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Subjectivism, Material Synthesis and Idealism

9.1 Introduction

Kant grants that by means of the pure concepts in abstraction from sensible intuition we can and indeed must still think things in themselves as the ground of the appearances that we cognise as the empirically real objects of experience (cf. A96; Bxxvi; A143/B182). But what exactly do we think, in *thinking* things in themselves? This is an important question to ask in the context of Kant's subjectivism, since many commentators take Kant's idealism to argue that objects are only ideal in regard to how they appear to us as spatiotemporal objects (appearances), but not insofar as they are also things in themselves. If we abstract from what constitutes the spatiotemporality of objects, we can thus perfectly well conceive of their intrinsic nature, implying that Kant's subjectivism does not affect the way we *think* about things in themselves, in abstraction from the properties that conform to our subjective conditions of knowledge (space and time). Or so these readers argue. This would mean that we can be metaphysical realists of sorts about things in themselves, as indeed Hegel thinks we must (see Chap. 8), and thus that the categories are not limited to application to

appearances or indeed, as many contemporary so-called metaphysical interpretations of Kant's idealism claim, that we can be confident in claiming that the things that we know as spatiotemporally distinct objects, as appearances, are the same things that also have an in-itself or intrinsic side, of which we are cognitively ignorant. Standardly, these readers believe that Kant's argument in the Transcendental Deduction (TD), which is centrally about the applicability of the categories to spatiotemporal objects, is wholly separable from Kant's idealism, which is centrally about space and time as subjective forms of intuition that are expounded in the Transcendental Aesthetic, not in TD. In Chap. 4, I provided an argument, which showed that Kant's argument in TD is best seen in line with a benign form of phenomenalism. In this chapter, I show that Kant's subjectivism about conceptuality, the thesis that our thought, in virtue of the principle of apperception or transcendental self-consciousness, is solely constitutive of the very conception of what an object is or what objectivity *means*, already entails idealism about objects. From Kant's very notion of our discursivity idealism follows.

That idealism is entailed by our discursivity, and not first by the forms of our receptivity (space and time), does not mean that Kant's argument for transcendental idealism is not crucially informed by the forms of our receptivity. But here I am not concerned with his arguments for idealism from space and time. Nor does it mean that because our discursivity entails idealism, the *mere* representation of a thing in-itself entails idealism, suggesting that we cannot even *think* anything that is beyond our mere representation, that is, conceive of the very notion of a thing in-itself. Robert Adams rightly believes that "in extending our categories 'farther than the sensible intuition' we can think *consistently* about things as they may be in themselves" (1997:810). Nevertheless, notwithstanding Kant's observation at A96 that the pure concepts of the understanding can indeed "be extended further than experience can grasp (the concept of God)", such an extension would appear to come down to what Kant says is a "transcendental use of a concept", which "consists in its being related to things *in general* and *in themselves*" (A238/B298), and the possibility of which at one point Kant effectively rejects (A246/B303).

The operative question thus is what this supposedly *consistent thought* about things in themselves amounts to, if not the “*real possibility of such things*” (Adams 1997:810)? Do the categories have a relation at all to a thing in itself or do they “only signif[y] the unity of thinking in general” (B314/A259),¹ by means of which nothing determinate is thought (Prol, 4:355), that is, do they constitute only a *logical possibility* (B302–3n.)?

The thesis that our conceptuality—as defined by my thesis of Kant’s radical subjectivism—implies idealism does not mean that we cannot even represent the notion of a thing in itself. That is to say, it does not constitute a short argument, namely an argument to the effect that, as Karl Ameriks has explained, the “mere reflection on the notion of a form of representation is taken to be sufficient for the Unknowability Thesis” (Ameriks 2000b:128),² the latter amounting to the positive claim that we cannot have knowledge of things in themselves. It is not because the object—which, as represented, is formally distinguishable from its representation—can, trivially, only be *represented* through a *representation* and so not purely, without the mediation of representation, as a thing in itself, that idealism is entailed. The reason why the thought of a thing in itself implies idealism is not so much conceptual per se as that it has to do with the nature of a thing in itself, to which we have no access because of the limitations of our discursivity. This involves a complex, ‘long’ argument concerning transcendental materiality, or material synthesis, which is the ground of discursive judgement and thus of the very conceptual elements of possible experience, on the grounds of which the thing in itself can ex hypothesi not be determined as such, that is, *as it is in itself*. An exposition of this ‘long’ argument for idealism from the categories follows in Sect. 9.5 and following.

On my reading, the thing in itself (de re) is not *identical* strictly speaking to its being *thought* by means of mere concepts, so that the mere thought of a thing in itself does not eo ipso reach the thing in itself *itself*. I contend that the thought or concept of a thing in itself does not exhaust all of the thing’s properties, whose essence we thus cannot determine or define (other than a thing’s logically deducible characteristics, i.e. the a priori concepts of the understanding which

make up the intension of the concept of an object *in general*, that is, a *possible* object of knowledge, which should not be conflated with the thing in itself).³ As Kant is reported to have said in one of his metaphysics lectures from 1784–85,

we can **think** a thing as *omnimode* determined, but we cannot **determine it really**, for then we would have to be omniscient so that we could think all of a thing's possible predicates. (V-Met/Volckmann, 28:410; trans. and boldface mine)

Crucially, the thing in itself as it is conceived of is not necessarily how the thing in itself *is or may be* as such (*de re*). Put differently, the *concept* of a thing in itself does not map isomorphically onto the thing in itself (*de re*), which is exactly why according to the Critical Kant we are precluded from having knowledge of it through conceptual analysis alone.⁴ Idealism is not entailed because there is a putative thing that is ideal on the grounds of it being entirely or partly dependent on the epistemic or logical conditions of its being thought, or because the thing in itself is merely the concept of that which remains in abstraction from these conditions. Idealism is entailed rather because discursive thought is not capable of establishing, even *merely* conceptually, the thoroughly determined nature of the putative thing that is being thought.⁵ In fact, the thought or concept of a thing in itself does not pick out an object defined in any straightforward sense (i.e. a determinable distinct particular). The idealism here concerns the inherent limitation of discursive thinking, of our very conceptuality, as a result of which we cannot have a determinate concept of a thing in itself. This limitation is part and parcel of Kant's radical subjectivism.

In arguing, in the following sections, that idealism affects our very conceptuality, I am thus going against the suggestion made by Adams that

Kant sees our possibility of conceiving of things in themselves as drastically limited, in the first instance, by a limitation, *not* of our active conceptual faculty, but rather of our passive intuitive faculty. (1997:806)

I am also going against Erich Adickes in this regard, who writes:

It is thus not in the categories themselves and their positive characteristics that there lies an obstacle to knowing the things in themselves through them. (Adickes 1924:70)⁶

Again, I am of course not claiming that idealism is not concerned with the limitations of our sensibility, but I am claiming that the limitation *also already* affects our conceptual faculty. If we relate this to the question regarding the possibility of the categories providing the minimal form of thinking an object in general, thus putatively enabling the thought of things in themselves as they are, in abstraction from sensible constraints, then it seems that, if not all the categories (see B300ff.), at least the categories of quality do not fit this framework, in particular, the category of limitation and, concomitantly, negation.⁷ It is to an account of these categories that I shall turn to support my claim that idealism already follows from discursivity or subjectivity alone. I shall make use of arguments that Kant provides in a transitional section in the Transcendental Dialectic, concerning the transcendental Ideal, where he speaks of the transcendental prototype or also the thing in itself in its proper metaphysical context (at A576/B604, Kant connects the topic of the transcendental Ideal with “the concept of a thing in itself”).

As a corollary of the above set of claims, my general view on Kant’s idealism is that Kant’s distinction between appearances and things in themselves amounts to a distinction between *two* kinds or classes of ‘object’ (in the general sense) which map onto *one* ontological realm, namely Being itself, and only one of which is a determinate object for our cognition and only one of which is a completely determined individual, a thing in itself.⁸ The one kind of object is not (numerically) identical to the other, while the one object represents, in some sense, a delimited part of the other. (One might argue that there is some sort of non-numerical identity between the two kinds of object, in that both kinds of object can be constituents of a composite entity; see Ertl 2016.) Furthermore, there is no one-to-one isomorphism between phenomenal object or appearance and thing in itself, which is not to say

that there are not *any* isomorphisms between the phenomenal and the noumenal.⁹ The ‘object’ (in the general sense) is either an appearance as an empirically real object (in Kant’s sense) or a thing in itself that is transcendently real, whereby the empirically real object is, in some sense, a limitation of the transcendently real ‘thing’, of reality *tout court*. Note that by reality *tout court* I do *not* mean empirical or physical reality. Reality *tout court* is, *as such*, not the reality of the appearances that we are able to determine as the objectively real spatiotemporal objects of empirical nature. I also note that, whereas the putative real thing in itself is completely individuated and so is an individual (see below Sect. 9.6), one is not licensed to speak of the empirically real object of possible experience (i.e. the appearance) in terms of an individual.¹⁰ Only things in themselves are individuals strictly speaking.

I thus depart from two-aspect (one-object) readings of idealism, either the methodological version famously espoused by Henry Allison and others or the more recent metaphysical or ontological versions (e.g. Langton 1998; Allais 2006, 2007, 2015). There is considerable *prima facie* textual support for two-aspect readings (see Rosefeldt 2007:170), but I believe both versions of two-aspectism run up against identity problems that have to do with their inability to account for the assumption that, apropos of the methodological two-aspect view, two *exclusionary* perspectives relate to one and the same thing/object and, as to the metaphysical two-aspects or two-properties reading, one and the same thing/object has two different *exclusionary* sets of properties (i.e. spatiotemporal properties and intrinsic properties) or, if not expressed in terms of metaphysical properties, is specifiable by “two ways of knowing the same things” (Allais 2006:160). As is well known, Kant believes that things in themselves are not spatial (A26/B42), for spatial properties are not intrinsic properties but extrinsic ones and things in themselves are essentially and exclusively characterised by their intrinsic properties; this means that spatial properties cannot be considered to be properties *of the same* things that are essentially and exclusively characterised by their intrinsic properties, or in other words, exclusionary properties cannot be properties of one and the same thing.¹¹ I also think that metaphysical two-aspectism

cannot account for the centrality of subjective agency in establishing the spatiotemporality of appearances, which was discussed in Chap. 7. Current metaphysical readings of idealism are conspicuously deficient in explaining this major reason behind Kant's subjective turn in philosophy.

My central claim here is thus that idealism is already entailed by our very conceptuality, independently even of sensibility, or, Kant's subjectivism centrally involves his idealism (in the sense of the fourth strand of my thesis of Kant's radical subjectivism; see Chap. 1, Sect. 1.4). However, I deny that this means that the transcendently real is an "empty category" or has no "ontological status" (Ameriks 2003:103). In fact, although I do not believe that the pure thought of a thing in itself has any object for itself (strictly speaking), on my reading the non-ideal, i.e. the thing in itself, has indeed a greater ontological status than the ideal, i.e. the phenomenal object (cf. Ameriks 2003:104). That is to say, there is some *thing* or entity or Being that is substantially more than the phenomenal object of experience, and whose truth thus transcends the evidence we have for our phenomenal experience. This ties in with my view of Kant's idealism as a benign form of phenomenalism, which I argued in Chap. 4, Sect. 4.10.

In Sects. 9.2–9.4, I present the negative argument for idealism from conceptuality, by delineating how the categories are restricted to their application to appearances and do not reach things in themselves, while allowing thoughts about that which goes beyond appearances. This will mainly be done by canvassing passages in the *Critique* and the *Prolegomena*, where Kant indicates the limits of the use of the categories. I also critically engage with Allen Wood's identity interpretation of idealism, which in my view conflicts with Kant's own strictures on establishing the putative identity relation between appearances and things in themselves (Sect. 9.4). In Sect. 9.5, I rehearse the main elements of the central argument of TD. In Sects. 9.6–9.8, I then advance the positive argument for idealism from conceptuality, by arguing that (1) our conceptual (discursive) rules for determining objects (a priori synthesis) are grounded on a different kind of a priori synthesis, which I call material synthesis, which concerns what Kant calls the "sum total of all possibility" (A573/B601), that (2) material

synthesis concerns the thoroughgoing or complete determinacy of an individual, which Kant identifies as a thing in itself proper, and that therefore (3) we cannot, *per impossibile*, by means of the rules for determining objects determine the *ground* of those very rules. Hence, we cannot determine a thing in itself, *just because* our conceptual rules for determining objects eo ipso prohibit this.

