Kant on empirical objects

Their reality and persistence as contrasted with Hume's scepticism

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Abstract

Can we be realists about objects as persistent entities about which empirical knowledge claims are formulated? And do we need to rely on objects persisting by perduring or enduring in order to decide this issue? I examine this topic first by Humean and then Kantian lights, in an attempt to formulate Kant's assumptions and his account of objects and our knowledge of them, both as a reaction to and as continuation of Hume's abortive sceptical enquiry. I distinguish three sceptical arguments in Hume, two of knowledge in general and one of knowledge of empirical objects in particular, the latter being in essence a more detailed version of the logical argument as applied to objects. These arguments have different grounds; of the two general arguments, one is psychological and the other logical. I conclude that the psychological argument is unconvincing, and that while both logical arguments are sound on a certain reading, Hume fails to take into account an ambiguity in his assumptions which makes scepticism avoidable. This has two results. First, taking scepticism about empirical objects to be avoidable on Hume's assumptions is consistent with their persisting either by perduring or enduring. Second, there is no need for Hume to abandon rational means for arriving at knowledge of an objective world. I explore the latter consequence in Kant, who has such a rational account, one which sets forth a rebuttal of Hume's scepticism and provides both an epistemology and empirical ontology of objects. However, Kant's derivation of an external world using Hume's subject-first or experience-first approach is faulty, for it assumes what it sets out to prove. This is not disastrous, for against Hume Kant does not need to prove the existence of an external world, he only needs to assume an objective world. This is a reasonable assumption, and as I show, Kant's system provides a plausible epistemology based on it, in which knowledge of persistent empirical objects is a necessary consequence of taking experience as essentially subjective or first-personal. On this account, however, ontologically the question whether objects are entities or composed of parts which are entities is indeterminate, for although objects are identified as relatively permanent when described as causes, experience can be described in non-mutually exclusive ways which are consistent with both the persistence and non-persistence over a period of time of any given object. Thus Kant's account is by default consistent in principle both with objects which persist by perduring and those which persist by enduring, merely because as it stands it does not provide a means of deciding the issue. Finally, both particular and general difficulties found with Kant's system and fruitful avenues of further research are discussed.

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1. Introduction

The title of this work could have been simply "Kant and Hume on empirical objects," as Hume plays such a large part, occupying nearly a third of the total length. But Hume is not Kant's equal here; I have chosen to discuss his views on objects mainly to provide a theoretical and historical background to Kant that throws certain aspects of his theories into relief, while relegating others to the background. Kant's system is strikingly similar to Hume's in many ways, a feature of his philosophy that is itself worth drawing attention to. It is on the foundation of a comprehensive critique of Hume's account of empirical objects that I draw attention to the strengths and weaknesses, and even some of the redundancies, of Kant's. Although the main intention is to contribute to the understanding of some of the specific issues surrounding the reality and persistence of every-day objects, my discussion also touches on issues of general interest, such as the overall plausibility of Kant's system, its proper interpretation, and the fruitfulness of a methodology that takes experience itself as a proper object of study, from which general metaphysical and epistemological conclusions can be drawn. I hope that the result is of interest historically, in providing a self-contained account of what Kant's critical philosophy of empirical objects amounts to, and non-historically, by going some way to providing an ontology and epistemology of objects with respect to their most striking feature, persistence through time, and drawing attention to some of the advantages (and pitfalls) of using a Kantian methodology when tackling issues of this kind.

1.1 The problem

Empirical objects are those things we see, feel, hear and perhaps smell and taste in the world around us, the objects that constitute our every-day sense-experience. It is about these that much or perhaps ultimately all of our ordinary knowledge claims are expressed. Although there could hardly be any more familiar kind of thing to make the object of a philosophical enquiry, empirical objects seem to have a puzzling feature which draws attention to them: they persist through time. Or rather, our ordinary knowledge claims about them seems to require that there are persistent things in the world, and that these things are the things we see, hear and so on; that we perceive. But perception, of which experience is made up, informs us that these things change, and our empirical descriptions of them reflect this other feature of

theirs. So we seem to have that these things at once change and stay the same. How can this be?

1.2 Aims and approach

The above puzzle can be expressed in this way: our knowledge seems to require an ontology of persistent objects, but our experience suggests that our epistemology is going to be in terms of something, perception or perceptions most likely, that is continually in change. If this is so (we could choose a different approach for the epistemology), then how can the ontology and the epistemology be made to work together? Both Hume and Kant have an answer. Hume's answer is really two-in-one: the first denies that it can be done in any rational or properly philosophical way, which amounts to a kind of scepticism, while the second says the ontology and his epistemology (of perception) belong together anyway, but we just don't, and can't, know how. Kant's answer, on my reading of him, is to deny this last rather pessimistic conclusion, and take up where Hume left off to show how it can be done.

There are, in effect, three separate sub-problems that need to be solved, though neither Hume nor Kant addressed only or particularly these to the exclusion of all else. First, are there persistent objects? Second, what are they? Third, how do we know them? Assuming a positive answer to the first question, most recent discussions of the second consider versions of realism such as naïve and scientific. The former kind of realism takes all or most characteristics of objects as perceived (such as colour and taste) to be real, the latter only taking some (those known to science) and attempting a scientific reduction of the others. Recent discussions of the third question have put it in the form of a question whether perception of objects is direct or indirect, indirect perception being of something intermediate between the object or its characteristics and the perceiver (such as a sensory impression or mental image) from which the existence of the object is inferred, direct being of the object itself.[1]

[1] Both the former versions of events are realist, differing in the extent to which the objects which we perceive have real characteristics. Various kinds of anti-realism, such as phenomenalism, reduce persistent independent objects to entities which may be neither persistent nor independent, such as sensations or sense-data, and which answer that objects in the original sense are not perceived at all, either directly or indirectly. See Dancy (1988).

The above three questions as I stated them are specifically in terms of persistent objects; my aim is to address the issues of how objects persist (assuming they do) and how we know that they do as specific kinds of existence of and knowledge about them, of which perception is only part of the story. Recent discussions of these more particular questions distinguish two kinds of persistence. One, usually called 'endurance', has persistent objects (independently of whether they are perceived indirectly, directly or not at all) present in their entirety at each time at which they are present. Thus an enduring object at time t_i is identical with itself at time t_j in virtue of being the same object at each of those times, despite having possibly different empirical characteristics then. In contrast, another type of persistence, 'perdurance', has only (temporal) parts of objects present at each of the times at which the object is persistent; the object then consists in the sum of these parts. Since only part of a perduring object (which may itself perdure) exists at any one time (unless the object is fleeting), we say, rather than that a perduring object at time t_i is identical with itself at time t_j, that what is present at t_i is part of an object another of whose parts (wholly distinct from the first part) is present at t_j.[2]

My approach does not engage with these debates directly, although they inform my discussion of Hume and Kant. For example, it is instructive to consider whether these two philosophers hold that perception is direct, which characteristcs of objects are real, and, in particular, whether persistence must be in terms of either endurance or perdurance. As ontological accounts of persistence, the latter merely assume that objects consist in nothing more than the sum of their parts and thus presents their own epistemological difficulties: in the case of endurance, how things known or perceived to be different are actually identical, and in the case of perdurance, how a determinate object is perceived or known by means of perception of a single temporal part (which could, as far as we know, be the part of any number of perduring objects).[3]

One objective, then, is exegetical and critical: to develop a consistent and plausible version of Kant's account of perception and knowledge of empirical objects, to large extent contrasted with Hume, and as far as is possible with consideration to current issues. A single explicit account of his views specifically on empirical objects is not to be found anywhere in his writings, partly because his aims are so very general, and

[2] See Lewis (1986).

[3] The term 'persistence' is used extensively in the following discussion whenever the issue of endurance versus perdurance is intended to be left as open.

partly because empirical objects play a very general role in his efforts to achieve them. My version of events will be based almost entirely on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which can be found the foundation and bulk of his theoretical philosophy dealing with entities and our knowledge of them, perceptual and otherwise.

Another objective goes beyond exegesis and criticism, and is to consider whether there are considerations, essentially Kantian, which can shed light on issues concerning the persistence and perception of objects and the debates surrounding them. I do not hope to have made very great progress on this front, but rather instead to have contributed to providing a foundation for future work in this direction.

1.3 Overview

The next chapter consists of a discussion of Hume's views concerning the existence of, and our knowledge of, empirical objects. Hume's aims are general, but it turns out that the persistence of objects, or rather, according to Hume, the impossibility of their persistence, plays a key role in establishing his epistemological conclusions. The discussion serves three purposes: (1) It enables me to critically assess one way of articulating sceptical doubt about the possibility of knowledge of empirical objects. Any positive reply (such as the one I attempt to outline in this investigation) to the question about our perception and knowledge of persistent objects must answer this doubt, if it is real. (2) It enables me to assess Kant's rebuttal of Hume's scepticism. With the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant was partly responding to Hume's doubts about our knowledge of an external world, and therefore our knowledge of objects.[4] Although his response unifies aspects of the empiricist tradition, which was Hume's, with the rationalist tradition, in particular as handed down by Leibniz (through Wolff), it is doubt about empirical knowledge that is most relevant to Kant's solution to scepticism. (3) Kant's work is complicated, convoluted and at times obscure. By drawing attention to the similarities and differences of their accounts, the discussion of Hume enhables me to outline more clearly some of the assumptions from which Kant begins, or, more accurately, from which I begin in my restricted interpretation of Kant (i.e., restricted in being of empirical objects only).

[4] Wolff and Hume get very special mentions by Kant at the tail end of the *Critique of Pure Reason* for the importance they play, in his eyes, in the 'History of Pure Reason'.

