and analytic argumentation, some of the properties of empirical objects are intuited *a priori*, thereby enabling *a priori* cognition of the empirical objects. Consequently, Kant's claim is that the properties of things in themselves cannot be intuited *a priori* prior to their existence.

Unfortunately, Kant does not elaborate, here, on why this is the case, but he does in the *Prolegomena*:

If our intuition had to be of the kind that represented things *as they are in themselves*, then absolutely no intuition *a priori* would take place, but it would always be empirical. For I can only know what may be contained in the object in itself if the object is present and given to me. Of course, even then it is incomprehensible how the intuition of a thing that is present should allow me to cognize it the way it is in itself, since its properties cannot migrate over into my power of representation; but even granting such a possibility, the intuition still would not take place *a priori*, i.e., before the objects were presented to me, for without that no basis for the relation of my representation to the object can be conceived... (Prol. §9)

The above argument turns on the point that, since things in themselves (as putative entities) are things replete with their properties independent of any relation to human cognition, they are determined antecedently to any relation with human cognition. For assume that we intuit a thing in itself. By the requirements for a representation to be an intuition, that thing in itself must belong to the representation's extension through some immediate cognitive relation to it. But since a thing in itself is determined antecedently to any relation to human cognition, any subsequent cognitive relation that is conceived to obtain between human cognition and a thing in itself must be empirical. Thus, by hypothesis, if we intuit a thing in itself, we do so empirically. Consequently, things in themselves cannot be intuited *a priori*. Furthermore, unlike empirical objects, an *a priori* intuition cannot structure a thing in itself. For, if an *a priori* intuition did structure a thing in itself, it would be false that things in themselves are replete with their properties independent of any

relation to human cognition. But, from the very concept of a thing in itself (i.e. <thing in itself>), that would entail a contradiction. As a result, it follows that things in themselves do not relate to *a priori* intuitions either by way of belonging to their extensions or by way of being structured by them.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, I have demonstrated that the transcendental ideality argument supports the following claim: things in themselves are neither intuited *a priori*, nor are they structured by *a priori* intuitions.

#### §3.3.4 *The Four Claims, the Non-spatiality Argument, and the Sensibility Argument*

I have just provided a systematic exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument. Recall that the purpose of doing so was to show that it supports both the non-spatiality argument and the sensibility argument. In order to show this, I had to demonstrate that, in the transcendental ideality argument, Kant argues for the following four claims: (1) our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, (2) all (human) empirical intuitions of things are structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), (3) if something is structured by *a priori* intuitions (of space), then it is cognizable *a priori*, and (4) things in themselves can neither be intuited *a priori*, nor can they be structured by *a priori* intuitions. In my exegesis, I have shown that Kant's synthetic and analytic argumentation each, individually, argues for the first three claims. Furthermore, I have shown, in the antecedency argument, that Kant regards the fourth claim to be an analytic consequence of <thing in itself>.

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<sup>83</sup> Falkenstein (2004: 290-1) reads the argument as invoking material from the transcendental exposition. Specifically, from the fact that geometric propositions are necessarily true, it follows that our cognitions of space are not empirical. For, if they were empirical, then geometric propositions would, at best, have comparative universality. From the fact that our cognitions of space are not empirical, we cannot have direct knowledge of their spatiotemporal properties, if they have spatiotemporal properties. For, if we did have direct knowledge of their spatiotemporal properties, it would be empirical knowledge, contrary to what we have stated. Hence, the spatiotemporal properties of experience must be determined by our subjective constitution, not the properties of things in themselves. I, on the other hand, do not think that reference to the putative apodictic certainty of geometric propositions is necessary.

From the fact that the non-spatiality argument is supported by the transcendental ideality argument, it follows that Kant has a valid argument for the claim that things in themselves are non-spatial. By extension to time, Kant has a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and is, therefore, absolved of the *non sequitur* problem. Furthermore, from the fact that the sensibility argument is supported by the transcendental ideality argument, it follows that it bars the possibility of sensibility being a means through which we can cognize things in themselves, in particular, because we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves. This will enable me to identify the remaining specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. I now turn to two points of interest. First, I turn to determining what kind of knowledge is barred by the Doctrine of Ignorance and what kind of knowledge, if any, is admissible. Second, after considering how the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, I examine whether Kant is still faced with the problem of neglecting an alternative.

#### §3.4 Determinations of the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-Spatiotemporality Thesis

My exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument paves the way to accomplishing the three general aims I set out at the beginning of this chapter: (1) demonstrating the consequences, if any, that the Doctrine of Ignorance has for both itself and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis; (2) demonstrating that the transcendental ideality argument does, in fact, support the non-spatiality argument and, by extension, supports a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis; and (3) given how the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, determining whether Kant avoids the problem of neglecting an alternative. In fact, the second of these aims has just been accomplished. Accordingly, this last section is divided into two parts. In the first part, I examine how the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains knowledge of things in themselves generally. This enables me to determine whether the Doctrine of Ignorance subjects itself to the

epistemic problem and, therefore, to determine whether the Doctrine of Ignorance is self-eneebing (i.e. to determine whether, by its own lights, the Doctrine of Ignorance is non-cognizable). It also enables me to determine how the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is restricted by the Doctrine of Ignorance. In the second part, given how the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is restricted, I consider whether Kant is still faced with the problem of neglecting an alternative. I proceed to the first part.

