

KANT'S SUBJECT-OBJECT DISTINCTION

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1965

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

PHILOSOPHY

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1967

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Date May 9, 1967

Abstract

In chapters two and three of this thesis, the distinction between the subject and object of knowledge and perception in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is examined in terms of what Kant calls, "representations." These representations are not, in general, as the name might suggest, pictures in the mind, or copies of objects. They are isolated bits of information which the mind has about the world; or, in other words, elementary ways in which the subject is related to the objects which it knows or perceives. The subject is constituted by the grouping of representations into different kinds of representations, mainly on the basis of similarities, so that we have the same sorts of information about different objects. The object is that which representations relate to when select representations of many different kinds are combined, mainly on the basis of coherence, so that we have different sorts of information about the same object.

Chapter one is devoted to Kant's doctrine of the object in itself, which is discussed in terms of the distinction between knowledge and belief. Objects in themselves are objects apart from our representations of them. In spite of the fact that they cannot be known, objects in themselves are significant insofar as the false belief that we can know them is an inevitable result of the capacity of the subject to combine representations in different ways, including the combination of representations in the concept of an unknowable object.

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Acknowledgment

Discussions with P.N.Stewart were helpful in the initial development of some of the ideas in this thesis, and Dr. Peter Remnant's thorough and thoughtful critical comments were indispensable. Thanks, also, to Wulfing von Schleinitz, for proofreading.

Introduction

There is hardly a section in the Critique of Pure Reason which does not make use of the subject-object distinction. This distinction is for Kant an ever-present dualism which haunts his more explicit monistic idealism. Kant himself says that a transcendental idealist may be a dualist.¹ That this dualism is present is not surprising considering the overall plan of the Critique, for reason is differentiated from logic at the outset because "it has to deal not with itself alone but also with objects,"² because it involves the relationships between the thinking subject and objects, not just between one thought and another thought without reference to objects. What is surprising is that Kant should begin without giving an explicit analysis of this distinction which is seemingly more basic to his theory of knowledge than the categories or even space and time.

The importance of the subject-object distinction in the first Critique is obscured by the extreme emphasis which is given to the perceiving subject in Kant's terminology. Opening the Critique of Pure Reason at random one comes across term after term concerning the thinking,

¹A370. All references are to the standard page numbers of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Norman Kemp's Smith's translation is used through-out.

²Bix.

perceiving subject without a corresponding array of terms concerning the perceived objects towards which thought is directed. On the side of the subject Kant's terminology distinguishes such faculties of mind as sensibility, understanding, and reason, as well as such entities and processes as sensible impressions, images, schemata, concepts, ideas, principles, perceptions, intuitions, and judgments. On the side of the objects there are only the terms "object" and "object in itself." There is also the term, "appearance," but it is by no means obvious whether this term belongs on the side of the thinking subject or on the side of the objects.

While this wealth of terms for referring to the subject reflects, prima facie, a lopsided preference on Kant's part for the subject over the object, it is possible to step back and consider the problem from another point of view, namely, from the vantage point of the term, "representation." All the aspects of the perceiving subject which Kant considers--sensible impressions, categories, forms of intuition, and so on--have this in common: They are all representations. From this perspective the balance between subject and object is restored to the extent that we can seek our goal of understanding the subject-object distinction quickly by asking some general questions about representations rather than losing ourselves in a

maze of concepts, schemata, and sensations which seems to go around in circles and keep the objects of perception which we seek permanently hidden from us. Concerning representations, the questions are: What do all representations have in common which makes them all representations? What is the relationship between a representation and that which is represented? To what extent can problems about the subject-object distinction be clarified, stated, and resolved in terms of representations?

Three quotations from completely different parts of the first Critique illustrate some of the problems involved in understanding what representations are and how they relate to other entities:

All our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance.³

How things may be in themselves, apart from the representations through which they affect us, is entirely outside our sphere of knowledge.⁴

External objects (bodies), however, are mere appearances, and are therefore nothing but a species of my representations.⁵

What is especially problematic here are the meanings of and relationships between the terms, "things in themselves," "appearances," and "representations." If representation is

³A42.

⁴A190.

⁵A370.

"of appearance" but appearances are still "a species of my representations," does this imply that appearances are in turn representations of something else--of the thing in itself? Can representations be representations of something which is unknown, as they would have to be if they were representations of things in themselves? Or can appearance be a special kind of representation which is not a representation of something else? Tn

In any case, I take it as evident that Kant wants to make some sort of distinction between the obviously closely related entities, representations and appearances, as well as to establish some sort of relationship between the obviously distinct knowable representations and unknowable things in themselves. I shall therefore base my analysis of Kant's subject-object distinction on a preliminary examination of the relationships between objects in themselves and representations, and on a discussion of the nature of representations.

Chapter One: Objects in Themselves

Kant says that objects in themselves, that is, objects apart from the conditions under which they are sensed, are completely unknown to human beings:¹ Objects in themselves are 1.) unknown and 2.) contrasted to objects of sensation, and thus the object in itself may be properly characterized only by saying that it is not an object of sensible intuition (intuition being direct relation to an object²).

Perhaps it is because this bare something-we-know-not-what is such an unpromising topic for conversation that many of Kant's readers have been baffled by the thing in itself in particular, and Kant's broader agnosticism in general. Why posit that there is something about which we cannot know anything? If we cannot know anything about the object in itself, why think that there is an object in itself at all? Why does Kant insist repeatedly that we cannot know objects in themselves as if this were a significant denial, rather than just a result of the way thing in itself is defined. Furthermore, is not agnosticism in general the meaningless claim that there are things which we cannot know but we can be in doubt that cannot know them or even know for certain that we cannot know them? How can

¹A42.

²A18.

we know that there is something we cannot know? How can the unknown even occur to us so as to make necessary the agnostic's modest denial of knowledge?

This strange unknown object in itself is important enough to Kant for him to have employed at least two terms to refer to it, for the term "noumenon" is equated to the term "object in itself" (though I suspect that there are connotative differences between the two terms) so that "the concept of a noumenon" is said to be the concept of "a thing which is not to be thought as object of the senses but as a thing in itself."³

Also, Kant distinguishes between a negative and a positive sense of the term "object in itself" alias "noumenon" in which the negative sense means "a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition," while the positive sense refers to "an object of a non-sensible intuition."⁴ It is noteworthy that Kant takes "non-sensible intuition" to mean "intellectual intuition," although, on purely logical grounds, it would be possible for "non-sensible intuition" to be a genus including innumerable species of intuition, so that a Spinozistic God with infinite attributes might also have infinite modes of non-sensible intuition.

However, Kant does not differentiate between non-sensible intuition in general and intellectual intuition in

³A254.

⁴B307.

particular, but rather equates non-sensible intuition and intellectual intuition. Kant does not speculate about modes of intuition belonging to non-human faculties of knowledge. He does speculate about a non-human mode of intuition belonging to a human faculty of knowledge, a faculty of knowledge which we actually have but without intuitive powers, the faculty of understanding.

Thus Kant's denial that we can know objects in themselves is the specific denial that we can intuit objects intellectually, and Kant, far from positing an unknown something just for the sake of tautologically denying that we can know it, is on the contrary concerned to show that we cannot know some things which the very nature of human understanding tempts us to believe we can know: It is only by considering the distinction between belief and knowledge, in addition to the distinction between the known and the unknown, that Kant's doctrine of the object in itself can be understood. By belief I mean the affirmation or assumption that something is true on the basis of one element of knowledge where knowledge consists of more than one element.

The profundity of Kant's agnosticism is his analysis of knowledge as the union of conceptual thought and sensory intuition, so that either element may be present without the other but without qualifying as knowledge, making it "just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our

intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts."⁵ Thought and knowledge are to be clearly distinguished: "To know an object I must be able to prove its possibility, either from its actuality as attested by experience, or a priori by means of reason. But I can think whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself."⁶

Within this framework agnosticism is quite meaningful, since, although I cannot know something that I cannot know, knowing and not knowing are not the only alternatives. I can think something I cannot know, and, inasmuch as thought often actually is fulfilled in sensory intuition, it occurs to me quite naturally that, when I have only one element of knowledge, the thought, it might quite well be possible that there is an object which corresponds to it, and if the thought is of something which cannot be sensed, I will be tempted to search around for a non-sensory mode of intuition, and since the only other faculty of knowledge I possess besides sensibility is understanding, I shall likely settle for a supposed intellectual intuition rather than patiently suspend my judgment. Within this framework the thought of the unknown will always be occurring to me, without, of course, being known to me.

To return to the object in itself, the question was:

⁵A51.

⁶Bxxviii.

If we cannot know anything about the object in itself, why think that there is an object in itself at all? The answer is that we can easily think--indeed, we can't resist thinking about--much that we cannot know. The thing in itself does not signify a mere unknown which to deny knowledge of is trivial, but a much more specific entity which we can or can try to think and which we are perpetually tempted to claim that we can also know. Thought extends beyond intuition for Kant in the same way will extends beyond intellect for Descartes.

Kant suggests that there are two general kinds of objects of intellectual intuition or noumena in the positive sense: "Doubtless, indeed, there are intelligible entities corresponding to the sensible entities; there may also be intelligible entities to which our sensible faculty of intuition has no relation whatsoever."⁷ This last sort of intelligible entity likely refers to the supposed objects of the transcendental ideas--the concepts of the unconditioned, such as God and the immortal soul, which have no objects corresponding to them in sense-experience. The hypostatization of these ideas results in the transcendental illusions, these being illusions which arise not accidentally from sophistry or carelessness, but inevitably from the very nature of reason itself.⁸

⁷B308-309.

