

## Transcendental aesthetic

- 33 1. In whatever way and by whatever means an item of knowledge may relate to objects, what relates it to them *immediately*. . . . is *intuition*. This happens only if the object is given to us, and that happens—in man at least—only when the object affects the mind in a certain way. ‘Sensibility’ is the name of the capacity for acquiring representations that reflect how we are affected by objects. So objects are •given to us by means of sensibility, and that’s our only way of getting •intuitions; but objects are •thought through the understanding, which gives us •concepts. But all thought must ultimately be related to intuitions, whether straight away (directly) or through a detour (indirectly); so it must be related (in our case) to sensibility, since it is only through sensibility that objects can be given to us.

[In case Kant hasn’t made it clear: *intuition* is by definition our ability to be knowingly confronted by individual things; and to call our intuition ‘sensible’ is to say that we are *passive* with respect to it—so when we have an intuition of an object, the object ‘affects’ us. The contrast is with **active intuition** (which Kant sometimes speaks of as ‘intellectual intuition’). Suppose there are creatures who have a non-sensible (= active) faculty of intuition; that means that they actively *do* things that bring them immediately into contact with particular things. We haven’t the faintest idea of what that would be like, he holds; but it is possible.

- 34 at least in the sense that it isn’t self-contradictory.]

When an object affects us, its effect on our capacity for representation is •sensation. An intuition that is related to its object through sensation is called ‘empirical’. Anything that an empirical intuition is an intuition *of*—whatever the details—is called an ‘appearance’.

The element in an appearance that corresponds to sensation is what I call the ‘matter’ of the appearance; and that which allows the manifold of appearance to have a certain

ordered and inter-related pattern is what I call ‘form’ of appearance. [See note on ‘form’/‘matter’ on page 19.] This form of appearance isn’t a product of the matter; the •form, which is required for the sensations to be ordered and patterned, can’t itself be another sensation! So it must lie in the mind *a priori*, ready and waiting for sensations to come and be shaped up by it; so it can be considered separately from all sensation. All the •matter of appearance is of course given to us only *a posteriori*.

I call any representation ‘pure’. . . . if nothing in it belongs to sensation. Using the word in that way: the pure form of sensible intuitions. . . . is to be found in the mind *a priori*. This pure form of sensibility itself is also called ‘pure intuition’. 35 So if I remove from the representation of a body

•everything the understanding thinks about it, such as substance, force, divisibility, etc.,

as well as

•everything that belongs to sensation, such as impenetrability, hardness, colour, etc.,

there is still something left over from this empirical intuition, namely

•extension and shape.

These belong to the pure intuition, which occurs in the mind *a priori*, as a mere form of sensibility, even when there is no actual object of the senses or of sensation. [For Kant ‘sensation’ refers to the *detailed content* of what the senses dish up, whereas ‘the senses’ refers to every aspect of our capacity for passively receiving data. In his German, the two are not verbally alike: ‘sensation’ translates *Empfindung*, ‘the senses’ translates *die Sinne*.]

The science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility is what I call ‘transcendental •aesthetic’.<sup>6</sup> There must be such a

<sup>6</sup> [In a footnote Kant says that ‘aesthetic’ has come to be used for matters of taste. He deplores this. There can’t be a proper science of taste, he says, because its basis is empirical and subjective.]

36 science, constituting the first part of the transcendental doctrine of elements. The second part contains the principles of pure thinking, and is named 'transcendental •logic'.

In the transcendental aesthetic we will therefore first isolate sensibility by separating off everything that the understanding thinks through its concepts. That will leave nothing but empirical intuition. Next, from that we will then detach everything that belongs to sensation, so that nothing remains except *pure* intuition and the mere *form* of appearances, which is all that sensibility can make available *a priori*. In this investigation it will be found that there are two pure forms of sensible intuition, serving as principles of *a priori* knowledge, namely •space and •time. Let us now consider these.

## Space

### 2. Metaphysical exposition of this concept.

37 By means of **outer** sense...we represent to ourselves objects as •outside us, and all as •in space. In space they have shapes, sizes, and inter-relations that we know or can come to know. **Inner** sense, through which the mind intuits itself or its inner state, doesn't operate in a manner exactly parallel to outer sense, because it doesn't yield an intuition of the soul itself as an object; but still it is parallel to outer sense in this: it has a determinate form, and its intuitions of the person's inner state are possible only in this form. This form is *time*; so every aspect of the person's inner state is represented as temporal. Time can't be intuited externally, any more than space can be intuited as something in us, i.e. intuited internally. Well now, what are space and time? There are three candidate answers, namely:

•Space and time are actual *beings*.