#### §3.4.1 *The Doctrine of Ignorance and Knowing Things in Themselves*

In this first part, I begin by identifying the last specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance, thereby fully determining it. Furthermore, I reflect on the general sense in which our cognitive faculty fails to allow for the cognition of things in themselves, namely, it cannot establish a cognitive relation with things in themselves through which judgments about them can be grounded. Then, because, according to Kant, human cognition is discursive (i.e. it takes the form of judgment), I turn to expounding three basic kinds of judgment. These judgments include *a priori* synthetic judgments, *a posteriori* synthetic judgments, and *a priori* analytic judgments. I examine these kinds of judgment because they have different criteria for their epistemic justification. Accordingly, the examination of these three kinds of judgments, in conjunction with the full determination of the Doctrine of Ignorance, will outline what kinds of knowledge of things in themselves are barred by the Doctrine of Ignorance, and what kinds are not barred. In particular, I argue that the Doctrine of Ignorance only bars synthetic judgments of things in themselves that are not analytic consequences of <thing in itself>, for those are the only synthetic judgments of things in themselves that require a cognitive relation with things in themselves for their epistemic justification (by ‘analytic consequence of <thing in itself>’, I mean a judgment regarding things in themselves, such that that judgment is logically entailed by some



set of judgments that (1) must include at least one analytic judgment of things in themselves and (2) for any synthetic judgment in the set, it must be a synthetic judgment that is not about things in themselves). Correspondingly, I argue that the Doctrine of Ignorance does not subject analytic judgments of things in themselves, or synthetic judgments of things in themselves that are analytic consequences of <thing in itself> to the epistemic problem. These judgments of things in themselves are not subject to the epistemic problem, precisely because their legitimacy rests on something other than a putative cognitive relation with things in themselves. With this knowledge in hand, I consider whether the Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis are subject to the epistemic problem by considering whether they, themselves, are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. Lastly, I consider how the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. I proceed to identifying the last of the specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance.

#### §3.4.1.1 The Commitments Undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance

In my exegesis of the transcendental ideality argument, I demonstrated that it supports the sensibility argument. Accordingly, a consequence of the transcendental ideality argument is that we cannot sensibly intuit things in themselves. First, we cannot intuit them *a priori* in two senses: (1) they cannot belong to the extension of *a priori* intuitions because, if they did, then those *a priori* intuitions would also be empirical intuitions, but that is a contradiction, and (2) things in themselves cannot enter into a structuring (i.e. ordering) relation with *a priori* intuitions, because they are replete with their properties independent of any relation to human cognition. Second, we cannot intuit them empirically, because all empirical intuitions, and therefore all empirical objects, are structured by *a priori* intuitions. In Chapter 1, I identified three specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance: (1) that we are unable to cognize things in themselves, as

putative entities, through our *a priori* concepts, (2) that we are unable to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuition of them, and (3) that we are unable to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances. I can now add two more: (4) that our *a priori* intuitions are unable to relate to things in themselves, and (5) that our empirical intuitions are unable to relate to things in themselves. The former three commitments signify, in part, why we cannot cognize things in themselves through the understanding. The latter two signify why we cannot cognize things in themselves through sensibility. With the two faculties of human cognition both unable to allow for the cognition of things in themselves, it would seem that we cannot have knowledge of things in themselves whatsoever. However, before adjudicating the matter, let us consider the general sense in which these commitments prevent our cognition of things in themselves.

In my identification of the five specific commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance, I chose to establish (1)-(3) before (4)-(5), which may have suggested that the two sets are independent from one another. In fact, commitments (1)-(3) are not only a function of the objective validity problem, but are also a function of the transcendental ideality argument (by way of the sensibility argument). For, on Kant's view, human cognition is fundamentally discursive. That is, cognition takes the form of judgment, in which an object is brought under a concept. A concept, however, cannot, by itself, establish a cognitive relation with the objects that belong to its extension, such that we can be assured that those objects, in fact, belong to its extension. Thus, it seems that, if left only to the resources of concepts, all *de re* judgments would be epistemically unjustified, for it seems we are necessarily left unassured whether the specific object being judged actually falls under the concept in question. Consequently, since, per the objective validity problem, our *a priori* concepts neither make possible things in themselves, nor is made possible

by them, no cognitive relation can be established with a thing in itself by an *a priori* concept alone. However, as I argued in Chapter 2 (§2.3.2.1.2), Kant assigns intuitions the epistemic role of establishing an immediate cognitive relation with objects. As a result, if intuitions could relate to things in themselves, then our concepts, including our *a priori* concepts, would have a medium through which they could be legitimately applied to things in themselves. However, since none of our intuitions relate to things in themselves, it seems, even with the additional resources of intuitions, that we cannot be assured that an application of a concept to a thing in itself is legitimate. Thus, again, it seems we are necessarily left unassured whether the object being judged actually falls under the concept in question. There are two things to note here. First, commitments (4)-(5), in part, undergird commitments (1)-(3). Second, the general problem that our cognitive faculty has in cognizing things in themselves is that none of our representations can instantiate a cognitive relation to any specific thing in itself such that we can be assured that a concept legitimately applies to it. Does this preclude all judgments of things in themselves from being legitimate judgments? I turn to arguing that it does not.