⁸A339.

What is striking here is the close similarity of the transcendental illusions in the last half of the Critique to the thing in itself in the first half of the Critique: The thing in itself is virtually a transcendental illusion, an all but unavoidable temptation to claim to know something that we can think, but which we cannot know because it is unconditioned.

There is nothing perverse, then, in repeating over and over again, as Kant does, that we cannot know something which we cannot know, provided, as is the case with the thing in itself, that people believe that it is something which can be known. The object in itself is not defined as unknown; It is defined as an object as it is apart from the conditions of human sensibility, from which it follows as a matter of fact--or, rather, as a matter of metaphysics--that it cannot be known by human beings.

For the denial that we know objects in themselves to be significant, the human mind must be such that it creates the belief that we can know objects in themselves. Let us see how this belief arises.

I have a concept of a book of over 300 pages in length with a green cloth cover, and whose pages are at least three inches wide and five inches high. Does such a book exist? The question is over-cautious since doubtless there are many instances in the world of individual books which fit this description. I would create even better odds that

there actually exist books corresponding to my concept by simply removing one of the conditions, such as the color of the cover, so to think of a book of over 300 pages of the specified dimensions with a cloth cover of any color. And one by one I can abstract the other characteristics so that at last I am conceiving of a book in general, a book of any number of pages and any measurable dimensions bound in any material of any color, so long only as it qualifies as a book.

On the other hand, I can think of more, rather than less, specific characteristics. I can conceive of a book of exactly 300 pages, the pages exactly four inches wide, with a dark green cover and an ink smudge on page 250 and with part of page 168 torn out. I do not know whether such a book exists, since I have never seen one fitting this description; I have only the concept, and not the intuition. I did not arrive at the concept of this hypothetical book by describing something I observed, but simply by combining certain representations which I already possessed.

These thoughts about books illustrate three characteristics of the human mind: First, it is the very nature of thought to abstract from the conditions under which specific objects of sensation exist. Second, these abstractions or concepts are potentially applicable to new objects never before intuited as long as these objects are of the sort

with which the concept is concerned. Third, the hypothesized not-yet-intuited objects can be more specifically described by such resources as the understanding has by combining concepts and specifying characteristics of the object.

The concept of a book with a green cover and more than 300 pages, etc., can correspond to many instances of actually existing books just because it leaves out many specific characteristics which a particular book might have. Further, it is by means of this characteristic of concepts--to be equally applicable to many particular instances--that the concept of a green book applies to future possible green books as well as those already perceived. Finally, by combining in a new way characteristics of already observed books, the concept of a unique book could be produced whether or not such a book actually exists.

Having illustrated three characteristics of thought with these examples involving an empirical object, I shall now apply them as a three step thought process to objects in general. First, there is the abstraction from particular instances, then the supposition that there are objects to which the concept corresponds other than those objects already experienced on the occasion of which the concept was originally abstracted, and finally, there is the attempt to conceive of the specific characteristics of the new objects supposed in the second step. These three steps may be called: Abstraction, hypostatization, and specification

of the hypothesized abstraction.

To conceive of books abstractly is to disregard all characteristics of certain objects save only that they are books. Objects can be conceived in a parallel manner as abstractly as possible by disregarding everything about objects except that they are objects, abstracting from all conditions under which particular objects are perceived. The abstraction, hypostatization, and specification of objects in general is as follows:

1. The object considered as abstractly as possible is the representation of an object abstracted from the conditions of sensibility. This may be what Kant means by the transcendental object = x.

2. The hypostatization of the mere representation of an object in general is the assumption that there are objects corresponding to the bare representation of objects as things outside of ourselves which are not the objects of sensory intuition. This is the negative sense of noumenon.

3. The more specific characteristics which are ascribed to the hypostatization of the mere representation of an object in general are that these objects are related to us under the conditions of a supposed intellectual intuition. This is the positive sense of noumenon.

The representation of an object in general corresponds to innumerable actual objects because it does not concern the specific characteristics of the objects but only

that they are objects. The concept, "object," like the concept, "book," applies to new entities other than those from which the concept was first abstracted because it is the very nature of a concept to transcend any particular instances of that which has been conceptualized. The difference between these two cases is that, while the concept of a book in general does not abstract from the conditions of sensory intuition, the concept of an object in general does so abstract, or so Kant would maintain. Only because we can think abstractly can--no, must--it occur to us that there might be new instances of old concepts. When the thought abstracts from the conditions of sensory intuition, as is the case with the concept of an object in general, it is possible that the new instances corresponding to the concept will not be objects of sensory intuition.

Though falling far short of knowledge, the mere concept of something which is not an object of sensory intuition is sufficient for the belief that such objects exist to occur, and insofar as the belief occurs, it is significant to deny that this belief could be known to be true, that is, it is significant to deny that we can know objects in themselves.

If this limitation on our knowledge is ignored, it is possible to posit different sorts of objects in themselves. This quixotic attempt to differentiate one object in itself from another proceeds in two ways: Either partially abstracted, semi-conditioned concepts of sensory objects are

hypostatized, or some representation or combination of representations which were never directly concerned with sensory objects in the first place is thought of as an intellectually intuited object. The first alternative concerns the objects of intellectual intuition which correspond to sensible entities, and the second, objects of intellectual intuition which do not correspond to sensible entities.⁹ The first, in attempting to characterize specifically objects which are not objects of sensory intuition, falls into contradiction and the objects are thus unknowable, and the second avoids contradiction by such utter abstraction from all conditions that there is no way to intuit the objects, which are thus also unknowable.

An example of the first alternative would be the attempt to describe and posit as an object the book in itself which corresponds to the knowable book as sensory appearance. Since it is a book, what size are its pages? 3 x 5 inches? But to have size it must be in space and objects in themselves are not in space. How many sizeless pages does this book have? 300? But in order to know that, it would have to be possible to count the pages, and counting takes time, and since objects in themselves are not in time we cannot know how many sizeless pages a book in itself has. Then perhaps it doesn't have pages? Then it isn't a book.

⁹B308-309. Cf. p. 9 above.

An example of the second alternative is the first anti-nomy interpreted in terms of its solution, which states that we can have no experience of an absolute limit, and that the idea of an absolute limit, though not contradictory, cannot be known because it cannot be intuited;¹⁰ We constantly employ in experience the concept of something having a beginning in time and limits in space. By abstracting from time and space we arrive at the concepts of an unconditioned beginning and of unconditioned limitations which we then attempt to apply to the universe as a whole, so to conceive of the beginning of the universe and the edge of the universe. Now beginning and limitation cannot be here thought of as respectively temporal and spatial since the only way we reached a degree of abstraction suitable for application to the universe as a whole in the first place was to remove in thought the conditions of space and time. If beginning and limitation are not conceived as temporal and spatial, then, though there is no contradiction in a non-temporal beginning or non-spatial limitation, we have no way of intuiting such empty concepts. Therefore we could not possibly know whether or not the universe has a beginning or limitations.

As a matter of strict definition the object in itself and the noumenon are one and the same, but in connotation they are different. "Noumenon," suggesting nous, the Greek

¹⁰A517 ff.

word for mind, sounds much more removed from sensibility than "thing in itself" which has a more concrete, physical sound. Noumena would thus be the objects of intellectual intuition which do not correspond to sensible entities, the object of the concepts of the unconditioned Kant calls the transcendental ideas, while objects in themselves would be something much more specific which we tend to think we can know when we don't attend to the contradictions involved, something very much like physical objects--except unconditioned: First we experience ordinary objects of sensation, then we posit the unconditioned existence of these very same objects, only apart from the conditions of our sensibility. Whereas "noumenon" suggests cosmic profundities, "thing in itself" suggests more substantial copies of everyday objects. Whereas transcendental ideas are unconditioned from the start, objects in themselves are only conditioned things, things as appearances, considered as unconditioned at the last moment.

The object in itself, if I may offer the long-awaited description, is the woman in the Picasso paintings whose face shows all sides at once. The object in itself has color where there is no light and weight where there is no gravity; it has shape which is not distorted by being viewed from different angles, and it appears the same size no matter how close to it or far from it one is. The object in itself is just a little bit more vivid and certain and

immediate than anything we actually experience: It is a feather bed whose softness is revealed in the spaces between the feathers, an anvil which is hard even in the void between the atoms; it is sugar which is sweet because it is white and granular without there being any danger of its being salt; it is located in a naive realist's heaven in which flames are hot because of their semi-transparent orange-red color, where MacBeth's dagger is sharp because of its metallic glitter, where sticks never bend when thrust into water, and where the most deafening noises are made by trees falling in uninhabited forests millions of miles from ear or eye or beast or man or the stealthiest percepts in the mind of God.

It is the third of the steps I mentioned--the attempt to specify the characteristics of hypostatized abstractions--which creates the impression that there is a gradual transition from the objects of experience to the objects in themselves which support them. The various degrees of abstraction, arrived at as the conditions under which we perceive something are removed one by one in thought, are thought of as corresponding to similar degrees of absense of conditions in the object. Then, since sensory intuition does not disclose this unconditioned object as it is in thought, we think of the objects we sense as confused impressions of the objects in themselves, the objects in themselves consisting of more solid stuff which we half

expect would reveal itself to us at any moment, if only our senses were a bit sharper or our investigations more thorough.

But, alas, the object in itself has always just left when we turn to look at it; it evades our grasp like a monster escaping to the depths and leaving behind his footprints in the delicate fresh-fallen snow of our sensory intuition. We can only wait and hope for its eventual emergence into the realm of knowledge like an iceberg rising from still green fathoms to float, not just its tip, but its full volume, on the restless, swelling surface of the sea of appearances, like a dinosaur slowly awakening from ages of petrification and emerging with massive awkward steps out of the oozing mud pits of the unknown into the sunlight of the categories shining down upon the land of intuition.