•They are properties of things or relations amongst things, which things have whether or not they are intuited.

•They are relations that attach only to the form of intuition, and thus to the subjective constitution of our mind. If our mind were left out of the story, these predicates couldn't be ascribed to anything at all. 38

In order to learn which of these is right, I will start by expounding the concept of space. In my usage, an 'exposition' [the noun from 'expound'] of a concept is a clear representation of what belongs to it, though not necessarily of *everything* that belongs to it. An exposition is 'metaphysical' if it brings out the concept's status as something given *a priori*.

(i) Space is not an empirical concept that has been derived from outer experiences. Here is why. When I relate some of my sensations to something outside me (i.e. to something in a spatial position different from mine), and also when I relate them to things that are outside one another—not merely as different but as in different places—I must be *already* representing *space* as the ground of the other representations—i.e. as the framework or background or setting within which these spatial relations can exist. So the representation of space can't be obtained through experience from the relations amongst outer appearances; on the contrary, outer experience can't be had except *through* this representation.

(ii) Space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions. We can't construct a representation of a state of affairs in which there isn't any space, though we can very well have the thought of space with no objects in it. So we have to regard space as a pre-condition for the possibility of appearances, not as a conceptual construct out of them. Space is an *a priori* representation that necessarily underlies outer appearances. 39

(iii) The representation of space isn't a discursive or general *concept*, but rather a pure *intuition*. As a start on seeing why, note this: •We can only represent a single space; any talk of 'many spaces' is always understood to refer to *parts* of the one unique space. •And space isn't an upshot of the assembling of these parts, with the parts coming first and the whole arising out of them. On the contrary, our only thought of the parts is of them as *in* the one space. •Space is *essentially* single; it is only by marking out boundaries within it that we get complexity in it, and that's also how we get the general concept of *spaces* or of *a space*. Thus, all our spatial •concepts have underlying them an *a priori* •intuition of space. Similarly, all geometrical propositions (e.g. that two sides of any triangle are together greater than the third) never come from general concepts (e.g. of *line* and *triangle*), but rather are derived from intuition, and indeed derived *a priori* with absolute certainty.

40 (iv) Space is represented as an infinite given magnitude. There's no way of thinking a *concept* as containing an infinite set of representations within itself. . . .; but that's how space is thought (for all the parts of space, even to infinity, are simultaneous). So the basic representation of space is an *a priori* •intuition, not a •concept.

### 3. Transcendental exposition of the concept of space.

A 'transcendental' exposition of a concept is an explanation of its role in enabling us to understand the possibility of other synthetic *a priori* knowledge. [A metaphysical exposition lays bare (some of) the content of the concept; and a transcendental exposition explains the concept's role in the acquisition of *a priori* knowledge.] For such an explanation to succeed, it must be the case •that such knowledge really does flow from the concept in question, and •that this knowledge wouldn't be possible if it weren't for this concept explained in this way.

Geometry is a science that discovers what the properties of space are, doing this *a priori* although its results are synthetic. How can that be? What kind of representation of space could make it possible to have such knowledge about it? •Because the knowledge is **synthetic**, the representation must be basically an •intuition; because the only propositions you can get from a •concept are ones 41 that bring out what the concept *contains*, and geometrical propositions do more than that. •And because the knowledge is *a priori* this intuition must be encountered in us prior to any perception of an object, which means that it must be pure rather than empirical intuition. For geometrical propositions are all. . . .bound up with the consciousness of their necessity (e.g. space has only three dimensions, •and we are aware that it *can't* have more•); but propositions of that sort can't be judgments of experience and can't be derived from such judgments.

Now, how can there exist in the mind an outer intuition that precedes the objects themselves and puts *a priori* constraints on the concept of an outer object? Obviously, it has to be through the intuition's being a fact about the person's mind—a fact about its *form*, a fact by virtue of which the mind *can*, •and without which it *couldn't*•, be affected by objects. That's equivalent to saying that the intuition in question is the form of outer sense as such.

So the only way to make comprehensible the possibility of geometry as synthetic *a priori* knowledge is through the explanation I have given. Accept no substitutes.

### Conclusions from the above concepts

(a) Space isn't a •property of, or set of •relations amongst, 42 things in themselves. Spatiality isn't something that objects themselves have, something they would still have even if we filtered out all the subjective conditions of intuition. [In that

sentence, 'filtered out' translates something that more literally means 'abstracted from'. In this text, 'filter' will often be used in this way (and in no other), just to give us a rest from 'abstract'.] For neither •properties nor •relations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things that have them, so they can't be intuited *a priori*.

