Two Perspectives on Kant's Appearances and Things in Themselves

Hoke Robinson

Journal of the History of Philosophy, Volume 32, Number 3, July 1994, pp. 411-441 (Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/hph.1994.0058

Two Perspectives on Kant's Appearances and Things in Themselves

HOKE ROBINSON

to Lewis W. Beck, on the occasion of his 80th birthday

"HOW ONE INTERPRETS Kant's idealism," wrote Henry Allison in a recent article, "is largely a function of how one interprets the transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves."[1] The systematic interdependence of the two issues can clearly be seen in the progression of Kant's thought after 1781. Neither issue was given much individual prominence in the first-edition *Critique of Pure Reason;* but when the very first review of that work took the Critical philosophy to be a kind of Berkeleyan idealism, one which "transforms the world and ourselves into representations,"[2] Kant appended disclaimers to the *Prolegomena,* and highlighted a revised Refutation of Idealism in the second-edition *Critique* and elsewhere.[3] Accompanying

[1] Henry Allison, "Transcendentalism Idealism: The 'Two Aspect' View," in Bernard den Ouden, ed., *New Essays on Kant* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 155. Cf. also his *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* [*KTI*] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 16: "The transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves or, more properly, between things as they appear and the same things as they are in themselves, functions as the great divide in the Kantian conception of the history of philosophy."

[2] Review attributed to Christian Garve and J. G. Feder, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen,* Jan. 19, 1782, pp. 40 ff., reprinted as an appendix in the Karl Vorländer edition of the *Prolegomena:* Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1957), at 167–74; all references are to the Meiner edition version. More recently, T. E. Wilkerson has held that "[Kant's] 'formal' idealism is indistinguishable from the 'material' idealism of Berkeley" (*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976], 190).

[3] The importance Kant attached to refuting the charge of idealism can be seen in the number of versions of the Refutation: *KdrV,* A366–80; *Prol.,* Ak. IV.288–94, 371–83; *KdrV,* B274–79, Bxxxix–xli; Refls. 5653–54 (Ak. XVIII.306–13), Refls. 6311–12 (Ak. XVIII.607–13), Refls. 6313–16 (Ak. XVIII.613–23); cf. Refls. 5709 (Ak. XVIII.332), 6317 (Ak. XVIII.627), 6319 (Ak. XVIII.633), and 6323 (Ak. XVIII.643). As is customary, references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*

these changes was an increased concern with the "transcendental distinction," that between appearances and things in themselves: whereas the A-edition Preface does not explicitly refer to the distinction at all—it puts in an appearance only well into the Transcendental Aesthetic[4]—the rewritten B-Preface includes a substantial discussion of the issue.

Concern with the nature of Kant's idealism was not restricted to the first review, nor did his denials lay this concern to rest. For the German Idealists Kant was not idealistic enough; but most later commentators have considered any idealism a defect, and have tended to be the less sympathetic to the Critical philosophy, the more idealism they found there. On the one side is the view of Strawson and others: Kant *is* an idealist, unfortunately, since "the doctrines of transcendental idealism . . . and the associated picture of . . . the mind producing Nature . . . are undoubtedly the chief obstacles to a sympathetic understanding of the Critique."[5] On the other is that of interpreters such as Baum: Kant is *not* an idealist, fortunately, since otherwise he would be inconsistent with his own views.[6] Some more recent commentators have been less intimidated by the idealism charge, among them Prauss, Allison, and Aquila. But as all of these treatments make clear, Kant's idealism (or lack thereof) is so bound up with his distinction between appearances and things in themselves that it is not possible to develop a position on the former without an analysis of the latter.

In what follows I want first to look at the idealism question, and suggest how a direct comparison of Kant and Berkeley can yield a structure for contrasting the "two world" and "two aspect" interpretations of the transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves. Turning to these views, I try to show that in attempting to solve the problems arising on the two world view, the two aspect view runs afoul of serious textual and systematic difficulties which render it inadequate as a sympathetic interpretation. I then propose an alternative "two perspective" view, consider some possible difficulties with it, and close by returning to the question of Kant's idealism.

(*KdrV*) cite the pagination of the first and second (A and B) original editions; all other references to Kant's work are by volume, page (and where necessary, line) of the Prussian Academy edition (Ak.) of Kant's complete works: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preussischen (later Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, vols. I–XXIX (Berlin: de Gruyter [and predecessors], 1902–).

[4] Briefly at *KdrV*, A27, more fully at A36ff.

[5] Peter F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966), 22. Strawson sees his task, according to Walker, as an attempt "to reconstruct Kant without the transcendental idealism, regarding it as a sad lapse on the part of an otherwise great man." See Ralph C. S. Walker, ed., *Kant on Pure Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 3; cf. 132.

[6] Manfred Baum, *Deduktion und Beweis in Kants Transzendentalphilosophie* (Königstein: Hain bei Athenäum, 1986), 21f. Cf. Peter Rohs, "Transzendentalphilosophie als Deutungstheorie?" *Kant-Studien* 72 (1981): 272f.

1. KANT AND BERKELEYAN IDEALISM

Though the Refutation of Idealism is directed largely at Descartes, the (to Kant) invidious comparison was with Berkeley. Accordingly, it will be helpful to set out Berkeley's view and examine the extent to which Kant's view can be mapped onto it.

Berkeley's view of knowledge acquisition is largely adopted from that of Descartes and Locke. The basic Lockean view is this: A subject's senses, presumably as the result of "affection" by an external object (say, a tree), impose upon the passive mind certain simple ideas of sense, such as green, tall, rough. The mind can know, without fear of error, what these ideas are (i.e., that they are the ideas of green, tall, rough), and can combine them into a complex idea of a substance (a green tree). The subject can then judge (fallibly) that there exists a green tree in the yard. The complex idea is adequate, and the judgment is true, if to the idea there corresponds an independent, external archetype with the characteristics attributed to it.[7]

Berkeley's idealism accepts the side of this view that sees simple ideas entering the passive mind and being actively compounded into complex ones. But it denies, first, that the external object, or Lockean archetype, can function to determine the adequacy of an idea. It denies further that the external object can provide a source of impressions for the adventitious ideas. And it finally denies that the external object exists at all.[8]

Kant's introduction of the transcendental distinction in the famous "Copernican Revolution" passage of the B-Preface[9] seems rather to confirm than to deny the accusations of Berkeleyanism. Previous philosophers assumed that our cognitions, to be true, had to conform to their objects; Kant now proposes to try switching the poles, and requiring the objects to "adjust to" the cognitions. This switch, however, requires us to distinguish two ways of viewing the object of knowledge. If it is taken as a subject-independent "thing in itself," no adjustment of object to subject is possible. If it is taken as an appearance, however, we can elicit from the subject's cognitive faculties the conditions an object must meet in order to be able to appear to us. Such knowledge would be a priori, but more than merely analytic; and as metaphysics consists of such synthetic a priori knowledge, Kant's move makes metaphysics possible at last.

---

[7] Locke, *Essay*, Book II, Chs. 1 (§§1–5, 23–25), 2, 3, 8, 12, 30–32. That we only presume, and cannot know for certain, that external objects affect the senses to produce the sensations, is clear from Book IV, Ch. XI.

[8] Berkeley, *Treatise*, Part I, §§1–33. A principle objection to this view is that if the objects of knowledge are to consist solely of ideas, then these objects do not exist when nobody is having the ideas (the *esse est percipi* objection). Berkeley's answer is that all that is needed is a potential for perception, the regularity of which derives from God (§§45–48, 90).

[9] *KdrV*, Bxvi–xvii.

But whatever advantages such a view might have, the notion that the object of human knowledge adjusts itself to that knowledge seems very much the kind of idealism Berkeley espoused.[10]

The attempt, however, simply to map Kant's view onto Berkeley's version of the Lockean position quickly runs into difficulties. We can take Kant's representations, on a first approximation, as Lockean ideas, entities which arise in consciousness and claim to represent something other than themselves. The archetype or external object seems to correspond to Kant's thing in itself, an entity independent of consciousness.[11] But for Kant, the object of knowledge to which the ideas must be adequate is not this thing in itself, as it is for Locke, but is instead the *appearance.*

The appearance seems to be a third entity, distinguished both from the representation on the one hand, and from the thing in itself on the other. As might be expected from its central role in the Copernican Turn, Kant is at great pains to emphasize the latter distinction. Only by means of this distinction can Kant explain how metaphysical knowledge—synthetic knowledge a priori—is possible: namely, as derived from the subject's conditions of experience. As a result, the distinction is also central in setting Kant's system apart from those of his predecessors.[12] Kant seems much less concerned to distinguish the appearance from the representation; indeed, he often seems simply to identify them. But, as we shall see, this identification is problematic, both because it seems at odds with his rejection of Berkeleyanism, and because it appears to introduce inconsistencies into certain central doctrines.

Thus the attempt to compare Kant's idealism directly with Berkeley's runs up against the question of what to do with the appearance. I want to maintain that both the two central views of the transcendental distinction presuppose such a comparison, and differ basically on the question of how the appearance is to be understood.