9.2 Do the Categories Have Meaning Beyond the Bounds of Sensible Experience?

In the concluding sections of the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* Kant writes that

it would be absurd [*eine Ungereimtheit*] for us to hope that we can know more of any object than belongs to the possible experience of it or lay claim to the least knowledge of how anything not assumed to be an object of possible experience is determined according to the constitution that it has in itself. (Prol §57, 4:350 [Kant 1977:91])

The reason for this, Kant says, is that objects are only knowable under certain conditions, that is, under the conditions of space and time as well as the concepts of the understanding, which “have no other use than to make experience possible”. Indeed, “if this condition [of sensibility, D.S.] is omitted from the pure concepts of the understanding, they do not determine any object and have no meaning whatever” (Prol, 4:350 [Kant 1977:91]).¹²

At the end of the Schematism chapter in the *Critique*, Kant asserts that without the schematisation of the concepts of pure understanding no relation to objects is provided. He is quite clear as to denying the possibility of “amplify[ing] the previously limited concept”, that is, the concept limited by a restricting condition concerning sensibility, so that “the categories in their pure significance, without any conditions of sensibility, should hold for things in general, *as they are*, instead of their schemata merely representing them *how they appear*”, and would thus “have a significance independent of all schemata and extending

far beyond them” (B186/A147).¹³ The significance that pure categories could have is only a “logical significance”, concerning “the mere unity of representations”, which yields no “concept¹⁴ of an object”. Kant concludes that

[w]ithout schemata, therefore, the categories are only functions of the understanding for concepts, but do not represent any object. This significance comes to them from sensibility, *which realizes the understanding at the same time as it restricts it.* (B186–7/A147; emphasis added; cf. B253)

At B178 Kant is even clearer as to the putative application of categories to things in themselves:

[T]hey cannot pertain to things in themselves (without regard to how and whether they may be given to us) at all [*auf Dinge an sich [...] gar nicht gehen können*]¹⁵.

Nevertheless, Kant insists in the same *Prolegomena* passage quoted above that it would be “a still greater absurdity if we conceded [*einräumen*] no things in themselves” (Prol, 4:350–351 [Kant 1977:91]), even though it is true to say that the categories are not applicable to things in themselves and so cannot strictly speaking represent them as such. That the categories do not pertain or refer to things in themselves does not, as Kant says, imply there not *being*, in some sense, such things. It is not implied by the categories’ inability to apply to a thing in itself that the thing in itself is not what it is, whatever it is, nor that there *is* no thing in itself (e.g. presumably because it is merely a limiting concept). The position that Kant adopts in the *Prolegomena* is consistent with the view that he espouses in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant acknowledges and indeed considers necessary the extramental being of things in themselves, which appear as and which we determine to be the empirically real objects that we experience. In the *Critique*, Kant speaks likewise of the threat of incongruity, for if we were not capable of at least thinking things in themselves, “the absurd proposition [would follow] that there is an appearance without anything that appears” (Bxxvi).¹⁶ Apart from the conceptual absurdity of an appearance that has no

ground of appearing, it is clear that if there were only objects as appearances, which we can cognise, but no things that are the substrate or ground¹⁷ of these appearances, which at various points Kant says are “mere representations” (e.g. B235–6/A190–1),¹⁸ then the central claim of TD that our representations have objective validity or objective reality would not amount to much and would thus lack probative force. It is true that in order for representations to have objective reference, by being unified in an objective unity of representations, it is both necessary and formally sufficient for them to be governed by the dual *formal* conditions of knowledge (the pure concepts and the pure forms of intuition), which establish cognition of things merely as appearances (see Chap. 4). However, there still has to be a *materially* sufficient condition which grounds empirical knowledge of an *actual* given object that is more than just an object in general; and in order to cognise the actuality of things perception is required, i.e. sensation, which, in our experience, is the connecting characteristic to the *thing itself* (B272/A225).¹⁹ Thus, by implication, if there were not things that existed in themselves (in some sense) independently of our minds to which they appear, we would not have sensible perception, and a fortiori cognition, of things either. This would uproot the whole project of the analysis of knowledge.²⁰

It seems clear, then, as Adickes has demonstrated in his classic *Kant und das Ding an sich* (1924) by canvassing ample textual support in the First *Critique*, that the fact that there are in some sense things in themselves apart from their way of appearing to us as cognisers is never in doubt for Kant. However, we should be aware that

- (1) the existence of putative things in themselves can only first be *determined* by virtue of the application of the modal category of existence, through judgement, so that their existence is not guaranteed as a matter of course, as Adickes seems to believe; Bird (2006:536, 555ff.) rightly criticises Adickes on this point, for being too quick in assuming the actual existence of things in themselves. However, Bird then wrongly concludes that Kant is not committed to the actual existence of things in themselves. That the conceivability of things in themselves does not eo ipso imply their actual existence

does not imply that they do not actually exist. We should distinguish between a general claim regarding the existential independence of things in themselves from our minds and specific claims regarding the fact that particular things in themselves or a singular thing in itself exist(s) or do(es) not exist;

- (2) by means of applying the modal category of existence it is only determined *that* a thing exists; it does not tell us anything about the *mode in* which it exists (for that at least further categories are needed, not least the categories of quality).

Nevertheless, though we do not know things in themselves as we know them in the way that they appear, we do know, by extrapolation, *that* they must exist (in some sense) independently of the manner in which we intuit them to be, *given* possible experience. (This does not mean that *mere* conceivability implies existence, but only that *if* we experience determinate appearances, things in themselves as their underlying ground must exist.) Strictly speaking, it is not the thing in itself *as such* that we know exists, but that of which we determine in judgement that it exists. Existence (as a category) is first bestowed upon the thing by the determinative power of the understanding; more accurately, the category of existence is applied to the object of experience, the appearance, not to the thing in itself as such. But that does not mean that the thing so determined does not exist mind-independently, nor that it is not the mind-independent thing in itself *only* that is the denizen of Being. The *determination* of existence in thought should not be conflated with de facto existence, nor should the de facto existence of a thing in itself be confused with the way(s) in which it exists or the ways in which it is determined to exist, which for us is only as a phenomenal object or appearance.

As has rightly been noted many times by Ameriks (e.g. 2000b) in response to typical objections raised first by Jacobi and then by champions of German Idealism, there is nothing contradictory in claiming to know something, in a very general sense, regarding that which transcends the limits of knowledge as long as we distinguish between kinds of cognition, only one of which yields determinate knowledge. Kant makes a clear distinction between thinking or

conceiving, on the one hand, and knowing, on the other hand (B146); to put it differently, we have no “determinate knowledge” (*Bestimmtes Wissen*) of things in themselves or of “pure beings of the understanding” (*Verstandeswesen*) (Prol §32, 4:315 [Kant 1977:57]; trans. emended), but we can still entertain the notion of ‘thing in itself’ without contradiction. One could also term this distinction as one between positive knowledge about things in themselves and negative knowledge about them (i.e. knowledge that such and such does not pertain to them), corresponding to Kant’s distinction between ‘noumenon’ in a positive and in a negative sense (in its problematic use).

So far so good. It is only at this point that the controversy starts. First, as Adickes, as one of the first as far as I know, pointed out very extensively and very clearly in the course of his aforementioned book, there is a lingering ambiguity in, on the one hand, holding the view, as Kant does, that the categories can have no meaning and do not determine any object outside of the realm of sensible experience and, on the other hand, believing that we must be able at least to *think* the underlying things in themselves that we do not cognise other than by way of cognising their appearance(s) and so claiming to know at least *something*, if only conceptually (non-determinately), about some thing that transcends the confines of cognition. If we non-determinately know something about that which transcends the limits of knowledge by thinking it, then it would appear that at least some concepts, if not the pure concepts (categories), are employed in so doing. And this would imply that those concepts must yield *some* meaning and cannot be entirely without sense.

Indeed, as Kant writes in the section Phenomena and Noumena, “if [...] I leave out all intuition, then there still remains the form of thinking, i.e., the way of determining an object for the manifold of a possible intuition” (B309/A253–4). Significantly, Kant continues, “the categories extend further than sensible intuition, since they think objects in general without seeing to the particular manner (of sensibility) in which they might be given” (cf. B150). Such passages appear to lend credence to the view espoused by Adams, whom I quoted in the beginning. The gloss we thus need to give on those passages in the

Critique where Kant seems to stress the *lack* of meaningfulness of the categories in abstraction from their application to sensible intuition is that meaning or reference (*Bedeutung*) must be interpreted as having to do with cognitive relevance in terms of yielding assertoric empirical knowledge (B310/A255; cf. A239/B298, A262/B318, A289/B346).²¹ Lack of sense (*Sinn* or *Bedeutung*),²² then, does not mean utter conceptual or semantic meaninglessness—Kant’s theory of concepts is not verificationist.²³ Apart from their necessary empirical significance in the case of knowledge, categories still have general significance in terms of providing the concept of an object in general. As Kenneth Westphal rightly notes, “[i]f the categories were utterly devoid of content when abstracted from sensibility, there would be no difference between any two (alleged) categorial concepts” (2004:43).²⁴ Furthermore, in abstraction from the way we cognitively determine a thing, which yields genuine objective knowledge, we are still able to think notionally, or to have at least the notion of, the thing in itself or think up patently transcendent or even impossible objects (cf. A96). And in fact, as indicated earlier, Kant must allow this possibility if we are to talk sensibly about *appearances* as the objects of our cognition. Also, if we are to talk meaningfully about such prominent things in themselves as the moral self and God, which are objects of Kant’s primary concern even in the First *Critique* but most importantly in the practical context, then he cannot allow that categories (in particular, the relational category of cause) do not apply *at all* to things beyond possible experience, that is, things in themselves, not least the noumenal self (cf. B575).²⁵ In general, as Kant affirms in the paragraphs following the sections of the *Prolegomena* quoted at the start of this section, although “we cannot [...], beyond all possible experience, form a definite notion [*bestimmten Begriff*] of what things in themselves may be”, we are “[y]et [...] not at liberty to abstain entirely from inquiring into them” (Prol, 4:351 [Kant 1977:92]).

In the next two subsections, I address the conundrum of the transphenomenal application of the category of substance to the thinking self, which particularly evinces the ambiguity of the reference or, in Kant’s words, the *Bedeutung* of the categories in general.

9.2.1 Categories and Self-Reference

Even in a purely theoretical context the category of substance, say, would appear to have some significance beyond the bounds of sense, if only because, in abstraction from the sensible conditions of empirical knowledge, we can (and must) make sense of the ‘I’ of transcendental apperception, which grounds theoretical knowledge. This ‘I’ refers to *someone* in particular doing the synthesising—viz. the ‘I’ as a substantial thing in itself, so the noumenal and not the empirical self—rather than to a mere activity.²⁶ The self-reference at issue in apperception concerns a consciousness of *one-self* doing the action or activity of synthesising, not a mere consciousness of activity in any merely general sense²⁷; and, as Kant asserts, “[w]here there is action, consequently activity and force, there is also substance” (A204/B250).²⁸ Of course, ‘substance’ as pure category, which is first derived from the ‘I’ of apperception (see Schulting 2012), is nothing but a function that, in the context of possible experience, serves to determine something that is relatively permanent or enduring. In abstraction from sensible experience, and so apart from the constraints of space and time, the category is nothing but a *logical* function, which has no object, in any strict sense, *for itself*. Nevertheless, the ‘I’ of self-consciousness does point to a more substantial underlying nature than is manifest at the phenomenal level; that is, an ‘I *am*’ is expressed by it (B422n.; emphasis added). For, although one is not licensed to positively (categorically) assert its substantiality, the ‘I’ that exercises the act of apperception is not merely a function of thought that is universally applicable (the ‘I’ is not a universal, or, a concept strictly speaking; cf. B404/A346). Again, this is because a particular *someone*—and this someone is *not* the phenomenal self (cf. B157), which is first *grounded on* the apperceptive self—has to exercise the function of thought, albeit that I, being that particular someone that apperceives, cannot gain any direct access to my self’s *complete* inner nature, not even, as I claim in this chapter, by merely thinking it—the access is immediately intuitive, not conceptual (cf. B153–9).²⁹

Therefore, a distinction should be heeded between, on the one hand, the necessary *reference to* an otherwise indeterminate subject as a particular person (i.e. a substantial thing in itself), not a mere activity, in any self-conscious act of thought or act of apperception (the ‘I’ of apperception) and, on the other hand, the noumenal self itself as a putative fully determinate thing in itself that is the unknowable and indeterminable *ground* of the ‘I’ of apperception and to which the apperceptive ‘I’ refers.³⁰ It is evident that the noumenal and the *phenomenal* self are not congruent, but I contend that also the noumenal self and the logical ‘I’ of apperception need not be, and probably are not, congruent (cf. A356–9). This is not to say that insofar as we speak of the transcendental subject no reference at all is thereby made to a thing in itself, i.e. the noumenal (personal) self.³¹ But what I am implying is that the transcendental subject, qua the logical characteristics of the thinking subject, is not, or at least need not be, *equivalent* to the noumenal (personal) self (Kant’s ‘I’ is not a Cartesian *res cogitans* determined or determinable as a separable substance; it is merely the thinking thing as a function of combination manifested in discursive thought, i.e. the act of thinking which, to be sure, nonetheless *expresses* my substantial being or the fact that *I am* [B422n.]).³² However, at A492 Kant does seem to identify the transcendental subject with the noumenal self (cf. Ameriks 2000a:281).

