

# Aspects for / in / of Kant

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“The doctrine of transcendental idealism is so difficult that one should not turn away from considering any serious hypothesis that might shed light on it.” (Ameriks 2003: 147)

## Abstract

I provide a new motivation for a dual-aspect interpretation of Kant’s transcendental idealism that reads the “as” in “things as they appear to us” literally and takes Kant to talk about *aspects* of things. I defend this account over extant, property-dualist, versions of the dual-aspect theory and show how it provides a sensible, and independently plausible, reading of the transcendental aesthetics and the amphiboly.

## I From epistemological premisses to metaphysical conclusions

### I.1 The ‘Kantian fallacy’

In the epistemic community where I grew up philosophically, Kant was not particularly highly regarded. Aside from being blamed, often unconsciously, for Hegel and ‘continental philosophy’, he was held to have illicitly inferred metaphysical conclusions from epistemological premisses. One way of making this reproach more precise was to attribute to him the following reasoning from (1) to (2), informally known as ‘the Kantian fallacy’:

- (1) We only know things if they affect us.
- (2) We only know things as they affect us.

The inference is from a necessary condition of (our possessing, or entertaining) a representation of some thing to the content of that representation. By the factivity of knowledge, the metaphysical conclusion follows: things as they affect us are all the things we can know, and, insofar as we know, are all the things there are. The problem is that the inference is invalid, and obviously so: there are many necessary conditions for our knowing anything that do not constrain *what* we can know – why should ‘affection’ be any different?

It may perhaps be thought, with some basis in the Kantian texts, that the inference goes through if the ‘only if’ in (1) not only states a necessary condition for  $x$ , but a necessary condition for the very possibility of  $x$ . But even if our knowledge of things is only possible because of  $y$ , or only possible through  $z$ , or on the basis of  $w$ , it does not follow that either  $y$ ,  $z$  or  $w$  has anything to do with the things our knowledge is about or the contents we know about these things. Perhaps it helps to swap ‘affection’ for ‘appearance’? This gives us:

- (3) We only know things if they appear to us.
- (4) We only know things as they appear to us.

The problem with the inference from (3) to (4) is that it, at least on some understandings of “appearance”, is either invalid or analytic.<sup>1</sup> If by “appearance” we mean whatever is our internal states that motivates, and internally justifies, our claim to knowledge, then the conclusion does not follow: I may very well see a coin,

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<sup>1</sup>We will discuss other, more general, senses of “appearance” below, on p. 4.

say, as oval (in the sense of having an oval retinal image) and thereby know that it is round. If, on the contrary, by “appearance” we understand whatever it is that constitutes warrant for knowledge and by “as” something along the lines “on the basis of”, then of course we only know things on the basis on which we know them.

That Kant seems to reason from (1) to (2) and that such reasoning is problematic has long been recognised in the literature.<sup>2</sup> In general terms, our problem is to reconcile the empirical realism that we take to be compatible with (1) – knowledge is some kind of contact, and without any contact there cannot be knowledge – with the transcendental idealism supposedly expressed by (2), if (2) is taken to restrict the realm of things we can know about in some meaningful and interesting way. One may think that this problem is particularly acute for so-called ‘one-world interpretations’, that take “things” in (1) and in (2) to refer to the very same entities. But in fact this is not so: If we reify the objects of knowledge in (2) as follows:

(5) We only know things if they affect us.

(6) We only know things-as-they-affect-us.

We have a simple fallacy: why should premiss (5) talking about some entities justify the step to conclusion (6), talking of different entities altogether? The equivocatio terminorum disappears, of course, if we reinterpret “things” in (5) in the same way. But

(7) We only know things-as-they-affect-us if they affect us.

(8) We only know things-as-they-affect-us.

is not valid either and, in addition, is decidedly antirealist: (1), after all, was supposed to deal with empirical knowledge of the world out there, not inner acquaintance with private sense data: If we add, to make the step from (7) to (8) valid, the further premiss that, necessarily, we are affected by these things we exclusively have knowledge of, the inference, while obviously question-begging, is at least revealing of a respectable philosophical position; but it’s phenomenalism, and we have independent grounds – or, at least, for the purposes of this paper I am presupposing that we have independent grounds – both to think that phenomenalism is wrong and that it is not Kant’s view.

Another possibility is not to tinker with the empirical realism (supposedly) expressed in (1), but rather with the transcendental idealism (supposedly) expressed by (2): on a *de re* construal, we may at least hope that we preserve the realist intuition that the things affecting us and the things we have knowledge about are one and the same. One possibility is the very modest:

(9) We only know things if they affect us.

(10) We only know of things that they affect us.

Though (10) preserves some realism in its *de re* construal of the objects of knowledge, the upshot is a very meagre one: the only knowledge we are said to have is that we are affected by some we-know-not, certainly not a basis on which we can hope to explain the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge of mind-independent reality.

What we would want to have instead of (10), I presume, is something along the lines of:

(11) We only know things if they affect us.

(12) We only know of things how they affect us.

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<sup>2</sup>We find a particularly strong formulation in Prichard (1909: 73–74): “In stating the fact of perception [Kant] substitutes for the assertion that things appear so and so to us the assertion that things produce appearances in us. In this way, instead of an assertion which relates to the thing and states what it is not but only appears, he obtains an assertion which introduces a second reality distinct from the thing, viz. an appearance or phenomenon, and thereby he gains something other than the thing to which space can be attached as a real predicate.” Strawson (1966: 250) calls the following “a fundamental and unargued complex premise of the *Critique*”: “Knowledge through perception of things existing independently of perception, as they are in themselves, is impossible. For the only perceptions which could yield us any knowledge at all of such things must be the outcome of our being affected by those things; and for this reason such knowledge can be knowledge only of those things as they appear – of the appearances of those things – an *dn*ot of those things as they really are or are in themselves.

The problem with the inference from (11) to (12) is that the only way of making it valid is to redefine the object of the states of knowledge attributed to us in (11) in a way to match up with the “how” in (12). So we get:

(13) We only know of things that they have the properties that affect us.

(14) We only know of things how they affect us.

The redefinition of the object of knowledge comes at a price, however.<sup>3</sup> Such property-dualist interpretations, as I will call them, face the ‘object of knowledge’ problem. Property-dualist interpretations cannot take literally Kant’s ubiquitous talk of the object (Gegenstand) of knowledge. In many places, Kant says that there are *things* we cannot know, and cannot know anything of, and this claim is not captured by (13). Interpreting, in the way of (13), “we cannot know *a* as it is in itself but only as it appears to us” as “of the properties of *a*, we cannot know those that are of kind  $K_1$ , but only those that are of kind  $K_2$ ” makes it entail *that we can know a*, which seems to rule out the interpretation according to which *a* is a thing-in-itself. For this reason, it is not entirely clear to me how property-dualist interpretation can salvage the empirical realism they want to attribute to Kant. For (almost all the parts of) the present paper, however, I will not insist on this objection.