2. THE SEARCH FOR A SYMPATHETIC READING

Recent commentators have distinguished two main lines of interpretation,[13] which have become known as the "two world" view and the "two aspect" view.

---

[10] See Colin Murray Turbayne, "Kant's Relation to Berkeley," in L. W. Beck, ed., *Kant Studies Today* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1969), 88–116.

[11] In fact, Berkeley uses the phrase, "objects in themselves, or without the mind," in the *Treatise,* Part I, §24.

[12] See, for instance, Kant's explanation of the two senses of "external" yielded by the distinction, in contrast to Descartes's sense, at *KdrV,* A373.

[13] E.g., Karl Ameriks, "Recent Work on Kant's Theoretical Philosophy," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19 (1982): 1–24.

The standard or "textbook" interpretation[14] is the *two world* view. Perhaps the earliest version, that of Jacobi in 1787, is in many ways typical.[15] Jacobi reduces the three Kantian entities to the two Lockean ones by simply identifying representation and appearance; he cites a number of passages in support of this identification.[16] The assimilation of appearance to representation is also a central element of contemporary two world theories. According to Strawson, e.g., the world of appearance is one that "only appears to exist, is really nothing apart from perceptions."[17] It is especially striking in Guyer: on his view, what Kant has done is to "*degrade* ordinary objects to mere representations of themselves. . . . Kant does not have to add a *third* set of objects to [things in themselves and representations]; all he has to do is *transfer* spatiality and temporality from objects [i.e., things in themselves] to our representations of them. . . ."[18]

But, as many commentators have pointed out, a number of serious difficulties arise for the Critical philosophy under the two world interpretation. The most central of these is the well-known and apparently intractable issue of *affection*. The core problem was sketched by Jacobi. On Kant's theory, representations result from the application of the cognitive faculties to a sensory manifold given to the mind. This sensory manifold in turn arises as the result of "affection" of the mind by the object. But, so the argument goes, if the object is an appearance, interpreted here as a representation, it could scarcely produce the very sensory manifold out of which it itself was first formed. The only alternative is affection through things in themselves. But Kant explicitly denies that the object can be a thing in itself. Accordingly, says Jacobi in a much-quoted passage, "without this presupposition [of affection by the thing in itself] I could not enter into the system, and with this presupposition I could not remain there."[19]

Two other related problem areas concern the status of the appearances.

---

[14] "Standard picture": Allison, *KTI*, 3; "textbook version," Ameriks, "Recent Work," 1. Cf. also Ameriks's APA talk, "Recent Work on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*," April 1991.

[15] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *David Hume über den Glauben oder Idealismus und Realismus* (1787), in Jacobi, *Werke*, Vol. II (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer d. Jüng., 1815, rpt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 291–310.

[16] Jacobi cites the following passages from the *Critique of Pure Reason's* first (and, at the time, only) edition. From the Fourth Paralogism: A370, A372–73, A374–75n., A378, A379–80; from the Aesthetic: A36–37, A37n.; from the Antinomies: A491; from the Deduction: A101, A125, A126–27.

[17] Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 238; cf. also 236, 246, 38, etc.

[18] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 335.

[19] Jacobi, *David Hume*, 304. Cf. also Strawson, *Bounds of Sense*, 41. (Allison also considers the problem of affection to lie at the heart of the two world view: *KTI*, 4–5, 247ff.)

The first of these may be called the problem of *phenomenality;* it is associated with the charge of Berkeleyan idealism. The central difficulty is this: if the objects of knowledge are appearances, but these are just mental representations, we seem stuck in a Berkeleyan world without a God to sustain it; the objects seem both arbitrary and unable to exist unperceived.[20] The second is the family of difficulties revolving around Kant's view of *spatiality.* One of these derives from Kant's denial that things in themselves are spatial: since Kant holds that appearances are *of* things in themselves, it is hard to see how appearances could be spatial while that *of which* they are the appearances is not. (In addition, one might ask how we can know nothing about things in themselves while knowing that they are not spatial.)[21]

The difficulties stemming from the two world view are commonly seen as insoluble, so much so that, with a few notable exceptions, adoption of the two world view seems to derive from a prior antipathy to the transcendental philosophy, rather than the other way around. Correlatively, those basically sympathetic to the Critical philosophy have felt moved to develop an alternative view of the distinction between appearances and things in themselves, one less subject to these difficulties.

The *two aspect* view appears in various forms in a number of earlier Kant interpretations, notably those of Heimsoeth, Heidegger, Adickes, and Paton,[22] but the current discussion received its main impetus from Gerold Prauss's treatment in 1974.[23] Prauss takes Kant's phrase "thing in itself" to be short for "thing—considered as it is in itself," where "in itself" designates, not a different kind of thing, but a different way of *considering* a thing, i.e., other than as appearance. What this means is that the same object can be considered

---

[20] Garve-Feder review, 167–74, esp. 167–69: the *Critique* is a "system . . . of idealism, which . . . transforms the world and us ourselves into representations. . . . Out of the *sensible appearances* . . . the understanding makes objects. It *makes* them. . . . But we confess that we do not see how the differentiation so easily made by the human understanding of the real from the imaginary and merely possible can be grounded without assuming a mark of the real in sensation itself, merely through the application of the concepts of the understanding, since after all visions and phantasies too . . . can appear combined in an orderly manner, sometimes apparently more orderly than real events." See also Allison, *KTI,* 4–5.

[21] Cf. Norman Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 113–14; H. J. Paton, *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), I: 180.

[22] Herbert Herring, "Das Problem der Affektion bei Kant," *Kant-Studien,* Ergänzungsheft 67 (1953): 65, lists Heimsoeth, Heidegger, Paton, and Weldon as proponents of a two aspect view. Adickes is best known for the "Double Affection" theory, and is so listed in Herring, but seems to assume a two aspect position as well: cf. Erich Adickes, *Kants Lehre von der doppelten Affektion unseres Ich als Schlüssel zu seiner Erkenntnistheorie* (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr, 1929), 3.

[23] Gerold Prauss, *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), which builds on Prauss's earlier book, *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971). For his more recent views, see *Die Welt und Wir* I.1 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1990).

in two different manners, as appearance and as thing in itself. This view seems to obviate the need for a separate realm for things in themselves. Prauss's central project involves going beyond Kant in a reconstruction of transcendental idealism, but the general line of his two aspect view is taken up by Henry Allison.

Allison emphasizes that Kant's distinction should be taken, not in a metaphysical, but rather in a methodological sense.[24] This methodological sense derives from what Allison calls epistemic conditions, conditions which representations must meet if they are to represent objects. Epistemic condtions are distinguished from logical conditions, which establish consistency among statements irrespective of the objects involved (if any), and from psychological conditions required for the operation of the human mind *in concreto;* in addition, they must be distinguished from what Allison refers to as "ontological conditions," "conditions of the possibility of the being of theings,"[25] "of the existence of the things themselves."[26] Since the epistemic conditions are derived from structures required by the subject in order for cognition to occur, any object whose representation meets these conditions includes "a reference to mind and its cognitive apparatus."[27] Much to nobody's surprise, these epistemic conditions turn out to be space, time, and the categories. Since an object can only be represented by us if these conditions have been met, we can know a priori that any object we can experience is structured in terms of space, time, and the categories.

We can, however, also consider these same objects in abstraction from the epistemic conditions; to do so is to consider them as they are in themselves. And there are good reasons to so consider them. First, the contrast with things considered in themselves "underscores" the fallibility, finitude and subject-dependency of knowledge of appearances.[28] Second, the contrast "enables Kant to explain the errors of his predecessors."[29] And third, the freedom required for morality is possible only if human beings can be considered as things in themselves. But it must be the *same* things that are considered now as appearance, now as thing in itself, though we can only know them as appearance.

Allison's view thus shifts the attitude of the appearance between the poles of representation and thing in itself. Whereas the two world view takes the

---

[24] Allison, *KTI,* 10–13, 237–44; "Two Aspects," 156, 170. Prauss refers to the metaphysical view as "transcendent-metaphysical," *Problem der Dinge,* 9ff., 131, 136, 197, etc.

[25] *KTI,* 11.

[26] "Two Aspects," 156.

[27] "Two Aspects," 157; cf. *KTI,* 27.

[28] "Two Aspects," 157; *KTI,* 238.

[29] *KTI,* 237.

transcendental distinction to refer to two different realms, and identifies the appearance with the representation, the two aspect view construes the distinction as one between two different ways of *considering* one and the same object:[30] the result is to associate the appearance, not with the representation, but with the thing in itself. This realignment is designed to permit solutions for difficulties arising on the two world view, such as the three problems singled out above.

