

# Critique of Pure Reason up to the end of the Analytic

Immanuel Kant

1781

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Each four-point ellipsis. . . indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between square brackets in normal-sized type. This version follows (B) the second edition of the *Critique*, though it also includes the (A) first-edition version of the Preface and of one other extended passage. Numerals like vii and 27 in the margins refer to page-numbers in B; ones like A xii and A 242 refer to A, and are given only for passages that don't also occur in B; and the likes of ..68 mean that B 68 (or whatever) started during the immediately preceding passage that has been omitted. These references can help you to connect this version with other translations or with the original German. Cross-references to other parts of this work include the word 'page(s)', and refer to page-numbers at the foot of each page. When something is referred to as 'on page n' it may run over onto the next page.

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### Chapter 3: The basis for distinguishing all objects into phenomena and noumena

295 We have now not merely explored the territory of pure understanding, and looked carefully at every part of it, but have also mapped it and put everything in its proper place. This territory is an island, however, enclosed by Nature itself within unchangeable borders. It is the land of *truth*—  
 296 enchanting name!— surrounded by a large stormy ocean, the sea of illusion. In this ocean many fog banks and swiftly melting icebergs give the deceptive appearance of distant shores, for ever deceiving the roving seafarer with empty hopes, enticing him into adventures that he can't ever bring to their end but also can't abandon. Before we set sail on this sea, to explore it in all directions and find out for sure there is any reason for such hopes, it will be useful to glance at the map of the land we're about to leave, with two questions in mind. (1) Couldn't we be satisfied with what *it* contains? Indeed, mightn't it be that we *have to* settle for that because there is no other land for us to go to? (2) What entitles us to possess even this land and to secure it against all hostile claims? I have already answered these questions well enough in the course of the Analytic, but still a compact overview of those answers may help to make you more confident that they are right, by condensing the various considerations into a single point.

296 It is a point that we have already seen, namely that everything the understanding derives from itself is, though not *borrowed from* experience, available to the understanding solely for *use in* experience. The principles of pure understanding—and this includes both the constitutive *a priori* mathematical principles and the merely regulative dynamical ones—contain nothing but a sort of *pure sketch* of possible experience. For the unity of experience comes

entirely from the •synthetic unity that the understanding confers—this being a basic, underived, unaided action on its part—on the synthesis of imagination that is involved in self-awareness; and the appearances—which are the basis for any knowledge that we can have—must conform to that •synthetic unity. (Conform to it *a priori*, of course; none of this comes *from* experience.) But although these rules of understanding are not only true *a priori* but are the source of all truth, . . . we aren't satisfied with an account merely of *what is true*; we want also an account of *what we want to know*. •This generates an argument for saying that what I have done up to here isn't of much value•:

If •this critical enquiry doesn't teach us any more than what we would have known in any case—without this subtle inquiry—through our merely empirical use of our understanding, •it seems not to bring any advantage that makes it worth the trouble.

Here is one reply to that:

When we are trying to extend our knowledge, the attitude of 'I want to know. . .' is at its most harmful when it occurs in constantly insisting 'I want to know whether this is going to be useful' in advance of doing any of the work. •As well as being harmful, it is absurd•, because before the inquiry has been completed we aren't in a position to form the least conception of this usefulness, even if it were staring us in the face.

297 But there is in fact one kind of usefulness that •can be grasped in advance of doing the work, and indeed• can be understood and found interesting by even the most sluggish and hard-to-please student. namely:

The understanding can get along pretty well when it is occupied merely with its empirical use, and not thinking about the sources of its own knowledge; but there is one •two-part• job that it can't do, namely

•discovering the boundaries of its use, and •coming to know what lies within its domain and what lies outside it. And *this* demands precisely the deep enquiries that I have embarked on.

If the understanding in its empirical use can't tell whether certain questions lie within its domain or not, it can never be sure of its claims or of its possessions, and is setting itself up for many embarrassing corrections that will occur whenever it steps outside its own domain and loses itself in delusions and deceptions. And this will keep happening—that's inevitable ·if the use of reason is not accompanied by a critique like mine·.

If we can know for sure that

The understanding can't use its *a priori* principles—can't even use its *concepts*—transcendentally or in *any* way except empirically,

298 this knowledge will yield important consequences. In any given principle, a concept is being used •transcendentally when the principle is asserted of •things in themselves; and a concept is being used •empirically when the principle is asserted merely of •appearances, i.e. things of which one could have experience. The use of concepts in application to appearances is the only use that is possible ·and legitimate·, and here is why. (·The explanation will occupy the remainder of this paragraph·.) Two things are required for every concept: (1) the logical form by virtue of which it is a concept, and (2) the possibility of applying it to some object. If there is no (2) ·possibility of an· object, the concept has no meaning and is perfectly empty, even if it still (1) contains the logical function for making a concept out of any data that may come its way. [Those two versions of (1) are not obviously equivalent, nor are the two German formulations that they represent. It does look, however, as though Kant meant them to be equivalent, though their shared label '(1)' is not his.] Now, the only way a concept can

be given an object is through intuition. A *pure* intuition can precede the object *a priori*, but even this intuition can only get an object (and thus be objectively valid) from an *empirical* intuition, of which it is the mere form. Therefore all concepts relate to empirical intuitions, i.e. to the data for possible experience—and what holds for the concepts holds also for the principles in which they occur, including the ones that can be known *a priori*. Without this relation to empirical intuition, they have no objective validity, and. . . are a mere play of imagination or of understanding. Take for example 299 the concepts of mathematics, considering them first of all in their pure intuitions. Space has three dimensions, between two points there can be only one straight line, etc. Although all these principles, and the representation of the object with which geometry occupies itself, are generated in the mind completely *a priori*, they wouldn't mean anything if we couldn't present their meaning in appearances, i.e. in empirical objects. So we are required to take the bare concept and *make it sensible*, i.e. present a corresponding object in intuition. . . . The mathematician meets this demand by constructing the figure ·corresponding to the concept·; it is produced *a priori*, but all the same it's an appearance present to the senses. Also in mathematics, the concept of magnitude seeks its standing and sense in number, and this in turn in the fingers, in the beads of the abacus, or in strokes and points that can be *seen*. The concept itself is always *a priori* in origin, and so also are the synthetic principles or formulas that come from it; but it's only in experience that they can be used and can have objects—i.e. things for the concepts to be concepts *of*, and for the principles to be principles *about*. . . . 300

The situation is the same with all categories and the principles derived from them: the only way we can provide for any one of them a *real definition*, i.e. a definition that shows how it can have an object, is by descending to the conditions of

sensibility, and thus to the form of appearances. . . . It is only by relating such a concept to appearances that we can get a grip on what the concept means. . . . ·THE REMAINDER OF THIS PARAGRAPH WAS OMITTED FROM THE SECOND EDITION.·

When I introduced the table of categories [page 52] I let myself off from defining each of them, because my concern was only with their synthetic use, and for that I didn't need such definitions; and one isn't obliged to tackle unnecessary tasks. I wasn't merely evading work! What I offered was an important practical rule: Don't rush into defining a concept, trying to characterize it completely and precisely, if you can get what you want ·for your theoretical purposes· with just one of its properties, without needing an enumeration of all of them. But now it turns out that there is an even deeper reason for the stand that I took back then, namely the fact that we couldn't give *real* definitions of those concepts even if we wanted to. For if we remove all the conditions of sensibility that mark them out as concepts of possible empirical use, and instead view them as concepts of things in general—things of whatever kind, things in themselves, things *period*—and therefore as concepts that can be used transcendently, . . . we have no way of showing that they can have an object. . . ., no way of showing how they can have meaning and objective validity. ·END OF PASSAGE OMITTED FROM SECOND EDITION.·

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·CATEGORIES OF QUANTITY·

No-one can explain the entirely general concept of *magnitude* except like this: '**Magnitude** is the fact about a thing that makes possible a thought about *how many units* are involved in it.' But this how-many-times is based on successive repetition, and therefore on **time** and synthesis. . . .in time.