Kant warns against such searching or waiting for objects in themselves: What "objects may be in themselves would never become known to us through the most enlightened knowledge of that which is alone given to us, namely, their appearance."¹¹ "It is not that by our sensibility we can not know the nature of things in themselves in any save a confused fashion; we do not apprehend them in any fashion whatsoever."¹²

By insisting on calling the objects which we can know,

¹¹A43.

¹²A44.

"appearances," Kant forces us to constantly think of what we can know in contrast to what we cannot know, of objects as appearances in contrast to objects in themselves. While on the one hand, this puts us ever on guard against mistaking something we can at best merely think for something we can fully know, on the other hand, it is confusing inasmuch as in ordinary usage "appearance" often means "illusion" or "that which seems," whereas Kantian objects as appearance are just what are not illusory objects or seeming objects.

Kant is hardly to be praised for such unfortunate terminology. Still, by careful attention we can understand what he means, for Kant recognized that his distinction between objects in themselves and appearances might be confused with another, but "merely empirical," distinction which could be made using the same terms--the distinction between essential and accidental intuition, between that which "holds for sense in all human beings" and that which "is valid not in relation to sensibility in general but only in relation to a particular standpoint or to a peculiarity of structure in this or that sense."¹³

On a dark night my friend's coat might seem to be black, but in better light I realize that it is really dark blue. As I am passing the display window of a clothing store one

¹³A45.

of the manikins appears to move, but on closer inspection I see that it is really one of the workers at the store dusting off the inanimate objects. The distinction made in these examples could be indicated by saying that the black coat and the animate manikin were appearances and the dark blue coat and the hired help were the objects in themselves.

Perhaps some of those who are baffled by Kant's pronouncements that we cannot know objects in themselves are thinking of examples of this sort: They think that Kant is denying that we can correct mistakes arising from a limited point of view by relating such a point of view to the more general conditions under which it occurs. However, it is not the conditioned but the unconditioned, not the transition from limited to general conditions but the leap from general conditions to the unconditioned, which Kant wants to disallow.

If someone wants to claim that it is obvious that we can know objects in themselves and that Kant denied some everyday event, he will do well to check what he means by "object in itself" against what Kant meant. Likely he will find that Kant referred to this everyday-event-object-in-itself by some other term such as "essential intuition" or "object as appearance." This helps us understand the distinction between objects in themselves and appearances insofar as we are careful not to confuse this distinction

with the distinction between essential and accidental intuition.

The categories apply only to appearances.¹⁴ This is not to say, however, that categories apply to sense-data-like entities. "Appearances" are not, in Kant's dictionary, "the way objects seem," as the distinction between essential and accidental intuition shows: Accidental intuition, an object seen from a particular standpoint only, is the way a thing seems. In Kant's example, the rainbow is the way the rain seems from a particular standpoint, while the rain is the object as appearance: "Rain will then be viewed only as that which, in all experience and in all its various positions relative to the senses, is determined thus, and not otherwise, in our intuition."¹⁵ Thus to say that appearances are things which we take as objects of our senses¹⁶ is to say more than that appearances are what is given to one sense in one position (which may be what some people mean by "sense-data"), but is also to include among appearances full scale objects such as raindrops perceived from various positions (plural) relative to the senses (plural).

Objects in themselves are reified patterns of thought. Their relationship to the knowable objects as appearances is

¹⁴A239.

¹⁵A45.

¹⁶A34.

the relationship between that which appears and the appearance. Though this relationship can only be thought, not known,¹⁷ Kant thinks that the presence of this thought in all our experience is so important that we should constantly think of what we know as depending on what we do not know, though of course this way of thinking can never be knowledge. Thus Kant speaks of objects as appearances as being the mode in which we are affected by "that something" which appears.¹⁸ This is confusing, since being "affected by something" suggests that a physiological explanation is wanted. But if "that something" which appears is the object in itself, physiological explanations are irrelevant, since the objects of physiology are objects as appearances: It is the flame as appearance which burns my flesh as appearance, while the flame in itself and the flesh in itself are irrelevant. Of course, I do not know the physiological explanations of most of my perceptions. This, however, is mainly because I am not particularly interested in physiology, not because such explanations are in principle unknowable.

Perhaps the confusion of the relationship between sense organs and the objects which affect them, both considered as appearances, with the relationship between objects as appearances and the corresponding objects in themselves contributes to the impression already noted that there is a gradual

¹⁷Bxxvi.

¹⁸A44.

transition from the object in itself to the object as appearance. At any rate, whereas any causal relationship between objects in themselves and objects as appearances are in principle unknowable, any causal relationship between sense organs as appearances and other objects as appearances which affect the senses, while in principle knowable, are irrelevant to metaphysics, since to discover causal relationships between objects and sense organs is an empirical matter which presupposes that it is already possible to know objects (including sense organs as observed by other sense organs) and to perceive causal relationships, whereas it is just these possibilities which metaphysics seeks to understand: How is it possible to know or experience objects or to perceive causal relationships? Of course, Kant and other epistemologists constantly refer to the senses, but they do this primarily to identify different sorts of sensory information as experienced by the perceiving subject, not to discuss the physical nature of the sense organs as objects of perception.

The purpose of the doctrine of objects in themselves is to show that the ability to think much that cannot be given in sense experience does not involve the capacity to know objects as they are apart from the conditions of sensory intuition. Kant shows that we cannot know while at the same time we can hardly help but believe that objects

look exactly the same when no one is looking at them as when someone is, that there is something more empirical than sensation hidden under the shapes and colors of the world, that there are intelligible entities corresponding to the objects which we sense--in short, that there are noumena supporting the phenomena.

Chapter Two: Representations and Appearances

Contrasted to the objects in themselves which cannot be known are the objects as appearances which can be known, because, unlike objects in themselves, they do come within the range of sensation: The objects which we can know are objects as they appear under the conditions of human sensibility.

How are the objects which we can know related to the representations of them? In attempting to differentiate these objects as appearances from the representations of them, Kant says that "that which lies in the successive apprehension is here viewed as representation, while the appearance which is given to me, notwithstanding that it is nothing but the sum of these representations is viewed as their object."¹ How much of a distinction does this make? If, as is not clear from this passage alone, the sum of representations which constitutes an object as appearance is itself a representation, then, as Kant says in an entirely different passage, "mere appearances" are "nothing but a species of my representations."²

A distinction has still been made, of course, even if "appearances" are just another species of the genus "representations." But this modest distinction does not always

¹A191.

²A370.

seem adequate to Kant's theories. In the "Refutation of Idealism," for instance, Kant says that there is something permanent in perception and that

this permanent is possible only through a thing outside me and not through the mere representation of a thing outside me; and consequently the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things which I perceive outside me.³

These "actual things" are presumably objects as appearances, in which case objects as appearances would be as distinct from representations, and thus no mere species of representations, on the one hand, as they are distinct from objects in themselves, on the other hand.

The question, "What is the distinction between representations and appearances?", provokes the more general questions, "What is the relationship between a representation and that which is represented?" and "What is a representation?" That there are such a great variety of entities included among representations makes these questions both especially interesting and difficult.

When Kant deliberately classifies representations, he includes among representations the following: Perception, sensation, knowledge, intuition, concept, and idea.⁴ Elsewhere Kant refers to judgments⁵ and schemata⁶ as repre-

³B275.

⁴A320.

⁵A68.

⁶A138.

sentations. Space and time, as species of intuition, and principles, as a type of judgment, are also representations. It may seem strange to include, say, knowledge and space among representations, but nonetheless Kant does so. That we are concerned with a diversity of sorts of things here can be seen by considering that representations may be active or passive, a priori or a posteriori, universal or particular, and mediate or immediate. Thus Kant contrasts the spontaneity of conceptual thought with the receptivity of intuition, and, while the categories are a priori and universal, sensation is a posteriori and particular, space and time are particular and a priori, and concepts and intuitions are respectively mediate and immediate knowledge of objects.

The case of concepts will serve to illustrate what I mean by the relationship between a representation and that represented. To the concept of a book as an abstraction correspond many instances of particular books as objects in space and time present to sensation. It is because the concept is concerned only with what these particular objects have in common, with no references to the endless differences in detail, that the concept can apply to many cases. Here, the concept is the representation, and the particular books are those things which are represented. This is the familiar relationship between universals and particulars.

Obviously the relationship between universals and particulars is not the relationship between representations of all kinds and the respective sorts of things represented, since some representations, for instance, space and time, are themselves particular in nature. Kant himself makes this comparison between concepts and forms of intuition as concerns space (and in a similar passage as concerns time):

Space is not a discursive or, as we say, general concept of relations of things in general, but a pure intuition. For. . . we can represent to ourselves only one space; and if we speak of diverse spaces, we mean thereby only parts of one and the same unique space.

Now every concept must be thought of as a representation which is contained in an infinite number of different possible representations (as their common character), and which therefore contains these under itself; but no concept, as such, can be thought as containing an infinite number of representations within itself. It is in this latter way, however, that space is thought.⁷

These relationships of being subsumed under a concept and being contained within space have this in common: In both cases there is a relationship of unity to diversity, even though in the case of space the unifying factor is as particular as are the diverse objects contained within it. However, the relationship of unity to diversity cannot be the general relationship of representations to that represented, since it does not apply to sensations, which are also representations.

⁷A25. Cf. A31-32.