In his 1983 treatment, Allison takes the standard view of affection as holding that "the issue is whether the affecting object is an appearance, a thing in itself, or perhaps both"; but this analysis of the issue, he says, presupposes the two world view. On the two aspect view, the issue instead is only whether we require both "ways of conceiving" the object. Jacobi's objection, he says, concerns only empirical affection, and is quickly resolved by simply admitting this affection; the question is whether transcendental affection requires consideration of the same thing as it is in itself. Allison argues that it does: since the matter of cognition first acquires spatial form from the cognitive faculties, it cannot be itself spatial prior to their application. Then the thought of an object producing this matter cannot attribute spatiality to this object; it must thus consider the object as it is in itself. The entities referred to are all "describable in spatiotemporal terms"; but as part of the "material conditions of human cognition, they . . . must be considered as they are in themselves."[31] (Difficulties with Allison's position are discussed below.)

This resolution of the affection problem indicates how the other problems are to be resolved. The phenomenality problem seems resolved merely by the move to the two aspect view: if the same object which can be considered as appearance must also, to account for affection, be considered as it is in itself, this latter aspect would support the existence of, and constrain the arbitrariness of, the former.[32] The spatiality issue is a bit more involved, but the gist of it is that a thing could have a spatial aspect (appearance) and a nonspatial

---

[30] *KTI*, 8ff., 240ff.; "Two Aspects," 160f.

[31] *KTI*, 249ff. See "Two Aspects," 159: "[The objection that things in themselves are nothing at all] ignores the fact that, according to Kant's theory of sensibility, if an object is to be intuited it (or at least the material for thinking it) must first be given to the mind." See also *KTI*, 250: "Any reference to an object (in a transcendental context) as the cause or ground of our representations must, therefore, involve the thought (although certainly not the knowledge) of the object as it is in itself." Allison equates the thing in itself here with the transcendental object, a view with which I am in (almost) complete disagreement (cf. A253: "This [sc. the transcendental object] cannot be called the *noumenon*"). This position is however much less prominent in the 1987 discussion.

[32] *KTI*, 250: "Insofar as such entities are to function in a transcendental context as material conditions of human cognition, they cannot, without contradiction, be taken under their empirical description. This means that, in a purely methodological sense, they must be considered as they are in themselves. . . ."

aspect (thing in itself); though the latter would presumably support the former, it would not be spatial in any significant sense.[33]

3. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE TWO ASPECT VIEW

Allison's two aspect view is carefully crafted to provide a sympathetic interpretation of Kant's Transcendental Idealism, one which avoids the problems for the Critical philosophy arising on the two world view, and as such represents an advance over the latter's "textbook" reading. Unfortunately, a closer inspection reveals that Allison's own interpretation is compromised by serious textual and systematic problems.

The textual difficulties are perhaps the most striking. As noted above (and as Allison recognizes[34]), a central feature of the two world view is the identification of the appearance with the representation; the proponents of this view, from Jacobi on, have been able to point to a long list of passages supporting, and often quite simply stating, this identification.[35] Allison's two aspect view, by contrast, wants to associate the appearance with the thing in itself. Thus his two aspect view has at least *prima facie* an obligation to account for the passages apparently equating appearances with representations, in such a way that they no longer threaten the two aspect reading.

Allison's response, however, scarcely seems adequate. He acknowledges[36] that the "extremely frequent" passages in question are "responsible for the standard [two world] picture," and "unfortunate" or "discomforting"[37] for proponents of the two aspect view. He contends, however, that they do not actually say what they appear to say. In his 1983 treatment, he takes a particular passage, offers an alternative reading, and by implication generalizes this reading to the other passages.[38] *KdrV*, A490f./B518f. reads: ". . . All objects of any experience possible to us are nothing but appearances, that is, mere representations, which, in the manner in which they are represented, as extended beings, or as series of alterations, have no independent existence outside our thoughts." Allison takes the phrase "in the manner in which they are

---

[33] *KTI*, Ch. 5, esp. 111–14; "Two Aspects," 162f. Cf. also Ameriks, "Recent Work," 11.

[34] *KTI*, 4–5, 31, 247, 249; "Two Aspects," 159.

[35] The two editions of the first *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* contain the following passages in which the identification of appearance and representation is clear and unequivocal: *KdrV*, A101, A104, A109, A113, B164, A190/B236, A191/B236, A250, A369, A372, A372, A375, A377, A383, A386, A390, A391, A490/B518, A492/B520, A493/B521, A494/B523, A498/B527, A507/B535, A563/B591, A793/B821; *Prol.*, Ak. IV.288, IV.289, IV.292, IV.305, IV.307, IV.319, IV.341, IV.342. There are many other passages in which the identification is suggested, or in which it is the object (elsewhere equated with the appearance) that is identified with the representation.

[36] *KTI*, 26–27.

[37] *KTI*, 26, 251.

[38] *KTI*, 26f. Cf. 151f.

represented" as modifying, and thus rendering harmless, the phrase "appearances, that is, mere representations," by indicating that we are speaking of appearances *only insofar as* they are represented, and not merely identifying them with their representations. He then takes this passage as typical of the rest.

But, first, the suggested alternative reading even of this passage is questionable. The phrase "so wie sie vorgestellt werden" occurs within the scope of the following relative clause, and thus seems most naturally related to that material, the sense being: ". . . nothing but appearances (i.e., mere representations); these have no independent existence outside our thoughts insofar as they are represented as extended or in alteration." And second, even granting Allison his reading of this passage, the many other such passages (more than 30 in the first *Critique* and *Prolegomena* alone) seldom provide even this much opportunity for an alternative to the straightforward interpretation: the two paragraphs a few pages later at A493ff./B521ff., as well as similar passages at A250, A793/B821, and *Proleg.*, Ak. IV.288f. and 342, for instance, offer no such possibility. It is difficult indeed simply to wave off such flat statements as: "By the *transcendental idealism* of all appearances I understand the doctrine according to which we regard them [sc. these appearances] altogether as mere representations, and not as things in themselves. . . ."[39]

In his 1987 discussion, Allison again grants that passages equating appearances with "mere representations" encourage the standard reading; but this reading, he says, is mistaken. "The point of such locution is . . . to underscore the claim that the representation of an object . . . is only achieved through the unification of given representations . . . according to categorial rules." He continues, "This is, of course, the central claim of the Transcendental Analytic."[40] But this explanation again seems inadequate to explain the large number of the passages in question; and it seems scarcely plausible that the "central claim of the Transcendental Analytic" would need "underscoring" at all, and certainly not by a passage with a "real" meaning the opposite of the meaning it seems to wear on its face.

In short, any view which, like Allison's, separates the appearance from the representation must assume the obligation of explaining the passages which seem to identify them. Allison does not appear to have fulfilled this obligation.

The systematic problems derive largely from the other side of this realignment, viz., the alliance of the appearance with the thing in itself. Critics of the two aspect view point to a *prima facie* implausibility in the claim that structures as opposed as appearance and thing in itself—the first spatial, temporal,

[39] *KdrV*, A369.

[40] "Two Aspects," 159.

substantial, causal and interactive, the second none of these—could serve as aspects of *the same* underlying thing.

Allison attempts to defuse this entire line of criticism as "reflect[ing] an erroneous *metaphysical* . . . reading of the 'two aspect' view";[41] he holds, with Prauss, that the distinction "appearance—thing in itself" is not only not a distinction between two different *things*, the appearance and the thing in itself; it is not even a distinction between a thing considered as appearance and the same thing considered in itself. Rather it is a distinction between two *considerations* of the same thing, consideration-as-appearance and consideration-in-itself. The difference of the considerations requires us "to distinguish the character that these things reveal as appearing (e.g., their spatiotemporal properties) from the character that the *same* things are thought to possess when they are considered as they are in themselves, independently of the conditions under which they appear." Claims arising from these considerations, e.g., the nonspatiality of things in themselves, involve only "*methodological* directives . . . [which] serve to undermine the 'common assumption' of transcendental realism."[42]

This move, however, does not seem to eliminate the difficulty: we would expect the methodology's presuppositions concerning its objects to be consistent with each other. Normally, a consideration of a thing under some aspect or respect *A* would be vacuous if there is no sense in which the thing has, or is, *A:* I can consider the *Pietà* as a great work of art, a lump of marble, an expression of religious faith, or a valuable commodity, but to consider it as a rocket or as a mathematical formula is just to be mistaken. Thus if the two *considerations* are to be nonvacuous, we must ultimately deal with the *aspects* to which the considerations are directed, and hence with the original question, that of the sameness of the object having the two aspects.

Allison seems implicitly to grant this point in responding directly to Richard Aquila's critique[43] of his view as a two aspect view. Aquila's point, as Allison construes it, is that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is not between two ways of considering, but between two ways of existing. There are then two possibilities for the relation between these two ways: either

---

[41] "Two Aspects," 155f. (my emphasis).

[42] *KTI*, 240f. (emphasis added). Cf. "Two Aspects," 159f. Two curious features of Allison's treatment are his apparently question-begging injection of "same" before "object" at various points (*KTI*, 25 ln. 27, 27 ln. 12; "Two Aspects," 158 ln. −1), and his use of "the thing itself" as an entity apparently distinct both from the appearance and from the thing in itself, perhaps as the entity of which the latter two are both aspects. These will be discussed below.