#### §3.4.1.2 Three Basic Kinds of Judgments and the Doctrine of Ignorance

As aforementioned, Kant regards human cognition to be fundamentally discursive in nature. Consequently, human cognition takes the form of judgment. Furthermore, Kant divides judgment into three basic groups: *a priori* synthetic judgments, *a posteriori* synthetic judgments, and *a priori* analytic judgments. Thus, in answering the question of whether the Doctrine of Ignorance precludes all judgments of things in themselves from being legitimate judgments, I must provide a careful examination of how each kind of judgment can be established (i.e. epistemically justified). Given the above discussion, if I find a body of judgments of things in themselves whose legitimacy can, in principle, be established without the need for our representations to instantiate

a cognitive relation with a specific thing in itself, then I have delineated a body of judgments of things in themselves that are not precluded by the Doctrine of Ignorance. I turn to examining these basic kinds of judgments.

Synthetic judgments, whether they are *a posteriori* or *a priori*, are ampliative. That is, the subject concept is assigned a predicate concept that is not already contained in the subject concept (e.g. 'all bachelors are messy' is synthetic because <messy> is not contained in <bachelor>). Consequently, the legitimacy of a synthetic judgment must rely on something outside of the conceptual information contained in the subject concept of the judgment. In the case of *a posteriori* synthetic judgments, the justification of the judgment is sought in empirical intuition (e.g. that all bachelors hitherto have been observed to be messy). But, by the Doctrine of Ignorance, *a posteriori* synthetic judgments of things in themselves can never be legitimized through our empirical intuition of objects. In the case of *a priori* synthetic judgments, the justification is sought either in our *a priori* intuitions (e.g. as in the case of geometric cognitions) or, more generally, in the *a priori* conditions that make experience possible (e.g. as in the knowledge that all events are caused). But, by the Doctrine of Ignorance, our *a priori* intuitions cannot relate to things in themselves. Furthermore, the *a priori* representations that make experience possible are only legitimately applied to objects of experience, which cannot include things in themselves because we cannot sensibly intuit them. Therefore, congruent with the above discussion, the Doctrine of Ignorance bars the legitimacy of synthetic judgments of things in themselves that would ground its legitimacy in some putative relation that our representations have with things in themselves.

*A priori* analytic judgments, on the other hand, are a different story. In an analytic judgment, the subject concept is assigned a predicate concept that is already contained in the

subject concept (e.g. 'all bachelors are unmarried' is analytic because <unmarried> is contained in <bachelor>). As a result, analytic judgments do not require a source of legitimacy apart from the conceptual information contained in the subject concept. If the predicate concept is contained in the subject concept (e.g. as in the judgment 'all bachelors are unmarried'), then we are entitled to the corresponding analytic judgment. Likewise, if the predicate concept contradicts the conceptual information contained in the subject concept (e.g. 'all bachelors are married'), then we are entitled to deny that any object falling under the subject concept can also fall under the predicate concept (e.g. we are entitled to 'no bachelors are married', because (1) <unmarried> is contained in <bachelor> and (2) <married> and <unmarried> are contradictory).

Now, because their legitimacy is not grounded in some putative cognitive relation that our representations have with specific things in themselves, the general features of analytic judgments enable us to have three kinds of judgments that are not precluded by the Doctrine of Ignorance. First, because a thing falls under <thing in itself> only if it is a thing in itself, we are entitled to any judgment of things in themselves that assigns to them (as a class) nothing except some of the conceptual information contained in <thing in itself>. Second, for the same reason, we are also entitled to any judgment of things in themselves that, if denied, it would entail a contradiction with the conceptual information contained in <thing in itself>. Third, for any synthetic judgment that is an analytic consequence of <thing in itself>, it is not precluded by the Doctrine of Ignorance. This is because, by my definition of 'analytic consequence of <thing in itself>', none of the judgments, from which the synthetic judgment in question is a logical consequence, is one that grounds its legitimacy from a putative relation between our representations and some specific thing in itself. The question, then, of the legitimacy of such synthetic judgments of things in themselves is reduced to the question of whether we are epistemically entitled to the judgments from which it

follows. I now turn to applying these constraints of the Doctrine of Ignorance to itself and to the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis.

#### §3.4.1.3 The Doctrine of Ignorance, Itself, and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis

I have just articulated the general manner in which the Doctrine of Ignorance constrains judgments of things in themselves, such that they can, at least in principle, be epistemically justifiable: in short, they must either be an analytic judgment of things in themselves, or they must be synthetic judgments of things in themselves that are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. Here, I want to apply this constraint of the Doctrine of Ignorance to both itself and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. First, I am interested in whether they are subject to the epistemic problem. Second, I am interested in how the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts us to a particular reading of the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. I begin with the Doctrine of Ignorance.

##### §3.4.1.3.1 The Doctrine of Ignorance and Itself

I have argued that the Doctrine of Ignorance is undergirded by five specific commitments that preclude the representations of our cognitive faculties from relating to things in themselves: (1) that we are unable to cognize things in themselves, as putative entities, through our *a priori* concepts, (2) that we are unable to cognize empirical objects apart from our sensible intuition of them, (3) that we are unable to cognize the existence of things in themselves through the existence of appearances, (4) that our *a priori* intuitions are unable to relate to things in themselves, and (5) that our empirical intuitions are unable to relate to things in themselves. Commitments (1), (3), (4), and (5) are clearly judgments about things in themselves. Commitment (2) is another way of saying that our consideration of objects as they are in themselves cannot be knowledge of them as they are in themselves. Consequently, each of the five commitments are judgments about things

in themselves, but none are analytic judgments of things in themselves. Thus, given the constraints of the Doctrine of Ignorance, I turn to considering whether they are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. Consider commitments (4) and (5) first.