Through sensation we acquire a diversity of information concerning detailed characteristics of objects. The few examples Kant gives of sensations show that he is concerned primarily with qualitatively different sorts of information of a fleeting, contingent sort, rather than with the processes by which objects affect the sense organs.⁸ For instance, in one passage Kant identifies as belonging to sensation, impenetrability, hardness, and color,⁹ and in another passage, again colors and also sounds and heat.¹⁰

Sensation, as supplying detailed information about objects, has in common with conceptualization the relationship of being about a limited aspect of what is being represented. The weight and color of a heavy green book are isolatable sorts of information about the book, yet they are still about the book. Both concept and sensation are about isolated characteristics of that which is represented. Since space and time are not characteristics of objects but ways in which objects are ordered, the relationship between a representation and that represented cannot be so specific as "x is about isolated characteristics of y." However, though the ways objects are ordered are not characteristics of the objects, they are still about or concerned with objects.

⁸Cf. pp. 23-24 above.

⁹A21.

¹⁰A28.

This relationship, "x is about y," the relationship between representations and that represented, I shall call, "transitivity."

Again and again Kant refers to representations in terms of function and purpose. Representations are said to relate to, to be directed towards, and to apply to objects or to other representations. Thus Kant says that all thought is directed as a means to intuition and intuition in turn relates to objects,¹¹ and again that "thought is the act which relates given intuition to an object."¹² Also: "Pure reason never relates directly to objects, but to the concepts which the understanding frames in regard to objects;"¹³ Here the relationship to objects is indirect, but still present. "Even space and time. . . would yet be without objective validity, senseless and meaningless, if their necessary application to the objects of experience were not established."¹⁴

The function of a representation is its direction to something outside itself so as to be of or about something. In order for a representation to fulfill this function there must be something outside that representation--perhaps only other representations--to be represented. Certain verbs

¹¹A19.

¹²A247.

¹³A335.

¹⁴A156.

are called transitive if they require a grammatical object to complete their meaning. Analogously, representations are transitive, since they require that which is represented to complete their meaning. So space and time could not be ways in which other representations or appearances are ordered if there were no such other entities to be ordered. Nor could a concept refer to an isolated characteristic of various particular objects, if there were no such objects to be conceptualized.

If representations require something that is represented to complete their meanings, they are, insofar as they can be isolated, incomplete, and, though likely too primitive to be strictly definable, they may at least be characterized in a manner complementary to the transitive relationships they enter into. So a representation is an incomplete reference to that which is represented; it characteristically refers to that which is outside itself.

To return to the distinction between appearances and representations, since appearances are something that is represented, and that which is represented is what representations require to complete their meaning, appearances are among the things which may complete the meanings of representations. This follows from the general nature of representations and their relationship to that which is represented. However, some questions about the specific nature of representations and appearances remain: There is

the question whether appearances are completely outside our representations or not, and the question of just what are these objects as appearances to which Kant constantly contrasts objects in themselves.

Appearances are something, though not the only things, which are represented. Since representations can be represented by other representations and thus be the thing which is represented, it may be the case that appearances are a species of representations, but it does not follow just because the thing represented may be a representation that appearances as something represented actually are of this sort. Are appearances a species of representations or not? Are appearances distinctive collections of representations or something completely different from representations?

That Kant contradicts himself on these points, there is no doubt, though assertions that appearances are a species of representations are far more frequent than assertions to the contrary. It may turn out, however, that the infrequent denial that appearances are representations leads to a more acceptable interpretation of Kant's philosophy. The typical statement on this matter is that "appearances, as mere representations, are in themselves real only in perception, which perception is in fact nothing but the reality of an empirical representation, that is, appearance."¹⁵

¹⁵A493. Cf. A491, A498-9, A508.

The untypical statement is that of the "Refutation of Idealism," in which it is quite emphatically asserted that the things which we perceive outside ourselves are actually things, not mere representations of things.¹⁶ Of course, the term "appearance" is not used in this passage, but there can be no doubt that the things which we perceive outside ourselves are the empirical objects which we can know in contrast to the objects in themselves which we cannot know--and it is just these knowable empirical objects to which the term, "appearances," refers.

Another reason, other than consideration of the "Refutation of Idealism," for doubting that appearances are representations is the difficulty of accounting for intransitivity if appearances are representations. The difficulty arises in this way: Representations are always about something other than themselves, and this something may be another representation. For instance, an "idea," in Kant's technical sense of this term, is about the concepts of understanding, and in its proper employment represents as much unity as possible among concepts. This makes ideas representations of representations, since ideas and concepts are both representations and the one represents the other. Since concepts are representations, they will also represent something other than themselves, so that it is evidently possible to have a series of representations in which the first representation represents a second representation, the second representation

¹⁶B275.

being in turn a representation of a third representation, . . .

And so on, indefinitely? No. The series of representations has its terminating point in the intransitive appearances: That is what appearances are--those things which are represented without in turn being representations of something else. The point is not that transitivity implies an intransitive starting point. There might, for all I know, be a universe in which representations are representations of representations in an infinite series, or in a finite series so that a represents b, b represents c, and c is again a representation of a. The point is that human experience of this universe--or at least Kant's theory of such experience--requires intransitive objects towards which the series of representations is directed. Kant distinguishes different kinds of representations from each other by the manner in which they relate to the objects as appearances which terminate the series.

How is this intransitivity of appearances to be accounted for? A straight-forward way would be to suppose that appearances are entirely distinct from the representations of them so that the intransitivity of appearances would be as primitive a part of the universe as the transitivity of representations. If appearances are a species of representations, however, intransitivity must somehow be derived from transitivity.

Is intransitivity primitive or derived? Are appearances

primitive or derived? Are appearances completely distinct from (though still related to) representations, or are they a species of representations? It is easy to find material in the first Critique to support apparently opposing answers to these questions. In order to help determine the significance of such opposing trends in Kant's philosophy, and to discover to what extent the contradictory material can be reconciled, I shall develop these diverging tendencies into two distinct interpretations of the relationship between representations and the objects as appearances represented. I shall call these two interpretations, respectively, the "correspondence theory of objects," and the "coherence theory of objects."

Suppose that appearances are not representations, or combinations of representations. Then the object as appearance is both distinct from the representation of the object as appearance, and distinct from the object in itself. From the denial that we can know objects apart from the way we perceive them, it does not necessarily follow that objects as we do know and perceive them are in our minds. The third alternative, in addition to objects existing completely apart from the mind or existing only in our representations, is that they exist as related to us without being in us, so that the objects would exist separately from but corresponding to our representations. This is the correspondence theory of objects.

Suppose that appearances are representations--or at least combinations of representations, which is presumably what Kant means when he says that appearances are a mere species of representations. Then the object as appearance is reduced to combinations of representations. Appearances would still be distinct from representations, but only as distinct as representations in general are from specified combinations of representations, so that the objects would be distinguished from the representations of them only as being more consistent, interrelated series of representations which are grouped in certain ways. This is the coherence theory of objects.

Of course, considerations of coherence are not absent in the correspondence theory. Even if objects are separate from the sum total of all the representations of them, the ability to combine and separate representations would still be a necessary condition for experience to be possible. Likewise, in the coherence theory there would still be the correspondence between the representation and the object represented. The difference between the two theories is not that they respectively assert the existence of one of the relations, coherence or correspondence, and deny the existence of the other, but that they offer completely different interpretations of the nature and existence of objects as appearances.

In the correspondence theory, representations are

combined and separated, and compared and contrasted, in accordance with the greatest coherence, but the objects represented are distinct from these coherently interrelated representations. The object is that in the external world which corresponds to the combination of representations. No amount of coherence among representations is a substitute for the independently existing, externally given object, in relation to which representations and combinations of representations alike are merely means to perception. In the coherence theory, there is still the correspondence between representations and that represented, but it is only the correspondence of the part to the whole, of isolated representations to the ways in which those same representations are combined.

In the correspondence theory, it is of the very nature of the objects that they correspond to the representations of them, and the bare coherence of those representations does not determine whether or not they correspond to the object. In the coherence theory, objects are nothing other than the ways in which representations are combined, and the correspondence of representation to object occurs only when an isolated representation can enter into a coherent combination of representations.

What does Kant say which justifies my differentiation of two such distinct ways of interpreting the role of objects as appearances and their relationship to the representations of them?

As far as the correspondence theory is concerned, independently existing objects are given to intuition: "Objects are given to us by means of sensibility."¹⁷ "Our mode of intuition is dependent upon the existence of the object, and is therefore possible only if the subject's faculty of representation is affected by that object."¹⁸

In the correspondence theory, then, objects as appearances are externally given, but still conditioned, the conditions being, primarily, relation to, rather than coherence among, the representations of the subject: "Representation in itself does not produce its object in so far as existence is concerned, for we are not here speaking of its causality by means of the will. None the less the representation is a priori determinant of the object, if it be the case that only through the representation is it possible to know anything as an object."¹⁹ According to the correspondence theory, understanding does not make the existence of objects possible, but only makes knowledge of objects possible.

Furthermore, Kant occasionally refers to that which corresponds to sensation in a manner which cannot be understood in terms of the sort of correspondence which is

¹⁷A19.

¹⁸B72.

¹⁹A92.

possible within the coherence theory of objects: "That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its matter."²⁰ "Reality. . . is that which corresponds to a sensation in general."²¹ "What corresponds in empirical intuition to sensation is reality."²² If Kant had consistently thought of objects in terms of the coherence theory tendencies in his philosophy, he need only have said, "that in the appearance which is sensation is the matter of appearance," and, "reality is sensation in general." The phrase, "that which corresponds to sensation," suggests something both distinct from sensation and distinct from the combinations of representations into which sensations can enter.