[43] Richard E. Aquila, "Things in Themselves and Appearances: Intentionality and Reality in Kant," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 61 (1979): 293–308; a later version of this piece appears in *Representational Mind* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), 88–118. Allison's response is in "Two Aspects," 161–66.

the "in-itself" way is primary, or neither is primary. But the latter possibility is inconsistent, and the former amounts to a "two object" view after all. Aquila's original rationale for this last point, according to Allison, is that if things in themselves are primary, then to say that appearances are spatial and are *of* things in themselves is to say that things in themselves appear spatial, which violates noumenal ignorance. But, says Allison, this violation turns out to be only an "attenuated and harmless" one. Aquila's later version offers a rationale based on the problem of affection: If what exists as appearance is *of* what exists as thing in itself, the thing in itself must affect us causally, contrary to the Kantian restriction of causality to appearances. For Allison, this is just Jacobi's old affection problem, which, he says, "is certainly as much a [problem] for the 'two object' as for the 'two aspect' approach."[44] And above and beyond these specific points, Aquila's original premise—that the distinction is between two ways of existing—rests on very shaky grounds. His argument from the Antinomies can be given a much more plausible reading, and the textual passages containing "existing" are subject to a quite harmless interpretation, and are in any case far outnumbered by those referring to "considering."

But whatever the merits of his counterattack against Aquila, Allison has the burden of proof. It is not enough to find problems with Aquila's argument that appearances and things in themselves *cannot* be aspects of the same thing; rather, Allison has to show that they *can* be. And it seems, *prima facie*, that they cannot. We would not, for instance, accept the possibility of a round square on the suggestion that we distinguish methodologically the consideration of it as round from the consideration of it as square; we would want some demonstration that the two considerations are nonvacuous, and that the *same* thing can have both round and square aspects. Thus the original criticism remains unanswered: we need an explanation as to how the *same* thing can have both as-appearance and in-itself aspects, where these involve apparently contrary features.

The difficulty, I think, lies in the fact that the methodological or epistemological considerations concern the knowing subject, whereas the two aspect view concerns the object; and Allison's view of the relation between subject and object is unclear. He begins with the mind of the subject. He is careful to restrict the application of the epistemic conditions to *representations:* if a representation (or complex of representations) meets the epistemic conditions, it is objective, which is to say, it represents an object. If this means no more than that "epistemic conditions . . . determine what can count as an object . . . for

[44] "Two Aspects," 163. Allison's *tu quoque* here may work against Aquila's *sympathetic* two object approach; but as most proponents of the two world view are opponents of transcendental idealism, the affection "problem" is not a problem for them, but is just one more nail in Kant's coffin.

the human mind,"[45] that is, that *we hold* a representation to represent an object once it has met the epistemic conditions, there could be little objection: we could *take* a representation as having an object even if there *are* no objects at all. But an object that exists only in the sense that we hold a representation to refer to it depends upon our representation, and thus can scarcely have an in-itself aspect. Accordingly, Allison slides from this notion of object to one in which the object does not "exist in the mind in the manner of Berkeleyan ideas or the sense-data of phenomenalists," but instead is "*what* we intuit (the phenomenal object) [rather than] . . . our intuition of it," it is the "something that appears," the "thing itself."[46] The independence thus acquired is supposed to allow the object to have both an as-appearance aspect, consisting in the features that permit it to serve as the object of the representation meeting the epistemic conditions, and an in-itself aspect as well.[47] But it is difficult to reconcile the apparent independence of an in-itself aspect with the apparent subject-dependence of an as-appearance aspect.

When we consider the possible dependence relations between subjective representations and their objects, we seem to find three main types. The first type may be termed illusion, where the representations are in no way dependent upon the objects: representations which meet the epistemic conditions are *deemed by the subject* to refer to objects; but there are, or may be, no objects. This possibility seems to be just a version of Berkeleyan phenomenalism; as this would permit no in-itself aspect, it would presumably be rejected by Allison out of hand.[48]

The second could be called simply idealism, in a core sense of the term: the objects are dependent on the representations, in that they exist *by virtue of* the fact that their representations meet the epistemic conditions; as a result, the ontological conditions *just are* the epistemic conditions. Though Allison admits to "a certain idealistic commitment," he is at pains to avoid this option—the

---

[45] "Two Aspects," 157.

[46] "Two Aspects," 157–59, cf. *KTI*, 10–13.

[47] A certain difficulty arises here, structurally reminiscent of Aquila's analysis. Allison sometimes speaks as if as-appearance and in-itself are aspects of some further entity, an underlying "thing itself," rather as mind and body are attributes of an underlying substance for Spinoza ("Two Aspects," 158f.: "We are forced to distinguish between things as they appear, that is, as they are sensibly represented, and the same things as they are in themselves, independently of the conditions of their sensible representation"). But sometimes the underlying thing seems to be simply identical with the in-itself aspect, so that as-appearance seems to "inhere" in in-itself as accidents inhere in substance (e.g., *KTI*, 13: the "conditions of the possibility of the things themselves" are conditions "of things as they are in themselves"; see also the emphasis on the passage holding that if there are appearances, there must be something that appears, "Two Aspects," 159.). The latter version seems to predominate, however, and I will assume this picture in what follows.

[48] See "Two Aspects," 157; *KTI*, 30ff.

objects again could scarcely possess an in-itself aspect as Allison understands it—and criticizes Aquila for a similar view.[49] I shall return to this later.

The third possibility, and the only one I can see which Allison could embrace, may be called the filtration model. This model envisages a range of "things themselves" which are completely independent of representations; these things exist by virtue of meeting the ontological conditions, whatever these may be, and the features which enable them to meet these ontological conditions make up their in-itself aspect. Some of these things may have additional features as well, features which are relevant to the possibility of their being represented; these features constitute a potential as-appearance aspect. Thus before any representations are brought into consideration at all, there exist two different kinds of "things themselves," those lacking, and those possessing, representation-enabling features. Only the latter are candidate objects of a subject's representations; but all these things are what they are, and possess the features they possess, regardless of whether there exist any representations, or any knowing subjects, at all.

Now consider the knowing subject. Its representations must meet the epistemic conditions if they are to represent an object, conditions involving space, time, and the categories. When a representation representing (accurately, one supposes) the representation-enabling features of a thing satisfies the epistemic conditions, the representation has the object, and the thing represented has an as-appearance aspect. In this way, the epistemic conditions establish reference to some, but not all, of the totality of things; the ones selected make up the world of appearance. This means the epistemic conditions work like a filter: they first filter out the things lacking representation-enabling features entirely; they then filter out those which, though possessing such features, are not capable of being united into a whole world-picture with others. Only the things that survive this double filtration may serve as the objects of our representations. We know that these in fact all possess representation-enabling features, i.e., spatiotemporal and categorial determination, because they were *selected* by the filtration only insofar as they possessed these features. But their possession of these features is not the *result* of the epistemic conditions; rather they possessed these features from the outset, and would continue to possess them if there were no representations, no epistemic conditions, no conscious subjects at all.

The filtration model, then, views the objects of our representations as filtered out of, or selected from, a totality of preexisting, mind-independent things. All these things possess in-itself features meeting the "ontological" conditions of existing; the ones selected as our objects possess in addition as-

[49] *KTI*, 11, "Two Aspects," 156; critique of Aquila, "Two Aspects," 161.

appearance features, since otherwise they would not have been selected in the first place. But even the as-appearance features belong to the things independently of representation; they merely serve as a criterion of selection. To think a thing in itself, then, is to abstract from the latter features and concentrate on the former.[50]

To summarize the situation so far: Allison attempts to evade the charge that the two aspect view cannot account for the sameness of the object having the two aspects by construing the aspects as ways of considering the same object. But this move does not alleviate the charge, since nonvacuous considerations presuppose objects possessing the aspects to be considered. The relationship of the subject to these dual-aspect objects turns out to follow a filtration model. But since the original rationale for the two aspect model was its ability to solve a series of problems arising on the two world model, we now need to examine these problems in the light of the filtration model.

The first of these is the phenomenality problem. Here the filtration model seems, if anything, to strengthen the solution. The unperceived persistence of phenomenal objects can apparently be explained by the inclusion of an in-itself aspect, one capable of supporting the object even when no actual perceptual experience of it is taking place.

There are difficulties, however, with spatiality, in particular what may be called the isomorphism problem. This problem, according to Allison,[51] is due to the assumption that the two aspect view requires an in-itself aspect for every appearing object (though not every object with an in-itself aspect must be capable of appearing). But this would mean that, since objects as appearances are *individuated* by their spatiotemporal characteristics, so would be the underlying thing in its in-itself aspect, contrary to the Kantian doctrine of the nonspatiality of things in themselves. Allison's response is to appeal again to the methodological character of his two aspect view, holding that on this construal, there is no isomorphism requirement; he cites passages to show that Kant requires no isomorphism.