Hume actually has two forms of scepticism, one general concerned with all knowledge, one special and concerned only with knowledge of empirical objects. I conclude that while Hume's general scepticism is doubtful, his special version is coherent and follows from his assumptions. However, one of his key assumptions is incorrect (that stating that no universals exist), and furthermore his own response to his sceptical conclusion is inadequate as an epistemology. Thus his assumptions must be modified.

Kant provides such a modication, and the subsequent chapter is the awaited discussion of his so-called 'critical' system. Some of his assumptions can be interpreted as modified assumptions of Hume's, and as such are more plausible. (I provide some independent arguments for why this is so.) Furthermore, with some reservations (which are not disastrous), Kant's epistemology is convincing, given his assumptions. It remains unclear, however, how Kant differentiates perceptual from judgmental (propositional) knowledge.

Despite Kant's relative obscurity, Hume's final position is in at least one way actually more unclear than Kant's. Hume provides two different epistemological positions (though essentially using the same ontology, consistent with perduring and enduring objects). This leaves the reader of his work uncertain as to which he himself holds. In particular, he is ambivalent about whether perception is essentially or foremost subjective or objective. Taking it as subjective leads to his scepticism; as objective to his non-explanatory naturalism. Given this condition, it is impossible to decide whether Hume favours direct or indirect perception. Further, I see the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity as crucial if one is to avoid scepticism and provide a successful epistemology: I argue that, through his transcendental method, Kant provides such an epistemology, and one which implies a version of direct perception.

On the other hand, Kant's ontology, which is to say, his account of what exists empirically, is less well developed than Hume's (or at least more unclear). It is apparently compatible with appropriate accounts of both persistence as perdurance or as endurance; that is, accounts of perdurance or endurance can be maintained which are not inconsistent with his results (though for reasons and in ways quite different from Hume's). However, Kant regards objects as indeterminate in an important way: he holds that empirical claims that persistent entities corresponding to perceptual

experiences exist cannot be known to be true or false, even though our propositional knowledge claims about our experiences, whch *appear* to be in terms of persistent objects, can. This suggests that Kant's overall epistemology is best suited to accounts of propositions about the empirical world which do not depend on persist entities for their demonstrable truth.

1.4 A note on terminology

We can certainly show what is meant by 'empirical object' by mentioning or pointing to things like tables, trees, rivers, cities and the bodies of animals, human and non-human. But is it possible to go further and define what is meant in a clear and determinate way? Not really; any explanation of the form "An empirical object is...", if not ostensive, is part of the answer being sought here, and cannot be assumed or stated at the outset. (If it is ostensive, on the other hand, then it is not the right kind of answer, and cannot help us.) Names connote meanings (even if only psychologically), and the choice of name for these objects cannot be made entirely innocently, without regard to the difficulty of providing a definition and the reasons for it. I have chosen the name 'empirical object' following Kant, although he actually uses the name in this exact form comparatively infrequently (and unhappily is not always apparently consistent in his use of terminology generally).[5] In the discussion, I often abbreviate the name to 'object' where the context makes clear that 'empirical object' is intended.

Other choices of modifier could have included such adjectives as 'material' or 'spatiotemporal', for example. However, as appellations the meanings they connote would as likely cloud or distort the issue from the start. We are to be concerned with those objects given immediately in experience, if any objects are, other than the self and other agents (if themselves objects). As far as is possible (and how far is one of the aims of this enquiry to find out) it is assumed that such objects are immediately given (though not necessarily directly), that is, that the experienced world is made up of such objects. Thus the account is supposed to be independent of (or perhaps prior to) scientific explanations of what objects of any kind are, and, included within this category, what our senses are and how they work. For Kant in particular, scientific

[5] Among the examples which are unambiguous are a house (A190-1/B235-6), a ship (A192/B237), a ball and cushion, a glass, and a small body of water (A203–4/B248–9), and a rainbow and of some drops of rain (A45-6/B63). (Please see footnote 94 on page 47.)

explanations are inherently empirical, and his objective is to get beneath the empirical in order to explain it. We also need to be independent of (or at least simultaneous with) philosophical accounts of space and time.[6] By leaving open these accounts, it is intended that the discussion remains uncommitted to the definition of empirical objects beyond the fact that they appear in experience (as everyone knows). That those objects are known to us through the medium of the senses is not something we can properly understand until later in the enquiry, once we have determined what empirical objects are in the required way. It is crucial that Kant be successful in his attempt to be independent of scientific knowledge, because our scientific knowledge of such things as ordinary objects, or the workings of our senses, have changed markedly since Kant's time. Perhaps no such independent account is possible, though it is impossible to determine at this stage.

The term 'empirical', while leaving open as far as possible the range of further explanations about the natures of different kinds of empirical objects, is also intended to omit those kinds of (non-empirical) objects that do not appear in experience; mathematical and logical objects, or geometrical figures, for example. These so-called abstract objects (of any kind, if they exist) are not the subject of this investigation.

It is also possible to consider the choice of terminology from the point of view of language and linguistic reference, too. Here we are restricted to choosing kinds of objects according to the kinds of parts of speech apparently used to make reference to them, such as proper names, definite descriptions, and demonstratives. Proper names and definite descriptions, however, can always be used in ways which are not restricted to picking out empirical objects. Both are capable of naming abstract objects (if they exist and we have knowledge of them). Demonstratives, on the other hand, are used in experience to pick out objects that are immediately present, and in fact are the primary means by which such objects are picked out, although they can be used to pick out symbols for things, too. So we can simply define reference to empirical objects linguistically by stipulating that empirical objects are those kinds of objects which demonstratives pick out, if they pick out anything and only one thing, when they are not picking out a mark for a symbol. It is immediately seen, however, that this definition is parasitic on an account of what experience is, and on how

[6] It is not to be assumed, in any case, that empirical objects are spatial. A rainbow is not spatial, for example, though it is experienced immediately and is the subject of propositions describing the empirical

objects go to make it up and how we know about them, if there is any such account to be had.

It is to one kind of attempt at obtaining such an account that we now turn.

world and our experience of it.

2. Hume: the dissolution of objects in experience

Hume's strategy is to examine experience directly, and he takes this to imply treating the content of experience independently from what experience is about. In one respect an examination of his views provides important historical background to a subsequent examination of Kant, who considered his own views, though strongly opposed, also deeply indebted to Hume. But it is also useful to see how far a purely empiricist account of knowledge of objects can be taken avoiding any assumptions that are not immediately obvious to the introspective philosopher, who, intent on examining the contents of his own experiences, ignores anything that seems beyond the immediate reach of his own subjective state. The title of this chapter is intended to reflect Hume's conclusion, which is essentially that objects are fictions, being nothing more than convenient arrangements of parts of one's own personal and contingently-structured perceptual field.

My aim in this chapter is to examine what Hume thought about the reality and persistence of objects, and so to develop and criticise the Humean account both of what objects are and how we know about them. For Hume, as for Kant (though in different ways), these two questions turn out to be two sides of the same coin. My focus here, as in the subsequent discussion of Kant, is on what objects are, what persistency of objects is, and how we know, if we do, that objects are persistent.

2.1 The subject-first approach

One of the problems of accounting for knowledge of persistent, unified, and independently existent objects from the point of view of an introspective examination of experience, is that it can be hard to see how objects considered in this way are among the items of which experience itself is constituted. By looking into experience and contemplating it itself as it is unto itself, without thinking about anything that is not immediately to be found there, we seem to find that it is available to the subject of the experience only, directly, and that it contains not objects themselves, but other things—impressions, ideas, images, perceptions (call them what you will), which, upon further reflection, seem wholly dependent on an individual mind. We are not *forced* to think of experience in this way, but it is compelling to do so. Experience, it seems, is first and foremost subjective.

In contrast to experience considered in this subjective way, knowledge, on the other hand, is objective. Though I can possess it, it does not belong to me, and can exist without me. It belongs to everybody, in principle at least; and it is the same for all. And yet though there for the taking, knowledge is not self-sufficient. It occupies a halfway position between experience and that which is wholly independent of all experience *and* knowledge. For while knowledge is in principle independent of any particular experience, and anyone's particular experience, it is dependent on the existence of empirical objects.[7] Only the latter are entirely self-sufficient, for they require no experience, and no knowledge. Put in these terms, experience and knowledge seem now very different; one is subjective, the other objective, and both are distinct again from the objects which are experienced and known. How are we to account for these three different kinds of thing?[8]

One approach is to derive knowledge beginning with the subjective, aiming to arrive at what is objective, i.e. at knowledge of a world of objects which is itself independent of experience and knowledge. Why might such a derivation be desirable? One obvious reason concerns the possibility of doubt. Once a distinction has been made between the subjective and objective worlds, as a distinction between two different kinds of thing, it is a small step to doubt the existence of the objective world, or to doubt, if there is one, that it corresponds to the subjective in the way in which it must if the subjective is representative of the objective or gives us access to knowledge of it. Performing the derivation from the subjective to the objective, if successful, would both prove the existence of the objective and reveal its correspondence with the subjective, thus yielding a means by which knowledge could be distinguished from mere error. Taking this approach does not assume that *all* experience is inherently subjective; perhaps some experience is both subjective and objective. Neither does it assume that this is the only way of demonstrating the existence of knowledge; if it is to fail, perhaps there is another. But if successful, it does seem from the outset the most secure, because it does not rely on the assumption that some experience is not just subjective.

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[7] There are obvious exceptions to this maxim as a rule about objects generally; the knowledge that I have toothache, for example, is not independent of my experience, but wholly dependent on it. However, it is true for empirical objects, which are not dependent for their existence on any subjective self.

[8] The term 'experience' is often used ambiguously, and clearly here too it could be read to include knowledge; it can generally be assumed that I restrict the term to mean 'subjective experience, considered apart from the possible, actual or necessary existence of objects.' Deviations from this practice should be clear from the context in which they are found.