(b) Space is nothing but the *form* of all appearances of outer sense. That is, it's the condition that our sensibility must satisfy if outer intuition is to be possible for us. Now, it's perfectly obvious that •a mind's ability to be affected by objects has to come before •all intuitions of these objects (just as the •softness of a piece of wax has to come before the •imprint on it of a signet-ring). That, therefore, explains how the •form of all appearances can be given in the mind prior to all •actual perceptions, i.e. given *a priori*, and how, as a pure intuition in which all objects must be determined, this form can contain prior to all experience geometrical principles of the relations among these objects.

43 So it's only from the human standpoint that we can speak of 'space', 'extended things', and so on. If we set aside our ability to be affected by objects—this being the subjective necessary condition of our having outer intuition—the representation of space signifies nothing. We can attribute spatial properties to things only to the extent that they appear to us, i.e. are objects of our sensibility. . . . (If we abstract from these appearing objects, what remains is a pure intuition, which we call 'space'.) The special conditions of sensibility can't be treated as conditions of the possibility of •things, but only of •the appearances of things; so we can say that space involves

•all things that can appear to us externally,  
but not

•all things in themselves, whether or not they are intuited,  
(and possibly not

•all things, by whatever mind they are intuited;

I add that last point because we have no idea of whether the intuitions of other thinking beings must satisfy the same conditions that our intuition must satisfy and that are universally valid *for us*). [Kant goes on to make the elementary logical point that if a proposition of the form

•All Ss are P

holds good whenever condition C is satisfied, then the corresponding proposition

•All Ss-satisfying-C are P

holds good without qualification, holds good universally. He applies this to our present topic, saying that whereas

•All things are spatially related to one another

holds good only of things considered as outer-intuited by us, the proposition

•All things of which we have outer intuitions are spatially related to one another

is absolutely, unqualifiedly true, because it has built the restriction into the subject-term. He continues:] My exposition 44 accordingly teaches that

•space is *real*, i.e. objectively valid, in respect of everything that can come before us externally as an object,

but at the same time that

•space is *ideal* in respect of things considered in themselves through reason, i.e. without taking account of the constitution of our sensibility.

This pair of results can be expressed by saying that space is **empirically real** but is **transcendentally ideal**.

[Kant now devotes two hard paragraphs to developing the point that the 'real'/'ideal' contrast as applied to space is different from every other contrast that we find in our experience. He instances *colours*. There's something subjective about colours, he allows, but it's not to be compared with 45

the subjectivity of space, for two main reasons. (i) A single thing might be coloured in one way for you and in another for me, i.e. there could be inter-personal differences of colours; whereas spatiality is the same for all human beings. (ii) We think of the colour of a rose (say) as subjective, thereby contrasting it with the rose itself, which we think of as objective. This is a thought about two levels—the subjective colour and the objective rose—but we have plenty of information about both levels; there isn't anything notably hidden or unknown about a rose, even if we set aside its colour; which is to say that both sides of that contrast lie within the realm of appearances. The two-level story regarding subjective space and objective *things in themselves* is quite different from that, because one side concerns appearances and the other doesn't; we have *no* information about things as they are in themselves; and, Kant adds, 'in experience no question is ever asked about them'.]

## Time

### 4. Metaphysical exposition of the concept of time

46 (1) Time is not an empirical concept that has been somehow drawn from experience. For we couldn't experience events as simultaneous or as one-after-another unless we had an underlying *a priori* representation of time. To represent several things as existing at the same time or at different times we must have a *presupposed* representation of time.

(2) Time is a necessary representation that underlies all intuitions. We can have the thought of time without any appearances—i.e. time during which nothing exists and nothing happens—but we can't have the thought of appearances that are not in time. So time is given *a priori*. The actuality of appearances is possible only *in* time. Appearances could all disappear, but time itself, the universal

condition of the possibility of appearances, can't be removed.

(3) This *a priori* necessity is what makes it possible to have 47 apodictic [= 'absolutely necessary'] principles concerning temporal relations, i.e. axioms concerning time as such—for example, 'Time has only one dimension: different times are not simultaneous, but successive' (just as different spaces are not successive but simultaneous). These principles couldn't be drawn from experience, because experience wouldn't give us strict universality or apodictic certainty. It lets us say 'This is what common perception teaches', but not 'This is how matters *must* stand'. These principles are valid as rules that have to be satisfied for experiences to be possible at all; the rules instruct us *before* experience, not *through* it.