But first, the two passages he appeals to can easily be given an alternative reading. Second, Allison's dismissal[52] (as belonging to another "point of view") of the case clearly calling for isomorphism—the human being whose as-

[50] Indirect evidence that Allison's view presupposes a kind of filtration model is provided by his defense of his view in "Two Aspects" against just the difficulties which arise on the filtration model. In addition, the notion that the consideration of things in themselves merely abstracts from the conditions of appearances (Kenneth F. Rogerson, "Kantian Ontology," *Kant-Studien* 84 [1993]: 22–23) seems to me also to presuppose a filtration model.

[51] "Two Aspects," 166–70.

[52] "Two Aspects," 168: "There is no problem providing truth conditions for identity claims concerning members of the phenomenal and noumenal domains because there are no such claims. At least there are none from the theoretical point of view, which alone concerns us here."

appearance aspect (determined object of natural science) calls for an individuated in-itself aspect (as free agent under practical reason)—seems unreasonable: one of the central purposes of the appearance—thing in itself distinction to begin with centers on just this case, where Kant needs to "deny knowledge to leave room for faith."[53] And finally, as argued above, a (nonvacuous) methodological distinction of this kind presupposes a concomitant one in the object, following the filtration model.

This model allows only those objects to appear that are individuated by spatiotemporal features of their as-appearance aspect. The question is whether there is a further possibility of individuation, i.e., whether the same thing is individuated (1) by independent ontological features as well, (2) by more basic ontological features underlying the epistemological ones of space and time, or (3) by no additional ontological features. In Case 1, it would be unacceptably fortuitous that totally independent features should produce the identical individuation. In Case 3, where the only individuation is spatiotemporal, we would have to say that those things in themselves possessing an as-appearance aspect are spatial, and those not possessing this aspect are not individuated at all. In Case 2, things in themselves would be *virtually* spatial, as providing some grounds for the spatial features, and perhaps this is the "attenuated and harmless" sense Allison admits to;[54] but no explanation is offered as to the nature of this "grounding."

Allison's proposed solution to the affection problem has serious difficulties quite independently of the filtration model, though problems associated with it appear here as well. Allison, following Adickes, first distinguishes empirical from transcendental affection; he considers Jacobi to be dealing only with the former.[55] He then assserts that this kind of affection is not problematic at all, on the extraordinary grounds that at the empirical level "the human mind is itself considered as part of nature,"[56] hence capable of ordinary causal interaction with material objects. Since Kant repeatedly asserts that nature is the sum of appearances, and that these appearances are

---

[53] *KdrV*, Bxxx. It is of course always possible that nonhuman objects are not individuated in themselves at all, a possibility suggested by Allison's tendency to consider the notion of things in themselves to be correlated with that of the Transcendental Object (*KTI*, 242–46). But this Spinozistic picture will not work for human agents: morality for Kant requires individuality, and is scarcely compatible with agents construed as regions of an oversoul.

[54] "Two Aspects," 162f.

[55] *KTI*, 249, note 25. There seems to be a prima facie difficulty in distinguishing an empirical and a transcendental *side* to affection, since the core of the problem seems to be the transition between the empirical and transcendental side of the knowing process: the question is how spatiotemporal empirical objects can affect a nonspatiotemporal, and hence nonempirical, mind.

[56] *KTI*, 249.

one and all spatial,[57] this would seem to make the mind itself spatial, perhaps identifying it with the brain—a complication that seems foreign to the spirit of the Critical philosophy (to put it mildly).

At the transcendental level, Allison holds that since the material on which the mind imposes spatiality cannot itself be spatial prior to this imposition, the object producing this material cannot be considered spatial either, and so by elimination must be considered as in-itself.[58] But first, there seems to be no reason to grant that a spatial entity cannot produce a nonspatial material, since on Allison's own position the reverse holds, when the nonspatial mind produces the spatiality of the empirical object. And second, this position seems to involve a reversion to the two world view. It was argued above that Allison's considerations, to be nonvacuous, require underlying aspects of a single object construed on the filtration model; then the "imposition" of spatiality on received material to form an objective representation can only amount to a filtering out of objects lacking the appropriate spatial features as prospective referent for the representation in question. The object that survives the filter has an in-itself aspect, but it has an as-appearance aspect as well, including the very spatial features imposed on the material in forming the objective representation; and it has always had these features, even before the representation was formed. Thus it is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that the thing underlying the two aspects is spatial, independently of the knowing subject, without splitting the aspects into two objects, and returning to the two world picture. And in fact, Allison's discussion sounds like classic two world theology: a thing in itself produces material for the mind to structure spatially into an appearance, now identified with the representation.

In sum, Allison's view, while proposing solutions to the central difficulties arising on the two world view, suffers from both textual and systematic difficulties. The former derive from his failure to account for passages identifying appearances and representations, as on the two world view. As for the latter, the attempt to construe the appearance—thing in itself distinction as *merely* methodological fails, in view of the "ontological" implications of the methodol-

---

[57] Kant also speaks of inner, i.e., nonspatial, appearances in certain contexts (e.g., *KdrV*, B68); but when nature is equated with a sum of appearances, the context makes clear that outer, spatial appearances are meant (since otherwise the categories, especially that of reciprocity, could not unite them). See *KdrV*, B163, A418n./B446n.; *Prol.*, Ak. IV.318; and especially *KdU*, Ak. V.386, where Kant explicitly characterizes nature as the sum of *outer* appearances.

[58] *KTI*, 250. Allison here, as elsewhere, equates the thing in itself with the transcendental object, a view which, as noted above, I consider a basic interpretational error. (*KdrV*, A494f./B522f., cited by Allison on p. 251 as evidence for the identification of the thing in itself with the transcendental object, should more appropriately be read as equating the transcendental object with the world. Cf., however, A45/B63, cited below, where "transzendentales Objekt" is clearly used to refer to the thing in itself.)

ogy. Once these are made explicit, the view turns out to employ a filtration model of the relation of the representation to its object; this gives rise to the problem of isomorphism, which in turn reintroduces the spatiality problem. And the more general question raised by Aquila, that of how the two aspects can be aspects of the *same* object, remains unanswered.

4. THE TWO PERSPECTIVE VIEW

The two world view was characterized above as associating the appearance with the representation; the two aspect view as allying it with the thing in itself. The inadequacies of these views suggest that a better way needs to be found of determining the role of the appearance with respect to the representation and to the thing in itself. I want to suggest that this can be accomplished in terms of a difference of *perspectives,* one derived from Allison's own work.

Allison quite rightly contrasts Kant's position with those of his Rationalist and Empiricist predecessors by terming the Critical philosophy an anthropocentric (man's eye) view, as compared to the theocentric (God's eye) view utilized by the earlier positions.[59] But this contrast can also provide a basis for an interpretation of the appearance–thing in itself distinction. In brief, the Kantian theory, on this interpretation, takes appearances as objects seen from the human perspective; things in themselves are objects seen from the divine perspective. At the empirical level I assume these perspectives to coincide: when I look out the window and see a tree, I assume there "really is" a tree there, i.e., that God sees (or would see) the tree just as I do. It is only upon reflection at the transcendental level that I recall past mistakes, entertain Cartesian doubts, and recognize that the tree is an appearance (i.e., an object in the human perspective), and that in itself (i.e., from the divine perspective) it may be quite different, or not exist at all.[60]

The recognition that I cannot appeal directly to God's knowledge to determine whether there is an object corresponding to my representation requires me to find another, indirect method of establishing this objectivity: the representation must meet *internal* criteria of objectivity involving its "fitting in" with other objective representations. So far, this view is not notably different from Locke's. But whereas for Locke the object of these representations is still this

---

[59] *KTI,* 14–25; cf. especially the section on Leibniz's theocentric construal of truth, 20f., and the references to Gurwitsch's discussion of this issue.

[60] Cf. *KdrV,* A45/B63: at the empirical level we differentiate the rainbow from the rain drops (or the sunrise from the earth's rotation) as appearance from thing in itself; the latter is the empirical object. At the transcendental level the empirical object is the appearance, the thing in itself (here, transcendental object) is unknown. (I use the terms "appearance" and "thing in itself" in the transcendental sense unless otherwise noted.)

object "in itself," i.e., the object in God's perspective, for Kant this object is the appearance, an object within the human perspective.[61]

Thus on this view both the representation and its (empirical) object fall within the human perspective. The thing in itself belongs to another perspective entirely. This prevents appearance and thing in itself from being Allisonian "aspects" of the same thing—to which perspective would this underlying "thing" belong?—and thus rules out at least a straightforward two aspect view. As a result, the relationship between the representation and its object cannot follow the filtration model. The relationship instead must consist in that "idealism" noted in the previous section, according to which the empirical object arises from the representation.

There is good textual evidence that this is Kant's position. To begin with, the central precept that "the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience"[62] seems *prima facie* a statement of this very position. In addition, whenever Kant addresses the question of the relation of the representation to its object (a question of concern to Kant as early as 1772[63]) he holds the former to make the latter possible.[64]

But this idealism must be distinguished from the phenomenalistic idealism of Berkeley. For though the appearance, as the object, can only "exist" or "be real" within the human perspective as the result of applying objectivity criteria to representations, this object is not itself identical with these representations (again, despite passages apparently to the contrary[65]). Rather the appearance must be a kind of intentional object, one generated or "projected" through the representations themselves.[66]

An obvious disadvantage of this view is that the empirical objects, and the

---

[61] *KdrV*, A26/B42: "Accordingly, we can speak of space, of extended beings, etc. only from the standpoint of a human being."