Commitments (4) and (5) are supported by the transcendental ideality argument. Kant's main strategy for securing them revolves around three claims: (i) all empirical intuitions of object are structured by *a priori* intuitions; (ii) things in themselves cannot belong to the extensions of *a priori* intuitions; and (iii) things in themselves cannot be structured by *a priori* intuitions. Claim (i) is not a claim about things in themselves. Furthermore, my exegesis shows that it is argued for in both the synthetic and analytic argumentation of the transcendental ideality argument. Review of that argumentation shows that claim (i) is not argued for from any synthetic judgments of things in themselves. Consequently, claim (i) is not subjected to the epistemic problem. However, claims (ii) and (iii) are both synthetic judgments about things in themselves. Accordingly, they are either analytic consequences of <thing in itself>, or they, and the Doctrine of Ignorance with them, are subject to the epistemic problem. I turn to arguing that they are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>.

According to my exegesis, claims (ii) and (iii) are both argued for in Kant's antecedency argument. Review of the antecedency argument suggests that both claims are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. Claim (ii) is supported by two premises: (1) intuitions, including *a priori* intuitions, require an immediate cognitive relation to the object that it is in its extension, and (2) things in themselves are replete with their properties independent of any relation to human cognition. The former is a claim about our representations and is justified by the formal requirements for a representation to be an intuition. The latter is an analytic judgment of things in themselves and is justified because what is predicated of things in themselves is contained in

<thing in itself>. But, then, if a cognitive relation does obtain, it will be empirical, not *a priori*. Thus, claim (ii) follows. Claim (iii) is a consequence of assuming that a thing in itself is structured by *a priori* intuitions. Since, things in themselves are replete with their properties independent of any relation to human cognition, the assumption that a thing in itself is structured by *a priori* intuitions entails a contradiction, because, if a thing in itself is structured by *a priori* intuitions, then some of its properties do depend on its relation to human cognition. As a result, we are entitled to the denial of our assumption. That is, we are entitled to claim (iii). Thus, commitments (4) and (5) are not subjected to the epistemic problem. I now turn to consider commitments (1), (2), and (3).

Commitments (1) and (3) are consequences of the objective validity problem. Recall that the objective validity problem revolves around the concern of whether a relation obtains between our *a priori* concepts and things in themselves, such that we are assured that things in themselves fall under those concepts. Kant notes that, if objects make possible our *a priori* concepts, they would be empirical concepts, not *a priori* ones. And if our *a priori* concepts make possible objects in the sense of creating them in accordance with our will, then we would be gods, not the limited beings that we are. In short, the objective validity problem confronts us with the same kind of problem that the antecedency argument confronts us with. Things in themselves are replete with their properties independent of any relation with human cognition (this is an analytic judgment). That is, a thing in itself is determined antecedently to any relation to human cognition. Since things in themselves are determined antecedently to any relation to human cognition, our *a priori* concept cannot make possible things in themselves. Furthermore, if things in themselves, by some subsequent cognitive relation, made the *a priori* concepts possible, they would be empirical concepts, but that is a contradiction. As an analytic consequence, we are unable to legitimately



apply our *a priori* concepts to things in themselves through the resources of concepts alone. And therefore, we cannot cognize them through our *a priori* concepts alone. Furthermore, since <causality> numbers among our *a priori* concepts, inferring the existence of things in themselves from the fact that we cognize appearances would require an illegitimate application of an *a priori* concept. As aforementioned, if we could sensibly intuit things in themselves, then we would be able to apply our concepts to things in themselves. However, since we cannot sensibly intuit them, we cannot legitimately apply our concepts to them. Commitment (2) is, likewise, a consequence of the inability of our concepts to relate to objects without the medium of sensibility. Because we cannot sensibly intuit objects as things in themselves, and because our concepts can only relate to objects insofar as we can sensibly intuit them, the thought of empirical objects apart from our sensibility is not cognition of them as things in themselves. Accordingly, for similar reasons that commitments (4) and (5) are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>, so are commitments (1), (2), and (3). Therefore, commitments (1), (2), and (3) are, likewise, not subjected to the epistemic problem.

From what I have shown above, it follows that the Doctrine of Ignorance does not subject itself to the epistemic problem. Consequently, the Doctrine of Ignorance escapes the worry that it is self-enfeebling.<sup>84</sup> I now turn to arguing that the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis is not subject to

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<sup>84</sup> Hogan (2009a) also offers a way in which Kant can have substantive metaphysical cognition of things in themselves without violating the Doctrine of Ignorance, namely, by making the Doctrine of Ignorance, itself, a consequence of a legitimate substantive judgment about things in themselves. First, he distinguishes between ways in which something may be non-empirically (i.e. *a priori*) unknowable. On the one hand, an object may be non-empirically unknowable, because cognizing it exceeds our capacity to cognize objects non-empirically. He calls this ‘a-unknowable’. On the other hand, an object may be non-empirically unknowable, because it lacks a ground through which it could be non-empirically cognized. He calls this ‘b-unknowable’. For instance, I cannot know how someone will act *a priori*, if she has free will. For, having free will, there can be no grounds for my judgment in advance of her action. Notice that judging something to be b-unknowable is, itself, a substantive metaphysical claim. Second, Hogan maintains that Kant is entitled to the judgment that all things in themselves are b-unknowable, because we know, on practical grounds, that our souls have free will. That is, we know on the grounds that being a moral agent requires having free

the epistemic problem, but only because the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts us to a weak reading of it.