·CATEGORIES OF QUALITY·

To explain **reality**'s contrast with negation we have to think

of **time** (which contains all being) as either filled with being or as empty.

·CATEGORIES OF RELATION·

If my concept of **substance** is to have anything more to it than the mere logical representation of a subject—which I try to cash in by giving myself the empty and possibly useless thought of 'something that can exist only as subject and never as predicate'—I'll have to bring in persistence, which is existence in all **time**. If I omit from the concept of **cause** the **time** in which x follows from y in conformity with a rule, all I'll find in the pure category is the idea that there is something from which we can infer the existence of something else; and that doesn't tell us how to distinguish cause from effect, and. . . it wouldn't give me the slightest help in identifying any individual case of causation. As for the concept of **community**: given that the categories of substance and causality admittedly can't be explained ·without bringing **time** into the story·, no ·such· explanation can be given of two-way causal interaction between substances.

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·CATEGORIES OF MODALITY·

The supposed principle *Everything contingent has a cause* ·essentially involves time·. It is solemnly paraded as highly important, just in itself; but if I ask 'What do you mean by "contingent"?' and you reply 'Something is contingent if its nonexistence is **possible**', then I want to know how you can tell that something's nonexistence is possible if you don't tie this to a change—a **time**-taking series of appearances in which something's existence comes after its nonexistence or vice versa. ·You might try to keep time out of this by saying that a thing is contingent if its nonexistence isn't self-contradictory, but· to say that something's nonexistence doesn't contradict itself is a lame appeal to a ·merely· logical condition. It is of course *needed for* the concept of real

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possibility, but it's far from being the whole concept. There is no self-contradiction in the thought *There are no substances*, but it doesn't follow from *that* that every substance is objectively contingent, i.e. could have not existed. So long as the definition of **possibility, existence, and necessity** is sought solely in pure understanding, and thus without bringing in **time**, they can't be explained except through an obvious tautology. You would have to be very new to this sort of inquiry to be taken in by the move in which the logical possibility of the *concept* (namely, its not contradicting itself) is substituted for the transcendental possibility of *things* (namely, an object's corresponding to the concept).

From all this it undeniably follows that the pure concepts of understanding can never admit of *transcendental* use but always only of *empirical* use, and that the principles of pure understanding can apply only to objects of the senses. . . . and never to things in general without regard to how or whether we can intuit them.

So the Transcendental Analytic leads to this important conclusion, that the most the understanding can do *a priori* is to anticipate the *form* of any possible experience, and that. . . . the understanding can never step across the boundaries of sensibility within which alone objects can be given to us. . . . So the proud name 'Ontology'—under which philosophers claim to supply, in systematic doctrinal form, synthetic *a priori* knowledge about things as such (for instance, the principle of causality)—must give place to the modest title 'Analytic of pure understanding'.

Thinking is the business of relating given intuitions to an object. If we don't have a specification of what *kind* of intuition it is, then the 'object' is merely transcendental, and the concept of understanding has only a transcendental use, namely as the unity of the abstract general thought *manifold*. Thus, no object is latched onto by a pure category from which

every condition of sensible intuition is filtered out. (Why specify 'sensible'? Because that's the only kind of intuition we can have.) In that case, all the category expresses is the thought *object*—the thought 'Something'! . . . . Now, the use of a concept involves the judgment's doing something to *apply* the concept to some object; so a concept can't be used unless the formal requirement for something to be given in intuition is satisfied; and of course what's required for anything to be given in intuition is also required for any judgment to occur, because judgment is the application of a concept to something given in intuition. If this requirement for judgment isn't satisfied, the concept in question can't be applied to anything, because nothing has been given for it to be applied to. So the merely transcendental 'use' of the categories isn't really a *use* at all. . . . It follows from all this that a *pure* category doesn't suffice for a synthetic *a priori* principle, that the principles of pure understanding are usable only empirically and never transcendently, and that outside the domain of possible experience there can be no synthetic *a priori* principles.

This paragraph presents what may be a good way to state the situation. The pure categories, separated from formal conditions of sensibility, have only a transcendental meaning. But it's impossible for them to be *used* transcendently, because they don't satisfy the formal requirements for having some object to which they can be applied; and with no object, there is no application; with no application, there is no judgment; with no judgment, there is no *use* of the concept. So there we have it: *pure* categories aren't to be used empirically, and can't be used transcendently; so they cannot be used at all. . . .

We have now come to the source of an illusion that it's hard to avoid. The categories don't basically come from sensibility (as do the *forms of intuition*, space and time);

so it seems that they can be applied to objects that are not objects of the senses. This is an illusion, because in fact the categories are nothing but *forms of thought*: all there is to them is the merely logical capacity for uniting the manifold given in intuition into one consciousness; so that when they are separated from the only kind of intuition that is possible to us, namely sensible = passive intuition—they have even less meaning than the pure sensible forms have. Consider one of these sensible forms while separating it from anything empirical, and what do you have? You don't have much, but you do at least have *an object*—namely time and/or space. Now consider a category apart from anything empirical—i.e. consider a way of combining the manifold apart from any intuitions in which such a manifold can be given—and what do you have? *Nothing!* And yet the illusion persists, perhaps encouraged by a certain use of language. If we give to certain objects, as appearances, the label

'sensible entities' (*phenomena*),

this label distinguishes *how we intuit them* from *their nature considered in themselves*; and that encourages us to think we have a use for the label

'intelligible entities' (*noumena*).

This label looks right for (1) the things-as-they-are-in-themselves that are correlated with our intuitions, i.e. things that appearances are appearances *of*, and also for (2) other possible things that aren't objects of our senses (even in the remote way that the members of group (1) are), but are merely thought through the understanding. The question then arises: can our pure concepts of understanding have meaning in respect of—and be a way of knowing—these non-sensible entities?

Right at the outset, however, there's an ambiguity that may lead to serious misunderstanding. When the understanding labels as a 'phenomenon' an object-related-to-it-

thus-and-so, it also starts off a sequence of other actions.

(1) It simultaneously represents to itself—apart from that relation—an *object in itself*,

and as a result of that

(2) It comes to think that it can form *concepts* of such objects. 307

But its own basic stock of concepts contains nothing but the categories, and so

(3) It supposes that the categories must enable us to know in some way—at least to *think*—the object-in-itself.

And as a result of this

(4) It is misled into treating the entirely *indeterminate* concept of a something that lies outside our sensibility as being a *determinate* concept of an entity that can be known in a certain way by means of the understanding.