More serious, it seems to me, is the question why we should take (13) to be true at all. (13), after all, is not the simple, and perhaps rather uncontroversial claim that our faculty of cognition is in at least some respects passive: it is the much more ambitious claim that our knowledge is restricted to a certain kind of properties. The plausibility of this claim will of course depend on what this kind of properties is taken to be. The problem here is that the larger the class of knowable properties is taken to be while interpreting (13) (problem (i) below), the more difficult it is to justify the inference by making it plausible that these properties are all knowable (problem (ii) and that knowing them is knowing how we are affected (problem (iii)). This is the task of the next section.

Before closing this one, however, I want to sketch the positive proposal I would like to make. It is a kind of hybrid between the (7)/(8) and (13)/(14) versions, also restricting the quantifier in (i), but not to properties as in (13), but to property-defined things, i.e. aspects:

(15) We only know of things that they have the aspects that affect us.

(16) We only know of things-as-they-affect-us.

Is this inference valid? I think it is, if (16) is supplemented by an account of how things relate to things-as-they-affect-us. To do so while preserving a sense in which (16) is an expression of transcendental idealism is the task of a theory of aspects outlined in sct. 2.1. Is the inference sound? This will depend on what account is given of what (15) means by “knowing of something that it has an aspect”, a task I take up in sct. 2.2.

## 1.2 Extant dual-aspect interpretations

Before examining extant dual-aspect interpretations, let us put aside the so-called ‘methodological’ use of “aspect” to interpret Kant, usually associated with Bird and Allison, as their accounts are not meant to make sense of anything like the inference from (1) to (2).<sup>4</sup>

Dual-aspect interpretations, in my use of the term, are characterised by an endorsement of the inference from (13) to (14) above, and by the fact that they underwrite it by a distinction between two types of properties – which I will call the ‘phenomenal’ and the ‘noumenal’ properties –, claiming (i) that phenomenal

<sup>3</sup>I will grant, for the purposes of the argument, that (re-)defining all our knowledge as knowledge of properties is systematically unproblematic. Such a view, however, faces a dilemma: if properties are construed as universal, then it is not clear how it can account for the particularity of much of all our knowledge; if they are property instances, on the other hand, non-shareable and individuated spatio-temporally, the problem is with the generality of what we know and the fact that knowledge should put you in a position to predict and reason counter-factually.

<sup>4</sup>This has been held against them, e.g. by Ameriks (1982: 2): “This approach to Kant obviously could absolve him from the charge of hypostatizing a second word, but by itself it does not give a full explanation of the doctrine of the unknowability of things in themselves...”

properties are the only properties that affect, or could affect us, (ii) that they are knowable, at least in principle, and (iii) that knowing that something has a phenomenal property is knowing (at best) how it affects us. Different distinctions between phenomenal and noumenal properties have been put forward:

**extrinsicist** (Langton?) All and only phenomenal properties are extrinsic, i.e. are such that their being exemplified or not depends on something outside, and modally independent, of the thing exemplifying (or not exemplifying) them.

**relationalist** (Allais?) All and only phenomenal properties are relational, i.e. are dependent for their existence and their nature on metaphysically prior relations, from which they are ‘obtained’ / ‘constructed’ or in which they are ‘grounded’ by way of ‘operations’ such as place-filling (from *being the brother of* to *being the brother of Michael*), reflexivization (from *killing* to *killing oneself*) and quantification (from *being the brother of* to *being a brother*).

**dispositionalist** (former Tobias) All and only phenomenal properties are dispositional, i.e. make a causal difference only (or, at least: primarily) by causing manifestation events under certain contingent conditions.

**response-dependantist** (present Tobias) All and only phenomenal properties are response-dependent, i.e. such that they or the facts that they are exemplified are at least partially grounded in subjective responses or reactions things like us have under certain circumstances.

**secondarist** All and only phenomenal properties are ‘secondary’, perhaps such as Locke conceived of them, as secondary in (causal and metaphysical) explanation and as being represented by representations that are not ‘resembling’ them, or their primary bases.

**conceptualist** All and only phenomenal properties are representational. Like methodological ‘interpretations’, conceptualist accounts take the contrast to lie in ways of thinking of / referring to / conceiving of things, but in contrast to methodologists they take this ontologically seriously.<sup>5</sup>

An important dimension of the evaluation of such property-dualist theories is how well they are able to account for the way Kant talks about “appearances”. “Appearance” in Kant exhibits a vehicle/content ambiguity and may mean both that which appears a certain way and that by which it appears. It also, more confusingly, appears to mean *the way* (whatever it is) in which objects are given, a sense in which an “appearance” is a “being of sense” (Sinneswesen).<sup>6</sup>

It is not clear to me that interpreting talk of appearances in terms of phenomenal properties captures any of these senses neatly. It does not capture the content sense because the content of a representation is never just a property by itself (or rather, never just a concept standing for a property), but also includes an object (or a concept thereof), and the claim that the object has the property. It does not capture the vehicle sense because phenomenal properties are not that by which things appear to us – not even response-dependent properties. Response-dependent properties such as *being red* or *being funny*, even if grounded in our responses to them and defined in terms of them, may appear in quite different ways, or it may even not appear at all (for instance, by being masked, finkish or fragile in the way dispositions are). Thirdly, it does not capture the sense of “appearance” in which it stands for the way objects are given. While it is analytic for Kant that they are given as appearances, it is neither analytic nor true that they are given as having only phenomenal properties; that our senses are such that they can only register and yield knowledge of these properties, is precisely the question of how we justify the step from (13) to (14). This is the problem to which we now turn.

A first aspect of it is a variant of the ‘object of knowledge’ problem mentioned above. Let us grant that both *x* and the way it has its noumenal properties are beyond our grasp – how are we, however, to understand (or even know) that *x* has its phenomenal properties? For all we know, these properties are exemplified by something different altogether (a noumenal property say, or even a phenomenal one). We may, so to say, have warrant for the ‘property part’ of (14), and still lack warrant for both the ‘object’ and the ‘exemplification’ part. Let us leave this aside, and ask whether we have warrant for the ‘property part’.

The most important problem of property dualist interpretations, however, is that we still do not have an

<sup>5</sup> Allen W. Wood says: “...appearances are not distinct entities from things in themselves, but the same entities, conceived or referred to in different ways” (2004: 65). His interpretation of Kant’s solution to the antinomies, however, interprets him as claiming that a series of conditions can *be* (not just: be thought of as) a thing-in-itself (2010: 258).