Nevertheless, is it not apparent that it is the formulation of this approach which gives rise to the possibility of sceptical doubt? The division of subjective and objective *worlds*, as described above, reveals a crack into which the wedge of scepticism may be driven. And it seems to be this positing of two kinds of world that itself demands a derivation of one from the other. This is true; nevertheless, the division of subjective and objective may not implicate an unavoidable and radical division of worlds (though Hume, as we shall see, construes it in such a way that it does). Secondly, if the derivation from one to the other is successful, then it is an advantage, not a disadvantage. Indeed it would be a very strong one, for it is to utilise only those resources that are not subject to this doubt.

It is to explore these issues that I consider Hume's writings in this chapter. My aim is primarily to prepare the ground for the discussion of Kant, though it is also, secondarily, for its own sake that I wish to clarify some of these issues before discussing Kant's answer to Hume. Kant certainly thought that the derivation Hume attempted, beginning from the subjective data of experience, is both desirable and necessary. He agreed that all knowledge must be obtained entirely from the content of subjective experience, that is, experience considered as it belongs to an individual personally; to me, to you, to himself. But he denied that considering experience in this way excludes what is objective. On the contrary, he considers it to include it essentially; he claims that there are such things as conditions for the possibility of experience, conditions that contain within them the possibility of knowledge *necessarily*. These conditions, though present to a subject, are guaranteed to be present everywhere at all times and in all experience; they thus transcend subjectivity. They are in essence objective; for they are always the same, and always present, no matter *who* is experiencing *what*. By this means Kant maintains a distinction between the subjective and the objective without positing the existence of separate worlds or domains of existence. As we shall see, Hume actually has two approaches to accounting for knowledge of objects; one which divides worlds and leads to scepticism, and one which does not, but which, in the form he gives it, is weaker and much less conclusive. Kant provides an alternative to Hume's scepticism about objects beginning from assumptions that are not so very different from those that lead to the latter's scepticism, but which in other ways is closer to the second approach; it thus attempts to avoid both scepticism and the inherent weaknesses of the second approach.

2.2 Some premises of Hume's account

Hume begins by claiming that the only world of which we can be sure of having immediate and certain access is the world that is presented directly to each of us as it is to us in itself. He is confident of his ability to characterise what this world is like, saying that it consists of 'sensations', 'passions', 'emotions', 'images of thinking and reasoning' and whatnot.[9] All these are subsumed under the title of 'perception'; hence we are to rely only on individual perceptions as they 'strike upon the mind' or 'make their first appearance in the soul'.[10] Experience, then, is constituted wholly of perceptions.

2.2.1 The subjectivity assumption

This is a more sophisticated position than it first appears. Essentially we are being allowed perceptions to be anything which takes our fancy; anything which simply appears, either contrary to our will or conjured up by it, just *as* it appears. Later comments of Hume's clarify that although he uses 'mind' and 'soul' here in a way which seems to make these terms refer to a thing apart from perceptions, this is not what he intends.[11] A mind, for Hume, just is a collection of perceptions.[12] He also discusses a single perception on its own, separated off from the others, as a logical possibility.[13] Could a single perception like that be a mind? What are the criteria for deciding what kind of a collection qualifies as a mind? Which kind of perceptions, and how many? Hume doesn't say, and in fact, he does not have to. It is obviously his contention that awareness or consciousness or whatever you wish to call the quality of 'having perceptions', their 'qualia', is built into the perceptions themselves. We don't know what the empirical criteria are for collections of them being mindful, but it doesn't matter. Perhaps a single perception could be a mind, if not a very long-lasting or interesting one. This is not a hypothesis that is ever going to be empirically tested; it is enough to know (as we surely do) that some collections of perceptions do qualify as minds.

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[9] T1. I prefix page citations from the *Treatise* Hume (1739-40) and the *Enquiry* Hume (1777) with "T" and "E", respectively.
[10] Ibid.
[11] See e.g. T252.
[12] That the mind is often seen as a substance on a par with substances of the external world is a clue that Hume's final position will be that the external world and the objects in it are also nothing more collections of perceptions.
[13] See e.g. T207. There Hume says that a mind is a 'collection of different perceptions united together by different relations.' Hume cannot really mean what he says here; relations are not distinct from

Hume makes this assumption because, unlike in the case of the objective world, he does not want to have to prove the existence of the mind. That is self-evident to him. It is as self-evident that a mind exists as that perceptions exist, and therefore they are on an equal footing from the beginning. But there is an imbalance here. Hume stoutly maintains that there is nothing 'present to the mind' (I will follow his use of this purely rhetorical device) which is not a perception.[14] We can allow the possibility that some perceptions are objective, or none are. Perhaps all of them are. Hume is concerned to avoid relying on any objective perceptions, or anything objective about subjective perceptions, in order to give the derivation of knowledge the soundest footing he can. The imbalance consists in giving perceptions a self-evident subjectivity, while denying them a self-evident objectivity. I call this the 'subjectivity assumption', or 'A_1'.

The assumption is made manifest in Hume's two-fold division of perceptions into impressions and ideas. He admits that his formulation of the distinction leaves a grey area in which it is not really possible to confirm whether perceptions are impressions or ideas;[15] the distinction is conditional just on the force or clarity of the perception.[16] He says by way of further justification that the difference between 'feeling and thinking' will be obvious to everybody who thinks about it.[17] But it is not obvious (at least not to me), and even if it were, it is not clear why this kind of a difference should correspond to the distinction between perceptions according to their force, nor whether perceptions which differ according to force will always conform to the classification as expected. Despite admitting that the distinction amounts only to a difference of degree, the resulting classification suggests a difference of kind. The fact that all perceptions are either impressions or complicated copies of them suggests a Lockean distinction of independent world and dependent mind, with the world the source of impressions, the mind a mass of mere associated semblances. But this is a result, as we will see, which he is most concerned to avoid.

Ayer, in his commentary on Hume, goes further and criticises Hume for defining perceptions as perceptions *of* objects in a way which presupposes the world of objects

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perceptions on his account, since universals do not exist, and all 'general ideas' are just individual perceptions united under a common term. (See discussion on universals beginning on page 17 below.)

[14] T197, T212; cf. T67-8, E168 n.1.

[15] T2.

[16] T3.

in order to give an account of perceptions which are essentially mental.[18] He regards it is a 'logical' fact about impressions (indeed, all perceptions) that they can be regarded as independent objects with no relations to anything beyond themselves, neither minds nor bodies.[19] Ayer thinks Hume should make do with this logical principle, since 'if impressions are to be taken as primitive in the order of knowledge, they cannot be accorded an initial dependence on either mind or body. At this stage neither minds nor bodies enter into the picture.'[20] Despite its obvious desirability, however, it is not at all clear how Hume could make use of just this logical principle, for he wants an account of knowledge of objects, and either these perceptions constitute knowledge or they do not. If they do, then he is simply assuming what he wants to find out; and if they do not, then he has to characterise the difference in such a way as to be useful and provide a means of deriving one from the other.

2.2.2 The simplicity assumption

Another premise of Hume's is that perceptions are particular. Although he makes surprisingly little explicit reference to particular perceptions as such,[21] the premise is implicit in the claim that all that is present to the mind consists in perceptions (and is indicated by the use of a countable noun). What this amounts to is that perception in general consists of parts, and that any part may consist of other parts. This, however, is not really the most general form of the premise, which, as Hume states it, is that perceptions are either simple or complex, and that all complex perceptions are complex by virtue of having parts; therefore (iterating) all complex perceptions are collections of simple parts.[22] I discuss in greater detail below the implications of this assumption for Hume's account of the persistence and independence of empirical objects.[23] For now it is sufficient to remark that this complexity can be spatial, temporal or cross-sensual, noting that not all perceptions have spatial complexity (because not spatial, such as feelings of emotion, certain ideas, and impressions of smell, taste and hearing[24]). Logically, a collection of anything is an individual.

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[17] T1 ff; E15.
[18] Ayer (1980), 24–26.
[19] op. cit., 29-30.
[20] op. cit., 40.
[21] Some examples: 'particular qualities', T16; 'particular ideas', T22; 'particular impressions', T248; 'particular perceptions', T252, 634.
[22] cf. T4.
[23] See page 16.
[24] I am following Hume here; he says that only visible and tangible perceptions have extension (T38). That audible sensations do not have extension is contentious; perhaps there are others as well (prosthetic sense, for example).

Empirically too, the idea of individuality is derived from the self-evident simplicity of simple perceptions, and any collection of parts can be considered or perceived a whole merely by the addition of this idea of simplicity to it. Logically and empirically, for Hume, it follows that all perceptions are individuals.[25] A complex of simple perceptions is on a par with a simple perception just to the extent that it is particular. Thus the general assumption, from which it follows that perceptions are individuals, is that all perceptions are either simple or complex, with complex perceptions being nothing more than collections of simples.[26] I call this the 'simplicity assumption', or 'A_2'.

A further assumption of Hume's *appears* to be that no universals of any kind exist. What we might regard a universal, for example a relation or a sortal concept, he claims is nothing but a collection of particular ideas gathered together under a common term. The formation of what he calls 'general ideas' or 'abstract ideas' occurs by means of association by resemblance, so that common terms do not have constant meaning, but are associated with particular perceptions which in turn are associated by resemblance with other particular perceptions.[27] Although Hume argues as if this principle should follow from the particularity of perceptions, he appeals to introspection, claiming that experience has no content but what is particular, that what we call 'general ideas' have no content beyond what is particular (i.e., that there is nothing we *could* mean by 'red' over and above instances of redness).[28]

If Hume could appeal to nothing more than empirical introspection, his assumption would be no more than a dogmatism. For we can ask, why should no two individual perceptions have any part in common? Take the 'general idea' of circularity, for example. Hume argues it is derived from repeated perceptions that bear some kind of similarity to each other. The name 'circularity' has no constant meaning; rather, on each use we associate with it a particular idea which bears a certain resemblance to other particular ideas (or impressions). Its meaning can be any of those ideas which bear the requisite relation of resemblance to the others. But we could equally well argue that there is some content, call it 'circularity', which is present in some

[25] I discuss below (page 17) whether Hume's account of simplicity is non-circular, given that all universals are supposed to be collections of individuals united under a term.
[26] T1, T2, T4.
[27] T17 ff, E168 n.1.
[28] T17–24.

perceptions and makes them similar to each other. And if this content were present in more than one perception, it would be a universal.