And as for the coherence theory, far from always maintaining that our intuition depends on externally given objects, Kant sometimes says that appearances are representations, and as such "must not be taken as objects capable of existing outside of our power of representation."²³ Contrasting to the assertion that representations make knowledge, as distinct from the existence of, objects possible, Kant says that apart from consciousness "appearances could never be for us an object of knowledge, and so would be

²⁰A20.

²¹A143.

²²A168.

²³A104.

nothing to us; and since it has in itself no objective reality, but exists only in being known, it would be nothing at all."²⁴ Here representations are still only said to concern knowledge of objects, but the existence of that knowledge is said to constitute the existence of the objects known. It is this reduction of existence to knowledge which gives rise to interpretations of Kant in which the mind is said to create objects.

Whereas, in the correspondence theory, appearances form an intervening realm between the representations of the mind and the objects in themselves, according to the coherence theory, the only alternative to something's being as object in itself is for it to be an object in the mind: "What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us. We know nothing but our mode of perceiving them."²⁵ The object in itself would, of course, be unknown in any interpretation of Kant. But the object in itself need not be equated with the object which affects the senses, as it seems to be in this passage. Here Kant is seemingly attempting to reduce that which is received to receptivity, that which is perceived to a mode of perception, and actuality to capacity.

Since, whatever objects as appearances may be, it is by means of judgment that representations relate to their

²⁴A120.

²⁵A42.

objects, I shall have to introduce an interpretation of Kant's views on judgment. Then I can further develop this comparison of the coherence theory of objects and the correspondence theory of objects, with a view to illustrating and evaluating these opposing tendencies in the Critique of Pure Reason.

Consider the procedure of a geologist confronted with a strange rock specimen. In order to find out what kind of rock it is he may first note some ordinary facts about the rock, its color and texture, as well as the natural setting in which the specimen was found. Perhaps he will break the rock to see what kind of pattern results, whether the planes of fracture result in jagged, conchoidal, or flat surfaces. For more exact identification he will determine how hard the specimen is on an established scale by attempting to scratch the rock with implements or other rocks whose degree of hardness is already known. Finally, the crystal structure of the specimen can be examined under a microscope.

I shall interpret this procedure of identification in terms of the judgments involved, since it is in terms of judgments that representations are related to objects, whether these objects are combinations of representations or quite distinct from such combinations. It is possible, of course, that the geologist will not literally say out loud or even to himself, "This rock is black and smooth and has a perfect conchoidal fracture," but this does not matter, since

judgments, for Kant, are not defined by the words or sentences which may or may not be used to express and communicate the judgments.

Judgment is "the mediate knowledge of an object, that is, the representation of a representation of it. In every judgment there is a concept which holds of many representations, and among them of a given representation that is immediately related to an object."²⁶ Thus, in, "this rock is black," "black" applies to many objects, but is here applied to a particular object, "this rock."

Since Kant defines judgment in terms of representations and in terms of the relationship between the thinking subject and objects, the judgment, "this rock is black," though I cannot write it out here without using words, need not take a linguistic form to qualify as a judgment. The geologist, having wondered what kind of rock he has just picked up, might suddenly realize that one clue to the identity of the rock is that it is black--and he might realize this without having put his realization into words. This realization would qualify as a Kantian judgment. Something happened in the geologist's mind: At first he just perceived "this rock," then he noticed that it was a black rock; an immediate object was represented and subsumed under a more general representation without a word having been said or thought. The ability to put this judgment into words might be a necessary condition for the judgment's having been made,

but this actual judgment need not thereby be put into words. Judgment, as the representation of a representation, though not necessarily being expressed in language, may still be quite deliberate, as it is in the example of the geologist.

"This rock" is an object as appearance. Only through the mediating activity of the mind is the knowledge that this rock is black possible, since it is only by representing in one's mind this object and further subsuming this representation under the more general representation, "black," that one can realize that "this rock is black;" otherwise the immediate object, "this rock," would be forgotten before there was time to realize or judge or know anything about it.

The geologist's procedure, then, can be interpreted as so many deliberate judgments. "This rock has a conchoidal fracture," "This rock is extremely hard on a standard scale," "This rock is flint," are all judgments which consist of mediate and general representations of the immediate and particular object as appearance which is being represented, and about which the judgments are made.

However, Kant is concerned less with judgments, such as those in the above examples, which are made in the course of inquiry, than he is concerned with the conditions which must be met before there is even the possibility of making judgments.

Above I discussed the judgment, "This rock is black." What if it is asked how we even know "this is a rock"?

Doubtless there are occasions on which this judgment could be made, but usually there is no discernable passage of time in one's experience of a simple object like a rock between one's perceiving the object and perceiving it as a rock. In the case of the geologist, he recognized the rock as a rock as soon as he saw it (by hypothesis); He did not see an indeterminate object first, wonder what it was, and then have it dawn upon him suddenly that it was a rock; He saw it as a rock from the start. Surely this happens countless times every day with simple objects with which we are familiar.

In spite of the fact that the geologist perceived a rock immediately, there is still something mediate and synthetic about this perception for several reasons. First, it is possible, say for a child who has never seen, or at least never attended to, a rock, to see an indeterminate object first, and only later learn that it is a rock. Second, it is possible, in theory, to make a judgment here, even though one already knows what the object is; it is possible to distinguish "this," as something which is immediately present, from "a rock" as a general concept, and then to re-combine the two into the judgment, "this is a rock." Third, it is possible to be mistaken, so that what one immediately perceived as a rock turns out later to be a papier-mâché imitation of a rock which some evil genius has put there to deceive us. Such a mistake could be analyzed in terms of

judgments, since it would still be true that one perceived "this," something immediately present, but not true that "this is a rock."

So here is a peculiarity of perception: When I confront a strange object, I become familiar with it by making a number of judgments, not necessarily linguistically expressed, but quite conscious and deliberate. Thereafter, when I encounter the object, I perceive it immediately as a rock, or as a tree, or as whatever it is, without making judgments.

Though this sort of perception of objects with which we are familiar is not a judgment, it does involve a combination of elements of the perception, which can be analyzed in terms of the capacity to judge. This is why judgment is relevant to perception: The conditions which make it possible to make a judgment like, "This rock is black," are the very same conditions which make it possible to perceive something immediately as a rock without making a judgment.

The whole routine of judgments, which the geologist makes, presupposes a number of conditions, such as the ability to perceive distinct objects enduring in time and located in space, without which the judgments would be impossible. For instance, if the geologist wants to examine rock crystals under a microscope in order to base a sophisticated judgment on the magnified image, he will have to be able to recognize and adjust a microscope. He could not recognize a microscope

were he not capable of apprehending certain very general characteristics about it which are so general that they apply to any other object coming within his experience also.

At a given moment the geologist sees the microscope from--say--a side-view: He sees quite clearly the way the base is attached to the neck of the microscope, with the stage for holding slides attached at the bottom of the neck, and a vertical, adjustable tube, with an eyepiece at the top and a lense on the bottom, attached at the top of the neck. Now suppose he turns the microscope so that he sees the adjustable tube from the front. The tube is closer to him than the neck, which is almost entirely hidden by the tube so that the only part of the neck that can be seen is through the gap below the lense and above the stage. Then again, seen from the back, the neck blocks much of the lower part of the tube from view, as well as the center of the edge of the stage. From the side, back, and front, only a thin plate-like edge of the stage can be seen, though the stage looks circular looking straight down from the top.

Between the side, front, back, top, and bottom views of the microscope there are an infinite number of intermediate views. Thus there is a view at an angle half way between a side and a front view, at an angle turned three-quarters of the way towards the front from the side, seven-eighths of the way towards the front, and so on.

Any one of these views may be considered as a unit, and

any number of them as a plurality of units, and any series of these units which go together to form a significant pattern, as a totality of units. In this case, the side view of the microscope is a unit. The series of views between the side view and the front view is a plurality. This plurality is further unified in a totality, since there are significant similarities between the different views in the series. For instance, the neck of the microscope seems to be a slightly different shape in a full side view than it does in a view from the side turned one-quarter of the way towards the front. If the one-quarter angle view is compared to the one-eighth angle view, there will also be a slight difference. But as the angle chosen gets smaller and smaller, there will eventually be two points of view between which there is no difference in the way the shape of the neck of the microscope seems in one view and in the other. It might, for example, be impossible to distinguish a difference in the distortion of the side view (taking the side view as undistorted) between the neck of the microscope as seen at an angle which is turned $5/32$ nds towards the front, and as seen from an angle which is turned $6/32$ nds towards the front. It is thus with all the views of the microscope: Since there are an infinite number of angles from which the microscope may be viewed, for any two views, no matter how diverse, there will always be a series of views in transition from one view to the other, such that, at any point in the transition,

there are two views which are so similar as to be indistinguishable in normal perception.

It is not as if a microscope when turned at a slight angle changed into a baked potato, and when turned just a bit more suddenly became a two-headed talking giraffe; rather, there are complex interrelationships among views of varying degrees of difference and similarity. It is such complex interrelationships which make a totality, not just a plurality of views. The plurality of views, "microscope, baked potato, giraffe," succeeding one another within a fraction of a second could not really occur at all, since there would not be time to recognize the first view as a view of a microscope, or even as a view of anything at all, and likewise for the succeeding views. But the series of views, "microscope seen from the side, microscope seen as turned $1/32$ nd of the way towards the front, as seen $2/32$ nds turned towards the front, as seen $3/32$ nds turned towards the front, etc."--this series could easily be apprehended if it continued for a few seconds (within the larger experience of a living person, of course), because it is not just a plurality of individual units, but a totality in which there is something which all the units have in common which makes them all go together.