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: “if we call certain objects, as appearances, beings of sense (phaenomena), because we distinguish the way we intuit them from their constitution in itself, then it already follows from our concept that to these we oppose ...noumena’ (B306).

explanation why it is *these* properties that are the phenomenal ones. As noted above, such an explanation would have to have three parts:

- (i) A property such that we can know of  $x$  that  $x$  has it is phenomenal.
- (ii) A phenomenal property of  $x$  is such that we can (in principle) know of  $x$  that  $x$  has it.
- (iii) Knowing, of some phenomenal property, that something has it is knowing how some thing affects us.

Without three explanations of these types, the dual-aspect interpretation is fatally incomplete: (i) is needed to make sense of transcendental idealism, i.e. Kant's claim that we can know things only as they appear. (ii) is needed to make sense of empirical realism, i.e. Kant's claim that the empirical properties of things are at least in principle within our cognitive grasp. To have an explanation of (iii), at last, is a so-to-say 'internal' obligation of dual-aspect theories that are also one-world interpretations: because they do not locate the mind-dependence in the objects, they have to locate them in the properties and (iii) is a minimal requirement for a phenomenal property to be mind-dependent in anything like a Kantian sense.

On all three counts, the extant dual-aspects interpretations fare badly. Let us start with (i) and call properties that satisfy the antecedent "knowable". Is there any reason to assume that knowable properties are – as such / automatically / in virtue of being knowable – extrinsic, relational, dispositional, response-dependent, secondary or conceptual? I do not see any, and in particular I do not see how something like (i) could provide us with any, speaking, as it does, about the conditions, not the content of knowledge. My knowing (of) it would make some property extrinsic only if it entailed that the property could not be (fail to be) exemplified without me, or something else entirely different from the thing that has it, existing: it would have to make the property modally dependent on something else. Even if we grant necessary covariation of extrinsicness and knowability, however, the account conflicts with empirical realism by reversing the order of explanation: it is in conflict with empirical realism, I presume, to hold that properties are phenomenal (i.e. extrinsic, on this account) *because* they are knowable. Rather, they are knowable because they are phenomenal. The relationalist theory has these problems, and another one as well: while it may be held to be open to discovery whether predicables or more generally qualitative entities have extra argument places,<sup>7</sup> no one (and certainly not Kant) has to my knowledge ever given an argument that *being red* e.g. just *is* the property *being red and known to be so*. Dispositionalist and response-dependence theories fare a little better with respect to (i), as it is not entirely implausible that the causal powers of things lie 'dormant', as it were, and need manifestations (or, more specifically, subjective responses) to be known. The problem here is to make sure this really goes further than (i), as it is notoriously difficult to distinguish 'normal' effects from those that are had in virtue of the nature of the cause (or part of the cause, if causes are facts): a knowable property has to have some effect on us, to be sure, but why think that without having the capacity to have this effect it would not be what it is? Secondarist and conceptualist theories face the problem of justifying (i) head-on, as every attempt to do so looks quite question-begging. I thus conclude that property dualist accounts need a story to tell why knowable properties are phenomenal, and, in so far as they aspire to be interpretations, have to attribute such a story to Kant.

The situation, I think, is still worse with respect to (ii). There is no reason, as far as I see, why extrinsic principles should be knowable, or even better knowable than intrinsic ones. Properties may be extrinsic for a lot of different reasons: some are 'holistic' (*being a surprise, being everything there is*), some are 'maximal' (a property  $F$  is maximal if nothing is an  $F$  if it is a proper part of being an  $F$ , like *being a table*), others are derelativisations (*being a brother, being left*), while still others are extrinsic for a host of other, quite variegated reasons (*being a  $\tau$   $\xi$  note, weighing  $\tau$  kg, being sincere, being Mona Lisa*). The relationalist property-dualist at least narrows down this variation,<sup>8</sup> but still includes too many. Intuitively, it is only relations to *us*, or subjects relevantly like us, that matter. As the phenomenal properties are monadic, however, this difference has to be located in the relational properties themselves. I do not see how this can be done: the relational property *being to the left*, for example, is clearly knowable in principle if it is had in virtue of the thing standing in the relation *being to the left of to me* – but it may be unknowable, even in principle, if it holds (perhaps exclusively, perhaps necessarily) between things beyond my cognitive reach. A similar problem arises for the dispositionalist: only dispositions to affect us, intuitively, should count – but how do we pick them out in a

<sup>7</sup>Arguments in favour of yet undiscovered (because 'inarticulated') argument places have been given for locational and more generally physical properties by relativity theorists, for tensed properties by some versions of endurantism, for taste predicates, knowledge attributions and epistemic modals by contextualists and for egocentric or 'de se' sentences by friends of the 'essential indexical'.

<sup>8</sup>And also extends it, if there are relational intrinsic properties. But leave this aside for now.

non question begging way? In the absence of a clear cut *intrinsic* distinction between dispositions such that we could, and could not, know of their manifestations, (ii) seems quite unmotivated. Response-dependence theories fare a bit better, if (but also: only if) the responses in question are knowable per se. But they also need to claim that the inference from the responses to the properties that depend on it is knowable, and this, I think, is a harder task: suppose, for example and as seems plausible, that many different shades of red produce in me the same red-sensation (which explains my inability to distinguish between them). Even if all these shades of red are grounded in that same red-sensation, I cannot tell on the basis of the red-sensation which property dependent on it was actually its cause. Secondarist and conceptualist theories have much less problems with (ii), but at the prize that they have much bigger problems with (i).

(iii), finally, is the *pièce de résistance* for property-dualism. Kant says in many places that our knowing only ‘appearances’ means that we only know how things affect or appear to us (and not how they are in themselves). It is entirely unclear to me how property-dualist interpretation can make sense of this. Even if the modal covariance of some extrinsic property is with me, if I am the ‘unarticulated constituent’ of some hiddenly relational property, and if I am essentially part of the triggering conditions of some disposition, knowing that something has this extrinsic, relational or dispositional property falls short of knowing how I am affected, or how the property’s being exemplified appears to me. Suppose I confer to something the extrinsic property *not being the tallest person in room*, the relational property *being a brother* or the dispositional property *burning someone*. It does not follow, and is implausible to claim, that knowing that it is *me* who confers that property is knowing how I am affected by it, or how it appears to me. Response-dependence, secondarist and conceptualist theories fare a little better in that respect, in virtue of their claim that for something to have that phenomenal property is for me to be in a certain state: having a response (or being such that I would have a response if I were normal and in the appropriate circumstances), having a non-resembling idea or conceptualising the property in some way. But it is not clear that these reactions qualify as ‘how the property affects me / appears to me’. Two problems can be distinguished: one is that “the thing” in (iii) need not be the thing that has the property. I could have a red sensation (wearing glasses, of a yellow cube in front of me), while at the same time some other red thing appears to me, but not through that sensation. The other problem is that even holding the thing constant, it does not follow from a property’s being constituted by some response on my part that my epistemic access to the property goes *through* that response.