(4) The fundamental representation of time isn't a discursive or general *concept*, but rather a pure form of sensible *intuition*. Here are two reasons for saying this. •Different times are only parts of one single time; which is to say that necessarily time is one single item; and the kind of representation that points to a single object is not a concept but an intuition. •The proposition that different times can't be simultaneous can't be derived from a general concept. It's a synthetic proposition, whereas if it arose from concepts alone it would be analytic. So it has to be something that is immediately contained in the intuition. . . .of time.

(5) Time's being infinite means merely that every specific 48 length of time is possible only through cuts in a single time underlying it; from which it follows that our *basic* representation of time can't be of any limited length of time; and therefore the basic representation of time must represent it as unlimited. . . . And to do this it must be an intuition, not a concept.

### 5. Transcendental exposition of the concept of time

I refer you here to item (3) above, where for brevity's sake I have included under the 'metaphysical exposition' heading something that is really •transcendental. Here I add one further item of transcendental exposition, namely: The concept of alteration is possible only *through* and *in* the representation of time; if the representation of time were not an *a priori* (inner) intuition, then no concept could make comprehensible the possibility of anything's *altering*. In an alteration, two contradictory predicates apply to a single thing. . . ., which is possible if they are applicable at different times, so that the self-contradictory 'Fx and not-Fx' is turned into the alteration-report 'Fx at  $t_1$  and not-Fx at  $t_2$ '. One sort of alteration is motion—alteration of place. So our concept of time explains the possibility of the synthetic *a priori* knowledge exhibited in the general theory of motion, knowledge from which good results flow.

### 6. Conclusions from these concepts

(a) Time isn't something that exists in its own right; for if it were, it would be •something actual, but wouldn't be an •actual object. Nor is time a property that things objectively have ('objectively' meaning that things have their temporality quite apart from any subjective conditions of our intuition of them). If it were, time couldn't precede things as their condition, and be known and intuited *a priori* through synthetic propositions. But it *can* do that if it is nothing but the subjective •necessary condition for intuitions to occur in us, because in that case this •necessary condition—this *form* of inner intuition—can be represented prior to the objects, therefore *a priori*.

(b) Time is nothing but the form of •inner sense, i.e. of the intuition of our self and our inner state. It can't be part of the story about outer appearances; it has nothing

to do with shape or position or the like, but pertains to the relation of representations in our inner state. Because this inner intuition yields no *shape*, we try to make up for this lack through analogies: we represent the temporal sequence through a *line* progressing to infinity, in which the manifold constitutes a series with only one dimension [see note on 'manifold' on page 20]. We reason from the properties of this line to all the properties of time, with just one difference: the line's parts are simultaneous, whereas the parts of time always exist successively. From this it is also apparent that the representation of time is itself an intuition, since all its relations can be expressed in an outer intuition. [Kant's point seems to be: it's already established that the representation of space is an intuition; we now see that the main formal features of time are also features of a part or aspect of space; and the only item that can in any way resemble an intuition is another intuition.]

(c) Time is the *a priori* formal condition of absolutely *all* appearances. Space, as the pure form of all •outer intuitions, is an *a priori* condition only for •them. But all representations, even ones that represent outer things, are states of the mind and therefore part of the person's inner state; so they have to satisfy the formal condition of inner intuition, which means that they must be temporal; so time is an *a priori* condition of all appearances whatsoever. It is the •immediate •or direct condition of inner appearances (of our souls), and through that it is the •mediate •or indirect condition of outer appearances. Just as I can say *a priori* that all outer appearances are in space, and their detailed natures are spatial, so from the principle of inner sense I can say that all appearances whatsoever—i.e. all objects of the senses—are in time, and necessarily stand in temporal relations. . . .

Time is objectively valid only in respect of appearances, these being already things that we take as objects of our

senses. If we abstract from the sensibility of our intuition—i.e. from the kind of representation that we humans have—and speak of things as such (·things, *period*·), time is no longer objective—indeed it is *nothing*. Nonetheless it is necessarily objective in regard to all appearances, thus also in regard to anything that we can encounter in experience. We can't say:

•all things are in time,

- 52 because the concept of 'all things' abstracts •from every kind of intuition of them, and thus •from the only thing that brings time into play. But if we build that condition into the subject-concept and say

•all things as appearances (objects of sensible intuition) are in time,

then we have something that is objectively true and *a priori* universal. [Compare the similar move with space at the top of page 30.]