In this example I have utilized the first set of categories, the constitutive categories of quantity, and the development of these categories into schemata and principles.

That each isolated view of the microscope is a unit, that there are a plurality of such units, and that these units are interconnected into a totality--all this is an application of the categories, Unity, Plurality, Totality, in their development in the section, "Axioms of Intuition."

This section is concerned with showing that "all intuitions are extensive magnitudes," that is, that for ordinary objects of experience there are certain parts of the object for which "the representation of the parts makes possible, and therefore necessarily precedes, the representation of the whole:"²⁷ It is impossible to become familiar with a whole microscope unless one sees it from all sorts of different angles first, in addition to sensing it in other ways. Each of these isolated representations of a microscope is subsumed under the more general representation, "microscope."

Though there are isolated points of view of a microscope which are perceived one after another, these views are not perceived like the stop-action in a movie; they are not perceived jerkily or with a vacuum between each point of view. Rather, there is a continuous experience of a microscope as it is turned from one angle to another. Though Kant mentions this continuity of experience in the section, "Anticipations of Perception," he is partly referring back to the "Axioms of Intuition" when he says that all appearances "are

²⁷A162.

continuous magnitudes, alike in their intuition, as extensive, and in their mere perception (sensation and with it reality) as intensive."²⁸ It is the continuity of extensive magnitudes which I am now illustrating with the microscope example.

So, the number of views of the microscope between a side view and a front view cannot be apprehended before the continuous experience of a microscope, since there are an infinite number of such intermediate views, and if all of them had to be apprehended before the whole microscope was apprehended, this would take an infinite length of time, and we could never come to perceive the microscope. It is as if the infinite points of view (which we experience as continuity) were subsumed under the common representation, "microscope."

(It is easily seen that the microscope can only be perceived in space and time, since the views of the microscope could not be perceived as views of different parts, such as the neck, and the lense, and the eyepiece, without perceiving them spatially, as existing outside of one another, beside, in front, in back, above, below one another, etc.; also, the different views follow one another in the experience of the perceiver, and the microscope endures: It is perceived in time.)

²⁸A170.

In interpreting these illustrations of judgment and perception in terms of the correspondence theory of objects and the coherence theory of objects, it might seem that the correspondence theory is more appropriate for the examples of actual judgment, while the coherence theory deals better with the cases of perception presupposing the capacity to judge. So, the procedure of identifying a rock would be analyzed in terms of coherence. The geologist examining a rock would already be aware of the rock as being present outside him when he undertook the identification of it. His judgments, "this rock is black," "this rock has conchoidal fracture," would simply be a matter of forming representations which adequately corresponded to the facts he discovered about the object. As for his immediate perception of something as a rock, which preceded this identification, that would not depend so much on whether there was something outside him as on his ability to perceive a diversity of sensory impressions as separated into various groups or combined into more or less distinct shapes. If correspondence and coherence were limited to dealing with such separate aspects of experience, they would not be in competition, but would simply be two different theories about different topics.

However, the coherence and correspondence theories of objects cannot be so easily reconciled. I have already said (pp. 37-38) that there are coherence and correspondence considerations in both theories. It is true that the geologist

would form judgments corresponding to the facts he discovered, but in the final analysis, his discovery might be only that the only way that the diversity of his representations could be unified at a certain time was under the concept of a black rock with conchoidal fracture, the correspondence being between the representations, "rock," "black," and "conchoidal fracture," as they are when considered in isolation, and as they are when considered in combination. Or, concerning the immediately perceived rock, it might turn out that the capacity to represent sensible impressions as shaped objects situated in space is only a necessary condition for actually perceiving such objects, the added condition for perception being the external presence of the objects.

In either case, one can always attempt to analyze correspondence in terms of coherence or subordinate coherence to a more profound correspondence. And as far as the nature of objects as appearances is concerned, it is important to be careful what sort of coherence or correspondence is being considered. The only relevant type of coherence or correspondence here is that which is a sufficient condition for the existence of objects as appearances as things which are represented without in turn being representations of something in turn, while other sorts of coherence or correspondence, as for instance in the coherence and correspondence theories of truth, would not be immediately relevant.

The problem is whether the intransitivity of objects as appearances is derived from the combination of representations in our minds, or whether this intransitivity is a primitive element of perception which our representations come up against outside the mind. In the case of the perception of a microscope as an object as appearance, various limited viewpoints serve as examples of isolated representations. From the top, the eyepiece is seen as a round piece of glass encircled by the top of the cylindrical adjustable tube, and with parts of the stage and base and neck of the microscope visible below. Seen from the front, the stage and the tube will be closest to the observer and hide parts of the microscope from view. From the back, the connection of the tube to the stage and base by the neck of the microscope will be most obvious. Other representations are the intermediate points of view between top, front, back, etc.

The transitivity of these representations is clear: "A microscope as seen from the top" is a representation which requires a microscope to complete its meaning, since, if there were no such thing as a microscope, there would be no way of seeing a microscope from the top. Although a representation of a microscope from the top is not the same thing as a more comprehensive representation of a microscope, the former, as a limitation of the latter, presupposes the latter.

However, this may seem artificial, since I deliberately chose representations which required a microscope as their object. What if these representations are in turn analyzed in terms of other representations? A representation of an eyepiece might be part of a representation of some other instrument other than a microscope. A representation of a circular piece of glass need not be a representation of part of an eyepiece. A representation of a smooth, transparent surface need not be a representation of a circular piece of glass. But, evidently, no matter how isolated and limited a representation is it is still perceived as something: Something smooth, something transparent, a surface, a circular shape.

It is further evident that experience does not consist of the consciousness of an isolated smoothness in a vacuum, followed by an interval of complete absence of consciousness, and then by consciousness of a circular shape in a vast emptiness, not even emptiness, but an unsupported circular shape with no relationship to the previous smoothness, no memory or expectation of any other representations, then another period of unconsciousness, then a completely new consciousness of a timeless transparency with no reference to smooth or round. Rather, experience involves continuous consciousness of related representations.

On the one hand, a representation of something smooth need not be a representation of something which is also

circular, much less be the representation of the surface of the eyepiece of a microscope. On the other hand, the representation of something smooth cannot be the representation of nothing smooth, that is, of smoothness unrelated to any other representations. If we can be conscious of something, it can be represented in various relationships with other things we are conscious of, and if we actually are conscious of it, it must actually be represented in some specific relationships: It is similar to some representations and different than others, simultaneous~~us~~ with some, before some, and after others.

As far as the coherence theory of objects is concerned, it is much easier to see the manner in which isolated, transitive representations would yield intransitive objects in combination, than it is to show that this combination is actually the source of objects: It is simply a matter of the parts being incomplete by themselves, but complete when forming a part of the whole. The representations, "circle," "something smooth," "surface," do not necessarily constitute a specific intransitive object, since they can be combined in different ways, so that "circle" could just as well be about a table, a coin, or a piece of glass which is part of a microscope. But if enough representations are combined, eventually the point is reached where the things represented are represented as specific combinations of representations which are not representations of something else in turn.

For instance, though the representations, "circle," "surface," "transparent," do not necessarily go together, when these representations are given and ordered in time and space, when they not necessarily but in fact go together, the representation of a smooth, transparent, circular surface arises without being a representation of something else. Though a sum of representations, it is not itself a representation, but is the object represented. Likewise, while the representation of a circular piece of glass need not be the representation of part of an eyepiece of a microscope as seen from the top, a microscope of which one also has various other views from the side, front, and back, if it is in fact so represented, it is so, not as a means to representing something else, but as an intransitive object as appearance of the sort towards which all representations are directed.

It is not combinations of representations into one object rather than another with which the coherence theory of objects is concerned, but with the possibility of combination, and of objects at all. If one has enough representations of a microscope, including concepts, spatio-temporal position, and a wealth of sensory impressions, one is, as far as the coherence theory is concerned, in the presence of the object without having gone outside one's own representations. It is as if, when enough vaporous representations wrap around each other, they condense into an object.

Insofar as representations can be combined so as to form in unison the goal towards which the isolated representations are directed, they form the sort of object required by the coherence theory of objects. Since there is nothing in the requirement that representations be grouped into consistently inter-related wholes which demands one way of grouping rather than another, as long as the resulting totality of representations is something that is represented without representing something else in turn, the coherence theory of objects supplies only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the existence of objects as appearances which are distinct from other objects as appearances.

When I perceive a microscope, I have many other sensations other than those which are represented as sensations of a microscope, and, of course, I always have access to a lot of other concepts besides the concept of a microscope. Why cannot some of the sensations, which can form part of the representation of a microscope, be combined with some of the other representations in my perceptual field, and these sensations be re-arranged to form a completely different object other than a microscope? As long as the coherence of representations is supposed to be the sufficient condition for the existence of one object rather than another, I can not see why this wouldn't happen. If, however, the

existence of objects is constituted, not in mere combinations of representations, but in something outside these combinations which correspond to them, this correspondence could determine which of the possible coherent combinations of representations actually indicated an existing object at a given time.

There is, then, a sense in which, after all, the coherence theory of objects and the correspondence theory of objects are complementary and not competitive. The question, "What is the sufficient condition for the existence of objects as appearances?", contains this ambiguity: Is it the existence of any objects at all which is in question, or the existence of one object rather than another? Is it the existence of a rock rather than an unintelligible jumble of representations, or is it the existence of a rock rather than a microscope, which is in question? The coherence and correspondence theories are compatible insofar as coherence determines the existence of representations as objects, and the correspondence determines the existence of objects as rocks and microscopes and other things as diverse.