We can give 'noumenon' [singular; 'noumena' is the plural] either of two senses. If we take it to mean

'thing that is not an object of our sensible intuition', we are using the word in its negative sense. If instead we take 'noumenon' to mean

'object of a non-sensible intuition',

we are using 'noumenon' in its positive sense. This goes much further than the negative sense, because in this positive use of the word we are presupposing that there is a special kind of intuition—*intellectual* intuition. It's not the kind that we actually have, and we can't understand how it could even be possible.

The doctrine of sensibility is at the same time the doctrine of the noumenon, with 'noumenon' understood **negatively**—i.e. of things that the understanding must think

without this reference to our kind of intuition, and therefore must think

•not as mere appearances but as things in themselves. But the understanding is well aware that in viewing things in this way, apart from our kind of intuition, it can't make  
 308 any use of the categories. That's because the categories have meaning only in relation to the unity of intuition in space and time. . . . Where this unity of time isn't to be found, as it isn't in the case of the noumenon, the categories can't be used and don't even have any meaning; because in that case we have no way of finding out whether it is even *possible* that the categories apply to anything. . . . A thing can't be shown to be possible merely by showing that the concept of it isn't self-contradictory; what's needed is to back the concept up by showing that there is an intuition corresponding to it. So if we want to apply the categories to objects that aren't viewed as being appearances, we must of course think that such objects are *possible*, and so we have to lay a foundation for that with a non-sensible intuition—and so we would be assuming that the object is a 'noumenon' in the **positive** sense of the word. But our cognitive powers don't include any such type of intuition—i.e. any *intellectual* intuition—so *our* use of the categories can never go outside the domain of the objects of experience. No doubt there *are*  
 309 intelligible entities corresponding to the sensible entities; there may also be intelligible entities that have no relation at all to our sensible faculty of intuition; but the concepts of our understanding couldn't apply to them in any way at all, because those concepts are mere forms of thought for use in connection with the output of our sensible intuition. So we mustn't use the term 'noumenon' in anything but its negative sense.

If from my empirical knowledge I remove **all thought** (through categories), no knowledge of any object remains. Through mere intuition nothing at all is thought; and the occurrence in me of this sensory event—the one that re-

mains when all thought is removed from an item of empirical knowledge—doesn't amount to a representation of any object. On the other hand, if from an item of empirical knowledge I remove **all intuition**, the form of thought still remains—i.e. the procedure for sorting out details of a manifold of intuition if an intuition is added. So the categories have a wider range than sensible intuition does, because they think objects in a perfectly general way, without regard to how they may be given. But that doesn't imply that they apply to a larger range of objects: to assume that such a larger range of objects can be given involves assuming that there can be some kind of intuition other than the sensible intuition, and we aren't entitled to assume that. If from my empirical knowledge I remove **all thought** (through categories), no knowledge of any object remains. Through mere intuition nothing at all is thought; and the occurrence in me of this sensory event—the one that remains when all thought is removed from an item of empirical knowledge—doesn't amount to a representation of any object. On the other hand, if from an item of empirical knowledge I remove **all intuition**, the form of thought still remains—i.e. the procedure for sorting out details of a manifold of intuition if an intuition is added. So the categories have a wider range than sensible intuition does, because they think objects in a perfectly general way, without regard to how they may be given. But that doesn't imply that they apply to a larger range of objects: to assume that such a larger range of objects can be given involves assuming that there can be some kind of intuition other than the sensible intuition, and we aren't entitled to assume that.

I call a concept 'problematic' if

- (1) it contains no contradiction, and
- (2) it is related to other items of knowledge, by serving as a boundary to the concepts involved in them, and yet

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(3) it can't be known to be objectively real, i.e. to have real objects.

Now consider the concept of a *noumenon*—i.e. of a thing that isn't to be thought as an object of the senses but is to be thought (solely through a pure understanding) as a thing in itself. This concept

(1) is not at all contradictory,

for we can't maintain that sensibility is the only *possible* kind of intuition. Furthermore the concept of a noumenon

(2) is needed to •prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus to •set limits to the range of objective validity of sensible knowledge.

(The things that lie outside that range are called 'noumena', so as to show that sensible knowledge can't extend its domain over everything that the understanding thinks.) And yet

(3) we can't get any understanding of how such noumena might be possible, so that the domain that lies out beyond the sphere of appearances is for us *empty*.

That is to say, we have an understanding that *problematically* extends further, but it can't be used *assertorically* outside the domain of sensibility, i.e. it can't be used to *say* anything about what things are like outside that domain. For that, there would have to be relevant intuitions; and we don't have any such intuitions, indeed we don't even have the *concept* of a *possible* intuition, through which objects outside the field of sensibility can be given. So the concept of a noumenon is only a *boundary* concept, whose role is to limit the pretensions of sensibility; which means that its only use is the negative one. [Clearly the 'negative use of the concept' of noumenon is parallel to the 'negative sense of the word "noumenon"'.] But it's not a sheer human invention; it is bound up with the limitation of sensibility, though it can't affirm anything

positive beyond the domain of sensibility.

[In this next sentence, Kant speaks of 'sensible concepts' and 'intellectual concepts'. He means 'concepts that apply to sensibly given things' and 'concepts that are appropriate only for intellectually given things (if there are any such things)'.] Thus: we can properly divide concepts into •sensible concepts and •intellectual ones, but we cannot properly divide objects into •phenomena and •noumena, or divide the world into a •world of the senses and a •world of the understanding, with these terms understood in a positive sense. For no object can be picked out for the intellectual concepts, and consequently we can't pass them off as objectively valid. . . . But if the concept of a noumenon is taken merely problematically, it's not only admissible but unavoidable, because of its role in setting limits to sensibility. (But in that use of the concept, a noumenon isn't a special kind of object for our understanding—an *intelligible object*. Indeed, the sort of understanding that *that* might involve is itself a problem; because we haven't the faintest notion of what could be involved in an understanding that knew its object not discursively through categories but *intuitively* 312 in a non-sensible intuition.) What our understanding gets through this concept of a noumenon is a *negative extension!* I mean that the understanding is not limited through sensibility; on the contrary, it limits sensibility by applying the term 'noumena' to things in themselves (things not regarded as appearances). But in doing this it also sets limits to itself, recognising that it can't know these noumena through any of the categories, and that it must therefore confine itself to the thought that they are 'an unknown something'.

In the writings of modern philosophers I find the expressions *mundus sensibilis* [= 'sensible world'] and *mundus intelligibilis* [= 'intelligible world'] used with quite different meanings from the ones the ancients gave those phrases. There's no special *difficulty* about this modern usage, but it

doesn't *do* anything—it's just word-play. It consists in using the phrase 'the world of the senses' to stand for

- the totality of appearances in so far as they are
- intuited; so that observational astronomy, which merely presents observations of the starry heavens, would give an account of this 'world';

and using 'the world of understanding' for

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- the totality of appearances in so far as their inter-connections are thought in conformity with laws of understanding; theoretical astronomy, as explained according to the Copernican system or even according to Newton's laws of gravitation, would give an account of this.