Hence it does not appear that that no universals exists follows from the individuality of perceptions. Assuming that individual incidences of a single universal are not discernible if universals exist, and that the numerical distinctness of individual perceptions is sufficient to discern them, it does follow that universals do not exist. But why should individual instances of a universal not be discernible? Consider the underlying assumption that entails that perceptions are individual, the simplicity assumption. Individual perceptions are either complexes, i.e. collections of simples, or simples. Take a particular universal. If it is a complex, there must be at least two perceptions which have it as a common part, which means that there is at least one simple perception which is a part of two or more perceptions. If the universal is a simple, then it follows immediately that there is at least one simple perception which is the part of two or more perceptions. Therefore if no simple perception is part of two or more perceptions, then no universal exists. Now, Hume's definition of a simple is a perception or a part of a perception that cannot itself be divided into parts. But a universal *can* be divided into parts, for it has as parts the parts which are in common among (two or more) perceptions. Therefore, if universals exist, it must not be the case that perceptions are either simples or complexes of simples, i.e., individuals. Hence numerical discernibility of perceptions is sufficient to establish the non-existence of universals on that assumption (the simplicity assumption).

If, indeed, the simplicity assumption were denied,[29] then there could be perceptions or parts of perceptions that are not collections of simples and not themselves simples. Since a simple is defined as that which cannot be subdivided, such parts would have to be capable of subdivision, i.e. complex. However, since they cannot be complexes of simples, they must be complexes of parts which are in turn capable of subdivision. This leads to an endless regress; such perceptions would be capable of endless subdivision. This is not a vicious regress, however, for presumably one of the constituents of this complex is our candidate for a universal, and a universal is simply defined as that part which two (or more) perceptions have in common, by virtue of which it is the constituent of a complex. The endless regress consists merely in the fact that such a perception can in principle be the common part of an unlimited number of perceptions. So if the simplicity assumption were modified to include

universals, it can be done in such a way as to leave undisturbed the consequence that all perceptions are individuals, for universals are then never themselves perceptions, but *parts* of perceptions. The modification of Hume's simplicity assumption that leads to this result I call the 'complexity assumption', or 'A_2*'. Because of the possibility of making this modification I distinguish the simplicity assumption from the principle that all perceptions are individual, which I call the 'individuality principle'; while the individuality principle does follow from the simplicity assumption, it does not only follow from this assumption (for it also follows from the complexity assumption).[30]

Ayer argues that in Hume's later work the phrasing of the distinction between matters of fact and matters of general ideas points to a partial retraction of his view of general ideas, i.e. of his simplicity assumption. Ayer also points out that Hume's theory of space and time in the *Treatise* (the earlier work) 'clearly falls foul of Zeno's paradoxes.'[31] Russell also argues against Hume's (and thus Berkeley's) view that only individuals exist (to our knowledge). He says that in order to avoid an endless regress in his account of the derivation of 'general ideas' in the *Treatise*, Hume must posit at least one relation, that of general resemblance, which is not itself derived from a perception, but is presupposed.[32] In fact, Hume does admit that all derivation of ideas of relations is dependent on the general relation of resemblance, which could be read as an admission of one kind of universal.[33]

There are strong cases to be made, then, for abandoning the principle that no universals exist, i.e., for modifying the simplicity assumption, and perhaps using the complexity assumption instead. How far would such an admission change the character of Hume's overall theory of knowledge of empirical objects? His empiricism is essentially a refusal to admit that experience has an inherent structure, that is, that there is any pre-determined way in which individual perceptions are

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[29] And I argue below that it *should* be denied; see discussion on unity, page 29, and distinctness, page 32.
[30] This distinction is particularly relevant to later discussions of Kant, who adheres to both the individuality and complexity assumptions.
[31] Ayer, 48.
[32] Without this grounding, argues Russell, any resemblance observed to hold between perceptions will be a particular kind of resemblance, such as resemblance of colour, which (if this 'general idea' is to be accounted for) presupposes a resemblance that this relation of resemblance has to other relations of colour resemblance. Again, this resemblance is not general (but a resemblance of colour resemblances), so generating another step in the regress. See Russell (1956), pp. 111–112. Note that Russell does not define universals in a way which is not consistent with Hume's approach (at least not until 1921), as he says a universal is something that can exist in more than one place at one time, as opposed to a particular which can exist only in one place at one time.
[33] T14.

presented to the mind. Although I do not pursue Ayer's and Russell's lines of thought mentioned above, I do argue (in the following chapter) for not dissimilar reasons that some universals exist, among them unity and something like 'distinctness'. Accepting the existence of some universals might not be reason for abandoning the individuality principle, and it is certainly not reason to abandon the subjectivity premise, but it would be reason to hold that perception and perceptions can and do have an inherent structure.

Accepting that some universals exist does not mean accepting all kinds of universals. Even if Hume did go along with the prior existence of some important relations, such as similarity and others discussed in the section 'On Relations'[34], that does not necessarily mean he would go along with the existence of sortal concepts, which could still be subsumed under the class of 'general ideas'. Incidentally, Hume's empirical argument against the existence of 'general ideas' discussed above is much more plausible in the case of sortal concepts than in the case of relations, and he may have meant the argument to apply only to that kind of universal.[35]

2.2.3 The independence assumption

A further assumption of Hume's is that in principle perceptions are independent of each other. We have already met this assumption when discussing the possibility of a single perception constituting a mind, that by 'separating off' a single perception from all others it can be considered independently on its own.[36] The principle of independence does not follow from either of Hume's other assumptions; in particular, it does not follow from the assumption of individuality. It might have been the case, for example, that the existence of one perception entails the existence of other perceptions, such as a perception of a certain colour entailing the existence of perceptions of other shades or other colours. I call this assumption the 'independence assumption' or A_3, although in what follows I will not have great cause to discuss it in as nearly as much detail as the others.

[34] T13–15.
[35] The section in which Hume discusses sortal concepts is *subsequent* to the section discussing relations of resemblance, identity, the various temporal, spatial and quantitative relations, degrees of quality, and cause and effect.
[36] See page 12 above.

2.2.4 Summary

In summary we have the following assumptions in Hume's account which are relevant to the derivation of knowledge of empirical objects: (A_1) the subjectivity of perceptions is self evident and certain; a mind consists in nothing more than a collection of such perceptions (this assumption does not imply that perceptions are *wholly* subjective); (A_2) perceptions are either simple, which means they cannot be subdivided, or complex, which means they are collections of simples (with the empirically-derived idea of simplicity added). We also have the following principle: (P_1) all perceptions are individual and no universals exist. This principle follows from A_2. Finally, there is the independence assumption: (A_3) the existence or non-existence of any perception entails in principle neither the existence nor non-existence of any other perception.

There is, however, a possible modification of Hume's assumptions which he himself may not have been adverse to, which allows the existence of some universals. The assumption A_1 remains as before, but A_2 is modified thus: (A_2*) perceptions are either simple, which means they cannot be subdivided, or they are complex, which they can. In the latter case, they are composed either of simple perceptions or combinations of simple and non-simple (complex) perceptions or combinations of non-simple (complex) perceptions.[37] This results in a modification to P which follows from A_2*: (P_1*) all perceptions are individual and some universals exist. (Perceptions, however, never consist only of a universal. One of the universals admitted will be unity, as we will see; in that case both simple and complex perceptions have the universal unity as a constituent.[38]) Finally, the assumption A_3 may need to be modified if it turns out that perceptions are not related contingently.[39]

Hume's path to scepticism begins with either one of these two sets of premises and takes two forms: one that considers knowledge of an external world in general, and the other which restricts itself to knowledge of objects of the external world. I argue that the results of these arguments implies the rejection of the first set of assumptions, and, in addition, the modification of A_1 to include self-evident objectivity. I begin with the general sceptical argument.

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[37] The recursive definition is intentional: complex perceptions are never-endingly so. The definition does not rule out the possibility that all perceptions are complex.
[38] See page 29 below.

2.3 The road to scepticism 1: the external world

Hume takes it upon himself (as one of his tasks) to demonstrate the existence of knowledge beginning with the above premises. (I hope the implications of the differences between the two sets of premises will become clearer as we proceed.) Earlier I characterised experience in subjective terms, i.e. in terms of dependence on a subject, knowledge in terms of independence from any particular subject though dependence on both subjects in general and on objects, and objects in terms of independence both from knowledge and from subjects (of experience).[40] If using this as a starting point, then evidently some account of dependence and independence is required. One way of construing dependence on objects is to posit the existence of a relation between perceptions and objects; knowledge minimally consists in the holding of a one-way relation, and is dependent on the existence of a particular object and at least one subject, though not any particular one. I call a one-way type of relation like this 'correspondence'. Independence from subjects in general (objects) can then be construed in terms of existence that is independent of what *exists* subjectively, in other words, in what exists *external to* the subjective. What is then required is a demonstration that subjective perceptions can and do relate to the external world, and an account of the holding of the kind of relation, in particular, which is sufficient for knowledge. Hume's general scepticism amounts to an argument that this task cannot succeed.

Characterising knowledge in terms of an external world and relations between the external and internal worlds is not the only way to do it, as we shall see; it is, however, the only way in which Hume thinks knowledge can be accounted for using rational methods.