"That which lies in the successive apprehension is here viewed as representation, while the appearance which is given to me, notwithstanding that it is nothing but the sum of these representations, is viewed as their object!"²⁹ I pick up a rock, look at it from various angles, and make

²⁹A191.

some simple experiments, and in so doing discover that it is black, has conchoidal fracture, and is hard on a standard scale. My knowledge of the object grows step by step in this process of familiarization. Each bit of information I hold in my mind is a representation--it is about something and is different than the thing it is about. But if I add together, one by one, each of these representations into an inter-related whole, I end up with a sum which is indistinguishable from the object. Once I become thoroughly familiar with an object by sensation, conceptualization, and location in space and time, I cannot distinguish the object from the sum of these representations.

Since it is equally true of any object that it is, in the sense illustrated in the above paragraph, a sum of representations, insofar as an object is a sum of representations, no two objects are different. But, as it is evident that the objects which we perceive and know about and experience are not all identical, but diverse, the differences among objects will have to be accounted for in some other way than as a result of objects being a sum of representations. The principles in Kant's "Transcendental Analytic" cannot account for the differences, since these principles are the same for every object, and not a differential. Differences in sensations alone cannot account for the differences between objects, because sensations, such as, "black," "smooth," "hard," can be combined in different ways, and one

always has so many different sensations that various combinations would be possible. There would be no reason why one combination would be preferred to another, unless it so happens that the ability to receive and combine representations establishes a relationship of these representations and combinations of representations to something which corresponds to them in the objects outside our representations.

How are the objects which we can know related to the representations of them? What is the distinction between appearances and representations? Each of these questions may be given two answers. If the objects as appearances in these two questions are objects as opposed to complete chaos, then the relationship between representations and their objects is the relationship of one aspect of an object to the whole object, of the part to the whole, of one unit of perception to an inter-related totality of perception, and the distinction between representations and appearances is that the representations concern an incomplete aspect of, or isolated relationships between, the appearances, while the appearance is that which completes the meaning of the representation and which enters into various relationships. If the objects are objects as opposed to other objects, then the relationship of representations to their objects, and the distinction between representation and appearance,

is that the representation is about something in the object as appearance which corresponds to it, and while the appearances do not exist separately from their relationships to the representations of the subject, they are something outside of the subject, and quite distinct from the representations of them, if only while they are being represented.

Is the intransitivity of appearances primitive or derived? Again there are two answers: The intransitivity involved in combinations of representations is derived from separate representations by combination. The intransitivity of the objects outside of our representations is primitive. Are appearances a species of representations? Here again one may say, yes, in regard to coherence considerations, and, no, as concerns correspondence. However, considering that appearances as combinations of representations have such distinct characteristics from uncombined representations, Kant's insistence that appearances are representations remains baffling.

If the coherence and correspondence theory tendencies in Kant's thought are reconcilable, they are still not actually reconciled by Kant. Their presence is revealed less by open opposition than by ambiguity. For instance, when Kant says that nature "is merely an aggregate of appearances, so many representations of the mind,"³⁰ does he

³⁰A114.

mean that the various objects which we come across in the course of experience are all in our minds, or that these objects are related to but distinct from the mind, while nature, as that ideal totality of objects in thorough-going interrelationships with each other, is only in the mind, since this totality far transcends experience? When Kant says that "an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united,"³¹ does he mean that there would be no object at all if the concept didn't impose order on the intuitions, or that the intuitions are unified in a manner so as to correspond to the object, which is distinct from the intuitions, the concept, and the combination of the two?

In spite of such ambiguities, some definite conclusions about representations and the objects which they represent can be made. The representation is always about the appearance, which is the goal towards which the representation is directed in perception and knowledge. The representation concerns isolated characteristics of the object in the cases of concepts and sensations, and relationships between objects or parts of objects in the cases of space and time. The object is the thoroughly experienced goal of perception, that which is perceived as an end, and not as a means to perceiving something else, that which is exhaustively interpreted in terms of the different kinds of representations: It is located in space and time, sensed in various ways, and conceptualized.

³¹B137.

Chapter Three:: Subject and Object

In discussing objects in themselves and objects as appearances, I put the emphasis on the fact that it was objects that I was concerned with. I did not deal directly with the subject as a definite entity contrasted to objects, but I dealt with the subject only insofar as it is implied by objects. I do not here wish to give an exhaustive treatment of the thinking, perceiving subject in Kant's philosophy. However, I will attempt to make more explicit something which is implicit in chapters one and two--that subject and object cannot exist or be described separately from one another.

To say nothing more of objects in themselves as opposed to objects as appearances, than that the former are in principle unknowable and that the latter are in fact known, is already to involve the subject, for it is the subject which knows or does not know. And in the case of Kant, to introduce the question of whether or not something is in principle knowable is to bring in, not only the subject, but also a relationship of the subject to objects, for something cannot be known merely in being thought; there must also be an intuition of--an immediate relation to--the object. It is because there is no intuition of objects apart from sensibility that objects in themselves are unknown. Moreover, in further specifying the reasons why objects

as appearances can be known and objects in themselves can not, the subject is mentioned in specific relations to objects: Human intuition consists of sensation and the a priori representations of space and time, and so only those objects outside us which can be sensed and are in space and time can be known.

In spite of the fact that objects in themselves are unknowable, it is still significant to go to the trouble of denying that they can be known insofar as belief in objects in themselves arises from the very nature of thought. We have the ability to abstract, to remove conditions in thought, so that, concerning a book of 300 pages measuring 3 X 5 inches and with a green cover and hard binding, we can ignore some characteristics and attend to others and conceptualize the book merely as, say, having 300 pages without specifying any other characteristics. We can also add conditions in thought, even to the extent of constructing a concept of something we have never perceived, even of something which couldn't possibly be perceived, of an object in itself which we can believe to, but not know to, exist on the insufficient basis of one element of knowledge, on the basis of an empty concept. All this again involves the subject even though it is objects which are being discussed.

More comprehensive than the specific relationships between belief and knowledge and their objects is the relationship between representations in general and their

objects. Here the inter-relationships between subject and object are most obvious, for being represented by a subject is at least a necessary condition for the existence of objects at all. So far I have referred to "isolated representations" and "combinations of representations" in order to contrast representations as they are separate from one another and as they are in the combinations which relate to objects as appearances. Something needs to be said about "isolated representations," since I have been using this expression only in a negative sense, to mean, "representations insofar as they are not combined so as to relate to objects as appearances."

Isolated representations, in a positive sense, are not completely isolated, but more or less isolated. Representations do not exist in complete separation from all other representations or separate from the continuous experience of the world by a thinking, perceiving subject. One case in which representations are more or less isolated is that in which an object is seen from a certain angle. In this sense, "a microscope as seen from the top" is a representation. A case of a greater degree of isolation is that of representations which could enter into any one of a number of combinations. Representations such as, "circle," "smooth," "black," and "surface," are of this sort.

How are representations of this last sort related to one another when they are separated from the combinations

which relate to objects as appearances? They are, I think, related in a manner such that they can be classified in hierarchical order. By saying that representations can be classified, I mean that there are distinct kinds of representations: A circle as a representation without respect to any particular object as appearance is not just a circle; it is a figure contrasted to triangles, squares, and other figures. Likewise, smoothness is not just smoothness, but is a texture contrasted to roughness, and black is not just black, but is a color distinguishable from white and red and yellow. This is not to say that I have a chart of representations hovering before my mind, but only that in order to be conscious of isolated representations, so that objects as appearances would not be the only things I am conscious of, I must be able to relate representations to other representations of the same kind, and that such classifications are part of the meaning of the representations. Part of what "black" means is: Not some other color. Isolated representations do not float away when their reference to a particular object as appearance is cut away, only because they are still tied to other representations by various inter-related similarities and differences.

By the hierarchical order of representations, I mean that representations may be about other representations only in the sense that representations which are more remotely related to objects as appearances can represent other

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representations which are less remotely related to objects as appearances. This means partly that black is a color but color is not a black, but mainly that one can conceptualize sensory impressions but one cannot have a sensory impression of a concept (though one can sense the object of a concept). Ideas, in Kant's technical sense, are a way of representing categories, and categories are a way of representing things in space and time, but things in space and time cannot represent categories, nor can categories represent ideas.

Representations, in order to qualify as representations, must be capable of entering into two kinds of relationships with other representations: They must be able to enter into combinations which relate to, if not constitute, objects as appearances, and they must be capable of fitting into the hierarchical classification of different sorts of representations. So, "black," "conchoidal fracture," and "hard," can be combined in the representation of a hunk of flint, and can also be related to other representations as being species of sensible impressions, of colors, of the concept of fracture, and so on. The flint could not be black if "black" could not be meaningfully contrasted to "white" and "yellow," nor could such a contrast be made if there were no instances of colored objects.

Objects as we know them would cease to exist if we were unable to combine representations of different kinds, while

we would be unable to combine representations of different kinds, if representations did not have similarities which permitted them to be classified into kinds of representations. We could not stand back and make judgments about objects if there were no objects, and there would be no objects if we could not stand back and make judgments. Thus Kant is a very un-Cartesian dualist: Subject and Object, unlike mind and body, are thoroughly inter-dependent and cannot exist separately from one another.

From this point of view, the greatest difficulty in conceiving of immortality is: What would the subject think about if separated from the objects of sensation? My experience of my own subjectivity occurs only under the conditions of a continuous experience of the world. Since I can remove conditions in thought, I can form the transcendental idea of a subject in itself, a subject apart from the conditions of experience, but since the object of this idea cannot be intuited, I cannot have knowledge of this unconditioned unity of the thinking subject.