[The next paragraph is a longish account of why time is 'empirically real' and 'transcendentally ideal'. It is *exactly* analogous to what Kant is reported on page 31 as saying about space's being empirically real and transcendentally ideal, with one addition: On page 29 Kant has spoken of two versions of the view that space and time are absolutely or transcendentally real:

- (i) that they are actual beings [German *Wesen*],
- (ii) that they are properties or relations of things in themselves.

This contrast comes up, though in different words, in our present paragraph, where Kant says that if space and time were absolutely real that might be

- (i\*) by way of subsistence or
- (ii\*) by way of inherence.

The (ii)–(ii\*) equivalence is clearly right, because it's properties and relations that 'inhere' in things. And the (i)–(i\*)

equivalence is also right: Kant thinks of an item's 'subsisting' as its existing in a self-sufficient way, as a being or *Wesen* in its own right, not as inhering in something else. One might say 'its existing as a *thing*', to contrast it with a *property* or *relation*; but that won't quite do because, as we'll see shortly, Kant says that if space and time did 'subsist' they would be 'non-entities', which roughly = 'not things'. It is tempting to replace 'subsisting' by 'existing in its own right', but this version will play safe and retain 'subsist'. Remember what it means. Kant discusses 'inherence' and 'subsistence' on page 110]

## 7. Elucidation

Against this theory, which admits the empirical reality of time but denies its absolute and transcendental reality, I have heard able men so unanimously voice one objection that I have to think it will naturally occur to every reader to whom this line of thought is new. It goes like this: ..53

Even if we deny that there are any outer appearances, and thus deny that there are any alterations out there, our own representations undergo changes; so •alterations are real. But alterations are possible only in time. Therefore time is something real.

This is easy to answer: I grant the whole argument. Certainly time is something real, namely the real form of inner intuition. So it has subjective reality in regard to inner experience, i.e. I really have the representation of time and of various temporal facts. It is therefore to be regarded really not as object but as my way of representing myself as object. If I could intuit myself without this condition of sensibility, then the very same states of myself that I now represent to myself as alterations would give me an item of knowledge that didn't include any representation of time or, therefore, of alteration. (This holds not just for me but for any being.) 54

So my theory doesn't touch the empirical reality of time, as a condition of all our experiences; all it denies is time's absolute ·or transcendental· reality. . . .

55 *Everyone* comes up with this objection—even those who can't find any convincing objection to the doctrine of the ·transcendental· ideality of *space*. Here is why. They didn't expect to be able to demonstrate conclusively the absolute reality of space, because they were confronted by idealism, which teaches that there can't be any strict proof of the reality of outer objects; whereas the reality of the object of our inner sense—i.e. the reality of oneself and the states one is in—is immediately clear through consciousness. Outer things could have been a mere illusion, they hold, but one's own inner states are undeniably something real. What they didn't see was that space and time *both*, though indisputably real as representations, belong only to appearance. There are always two sides to appearance: •one where the object is considered in itself (without regard to how it is to be intuited, and therefore having a nature that must always remain problematic), •the other where the form of the intuition of this object taken into account. This form must be looked for not in the object in itself but in the subject—the mind—to which it appears, yet it really and necessarily belongs to the representation of this object.

56 So time and space are two well-springs of knowledge from which different items of synthetic knowledge can be drawn *a priori*. (Pure mathematics provides a splendid example of the spatial half of this.) Time and space are the pure forms of all sensible intuition, which is why they make synthetic *a priori* propositions possible. But the very fact that they are merely conditions of sensibility means that these *a priori* sources of knowledge fix their own limits—i.e. settle that they apply to objects only considered as appearances, and don't present things in themselves. Appearance is the sole field of their

validity; outside it there is no further objective use for them. This •empirical· reality of space and time leaves the certainty of empirical knowledge unaffected; for we are certain of *that*, whether these forms belong to the things in themselves or only to our intuitions of them. But those who assert the •absolute reality of space and time—whether as (i) subsisting or only as (ii) inhering—must come into conflict with the principles of experience. [For help with 'subsist' and 'inhere', see page 110.] For if they decide in favour of (i) subsistence (which mathematical physicists generally do), then they must think of space and time as two eternal and infinite self-subsisting *non-entities*, which have nothing real about them and exist only in order to *contain* everything that is real. If they think of space and time as (ii) inhering (as do some metaphysicians of Nature ·such as Leibniz·), holding that space and time are spatial or temporal relations amongst appearances, confused representations abstracted from experience, then they must 57 dispute the validity or at least the absolute certainty of a *priori* mathematical doctrines about real things (e.g. things in space), because such certainty can't be achieved *a posteriori*. [The remainder of this paragraph is excessively difficult. It contends that the (i) approach has a certain advantage, while the (ii) approach has a different one; that each approach has its own special disadvantage or difficulty; and that both difficulties are solved when one rejects both (i) and (ii) in favour of Kant's view that space and time are basic forms of sensibility.] ..58