[62] *KdrV*, A158/B197.

[63] Letter to Herz, 21 Feb. 1772, Ak. X.130: "On what ground rests the relation of what we call representation in us to the object?"

[64] *KdrV*, Bxvi–xvii, A92/B124, A197/B242.

[65] Thus the view espoused here takes over from Allison the burden of providing an account of these passages. A sketch of this account is given below.

[66] The "intentional object" view of appearances is found in Prauss (see *Einführung in die Erkenntnistheorie* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980], §19); in Aquila (*Representational Mind*, 21–25, 99–110); and more recently in Ermanno Bencivenga (*Kant's Copernican Revolution* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987], 80–118 and elsewhere). The model comes from Husserl, who modified Brentano's term in such a way that the mental contents or acts "point to" the object, but do not contain it as a constituent. See Herbert Spiegelberg, "Der Begriff der Intentionalität in der Scholastik, bei Brentano und bei Husserl," *Philosophische Hefte* (edited by Maximilian Beck, Prague) 5 (1936): 75–91. For the notion of projection, see Gerd Buchdahl, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1969; rpt. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1988), 506–509, 661.

natural world which they comprise, can change: if the objects, and thus the world, are projected according to which representations we term objective, then if we change our mind about the objective representations, we change the objects and change the world. This is what happens when we discover an error or when a later scientific theory replaces an earlier one. But in fact we have no option here. *At any given time* the object as appearance must be "empirically real" so long as we restrict consideration to the human perspective; for we have access to nothing "more real" with which to contrast it. It is only when we move to the transcendental level, and contrast this appearance with a thinkable but unknowable thing in itself (i.e., an object as God would see it), that we take the possibility of revision into account and consider the appearance as ideal.

The equally obvious advantage is that on this view Allison's "ontological" conditions of the existence of empirical objects *just are* the epistemic conditions of the objectivity of representations, due to the projected status of the objects.[67] The absence of an external criterion for the objectivity of representations requires us to search for internal objectivity criteria for representations, which are then simultaneously the ontological or existential criteria of the empirically real objects themselves. The question which arises next is: what are these criteria, and under what conditions and circumstances do I apply them to constitute the empirical objects? This question, under the restriction to the human perspective, is the beginning of transcendental philosophy.

There remains the question of the nature and role of the thing in itself on this two perspective view. The two world and two aspect views agree in taking the worlds or aspects as parallel. The two world view considers both worlds from the outside, and usually takes things in themselves as the real world. The two aspect view sees two parallel ways of considering an underlying object, though priority is given to the appearance side.

On the view proposed here, however, the relationship between the two sides is quite different. The notion of perspectives indeed suggests a kind of parallelism between the way God looks at things on the one hand, and the way we look at them on the other. But we cannot acquire the distance from the two perspectives required for a consideration of them as parallel. For as humans, we are hopelessly contained within the human perspective, and can only think what the divine perspective might be like; but even this thinking is done from within the human perspective. We *conceive* the divine perspective to be inde-

[67] See *KdrV*, A247/B303: "[The understanding's] principles are merely principles of the exposition of the appearances, and the proud name of an ontology, which presumptuously claims to provide synthetic cognitions a priori of things in general (e.g. the principle of causality) in a systematic doctrine, must give way to the modest name of a mere analytic of pure understanding."

pendent of human experience. But our *conception* of it is not. Rather it is only as a response to developments within the human perspective that we appeal to this perspective at all, that is, we *think* things in themselves only when we have run into difficulties with appearances.[68] The human perspective is the only perspective to which we have access; the divine perspective is one we conjure up in thought when we reflect on past mistakes and the posssibility of future ones, and think what it might be like to know all about something, once and for all.

Granted, this position appears initially to be just backwards. The traditional view is the one out of which the two world view arises, i.e., that the way things appear to us is the result of the way they (and we) are in themselves, that reality (as God sees it) is prior to appearance (as we see it). But this position views the knowledge situation from "outside"; that is, it assumes a God's eye view which it cannot in fact share. The view proposed here starts from within the human knower, and the dependence is the reverse: the *conception* of things in themselves is indeed that of a world prior to and determinant of human experience; but this conception is itself built upon human experience, and arises in answer to its needs. Hence Kant's emphasis on our ability, indeed our requirement, to "think" things in themselves, and his use of the term "noumena," with its built-in reference to "nous," for these thought-objects.[69] Hence too Kant's repeated reference to a natural inclination to go *beyond* possible experience, implying that the path to the noumenal passes through the phenomenal first.[70] We cannot know what "absolute reality" would be like "from outside," independently of human experience; we can only begin with human experience and *think* (not know) what might lie behind it. The divine perspective does not lie parallel to (or even superior to) the human; rather it derives from the latter.

Textual support for the two perspective view's construal of things in themselves can be found in the section on phenomena and noumena.[71] The notion of an appearance, says Kant, appeals to the notion of an object in itself. Appearances are beings of sense (phenomena), things in themselves are beings of understanding or thought (noumena). Properly speaking, the latter are for us undetermined, since they are not objects of sense-intuition, and both empirical concepts and categories determine only sensible objects. But

---

[68] For instance, we cannot *know* the source of our representations' origination and diversity, but we are driven to *think* one: a supersensible one only God could "see."

[69] Though the extent to which, and the sense in which, things in themselves and noumena coincide may be debated, textual evidence places them close enough for present purposes. See *KdrV*, B306f. and passim; B423n.; *Entdek.*, Ak. VIII.208f. and n.; etc.

[70] *KdrV*, B21f.; cf. also Ax, Bxxivff., A235f./B294f., etc. etc.; *Proleg.* Ak. IV.362, etc.

[71] *KdrV*, B306–309. Cf. also Bxxvi, note.

we tend to think of objects generally as determined, as falling under some concept or other; and this leads us to think of noumena as objects of nonsensible, i.e., intellectual, intuition, which in some way allows their determination. Intellectual intuition, however, is possible only for God.[72] Thus things in themselves as determinate are things as God would see them, what I have called objects in the divine perspective. Kant refers to these as noumena in the positive sense. But since intellectual intuition is completely beyond our grasp, so too is the determinateness of things in themselves (i.e., the categories do not apply to them), and they remain—for us—only "thinkable" in general, or noumena in the negative sense. "[The noumenon] is not a particular *intelligible object* for our understanding, but rather an understanding to which it could belong is itself a problem."[73]

5. PROBLEMS AND RESOLUTIONS

The two aspect view was developed to provide solutions to problems arising on the two world view; but as I have tried to show above, it involves serious difficulties of its own. If, now, the two perspective view is to be preferred as a sympathetic alternative, it must be able to resolve the two world view's problems while avoiding the difficulties involved in the two aspect view. Space considerations prevent a full discussion of these issues, but I will try to indicate how the systematic and textual problems may be addressed.

To begin with, the phenomenality and affection problems may be considered together as two sides of the same problem, that of the status and origination of the empirical object. On the current view the empirical object is an appearance, construed as an intentional object, which is constituted through the representation intending it; this intending is usually construed as a kind of "projection," as in Buchdahl. The difficulty is that under this contrual, the object seems unable to exist when the representation through which it is projected is no longer being entertained in the mind: like the tree in Berkeley's quad, it seems it cannot persist unperceived, and no God is available to sustain it between perceptions. Nor can Allison's in-itself aspect serve this function, for on the current interpretation, this aspect has been banished to God's perspective. But the difficulty only arises, I think, as the result of a misunderstanding of the "constitution" of the empirical object as analogous with a kind of simple projection, and can be resolved by correcting this misunderstanding.

The simple projection model of constitution takes the relation between representation and object as analogous to that between a slide and the image it projects. Just as the existence of the image depends upon the presence of the

[72] *KdrV*, B72, B145; cf. B135, B138f.

[73] *KdrV*, A256/B311.

slide in the projector, the object exists only so long as its representation is being entertained in the mind: it cannot exist unperceived. On this model, the screen upon which the image is projected is blank except when a projection is actually taking place. Suppose, now, we consider the screen to be *engraved* by the projected image, rather the way photographic paper is impressed with the image thrown by the negative. It would still be the case that in the absence of *any* light, we would see nothing on the screen. But we no longer need the slide actually present in the projector to see the image: a simple white light will do. The engraved image exists between illuminations in the sense that we can return to it again and again, merely by turning on the light. A new projection might serve to modify the engraving, filling in undetermined areas and correcting mistaken ones; in this way, different slides at different times could contribute to the same image.