Though I cannot unconditionally intuit my own thoughts, I can conditionally intuit them, the condition being "inner sense," that is, time. Or, as Kant puts it, I do not know myself as I am in myself but only as I appear to myself:¹

¹B68, B153 ff.

I have no knowledge of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself. The consciousness of self is thus very far from being a knowledge of the self. . . I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination; but in respect of the manifold which it has to combine I am subjected to a limiting condition (entitled inner sense), namely, that this combination can be made intuitable only according to relations of time.²

I mention this distinction between the "I" which thinks and the "I" which intuits itself, not because I wish to discuss it at any length, but because it involves a sort of object which I have so far said nothing of, a knowable object which is in time without being in space or being capable of affecting our senses. In fact, our own minds, as distinct entities as they appear to ourselves, are not the only such objects, for "everything," Kant says, "every representation even, in so far as we are conscious of it, may be entitled object."³ In this broad sense, in which an object is something one is conscious of, more or less isolated representations and spatio-temporal-sensory objects would both be objects.

Confusion may arise if there are passages where Kant refers to objects ambiguously, so that the reader cannot tell whether objects in the very general sense of something one is conscious of (including, I suppose, mathematical equations, concepts, dreams, and hallucinations) is meant, or

²B158-159.

³A189.

if the more specific sense of something sensed in space and time is meant. However, there is no problem in principle, since the nature and significance of objects in the general, and in the more specific sense are quite distinct. Something insofar as we are conscious of it is one thing, and something insofar as we are conscious of it by means of sensation and as located in space and time is another, much more specific, thing.

That the spatio-temporal-sensory object plays a much more significant role in the Critique than that which is an object merely because we are conscious of it, is easily shown considering that Kant says that we have synthetic a priori knowledge of outer appearances--that is, of spatio-temporal-sensory objects--only and not inner appearances,⁴ and that the question of how a priori synthetic judgments are possible is "The General Problem of Pure Reason,"⁵ and the question to which the entire Critique is the answer, a question which concerns knowledge of spatio-temporal-sensory objects. When Kant says that the proper employment of the categories is to appearances, not things in themselves, he means outer appearances, spatio-temporal-sensory objects, only: "The categories have meaning only in relation to the unity of intuition in space and time."⁶

⁴ A381.

⁵ B19.

⁶ B308.

One further point I shall deal with, by way of illustrating the distinction between, and the inter-dependence of, subject and object, is the contrast between mental and physical representations. By mental representations, I mean nothing more unusual than, and, indeed, nothing other than, the types of representations which I have been discussing all along: Ideas, concepts, time, sensations, judgments, and so on. By physical representations, I mean such things as photographs, paintings, drawings, maps, and diagrams.

It may seem strange that I did not mention physical representations in order to help understand mental representations. If I hold up a photograph before me at the spot from which it was taken, I can compare the photograph as a representation to the scene photographed as that represented. There is a house in the photograph which looks like the house before me, and a large evergreen tree, twice as tall as the house and to the left of the house, in both the photograph and in the scene before me. There are two smaller deciduous trees to the right of the house in both the representation and the scene represented.

Does this not offer a perfect analogy for the discerning epistemologist, so that, in the same way that a photograph can be compared to the scene which was photographed, the concepts, images, and sensations of the perceiver can be compared to that in the external world which is conceptualized, imagined, and sensed? I think not, for the concept is not

compared to the thing conceptualized, but is something by means of which comparison is possible. In order to compare the scene as it appears in the photograph with the scene as it appears to a person on the spot, I must be able to recognize the photograph as a photograph, and the houses and trees as houses and trees, rather than as unconnected phenomena. Also, I must be able to perceive similarities in shape, texture, relative position, and proportion between such diverse entities as a tree and a house in a photograph and a real tree and house.

The photograph is as much an object of sensation located in space and time as are the trees and the house of which the photograph was taken. The photograph is a definite size, shape, and weight, and it is possible to consider the arrangement of shapes and colors on it just as an arrangement of shapes and colors, not as a representation of something. Mental and physical representations are both about something that is represented, but while a physical representation has additional characteristics of its own of the same sort as the thing represented, the mental representation has no other characteristic than its being about something other than itself.

Since a physical representation has physical characteristics of its own, in addition to its being a representation, it can be described in detail without the fact that it is

a representation being mentioned. There is, for instance, on page 170 of a certain text-book something which is three inches wide and two inches high. In this space there are some lines in black ink varying in width from $1/16$ th to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch. Some of these lines are curved and some straight, some interconnected and some isolated, some faint and some dark. Incidentally, these lines can be taken as a representation of the human heart.

Far from the understanding of physical representations being necessary for the understanding of mental representations, physical representations presuppose mental representations. For the representation of a rectangular piece of paper with various colored shapes, in a definite relation to one another, on it to be perceived as a photograph and not as a series of unrelated phenomena, the perceiver must be able to recognize the markings on the paper as shapes of a particular sort distinguishable from other shapes. And the photograph must be there in a definite place in order for sensation and conceptualization to be stimulated into action. The relationship between mental and physical representations in which the mental representations take physical representations as their object is no different than the relationship between the mental representations of the perceiving subject and any other object. The physical representation is just another object, and not a basis for theorizing about "pictures in the mind."

In terms of this comparison of mental and physical representations, it can be seen why I think that Kant's "immediately given object" can be equated both to the spatio-temporal-sensory object and to that which is represented without representing something else in turn. The mental representation, though an object in the weak sense of being something we are conscious of, is neither an object in the sense in which synthetic a priori judgments apply to objects, nor is it immediately given, rather it is that--in relation to other representations in the hierarchical order of different kinds of representations which form the subject--to which objects are given. And physical representations do not offer a counter-example of a spatio-temporal-sensory object which is not only represented but also represents, because the sense in which physical representations represent is completely different from the sense in which mental representations represent. A mental representation is a way in which the subject relates to objects, while a physical representation, as a representation, beyond being an object, is a relationship between two objects in which the perceiver interprets certain characteristics of one object as corresponding to characteristics of the other.

Conclusion

Kant's subject-object distinction can be understood in terms of representations. The subject consists of representations insofar as they are related to other representations of the same kind and the various kinds of representations enter into hierarchical order, and these classifiable, orderable representations are compared, contrasted, and inter-connected as a means to perception. The object is that which representations relate to as an end by entering into combinations of representations from different levels in the hierarchical order; i.e., the combination cannot be of sensations only, but also of the representations, space and time, and of concepts.

Besides the spatio-temporal-sensory object, there are two other kinds of objects according to Kant: There is the object as anything we are conscious of, and the object in itself. Both of these kinds of objects can only be understood by relating them to the subject-object distinction, as stated above. Anything so far as we are conscious of it includes even isolated representations, but isolated representations can only exist insofar as they maintain some relationship to the hierarchical order of representations in the subject; they are more or less isolated: They do not necessarily relate to an object present to the perceiver at a given time, but they do have definite similarities

and differences with other representations, and are, compared to other representations, more, or less, remotely related to spatio-temporal-sensory objects.

The importance of something which is an object only insofar as we are conscious of it is limited, because it is not in any sense an object which is outside ourselves, nor is it believed to be outside us. The significance of the object in itself is that it is an object which we do believe to be outside ourselves, in spite of the fact that it cannot be sensed or located in space and time.

It is easier to point out and differentiate the various kinds of objects dealt with by Kant than it is to show just how he thought the different kinds of objects are related. I discussed the problem of how representations are related to appearances, of whether the objects which we can know are combinations of representations or something outside of those combinations to which the combinations of representations relate. If one can never be sure which alternative Kant would prefer, there are similarities in the distinction made in either case: The object as appearance, whether outside of our representations or a mere combination of representations, is still that within the realm of the knowable which is perceived as an end and not as a means to perceiving something else.

Kant's views of the relationship between objects as appearances and objects in themselves are confusing, since

the former are sometimes referred to as if they were the knowledge we have of the latter, even though the latter are unknowable. Thus Kant says that "appearances are only representations of things which are unknown as regards what they may be in themselves."¹ This seemingly contradicts my often repeated opinion that the appearances are represented without representing anything in turn. However, the contradiction disappears, if we consider how Kant constantly forces us to compare our modest bit of knowledge with the vast regions outside of knowledge which surround and threaten to engulf us: It is within the realm of the knowable that appearances are represented without representing something else in turn, and only in the framework of thoughts and beliefs, with no corresponding intuitions, that appearances are representations of objects in themselves.

We can no more know that appearances are representations of things in themselves than we can not believe that they are. To know that appearances are representations of objects in themselves we would have to know objects in themselves. But objects in themselves are objects as they are independently of our knowledge of them, so, we can neither know objects in themselves nor that appearances are representations of them. In order not to tend to believe that

¹ B164.

appearances are representations of objects in themselves, we would have to be incapable of abstract thought and the ability to conceive of things we have never experienced, and to conceive of things we do experience apart from our experience of them.

An appearance may be an appearance to someone or an appearance of something. As far as knowledge is concerned, objects as appearances are objects as they appear to the subject which knows, and only within the wider context of belief in the unconditioned are objects as appearances the appearances of objects in themselves. Appearances may be representations of things which are unknown, but we cannot know they are. Within the realm of the knowable, representations are representations of appearances. To say that these appearances are in turn representations is to forsake the knowable for that which can be believed, in spite of the fact that it is in principle unknowable.

For Kant, the complexity and precision of knowledge occurs as a limitation on, and a discipline of, the temptation--inseparable from the ability to think abstractly--of belief in the unconditioned. The land of truth is an island "surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion."²

²A235.

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