9.2.2 The ‘Substantial’ and the Transcendental Subject

To understand the relation between the agent of thought and the self as substance, it might be helpful to bring to mind here Kant’s talk of “the substantial” (*Substantiale*) (B441; Prol, 4:334), which differs from the notion of ‘substance’ in some important ways.³³ The ‘substantial’ is the notion of an object “which subsists, insofar as one thinks in it [*an ihm*] merely the transcendental subject without any predicates” (B441/A414; trans. emended). At A355–6, Kant makes it clear, regarding this “transcendental subject”, that

it is obvious that the subject of inherence is designated only transcendently through the I that is appended to thought [*dem Gedanken*], without noting the least property of it, or cognizing or knowing anything at all about it [*oder überhaupt etwas von ihm zu kennen, oder zu wissen*]. (trans. emended)

This transcendental subject, which is but “a something in general” (*Etwas überhaupt*), is a simple representation, as it is the concept of something completely undetermined. Through this ‘I’, or the transcendental subject, nothing but “an absolute but logical unity of the subject” is thought, and through it I do not think the “real simplicity of my subject” (A356).

The ‘substantial’ as such cannot be thought, because it is that which is always already presupposed in whichever thoughts we have; that is, it is that *in which* inhere our thoughts or determinations, more in particular, the pure categories as the functions of thought. At B422, Kant asserts that “the subject of the categories cannot, by thinking them [i.e. the categories], obtain a concept of itself as an object of the categories”, the reason being that “in order to think them, it must take its pure self-consciousness, which is just what is to be explained, as its ground”. Similarly, at B404/A346, Kant speaks of “the simple and in content for itself wholly empty representation I, of which one cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept”. Significantly,

[t]hrough this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = X, which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, *and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept*. (emphasis added)

Quite clearly, then, this “consciousness in itself [*Bewußtsein an sich*] is not even a representation distinguishing a particular object” (B404/A346). If I were to try to determine the properties of the thinking subject, I would be “turn[ing] in a constant circle”, as in doing so I would have to make use of it as that which accompanies all of my thoughts.

Concluding, the absolute unity and substantiality of the thought of the subject, through the pure categories, do not tell us anything about the determinate properties of the subject as an object, as substance. As indicated before, it is however not at all implied that the subject of thought is *reducible to* the functional unity governing any judging, or is indeed mere "impersonal" activity (Keller 2001:4ff.). There is still enough warrant for claiming that there is a noumenal self that is the ultimate ground of my thinking or thoughts, which are the predicates that inhere in the unity of the 'I'. It is only that, *due to the nature of discursive thought*, which is shown by the fact that I must always be able to accompany whichever thoughts I have with this irreducible 'I think', I cannot represent my pure thinking being *as a determinate subject*, "as I am in myself" (B157), solely through the categories. In short, I cannot *determine* my complete, noumenal thinking self, evidently not with the help of the senses, but also not by any pure (rational) means.

9.3 We Can Make the "Connection" to the Thing in Itself "Distinct"

Coming back to the main question: *what* exactly do we think of the thing in itself if what we think of it does of course not have to do with the spatiotemporal properties of a fully-fledged object? Does it mean that by virtue of merely thinking the form of an object, without considering the way in which "we intuit [it] to be" (B59/A42), I think the thing *as it is in itself*? Accordingly, does it mean that since the appearances that are cognised are, as Kant asserts, only empirically real and hence transcendently ideal because of the limiting condition of sensibility, that idealism does not affect the way I might *think* the thing in abstraction from the sensible conditions of cognition so that what I think through the pure understanding is the transcendently real thing in itself? In the *Inaugural Dissertation*, Kant still held the view that the intellect knows things as they are in themselves, such that the pure intellect has its proper intelligible objects, whose essences it knows by purely thinking them (see e.g. MSI, 2:392, 384). But this cannot be Kant's position in the *Critique*, when we know that it was precisely the

role and function of the intellect with respect to objects that changed between the Dissertation and the *Critique*.

If we return to the concluding section of the *Prolegomena*, then we find a preliminary answer to the question whether we are able to think the thing in itself *as* the thing in itself proper. Kant writes that the relation to what lies beyond the bounds (*Grenzen*) of reason—he makes a distinction between limits (*Schranken*) and bounds (*Grenzen*), which always point to something positive, “whereas limits contain mere negations”—is a particular one, namely

an actual connection [*wirkliche Verknüpfung*] of a known thing [*des Bekannten*] with one quite unknown [*einem völlig Unbekannten*] (and which will always remain so), and though what is unknown should not become the least more known—which we cannot even hope—yet the notion of this connection must be definite, and capable of being rendered distinct. (Prol, 4:354 [Kant 1977:94–95])

Kant is clear that

as we can never cognize these beings of the understanding as they are in themselves, *that is, determinately*, yet must assume them as regards [*im Verhältnis auf*] the sensible world and connect [*verknüpfen*] them with it by reason, we are at least able *to think this connection* [*Verknüpfung*] by means of such concepts as express their relation to the world of sense. (Prol, 4:355 [Kant 1977:95]; emphasis added)

What we thus think, when we try to think beyond the limits of sensibility, is the *connection* between what is known through the categories and empirical intuition and that which necessarily lies beyond it. But we do not think, strictly speaking, *that which* lies beyond it.³⁴

9.4 Wood’s Identity Interpretation

Recently, an interesting version of the two-aspects reading of idealism has been advanced by Allen Wood, which he calls the Identity Interpretation (Wood 2005). Wood’s view epitomises the idea that Kant’s notion of

discursivity is separable from idealism, the view that I reject. Succinctly put, Wood believes that we can *think* the thing in itself *as* it is in itself. According to Wood, Kant's talk of appearances and things in themselves concerns the same object, which is in line with Allison's epistemological one-world reading, as with most other two-aspects readings. However, Wood (2005:65) appears to regard the distinction, not as due to two ways of considering but as having to do with two kinds of property of the same object that are being referred to (perhaps similar to Allais 2006); phenomenal properties are aspects of underlying things in themselves, and it is these aspects that we cognize through our forms of perceiving spatiotemporal objects. Wood contends that, although there is no identity between the *sensible characteristics* of appearances and things in themselves, there is identity between, on the one hand, the objects *thought through* the pure concepts of the understanding in abstraction from the sensible features of these objects as appearances and, on the other hand, things in themselves. The "fundamental point" of the identity interpretation, Wood asserts, is "that every appearance is *identical* to a thing in itself, and the distinction is not between two different entities but between two ways of thinking about or referring to the same entity" (2005:65). Regarding the thinkability of things in themselves Wood further writes:

Although things in themselves cannot be sensed, appearances can be thought through the pure understanding, simply by thinking of them in abstraction from the ways they can appear to us. Thus while the sensible criterion for identity cannot apply across the gulf separating phenomena from noumena, the intelligible criterion can apply. [...] [Kant] seems to regard it as entirely permissible and even inevitable that we should be able to *think* the phenomenal objects around us solely through pure concepts of the understanding, hence as they are in themselves. (2005:69)

We call something an appearance insofar as it can be intuited by us and therefore cognized through our understanding; but we can *think* the same thing while abstracting from the relation to our faculties that makes it a possible object of cognition. (2005:73)³⁵

Wood's interpretation is problematic for three main reasons. (1) It seems to me that Wood's interpretation is flatly contrary to Kant's

censure of Leibnizian strategies. Wood appears to do precisely that for which Kant criticises Leibniz. Kant writes:

[F]or him [i.e. Leibniz] appearance was the representation *of the thing in itself*, although distinguished from cognition through the understanding in its logical form [*der logischen Form nach*], since with its customary lack of analysis the former draws a certain mixture of subsidiary representations into the concept of the thing, from which the understanding knows how to abstract. (A270ff./B326ff.)

Wood, like Leibniz, intellectualises appearances, which according to Kant amounts to abstracting from the irreducibly sensible properties of appearances.

(2) Wood draws on the Leibnizian principle of the identity of indiscernibles,³⁶ referring to the Amphiboly chapter in the *Critique*. He believes that Kant holds that

when objects are represented in pure understanding, the criterion to be used in individuating them is the Leibnizian one—the identity of indiscernibles—while when they are given to us through the senses, the principle of their individuation is their positions in space. (Wood 2005:68; cf. Van Cleve 1999:149ff.)

Kant indeed asserts that if an object is presented with the same inner determinations, “then it is always exactly the same if it counts as an object of pure understanding, not many but only one thing (*numerica identitas*)” (A263/B319). However, although what Kant says here holds true for the putative³⁷ identity of a thing in itself in contrast to some other thing, I believe Leibniz’s principle (and Kant’s reference to it) cannot be put to use in trying to establish, as does Wood, the identity *of* the appearance—supposedly thought merely through the understanding—*and* the thing in itself,³⁸ that is, to bridge “the gulf separating phenomena from noumena” (Wood 2005:69), which though is the main point of his identity interpretation. Incidentally, Wood is ambiguous as to whether the identity relation holds, on the one hand, between the concept or the thought of the thing in itself

“as an object of pure understanding” and the thing in itself or, on the other, between the appearance and the thing in itself.³⁹ These surely are not the same identity relations, although it appears that he means the two relations to come down to the same, for the identity is really between the appearance and the thing in itself, once the appearance has been stripped of its appearance properties. But this strikes me as a lot of tautological window dressing. Wood's intention is to enable the conception of thinking *appearances* through the pure understanding (2005:69), by way of abstracting from their sensible properties, but what he thereby effectively achieves is not establishing the identity of appearance and thing in itself across the conceptual gulf, but merely confirming the trivial truth that a thing is the same as itself and thus different from something else, for what is an appearance without its 'appearance' features?

Moreover, I think, contrary to Wood, that Kant does not endorse the view, neither in the Amphiboly section nor anywhere else in the Critical corpus, that sheerly by virtue of Leibniz's principle objects are *individuated*,⁴⁰ even if the objects concerned are (mere) objects of pure understanding (whatever these amount to) or things in themselves, for that matter. What I should like to stress here, against Wood's unwarranted use of the textual evidence, is that Kant's aim in his criticism of Leibniz is not to *partly endorse* Leibniz's principle—viz. insofar as things in themselves are concerned (although he also does not explicitly deny its applicability in that restricted case⁴¹)—but rather to point out that Leibniz's principle is to no avail for acquiring knowledge of objects of any sort, since “pure concepts of the understanding yield no knowledge on their own” (FM, 20:280 [Kant 2002:371]); for only in the categories' schematisation to sensible experience is cognition of objects *stricto dicta* first possible. This is the reason why Kant writes that “that putative law [Leibniz's principle, D.S.] is no law of nature” but “simply an analytical rule or comparison of things through mere concepts” (A272/B328).⁴²

(3) Wood's assumption of the possibility of thinking things through the pure understanding is based on a mistaken conception of what a pure concept of an object or “an object of pure understanding” amounts to. He appears to conflate the pre-Critical and Critical views of the

intellect's relation to objects. As I pointed out earlier, the pure concept of an object is constrained by the limits of discursive thought as much as our sensible intuition of an object is constrained by the forms of space and time. This means that one is not licensed to argue that for the Critical Kant things in themselves satisfy the conditions under which objects are *thought* (i.e. the intellectual conditions).⁴³ As a result of this, a disparity exists between the object of pure understanding, which is a mere transcendental object and constrained by the a priori concepts that come with discursivity, and the thing in itself. This disparity cannot be bridged by means of any speculative attempt of putting to use metaphysical principles (e.g. Leibniz's identity principle). Nevertheless, at A249, quoted by Wood (2005:65), Kant seems to suggest that the thing in itself is the object of the understanding, which is the object of "a cognition [...] in which no sensibility is encountered" and which would refer to a different "world" (a *mundus* [...] *intelligibilis*) (A249), "a world thought in spirit (perhaps also even intuited)" (A250). However, first, Kant argues that it would here, in the same passage, concern an object of a non-sensible intuition; earlier he refers to intellectual intuition. Clearly, Kant *hypothesises* here about a pure employment of the understanding, that is, about "a pure and yet objectively valid [use of the categories]". But he soon makes it clear that the object to which "through the understanding" our representations are "in fact related" is indeed "only the transcendental object", a

something = X, of which we know nothing at all nor can know anything in general (in accordance with the current constitution of our understanding), but is rather something that can serve only as a correlate of the unity of apperception for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition, by means of which the understanding unifies that [*dasselbe*, i.e. the manifold, D.S.] in the concept of an object. (A250)⁴⁴

Significantly, then, the transcendental object is nothing in abstraction from sensibility (cf. A277/B333; A109). Kant continues:

This transcendental object cannot even be separated from the sensible data, for then nothing would remain through which it would be thought.