## 2 The dual nature of aspects

### 2.1 Aspects: dependent extrinsic things

Take the cup in front of me and let us call it “Sam”. It is round and white. I claim that there exist two other objects, we may call “Tom” and “Maria” respectively. They are aspects of Sam, existentially, essentially and qualitatively depend on it, but also numerically different. We may call Tom “the cup in so far as it is round”, “the round cup”, “the cup as round”, or “the cup qua round”, though it is not always clear how these terms may be construed as definite descriptions. I will also call Tom by the functional name “Sam qua round”. Tom depends on Sam in at least the following ways:

**existentially** Tom exists because Sam exists and is round.

**essentially** Tom is essentially round because Sam is round.

**qualitatively** Tom is round because Sam is round.

Tom depends on Sam not just for its existence in space and time, or its being ‘concrete’, or ‘actualised’, but for its existence *tout court*. That it is essentially round does not just mean (or, perhaps, if there may be contingent essences, does not even imply) that it is necessarily round if it exists. It means that roundness is part of what it is, that it could not be the thing it is if it were not round, that roundness is part of its real definition(s). The third condition does not imply that qua-object have all the properties their basis do, nor does it imply that it cannot have any other properties.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The conception of qua-objects Marshall (2013) puts to work in an interpretation of Kant does not allow for this, claiming that “the properties of the qua-object must either be those of the original object, or else arise straightforwardly from the latter; nothing fundamentally new can be added” (2013: 528). We will return to this point later.

All three “because” have to be understood in the non-causal, distinctively metaphysical and admittedly somewhat elusive sense that is the explanandum of recent theories of grounding. That Tom’s existence is grounded in Sam’s and it’s being round thus means, at least, that Tom is not just a dependent entity, but that it owes its existence not just to some other existence, but to a qualitative fact about the world: this is a feature Tom shares with things normally classified under the category of properties. That Tom’s essence is externally grounded means that Tom is what it is in virtue of a relation to something else and that it is an extrinsic thing in this sense, a thing that can only exist if conditions for its existence that are external to it are satisfied. That even Tom’s roundness is grounded in someone else’s roundness means that Tom is not qualitatively autonomous, that some of the properties it has are ‘inherited’ or ‘reflected’; it also means that there are at least two ways to be round: a thing may be round either just because it itself has a certain shape, or also because something else has a certain shape. I will call these three aspects of Tom’s being grounded in Sam it’s being a ‘qualitative’, ‘extrinsic’ and ‘heteronomous’ thing.

Are such qualitative, extrinsic and heteronomous things real? I think they are, but I do not think that they’re *definition* gives us this result. This is an important difference between my conception of qua-objects and their two (only?) contemporary defenders, Kit Fine and David Lewis.<sup>10</sup> Defining qua objects into existence, I think, would only be appropriate if we could assign them some second-grade status that not only demotes them *metaphysically*, but *ontologically* as well: just because they are dependent – qualitative, extrinsic and heteronomous – does not make them less real, or more of a projection of ourselves, or more ‘conceptual’, or less ‘objective’ than their bases. Both Kit Fine and David Lewis take that route. In 1982, Kit Fine conceived of them as constructed by us<sup>11</sup>, while in his later theory of ‘rigid embodiments’ he took them to be ‘entities-under-a-description’.<sup>12</sup> David Lewis says that it is up to us what to count as counterparts of things.<sup>13</sup> But again the restriction of the maximal counterpart relation is done by *us* privileging one aspect of similarity over another.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Kit Fine, in a short note entitled “Acts, Events and Things” (1982) introduced qua objects as a special kind of intensional entities, consisting of a particular, say *a* (its ‘basis’), together with a property, say *F* (its ‘gloss’), and denoted by “*a* qua *F*” (Fine 1982: 100). For any particular *a* and any property *F*, Fine claims there is such a qua object, which exists at times and in worlds when and where *a* is *F*. Qua objects in Fine’s sense are intensional entities because they are identical only if they have the same glosses and they are distinct from their bases, though they have them as constituents and exemplify, at any given time and in any given world, all the properties of their bases which are not ‘formal’, i.e. which are not about the time or world in question.

David Lewis, presupposing his own modal realism and his (anti-realist!) semantic theory of *de re* modal predications, takes qua-objects to be things with contextually restricted counterpart relations. Something *b* in a possible world *v* is a counterpart of *a* in *w* iff *a* would be *b* if *w* turned out to be *v*. Counterpart relations depend on overall intrinsic and extrinsic similarity and sometimes on similarity-in-a-given-respect. Different counterpart relations are distinguished by the fact that they place more relative importance on some of the properties of one and the same thing: one and the same thing, e.g. the lump of matter and the statue, might have counterparts in one respect which are not counterparts of it in another respect, e.g. melted-down counterparts which are sufficiently similar to it with respect to lump-hood, but not to statue-hood. The difficulty is, of course, to say how such counterpart relations are selected and why their being more than one of them does not violate Leibniz’s Law. Lewis (2003) takes Long qua black to be “none other than Long himself”, but “differ[ing] from him in essence”: “...[Long] has different essences under different counterpart relations. The name ‘Long’ evokes one counterpart relation; the (novel) name “Long qua black” evokes another. The counterparts of Long qua black / Long under the second counterpart relation are just those of his counterparts under the first counterpart relation that are black.” (2003: 31) So Lewis has the following conditions on qua objects: *a* qua *F* exists at *t* in *w* iff *F* is an intrinsic property of *a* at *t* in *w*; *a* qua *F* is identical to *abut* the counterparts of *a* qua *F* are only the counterparts of *a* that are *F*.