#### §3.4.1.3.2 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis

Earlier in this chapter, I have shown that Kant provides a valid argument for the claim that things in themselves are non-spatial. However, I have not discussed in what sense things in themselves are non-spatial. In the course of the transcendental ideality argument, Kant assigns space several properties. Many of these accord with our typical thoughts of space. For instance, space is an infinite three-dimensional extensive magnitude, in particular, the infinite three-dimensional extensive magnitude that is studied by geometers. However, Kant assigns space a very surprising property as well. Specifically, Kant assigns space the epistemic function of making possible the cognition of objects as distinct from our own mental states.<sup>85</sup> Thus, he identifies space

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will. Third, if we take the b-unknowability as part and parcel to the Doctrine of Ignorance, then it is neither self-eneebling nor does it preclude, outright, all other cognition of things in themselves:

Kant's global denial of theoretical knowledge of things in themselves is a conjunction of the following propositions: (i) there is nothing through which some features of things in themselves could be non-empirically known; (ii) non-empirical knowledge of things in themselves, unless the result of a sound argument whose premises include (i), exceeds our cognitive capacities; and, (iii) empirical knowledge of things in themselves exceeds our cognitive capacities. (Hogan, 2009a: 60)

Hogan's position is wrong. First, even if we know that we have free will and, therefore, there are no grounds by which judgments about our actions can be justified *a priori*, it does not, thereby, follow that there are no grounds for cognizing things in themselves generally. Second, the claim that our souls have free will is an instance of the specific kind of metaphysical judgments that prompted Kant to investigate how *a priori* synthetic judgments can be grounded. Consequently, Hogan's position has Kant begging the question. Nevertheless, Hogan's position and my position are similar in that we both demand that (1) the legitimacy of the Doctrine of Ignorance is not precluded by its own lights and (2) the manner by which the Doctrine of Ignorance evades the epistemic problem may also serve as a means by which other judgments of things in themselves evade the epistemic problem.

<sup>85</sup> Warren (1998) maintains that space is not a necessary condition for representing objects as being ontologically distinct. He says, "If I know that (at a given time) a is pink and b is not pink, then I can infer that a and b are numerically distinct" (Warren, 1998: 187). I fully grant this, even though it may be thought to show that representations other than space can make possible the cognition of objects as distinct from our own mental states. For, if we can cognize that our mental states have some property, P, and some object is not-P (or vice versa), then we could cognize the object as distinct from our own mental states. However, the cognition of our mental states as being P and an object as being not-P presupposes that we represent our mental states and the object as being distinct, for, otherwise, we are not in the position of assigning P to our mental states, but non-P to the object.

with our sensibility, such that space is the means by which sensibility has an outer sense. Space accomplishes this function by situating objects in a three-dimensional magnitude. Now, there are two distinct senses of 'spatial'. In the first sense, an object is spatial if and only if either it is space or it is contained within space. In its second sense, an object is spatial if and only if it is space-like or structured by something that is space-like. For example, consider a thing in itself that fits Newton's (false) description of space, even though it is not space and it is not structured by space. Such an entity would possess several of the same features of space, in that it would (or could) contain objects in a three-dimensional extensive magnitude. Since it possesses several of the same features of space, but is neither space nor is structured by space, it is spatial in the second sense, but not in the first sense. Accordingly, we have two non-spatiality theses at our disposal. On the one hand, an object may be non-spatial in the sense that it does not relate to space (either by being it or being contained by it). Call this the weak non-spatiality thesis. On the other hand, an object may be non-spatial in that, not only does it not relate to space, but it is not space-like (i.e. it is neither a three-dimensional magnitude nor is it contained in one). I argue, here, that the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts Kant to the weak non-spatiality thesis. This requires showing that Kant's argumentative strategy can secure the weak non-spatiality thesis without violating the Doctrine of Ignorance, while also showing that the strong non-spatiality thesis cannot be secured without violating the Doctrine of Ignorance. I begin by demonstrating that Kant's argumentative strategy can secure the weak non-spatiality thesis. Then I turn to demonstrating that it cannot secure the strong non-spatiality thesis.

#### §3.4.1.3.2.1 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Weak Non-spatiality Thesis

Kant's strategy for securing the claim that things in themselves are non-spatial revolves around three main points: (1) our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, (2) the

Identity Thesis (i.e. if  $x$  is intuited *a priori*, then  $x$  is reducible to the representational content of the *a priori* intuition), and (3) that things in themselves can neither be in the extension of an *a priori* intuition, nor can it be structured by one, which I argued earlier (§3.4.1.3.1) is an analytic consequence of <thing in itself>. Here I argue two things in order: (i) that the weak non-spatiality argument follows from these three points; (ii) that, as a result, the weak non-spatiality thesis is not subjected to the epistemic problem.