But such a twisting of words is merely a sophisticated trick; it tries to avoid a troublesome question by turning it into something more manageable. Of course understanding and reason are used in dealing with appearances; but the question is whether there is any use for them when the object is not an appearance (i.e. is a noumenon); and *this* question concerns 'intelligible objects' with 'intelligible' used properly—i.e. it concerns objects thought of as given to the understanding alone, and not to the senses. The Newtonian account of the structure of the universe isn't 'intelligible' in this sense, because it involves the •empirical use of the understanding. So: can there be a •transcendental use of the understanding, in which it deals with the noumenon as an object? To this question I have answered 'No'.

So when we say that the senses present us with objects *as they appear*, while the understanding presents them *as they are*, we mustn't take 'as they are' in a transcendental sense. Its proper meaning in that statement is empirical:

- the understanding presents us with objects as thoroughly inter-linked appearances, which is what they have to be if they are to count as objects of *experience*.

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It doesn't mean that

- the understanding presents us with objects in a way that doesn't involve possible experience (or, therefore, the senses), presenting them as objects of *pure* understanding.

We'll never know such objects of pure understanding; indeed, we don't even know whether such transcendental or exceptional knowledge is *possible* at all—at least if it's to be the same kind of knowledge as that to which our ordinary categories apply. *Understanding* and *sensibility*, with us, can latch onto objects only when they are employed in conjunction. When we take them separately, we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions; either way, we have representations that we can't apply to any determinate object.

If after all this discussion you are still reluctant to abandon the merely transcendental use of the categories, then put that use to the test by trying to get a synthetic proposition from it! Why a *synthetic* proposition? I have already explained this more than once, but I'll say it again here. An analytic proposition doesn't take the understanding any further; it is concerned only with what is already thought in the concept, so it leaves open the question of whether this concept actually applies to any objects. When the understanding is working analytically, it simply isn't interested in what if anything the analysed concept •applies to. But the test I am proposing is, precisely, a test of the understanding as •applied to noumena, so the analytic attitude can't have any bearing on it. So the test has to involve a *synthetic* and supposedly transcendental principle, such as:

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- 'Everything that exists, exists as a substance or as a state of a substance.'
- 'Everything contingent exists as an effect of some other thing, i.e. its cause.'

Now I ask: Where can the understanding get these synthetic propositions from, given that the concepts are to be applied not to things that could be given in experience, but to things in themselves (noumena)? A synthetic proposition needs a third something, to establish a connection between two concepts that aren't related [see page 97 above]; so where is the third item in the present case? You won't be able to prove your proposition, indeed you won't be able to show that your proposition *could* be true, unless you bring in the empirical use of the understanding—hereby dropping the claim that this is a pure and non-sensible judgment. Thus the concept of pure and merely intelligible objects is unable to support any principles that might make possible its application. We can't think of any way in which such intelligible objects might be given. The ·legitimate· problematic thought that leaves open a place for such objects serves only to limit empirical principles, but doesn't itself contain or reveal any object of knowledge beyond the sphere of those principles. It could be compared with empty space surrounding the material world.

### **Appendix: amphiboly of the concepts of reflection arising from the confusion of the empirical use of the understanding with its transcendental use**

[‘Amphiboly’ translates Kant’s *Amphibolie*. This means ‘ambiguity (of a certain kind)’; but on page 146 and perhaps elsewhere Kant uses it to refer both to •an ambiguity and to •intellectual muddles arising from an ambiguity.] Reflection. . . is our consciousness of how given representations relate to our different sources of knowledge; and only through such consciousness can we get straight about how the sources of knowledge relate to one another.

Before we go on with anything else about our representations, we must ask this: In which of our cognitive faculties do our representations belong together? Is it by the •understanding, or by the •senses, that they are combined or compared? . . . [In this context, ‘compare’ = ‘hold in mind together, and relate in *some way*’. Comparing in *our* sense is just one special case of this; making a judgment is another.] Some judgments don't need any *inquiry*, i.e. any directing of our attention to the grounds of their truth; for if a judgment is immediately certain (for instance, the judgment that between two points there can only be one straight line), the best evidence we can have of its truth is what the judgment itself says. But all judgments, and indeed all comparisons, require *reflection*, i.e. picking out the cognitive faculty to which the given concepts belong. I use the phrase ‘transcendental reflection’ for the act by which I bracket a comparison of representations with the cognitive faculty to which it belongs, thus sorting out whether the comparison belongs to pure understanding or to sensible intuition. Now, the relations in which concepts can go together in a state of mind are:

- sameness and difference,
- agreement and opposition,
- intrinsic and extrinsic, and
- determinable and determination (matter and form).

Getting the relation right ·in a particular case· depends on knowing in which faculty of knowledge the concepts go together *subjectively*—whether it's sensibility or understanding. For the difference between the faculties makes a great difference to how we have to think the relations.

Before making any objective judgments, we compare the concepts to find in them

- sameness (of many representations under one concept) for purposes of universal judgments,
- difference, for purposes of particular judgments,

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•agreement, for purposes of affirmative judgments,  
 •opposition, for purposes of negative judgments,  
 and so on. So it looks as though we ought to label the concepts that I have cited ·in pairs, in the preceding paragraph·, ‘comparison concepts’. But now suppose that our concern is not with the logical •form of the concepts but with their •content—i.e. with whether *the things themselves* are the same or different, in agreement or in opposition, and so on. In that context, the things can relate either to our sensibility or to our understanding; and this difference in *where they belong* creates a difference in *how they relate to one another*. So you can’t settle how given representations relate to one another without engaging in transcendental reflection, i.e. becoming conscious of their relation to one or other of the two kinds of knowledge. You want to know whether things are the same or different, in agreement or in opposition, and so on? You can’t find out just by comparing the concepts; you have to engage in transcendental reflection so as to pick out the cognitive faculty to which they belong. So we have:

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•Logical reflection: a mere act of comparison of representations, taking no account whatsoever of the faculty of knowledge to which they belong. In this context, the representations are all on a par so far as their place in the mind is concerned.

•Transcendental reflection: ·I have already described this·. Since it bears on the objects of the representations, it makes possible the objective [here = ‘object-involving’] comparison of representations with one other; so it is totally different from logical reflection. Indeed the two kinds of reflection don’t even belong to the same faculty of knowledge.

If you want to make *a priori* judgments about things, you need transcendental reflection. Let us now take it in hand; it will cast light on what the understanding’s real business is.

1. **Sameness and difference.** If an object is presented to us on several occasions, always with the same intrinsic features of quality and quantity, then if it’s being taken as •an object of *pure* understanding it is always the very same object on each occasion, one single thing, not many. But if it is •an appearance, conceptual comparisons ·among the presentations· don’t matter, because even if they are conceptually *exactly* alike ·in quality and quantity· we can still judge them to be presentations of different objects on the grounds that they have different spatial locations at the same time. Take two drops of water, and set aside any intrinsic differences (of quality and quantity) between them; the mere fact that they have been intuited simultaneously in different locations justifies us in holding that they are numerically different, ·i.e. that they really are *two* drops·. 320  
 Leibniz took appearances to be things-in-themselves, and thus to be objects of the pure understanding (though he called them ‘phenomena’ because—he thought—we represent them confusedly); and on that basis his principle of the identity of indiscernibles certainly couldn’t be disputed. [The principle says that for any x and y, if x’s intrinsic nature is exactly the same as y’s, then x is y. Another way of putting it would be ‘Between any *two* things there is some qualitative difference’—the discernibility of non-identicals.] But since the things he was talking about are objects of sensibility, a topic for the empirical use of understanding and not its pure use, they have to be in space because that is required for outer appearances; and space gives us answers to questions of the form ‘Two things? or one thing presented twice?’, ·independently of conceptual comparisons of intrinsic natures·. This holds for •things in space because it holds for •parts of space. One part of space, though exactly like another part in shape and size, is still outside the other; so they are different, and the two together constitute a space larger than either of them.