<sup>11</sup>Cf.: “The acts, as qua objects, are in an obvious sense artificial and derivative. They are not genuinely ‘out there’ in the world, but are formed from what is out there by means of an alliance with a purely intensional element. (It is tempting to say that they are partly formed in our own minds, but this would be too psychologistic.)” (Fine 1982: 103)

<sup>12</sup>Cf.: “An especially important class of cases are those in which the principle of embodiment is a property *P* rather than a polyadic relation *R*. The rigid embodiment is then of the form “*a/P*” and may be read as “*a* qua *F*” or as “*a* under the description *P*.” An airline passenger, for example, is not the same as the person who is the passenger since, in counting the passengers who pass through an airport on a given weekend, we may legitimately count the same person several times. This therefore suggests that we should take an airline passenger to be someone under the description of being flown on such and such a flight. And similarly for mayors and judges and other “personages” of this sort.” (Fine 1999: 67–68)

<sup>13</sup>Lewis (1971: 209 / 53) says that “the sense of the term somehow selects the counterpart relation that is to be used to find the counterparts of the thing denoted by that term”, while Lewis (2003: 31) speaks of names “evoking” particular counterpart relations. but also says that we can stipulate that the appropriate counterpart relation is selected by a special clause like “regarded as an *F*”: “Is it a counterpart of Lump/Goliath? Yes and no. It is a counterpart under the counterpart relation that is called to mind when we describe Lump/Goliath as a lump, but not under the different counterpart relation that is called to mind when we describe the very same thing as a statue. [...] Thanks to the multiplicity of counterpart relations, we have no need to multiply entities. [...] One identical thing can have different potentialities and different essences if it has them relative to different counterpart relations.” (Lewis 2003: 28)

<sup>14</sup>In 1971, Lewis even adopts the ‘under a description’ metaphor. Cf.: “My real essence consists of the properties common to all my counterparts. [...] My nominal essence under the description ‘person’ consists of the properties common to all possible persons. My intermediate essence under the description ‘person’ consists of the properties common to all my personal counterparts.” (Lewis 1971: 54)

In contrast to these two (roughly) contemporary theories, I take qua objects, or aspects, to be *data*, part of the natural world we find ourselves in and of which we have to make sense of, in the way philosophers do.<sup>15</sup> I think there are entities that are dependent in the ways characterised above and take it to be a question of interpretation, not just of modelling, whether Kant was talking about them.

## 2.2 Aspects: horizontally grounded things

Aspects, I claim, are real and they are really numerically different from the things they are aspects of. But is this not a variant of phenomenalism? Could aspects really be much substantial than mere seemings, looks, appearances of things, illegitimately reified as being different from things seeming, looking, or appearing some way or other? The aim of this section is to dispel these worries and to outline an (admittedly sketchy) account of how knowledge of aspects could just *be* knowledge of the things they are aspects of.

My argument why knowledge of aspects constitutes (also) knowledge of their bases is by analogy with the problem of mental causation. Friends of mental causation who are also physicalists (or at least believe in the ‘causal closure of the physical’, that every physical effect has a physical cause) have long worried about systematic causal overdetermination, of which the firing squad is the stock example. Yablo (1992) made some progress on this score, presenting the example of Sophie, a pigeon trained to peck at red specks, presented with a crimson one, and pecking. Shall we say that Sophie’s reaction is overdetermined by it’s being a reaction both to the speck being red and it’s being crimson (to different ways for the speck to be)? No, says Yablo, because the determinate/determinable relation between *being crimson* and *being red* is sufficiently tight.

While it is not subsumable under the determinate/determinable relation (at least as the latter is standardly construed), the same appears to me true of the *being an aspect of* relation. While aspects may have novel properties, their causal relations are constrained, and explicable in terms of, what they are aspects of. Knowledge, I boldly claim, is in this respect similar to causation: to know an aspect is to know that its base has a certain property. But more needs to be said.

## 3 Aspects for Kant

In this section, I will try to make the conceptual apparatus outlined above useful for the purposes of interpretations (and, ultimately, defenses) of transcendental idealism. Before doing so, I will first add an important restriction to my methodological thesis about the usefulness of aspects: there is no need, I think, to appeal to them *at all* in an interpretation of things-in-themselves, and conceiving of noumena as another type of aspects has several problems. I then sketch three qua-object interpretations of appearances, of decreasing radicality, for all of which I think some textual evidence is found on Kant. Systematically, I will settle for the last, least radical one: even though it does not fit everything Kant says, I think it gives a plausible version of transcendental idealism, as I will try to show in the next section.

### 3.1 Noumena are not qua-objects

The proposed interpretation of Kant is, in a sense, two-aspect but also two-world: it takes appearances to be aspects of things-in-themselves, thus marks out some class of properties as the only properties we can know things to have (the phenomenal properties are those had by aspects that we can know), but also treats appearances and things-in-themselves asymmetrically, taking the first to be aspects and the second to be their bases.

Marshall’s reason not to take noumena to be qua-objects is that they are not spatio-temporal, but phenomena are. This is not a particularly good reason, especially because it is not part of all theories of qua-objects that they cannot have novel properties.<sup>16</sup> It follows from the characterisation given above with respect

<sup>15</sup>My conception of qua objects is thus much closer to Aristotle’s, who took Musical-Coriscus to be as much ‘given’ as Coriscus. For an explanation how this justifies his assimilation of qualitative to substantial change, cf. Matthews (1982). A very interesting contemporary elaboration of the ‘two in being, one in number’ account of aspects is given by Donald Baxter.

<sup>16</sup>On the contrary, this will be the case on all such theories, at least if you count *being essentially F* as a property of *a*-qua-*F* even when *a* lacks it. Also, it has Kantian pedigree in one of the passages Marshall (2013: 533) cites in favour of his interpretation: “We



to modal and temporal persistence conditions. It is also quite plausible with respect to representational and intentional properties: I may be thinking of Tom, remembering Tom, aesthetically appreciating Tom, without thinking of, remembering or appreciating Sam. Given these examples, I think it is arguable that the qualitative autonomy extends to empirical properties. I may invite Picasso-as-painter for dinner without inviting him as a writer, criticise Rudolph for unfairness as a father, without criticising him for unfairness as a judge, see the duck-rabbit as a rabbit without seeing it as a duck etc.

The most direct advantage of taking noumena to be bases of aspects, not aspects themselves, is that it fits much better with transcendental idealism implying a (deplorable, but unavoidable) *limitation* of our knowledge.

Another important advantage is that it keeps us out of the difficult problems pertaining to the constraints of our knowledge of aspects. Consider the following argument in favour of the two-world view:<sup>17</sup>

$P_1$  The objects of outer experience have the property of being necessarily spatial.

$P_2$  Noumena do not have the property of being necessarily spatial.

$C$  Hence no object of outer experience is a noumenon and vice versa.

The aspect-interpretation I advocate has no problem in accepting the conclusion: the left-to-right half then says that no aspect we experience is a noumenon and that we experience only aspects. The first follows already from the distinctness of aspects and their basis, the second from the analysis of our experience as being conditioned by the forms of pure intuition: every object of our experience is experienced as spatiotemporal, at least. The right-to-left half says that no noumenon is an aspect we experience. Again, this is unproblematic if noumena are bases: they then cannot be aspects. If noumena are aspects as well, however, we need an explanation why we cannot experience these aspects. This explanation is not as straightforward as it may seem. Why would it not be possible to experience *a-qua-nonspatiotemporal as spatiotemporal*? Such an experience, of course, would not be veridical and even necessarily so, but why think that it is not possible?