It is therefore no object of cognition in itself [*Gegenstand der Erkenntnis an sich selbst*] [...] *Just for this reason, then, the categories do not represent any special object given to the understanding alone*, but rather serve only to determine the transcendental object (the concept of something in general) through that which is given in sensibility, in order thereby to cognize appearances empirically under concepts of objects. (A250–1; emphasis added)

This gainsays Wood's contention that through the pure use of the understanding, through mere concepts, we are able to think the thing in itself as it is, for clearly, as Kant notes, the "categories do not represent any special object *given to the understanding alone*". The thing in itself, i.e. "that which is given in sensibility", is only indirectly related to the understanding. The concept of a noumenon results from the "thinking of something in general, *in which I abstract from all form of sensible intuition*". Does this mean that I thus represent a pure object, i.e. the thing *as it is in itself*? No. Kant insists:

[I]n order for a noumenon to signify a true object, to be distinguished from all phenomena, *it is not enough that I liberate my thoughts from all conditions of sensible intuition*, but I must in addition have ground to assume another kind of intuition than this sensible one, under which such an object could be given; for otherwise my thought is empty, even though free of contradiction. [...] *[A]lthough our thinking can abstract from that sensibility, the question still remains whether it is not then a mere form of a concept and whether any object at all is left over after this separation. The object to which I relate appearance in general is the transcendental object, i.e., the entirely undetermined thought of something in general. This cannot be called the noumenon; for I do not know anything about what it is in itself; and have no concept of it except merely that of the object of a sensible intuition in general [...]. I cannot think it through any categories.* (A252; emphasis added; cf. B306–7)

For the Critical Kant, the pure (unschematised) concept of an object does *not* map, one to one, onto the thing in terms of its in-itself nature. In fact, the pure concept of an object does not have or refer to any particular object or thing for itself. Kant clearly links this limiting fact to

the nature of the functions of our discursive thought. He writes towards the end of the Amphiboly section:

If by merely intelligible objects we understand those things that are thought through pure categories, without any schema of sensibility, then things of this sort are impossible. For the condition of the objective use of all our concepts of the understanding is merely the manner of our sensible intuition, through which objects are given to us, and, if we abstract from the latter, *then the former have no relation at all to any sort of object*. Indeed, even if one would assume another sort of intuition than this our sensible one, our functions for thinking would still be without any significance in regard to it. (B342/A286; emphasis added)

This, as Kant continues, does not exclude the problematic notion of a noumenon, that is, noumenon in the negative sense, but we cannot

assume beyond appearances objects of pure thinking, i.e., noumena [in the positive sense, D.S.], since those do not have any positive significance that can be given. [...] Thinking in itself, to be sure, is not a product of the senses, and to this extent is also not limited by them, *but it is not on that account immediately of any independent and pure use, without assistance from sensibility, for it is in that case without an object*. (B343/A287; emphasis added)

There cannot be a positive argument to the effect that we may infer that, when we abstract from the sensible constraints of the knowledge of an object, there obtains an identity between the object thought through the pure concepts and a putative thing in itself, “[f]or one must concede that the categories alone are not sufficient for the cognition of things in themselves [*allein noch nicht zur Erkenntnis der Dinge an sich zureichen*]” (B343/A287). This is Kant’s clearest statement regarding the alleged possibility of thinking, through the categories, things in themselves (cf. also B306–7). The pure concept of an object is nothing but the set of the purely logical characteristics which make up that concept, i.e. the categories; and, as we also know from Kant’s arguments in the Paralogisms regarding the nature of the self (see again above Sect. 9.2),

these do not determine an object for themselves (in abstraction from sensibility).

Wood crucially neglects the difference between the pre-Critical concept of an object (whereby, as I said earlier, the Kant of the Dissertation indeed holds that the intellect cognises the intelligible object) and the Critical concept of an object which may be said to correspond to a noumenon *in a negative sense only*. The pure understanding of an object (or an appearance) is not isomorphically related, and a fortiori identical, to a thing in itself by way of its mere intellectual grasp, by merely entertaining the notion of a thing in itself or by abstracting from the appearance properties of an object. This means that, strictly speaking, things in themselves cannot even be *thought* as such in any objectively significant, determinate sense.⁴⁵ What *is* thought about a thing in itself is merely the noumenon in a negative sense—i.e. empty concepts, or at least concepts without any positive ontological reference, or *Bedeutung* as Kant would say. The positive content of our thoughts of things in themselves consists, as Kant pointed out in the *Prolegomena* passage quoted earlier (Sect. 9.3 above), merely of (analogical) *relations* or “connections” between our knowledge and what lies beyond its limits, what is “quite unknown”.

As a run-up to discussing those aspects of the transcendental Ideal central to the topic of this chapter, I now turn to a brief rehearsal of the main argument of the TD, in particular the element of objective determination.

9.5 Objective Determination in TD

As we have seen in detail in Chap. 4, in TD Kant expounds the necessary conditions which must be satisfied to enable the sense of an object as object, which at the same time enables the experience of such an object (B197; A111). Kant asserts, controversially, that this dual possibility—that is, the possibility of the experience of an object and the possibility of an object itself, of objectivity *simpliciter*—is grounded in one unconditional subjective principle, which he calls the principle of transcendental apperception (the thesis of Kant’s radical

subjectivism). This principle is transcendental self-consciousness insofar as it concerns the thinking or judging subject who is conscious of her own representations, which she regards as her own and as such apperceives or takes as belonging together. It is the central claim of TD that the form in which transcendental apperception—in that it is the pure function constitutive of discursive thought—determines the logical relation of concepts in general, is also the necessary form in which it gives unity to the manifold of representations in an intuition, representations which in some way are related to the thing that is perceived and judged about in any arbitrary determinative judgement *a is F*. This central idea is expressed most fundamentally and succinctly in the so-called *Leitfaden* passage (A79/B104–5). This is not the place to expand on the perplexing issues surrounding this controversial passage, which concern the way how the *Leitfaden* should be read in regard to deriving the categories from the forms of judgement and how the deduction of the categories in TD ties in with the former.⁴⁶ What is important to emphasise here is that insofar as the unitary form of the intuited object, by means of a synthetic unity of the representations that one has, is determined as such in the unifying act of transcendental apperception, one is licensed to say that the set of functions of transcendental self-consciousness—the “same function” of which Kant speaks in the *Leitfaden* passage—which are the rules for the unity of consciousness, is the original, subjective ground of knowledge itself, that is, of objectively valid cognition. Indeed, transcendental self-consciousness is the very ground or, as Kant says in a *Reflexion* from the 1770s, the “original” of an object in general.⁴⁷

It is for this reason that Kant calls the principle of self-consciousness the original-synthetic principle of apperception (subheading §16), for it is both the ground of the conceptual form of a judgement, which is established by means of an analytic unity of the representations in their purely conceptual relation of subordination, and the ground of the unity of a manifold of representations in an empirical intuition. The original synthesis of apperception grounds, in one act, both the analytic and synthetic unity of representations, by whose complex relation a judgement is characterised. To put it succinctly, a judgement is an objective unity of representations, whereby ‘objective’ should be seen in

terms of a qualitative unity that is established by the synthetic function that grounds both analytic and synthetic unities of representations. So when Kant claims that this objective unity of apperception, which is the definition of judgement, is the ground of our concept of an object, and thus constitutes an object (B137), “not merely something I myself need in order to cognize an object but rather something under which every intuition must stand *in order to become an object for me*” (B138), he makes a claim to having established not merely the necessary conditions for the object to be an object of experience or thought, but also the sufficient condition for the object to *be* an object for me (at least formally). Object is a function of judgement.

Obviously, as Kant affirms and as we saw earlier in Sect. 9.2 above and more in detail in Chap. 4, Sect. 4.10, we do not produce the thing as to its existence (“*dem Dasein nach*”; A92/B125; B72), in the same way that one may say, a bit awkwardly perhaps, that judgement ‘produces’ the object qua its necessary form, viz. as an object in general. We should further notice that the concept of an object, even if only in very general terms, can be made concrete only if we explain subsequently the necessary application of the set of functions, the categories, that make up the concept of an object, to appearances in an *empirical* intuition. Concrete knowledge *stricte dicta* is only possible when the categories are schematised.⁴⁸

On account of the probative force of the argument in TD Kant limits the domain of possible knowledge, and hence the domain of what we determine to be an object. What can be analytically shown to be an object for cognition *eo ipso* determines what cannot be so shown. The object, *as object*, is only knowable to the extent that the categories are applied to sensible intuition and regard the phenomenally substantial thing in space and time. The thing that is determined as the object of our judgement is *ex hypothesi* not the thing as it may be apart from the very general categorial properties that it must have if it is to be an object of our judgement.⁴⁹ That implies that, though the categories provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for the knowledge of an object *in general*, they do not provide us with the sufficient conditions for the knowledge of any particular existent thing as an individual. The only access that we have to the existing thing appears to be the a posteriori

determinable sensations that are the result of the thing's affecting our sense organs (and hence our minds) (cf. again B72), which prompts the occurrence of representations in our mind. Kant's distinction between appearance and thing in itself is thus not the arbitrary distinction for which it is often lambasted, but issues from the very conceptual limits of discursively determining the properties of a putative individual. We just cannot know what the properties of a thing as it is in itself, as individual, *could* be, unless we encountered them in an empirical experience or else they mysteriously "migrate[d] into my faculty of representation" (Prol §9, 4:282)—but notice that Kant dismisses even the possibility of the a posteriori cognition of the properties of a thing in itself.

Put differently, even though by means of judgement we are fully capable of determining, through the forms of the understanding and intuition, the very general properties that any particular object must have, and so indicate its formally necessary and sufficient conditions if it is to be an object of our knowledge, we cannot possibly synthetically grasp *all* of its possible properties, even essential ones, that make up the *particular* thing's essence—what makes it an individual, a thing in itself. Given the nature of our discursive form of thought, it is not possible, for a given empirical judgement (in experience) nor in a consecutive series of empirical judgements, to exhaustively determine the thing that we judge about. A judgement is always a relative positing of predicates which to be sure can be linked with other predicates, through syllogistic reasoning, indefinitely, such that our knowledge of the object of our judgements gradually increases (a procedure for which the practice of science is paradigmatic). Only to the extent that under the conditions of an identical apperceiving subject of judgement—the self-conscious representer—a unity has been brought into the manifold of representations in a "certain intuition" (B132), as Kant says, one can say that one knows an object, that is, the something in general = X (the transcendental object [A109]⁵⁰), which is the correlate of the unity of my representations (cf. A251). This means that only those representations that, at any given time, are occurrently apprehended by the judger determine an object for her judgement. For example, I judge that some x is 'oblong' and 'flat' and not that I judge that e.g. it is 'rust-encrusted' and 'bulky', which are also possible predicates attributable to the object

of my current judgement, e.g. the large steel plate that I perceive and about which I judge that it is oblong and flat—suppose, while abstracting from the aesthetic connotations and being a welder by profession, I am gazing at one of Richard Serra’s massive constructions. For any series of predicates attributed to the transcendental object of one’s judgement, in this case, the large steel plate that I perceive outside me, a synthesis must be performed in order to bring any of a series of possible predicates into a unity with all other predicates attributed.⁵¹ The synthesis of a set of predicates constitutes the object *qua* object of my judgement. This is what is meant by the idea that an object is always only a function of judgement, which makes the object of my judgement an *ideal* object.

This is all very general and needs elaborating, something I do in Schulting (2012) (see also Chaps. 2–4, this volume). What I am going to do next is to concentrate on one class of categories in particular, i.e. the categories of quality (reality, negation and limitation), in the context of my theme of the relation between subjectivity and idealism. It is these categories that make it clear that the categories are only “serviceable” in regard to objects of experience, that is, phenomenal objects, and not in regard to intelligible or noumenal objects (B344/A288). Simply put, these categories make it clear that I cannot even have, through the pure understanding, a definite notion of a thing in itself. To connect this even more intimately to the issue of idealism, in the next section I address relevant aspects of Kant’s account of the *prototypon transcendental* in the Transcendental Dialectic, where he speaks of the ‘thing in itself’ in its proper metaphysical context.

9.6 On Another Kind of A Priori Synthesis: Material Synthesis and the “Sum Total of All Possibility”

In the third chapter of the second book of the Transcendental Dialectic, which is about the Ideal of pure reason and forms the transition to the critique of the proofs of God’s existence, Kant provides what I believe is the key to a proper understanding of the relation between the object

as a phenomenon or appearance and the thing in itself, and thus of the putative possibility of thinking, through the pure categories, the latter. There, Kant explains that a thing in itself is an individual (*individuum*) in terms of a metaphysical or ontological substrate, which is completely or thoroughly determined. This concerns the ground of the object that is determined through the categories of the understanding and the forms of intuition (notice again that, for Kant, the object of experience, the appearance, is *not* an individual, although at A582/B610 he does appear to suggest otherwise).