Finally, the transcendental aesthetic can't contain more than these two elements, space and time. None of the other concepts belonging to sensibility can come into a •transcendental study, because they all presuppose something •empirical. Take for instance the concept of *motion*, which involves both time and space. This presupposes the perception of something movable; but in space considered



on its own there is nothing movable; hence the 'something movable' must be found in space only through experience, which makes it an empirical datum. Similarly, the transcendental aesthetic can't count the concept of *alteration* among its *a priori* data; for time itself does not alter; all that can alter are things *within* time. So the concept of alteration presupposes the perception of •some thing and of •that thing's series of •different• states; which means that it presupposes experience.

### 8. General remarks on the transcendental aesthetic

- 59 (1) I must first explain as clearly as I can my view about the basic constitution of sensible knowledge in general, so as to head off any misinterpretation of it.

What I have wanted to say is this:

- All our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance.
- The things we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them as being, nor are they related, in themselves, in the way they appear to us to be related.
- If we strip off from the story •our own mind, or even just •the subjective character of our senses, then all the structure—all the inter-relations—of objects in space and time would disappear; indeed space and time themselves would disappear; because as appearances they can't exist in themselves, but only in us.

We know absolutely nothing about what objects are like in themselves, considered apart from all this receptiveness of our sensibility. All we know is our way of perceiving them, which is special to us and may not be the same for every being, though it is certainly the same for every human being. We aren't concerned with anything except this. Space and

- 60 time are its pure forms, and sensation is its matter. [Kant

goes on to say again that the 'forms' can be known *a priori* and the 'matter' only *a posteriori*. He adds that however sharp and thorough our intuitions become, and however alertly we attend to them, they won't move us an inch closer to knowing what things are like in themselves.]

Here is one theory—a theory that we should reject—about how our sensibility relates to things in themselves:

Our entire sensibility is nothing but a confused representation of things; whatever it presents is something that *does* apply to things in themselves, but it presents them only through a great bundle of marks and partial representations that we don't consciously sort out from one another.

This theory falsifies the concept of sensibility and of appearance, and renders the entire theory of them useless and empty. The difference between an •indistinct representation and a •distinct one is merely logical; it doesn't concern the content. •To see that **•confused uptake of x need not be •knowledge of x as it appears•**, consider the concept of *moral rightness*. No doubt this concept—the one that ordinary sane people use—contains everything that the most subtle speculation can tease out of it; but in everyday practical use of the concept—e.g. in thinking 'His treatment of the workers is not right!'—one isn't conscious of the complex of representations that are •covertly involved• in these thoughts, •presumably because in one's conscious mind they are presented in too confused a fashion•. But we can't infer from this that the common concept is sensible, and contains a mere appearance. •We can't infer it, and indeed it isn't true•, for *right* can't **appear** at all: its concept lies in the understanding, and represents a moral property that actions have **in themselves**. •And to see, conversely, that **•clear uptake of x need not be •knowledge of x in itself•**, consider the representation of a *body* in intuition.

This contains nothing that could belong to an object in itself, but merely the appearance of something, and the way in which we are affected by it; and this receptiveness of our faculty of knowledge is called 'sensibility'. Even if that appearance were so clear that we could see into it and right through to the bottom—what we had would still be worlds apart from any knowledge of the object in itself.

So the Leibniz-Wolff philosophy, in taking the distinction between sensibility and the intelligible to be merely logical, has led all investigations of the nature and origin of our knowledge to adopt a completely wrong point of view. The sensible/intellectual line is obviously transcendental: it doesn't concern the •form of a representation (is it clear or cloudy?) but rather its •origin and •content. It's quite wrong to say that what sensibility tells us about the nature of things in themselves is unclear; what it tells us about things in themselves is *nothing at all*. . . .

[Kant now devotes a paragraph to discussing a certain appearance/reality line that we draw *within* the realm of appearance. We may say 'It looked round but it was really square', or 'There seemed to be an arch of coloured silk across the sky, but it was really a rainbow—light diffracted by raindrops'. In contrasts of this kind, however, both sides belong to the realm of what Kant calls 'appearance'. We may think of facts about raindrops as somehow more objective than facts about rainbows, but the former are still facts about how reality appears to us.]