A third advantage is that taking noumena to be bases rather than aspects allows us to account for the numerical disparities between noumena and phaenomena, ie. the fact that they may have, for all we know, different cardinalities. The problem here is three-fold: there are what some call “pure noumena” such as God and the soul, ie. noumena that do not appear in any way.<sup>18</sup>; there may be phenomena that do not correspond to any noumenon at all and finally one noumenon may ‘correspond’ to more than one phaenomenon.<sup>19</sup> The first and the third are no problem at all for my theory, while the second, I think, is a problem for everyone. But more has to be said.

### 3.2 Qua-objects as things-as-appearing

A straightforward way of putting qua-objects to use for Kantians is to say that Sam, the cup cannot be known, but only Sam-as-it-appears. Tom, an aspect of Sam, has the property of appearing essentially, while Sam does not. Such a theory has recently been sketched by Colin Marshall (2013), who models the contrast as one between things-qua-appearing-some-way and things-qua-having-only-properties-other-than-appearance-properties (2013: 530):

Since a thing-qua-appearance necessarily has the property of appearing, and one (de re) necessary mind-dependent property makes a thing mind-dependent, it follows that things-qua-appearance (and so, for Kant, objects of experience) are mind-dependent. (Marshall 2013: 535)

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have ...wanted to say that all our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance; that the things that we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them to be [nicht das an sich selbst sind, wofür wir sie anschauen], nor are their relations [Verhältnisse] so constituted in themselves as they appear to us” (A42/B59).

<sup>17</sup>Setiya (2004: 67) ascribes this argument to Guyer (1987: 362–367), though I find in these pages a different argument, to be discussed below.

<sup>18</sup>Schulking (2011: 11) criticises Allais and Langton for their inability to account for these.

<sup>19</sup>Schulking (2011: 13, 14) says, this is a general problem of all dual aspect interpretations. It is, however, problematic only for those that postulate generic necessary connections between phenomenal and noumenal properties, claiming (i) that everything that exemplified a phenomenal property also must exemplify a noumenal one, and (ii) vice versa and (iii) that phenomenal properties are maximally inclusive in the sense of entailing all the non-noumenal properties of their particulars. While the claim (i) is necessary to make sense of (2), (ii) and (iii) are optional: one can consistently hold that objects may have noumenal (intrinsic, non-relational, categorical, response-independent, primary and worldly), but no phenomenal (extrinsic, relational, dispositional, response-dependent, secondary, conceptualist) properties. Claim (iii) corresponds to the things-as-appearing conception to be discussed, and criticised, below.

But is *appearing* really the paradigmatic phenomenal property?<sup>20</sup> Is it even a phenomenal property? More needs to be said.

### 3.3 Qua-objects as things insofar they have some phenomenal property

As we noted above, Marshall takes over the views that all we know of things is that they appear to us in certain ways (2013: 531) and that spatio-temporal properties are what he calls ‘appearance properties’, ie. that the property of having a certain shape is the property of appearing a certain way (2013: 532). This makes aspects mind-dependent (if phenomenal properties are, cf. above), but too cheaply so. If the objects of knowledge are qua-objects like Sam-as-appearing-round, the property-dualism is maintained and its problems outlined above inherited.

But more needs to be said, especially on the secondary quality analogy.

### 3.4 Qua-objects as things insofar they have properties of which we have knowledge

On this view, the mind-dependence of appearances does not lie in their having mind-dependent properties, but in their being themselves mind-dependent. The empirical properties they have, such as being round and white, may themselves be perfectly objective. It is their own existence that is due to us, i.e. to them being given to us as having the properties that define them *essentially*. The crucial move here rests on a distinction of two types of modality: if we know that *a* is necessarily-given as *F*, but may not be necessarily *F*, we have a reason to take *a* to be an aspect.

But this is very sketchy.

## 4 Aspects in Kant

In this last section I want to have a closer look at two places where the phenomenon/noumenon distinction is put to work and thereby further elaborated: the aesthetics and the amphiboly. My aim is to flesh out the claim already adumbrated in sct. 1 that it will not do to just bluntly assert that “[o]ur ignorance of things in themselves is supposed to follow from Receptivity [the claim that XXX], and not from any particular doctrine about [e.g.] space” (Langton 1998: 211). To the contrary, I think, it is the “particular doctrines” that make up the argument for transcendental idealism.

### 4.1 Aspects in the transcendental aesthetics

Kant’s transcendental deduction of SPACE and TIME:

...da nur vermittelt solcher reiner Formen der Sinnlichkeit uns ein Gegenstand erscheinen, d.i. ein Objekt der empirischen Anschauung sein kann, so sind Raum und Zeit reine Anschauungen, welche die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Gegenstände als Erscheinungen a priori enthalten, und die Synthesis in denselben hat objektive Gültigkeit. (A89, B121-122)

The problem is that we need an interpretation of “die Möglichkeitsbedingung von *x* enthalten” substantial enough to imply “auf *x* zutreffen”. The quoted argument proceeds as follows:

- (a) all our possible representations of objects represent them as being in time
- (b) time is a form of pure intuition / only in time can things appear to us
- (c) TIME applies to all things that we can represent

<sup>20</sup>It is not absolutely clear to me that Colin Marshall always understands “appearance property” as “property of appearing”. For one thing, he also uses the plural. He also cites (2013: 534, approvingly, Allais (2007), Rosefeldt (2007) and Ameriks (2011), as exponents of the view that “normal empirical properties are [...] appearance properties”. These would put his theory in the second group, to be discussed in the next subsection. He does also say, however, what I cite in the main text.

But the step from (b) to (c) is not automatic: that things necessarily appear to us temporally does not imply that they are temporal unless, of course, it is presupposed that they appear to us the way they are. Again, the crucial step is from (1) to (2):

1. to cognize something as an object (etwas als einen Gegenstand erkennen) is (to cognize it) through the representation (Vorstellung)  $x$
2.  $x$  is a priori determining (a priori bestimmend) *in Ansehung* of the object

According to Kant, the inference is valid and is also sound for  $x = \{ \text{SPACE, TIME, categories} \}$ . The aesthetics establishes (1) for  $x = \{ \text{SPACE, TIME} \}$  with respect to the cognition which is Anschauung. The deduction to (2) is then as follows:

Mit dieser formalen Bedingung der Sinnlichkeit [dass wir Anschauung davon haben können] stimmen also alle Erscheinungen notwendig überein, weil sie durch dieselbe erscheinen, d.i. empirisch angeschauet und gegeben werden können. (A93 / B125)

Again, we cannot infer that a necessary condition of our cognition of some object is a condition of that object unless the object is itself some  $x$ -qua-cognised. The property-dualism interpretations does not provide warrant for this inference: even if their spatial and temporal properties are extrinsic, relational, disposition, response-dependent or in other ways ‘secondary’, it does not follow from that fact that we have to attribute them to the objects of cognition that these objects in fact have them.