We saw earlier, in Chap. 4, that the conditions of the possible experience of an object are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of the object of experience (B197/A158; A111), for unlike things in themselves objects depend entirely on possible experience for their being objects (cf. FM, 20:274). The principle of possible experience of objects is analytic (B135) and hence, from the probative force of the analysis of the concept of an object, the limits of what can be determined *as object* are thereby defined. Now the non-trivial analytical principle that, by means of an underlying a priori synthesis (B135), establishes the determination of the *form* of an object (i.e. the object *for us*; A582/B610), which is grounded on a priori synthesis, *rests itself on a further synthesis of a particular kind*. At A578/B606 Kant speaks of a “synthesis of the manifold *in respect of its content*” (trans. Kemp Smith; emphasis added) as concerning “all the possibility of things” (cf. B600). This synthesis, unlike the synthesis brought about by the synthetic act of the understanding regarding the manifold of intuition, is a “sum total of all possibility” (*Inbegriff aller Möglichkeit*) (A573/B601) or an “all of reality” (*All der Realität*) (A576/B604). Significantly, Kant also speaks of the “material for all possibility” (*Materie zu aller Möglichkeit*) (A573/B601, trans. emended; cf. A267/B323).⁵²

This means that the a priori necessary form of the object of knowledge or experience presupposes, logically, that the matter which grounds the very knowledge of an object, that is, that without which it would not be possible in the first place to have a priori synthetic knowledge of an object, is *transcendentally given* (it concerns certain “data”; A573/B601).⁵³ We are not talking here about the de facto givenness

of sensations, which are the concrete empirical matter or content of an appearance (B34/A20), that is, the *empirically* given, but about the *transcendentally* given matter (“transcendental matter”; A143/B182), which corresponds in some way to the sensations that are the empirically given content of appearances. Thus, the transcendental *form* of an object presupposes, insofar as the object’s real possibility is concerned, the transcendental *content* or *matter* of the thing that is being determined as the object of experience. It is this transcendently given matter which makes the thing *materially* possible. This matter is that which individuates the thing underlying the object of experience as what it *is* qua thing, qua individual. It concerns the “complete material condition of its possibility” (*vollständige materiale Bedingung seiner Möglichkeit*) (A576/B604).⁵⁴ The forms of the understanding, the categories, together with the forms of intuition alone cannot satisfy this material enabling condition.

How can this condition of material possibility be further characterised? The application of concepts to objects rests essentially on the principle of excluded middle (*principium exclusi tertii*, i.e. PET), which comes down to the principle that for any arbitrary predicate F either F or $\neg F$ be attributed to the object.⁵⁵ This principle, which is the minimally required condition for knowledge of objects, hangs together with the principle of determination or more precisely “the principle of *determinability*” (*Grundsätze der Bestimmbarkeit*) (A571/B599), which states that of each predicate F a further predicate G can be predicated (cf. Chap. 3). That is, each given predicate F is further determinable by at least one of two contradictorily opposed predicates G or $\neg G$.

However, as Kant writes at B601, when we are concerned with something that exists, a thing rather than a predicate alone, there is not just a *logical* determination of predicates, whereby of each given pair of opposed predicates always only one can be predicated (F or $\neg F$), but also of a transcendental comparison of the *thing itself* with *all of its possible* predicates, that is, a *real* determination of the thing in relation to all possible predicates or, more exactly, *properties* that essentially belong to it. In this case, for all possible predicates F , each F or its contradictorily opposed $\neg F$ *must* be predicated, for things that are the *objects* of predication, rather than mere predicates, are thoroughly determined individuals. It concerns the existing object qua its ‘being’

or essence (qua its thinghood, A574/B603), thus the existing object as thing in itself, which if we were to know it completely, and thus *in itself*, we would know in terms of all its possible predicates or properties. More precisely, as Longuenesse writes,

[i]f one could have cognition of the exhaustive division of the ‘infinite sphere of all possible determinations’, and could exhaustively specify all the subspheres to which the thing belongs *and* to which it does *not* belong, then one would know the thing in its complete determination and, thus, as the *individual* thing it is. (1998:295)

The determination of a concept falls under the generality (*universalitas*) of the principle of non-contradiction PNC (and, equally, PET; A572/B600n.).⁵⁶ But the determinability of a *thing*, qua its ‘being’, falls under totality (*universitas*) or the “sum total” (*Inbegriff*) of all possible predicates predicable of it (see B600n.), i.e. all of its attributable properties. This totality or “sum total” of all possible predicates or properties—Kant also calls it “the whole of possibility” (*gesamte Möglichkeit*) at A572/B600—must be understood in terms of a maximally possible increase of determinacy. That is to say, one must see it as a standard or exemplar of a completely determined individual, not in terms of a mere aggregate or set of predicates. This standard is exactly applicable to one thing, which Kant calls the “*Ideal* of pure Reason” (B602).⁵⁷ Only in this case, that is, in the case of a thing in itself (B604), is the thing completely determined and do its concepts or predicates apply to their object fully. To put it differently, in the case of a thing in itself, its concept fully corresponds to it; there is no longer a discrepancy between the determinacy of the thing and its determinate *concept*. In the case of a thing in itself, it is therefore also not apt to distinguish between the metaphysical and epistemological senses of its ‘determination’, because in this case (and this case only) the epistemic and ontological determinations coincide—or, the logical predication is not distinguishable from the attribution of properties to the *thing* itself.

This idea of an exemplar of a completely determined individual is of course neither an empirical concept nor a concept of the understanding (a category, or even the set of categories), which would effectively

represent it through an empirical intuition, or purely through concepts alone—even though it is true to say that a thing that is the object of judgement falls under the *category* of totality,⁵⁸ which makes the determinate appearance of the thing a *relatively* individuated whole of perceptions, i.e. an empirical object that is distinguishable from other empirical objects (cf. A582/B610).

The concept of a thing in the metaphysical sense—viz. a thing *realiter*, a *Sache*—rests on the metaphysical principle of thoroughgoing determination (*principium omnimodae determinationis*; henceforth POD).⁵⁹ POD is the metaphysical principle of the individuation of things.⁶⁰ This principle, which concerns the logically material (not: empirical) content of determinative knowledge, must be seen in connection with “a common correlate” (B600n.), which is the collective possible predicates attributable to the thing, that is, any possible thing about which one judges. The thoroughly determined thing or individual, which concerns the collective possible predicates attributable to a thing,

is a transcendental *ideal* which is the ground of the thoroughgoing determination that is necessarily encountered in everything existing, and which constitutes the supreme and complete material condition of its possibility, to which all thinking of objects in general must, as regards the content of that thinking, be traced back. (A576/B604)

In other words, in any determination of an object by the understanding, the individual as transcendental Ideal of a thing in itself is always already presupposed as metaphysical ground. More in particular, the actuality of an object as appearance (determined in virtue of the schematised categories) is grounded upon a disjunction of the set of actually attributed predicates from the greater set of all the object's *possible* predicates, that is, the predicates or properties that it possesses as individual or thing in itself. The determination of an actual object in fact occurs by means of the category of limitation, which is the combination of the categories of reality and negation—a thing is determined through *negation*, which results in a *limitation* of the transcendently given *reality*.⁶¹

The thing in itself *is* in fact the collective possible predicates predicable of, or the collective possible properties attributable to, it. That is, a thing in itself is the whole of all predicates that can be determined of the thing that essentially possesses those predicates, that is, when seen (*idealiter*) as a thoroughly determined individual. Any actually existing thing is eo ipso a thing in itself, i.e. a thoroughly determined individual. There is nothing besides the whole of all its possible predicates that the thing in itself *is*, in addition to its predicates. It is a realist mistake—often made—to think that there is an unbridgeable gulf between what the thing in itself is ontologically (qua its ontological determinacy), and how it would be epistemically determined in judgement if it were thoroughly determined, namely as an individual with all of its properties. If all possible epistemic determinations of a thing have been given, then the entirety of *its* determinations, *its* complete determinacy, *is* the thing ontologically; that is, the complete determinacy of a thing corresponds to its *being* that particular thing with all its properties. No gap exists between a thing and its complete (ontological) determination, though, as I argue here, there is an unbridgeable one between it and any *single* (epistemic) determination or finite series of such determinations.

Call epistemic determination ‘ ϵ -determination’ to distinguish it from *ontological* determination or determinacy, which henceforth is called ‘*o*-determination’ or ‘*o*-determinacy’ (*o* standing for omicron). An ϵ -determination concerns the logical predication of a subject (A6–7/B10–11), whose substratum (*x*) is determined as referring to an object of empirical cognition (a determinate appearance), whereas *o*-determination or *o*-determinacy concerns the possession of properties by a thing.⁶² Now, as said, there is no discrepancy between the thing metaphysically speaking, as having all of its properties, and its thoroughly determined *concept*. In other words, concept and thing truly correspond, or the putative ϵ -determination and *o*-determination coincide, just in case the thing in itself is a thoroughly determined individual and one were indeed able to ϵ -determine the thing in itself completely. A thing’s *o*-determination is thus the complete set of all possible ϵ -determinations attributable to it. However, this does *not* imply that the ϵ -determination or set of ϵ -determinations in *any given particular empirical* judgement or series of such judgements

about some arbitrary object x for my judgement, coincides with the thing in itself underlying x . Any single ε -determination or finite set of ε -determinations of x is not identical to the set of *all x 's possible* ε -determinations, after all. From the perspective of empirical judgement, it is therefore correct to distinguish strictly between the ε -determination of x and its o-determination. It would though be a mistake to think that, in the Kantian transcendental context, an ε -determination of x is merely a justified true belief about x at best, but not yet knowledge of x (see Chaps. 3, 4). The ε -determination of an empirical object, by means of the categories, truly corresponds to the actual object so determined, albeit that the object so determined is not a thing in itself (see Chap. 4)⁶³; this latter proviso makes perfectly logical sense, since, as said, an *actual* ε -determination or finite set of actual ε -determinations does not correspond to the totality of all possible ε -determinations, or, the *complete* (ontological) determinacy or o-determination of a thing, which is Kant's definition of a thing in itself.

Yet, later on in Sect. 9.8, we shall see that, in Kant's theory of possible experience, not even *all possible* ε -determinations of *objects as appearances* in fact correspond to the o-determinacy or o-determination of a *thing in itself*. There is thus an unbridgeable discrepancy between, on the one hand, all possible ε -determinations of *objects of possible experience*—"the totality [*Inbegriff*] of all objects of experience"—and, on the other, all possible predicates or the o-determination of *the thing in itself*. But recall that ε -determination and o-determination do coincide, just in case the *thing in itself* is completely determined, which though is *logically* impossible for us to achieve, as will become clear.

As said earlier, the determination of a thing—which, for us, comes down to an ε -determination of an actual object—occurs by means of the categories of quality, in particular the category of 'limitation'. The appearances as objects of possible experience are as it were *ectypa*, copies or negations, of the prototype (*prototypon*) that the thing in itself is, and from which they take their "matter [*Stoff*] for their possibility" (A578/B606). This matter must be transcendently affirmed, by means of the *category* 'reality', for what is effectively determined as the object of cognition to be an existing thing at all; it gives the object its thinghood,

its reality *sensu stricto* (B602). Wolfram Högbe speaks aptly of the “predicative protoplasm” (*prädikative Protoplasma*) or also the “proto-object” (*Protogegenstand*), or likewise, with a hint of Heideggerian etymology, the “dugout of all objects of predication” (*Unterstand aller Gegenstände der Prädikation*) (Högbe 1989:63, 65).

Objective ϵ -determination of a thing thus occurs by means of the categories of quality, in particular, through a *negation* of the thinghood or *reality* of a thing in its complete determinacy, which amounts to a *limitation* of the sum total of all its possible predicates, i.e. a limitation of transcendental matter (B111: “[L]imitation is nothing other than reality combined with negation.”).⁶⁴ Anneliese Maier circumscribes this graphically by saying that “by means of limits or negations we mould, as it were, the manifold of finite objects from the infinite totality of reality [*All der Realität*]” (Maier 1930:41). This limitation of the transcendental matter (of the *illimitatum*, as it were, of the all or totality of reality) determines the unitary manifold of sensations, which constitutes the *realitas phaenomenon* or the matter of appearances that is the result of the thing in itself affecting our sensibility and is effectively determined through the category of reality.