2.3.1 The general empirical argument

There are two forms of the argument, one empirical and one logical. I discuss the empirical argument first, as it is the more straightforward. It proceeds by generalising doubt (variously a concept, process, procedure or feeling, which the logical argument does not mention or use) as something which in principle can be applied to any perception. (It turns out that for Hume it is a feeling.) In conformity with Hume's

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[39] As is the case with Kant. Note that in the following discussion, citing assumption A_i/A^*_j indicates intended neutrality to whether the unmodified or modified version of the assumption is used.

[40] See discussion on page 10 above.

thorough-going empiricism, it is based upon the supposed empirical fact of experience, that when we examine experience introspectively, we discover that belief, even of something quite abstract and logical such as a mathematical truth, is nothing but a special kind of feeling.[41] Like all perceptions, this feeling is particular, though it bears a similarity to other perceptions.[42] It may then simply be doubted whether this feeling provides a reliable indication of truth, irrespective of the kind of occasion of its manifestation. Hume concludes that any means of truth-showing at our disposal, even reason, is in principle susceptible to the doubt that requires verification of truth in the first place.[43]

The argument is as weak as its weakest premise, essentially that doubt is all-pervading. (Hume's attitude is that feeling gets in the way of truth.) But perhaps Hume is not unconditionally committed to this argument. Ayer, following Kemp Smith[44], says that for Hume reason does 'hold sway', i.e., without the possibility of sceptical doubt, 'in the limited field of what we now call purely formal questions'.[45] In the *Treatise* there is little evidence of this interpretation; Hume says, for example, that all knowledge, including mathematical, is only to a degree probable, depending on in how many past instances it has been observed to hold (by which he must mean, of course, similar sets of perceptions in similar networks of relations). In the *Enquiry* the textual evidence is somewhat more ambiguous. In any case, even if Ayer is right, it is not clear that certainty on 'purely formal questions', which I call the 'weak form' of the argument, would make any difference about knowledge of an external world. Making certain formal knowledge certain amounts to denying that it depends upon empirical confirmation, that there is, in effect, knowledge which is not empirical, and which is not susceptible to Hume's all-pervading doubt; knowledge which *is* empirical will still then be susceptible to this doubt. Hume is hardly going to argue that reason, proceeding on the strength of the certainty of the formal, can prove the existence of external objects. A solipsist can do logic quite happily.

Constructive response to this argument is difficult. It denies the existence of Descartes' 'clear and distinct perceptions', in fact, not in principle, so it may merely be denied. It doesn't seem that holding this view is *more* plausible than denying it, in

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[41] T631.

[42] It is this relation of similarity which Russell demands Hume to admit as a primitive relation, a universal. (See page 17 above, note 32.)

[43] E162-3.

[44] Kemp Smith (1941).

fact, quite the reverse. As it stands, the principle of doubt is so general as to doubt even itself, so that we get nowhere. On the other hand, its one strength is that it does *not* depend on any formulation of what knowledge is that is to be doubted in the first place; it is independent, in other words, of the formulation in terms of internal and external worlds and relations between them. Other than that, however, I do not think that there is very much to be said for it.

2.3.2 The general logical argument

As I will render it, the logical argument has two versions, only one of which Hume takes into consideration. It proceeds on assumption A_2/A_2* and principle P_1/P_1* of the last section: that the only available perceptions are inherently subjective, i.e., that they belong to a subject, and that nothing is present to the mind (the subject) but individual perceptions. If knowledge exists, it follows that there must be some perceptions (*a*) which reveal the relation that some perceptions (*b*) with a world that is distinct from perceptions (*b*), that is, from the subject which perceives. In one kind of case, perceptions (*a*) and (*b*) are distinct; in the other, they are identical.

Knowledge, it will be remembered (from the previous section), consists (for Hume) in a relation that perceptions have to something distinct from them; this is what is means to say that we have perceptions *of* an external object. Let us call a perception veridical when it has this relation; relations being subjective, it is not necessary that they all do, and even if a perception has a relation, it may not be one of the required type.[46] In the first case, it is clear that the demand set forth by this construal of knowledge cannot be met, even if, unbeknownst to us, there is such a relation. Any perception of the relation that some other perception has itself requires a relation to what it is a perception of. So if perceptions (*a*) are perceptions of something about perceptions (*b*), that they are related in a certain way to the external world, then there must be a further set of perceptions (*c*) which are perceptions of the relation that perceptions (*a*) have to the relations that (*b*) have to the external world. There is no possibility of choosing a perception that does not immediately introduce a new relation and the demand for a perception of it, which generates an endless (and vicious) regress. There is no possibility, in other words, of choosing a perception

[45] Ayer, 19.

[46] Hume says nothing about language and the veridicality of statements, so we are restricted to considering the veridicality of perceptions. Note that we have not considered yet what kind of a relation qualifies as knowledge, but the principle of construing knowledge in terms of relations to an external world at all.

without the need for the verification of its veridicality, which introduces another perception, and so on.

In the second case, however, the story is rather different. If perceptions (*a*) and (*b*) are *the very same* perceptions, then a perception of this type could, in principle, be either a perception of an object or a perception of the relation that another perception has to an object of the external world, which either puts a stop to the regress of the previous case, or itself provides an example of the knowledge we are looking for. Hume does not consider the possibility of this kind of perception when tracing his path to scepticism. Why not? One reason might be that he is committed to the possibility of doubt, and it does not appear if such a perception can doubted. However, this is wrong-headed, for a doubt about this perception would be another perception—and one that is not veridical. In any case, perhaps, unlike Hume, this argument is not committed to the possibility of doubt (which is itself a doubtful principle). Another reason is the suggestion that the logical possibility of perceptions of this type, which is to say both subjective and objective, does not suggest there are any, and the demonstration of the existence of knowledge can only make use of resources which are available (such as perceptions which are subjective). Any demonstration of the existence of this kind of perception would seem to be empirical, not rational. So we do not here have reasons for concluding that there is any knowledge, just that there might be, which is not really very far along the road from where we started. It does for the moment show, at least, that scepticism is not an unavoidable result, given the assumptions.

There is a far better reason, however, from Hume's point of view, for ignoring the possibility of equating perceptions which are subjective with perceptions which are objective. (This is not to equate subjectivity with objectivity, but to deny their mutual exclusivity.) The distinction of internal and external worlds suggests that perceptions or parts of perceptions which are subjective are of the internal world, and that anything else belongs to an external world. Anything in the external world is not subjective (it is independent of anything in the internal world), and so is not available to the account, which is to make use only of what is subjective. This is true for all perceptions, and so is insensitive to the distinction of perceptions into type (*a*) and (*b*) above. It effectively denies that there is any kind of perceptions of the second case. But this denial is a dogmatic rather then sceptical position, and so is not in keeping with Hume's avowed approach.

I mentioned that the internal/external distinction is only *one* way to construe the subjective/objective distinction. Hume is wrong to assume that the internal/external division is the only kind of subjective/objective distinction available for a rational account, if scepticism is to be avoided. Indeed, as I discuss later, in effect he took the second option in his 'non-rational'[47] reaction to the sceptical conclusion, but, having distanced himself from the effectiveness of the rational method, prevented himself from developing it into a proper theory of knowledge.[48]

In the 'strong form' of the argument, which has all perceptions within its compass (not just as in the weak form those perceptions that do not constitute formal reasoning), Hume claims that the conclusion, that all claims to knowledge are open to a demand for verification that cannot in principle be eliminated, is so strong as to prevent further reasoning. Once this conclusion is reached, reasoning becomes superfluous. It requires a standard for certainty of knowledge that it itself undermines. (In the weak form of the argument the uncertainty will only irredeemably undermine empirical beliefs, but that is sufficient for our purposes.) Hume emphasises that even when directly faced with unavoidable uncertainty about our beliefs we do not, in the normal course of things, abandon our claims to knowledge. Why not? Much of Hume's commentary in the context of uncertainty calls upon our pervading interest in ordinary everyday affairs and its insusceptibility to being disturbed by abstract argument, especially the sceptical argument.[49] Customary practice and habit provide an order and coherence to our experience; they are unjustifiable by rational argument, but that in itself is insufficient reason to abandon them.

Indeed, thinks Hume, we do not have a choice here; even if we wanted to abandon our habits of thinking and acting in favour of accepting the conclusion of the sceptical argument, we are not able to. That is not to say that habit and custom and whatever else but reason is actually able to *refute* the sceptical argument, which he continues to claim is sound (soundness being a rational criterion). No; it is that we are guided rather more forcefully by the *exoteric* patterns of activity that comprise everyday life than by *esoteric* products of the rational mind—the more so when they run counter to

[47] Though not irrational.
[48] If he had been able to consider persistence in some other way than endurance, he may not have abandoned the rational method so quickly. I return to the issue of distinguishing subjectivity from objectivity later in this chapter (in §2.6; see page 41).
[49] T187; cf. T218, T636.

one another. It is not a real choice, the choice of scepticism or 'everything else'. So he concludes that those philosophers who profess scepticism are either intellectually dishonest or deceiving themselves.[50] To claim to follow scepticism is merely a rhetorical device at best, an empty play of words at worst.

So Hume holds to the soundness of the sceptical argument but at the same time maintains that it is absurd to accept its conclusion (it is only slightly less absurd in the case of the weak form). It's an odd choice; given the option of abandoning the rational argument, or of modifying his empiricist assumptions, Hume chooses the former, and this means he gives up *any* attempt to found knowledge on a rational basis. Instead, he goes back to what I refer to as the 'exoteric' view, which is based on the 'common' or 'vulgar' view, taken for granted, that perceptions *are* objects. I discuss the merits and demerits of this response of Hume's to the threat of scepticism in a later section.[51] First, however, it is necessary to examine the argument as it pertains to a particular type of knowledge, that of empirical objects: Hume's explanation of the process by which what he considers to be the rational, what I call the 'esoteric', view of objects arises, and how that leads to scepticism about knowledge of empirical objects.