Recall that Kant's argument cannot hope to get off the ground unless he argues that our original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition. If Kant had discovered that our original representation of space was a concept, then, since the extension of a concept can include several objects and is not determined by a cognitive relation that we have with objects, several objects, including ones that cannot, in principle, relate to our cognitive faculties (e.g. things in themselves), may fall under <space>. In contrast, an intuition can only have one object in its extension, as determined by the object that the intuition has an immediate cognitive relation to. Consequently, since our original representation of space is an intuition, it follows that the one object in its extension is space. Otherwise, it would not be an original representation of space. Furthermore, since, per point (1) above, our original representation of space is our *a priori* intuition of space, it follows that it fixes the referent of 'space'. From point (2), it follows that the referent of 'space' is a weak object. This explains why Kant, in offering a theory of space, proposes to examine our representation of space. Namely, he aims to show that the object of debate between Newton, Leibniz, and himself is reducible to the representational content of our *a priori* intuition of space. By point (3), it follows that things in themselves can neither be this weak object, nor can they be structured by it. Accordingly, the weak non-spatiality thesis follows, and things in themselves are

non-spatial in the sense that they cannot relate to space. I now turn to showing that the Doctrine of Ignorance does not subject the weak non-spatiality thesis to the epistemic problem.

Consider the above three points in turn. Kant argues for point (1) in both the synthetic and analytic argumentation of the transcendental ideality argument. Since none of that argumentation relies on judgments about things in themselves, point (1) does not violate the constraints of the Doctrine of Ignorance. I argued for point (2) in Chapter 2. Review of my argument shows that it hinges (i) on the requirements for a representation to be an intuition and (ii) the analytic consequence of <thing in itself> that they cannot belong to the extensions of *a priori* intuitions (see §2.3.2.3.2). I have already shown in §3.4.1.3.1 that point (3) does not violate the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of Ignorance. As a result, the Doctrine of Ignorance does not subject the weak non-spatiality thesis to the epistemic problem. I now turn to considering why the strong non-spatiality thesis cannot be secured without violating the constraints of the Doctrine of Ignorance.

#### §3.4.1.3.2.2 The Doctrine of Ignorance and the Strong Non-spatiality Thesis

I have just argued that the transcendental ideality argument secures the weak non-spatiality thesis: that things in themselves are non-spatial, in that they do not relate to space. Earlier, I mentioned that Kant assigns several properties to space. This includes space being represented as an infinite three-dimensional extensive magnitude. However, the most surprising property assigned to space is its identification with (outer) sense – that part of sensibility through which we empirically intuit objects as distinct from our own states. Since Kant identifies space with our outer sense, and since the weak non-spatiality argument hinges, in part, on the fact that things in themselves cannot relate to our *a priori* intuition of space, one way of conceiving Kant's argumentative strategy for the non-spatiality thesis is to take him as showing that things in

themselves cannot possess one of the essential properties of space, namely, things in themselves cannot be identified with our outer sense (and they cannot be structured by anything that is identified with our outer sense).<sup>86</sup>

Now, the strong non-spatiality thesis requires, not only that things in themselves be non-spatial in that they do not relate to space, but they must also be non-spatial in that they are not space-like. The above argumentative strategy, however, only demonstrates that things in themselves cannot possess one essential property of space. But in order to show that things in themselves are not space-like, Kant needs to further argue that no thing in itself can be a three-dimensional extensive magnitude (that may, or may not, contain other things in themselves). But ‘no thing in itself is a three-dimensional extensive magnitude’ is a synthetic judgment about things in themselves, and it is not forthcoming as an analytic consequence of <thing in itself>. Consequently, the additional argument would have to rely on synthetic judgments of things in themselves that violate the Doctrine of Ignorance. It follows that the strong non-spatiality thesis is subject to the epistemic problem. We must, therefore, regard Kant as only arguing for the weak non-spatiality thesis and, by extension, as only arguing for the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis (i.e. the thesis that things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal in that they relate neither to space nor to time).

This not only completes a general task set out for this chapter, but it completes one of the tasks of my overarching project. I have identified the commitments undergirding the Doctrine of

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<sup>86</sup> Allison (1996) first attempted to bar the problem of the neglected alternative by relying on the mere subjectivity of space. He says, “I attempted to rule out the possibility of any relevant similarity or analogy by noting that it would have to be between something that involves an essential reference to the mind and something that, *ex hypothesi*, is completely independent of the mind” (Allison 1996: 10). However, being confronted with the strong isomorphism objection, Allison agrees that the mere subjectivity of space is not sufficient to bar the problem of the neglected alternative. Consequently, Allison adopts Falkenstein’s attempt at barring the strong isomorphism objection. See footnote 87 to see why that attempt fails.

Ignorance. As a result, I have shown that the Noumenal Causation Thesis is subjected to the epistemic problem. I have shown that the Doctrine of Ignorance only bars the possibility of knowing a thing in itself through some putative cognitive relation between it and the representations of our cognitive faculties. However, it does not preclude analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. Consequently, the Doctrine of Ignorance does admit of the possibility of some cognitions of things in themselves. In fact, the Doctrine of Ignorance admits itself as a possible piece of cognition of things in themselves and, therefore, escapes the worry that it is self-enfeebling. Furthermore, I have shown that the Doctrine of Ignorance admits of the legitimacy of the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, but it, at the same time, restricts us to that reading of the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. With the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis in mind, I now turn to whether Kant is still faced with the problem of the neglected alternative.

#### §3.4.2 *The (Weak) Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and the Neglected Alternative*

Recall that the problem of the neglected alternative was originally motivated by the *non sequitur* problem. That is, the argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis has been thought to be invalid, and, as a result, it cannot rule out the possibility that both our sensibility and things in themselves are spatiotemporal. I have argued that Kant does have a valid argument for the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis and is, therefore, absolved of the *non sequitur* problem. However, I have also shown that, in order to avoid the epistemic problem, Kant must be regarded as arguing only for the weak non-spatiality thesis and, by extension, as only arguing for the Weak Non-spatiotemporality Thesis. As a result, the transcendental ideality argument cannot be read as ruling out the possibility that some thing in itself is a three-dimensional extensive magnitude, such that it and space are structurally isomorphic. Consequently, the transcendental ideality argument is faced with another neglected alternative. In this section, I first turn to considering how this new

neglected alternative might be thought to pose a problem for Kant's cognitive theory. Then I turn to disarming that worry. Even though Kant's argumentation cannot rule out a strong structural isomorphism, I argue that it does not pose a serious threat to Kant's project in the *Critique*.