Kant asserts that “transcendental negation”, which is *nothing* as such or “not-being in itself” and as such indicates a “lack”, is logically preceded by “transcendental affirmation”, which expresses Being itself (A574–5/B602–3). Being is always already transcendently affirmed, which does not mean that, *per impossibile*, the existence of any arbitrary object or thing is affirmed before the existence of the object or thing is determined in a judgement (see Sect. 9.2). The Being meant here is reality *simpliciter*, not phenomenal reality, which is first the *result* of the application of the *category* of reality in any arbitrary empirical judgement. The Being that is transcendently affirmed in an objective ϵ -determination by virtue of the negative quality inherent to judgement is “reality (thinghood) [...] through [which] alone [...] are objects Something (things)” (A574/B602).⁶⁵ *Transcendental* affirmation concerns the Being that is affirmed in any arbitrary logical predication, irrespective of it being a *logically* affirmative or negative predication *S is P*, or, *S is not P*, respectively, given that these judgements concern

empirical judgements about objects of experience. Transcendental affirmation means that the something = x of predication—the x underlying the subject predicate in either S is P or S is not P as judgements about objects—is *determined* as a “Something”, as a really existing thing, while a transcendental negation indicates a denying or negating of this Something, that is, a “lack” (A574–5/B602–3), or, a non-existence (notice that transcendental negation is not negation as category, which is in fact the *determination* as such in either affirmative or negative empirical judgements).⁶⁶ Any and all judgements about an object, whether negative or affirmative, rest on a transcendental affirmation.

9.7 Determination, Judgement and the Thing in Itself

At this point, the question might arise as to whether in determining an object of experience, by means of ϵ -determination, we in fact attribute (or not) a predicate *to* the thing in itself that appears to us. Are the predicates that are being attributed to a thing, in a judgement, the properties *of the very thing in itself*? This is important to know, as one would expect a determinative judgement to result in the determination of the thing judged about. That is to say, are the predicates I attribute to the object of my judgement aspects or properties of the thing that I judge about in terms of a thing in itself, or merely in terms of an appearance? Are the properties that I determine to belong to the thing that I judge about, really also properties of the thing in itself *qua* thing in itself if as per Kant’s restriction thesis what I can determine of the thing can only be its appearance properties?

In answering these questions, we must first note again that Kant’s theory of judgement is not a theory of ontological predication (see Chap. 3). Contrary to Wolff and others in the School metaphysics, Kant rejects the view that predicates relate directly to the thing (or the *Sache*) about which is judged that it is so and so (cf. A68/B93) or that we would be able to apply in a judgement a *conceptus infimus* which would determine the individual completely (cf. A655ff./B683ff.).⁶⁷

Kant denies that there can be singular concepts, for we have no notion of the lowest species (Log, 9:59, 97). This means that whatever predicates I apply to the object of my judgement, by means of the application of the categories to the object of my empirical intuition, they never apply to the thing in itself *qua* thing in itself (cf. A358–9)—namely, in terms of the thoroughly determined individual, or the complete set of its possible predicates. This follows from the fact that, as we saw before, ε -determination does not map isomorphically onto o -determination.

Likewise, analytic judgements, which do not depend on the schematisation of categories to empirical intuitions, do not determine things in themselves. James Van Cleve is therefore mistaken, when he states the following:

An upholder of Kant's system must [...] either admit that the pure categories do apply to things in themselves, or else maintain that *things in themselves are never the subject matters of any true judgments*. But the sentence I just italicized expresses a negative and universal judgment; if the sentence is true, the corresponding pure categories must have application to things in themselves. (Van Cleve 1999:138)

Van Cleve is mistaken, for neither in this case do the categories have application in the sense that they would determine things in themselves *qua* things in themselves. The predicate in Van Cleve's italicised sentence is only predicated of *the subject concept* <things in themselves>, not of the thing in itself or things in themselves that would be the underlying real substrate of this concept if the judgement were *objectively* valid. The italicised sentence is not an objectively valid judgement, but merely a logically valid (and as it happens, false) statement. As I showed in Chap. 3, the objective validity of a judgement should not be confused with its truth value. So the truth (or falsity) of a judgement does not imply that the judgement is or is not objectively valid. Analytic judgements are examples of judgements that can be true or false, but are not ipso facto objectively valid, in the sense of referring to objectively real objects.

This is the case with the example that Van Cleve uses. As with any other judgement, the substrate is a transcendental object, an x , for

which in this particular case—the subject being the concept <things in themselves>—there is *ex hypothesi* no experience possible, hence no ε -determination, and a *fortiori* no *real* application of the categories. It is perfectly possible to formulate judgements (more accurately, propositions) about *the concept* <thing in itself>, but it is never possible to actually apply categories so as to determine the thing in itself *de re*. In other words, it is not possible to make synthetic, objectively valid judgements about things in themselves *qua* things in themselves (rather than just analytic statements about the concept <things in themselves>).

Although in a judgement about an object a truth-value is necessarily attached to the relation between concept and thing,⁶⁸ as also in the case of Van Cleve's example, the resulting correspondence is not a one-to-one or immediate relation between the predicates in a proposition and the properties of the thing *qua* thing in itself. This means that the determinate object of judgement is not numerically the same as the transcendental substratum (the thing in itself properly speaking), out of which by means of limitation the determinacy of the object judged about is 'carved', as it were (cf. Maier 1930:41, quoted above). The determinate object of judgement is by implication not numerically identical to the thing in itself as the thoroughly determined individual, for although in judgement I do determine, by virtue of ε -determination, the thing that is the substrate (the transcendental object = x) of my judgement, *what* I determine of it concerns only the modes in which it *appears* to me, mediated by the forms of space and time, never the thing in itself *qua* thing in itself, not even if I abstracted from the appearance properties (spatiotemporality). Determinations, that is, ε -determinations, relate to the thing as accidents relate to substance (cf. A186/B229).

That which, in an ε -determination, I attribute to a thing is the property of the thing itself, but *only insofar as* the thing appears to me, as an object in space and time and as such as the particular object of my judging with such and such properties, namely as a transcendental object = x underlying the subject in a proposition that has certain predicates—not *as* thing in itself, namely, as the individual with *all* of its possible predicates. Thus, the determination that I give to the thing, in judgement, is strictly speaking an ε -determination of it *qua*

appearance, for me, not *as* thing in itself.⁶⁹ This is not an arbitrary thought on Kant's part, but follows analytically from the constraints of discursive judgement, which sees ε -determination in terms of a categorial limitation of the totality of possible predicates applicable to an x about which one makes a judgement (a 'carving out of' its ontological determinacy or o -determination). Put differently, the property or set of properties determined by virtue of ε -determination is only one or a subset of the complete set of all possible properties of the thing in terms of its complete ontological determinacy or o -determination. It would of course in fact be impossible, that is, logically contradictory, that any single or finite series of predicates or ε -determinations that is predicated or determined of the thing, in a judgement, would correspond one-to-one, in a numerically identical fashion, to the *complete* set of *all possible* predicates or o -determination, which define the thing in itself as thoroughly determined individual. Therefore, a predication F of a thing (an x) cannot be an attribution of F to the thing *qua* thing in itself, though F is of course one of the possible predicates that define the thing in itself. In idealist terms, an attribution, by means of ε -determination, of F to a thing (x) is an attribution of F to the thing (x) *as appearance*, F being just one predicate from among the totality of all possible predicates predicable of x , which as and only as totality refers to the *thing in itself*.

Notice that, although my reading might seem close to a metaphysical two-aspect reading, it cannot in fact be labelled thus, for I reject any numerical identity between the thing in itself *qua* thing in itself and the thing *qua* ε -determined in a judgement, namely, as an appearance; ε -determinations are the product of a *limitation* of o -determinacy, but they are precisely not *aspects* of numerically the same things that by definition have o -determinacy, as metaphysical dual aspectists standardly believe (see further below, Sect. 9.8).

What is also at issue here is that the thing in itself should be seen as the *ground* of the appearance, rather than as an aggregate of phenomenal objects as derivative beings that are somehow contained in an alleged actual *ens originarium* (cf. A579/B607). This is confirmed by Kant at the end of the section on the transcendental Ideal: Strictly speaking, the limitation by means of which "objects of the senses" are

determined in an *empirical* judgement is a limitation, not merely of “the sum total of all possibility” (A573/B601), but, more specifically, of “the material for the possibility of *all objects of sense*”, i.e. “the one all-encompassing experience”, “in which the real of all appearances is given” (A581ff./B609ff.; trans. emended and emphasis added). Limitation here thus indicates the *schematised* use of the category as applied to objects of possible experience. Objects of experience are limitations of the totality of all possible objects in nature.

9.8 Limitation and Idealism

Does the above analysis decide in favour of the two-aspects reading of idealism in its metaphysical version? I think not, for, as I said in the last section, the two-aspects reading illicitly assumes the numerical identity or sameness of the thing across the noumenal and phenomenal realms (unless one adopted the composite view, as suggested earlier, but I think a composite view skirts round the real issue of the relation between the thing in itself or things in themselves and appearances). Disregarding even the fact that the thing in itself concerns an *ens rationis*, not an *empirically given* thing, as we saw above, the determinate set of predicates attributed to the thing judged about—even an indefinite amount of such ϵ -determinations—constitutes an object that is *ex hypothesi* numerically different from the complete set of all possible predicates that constitutes the thing as it is in itself, as a thoroughly determined individual. Two-aspect readings of the transcendental distinction, either of the metaphysical or methodological kind, cannot account for this constitutive difference. Both interpretations fail to grasp the implications of Kant’s theory of discursive logic for the status of the object to which the judging intellect relates. They also fail to understand the very concept of determination (and thus the relation between ϵ -determination and \omicron -determination), as well as what it means for an individual to be an individual. One aspect of this misunderstanding is that one is wont to insist on an absolute distinction between the metaphysical and epistemological senses of the notion ‘determination’. As we have seen, such an absolute distinction

is valid only insofar as this distinction correlates with the distinction between appearance and thing in itself. But as soon as one talks about the thing in itself and its possible complete determinacy, then the distinction is wrong-headed, because it is precisely the metaphysical properties or determinations that are being talked about, not merely how *we* determine, by virtue of ε -determination, the thing in a judgement.

Longuenesse (2005) appears to sidestep the idealism issue and thus the question about the identity between appearance and the thing in itself altogether by espousing a thoroughly empirical-realist view of the transcendental Ideal. Her view of the principle of complete or thoroughgoing determination (POD) can be labelled reductionist.⁷⁰ For she reads POD in such a way that it *merely* concerns the comparability of one object of experience with another, with every other possible, object of experience, that is, in terms of the totality of *possible experience*—presumably relying on Kant’s suggestions in this direction at the end of the chapter on the transcendental Ideal (B609ff.).⁷¹ Longuenesse emphasises the one sphere of which there are subspheres as the whole of objects of possible, *empirical*, experience, not as the *omnitudo realitatis* in a transcendental sense.⁷² That is to say, in her view, the *totum realitatis* “is a sensible, conceptually indeterminate whole necessarily presupposed as the background of any empirical given” (Longuenesse 1998:308; cf. 2005:223). However, this can only be partly correct, since the sum total of the thing’s predicates of which Kant speaks, is not coextensive with the putative totality of “the predicates of *appearance*” (A581/B609; emphasis added). Even if all of the spatiotemporal, sensibly experienceable, properties of all appearances were determined, it would still not be tantamount to the complete determination of the thing in itself (or all things in themselves), in terms of the totality of reality (*All der Realität*; A576/B604). All possible ε -determinations of appearances in empirical space, that is, nature itself, do not map onto the \circ -determination of the thing in itself as the totality of reality. This is confirmed by Kant in the *Prolegomena*, when he asserts that the “sensible world is nothing but a chain of appearances connected according to universal laws”, which “has therefore no subsistence by itself” and “*is actually not the thing in itself* and consequently must point

to that which contains the ground [*den Grund*] of this appearance, to beings [*Wesen*] which cannot be cognized merely as appearances, but as things in themselves” (Prol, 4:354 [Kant 1977:95]; trans. emended and emphasis added; cf. 4:353).

Longuenesse (2005:218) appears to regard the object of empirical experience as the same individual thing that is completely determinable, and although Kant does speak of thoroughgoing determination of an object of sense (A581–2/B609–10), I believe the passage as a whole should be read in a non-reductionist fashion as saying that “the thing itself (in appearance), namely the real” is the transcendental object, which we subsequently determine, by means of what would be the *schematised* category of limitation applied to sensible spatiotemporal content in intuition, as the object of experience. Although reality for us, as discursive cognisers, is of course always “empirical reality” (A582/B610), this does not mean, on Kant’s view, that by implication all reality is empirical.⁷³

Remarkably, Longuenesse also claims that POD is not a new principle, but one that “Kant could have given as a corollary of the principle of all synthetic judgments” (2005:219), thus as a principle of the understanding. Longuenesse’s reading of POD illustrates what a thoroughgoing empirical realism, which shows no particular interest in the metaphysical issues surrounding Kant’s idealism, results in, viz. a reduction of the thing in itself to the whole of possible *experience*, to the sensible world. I think Longuenesse’s view contradicts Kant’s differentiation between what makes a thing a thing or a “Something” (A574/B602) and the way in which appearances are the determinate objects of experience. She conflates the material (ontological-metaphysical) conditions of the synthetic content necessary for the conception of things as things and the transcendental (epistemological-metaphysical) conditions for the necessary form of any object if it is to be an object of empirical experience.