2. **Agreement and opposition.** If reality is represented as noumenal, i.e. represented only by the pure understanding, we can't make sense of the idea of two realities that are opposed to one another in such a way that when they are combined in the same subject they cancel each other's consequences, in the way that  $(3 \text{ minus } 3) = 0$ . [Underlying this difficult sentence is the idea that (a) objects of pure understanding are concepts, or made out of concepts, or logically on a par with concepts; (b) the only way two conceptual items—e.g. two propositions—can logically conflict is for one of them to be or involve the *negation* of the other or of some part of it; and (c) realities are by definition positive, not negative, and so involve no negations. On page 148 Kant will speak of noumenal or conceptual realities as 'sheer affirmations'; and page 151 is also relevant.] On the other hand, there can certainly be  
 321 opposition between phenomenal realities, realities in the domain of appearance. When *those* realities are combined in a single subject, one may wholly or partially destroy the consequences of another. Examples: •two moving forces in the same straight line, pushing or pulling a point in opposite directions; •pleasure counterbalancing pain.

3. **Intrinsic and extrinsic.** The intrinsic nature of an •object of pure understanding consists of the features of it that have no relation whatsoever (so far as its existence is concerned) to anything other than itself. It is quite otherwise with a •phenomenal substance in space; its intrinsic properties are nothing but relations, and the substance itself is entirely made up of sheer relations. The only way we can encounter a substance in •a region of space is through *forces* that are at work in the region, either bringing others [= 'other substances?'] to •it (attraction) or preventing them from getting into •it (repulsion and impenetrability). We don't encounter any other properties constituting the concept of the substance that appears in space and that we call 'matter'. As an object of pure understanding, on the

other hand, every substance must have intrinsic qualities and powers that make up its intrinsic reality. When I try to think about these intrinsic qualities, all I can come up with are qualities of myself that inner sense presents to me. [Here 'intrinsic' and 'inner' are translations of a single German word.] So they—the intrinsic qualities of these substances—have to consist in *thinking* or something analogous to thinking. When substances are regarded as noumena or objects of pure understanding, therefore, we must

(1) *negatively* strip them of any relations to other things, including the relation '*... is made up of ...*'; which means that we must deny that they are composed of parts; and

(2) *positively* credit them with something like thoughts.

And so we find Leibniz, who did regard substances as noumena,<sup>322</sup> conceiving them as what he called 'monads', that is,

(1) simple = partless things, with

(2) powers of representation.

He said this even about the ingredients in matter.

4. **Matter and form.** All other reflection is based on these two concepts because they are so inseparably bound up with every use of the understanding. 'Matter' signifies whatever it is that can have qualities, and 'form' signifies the qualities that matter can have—all this being understood absolutely generally, with no constraints on what matter may be or on what qualities it may have. [See note on form/matter on page 20.] [Kant's next four sentences sketch some other ways in which 'matter' and 'form' have been used by philosophers. Then:] If the understanding is to say something (form) *about* something (matter), it demands that it first be given—at least conceptually—the matter that  
 323 its assertion is to be about. In pure understanding's way of looking at things, therefore, matter comes before form; and that is why Leibniz •first took on board *things* (monads)

with intrinsic powers of representation, in order •then to give them outer relations including the community of their states (i.e. of their representations) [see treatment of ‘community’ on page 50]. On that basis he could have space (as an upshot of how substances are inter-related) and time (as an upshot of how the states of substances are interrelated). [Kant also says, puzzlingly, that in this Leibnizian scheme space and time are possible (not only as upshots or ‘consequents’, but also) as ‘grounds’ or ‘bases’. Then:] And in fact that is how things would stand if pure understanding could be directed immediately onto objects, and if space and time were states of things as they are in themselves. But if they are only sensible intuitions, in which we inform ourselves about objects solely as appearances, then ·the matter-then-form order is switched to form-then-matter·: the form of intuition (as a subjective property of sensibility) precedes all matter (sensations); space and time come before all appearances and all data of experience, and are indeed what make the latter at all possible. The intellectualist philosopher ·Leibniz· couldn’t allow that the •form comes before •the things themselves, making them possible; and he would have been quite right about this if it had been the case that we intuit things, though confusedly, as they really are. But sensible intuition is a quite specific subjective condition, which lies *a priori* at the base of all perception as its original form; so the •form is given by itself, and the •matter (or the things that appear) comes after it, because the matter isn’t even possible unless a formal intuition (time and space) is antecedently given. If we were looking at the situation purely in terms of concepts, we would of course have to adopt the order: matter first, then form.

### Remark on the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection

When we assign a concept either to sensibility or to pure understanding, I shall say that we are assigning it its *transcendental location*. And the business of judging where each concept belongs on the basis of how it is used, and of developing rules for doing this, is *the transcendental topic*. This body of doctrine, by sorting out which concept belongs in which cognitive faculty, will guard us against having the pure understanding quietly sliding things past us and thereby leading us into error. We can label as a *logical location* every concept or general heading under which many items of knowledge fall. That is what Aristotle’s *logical topic* was about. Teachers and orators could use its headings and lists to find what would best suit the material they were dealing with, so as to put on a show of thoroughness in their hair-splitting and verbose chattering. The transcendental topic, on the other hand, puts all comparison and distinctions under just the four headings I have listed. . . .

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We can •logically compare concepts without bothering to settle which faculty their objects belong to, i.e. whether their objects are noumena for the understanding or phenomena for the sensibility. But that’s exactly what we *do* have to bother with—in transcendental reflection—if we want to move from the concepts to their objects. It is risky to use these concepts without engaging in such reflection, because that can give rise to alleged synthetic principles that critical reason can’t recognise, and that are based on nothing but a transcendental amphiboly, i.e. a muddling of an •object of pure understanding with an •appearance.

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The illustrious Leibniz didn’t have any such transcendental topic, so he was defenceless against the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection. That led to his constructing his *intellectual system of the world*, or—more accurately—to his thinking he had come to know things’ intrinsic natures just

by comparing all objects merely with the understanding and its stock of abstract formal concepts. My table of concepts of reflection—the quartet of pairs on page 143—gives us an unexpected advantage: it sets openly before us •the distinctive features of Leibniz’s system in all its parts, and •the main basis for this idiosyncratic way of thinking—the basis being nothing but a misunderstanding! He conducted all his comparisons of things purely through concepts, and so of course the only differences he found

327 were ones that the understanding can pick out in conceptual terms. What about the conditions of sensible intuition, which carry with them their own differences? He didn’t regard them as parts of the basic story, because he thought that sensing is just •having confused representations rather than •plugging into a separate source of representations. He thought that appearances are representations of *things in themselves*. . . . In brief, Leibniz *intellectualised* appearances, just as Locke. . . .*sensualised* the concepts of the understanding. . . . Instead of

- looking at understanding and sensibility as two sources of quite different kinds of representations that have to be linked together to yield objectively valid judgments about things,

each of these great men

- holds to one only of the two faculties, taking *it* to be the one that directly refers to things in themselves, while marginalizing the other faculty as merely something that serves to confuse (Leibniz) or to organize (Locke) the representations provided by the favoured faculty.