2.4 The road to scepticism 2: empirical objects

The general sceptical argument, even in its weak form, embraces scepticism about knowledge of empirical objects; indeed, about anything that is considered apart from what is purely subjective in experience. Nevertheless, Hume has a more detailed analysis that both purports to explain the origins of beliefs in empirical objects and, along similar lines to the general argument, purports to show why those beliefs cannot ever be known to be true. However, by 'beliefs about empirical objects' Hume does not mean our ordinary empirical knowledge claims ('Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander the Great'), but a certain kind of esoteric philosophical claim about what those kinds of knowledge claims imply. In fact ordinary knowledge claims concerning empirical objects are *not* under threat from this more specific version of scepticism *unless* those claims are held to depend on the demonstrable truth of the

[50] T183.

[51] Essentially it is an implicit way of allowing perceptions to be both subjective and objective, which is the key to surmounting sceptical doubt. See §2.5, from page 38.)

esoteric beliefs. (Clearly Hume holds they are not, as his final exoteric position indicates.)

The exoteric view, what Hume characterises as the 'vulgar' view, which has not had the questionable 'benefit' of philosophical sophistication,[52] simply makes no distinction between objects and perceptions. He thinks that any philosophical or rational reflection on the matter of what objects are inexorably leads from the exoteric to the esoteric view, thus giving the internal/external division of worlds an essential role. He thinks that two characteristics of objects in particular mark them off as distinct from perceptions: '[w]e ought to examine apart these two questions, which are commonly confounded together, *viz.* Why we attribute a CONTINU'D existence to objects, even when the are not present to the senses; and why we suppose them to have an existence DISTINCT from the mind and perception.'[53] Clearly Hume considers persistence or continuance to mean *endurance*;[54] he wants to explain how it is that we have a perception at one moment, for example, of a person sitting down, and then a perception at another moment, of a person standing up, and attribute to these distinct perceptions the identity of being the same object.

This puzzle about identity is the key to understanding Hume's reasons for adhering to the sceptical consequence of reflecting on our knowledge. After arriving at his general sceptical position, which (in either form), as I contend, is not very convincing, he sees his task not the justification of our beliefs in an external world, but the explanation of how they are possible, given his assumptions. The aim is to show that despite such beliefs being rationally unjustifiable, they are nevertheless coherent. Hume admits that there is something to the claim about the existence of objects of an external world; it does not just follow from his sceptical argument (supposing it were sound) that statements referring to an external world are meaningless. To show why the claim has no meaning would be difficult, for it would require having some general criteria for meaningfulness and an explanation as to why statements of this type (that refer to external worlds) do not satisfy them. The fact that the external world is not *known* to exist is insufficient, for this does not show that the world does *not* exist, and even if it did, *that* would not make the claims meaningless (Alice's world through the looking glass does not exist either). It is far from obvious that such criteria and such

[52] e.g., see T193.
[53] T188.
[54] In the discussion of Hume, whenever I use the term 'persistence' or 'endurance', I take it to correspond to Hume's version of 'continuance' or 'continued existence'.

an explanation are to be found in Hume's premises (which led to his scepticism), or follow from them.[55]

As perhaps seen from the above quote, Hume's strategy is one of analysis: it is to separate out the ideas inherent in the idea of an object of the external world, and then to show where these ideas come from. Hume mentions endurance (continued existence), distinctness from perceptions (independence), and the correspondence relation between external objects and perceptions being causal. There is also a fourth idea which can (though not must) be associated with the combination of these three: the simplicity or complexity (though not both together) of a perception. I now move on to a discussion Hume's treatment of these four ideas.

2.4.1 On perceptions and persistence

Hume claims that the idea of endurance is derived in a straight-forward way from the idea of unity, with the idea of unity being derived directly from the actual unity of perceptions. These last, both simple and complex, are individual; they have an empirical unity. The idea of this unity is simply copied from (simple or complex) impressions, fleeting ones or ones that endure for a short period (as they sometimes do). Thus *self-identity* is nothing more than unity, derived empirically. Since some impressions are non-fleeting, this idea can come to have persistence associated with it, i.e. this very self-identity at two different (though consecutive) times. Hume says that this idea is then essentially *mis*-applied to different impressions, though ones which are very similar; it comes to be associated with series of impressions, or (less directly) ideas of impressions. Ideas of this sort (associated by similarity) are grouped under the 'general idea' of *identity*.[56] A further step is then to associate this idea with series of continuously varying impressions, or even discontinuously varying impressions,[57] and from there to networks of diverse impressions existent at various times. The idea of endurance is then nothing more than the idea of identity through

[55] Although Hume sometimes asserts that beliefs in an external world are 'unintelligible' or 'incomprehensible' (e.g. T222), I maintain that what he means is that such beliefs are in principle unverifiable and that it is any justification of them that is unintelligible (lacking a possible reference); far from denying that there is any content to these ideas, he provides an explanation exactly of what this content is, as I show in the following three subsections. I do take it that Hume is unjustified if he means to say that in principle such beliefs cannot be about what they purport to be about, a point I also discuss later. Hume needs to be open to the eternal possibility that our beliefs about empirical objects, or some of them at any rate, are in fact true. If this possibility is a real one, our knowledge claims cannot in general be meaningless.

[56] e.g., see T200.

[57] T253–4.

time, i.e., the identity of the unity of perceptions at different times, derived empirically.[58]

All well and good. But Hume goes further; he claims that it is contradictory to hold the relation of identity between individual perceptions which are unalike, so that this idea of endurance, when held of perceptions, is self-contradictory. Hume's argument has a spatial analogue. Just as it is incorrect to identify the unity of two spatially distinct perceptions existent at the same time, of a spade and a bucket for example, it is incorrect to identify the unities of two temporally distinct perceptions, *even if* they are not spatially distinct—the spade viewed from two different angles, or the spade with and without a scratch, for example.

The first problem with this account is that it is not entirely clear whether Hume construes persistence as the identification of diverse perceptions at different times as a unity, or the identification of the unity of numerically distinct perceptions. If we take the first of these two interpretations, that numerically distinct impressions are not identical is analytic follows from the individuality principle, whether the impressions are existent at different times or not. So if persistence is taken as endurance, and endurance is defined in terms of the identity of perceptions at different times, Hume is right to say, from A_2/A_2*, that persistence of perceptions is self-contradictory *unless* the perceptions are numerically identical. However, if persistence is taken as perdurance, this contradiction is avoided. Persistence (as perdurance) is still defined in terms of unity, but it is the unity of various perceptions existent at different times, exactly analogous to the spatial and cross-sensual unity of complex perceptions. It too has its spatial analogue. The perceptions of the spade and the bucket can be regarded as parts of the same object (a spade-bucket complex);[59] likewise, the perceptions of the spade as viewed from different angles or the perceptions with and without the scratch can be regarded as temporal parts of a temporally complex spade-whole. Because it is analogous with the spatial application of the idea of unity, this is actually a more natural application of the idea. We could rephrase the first of the above two interpretations, saying that persistence as perdurance is defined as the identification of diverse perceptions as parts of the same unity, which is not self-contradictory.

[58] In a moment I come to an ambiguity in this formulation.
[59] Or more likely, the handle and the blade of the spade, etc.

Now take the second of the two interpretations, which is persistence as the identification of the unity of perceptions (not the perceptions themselves). Unity on Hume's account is a 'general idea', and the identity of a general idea with itself is just the recognition of a *resemblance* between various particular perceptions, subsumed under a general term (since that is what a general idea is). So there is no contradiction here, and persistence *can* be read without contradiction as endurance, if the enduring 'entity' is the unity of certain perceptions, not the perceptions themselves.

So on persistence either as endurance or perdurance (though endurance is Hume's concern), there is a reading of his account that is consistent, and he need not conclude that the persistence of perceptions is itself contradictory.

The second problem concerns the universality and mereological status of the idea of unity. If unity is not a universal (as Hume claims) then the word 'unity' must be the name for a host of similar individual ideas, as we just saw. Any one of these ideas is derived empirically from a certain impression. Take one of these ideas. Is it a complex or a simple? If a simple, then it must correspond to a simple impression. But which impression? Any impression that is a unity (any impression, that is) is already something more than a mere unity; it is a patch of colour, or a momentary sound, or some other simple perception. If unity is something which can be directly copied from an impression, the impression concerned must not, then, be a simple after all, for it must consist in whatever the impression is that directly corresponds to the idea of unity, with added empirical content such as colour, shape and so on. But this would mean that simples are not unified, only complexes are, which is contrary to assumption A_2/A_2*. Therefore (retracing steps) any idea of unity must be a complex. So it is a collection of simple ideas. But which ideas? A simple idea must be derived from a simple impression, but a simple impression already comprises a unity, so any attempt at a derivation puts us straight back on the other horn of the dilemma. We have to reject the assumption (from the start) that 'unity' is a name for individual ideas associated by similarity, and admit unity as a universal.

The heart of the problem is that simple perceptions are *defined* as those which cannot be subdivided, and this raises the question of how Hume can non-circularly make use of the idea of unity in the definition of what a simple perception is. Stroud raises a similar concern when he worries that Hume must presuppose a 'general idea' of

endurance in order to explain the way it is derived from individual impressions.[60] The presupposition can be easily explained and is quite unproblematic if unity is a universal.

The criticism just outlined bears a resemblance to Russell's contention that Hume's assumption A_2 cannot be stated without assuming the universal of similarity, as identity is similarity on Hume's account (as we saw above). Russell holds that a general relation of similarity must be assumed when comparing perceptions, and this hinges on the premise that two perceptions cannot be initially compared on the most general relation of similarity, which would otherwise establish it, but similarity of some specific type such as colour or shape, which leads to an endless regress.[61] Russell's argument is imperfect as it stands, because he does not argue that two impressions cannot ever be compared on a perfectly general relation of similarity, but merely assumes this as a premise. He needs to argue it, as it can be retorted that two simple perceptions can be compared on the basis of similarity in general (as a particular idea), since simple impressions cannot be divided and cannot therefore yield more than one characteristic upon which comparison can proceed. However, deriving the idea of similarity in general from the empirical comparison of two (simple) perceptions is just to have the idea of the unity of diverse perceptions, which leads to the argument I outlined earlier. Thus Russell's conclusion does hold.