Even if (2) is salvaged, however, this does not yet give us quite what Kant takes to have established: the necessity by which spatiotemporal properties attach to phenomena is not just conditional, but absolute. Guyer puts the point against Allison as follows:

...it is not Kant’s view that what we know merely the conditional necessity that if we are to perceive things external to ourselves they must be spatial. Rather, it is Kant’s view that what we perceive is *necessarily spatial* in an absolute sense, and that the existence of this absolute necessity can be explained only by the supposition that we actually *impose* spatial form on objects. (1987: 361)

Qua objects are tailor-made to make room for this absolute necessity.

## 4.2 Incongruent counterparts (very sketchy)

Throughout his career, Kant repeatedly used incongruent counterparts to show that our representations of space and time are intuitional rather than conceptual<sup>21</sup>, in effect relativising the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction to the epistemic capacity by which we access the property.<sup>22</sup>

Their apparent possibility may be either taken as an argument for a substantialist account of space-time or as showing the need to acknowledge handedness as an intrinsic irreducible properties of spatial objects. If Kant is not a substantialist, how can property-dualist accounts take handedness to be a phenomenal property?

## 4.3 Aspects in the amphiboly

The noumena/phaenomena contrast is applied to representations (Vorstellungen) and more particularly to concepts (Begriffe) in the amphiboly of Reflexionsbegriffe. Transcendental reflection there reveals that

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<sup>21</sup>He says in his inaugural dissertation that “between solid bodies which are perfectly similar and equal but incongruent [...] there is a difference, [...] in spite of the fact that, in respect of everything which may be expressed by means of characteristic marks intelligible to the mind through speech, they could be substituted for one another. It is, therefore, clear that in these cases the difference, namely, the incongruity, can only be apprehended by a certain pure intuition.” (1992: 403; “in solidis perfecte similibus atque aequalibus, sed discongruentibus [...] sit diversitas, [...] quanquam per omnia, quae notis, menti per sermonem intelligibilibus, efferre licet, sibi substitui possint, patet: hic non nisi quadam intuitione pura diversitatem, nempe discongruentiam, notari posse.”; A<sub>2</sub> 20, 1983: V, 58)

<sup>22</sup>In the *Prolegomena* (A 59, ¶: 403), Kant says that the distinction between the right-hand and the left-hand glove is intrinsic to the senses (“innerlich, so weit die Sinne lehren”) but is only possible by the relations of them to the whole of space of which they are a part (“die innere Bestimmung eines jeden Raumes ist nur durch die Bestimmung des äusseren Verhältnisses zu dem ganzen Raume, davon jener ein Teil ist (dem Verhältnisse zum äusseren Sinne), d.i. der Teil ist nur durch das Ganze möglich”).

conceptually based relations between things differ relative to our ground of having these concepts (“der Erkenntnisart, zu der [die Begriffe] gehören”, A 261 / B 317). Depending on the ground (Erkenntnisart / Erkenntniskraft) of the concepts and the source (Erkenntnisquelle) of the Vorstellungen and the Erkenntnisvermögen wherein they “belong together”, there may be (i) different intrinsically indiscernibles, (ii) real contrariety, (iii) ungrounded dispositions and (iv) form that determines, but is not determined by matter. There are thus four contrasts between noumena and phenomena, corresponding to the four pairs of concepts of reflexion:<sup>23</sup>

1. Intrinsically indiscernible things that “als Gegenst[ä]nde des reinen Verstandes [gelten]” are identical (A 263 / B 319), while also only extrinsically discernible phaenomena (that are, e.g., located in different places) are distinct.<sup>24</sup>  
Compared as noumena (and hence in abstraction from their location), two intrinsically indiscernible drops of water are identical; compared as phaenomena, the difference of their locations grounds their non-identity.<sup>25</sup>
2. Parts of reality (Realitäten) as “nur durch den reinen Verstand vorgestellt” cannot be contrary to each other (im Widerstreit), while things that are real “in der Erscheinung” may (A 264 / B 320). Being in harmony with each other, however, means different things with respect to representations and to things represented: for concepts, not being in harmony or being contrary is being logically contradictory (A 272 / B 328); for things, it is to cancel out the other thing’s effects. Such a “wechselseitiger Abbruch” happens, e.g., with two diametrically opposed and equally strong forces acting on the same point.
3. All intrinsic properties of objects of pure reason (“Gegenstände des reinen Verstandes”) are not really relational (ie. do not stand in relations “dem Dasein nach”), while intrinsic properties of spatial phaenomena all are.<sup>26</sup> An intrinsic determination of a thing in itself cannot be the concept of a relation, not even of a relation between its parts: because things in themselves need to have an intrinsic nature, they must therefore be simple. Determinations of phaenomena, by contrast, may be only comparatively intrinsic, ie. be exemplified in virtue of how the things is by itself (independently of the existence of things wholly disjoint with it), but still be had in virtue of properties of and relations between its parts. With noumena, extrinsic discernibility presupposes numerical non-identity, while the numerical non-identity of phaenomena may consist in such a difference of external relations (“die Verschiedenheit der äusseren Verhältnisse [macht] eine Verschiedenheit der Sachen selbst [aus]”, A 280 / B 336).
4. With respect to pure concepts of reason, matter, as that which is determined, precedes the form that determines it and makes it possible. Reason needs matter, at least conceptual matter (“dass etwas gegeben sei (wenigstens im Begriffe)”, A 2 67 / B 323), before it can impose form (e.g. by combining concepts into judgements). With respect to intuition and its objects, however, form precedes matter and makes it – as a phaenomenon, ie. object of an intuition – possible.

We thus have the following claims:

**identity/difference**  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are representations of droplets:

<sup>23</sup>Some passages suggest that the same pair of concepts may stand in different relations relative to the respect of their comparison: they are “als zum reinen Verstande oder zur sinnlichen Anschauung gehörend untereinander verglichen” (A 261 / B317) and their ‘transcendental place’ accrues to concepts relative to the use we make of them (“nach Verschiedenheit [des] Gebrauchs”, A 268 / B 324). This aspects-of-concepts interpretation does not match well, however, with Kant’s talk of concepts *belonging* to different Erkenntniskräfte. Also, it reintroduces the basic problem of the phaenomena/noumena distinction at the conceptual level: how can the same concepts stand in some relation to each other if compared with respect to reason and not stand in this relation if compared with respect to the senses? How can they be the *same* concepts if they differ in (at least) this important respect?