#### §3.4.2.1 The Strong Isomorphism Objection and the Problem of the Neglected Alternative

*Prima facie*, this new neglected alternative seems to be a devastating blow to Kant's project. Kant's motivation in writing the *Critique* is a function of his dissatisfaction with the state of metaphysics during his time:

[M]etaphysics has... to be regarded as a battle-ground quite peculiarly suited for those who desire to exercise themselves in mock combats, and in which no participant has ever yet succeeded in gaining even so much as an inch of territory, not at least in such manner as to secure him in its permanent possession. (Bxv)

The difficulty, as Kant sees it, is that the subject matter of metaphysics (e.g. God, the soul, etc.) is never given in experience, yet metaphysicians are in the business of discovering ampliative knowledge of these things. Consequently, they make *a priori* synthetic judgments about them (e.g. 'the soul is immortal'). But since these judgments are synthetic (e.g. 'the soul is immortal'), they cannot be epistemically justified on grounds that they are analytic consequences of our concepts of the subject matter (e.g. <God>, <soul>, etc.), for the predicate concept will not be contained in the subject concept (e.g. <immortal> is not contained in <soul>). Furthermore, since the subject matter (e.g. the soul) is never in experience, the synthetic judgment cannot be epistemically justified on grounds of empirical observation. This is precisely why Kant creates transcendental philosophy: he wants to know how *a priori* synthetic knowledge (i.e. cognition) of objects is possible in order to determine whether metaphysics, as a science, is possible.

Consequently, one aim of the transcendental ideality argument, as a piece of transcendental philosophy, is to illustrate why and how we are entitled to some *a priori* synthetic cognitions of



objects. As shown in my exegesis, the transcendental ideality argument accomplishes this by demonstrating (1) that space is the form of outer sense, (2) that space can be studied *a priori* in the imagination independently of any particular object, and (3) that empirical objects must be structured by our form of outer sense. As a consequence, the *a priori* study of space licenses some *a priori* judgments of empirical objects. Furthermore, since our representation of space is an intuition, the judgments grounded in the *a priori* study of space are not limited in being analytic judgments, as is the case with studying concepts. As a result, the transcendental ideality argument demonstrates that geometric principles are a set of *a priori* synthetic judgments that are legitimately applicable to empirical objects and are, therefore, *a priori* synthetic cognitions of empirical objects.

However, Kant's solution to his dissatisfaction of metaphysics is not only to show that we are entitled to certain kinds of *a priori* synthetic cognitions. He also aims to show that certain kinds of synthetic cognitions of things in themselves are impossible for us to have. Per the Doctrine of Ignorance, he aims to show that we cannot have synthetic cognitions of things in themselves, unless they are analytic consequences of <thing in itself>. The problem of the new neglected alternative is, if a thing in itself is a three-dimensional extensive magnitude and other things in themselves are contained in it, then geometric principles will apply to these things in themselves just as well as they apply to space and the empirical objects it structures. Accordingly, since geometers can study these features in the imagination independently of any particular object, it seems that we would have the kind of *a priori* synthetic cognitions of things in themselves that Kant intends to be denying. Therefore, given the possibility of a strong structural isomorphism, a major aim of the *Critique* seems to be undermined. Call this 'the strong isomorphism objection'.

I do not think the strong isomorphism objection is much of a problem for the *Critique*. Thus, I turn to offering a response that Kant can give to the strong isomorphism objection.

#### §3.4.2.1.1 Disarming the Strong Isomorphism Objection

In order to overcome the strong isomorphism objection, Kant must have either provided a valid argument for the strong non-spatiality thesis, thereby avoiding the new neglected alternative altogether, or the strong isomorphism objection must be disarmed. I have already explained why the former option is not possible; it would require adding argumentation to the transcendental ideality argument that relies on the kind of synthetic cognition of things in themselves that is barred by the Doctrine of Ignorance.<sup>87</sup> Thus, I turn to disarming the strong isomorphism objection.