How does construing unity as a universal, as I argue it should be construed, affect the two interpretations of Hume's derivation of the idea of persistence? Here we have to distinguish two different things which may be intended in the use of the word 'unity'. One is the universal unity which is a constituent of individual perceptions (simple and complex), which I have argued is entailed by Hume's premises. The other is the individual empirical idea of the unity of some complex perception which is empirically derived from it, which is the idea Hume intends the word 'unity' to *always* mean. The unity of the perception of the spade and the unity of perception of the bucket which I mentioned earlier are two such different individual ideas. (The universal unity contained within them is the same in each case. The above argument for the existence of the universal is essentially that this empirical idea presupposes the universal.) If persistence is read as perdurance, then persistence is unity the universal which is a constituent of the temporal complex of various perceptions. If persistence

[60] Stroud, pp. 103-6, 110.
[61] See p. 17 above, note 32.

is read as endurance, then persistence is the self-identity of the *idea* of unity which is taken to consist (according to Hume, inconsistently) in the resemblance of a number of individual ideas of the unities of individual perceptions. Note that assumption A_2*, which admits the existence of some universals, will have to admit the universal of unity. In that case simple and, notably, complex perceptions will have this universal as a constituent, unlike in the case of complex perceptions on assumption A_2, which have the empirically-derived idea of unity added.

That unity a universal exists might not have upset Hume's derivation of the idea of an empirical object, but that he is wrong to ascribe contradictoriness to the persistence of diverse perceptions does. As we will now see, without this contradiction, he loses the only reason he had for arguing that the division of worlds into internal and external is essential to the esoteric account of empirical objects.

2.4.2 On distinctness from perceptions

Earlier I examined Hume's contention that endurance of perceptions is self-contradictory. He goes further in his explanation of the origin of the idea of existence distinct from perceptions, and actually claims that the mind 'sees' the contradiction inherent in identifying diverse perceptions and that it takes avoiding action: by positing the existence of something (as yet undetermined) which is the thing that *really* endures, the contradiction is eliminated. What remains is the endurance of some thing which is distinct from perceptions, and which corresponds to the perceptions to which the esotericists, in this half-knowing way, attribute identity corresponding to the diverse perceptions. The necessity of avoiding the contradiction is the ground for introducing the internal/external world distinction to the account. Before going on to ask how it is that Hume accounts for the relationship of correspondence which is to link the worlds, it is well to consider the steps taken here.

First, although Hume makes no attempt to account for how the idea of distinctness that is used is derived, it is in keeping with his empiricism that he should. How could he? One way would be to say that it is simply the distinctness that diverse perceptions have; indeed, this is the only way, for, given his premises, there simply are no other things around, and so no other things that could be distinct from each other. However, to equate the kind of distinctness that a perception has from another perception with a distinctness from perceptions in general is to conflate two different

kinds of distinctness. To avoid this charge, one might reply that something that is distinct from perceptions might just be conceived as an unperceived perception, therefore not different in kind. But whether a perception is perceived or not (on Hume's view) is a contingent fact; it *might* after all have been perceived, had things turned out differently. But the distinctness from perceptions in general is necessary, and we need only characterise the necessity in the Kripkean sense (rather than in some 'stronger' sense) that there is no possible world in which it could ever be perceived; that the external world is exactly this kind of world is the result we want, and is already too strong an idea of distinctness to be got from the empirical notion, because there *is* always a possible world in which it is perceived, as proved by our imagining it (on Hume's assumptions). But since the external world cannot in principle be perceived (thus also not imagined), the idea of distinctness that it entails cannot be derived empirically from perceptions.

Second, there is the question of the empirical distinctness that individual perceptions do have, independent of the question of the distinctness of the external world. Can this really be a 'general idea'? Distinctness of perceptions (from each other) is the counterpart to the unity of perceptions (in themselves). Along similar lines to the argument that assumption A_2 entails that there is a universal unity, even though this unity is not ever itself an individual perception, but always a constituent of them, I argue that distinctness of perceptions is a universal, even though itself never an individual perception. The main point is that a particular idea of distinctness cannot be a simple, as Hume needs it to be (as in the case of a particular idea of unity), because the idea of distinctness is always the distinctness of something (implied by its being an empirical idea) and thus is a complex containing at least two perceptions that are distinct. But it cannot be a complex containing *only* these two perceptions, otherwise it would simply be a complex of two perceptions, rather than the complex which is the idea of the distinctness of two perceptions. The content that is not either of these two perceptions must itself be a perception (there being nothing other than simple and complex perceptions available) and is thus distinct from them. But how can this perception be distinct from the others without presupposing distinctness? If this distinctness is another 'general idea' then an endless regress is generated, which is vicious because it never results in the complete derivation of an idea of distinctness. Therefore distinctness is not an individual idea, but a condition and constituent of complexes; a universal. This is not to say that there cannot be an empirical and

particular idea of distinctness, which is a particular distinctness that two or more particular perceptions have.

The main point of relevance here is that neither of these two meanings of the word 'distinctness', the universal and the empirically derived, is a candidate for the distinctness of the internal and external. This means that Hume has lost the empirical basis upon which the internal/external distinction was to be phrased, on either his original assumptions *or* the modified ones. Further, while the distinctness of perceptions from each other is entailed by the particularity principle, the independence of perceptions from each other is not implied by either assumption A_1/A_1* or the particularity principle. This suggests that the term 'independence', if applied to the external world, implies a different kind of relationship from mere distinctness, and perhaps one which could have have an empirical ground.

2.4.3 On correspondence with perceptions

Having argued that the endurance of empirical objects on the esoteric view implies the existence of enduring things in an external world, Hume must account for the relationship that the external world, on this view, is to have with perceptions.

Perhaps there are many different ways of construing this relationship, but Hume considers only one, the most obvious one, which is the relation of cause and effect; that is, the relation that is thought, because of the repeated conjunction of similar pairs of perceptions, to hold between one perception that is a cause and another which is its effect.[62] Hume says that this relation springs to mind because we tend to think things in the external world ought to resemble the perceptions, just as causes resemble their effects.[63] It is natural to equate these two kinds of resemblance, so that an object in the external world is thought to be the cause of some perception which is its effect on the mind or subject of experience.

It is true that it is natural to think of the relationship in terms of cause and effect, but Hume's reasons for this are not very persuasive. Though resemblance does play a part in the empirical derivation of the idea of causation, it is not the resemblance of perceptions to each other, but the resemblance of repeated perception pairs to each

[62] In fact, when speaking of individual perceptions, there are three implicated by the cause-effect relation, for an effect consists of a change, i.e. two perceptions. This point becomes of special importance later, in the discussion of Kant's version of the cause-effect relation.

other; i.e. the resemblance of a number of perceptions to each other, each of which is generally followed by an equal number of other perceptions which are also all similar to each other. This is the similarity conveyed by the maxim 'like causes produce like effects'.

What other kind of similarity could Hume mean? Empirical resemblances that perceptions have to each other—resemblances of colour, shape, size and so on—are not the kind of resemblance that is relevant to the perceived relation of causation that holds between them. What kind of similarity does the expansion of a balloon have to the breath that makes it expand and to the child who is blowing into it, for example? Perceptions which are causes and effects are as likely to be dissimilar to each other as similar.

What about more general similarity, the similarity perceptions have by virtue of being perceptions of objects, being temporal and spatial, for example? This is a little more promising, but it isn't clear why such an idea of resemblance would be attributed to the external and the internal, so to suggest that they also have the relation of cause and effect. Neither is it clear, even if it were the case that perceptions of cause and effect were *always* also spatial and temporal (which is not the case, at least for spatial characteristics on Hume's account), why other spatial and temporal resemblance would *also* be causal. Hume's account of the resemblance which is supposed to play this role for the external and internal worlds is really quite obscure. It is more plausible that objects of the external world are often considered as causes of perceptions because there is simply no other kind of relation available which could account for the *dependence* of perceptions on the external world.

Nevertheless, the result of Hume's consideration of the relationship that perceptions have with the external world is insensitive to whether the relationship is conceived in causal terms or some other. For whatever the relation is, it must be conceived in some way which can be shown to be derived from perceptions on Hume's premises. Unlike the cause and effect relation, in which both relata are perceptions,[64] the 'cause' of perceptions is in general by definition unperceivable, and this remains true whatever kind of relation is chosen. Thus the supposed correspondence between the internal and external worlds can never be verified empirically, because no relation of

[63] T216–17.
[64] Note the disclaimer in note 62.

any kind can be shown to hold between them. (It is thus at least as likely that the external 'causes' of perceptions are as unlike perceptions as it is possible to get as that they are similar.) We have here, finally, Hume's special sceptical argument about knowledge of empirical objects; an object is an entity which is distinct from perceptions, but the relation this object has with perceptions, which is necessary to verify their veridicality to the object, can never in principle be observed.

In the case of the general sceptical argument, the formulation I discussed required the verification of subjective perceptions. I questioned whether the only means to do so is the introduction of another perception, which also requires verification, instead considering the possibility of perceptions which are at once both subjective and objective.[65] This latter form of response to the above formulation of the special argument is not available, because Hume has drawn us into positing internal and external worlds as distinct—at least as distinct as individual perceptions are from each other—and thus the existence of some relation which can verify the correspondence of the one to the other. It is thus Hume's distinction of internal and external which leads him to neglect the possibility of the response.