Let us now consider the representation–object relation in terms of the engraving model rather than the simple projection model. The empirical object is still constituted through perception. But its persistence between perceptions need not depend on an in-itself aspect or correlate (which has in any event been relegated to a different, and subsequent, perspective). Rather, the sense of unperceived persistence is that we can *return again* to the object whenever we wish. The ability to return to the object opens up a field of possibilities for the temporality of the representation–object relation. The first is that representations occurring in the mind at one time can contribute to the constitution of objects appearing in the world at a different time. A simple such case involves my recalling a representation from last December and recognizing it now, in June, as representing the same tree; this allows me to determine the tree to be deciduous.[74] The uniting of a past representation with a present one to constitute a present object, as a kind of paradigm case, illustrates the engraving model's principle virtue: that of freeing the time of the object from the time of the constituting representations. We can go on to constitute a tree existing at some time in the past out of present (and recent) representations whose times of occurrence in the mind differ significantly from the time of the constituted tree.

This gives rise to a second possibility. Not only can representations at different times constitute an object at a given time; they can constitute different times for the same object. This is to unite an object with its past (and prospective future); it is to constitute an object as *diachronic*. The simple en-

[74] This recollection (reproduction) and recognition serve the functions provided by the second and third parts of the A-Deduction's Threefold Synthesis (*KdrV*, A97–105); see the discussion below of the changes between the A and B editions of the first *Critique*, in connection with the textual difficulties.

graving model is inadequate as it stands for expressing the diachronicity of constituted objects (as is the notion of a world-picture). But we can understand an extended sense of the engraving model (and of "world-picture") to include objects' histories. A final possibility would be to consider all such diachronous objects to constitute parts of a world-whole.

Thus the simple projection model restricts the object's time to that of its constitution; the (extended) engraving model dissolves this restriction. Representations present in the mind at one time can serve to constitute objects with a different temporal position. These objects are constituted into a single world picture together with their pasts and prospective futures: the green oak in the quad was smaller ten years ago; it is expected to be golden in October and bare in December. And in fact, it may well be the case that *no* stage of the constituted object is contemporaneous with its constitution: what Allison calls "causal routes"[75] allow twentieth-century natural historians to include dinosaurs and Neanderthals among the empirical objects of their world picture.

The extended engraving model, by freeing the constituted object from the time of constitution, also yields a solution to the problem of affection. Jacobi asked how an appearance which arose as a result of sensory affection could be the agent of this affection: it would have to exercise the affection before it ever existed.[76] But the current view assumes that we may constitute objects into a world-picture extending beyond the here and now, not only in space, but in time as well (i.e., into the past and future). We may then analyze affection into two moments, the empirical interaction of the object with the knower's body, and the "trans-pineal" interaction between the mind and the body of the knower. The second moment is supersensible, as Kant makes clear, and is not susceptible to empirical explanation.[77] But the problem seems to remain: the object must have physically interacted with the physical body of the knower prior to any trans-pineal interaction, hence prior to any constitution. This view, however, assumes the simple projection model, where the time of the object must be the same as the time of the constitution. On the engraving model, the problem vanishes. The object is constituted into a world-picture including past and future, as *having just interacted with* the body of the knower.

In sum, the problem of affection only arises on the assumption that the time of the object is the same as the time of its constitution, as on the simple projection model. But our world-picture, e.g., in natural history, contains objects constituted long after they had departed from the scene. Thus when we see that it is not just the substance and qualities of an object that are

---

[75] "Two Aspects," 166.

[76] Jacobi, *David Hume*, 303–307.

[77] E.g., *KdrV*, B427.

constituted, but its spatial and temporal attributes as well, there is no difficulty in constituting the past of an object, including its past interaction with the knower's body on which the constitution was based. Granted, the relationship between the time of empirical events and that of such supersensible relations as trans-pineal interaction remains problematic; but this need not be resolved to eliminate Jacobi's affection problem.

The isomorphism problem connected with the spatiality issue concerns the alleged necessity for an in-itself object or aspect for every appearance: if this necessity is granted, then, since appearances are individuated by their spatial features, so would be apparently their in-itself correlates, contrary to Kantian doctrine. On the current view, however, the thing in itself is only something I think God would "see." When I perceive a tree, and recognize that I could be mistaken, I wonder on reflection whether it is "really there," i.e., whether God too sees the tree, and sees it as I do. When I do this, I *think* a thing in itself for the appearance, and it is only in this sense that there "is" a thing in itself for every appearance. It is true that we normally think of things as individuated, an individuated tree in itself correlated with an individuated appearing tree; but Kant only requires individuation (through space and time) for appearances. God's perspective may consist of infinite monads individuated by complete concepts, as in Leibniz,[78] of objects rather like our own, of one Spinozistic substance, or of something else altogether. But our thinking of a tree in God's perspective as *one individuated* tree in itself correlated with our appearing tree is a function of our own requirements for intelligibility, and is not binding on God.

This result may appear too weak; after all, the question was not whether one could *think* a thing in itself for a given appearance, but whether there "really is" one. But the "really is" here can only mean: as we think God would know it. And without direct access to God's knowledge, we can only form, on the basis of what we know, conjectures as to what God knows. Thus the two perspective interpretation gives as good an answer to the isomorphism question as the question permits.[79]

These considerations can be applied to the spatiality problem generally. The problem concerns how spatial appearances could be *of* nonspatial things in themselves, where the very individuality of an appearance depends on its spatial properties. But this way of stating the problem assumes a parallel and independent existence for the as-appearance and in-itself aspects (or worlds). On the two perspective view, the in-itself perspective is subsequent to and built upon the as-appearance perspective. Spatiality fulfills a requirement for dis-

[78] As Kant seems to assume: cf. *KdrV*, A263f./B319f.

[79] Cf. Ameriks, "Recent Work," 10.

cursive human knowledge (i.e., the individuation of objects); but there is no such requirement for God's intellectual intuition. Hence it is not necessary for a thing in itself to be spatial in order for us to think this thing in itself as correlated with an appearance. As a result, it would be gratuitous to attribute spatiality to things in themselves.[80]

The textual problems plaguing the two aspect view are problems for the two perspective view as well: the latter shares with the former the differentiation of appearances from representations, despite the substantial list of passages which seem to identify them. The resolution of this difficulty is too involved to be fully explicated here, but I shall try to show the direction such a resolution would take.

This direction is suggested by the list of problem passages itself:[81] although many of these passages appear only in the first *Critique*'s A edition (1781), in the 1783 *Prolegomena*, and in both A and B editions, there is only one which appears only in B (1787). Thus an interpretation according to which Kant modified his position around 1783 need only explain away the one passage (though the retention of problem passages in B must be accounted for as well). Can support be found for this contention?

I think that it can. A second significant change between 1781 and 1787 is the disappearance of the Transcendental Object = X; this entity, so prominent in the A edition, appears not at all in the *Prolegomena*, nor in the rewritten passages of the B-*Critique* (though again, the retention of A-edition passages containing it needs to be explained).[82] A third change is the elimination of the A-Deduction's threefold synthesis. And all these changes, I believe, can be plausibly related to the new concern, in the wake of the Garve-Feder review, to distinguish Transcendental Idealism from Berkeleyan idealism, a concern most evident in the *Prolegomena* but also prominent in the new material of the B-*Critique*.

The A-edition begins with representations as "modifications of the mind,"[83] and combines these (via the syntheses of apprehension, reproduc-

---

[80] Another way of putting this is to say that spatiality should not be treated as a kind of empirical property of an everyday object, which the object can have without our knowing it. Rather spatiality is to be considered as a kind of theoretical property, attributed to entities in answer to systematic needs (here, individuation), rather in the way we say an electron has charge. But where no need exists, it is otiose to attribute such a property to the object (an electron has no color).

[81] See Note 35 above.

[82] There are some twenty references to the Transcendental Object in the A edition, some of which are preserved in B; but there are no references in B which are not also in A, nor are there any in the *Prolegomena*.

[83] *KdrV*, A34/B50, A50/B74, A97, A197/B242. Cf. letter to Beck of 4.9.92, Ak. XI.395; Refl. 5636, Ak. XVIII.267.

tion, and recognition) into an appearance; the appearance then refers to (is "of") the Transcendental Object = X. To the extent that the appearance is *composed of* representations, it must itself be a representation, and is so identified in the problem passages. But this view in effect splits the appearance between the "subjective" and "objective" poles within the human perspective. The representations synthesized make up the appearance's "moment of difference," that which distinguishes it from other appearances; its reference to the Transcendental Object constitutes its "moment of objectivity" which it shares with every other appearance.[84] When Kant identifies the appearance with the empirical object, he is emphasizing the moment of objectivity; when he identifies it with the representation he is stressing the moment of difference, and there is no question that for Kant, the differentiation of empirical objects from one another derives from the representations given in sense-experience.

But it is one thing to say the differences *derive* from sense-representations, and another to say they *reside* there. And it is the latter formulation that gives rise to the charges of Berkeleyanism. A given representation as a "modification of the mind" is a one-time mental occurrence, and as such cannot subsist without the mind which has it; that is, it cannot exist unperceived. Then if the appearance is no more than a complex of such representations, it too cannot exist unperceived.