The second important concern regarding my transcendental aesthetic is that it shouldn't merely earn some favour as a plausible hypothesis, but should be as certain and as free from doubt as can ever be demanded of a theory that is to serve as an organon [see note on 'organon' on page 25]. In order to make you fully convinced of this certainty, I'll present a case that will make the validity of the transcendental aesthetic

obvious. It will also clarify what I said in section 3.

•Suppose, for purposes of argument, that the transcendental aesthetic is *not* valid. That is, let us adopt

**the supposition** that space and time are objective *in themselves*, and are conditions of the possibility of things *in themselves*;

•and let us see how this squares with some things that we know. Well, it's clear that there are many synthetic propositions about space and time that we know absolutely for sure, *a priori*; especially about space, which I'll take as my prime example. Since we know the synthetic propositions of geometry *a priori* and with absolute certainty, I ask: Where do you get such propositions from, and what is our understanding relying on when it attains such absolutely necessary and universally valid truths? There are four *prima facie* possible answers: the source of the truths might be

- (1) empirical concepts,
- (2) empirical intuitions,
- (3) *a priori* concepts,
- (4) *a priori* intuitions.

Neither (1) empirical concepts nor (2) empirical intuitions (which is what (1) are based on) can deliver any synthetic proposition that isn't itself merely empirical, i.e. a proposition of experience; so neither (1) nor (2) can yield the necessity and absolute universality that all propositions of geometry have. That leaves us with (3) and (4); but (3) *a priori* concepts can't give us •synthetic knowledge; anything that comes purely from concepts is •analytic. Take the proposition:

•With two straight lines no space can be enclosed, and thus no figure is possible,

and try to derive it from the concepts *straight line* and *number two*; or take the proposition:

•A figure is possible with three straight lines,

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and in the same way try to derive it from the relevant concepts. You will fail both times, and will find that you're forced to avail yourself of intuition, as geometry always does. And the intuition you give yourself can't be an empirical one, because an empirical intuition couldn't deliver knowledge that is universally valid, let alone apodictically certain; for experience can never provide anything like that. So you must consult (4) an *a priori* intuition, and base your synthetic proposition on this. If any of the following were true:

- You have **no** power of intuiting *a priori*,
- The formal necessary condition for you to have intuitions is **not** also a universal *a priori* condition which any object of this (outer) intuition must satisfy,
- The object (the triangle) is a thing in itself, with **no** relation to your mind,

then... you would have no grounds for saying that three straight lines can enclose a figure (a triangle). But you *do* know *a priori* that this three-lines proposition is true; so the above three propositions are all false; and so the **supposition** with which this paragraph opened must be false.... So it is unquestionably certain—not merely possible or even merely probable—that space and time... are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition, and are valid for all objects only because these objects are mere appearances and not given to us as things in themselves. It follows from all this that although much may be said *a priori* concerning the form of appearances, nothing whatsoever can be said about the thing in itself that may underlie them.

(2) Here is a powerful confirmation of the theory of the ideality of... all the objects of both inner and outer sense. Everything we know that comes from intuition contains nothing but mere relations—•where things are, •how they move, and the •laws in accordance with which they move. (This is about our *knowledge*, so it doesn't concern such

non-cognitive items as feelings of pleasure and displeasure, and the will.) But knowing these relations doesn't tell us anything about what 'thing-in-itself' is present in this or that place, or what is at work in the things themselves when movements occur. Now, you can't get knowledge of a thing in itself purely through relations; so we have to conclude that since •outer sense represents to us nothing but relations, it can't tell us anything about the inner nature of any object in itself—only about how the object relates to our mind. It is exactly the same in the case of •inner sense. [Then follows an extremely difficult passage in which Kant explains why and how his present thesis holds for time as well as space. It seems not to add *much* to what he has already said about time as the form of inner sense. But a new theme is introduced when he discusses the idea of my inner sense as informing me about *myself*:] Everything that is represented through a sense is appearance; so if I am to hold there is such a thing as inner sense, I must allow that the object of this sense—namely, *myself*—can be represented by it only as •appearance, not as •a thing in itself, i.e. not as I would judge myself to be if my intuition were a self-activity, i.e. were purely intellectual. ..68

[One backward-looking point: •See the note on page 28 for the equation of

- 'intuit x as it is in itself with
- 'have an active intuition of x' and of that with
- 'have an intellectual intuition of x'.