<sup>24</sup>Kant conceptualises the intrinsic indiscernibility of two things as *identity* of their (complete) concepts and claims that in the case of noumena, identity of things is implied by identity of concepts. Kant’s further claim, that the numerical distinctness of differently located intrinsically indiscernible phenomena is grounded in the numerical distinctness of their (equally intrinsically indiscernible) regions, depends on the claim, which Kant denies, that the relation of a region to absolute space is not an intrinsic property of that region.

If we adopt the interpretation described in footnote (23) and see the contrast as between comparisons of the same concepts, taken one or the other way, we can interpret Kant more weakly here: as only saying that Leibniz would have been right if he would have been (entitled to) talking about noumena, and not making any positive claim about noumena himself.

<sup>25</sup>In the ‘one-concept’ interpretation of fn. 23, the contrast would be: compared as having objects knowable only by reason, DROPI and DROPI2 have the same object, compared as having objects given to us by intuition, they don’t.

<sup>26</sup>The claim is indeed this sweeping: “die inneren Bestimmungen einer substantia phaenomenon im Raume [sind] nichts als Verhältnisse, und sie selbst ganz und gar ein Inbegriff von lauter Relationen” (A 265 / B 321).

**if  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are intellectual:**  $\Box(R(V_1) \text{ is identical}_R \text{ to } R(V_2) \leftrightarrow V_1 \text{ is the same concept as } V_2)$

**if  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are intuitive:**  $\Diamond(R(V_1) \text{ is not identical}_V \text{ to } R(V_2) \wedge R(V_1) \text{ is intrinsically indiscernible to } R(V_2))$

**harmony/repugnance**  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are representations of contrary emotions (pleasure and pain):

**if  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are intellectual:**  $\Box(R(V_1) \text{ is in harmony}_R \text{ with } R(V_2) \leftrightarrow V_1 \text{ is logically consistent with } V_2)$

**if  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are intuitive:**  $\Diamond(R(V_1) \text{ is not in harmony}_I \text{ with } R(V_2) \wedge R(V_1) \text{ cancels out the effects } R(V_2))$

**inner/outer**  $V_1$  is the representation of a determination of  $x$ .

**if  $V_1$  is intellectual:**  $\Box(R(V_1) \text{ is an intrinsic}_R \text{ determination of } x \leftrightarrow V_1 \text{ is a non-relational concept})$

**if  $V_1$  is intuitive:**  $\Diamond(R(V_1) \text{ is an intrinsic}_I \text{ determination of } x \wedge R(V_1) \text{ is a relation between parts of } x)$

**form/matter**  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are any representations whatsoever:

**if  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are intellectual:**  $\Box(R(V_1) \text{ is the form}_R \text{ of } R(V_2) \leftrightarrow V_2 \text{ makes } V_1 \text{ possible})$

**if  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  are intuitive:**  $\Diamond(R(V_1) \text{ is the form}_I \text{ of } R(V_2) \wedge R(V_1) \text{ makes } R(V_2) \text{ possible})$

The left-hand sides of the biconditionals have to be taken with a grain of salt: strictly speaking, all positive claims we can make about noumena are in reality claims about their concepts; we can only ‘reflect logically’ and determine relations between their concept:

Wenn wir bloss logisch reflektieren, so vergleichen wir lediglich unsere Begriffe unter einander im Verstande, ob beide dasselbe enthalten [identity<sub>R</sub>], ob sie sich widersprechen oder nicht [harmony<sub>R</sub>], ob etwas in dem Begriffe innerlich enthalten sei, oder zu ihm hinzukomme [intrinsic<sub>R</sub>], und welcher von beiden gegeben, welcher aber nur als eine Art, den gegebenen zu denken, gelten soll [form<sub>R</sub>]. (A 279 / B 335)

Property-dualist interpretations have a major problem, it seems to me, to make sense of Kant’s clear assertion that Leibniz’s principle of the identity of indiscernibles holds of “concepts of things as such” (“von Begriffen der Dinge überhaupt gilt”, A 272 / B 328):

...wenn ich einen Tropfen Wasser als ein Ding an sich selbst nach allen seinen innern Bestimmungen kenne, so kann ich keinen derselben von dem anderen für verschieden gelten lassen, wenn der ganze Begriff desselben mit ihm einerlei ist. Ist er aber Erscheinung im Raume, so hat er seinen Ort nicht bloss im Verstande (unter Begriffen), sondern in der sinnlichen äusseren Anschauung (im Raume), und da sind die physischen Örter, in Ansehung der inneren Bestimmungen der Dinge, ganz gleichgültig...(A 272 / B 328)

Kant here says that the very same droplet of water may be known as a thing by itself and also be a phenomenon in space. This already rules out an interpretation of aspects as sets or bundles of properties. If the noumenon / phenomenon distinction were one between properties, then there is no sense available in which one and the same thing can be known, be or be considered as both a noumenon and a phenomenon.<sup>27</sup>

There is a further, more important problem here for property-dualist interpretations, however. If we interpret Kant’s claim that the PII holds of noumena as asserting that commonality of noumenal (intrinsic, categorical, response-independent) properties suffices for identity, then his claim that it does *not* hold of phenomena is illogical nonsense: if two things sharing their noumenal properties are *already* identical, then there are no two things for the phenomenal properties to differentiate.<sup>28</sup>

There is no such a problem for an aspect interpretation, on the other hand. The very same thing  $a$ , in itself, may have two aspects, e.g.  $a$ -qua-being-here and  $a$ -qua-being-there. To take two water droplets located in different places to be one and the same is to viciously abstract from their aspectual diversity. This corresponds well with Kant’s own gloss on the matter. Leibniz’s mistake to take the indiscernibility of identicals to hold not just of noumena, but of phenomena as well, is put in terms of forgetting about what was abstracted from:

<sup>27</sup>This is a version of the ‘object of knowledge’ objection above.

<sup>28</sup>This follows from the converse of the PII, the indiscernibility of identicals, which is far more plausible.

Weil aber bei dem blossen Begriffe von irgend einem Dinge von manchen notwendigen Bedingungen einer Anschauung abstrahiert worden, so wird, durch eine sonderbare Übereilung, das, wovon abstrahiert wird, dafür genommen, dass es überall nicht anzutreffen sei, und dem Dinge nichts eingeräumt, als was in seinem Begriffe enthalten ist. (A 281 / B 337-338)

Kant says here that Leibniz, thinking to be able to sensibly talk about noumena, abstracted from the extrinsic (i.e. spatio-temporal) properties that may distinguish intrinsically identical phenomena, took them to be non-existent and thus inferred the identity of things from the identity of their concepts. He mistook, in other words, aspects for their bases.

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