As in TD it was made clear that the analytic principle of self-consciousness rests on a synthesis of intuitive empirical content, which thus establishes the concept of an object in general and hence constitutes the principle of experience, I have argued here that the principle of possible experience itself in turn necessarily rests on a

synthesis of the “the data, the material so to speak, or the transcendental content, for the possibility and the thoroughgoing determination of all things”, what Kant calls the “transcendental substratum” (A575/B603). The latter synthesis is governed by POD, a genuinely *new* metaphysical principle that is not just implied by the principles of possible experience, as Longuenesse would have us believe. This also explains the necessary presupposition of the thing in itself as the *ground* of an appearance (Bxxvii), with which it a fortiori cannot be identified, not even with the whole of all possible appearances. For the “transcendental substratum” is not the whole of possible experience, even though it is the whole of possible experience that is presupposed, as Kant says, as “the material for the possibility of all *objects of the senses*” (A582/B610; emphasis added).

9.9 Conclusion

Whereas Longuenesse’s apparent reduction of the thing in itself to the totality of experience wholly neglects Kant’s idealism, the current treatments of the topic of idealism, specifically in their two-aspect form, fail to recognise the limits imposed by our very discursivity in that these interpretations assume the object’s identity across the transcendental boundary. Contrary to this assumption, it should be observed that the object as appearance is not numerically the same as the thing in itself, not even if we abstracted from the appearance properties and consider the thing merely through concepts, as Wood would have it (as we saw in Sect. 9.4). Nor is it the case that purely through thinking the thing in itself we would thereby be able to pick out a noumenal object, as Adams suggests. As I have explained, this relates to Kant’s conception of a thing in itself as having to do with its complete determinacy (its o-determination), which we can only grasp notionally, that is, as an Ideal of Reason—it is an *ens rationis*. Kant clearly states that “in order to cognize a thing completely one has to cognize everything possible and determine the thing through

it, whether affirmatively or negatively”, which for human beings is impossible. He continues:

Thoroughgoing determination is consequently a concept that we can never exhibit *in concreto* in its totality, and thus it is grounded on an idea which has its seat solely in reason, which prescribes to the understanding the rule of its complete use. (A573/B601)

What would be known ‘completely’, were we able to determine a thing qua its “Being” (*Sachheit*) (B602) as such—putatively by means of the categories of quality, in particular reality—would be the whole of its possible predicates. But a conceptual grasp of the complete thing in itself, other than purely notionally (as an *ens rationis*), is *logically* impossible, for it would mean, contradictorily, that our *discursive* synthesis in an actual judgement or indeed in an indefinite series of judgements (ϵ -determination) is tantamount to the *complete* synthesis of the thing’s possible predicates (\omicron -determination). We can have the *concept* or *notion* of a thing in itself, an individual—and indeed we must, as I argued in Sect. 9.6—but we cannot ϵ -determine a thing’s \omicron -determination. Also, what is completely determined, the thing in itself, is ipso facto no longer determinable. Therefore, that which is objectively ϵ -determined through limitation cannot, by implication, be numerically identical to that from which what is objectively ϵ -determined is delimited, that is, to the ‘illimitative’ real or the thing in itself. A delimitation of reality that results in a determined object by implication cannot be numerically identical to that *from which* the determined object is delimited, namely the *all* of reality.

This, it seems to me, refutes the idea that what in abstraction from sensibility we think, through the pure concepts, as general rules for the objective determination of representations that constitutes the object of knowledge, would be the thing in itself as such, namely the thoroughly or completely determined individual that is in fact the very metaphysical ground of the possibility of employing the pure concepts in predication. Therefore, the categories do not, in and of themselves, determine any individuated thing or object for the understanding

alone. In conclusion, Kant's thesis about the subjective constraints of discursive thought itself already leads to idealism, namely, the restriction of the applicability of the categories to the transcendental object, which is the necessary correlate of our sensibility only, and is not serviceable even to conceive of things in themselves other than purely notionally. We thus do not have access, by means of the pure categories in abstraction from the constraints of sensibility, to intelligible objects, or to things in themselves *qua* things in themselves, contrary to what Adams, Wood, and others have suggested. This shows Kant's radical subjectivism about the possibility of knowledge of objects, which affects not just our sensibility but also our conceptuality.

Notes

1. See also B166n.
2. Cf. Ameriks (2000b:163). Ameriks criticises Reinhold on this point, but see Schulting (2016) for a more positive (Kantian) outlook on Reinhold's reading of the Unknowability Thesis.
3. Cf. A241ff./B299ff.
4. Precisely the identification of the *concept* of the thing in itself with the *being* of the thing in itself brought Hegel to think, against Kant, that there is no gap at all between thought and being, and that thus Kant's restriction thesis is ungrounded. See again Chap. 8.
5. It is interesting to note that Johann Friedrich Flatt, who was professor of philosophy and Hegel's teacher in the Tübinger Stift, stated in his reply (*Antikritik*), published in the *Philosophisches Magazin*, to a review of his work *Fragmentarische Beyträge zur Bestimmung und Deduction des Begriffes und Grundsatzes der Causalität und zur Grundlegung der natürlichen Theologie; in Beziehung auf die Kantische Philosophie* (Frankfurt/Leipzig: Crusius, 1788), which Reinhold published in the *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* of 3 January 1789, that, contrary to Reinhold's view of the unrepresentability of the thing in itself, the most that can be shown is that "keine dem ausser dem Gemüthe vorhandenen Gegenstände, nach seiner durchgängigen Bestimmung betrachtet, vollkommen entsprechende Vorstellung, für uns möglich sey" (*Philosophisches Magazin* II, 3, 1789, p. 387, published in reprint

in *Aetas Kantiana*; emphasis added). Flatt's view may be seen as a precursor of the position that will be defended here. In Schulting (2016), I made an attempt to combine Reinhold's views with the view that Flatt here advances. See further Henrich (2004:367ff.). I thank Manfred Baum for the reference to Flatt.

6. See for Adickes's views further below, Sect. 9.2.
7. At least some of the categories, like substance and causality, would appear to have a transcendent function, most clearly in practical philosophy. Cf. Martin (1969:232ff.). See further Sect. 9.3.
8. Like Van Cleve (1999:8), I believe that appearances, which he calls "virtual objects" or "intentional objects", have no special kind of being of their own (existing apart from things in themselves). There is just one realm of being, of which appearances, as a distinct class of objects, are in some sense part. Van Cleve has a somewhat similar reading as mine; he writes: "My interpretation is nonetheless dualistic in the following sense: the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is a distinction between two separate universes of discourse—not between two ways of discoursing about the same class of objects. If there is a sense in which I believe in one world only, it is [...] a world whose *only* denizens are things in themselves" (1999:150). On Van Cleve's interpretation of idealism and my differences with it, see again Chap. 4, Sect. 4.10.
9. Cf. Van Cleve (1999:158).
10. Collins (1999:15) is therefore wrong to suggest that empirical objects, appearances, can be called individuals. But Collins's reading is consistent with his anti-representationalist reading of Kant's idealism.
11. For further discussion, see Schulting (2011:7–16, 2017a).
12. Cf. B150; B298; B300; A242.
13. Cf. Martin (1969:167).
14. In Kant's own copy of the *Critique*, "cognition" (*Erkenntnis*) is substituted for "concept" (*Begriff*) here, which makes more sense, as of course the pure categories do provide us a *concept* of the object, but not a cognition of the object, where cognition is understood as objectively real cognition.
15. In the Italian Gentile translation *gehen auf* is aptly translated as *riferirsi*, meaning 'refer to'.
16. Cf. Prol §32, 4:314–315; A251ff.
17. Cf. V-Met/Mron, 29:857.

18. On this aspect, see again Chap. 4, Sect. 4.10.
19. Cf. B182/A143: “[T]hat which corresponds [*entspricht*] to the sensation in these [appearances] is the transcendental matter of all objects, as things in themselves (thinghood, reality).”
20. One could of course argue that the project in the *Critique* is precisely to demonstrate *that* there are things that exist extramentally, so that the thing’s existence cannot figure as the premise of the argument. This would mean not only that we cannot assume the existence of things, but also that, since it is based on something non-mental that prompts it, we cannot be sure of having sense perception either unless we assume some inner sensation-producing faculty of the mind or God having planted sense ideas in our minds (both of which Descartes suggests are possibilities we cannot rule out). This in turn would invite the familiar transcendental argument strategy, espoused by so many readers of Kant. But I believe that Kant is not trying to demonstrate the existence of extramental things, i.e. *that* they exist, but rather, more modestly and quite like Descartes for that matter, he wants to demonstrate the terms under which our representations acquire the objective reality or validity that connects them to extramental things (A197/B242).
21. Cf. Ameriks (2000a:xxxv, n. 40). See also Westphal (2004:46) and Ameriks (2015).
22. See B299. Unlike Frege, Kant does not appear to differentiate *Sinn* from *Bedeutung* (cf. Bird 2006:526ff.).
23. Cf. Bird (2006:529). At A248/B305, Kant makes an ostensibly crucial distinction regarding “pure categories, without formal conditions of sensibility, [that] have merely transcendental meaning [*Bedeutung*], but are not of any transcendental use [*Gebrauch*]” (trans. emended). Thanks to Tobias Rosefeldt for pointing this out. I take Kant’s remark to confirm my view that the categories do not pertain or refer to putative transcendent objects, and nonetheless continue to have some transcendental significance. It is not clear what the categories having meaning beyond the bounds of sense could yield in terms of them having a putative object for themselves, in abstraction from the conditions of sensibility, for, as Kant says in the same passage, “(as merely pure categories) [...] they do not have any use at all if they are separated from all sensibility, i.e., they cannot be applied to *any supposed object at all*” (A248/B305; emphasis added). A bit earlier on, Kant writes more clearly: “The merely transcendental use of the categories is [...] in fact

no use at all, and has no determinate or even, as far as its form is concerned, determinable object” (see also B343/A287). For categories to have an object that is subsumed under them, “a function of the power of judgment [*Urteilkraft*]” is needed, i.e. a schema. “If this condition of the power of judgment (schema) is missing, then all subsumption disappears, for nothing would be given that could be subsumed under the concept” (B304). What is expressed is “only the thought of an object in general [...] in accordance with different *modi*” (ibid.), i.e. the various pure concepts that together make up the intension of the concept of an object in general. The distinction between a logical object thought purely through the categories and an objectively real object would then amount to the distinction between the logical characteristics contained in the concept of an object *in general* and any concrete schematisation of such a concept to a particular object, which can only be an object of sensible experience (cf. Grier 2001:81–83, 89). Kant is clear that “they [i.e. the categories] are merely the pure form of the employment of the understanding in regard to objects in general and of thinking [*des Denkens*], yet without *any sort* of object being able to be *thought* or determined through them alone [*ohne doch durch sie allein irgend ein Objekt denken oder bestimmen zu können*]” (A248/B305; emphasis added; cf. B147). Clearly, a logical “object in general” is not ipso facto a thing in itself.

24. Cf. Westphal (2004:50–51) on the transcendental significance of the categories. See also Lau (2015:451).
25. See also Ameriks (2000b:191–192n.4). Cf. Ameriks (2000b:254n.52, 2003:149).
26. Cf. Ameriks (2006:60), Rosefeldt (2006) and Heimsoeth (1984:247, 259). See also FM, 20:270, where, interestingly, Kant connects the “logical I” with the “I that I think and intuit” and which is “a *person*”, in contrast to the “I that belongs to the object that is intuited by me”, which “is, similarly to other objects outside me, a thing” (Kant 1983:73; emphasis added).
27. Notice that at B157 Kant writes that “in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor *as* I am in myself [*wie ich an mir selbst bin*], but only *that* I am”. This suggests that in apperception I am not conscious of myself *as* a thing in itself, nor as an object, but only of myself as being while doing the synthesising. However, the consciousness of this act of synthesis is a

transcendental self-consciousness, not a mere (empirical) consciousness, and so *points* to the noumenal self.

28. Cf. Heimsoeth (1984:262).
29. Ameriks (2000a:268) has suggested that the reason for thinking that there are real non-spatiotemporal essences might lie in Kant's belief "that we are familiar with the essences of certain operations, and that in particular logic gives us the essence of our acts and thoughts. [...] [T]he (theoretical) characteristics I have *qua* mind, which are just those I have through the acts of synthesis I carry out according to the categories, could in a sense be had without temporality because the categories have a meaning that is non-temporal". I agree with the general purport of Ameriks's point here. However, the important question I believe is what the "essence of our acts and thoughts" is supposed to amount to other than a mere logical unity of thought, which, true, is necessarily carried out by a subject but, importantly, does not *pick out* an object (cf. B404/A346), i.e. an individual (a "personal being" *sensu stricto*; cf. Ameriks 2000a:277). The characteristics that are due to me being the subject and operator of my thoughts do not determine me substantially rather than merely *qua* the unity of the set of logical functions that are operated by me; there is indeed a subsisting transcendental, even personal subject of thought here, but this transcendental subject cannot be *equated* with a numerically identical underlying substance. So (1) the self of pure thought is not simply to be taken as *numerically* identical to the noumenal self (as a thing in itself) and (2) it is not the case that we literally think the latter's nature merely by thinking, i.e. *through* mere thought, or, as Heimsoeth puts it referring to the Kant of the *Lectures on metaphysics*, through immediate intuition (see Heimsoeth 1956:233, 1984:242–243). See further Heimsoeth (1956:236ff., 241, 245ff., 1984:247, 253, 259–260). See also especially Ameriks (2006:60). See further Schulting (2017b).
30. Cf. Heimsoeth (1956:241, 1984:253ff.).
31. Cf. Refl 6001 (1780s), 18:420: "The soul is in the transcendental apperception *substantia noumenon*" (trans. mine). See also in particular B429: "[I]n the consciousness of myself in mere thinking I am the *being itself*, about which, however, nothing yet is thereby given to me for thinking." Cf. Ameriks (2006:59).