And one forward-looking point: •The term 'self-awareness', which we shall encounter in a moment, translates Kant's *Apperzeption*. Leibniz had invented that to mean *awareness*. (The common practice of retaining 'apperception' as an English word has nothing to be said for it.) Kant's uses of *Apperzeption* in the present work restrict it to awareness of *oneself*. It will be left untranslated just once, to highlight Kant's equation of 'consciousness of oneself with *Apperzeption*. In this version, 'consciousness' always translates *Bewußtsein*.]

The only difficulty about this lies in the question of how anything can internally intuit itself, but this is a difficulty for *every* theory. Consciousness of oneself (*Apperzeption*) is the simple representation of the *I*; and if all one's complex nature were given *by the activity of the self*, then the inner intuition would be intellectual and so it would be an intuition of the self or subject as it is in itself. In human beings, this consciousness of oneself requires inner perception of the complex item that is antecedently given in the subject; that is, when you or I look inward we passively *find* that we are in this or that state—our looking-inwards doesn't actively *put* us into such states. And this kind of procedure should be called 'sensibility', to mark its non-active nature. If my faculty for becoming conscious of myself is to seek out and grasp what lies in my mind, my mind must *affect* it; there's no other way for the mind to produce an intuition of itself. But it must affect it *somehow*, and the *how* must come from the underlying form or structure that the mind has, a form that settles how the manifold is organized in the mind

69 in the representation of time. If the mind had an active representation of itself—a kind of intuition that would take it to things in themselves—then it would intuit itself as it is in itself; but it *doesn't* have that sort of intuition; its intuition of itself is passive, sensible, has a *how* to it; so it intuits itself not as it is in itself but as it appears, *how* it appears.

(3) [Kant opens this paragraph with a reminder that in treating objects in space and time as appearances, he is not writing them off as mere illusions. He continues:] It would be my own fault if I made a mere illusion out of something that

70 I should reckon as appearance.<sup>7</sup> But that's not what is done by my principle of the ideality of all of our sensible intuitions. Rather than turning \*space and \*time into illusions, it *saves*

<sup>7</sup> [Here Kant has an obscure footnote about the application of predicates to illusions.]

them from counting as illusions! If we ascribe objective reality to those \*forms of representation, that will remove all chance of rescuing anything from being a mere illusion. Suppose you regard space and time as properties which, if they are possible at all, must be encountered in things in themselves; and then think about the absurdities in which you have then become entangled. You are now committed to there being two infinite things that

- \*are not substances, and
- \*don't really inhere in substances [see page 110], but
- \*must nevertheless exist, and
- \*must be the necessary condition of the existence of all things, and
- \*would exist even if all existing things were removed.

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Given that view of the state of affairs, one can hardly blame the good Berkeley for downgrading bodies to mere illusion! Indeed even *our own existence*, which would in this way be made dependent on the self-subsisting reality of a non-entity such as time, would also be transformed into a mere illusion—an absurdity of which no-one has yet allowed himself to be guilty.

(4) In natural theology one conceives of an object—God—who not only isn't an object of intuition for us but can't even be an object of sensible intuition for himself, because sensibility = passivity, and God is wholly active. And in this study we are careful to remove the conditions of time and space from all God's intuition (and thus from all his knowledge, for all of God's knowledge must be intuition—it can't be *thinking*, which always involves limitations). But how can we be entitled to do this if we are regarding time and space as forms of things in themselves, and indeed as *a priori* conditions of the existence of things, and thus as remaining even if all the things were removed? As conditions of all existence in general, they would also have to be conditions

of the existence of God. If, wanting to avoid this difficulty, you back off from making space and time objective forms of all things, then your only alternative is to make them into  
72 subjective forms of our kind of intuition, outer as well as inner. Our kind of intuition is called 'sensible' because it isn't *originating*, i.e. isn't an intuition that brings its object into existence; rather it depends on the existence of the object, so it is possible only to the extent that the representational capacity of the subject is affected by that object. So far as I can judge, only the primordial being, ·God·, can have intuition of the creative, active type.

[Kant now has a paragraph musing on the thought that our sensible=passive kind of intuition may be the only kind that any finite thinking being (human or otherwise) has; and he repeats that God's intuition is different, hinting at a reason for this:] Intellectual intuition. . . .seems to pertain only to the primordial being, ·God·, and never to a being that is dependent as regards its •existence and its •intuition. . . .

### **Conclusion of the transcendental aesthetic**

73 So now we have one of the required pieces for the solution of the general problem of transcendental philosophy—how are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible?—namely pure *a priori* intuitions, space and time . . . .