Now in fact Kant's representations cannot all be simple Berkeleyan ideas, for they persist unperceived at least in the sense of existing between occasions of reproduction and recognition. But the characterization of appearances as representations can easily mislead us so that we adopt Berkeleyan attitudes towards them. Kant seems already to have seen this difficulty in the A-edition. His discomfort is expressed at the beginning (in A) of the Second Analogy: "What this word [sc. *object*] ought to mean for appearances, . . . insofar as they . . . designate an object, requires a deeper investigation. . . . Here, what lies in successive apprehension is considered as representation, but the appearance, despite the fact that it is nothing more than a sum of these representations, is considered to be their object. . . ."[85] In the B-edition, Kant moved the moment of difference, and thus the entire appearance, to the objective pole of the human perspective. As a result, the differences among the objects still *derive* ultimately from one-time representations, but they *reside* in the object constituted thereby. The appearance is thus the object of representations, and not, in the same sense, itself a representation. The Transcendental Object = X

---

[84] *KdrV*, A104, A253. Cf. A109: "The pure concept of this transcendental object (which really is always the same = X for all our cognitions) is that which can bring about relation to an object, i.e. objective reality, for all our empirical concepts in general."

[85] *KdrV*, A189ff./B234ff. (my emphasis).

becomes superfluous (thought its ghost remains in the notion of *natura formaliter spectata*[86]). And the syntheses of reproduction and recognition (and hence the structure of the threefold synthesis) are no longer needed to reanimate past representations for the constitution of a present object, since the determinations they occasioned are "engraved" into the appearances, now part of the objective pole's world-picture: to retrieve them, one need only illuminate this picture.[87]

On this view, the retention of many of the problematic A-edition passages in B may be due to the fact that they are not actually wrong, but only misleading. But it may also be due simply to the exigency of more pressing concerns.

Finally, there remains the single new passage in B equating appearances with representations to be explained. It occurs in a summary paragraph at the end of §26 of the B-Deduction, prefaced by the remark, "Here is the solution to the riddle [of nature's necessary agreement with the categories]." Kant contrasts the lawfulness [*Gesetzmäßigkeit*] that things in themselves would have with that of appearances: "The lawfulness of things in themselves would apply to them necessarily even outside an understanding which cognizes them. But appearances are only representations of things which, with respect to what they may be in themselves, are unknown."[88] It seems clear, to me at least, that Kant here uses "representations of things" globally in contrast to things in themselves, that is, to contrast the human with the divine perspective. He is not using "representations" specifically within the human perspective as contrasted with or identified with appearances as the empirical object within this perspective.

6. CONCLUSION

The two world view maps Kant's three entities—representation, appearance, and thing in itself—onto the two entities of the Lockean position by first separating appearance and thing in itself into two distinct worlds or realms; it then identifies, on the basis of ample textual evidence, the appearance with the representation. The fleeting nature of the representation is thus attributed to the appearance as well, with disastrous results for the Critical philosophy with respect to spatiality, phenomenality, and affection.

The two aspect view also starts with the Lockean position, but separates the appearance from the representation and attaches it to the thing in itself: it takes the appearance as a "way of considering" a thing, of which another "way

[86] *KdrV*, B165.

[87] An early version of the interpretational move underlying the solution proposed here can be found in my "The Transcendental Deduction from A to B," in Robinson, ed., *The B-Deduction*, supplement to the *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25 (1987): 45–61.

[88] *KdrV*, B164.

of considering" it is as thing in itself. The first line of defense of this view is that most of the classical problems simply do not arise here, since the view is metaphysical rather than ontological; the second is that, even if two considerations turn out to yield two aspects, these can cogently be considered aspects of "the same" thing in such a way as to solve the two world problems.

But adoption of the two aspect view involves insurmountable problems. First, two considerations indeed must reduce to two aspects, if the considerations are not to be vacuous. But then, Aquila's problem of just how two aspects with apparently contrary features can belong to "the same" thing demands a resolution which is not forthcoming. And finally this view's dependence on the separation of appearance from representation requires it to account for the numerous passages identifying them; this it fails to do.

The two perspective view relegates the thing in itself to God's perspective, retaining the appearance within the human perspective. But it does not consider the two sides to be parallel, as, apparently, both the two world and the two aspect views do. Rather the divine perspective lies behind the human one, as a perspective we conjure up to meet human needs. As a result, the object of knowledge is the appearance; a thing in itself is only "the same thing" as an appearance in the sense that we "think" (when required) a thing as God would presumably see it, and *think it as* the same as the appearance. The question, "Is it *really* the same?" simply makes no sense here, for there is no perspective accessible to us from which to establish the "really."

This reorganization of the relationship between the two sides yields a better resolution of the core problems. (1) Spatiality applies to appearances, because only thus can a discursive understanding individuate them; it would not be needed for the intuitive divine understanding. We do not know how or if God individuates things, but such individuation as is involved in thinking a thing in itself for an appearance derives from our intelligibility requirements, not God's. (2) The phenomenality question requires viewing the appearance as a kind of intentional object, constituted through the representations, but distinct from them; it can exist unperceived in the same sense that a scientist (or two of them) can *return* to a consideration of *the same* object posited by a theory after a good night's sleep—even if the theory is subsequently abandoned. I will return to this in a moment. (3) The affection problem results from the assumption that the time of the constituted object is the time of its constitution. Once this assumption is dropped, there is no difficulty in affection by the appearance: the appearance can be constituted along with its past, as having previously interacted with the body of the perceiver. The further "trans-pineal interaction" between mind and body is supersensible, and thus outside the range of empirical explanation.

The two perspective view accounts for the passages identifying appearance

and representation by suggesting a change between the A and B editions of the first *Critique,* largely as a result of the charges of Berkeleyanism. In A, the appearance's moment of difference was associated with the representation, its moment of objectivity with the Transcendental Object = X. In B, both moments, and thus the appearance entirely, were moved to the object pole, eliminating the Transcendental Object (and the threefold synthesis as well). The one new passage in B identifying representation and appearance is explained as taking the appearance to be on the same *side* as the representation, namely, within the human perspective, vis-à-vis the divine perspective.

Is this two perspective view just a variant on the two aspect view, or is it a return to the old two world view? It is, I think, neither. It shares with the two aspect view the separation of representation from appearance, but considers the thing in itself to be, not just another aspect of that of which the appearance is an aspect, but an object in another perspective entirely. This last point seems more in line with the two world view. But the two world view usually considers the two worlds "from outside," whereas the two perspective view considers the question of knowledge acquisition from the inside, i.e., from within the perspective of the knowing subject, and takes the divine perspective, not as parallel to the human, but as within it, something "thought" by us for specific purposes.

What, then, is this view's answer to the idealism question? In the first and most obvious sense, the two perspective view clearly assumes an idealism: the relationship between representation and object noted above is described as an idealism in which the representation makes the object possible. That is, when a representation meets the objectivity criteria (Allison's epistemic conditions), an object is posited for it. This object is a "constituted" or "intentional" object, it is subject-dependent, and stands in contrast to a subject-independent or "real" object.

But the notion of "reality" here depends on the contrast of our fallible knowledge with the infallible knowledge of God, and thus functions only *within* that reflection on our human cognition that contrasts it with the divine. This reflection—one that thinks a thing in itself for the appearance—occurs at the transcendental level; hence it is at this level only that the appearance is ideal (i.e., in contrast with a thinkable "more real" thing in itself). But when we restrict our consideration to the human perspective, we lose even the merely thinkable thing in itself as the locus of the real, and must rely on internal, subjectively derived criteria of the real: agreement of the appearances among one another in accordance with space, time, and the categories, and a consistent system of empirical laws. Thus at any given time, the real for us consists in that world-picture we have formed "to the best of our knowledge at the time":

within the human perspective, there is nothing "more real" with which to contrast it.[89]

This view is not perhaps as odd as it may seem; in fact it underlies the practice of working scientists. Objects are proposed to account for various observations, and in the course of experimentation these are treated as real; but reflection always reveals the possibility of a theoretical revision modifying or eliminating these objects in favor of others. The two perspective view merely extends this consideration to objects generally. The empirical object, as appearance, is real under restriction to the human perspective: it is the best we can do at the time. But the possibility of error moves us to appeal to the divine perspective and "think" things in themselves for the appearances. This is the sense in which the empirical object, as appearance, is empirically real, but transcendentally ideal.[90]

Memphis State University

---

[89] Cf. *KdrV*, A37/B54 and A39/B56.

[90] I would like to express my appreciation to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and to Memphis State University for supporting the leave during which this paper was formulated, and to Prof. Gerold Prauss, my host during the leave. I would like also to thank Richard Aquila, Bernd Dörflinger, Klaus Düsing, Edmund Heller, Klaus Kaehler, Manfred Kleinschnieder, Jane Kneller, Manfred Kuehn, Thomas Nenon, Prof. Prauss, Ken Rogerson, Peter Rohs, Mark Timmons, Burkhard Tuschling, the editor and anonymous referees of this *Journal*, and a number of others as well, for valuable comments on various versions of this paper.