So Leibniz compared the objects of the senses with each other solely through the understanding, taking them to be *things*—i.e. not things of this or that kind, but merely things, *period*. I’ll describe four aspects of his procedure, each of

them related in some way to one of my quartet of contrasts on page 143.

(1)•SAME and DIFFERENT• He compared things in terms of ‘same or different?’, doing this solely through the understanding. All he had to work with were things’ concepts, ignoring their position in intuition (though that is where objects have to be *given*), and leaving entirely out of account the concepts’ transcendental location—i.e. the question of whether their objects should be counted as appearances or as things in themselves. So *of course* he extended his principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which really holds only for general concepts of things, to cover also the objects of the senses, and thought that in doing this he was adding significantly to our knowledge of Nature. Certainly, if a drop of water is **a thing in itself** whose whole intrinsic nature I know, and if the intrinsic nature of some other drop is identical with the nature of this one, I can’t allow that they are really two drops. But if the drop is **an appearance in space**, it has a location not only

- in the understanding (because of the concepts that fit it)

but also

- in sensible outer intuition (in space);

and the spatial locations are completely independent of the intrinsic states. Two spatial locations can just as easily

- contain two things (one each) that are intrinsically exactly alike as •contain two things that are intrinsically as unlike as you please. If appearance *x* is in a different physical place from appearance *y*, then *x* must be different from *y*; they must be two, not one. So the identity of indiscernibles isn’t a law of Nature, but only an analytic rule for the comparison of things through mere concepts.

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329 **(2) ·OPPOSITION·** The principle that realities (as sheer affirmations) never logically conflict with each other is entirely true with respect to relations between concepts [see note on page 145], but it has no significance as applied to Nature or to things in themselves (of which we know nothing). Real conflict certainly does take place; there are cases where  $(A \text{ minus } B) = 0$ , i.e. where two realities combined in one subject cancel one another's effects. Examples are repeatedly brought to our attention in all the hindering and counter-acting processes in Nature; these depend on forces, so they count as phenomenal *realities*. •General mechanics can indeed give an *a priori* rule stating the conditions in which such conflicts occur; but that's because •it takes account of the forces' going in opposite directions, which is something that the transcendental concept of reality doesn't know about. •We are dealing here with two quite different sorts of opposition: (a) the opposition between two forces working in opposite directions, (b) the opposition between two items of which one involves the negation of the other. In the noumenal sphere, only (b) can be recognised; but to us (a) is perfectly familiar, and is a genuine opposition—the kind that can produce a cancelling-out. Although Leibniz didn't announce the above proposition (•that realities never conflict•) with all the pomp of a new principle, he did use it as a basis for new assertions, and his followers explicitly incorporated it into their Leibniz-Wolff doctrinal structure. For example, according to this principle all evils are merely consequences of the limitations of created beings, i.e. they are negations, because only negations can conflict with reality. . . . Similarly, Leibniz's disciples consider it not just possible but *natural* to combine all reality into one being, without fear of any conflict, because the only conflict they recognise is that of contradiction, in which the concept of a thing is wiped out. They don't make room for things like this:

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Two real processes related in such a way that each cuts off what would have been the later stages of the other.

This is a real opposition—the processes *annul* one another—and we can't encounter it except through sensibility.

**(3) ·INTRINSIC and EXTRINSIC·** The entire basis for Leibniz's theory of monads consists in his way of representing the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction wholly in terms of the understanding. •His case for monads goes as follows. All substances must have some intrinsic nature, which doesn't involve any extrinsic relations and therefore doesn't involve composition, •i.e. being composed of parts. So the basis for whatever is intrinsic in things-in-themselves must be simple, i.e. not made up of parts. Also, the intrinsic state of a substance can't involve place, shape, contact, or motion, because these are all extrinsic relations; so the only states we are left with as candidates for belonging to the intrinsic nature of a substance are the •kinds of• states through which we ourselves inwardly [*innerlich*, which could = 'intrinsically'] note what our senses are giving us, namely, states consisting in representations. That's all that monads were equipped with, to serve as the basic material of the whole universe—an active force consisting of *representations!* And, strictly speaking, no monad could exert force on anything but itself.

Just because of this, Leibniz's principle of the possible community of substances had to be a *pre-established harmony*, and couldn't be a physical influence. For since every substance is. . . concerned only with its own representations, the state of the representations of one substance couldn't have an *effect* on the state of any other; so there had to be a third cause—God—which influences *all* the substances in such a way as to make their states correspond to each other •in a 'harmony'. God doesn't do this, •according to Leibniz, by intervening in each particular case. [The next

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sentence takes more than usual liberties with what Kant wrote, but it is true to his meaning.] What produces the harmony is God's having in his mind a single unified *plan* which assigns to each substance its persistence and the whole of its history of temporary states—a plan which in this way assures that the states of the different substances correspond with one another according to universal laws.

(4) *FORM*. Leibniz's famous doctrine of time and space, in which he intellectualised these forms of sensibility, owed its origin entirely to this same delusion arising from his failure to make use of transcendental reflection. If I want through mere understanding to represent to myself extrinsic relations of things, the only way I can do this is by means of a concept of their interaction; and if I want to connect two states of a single thing, I have to do it through the notion of grounds and consequences [evidently meaning 'cause and effect']. And this led Leibniz to conceive of *space* as a certain order in the *pseudo-causal* community of substances, and *time* as the dynamical sequence of their states. This implied that space and time are conceptually parasitic on things and events, respectively: for space to exist is for *substances* to be thus and so, and for time to exist is for *states of substances* to be so-and-thus. What about the status that space and time seem to have all to themselves, independently of things in space and time? Leibniz wrote those off as results of conceptual confusion that has led us to regard what is really a form of dynamical relations as being a special intuition, free-standing and antecedent to the things themselves. For Leibniz, then,

- space and time were the intelligible form of the connection of things (substances and their states) in themselves; and
- the things were intelligible or noumenal substances.

[In this context, 'intelligible' is the antonym of 'sensible'; what is *thought* through the understanding is being contrasted with what is *intuited* through the sensibility.] And he wanted to treat the *intellectualised* concepts as being valid for appearances as well as for noumena. He *had* to, because he didn't allow sensibility any kind of intuition all of its own, and attributed all representation of objects, even empirical representation, to the understanding. All he left for the senses to do was the despicable work of confusing and distorting the understanding's representations.