32. Cf. B158, Prol, 4:334n., where Kant talks about apperception as “the feeling of an existence”. See Heimsoeth (1956:244–245, 1984:258–259, 266); cf. Heimsoeth (1956:249–250) and Martin (1969:211).
33. Cf. Heimsoeth (1956:74ff., 247). See further Schulting (2012:125–135).
34. What we know is the relation (*Verhältnis*) between two “dissimilar things” (*unähnliche Dinge*) (Prol, 4:358), which is an analogical relation.
35. See also Guyer, who writes: “[Kant] never denies that the categories enter into our *conception* of things in themselves. Therefore, being an epistemic condition, as the categories clearly are, cannot itself be a sufficient reason for exclusion from the concept of things in themselves” (Wood et al. 2007:15). Indeed, not from the *concept* of things in themselves, but to my mind it excludes the possible determination of the properties of a thing in itself qua itself, i.e. *as* a thing in itself proper, or the complete set of its properties (see further Sects. 9.6–9.8). Guyer, as so many others, conflates the *concept* of a thing in itself (de dicto) and the thing in itself (de re).
36. The principle of the identity of indiscernibles =df ‘an object x is identical to an object y if x has exactly the same properties as y ’ $\{\forall x\forall y(\forall F(Fx \leftrightarrow Fy) \rightarrow x = y)\}$ (cf. Kant A272/B328; B337/A281); this is often paired with the principle of indiscernibility of identicals =df ‘to a thing x are attributed exactly the same properties as are attributed to a thing y if x and y are identical’ $\{\forall x\forall y(x = y \rightarrow (Fx \leftrightarrow Fy))\}$. In his critique of Leibniz, Kant famously argues that although the former principle might hold for things in themselves (that is, things in themselves are qualitatively and numerically identical or the same), this does not hold for appearances; two appearances might have the same qualities, but could very well differ qua numerical identity.
37. Van Cleve carefully notes that it is not clear “whether it is Kant’s view that Leibniz’s principles do definitely hold for things in themselves (as he sometimes says), or only that they *would* hold for the noumena in the positive sense, it being problematic whether things in themselves are noumena in that sense. (They are not noumena in the positive sense for us, but may be so for other beings)” (1999:292n.41). Notice that Kant says of Leibniz’s principle of the identity of indiscernibles that it

- “holds merely of *concepts* of things in general [*Begriffen der Dinge überhaupt*]” (A272/B328; emphasis added). On the use of the principle of identity of indiscernibles, see also Quarfood (2008:615ff., 2011).
38. Cf. Van Cleve (1999:150, 292n.44).
39. “Is an appearance the very same entity as a thing in itself? [...] the identity interpretation says yes” (Wood 2005:66); “Once we have abstracted from the sensible—e.g., the spatiotemporal—properties of the object as appearance, hence from our empirical cognition of it, it must be the same as *itself* thought solely through pure concepts of the understanding and distinct from any thing which is represented as *other* than it (for instance, from a *different* appearance regarded as it is in itself)” (Wood 2005:69).
40. Notice that traditionally the *principium individuationis* and the *principium identitatis* were distinguished anyway. I thank Wolfgang Ertl for pointing this out.
41. Cf. Martin (1969:174–175).
42. Cf. Quarfood (2011).
43. Cf. Maier (1930:45–46). Maier writes (quoting A282n.): “*Realitates noumena, nur durch den reinen Verstand gedachte und erkennbare Realitäten* (wie sie auf dem Standpunkt der Dissertation angenommen werden), **die als gegenständliche Korrelate der reinen Kategorie gelten könnten, gibt es nicht, jedenfalls nicht in der Bedeutung von intelligiblen Bestimmungen.** Wir können sie höchstens rein logisch als positive Prädikate überhaupt, als Bejahungen denken, ohne imstande zu sein, ‘ein Beispiel von dergleichen reiner und sinnenfreier Realität’ anzuführen” (boldface mine).
44. On the different senses of Kant’s notion of ‘transcendental object’, see Willaschek (1998:333–335).
45. Cf. e.g. Prol, 4:359, where interestingly Kant asserts, regarding one prominent thing in itself, that “the Supreme Being is quite inscrutable and *even unthinkable* in any determinate way [*auf bestimmte Weise sogar undenkbar*] as to what it is in itself” (Kant 1977:99; emphasis added). We can of course conceive of the Supreme Being, in having an understanding of Him as necessarily having the properties of ‘eternity’, ‘omnipotence’, and ‘omnibenevolence’, but we cannot conceive of Him “in any determinate way”. That is, all our talk about the Supreme Being remains perfectly speculative, however logically or conceptually consistent.

46. For further discussion, see Schulting (2012, Chap. 5). For a much briefer account, see also Chap. 2 (this volume).
47. It concerns *Reflexion* 4674 from the *Duisburg Nachlass* (Refl, 17:646). Kant writes further that “the mind [*das Gemüth*] is [...] itself the archetype [*Urbild*] [of the possibility] of [...] synthesis” (Refl, 17:647 [Kant 2005:160]). Guyer and Wood (Kant 1998:54) fundamentally underestimate Kant’s claim by maintaining that it is about merely an *analogy* between the way I conceive of myself and the way I must conceive of objects.
48. See further Chaps. 4 and 7.
49. The ontological status of the latter kind of thing concerns what Kant calls the *Sachheit, das Reale* of a thing (B182/A143; B207ff.). At B182, Kant explicitly associates “reality” with the “thinghood” of things in themselves as regards their “transcendental matter”.
50. Cf. A104; A613–14/B641–2.
51. Put in a nutshell, the knowledge that I can have of an object, of which I can acquire a priori insight that can thus be analytically demonstrated, concerns the knowledge of an object, insofar as, as Kant says in the B-preface (Bxviii), I have put certain, both intuitive and conceptual, forms into it.
52. Surprisingly, Longuenesse (2005:213n.5) suggests that the Critical philosophy made this view about material synthesis as the ground of a priori synthesis irrelevant (!). According to Longuenesse (2005:213), it is not reality, as matter, that precedes form, but form (a priori forms of sensibility) that precedes matter.
53. This is one of the reasons motivating Kant to distinguish between the form of the known object (appearance) and the thing itself.
54. Longuenesse (2005:227–228) assumes that for the Critical Kant the form of possibility precedes matter. She seems to forget to distinguish, first, between the necessary form of possible objects of experience, where indeed possibility precedes actuality, and the a posteriori givenness of the material, sensible content that is a precondition of experience at all and so necessarily precedes the necessary form of possibility. Furthermore, let’s not fail to recall that in matters metaphysical Kant adheres to an essentially Aristotelian view of matter as *preceding* form; hence, Kant speaks of “material for [*zu*] all possibility” (A573/B601; trans. emended). On the other hand, Longuenesse would appear to be right in holding that in the *Transcendental Analytic*, from the

transcendental perspective that looks at the conformity of concept and the form of an object, form precedes matter, for on the Copernican view everything has to be conceived from within the form that reason puts into things (cf. Bxvii).

55. Though formally distinct from it, PET ($p \vee \neg p$) in its turn rests ultimately on the principle of non-contradiction PNC [$\neg(p \wedge \neg p)$]. PET grounds the logical necessity of a cognition, whereas PNC determines its logical possibility (cf. Log, 9:53).
56. Regarding universality, see also the *Jäsche Logic*, §21, in Log, 9:102–103.
57. Cf. B596, where Kant speaks of an “idea *in individuo*”: it concerns the prototype of an individual. For further discussion, see Verburgt (2011).
58. Cf. Heimsoeth (1969:429).
59. See A571/B599. Cf. Refl 5270–5274, 18:138–140.
60. Cf. Longuenesse (2005:216).
61. Cf. Refl 5905, 18:380. See also WDO, 8:138n.
62. Kant does not seem to consistently distinguish between ‘predicates’ (*Prädikate*) and ‘properties’ (*Eigenschaften*), using both to characterise *things* (for the application of the term ‘predicate’ to things see e.g. A571–2/B599–600; A573/B601; V-Met/Volckmann, 28:410, quoted at the outset of this chapter). But Kant’s transcendental idealism also makes it difficult to apply this distinction (predicates/properties) rigorously to how objects of experience are determined in judgements and how *things* can be said to have properties: do the predicates predicated in a judgement about an object correspond to the properties of the object, that is, are the properties possessed just by the object of my judgement, or also by the thing in itself underlying it? My distinction between ε -determination and o -determination reflects this difficulty in Kant.
63. Of course, I could still be mistaken about *empirical properties* of the object that I judge about, but I cannot be mistaken about the instantiation of the categories in any object that I judge about, because the instantiation of the categories is constitutive of the objective validity of my judgement, and thus of the very *objectivity* of the object of my judgement (see again Chap. 4 for discussion). Hence, the true correspondence mentioned here concerns *transcendental* truth.
64. In Refl 3063, 16:638, Kant likens infinite judgement to judgement of determination. Cf. A576ff./B604ff. and PND, 1:395. See further Longuenesse (1998:294ff.).

65. Reich (2001:185) associates transcendental affirmation explicitly with the category of reality. Transcendental affirmation could be labelled ‘original’ affirmation. A determinate negation (‘is not’ in the judgement *S is not P*) cannot be thought without already having presupposed (originally) its opposite, that is, by having *affirmed* reality (the same holds of course for a determinate affirmation, ‘is’ in any judgement *S is P*).
66. Cf. Refl 5270, 18:138.
67. Cf. Longuenesse (1998:293). In regard to the notion of *conceptus infimus*, see Stuhlmann-Laeisz (1976:78ff.).
68. For discussion, see again Chap. 3.
69. See Kjosavik (2008:393), who points out, somewhat vaguely but in essence correctly, that the “imposition” of an objective structure, through synthesis, is not “directly upon a thing in itself”, but rather “upon a matter that is given to us” (Kjosavik quotes ÜE, 8:215).
70. Longuenesse differentiates between “legitimate (critical) and “illegitimate (intellectualist) uses of the principle of complete determination” (2005:213). She herself indeed talks about a “critical reduction”, i.e. the disentangling of the principle as well as the notion of the whole of reality “from the rationalist illusion” (2005:214). See also Longuenesse (1998:308ff.). For a critique of Longuenesse’s reading of POD, see also Verburgt (2011:250–252).
71. Cf. Adickes’ critique of Cohen’s neo-Kantian notion of the “Inbegriff der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse” (Adickes 1924:34n.). Longuenesse’s interpretation bears a close resemblance to Cohen’s. Longuenesse writes: “The infinite sphere whose division would yield all concepts of possible entities, in which infinite judgement thinks the object thought under its subject-concept is then the infinite sphere of the concept: ‘object given in space and time’, that is to say ‘object of experience’” (2005:218; cf. Longuenesse 1998:297).
72. Cf. Longuenesse (1998:296). She speaks of the “infinite sphere of all possible determination” in terms of a “merely logical representation”, “logical space”. Although it is true, of course, that Kant criticised the hypostatisation of the totality of possible determinations, that is, the “all of reality”, into an *ens realissimum* that would contain all these determinations, he does not thereby mean such a totality to be “merely logical”. On the contrary, the logical space of all possible determinations has an ontological thrust, which is why Kant asserts that the concept of such a completely determined object is “transcendent” (A571/

B599) and serves as transcendental Ideal. Longuenesse rejects the inference from the “logical (conceptual) primacy of reality to its *ontological* primacy” (1998:308), but she simply confuses ontology with empirical reality, or actuality, here.

73. The passage that appears to lend support to Longuenesse’s reading should, I believe, be read as suggesting that we distinguish between “the thing itself (*in* appearance), namely the real” (emphasis added) and “the real of all appearances” (*das Reale aller Erscheinungen*) (A582/B609; emphasis added; the Guyer/Wood translation is not precise here, by rendering the last passage as “the real in all appearances”), whereby two kinds of reality are to be distinguished: empirical reality, i.e. “the real of all appearances”, and reality *simpliciter*, i.e. Being (A574/B602), which is the reality referred to “*in* appearance”.

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