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<sup>87</sup> Falkenstein (1995) offers a noble attempt at barring the possibility of a strong isomorphism obtaining between space and things in themselves. First, he makes a distinction between kinds of orders: (1) stipulative, (2) deductive, (3) comparative, and (4) presentational (1995: 185). Stipulative orders are orders determined by convention or fiat. Deductive orders rely on recursivity to determine the order of the elements. It could be a stipulated recursive definition that determines the order, in which case it is a kind of stipulative order, or, it could be determined by some rule that is discovered through empirical investigation (e.g. some causal rule). Comparative orders are orders that can be determined by the mere inspection of the elements (e.g. the order of brightness, saturation, hue, etc.). Presentational orders are neither a function of facts of the ordered elements, nor are they arbitrary like stipulative orders. Furthermore, the elements ordered by a presentational order are ordered by the manner in which the elements occur in a subject's experience of them or, alternatively, some detector device. By identifying space with the form of outer sense, Kant has argued that space is a presentational order. Because their facts are determined irrespective of any relation to sensibility (or any other detecting thing that is not God's cognition), it follows, analytically, that things in themselves cannot be ordered by a presentational order or a stipulative order. It might be thought that things in themselves could be deductively ordered in an infinite three-dimensional extensive magnitude via their causal properties. Falkenstein denies this possibility on the grounds that Kant does not allow for the legitimate application of <causality> to things in themselves (ibid. 303). By elimination, things in themselves must have a comparative order closer in kind to the orders of brightness and color (ibid.). Examination of the orders of brightness and color indicate that, if things in themselves are ordered comparatively, then that order will be significantly different in kind from that involved in a three-dimensional extensive magnitude. Now, I accept that Kant's strategy can be construed as an attempt to identify space with a presentational order. However, the above argument does not go through for three reasons. First, we can be assured that things in themselves do not have causal properties, and are therefore not deductively ordered in an extensive magnitude by them, only if Kant argues that our representation of causality is an *a priori* intuition, but Kant argues that it is an *a priori* concept. Consequently, it is an open question, on Kant's view, whether things in themselves have causal properties. Second, we would have to be assured that we have not left out a kind of order that allows for a strong isomorphism. But knowing that we have not left out a kind of order would require synthetic cognition of things in themselves, and, since we cannot, on Kant's view, have synthetic cognition of things in themselves, we can never be assured that we are not leaving out a kind of order that admits of a strong

As described above, the strong isomorphism objection seemingly presents the following problem to the *Critique*: if a thing in itself happened to be a three-dimensional extensive magnitude, then it would seem that we do have the kind of *a priori* synthetic cognition of things in themselves that Kant intends to preclude. This, I argue, is a misguided worry. First, consider the following analogy. Suppose you come across a hyperrealistic painting that depicts a person. Now, suppose that, not only do you not know whether the painting has a referent, but that you cannot, for one reason or another, know whether the painting has a referent. That is, you cannot determine whether the painting is a portrait of someone or whether the depiction is a mere concoction of the artist's imagination. But further suppose that the painting does, in fact, have a referent. Because of the hyperrealism, it will follow that facts that apply to the depicted person (i.e. the representation of a person in the painting) will also apply to an actual person. Nevertheless, it would be illegitimate for you to maintain that, by studying the painting, you now have knowledge of a particular existent person, precisely because you cannot know whether it refers to a person.

The same holds between space and a thing in itself that is a three-dimensional extensive magnitude. The transcendental ideality argument demonstrates that we have *a priori* synthetic

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isomorphism with space. Third, it seems to me that Falkenstein has, in fact, left out a kind of order, one that we might call an 'extrinsic order'. By way of example, consider Newton's container theory of space. If an element is contained in a three-dimensional extensive magnitude, it must have a certain order with respect to any other elements thereby contained. Furthermore, the elements would be ordered even if their inherent properties did not effect its particular placement, and they would be ordered even if there were no causal powers at all. This extrinsic order illuminates why Kant cannot avoid the possibility of a strong isomorphism. Kant's argumentative strategy only demonstrates that the presentational order of objects is made possible by another kind of order; namely, one that is essentially unitary, is boundless, and is a three-dimensional extensive magnitude. However, a thing being essentially unitary, being boundless, and being an extensive magnitude does not seem to require that it be a presentational order. Thus, while Kant may succeed in demonstrating that space has those properties and is also a presentational order, he offers no reason for thinking that if something has those properties, it must be a presentational order. In line with what I argued above, doing so would require showing that possession of those properties is sufficient for an order to be a presentational order, but that would require synthetic knowledge of things in themselves that is not an analytic consequence of <things in themselves>.

cognitions of space, namely, geometric principles. Given a strong structural isomorphism between space and the thing in itself in question, those principles will, no doubt, hold of that thing in itself. However, a consequence of the weak non-spatiality thesis is that our *a priori* intuition of space cannot establish a cognitive relation with things in themselves: it cannot take a thing in itself in its extension, and it cannot structure (i.e. order) a thing in itself. Consequently, even though geometric principles will hold given a strong structural isomorphism, we would still lack a cognitive relation by which we could legitimately apply the geometric principles.<sup>88</sup> It follows that the *a priori* synthetic cognitions in question would still be precluded by Kant's cognitive theory. The strong isomorphism objection is, therefore, disarmed.

This not only completes a general task set out in this chapter, but it completes the other major task of my overarching project. I have argued that Kant has a valid argument for the (Weak) Non-spatiotemporality Thesis, thereby absolving Kant of the traditional problem of the neglected alternative. However, I have also argued that the Doctrine of Ignorance restricts our reading of the Non-spatiotemporality Thesis such that the transcendental ideality argument must neglect a new alternative, thereby opening Kant to the strong isomorphism objection. But, as I have just argued, the strong isomorphism objection does not pose much of a problem to Kant's cognitive theory. Consequently, any concerns attached to Kant's neglect of the possibility of a strong structural isomorphism between a thing in itself and space should be ameliorated.

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<sup>88</sup> Falkenstein (1995) also maintains that the arguments of the metaphysical and transcendental expositions are strong enough preclude the legitimate application of geometric cognitions. He says, "But the conclusion does more than this. It claims not only that we *cannot know* whether or not things in themselves are in space or time, but also that we *can know* that, even if they were, their spatiotemporal features would not be what determines the form of our intuition and so would be nothing to us" (Falkenstein, 1995: 292).

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