But even if we *could* by pure understanding say anything synthetically about things in themselves (which we *can't*), we couldn't re-apply that to appearances, which don't represent things in themselves. In dealing with appearances I shall always be obliged to compare my concepts, in transcendental reflection, solely under the conditions of sensibility; and accordingly space and time won't be states of or relations among things in themselves, but will have their reality in the domain of appearances. What the things in themselves may be I don't know and don't need to know, because I can never encounter anything except in appearance. 333

I deal with the remaining concepts of reflection in the same way. **Matter** is a phenomenal substance. I look for its intrinsic nature in all the parts of the space that it occupies, and in all the effects that it brings about, though these can only be appearances of outer sense. The result is that the best I can do is to find *relatively intrinsic* states of matter, which are themselves made up of extrinsic relations; I don't come up with anything that is *absolutely intrinsic*. The absolutely intrinsic nature of matter, as it would have to be conceived by pure understanding, is nothing but a phantom; for matter isn't an object of pure understanding. What about the transcendental object that matter is an appearance of? I answer that even if someone were in a position to tell

us what it is like, we wouldn't be able to understand him! That's because we can understand only expressions that correspond to something in intuition. It is absurd and unreasonable to *complain* that we have no insight into things' intrinsic natures, because this amounts to complaining that we can't conceive by pure understanding what the things that appear to us may be in themselves; which involves demanding that we should be able to know things, and therefore to intuit them, without senses; which asks for  
 334 a faculty of knowledge wholly different from the human one. . . .; while we have no idea of what such non-human knowers would be like, and don't know whether they are even *possible*. Through observation and analysis of appearances we penetrate to Nature's inner recesses, and no-one can say how far this knowledge may in time extend. But even if the whole of Nature were revealed to us, we *still* couldn't answer the transcendental questions that go beyond Nature. To see how cut-off we are, consider the fact that we don't get to observe *our own minds* with any intuition except that of inner sense, which means that we observe our minds merely *as appearances*, and never get through to the transcendental basis for the unity of our mind. Yet it is precisely in our mind that the secret of the source of our sensibility is located! If even our selves-in-themselves lie too deep for us, it's not to be expected that our sensibility could be a suitable instrument for investigating the nature of *anything* except further appearances. . . .

I have been offering criticisms of certain inferences—criticisms based merely on acts of *transcendental* reflection. What makes this critique so very useful is that it *•makes plain the nullity* of any conclusions about objects that are compared with each other solely in the understanding, and at  
 335 the same time *•confirms the main point* I have been insisting on, namely that appearances, although they are not things

in themselves that can be tackled by pure understanding, are the only objects of which we can have objectively real knowledge—i.e. knowledge where there is an intuition corresponding to the concepts.

[This might be a good time to look back at the note about 'comparing', on page 143.] If we reflect in a merely logical fashion, we are only comparing our concepts in the understanding, asking:

- Do these two have the same content?
- Do these two contradict one another?
- Is. . . intrinsic to this concept or added to it from outside?
- Of these two, which is given and which counts only as a way of thinking about the given one?

But if I apply these concepts to an *object as such*,. . . .without settling whether it's an object of sensible intuition or of intellectual intuition, *·i.e. of passive intuition or of active intuition·*, it immediately turns out that the very concept of this object (we don't have to go beyond it) sets boundaries that forbid any non-empirical use of the concept. What *this* shows is that the representation of an object as

- a thing as such, *·i.e.*
- a thing, *period·*,

rather than as

- a thing that is given through sensible intuition, or
- a thing that is given through intellectual intuition,

is not only *insufficient*, but is downright *self-contradictory*. That's because this concept *•contains within itself the barrier to non-empirical use while also •purporting to be used non-empirically·*. The moral is that we must (in logic) filter out all talk of objects, or else bring objects in under the conditions of sensible intuition . . . .

\* \* \*

..336 As I have shown, the concepts of reflection have, through a certain misinterpretation, had so much influence upon the use of the understanding that they have misled even one of the sharpest of all philosophers (·Leibniz·) into a would-be system of intellectual knowledge—a system that undertakes to find out about its objects without any help from the senses. We need a reliable method of determining and securing the limits of the understanding, and we can be helped towards that by an account of *what goes on* when the amphiboly of  
337 these concepts leads people to accept false principles. . . .

The principle of the identity of indiscernibles is really based on the assumption that if a certain detail isn't to be found in the absolutely general concept of *thing*, it's not to be found in individual *things* either. This does imply that if the concepts of x and y are exactly the same (in quality or quantity), then x is numerically identical with y—they are one thing, not two. ·It's a strange blunder to go this way·. In the general concept of *thing* we filter out many details, including the necessary conditions of the intuition of a thing; and now we have Leibniz and his followers jumping to the conclusion that what we have filtered out wasn't there in the  
338 first place, so that no thing is credited with anything beyond what is contained in the *thing* concept. ·I shall discuss three examples of this·.

(1) The concept of *a cubic foot of space* is always and everywhere completely the same; but two cubic feet are distinguished in space merely by their locations. These locations aren't to be found in the concept of a cubic foot of space, but instances of the concept are firmly tied to locations by the sensibility.

(2) Similarly there is no conflict in the concept of a thing unless it combines something negative with something

affirmative; you can't get a cancelling-out by putting together purely affirmative concepts [see note on page 145.]. You can't, for example, get an annulment by putting together 'x moves' and 'y moves'. But in the general concept of *motion* we filter out such details as the *direction* of motion; yet motions do have directions, as we find through sensible intuition; and so in the real world there can be cases where

x moves in one direction, y moves in the opposite direction, and when they collide they come to a halt, which is a cancelling-out of their movements (though not a logical one), despite the fact that the example involves nothing negative. So we aren't in a position to say that all reality is in agreement with itself because not all conflict is to be found in the *concepts* of reality.<sup>19</sup>

(3) [Reminder: Through all this, 'intrinsic' is exchangeable with 'inner', and 'extrinsic' with 'outer'.] According to mere concepts, a thing's ·intrinsic nature is the substratum of all its relational or ·extrinsic features. So if I form the general concept of *thing*, filtering out all conditions of intuition, that will involve filtering out all extrinsic relations, leaving me with a concept of something that doesn't signify any relations and signifies only intrinsic characteristics. Here is what seems to follow from this:

In every substance there is something absolutely intrinsic, which precedes all extrinsic characteristics because it is what makes them possible in the first place; so this substratum, being free of any extrinsic rela-

<sup>19</sup> You might want to dodge this result by maintaining that *noumenal* realities, at least, don't act in opposition to each other. But then you should produce an example of such pure and sense-free reality, so that we can tell whether you are talking about anything! Our only source of examples of anything, however, is experience, and that yields only phenomena, not noumena. So your proposition comes down to this: a concept in which everything is affirmative includes nothing negative—and who ever questioned *that*?

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tions is *simple*, ·i.e. has no parts·. (There is nothing to a *body* but relations—the relations amongst its parts.) And since the only absolutely intrinsic characteristics we know of are the ones given through our inner sense, this substratum is not only simple but—on an analogy with our inner sense—is characterised by *representations*. This means that all things are really *monads*, simple beings endowed with representations.

These contentions would be entirely justified if it weren't for this fact: the conditions under which objects of outer intuition are given to us (the only conditions under which they *can* be given to us) involve something more than the general concept of *thing*—something that has been filtered out when that concept is formed. Under these further conditions we find ·something that makes the above indented passage wrong, namely· that an abiding appearance in space can •be the primary substratum of all outer perception and yet •contain only relations and *nothing* absolutely intrinsic. [Kant throws in some phrases that are omitted above. They are an extremely compressed way of saying this: How can that be? *Only* relations? Yes indeed: a permanent thing in space is a body, and all there is to a body is its being •extended and its being •impenetrable by other bodies. And these are purely relational: a thing's •extendedness is just its having parts that relate to one another thus and so, and •impenetrability is obviously relational, because it means that a thing x can't be penetrated *by another thing*.] Through mere concepts, it's true, I can't have the thought of extrinsic relations without also having the thought of something intrinsic; that's because relational concepts presuppose things that are independently given—you can't have a *relation* without *things that are related* by it·. But in an intuition there is something that mere concepts don't capture, and this 'something' provides the substratum ·of the relational

properties·. What I am talking about is a *region of space* which, with all that it contains, consists solely of relations (formal relations ·among the parts of the region·, and perhaps also real relations ·among the parts of any bodies the region happens to contain·) From this premise:

•A thing can't be represented by mere concepts unless **the conceptual representation** includes something absolutely intrinsic,

I am not entitled to infer this:

•A thing can't be represented by mere concepts unless **the thing itself, and the intuition of it**, involve something absolutely intrinsic.

Once we have abstracted from all conditions of intuition, there's admittedly nothing left in the mere *concept* but something intrinsic and the interrelations *within* that; without this, extrinsic relations aren't possible. But this impossibility is based solely on abstraction; it doesn't hold for things as given in intuition with features that express mere relations and don't have anything intrinsic as their basis; for these aren't things in themselves, but merely appearances. All that we encounter in *matter* is merely relations (what we call matter's intrinsic qualities are merely *more intrinsic* than the rest); but some of these relations are •free-standing—•basic, not dependent on any underlying intrinsic whatnot—and are also •permanent, and through *these* we are given a determinate object. It's true that if I abstract from these relations there's nothing left for me to think; but that doesn't rule out the concept of a thing as appearance, or indeed the abstract concept of *object*. What it *does* remove is all possibility of •an object than can be characterized through mere concepts, i.e. the possibility of •a noumenon. I admit that it's startling to be told that a thing is to be taken as consisting wholly of relations! But the thing in question is a mere appearance, which can't be thought through pure

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categories; and all there is to it is the relation to the senses of a Something as such—i.e. one about which there's nothing to say except that it's a Something; because any details that we tried to give would be immediately absorbed into the Something's relation to the senses. [Kant now launches another example, starting with 'Similarly, . . .'. What it has in common with examples (1)–(3) is very general: all four are examples of *attempts at purely conceptual thinking that are fundamentally incompetent, just because they are purely conceptual*. Thus:] Similarly, the only thought we can have about the relations amongst things—if we are doing this abstractly, using nothing but concepts—is by thinking of one thing as the cause of states of another thing, because that is our understanding's concept of relatedness between two things. But with that kind of thinking we are disregarding all intuition and thus cutting ourselves off from one special way in which elements of the manifold fix one another's locations, namely through the form of sensibility—*space*—and yet in all empirical causality space has to be presupposed!

If by 'merely intelligible objects' we mean **things that are thought through pure categories**, without any schema [see page 91] of sensibility, such objects are impossible. For us to use any of our concepts of understanding objectively, we need the sensible intuition by which objects are given to us; so if we abstract from that intuition, our concepts have no relation to any object, i.e. aren't concepts of anything. 'But suppose there were a kind of intuition other than the sensible kind that we have?' Even then the functions of our thought would get no grip on it. But if we have in mind only **objects of a non-sensible intuition**, then noumena in this purely negative sense must indeed be admitted. Our categories wouldn't apply to them, so we could never have any knowledge whatsoever (no intuitions, no concepts) of them. To 'admit' them is merely to say that *our* kind of intuition doesn't extend to all things but only to objects of our

senses; so that its objective validity is limited, and therefore a place remains open for some other kind of intuition and thus for things as its objects, i.e. things that it has intuitions of. But the concept of a noumenon reached in this way is problematic, i.e. it's the representation of a thing that we can't say is possible but also can't say is impossible. Why? Because the only intuition we know is our own sensible kind, and the only concepts we know are the categories, and neither of these can get any grip on a non-sensible object. So we can't positively extend the domain of the objects of our thought beyond the conditions of our sensibility, and assume that in addition to appearances there are objects of pure thought, i.e. *noumena*; because such objects have no positive significance that we can indicate. . . . Thought isn't itself a product of the senses, and to that extent it's not limited by them; but it doesn't follow from *that* that it has a pure use of its own, unaided by sensibility, because then it would be without an object. Don't think 'The noumenon would be its object'. We cannot call the noumenon that we have admitted an *object* in the relevant sense; because all it signifies is the problematic concept of an object for a quite different intuition and a quite different understanding from ours. So the concept of the noumenon isn't the concept of an object; rather, it is a question that inevitably comes up in connection with the limits on our sensibility—the question 'Might there be objects entirely disengaged from any such intuition as ours?' This question can only be answered vaguely: because sensible intuition doesn't extend to all things of every kind, *a place remains open* for other and different objects; so these latter mustn't be absolutely denied, though. . . .they can't be asserted, either, as objects for our understanding.

Thus, the understanding limits sensibility, but doesn't extend its own domain in the process. When the understand-

ing warns the sensibility ‘Don’t claim to deal with things in themselves, but only with appearances’, it does indeed give itself the thought of an object in itself, because that thought is involved in its telling the sensibility what *not* to do. But here the understanding thinks of it only as a *transcendental* object, which is the cause of appearance and therefore not itself appearance. It can’t be thought of in terms of quantity or reality or substance etc. (because these concepts apply to objects only with help from sensible forms). We don’t know *anything* about whether this transcendental object is to be met with in us or outside us, or whether it would still remain in existence or vanish if all sensibility stopped. If we want to call this object ‘noumenon’ because the representation of it isn’t sensible, we are free to do so. But since we can’t apply to it any of the concepts of our understanding, the representation of it remains empty for us. All it does is to mark the limits of our sensible knowledge, leaving an open space that we can’t fill through possible experience or through pure understanding. . . .

\* \* \*

Before leaving the Transcendental Analytic I must add something which (though not of special importance in itself) might be thought to be needed for the completeness of the system. The top concept that transcendental philosophies usually begin with is the division into the possible and the impossible. But any division presupposes a concept to be divided, so that’s not the top concept after all. We need a still higher one, namely the concept of *an object as such*—this being understood not only

- indeterminately, i.e. without providing any details about the object,

but also

- problematically, i.e. without even settling whether it is something or nothing.

And that *something or nothing* is the top concept we were looking for. The only concepts that refer to *objects as such* are the categories; so our examination of our top concept, the something/nothing distinction, should follow the order of the categories and be guided by them. [In fact Kant’s four-part taxonomy of varieties of *nothing* follows the categories only for Quantity and Quality. Item 3 has nothing to do with Relation, and 4 is only loosely linked to Modality. Anyway, this page of material is neither enjoyable nor instructive, and is therefore omitted from this version. This brings us to the end of the transcendental analytic. What lies ahead is mainly the transcendental dialect .]

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