Further, Hume's reasons for introducing the external world are questionable. He himself seems to realise this, but does not go so far as to recognise that if there are no terms in which an external world can be formulated, then there is no basis to his sceptical argument.[66] For his premises entail that we not only reject his distinction between the internal and the external, with its consequence that verifying a perception consists in something other than positing an external world to which it corresponds, but that we find some other account which is consistent with them. I mentioned an alternative in the last section, when I distinguished Hume's distinctness (from perceptions) from independence (from what is subjective about perceptions). By considering objects in terms of independence, the possibility of objective (non-dependent) content in perceptions which are *also* subjective is made available. I

[65] See §2.3.2 above, page 22.

[66] Seeming to admit that his characterisation of the external world is not legitimate, he says: 'Let us chace our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive of any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appear'd in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produc'd.' This does not prevent him from considering the idea of external objects coherent; he then substitutes the poetic for a matter-of-fact tone and says: 'The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when suppos'd *specifically* different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects. Generally speaking we do not suppose them specifically different; but only attribute to them different relations, connexions, and durations.' (T67–68)

mention this for the moment as a possible way of characterising the subjective/objective distinction (to be elaborated later [67]) which avoids the internal/external distinction and which thus also avoids Hume's scepticism.

2.4.4 Further characteristics of perceptions: simplicity and complexity

By explaining the origination of belief in the endurance and independent existence of objects on assumptions A_1 and A_2/A_2*, Hume at the same time provides an account of identity statements—they are about enduring entities that are external to perceptions—and shows why such a belief is impossible to justify, *if* objects are indeed those entities that are external to perceptions. I have claimed, however, not just that it does not follow from Hume's assumptions that objects must be construed in terms of *externality to perceptions*, but that his assumptions entail some subjective/objective distinction which is *not* this one. Note that a sceptical result plays only a secondary role in this demand, for we can reject the internal/external distinction before getting to the sceptical conclusion that follows from it.[68]

The combined ideas of distinctness and endurance provide the basis for the esoteric idea of an object on Hume's characterisation, to which I will refer as an 'external object' (in discussing Hume). The object is wholly external, while perceptions, being subjective, are internal (at least to the extent that they are subjective). That an external object requires a relation to perceptions is clear, or else it could not be perceived. The relation of causality is perhaps not the only candidate, but it is likely the only conceivable one; or so Hume assumes, and justifies his assumption with a (questionable) empirical derivation of causality used in this way. So far, there has been no mention whether this external object, which is conceived by Hume on the basis of ideas derived empirically from impressions, can have *other* empirically-derived characteristics. There seems no reason in principle why not; going along with Hume, if the empirical derivability of endurance, distinctness, and causativity [69] are coherent ideas which are themselves parts of the idea of an external object, there is at

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[67] See §2.6 below, page 41.

[68] Whether we *must* or whether we can depends on whether we simply reject Hume's implicit empirical derivation of distinctness of the external from the internal or substitute an a priori causativity and presupposed distinctness in its place. Note that Hume does not attempt to actually provide an empirical derivation of distinctness, and presumably for this reason misses this weak link in his argument to scepticism.

[69] I use the word 'causativity' for the idea in Hume which corresponds to what I translate as 'efficacy' (*Kraft*) in Kant. See §3.6.4 below, page 96, in particular comment (a) on page 97.

least the possibility of the complex idea of an external object having other idea-parts which are empirically derived.

One which suggests itself immediately is simplicity, and so, of course, its opposite, complexity. Unlike the ideas of endurance and distinctness, it is not required for the attempt at accounting for our knowledge that the question of the simplicity or complexity of an external object is considered; i.e. whether the idea of simplicity or the idea of complexity is to be added to the hereto-derived triad of ideas. But there is no reason why we cannot add one of these two ideas (but not both) to make a tetrad. Both complexity and simplicity can be derived empirically in exactly analogous ways to the ideas of distinctness and endurance. Though Hume would deny the usefulness of this new idea, for the reasons already considered in the case of the other sub-ideas, he could not deny its coherence.

In fact, he does briefly discuss the idea of a simple external object, and calls it a 'substance' in the classical sense. [70] A simple external object implies an ontological simplicity which is to be contrasted with the epistemological complexity of the incessantly changing mass of mostly fleeting perceptions. It provides a way of explaining the order and cohesiveness which they nevertheless have, enabling the use of a single name by means of which the various and diverse impressions and ideas associated together across different times, places, and senses can appear unified.[71]

Hume also discusses the counterpart of a substance, a complex external object. Although he does not mention it explicitly as such, it makes an appearance in his account when he discusses the primary/secondary distinction of qualities. He dismisses the possibility of knowing of objects which have primary qualities for exactly the same reasons that he dismisses the possibility of confirming that external objects cause perceptions: the lack of perceptible correspondence. In fact, the object whose real properties are primary in Locke's sense, secondary properties being entirely subjective to the perceiver, is just one possible example of a complex external object, one that has been picked from the range that has at one extreme the most simple of objects, a substance, and at the other extreme the most complex, whereby there are no perceptions at all which are wholly subjective, each being perceived

[70] T200. This doesn't of course mean the idea of substance itself is simple, just that one of the (complex) ideas making up the (complex) idea of substance is the idea of simplicity.
[71] For the uniting of spatial and temporal complexity, see T219, T221; cf. T228. For the uniting of cross sensual complexity see T221, T231.

(rightly or wrongly) to inhere objectively, as a property, in some object. Where Locke draws the line between the extremes of the simplicity and complexity, the corresponding objectivity and subjectivity of perceptions it indicates is far from being the only place where it can conceivably be drawn.

Hume thus leaves us with an account showing that ideas of empirical objects can be coherent, though they cannot be known to correspond to any world external to the subjective impressions from which they are originally derived. I argued that the internal/external distinction should be rejected, but even if it is not, our ignorance about the matter of external objects also ensures that we cannot conclude that our ideas *don't* correspond, leaving open the possibility that they *might*, for all we know. More importantly, his account fails to take into account the possibility that construing objectivity in terms of an external world is not the only way in which it can be done, so that on a different account, such as (for example) an account that renders objectivity in terms of dependence and independence, there might be a way of showing when and how knowledge arises and is related to the purely subjective and to the purely objective.

2.5 The road back 1: Hume's naturalism

Hume does put forward an alternative picture to the esoteric view of objects, though not because of any perceived faults with his argument to scepticism. On the contrary, it is the very inevitability of the sceptical conclusion that leads him to posit knowledge on a basis other than that of an external world whose correspondence with perceptions is the sole way of establishing their veridicality.

Contemporaries of Hume tended to focus on Hume's sceptical result, and hence classified him as a sceptic, differing from Berkeley only in attempting to justify the order and cohesiveness of our perceptions without an appeal to the mind of God. Nevertheless, he does make clear quite explicitly that acceptance of scepticism is not only absurd, but impossible. There must be alternative grounds for our beliefs, perhaps not so strong as to establish truth on certain grounds, but strong enough to justify the manifest cohesiveness of most of our beliefs in everyday life.[72] It is, he says, through the force of nature that we have our customs, instincts and habits; and

though nature itself remains hidden from view, it being beyond our capacity to understand its inner workings, we can nevertheless be satisfied, on the whole, with what we believe.[73] Rather than knowledge, which Hume conceives of as certain belief, we make do with only relative probability, increasing in proportion to the number of similar 'successful' past beliefs.[74]

It is in this sense that Hume is called a 'naturalist' by, for example, Stroud; our beliefs can supposedly be justified on grounds that are not rational but natural.[75] Human nature does not refute scepticism, but 'submerges' it, as Stroud puts it.[76] He suggests that Hume's sceptical result does not imply the renunciation of philosophical reasoning, but a need to change its methodology to take into account the natural foundations of our beliefs to which he thinks the result points.[77] Ayer, too, suggests a similar approach; taking note of Hume's view that belief 'is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cognitive part of our natures,'[78] he suggests that for Hume the moral sciences are more fundamental than the natural sciences, despite the fact that even in Hume's time the moral sciences had made markedly less overall progress in extending our knowledge.[79]

For later interpreters, then, such as Ayer and Stroud, Hume's sceptical argument is just a step towards establishing an alternative basis for justifying beliefs about objects.[80] The problem with this reaction to Hume's sceptical result, however, is that it means giving up the possibility of founding this basis with rational criteria; his sceptical result forces *him* to give up rationality, at least for this kind of purpose. It is for this reason that Hume does not work out a fully-fledged 'naturalist' epistemology, why indeed he *cannot*, and does not even mention nature in the context of epistemology beyond scattered references to it as the 'source' of our habits and beliefs. There is, then, little way of assessing this kind of a response as Hume's own

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[72] One wants to add: and also, though more strikingly today (by an order of magnitude), the success of science as a body of theory.
[73] T179, 187, 368; E42, E55.
[74] E58-60; cf. T179.
[75] Stroud (1977), 94–95.
[76] op. cit. 115. He also points out that the 'naturalistic' reading of Hume gains most support from the *Enquiry*.
[77] op. cit., 94-95.
[78] T183; cf. T624 where Hume says that a belief is a kind of feeling. See also §2.3.1 above, page 20.
[79] Ayer (1980), 23-24.
[80] Both Ayer and Stroud acknowledge a debt to Norman Kemp Smith (Kemp Smith, 1941) in pioneering this approach to interpreting Hume.

response. Hume's naturalist epistemology, if such it be, does not amount to an argument or even to a theory.[81]

Nevertheless, we can consider some consequences of it. Habits and customs are conceived as a way of explaining our ordinary actions and statements with respect to our perceptions. There is a certain uniformity and pattern to our thinking and doing and perceiving, which justifies calling some of our perceptions 'knowledge' and not mere capricious 'belief'. As such, habits and customs merely provide a reason why our actions, thoughts and perceptions of the world make up a more or less meaningful and coherent whole. They cannot verify individual statements according to some independent standard of truth; they only provide an expectation that (and not why) some individual statements and perceptions fit into this cohesive whole and not others. They cannot therefore justify any statements at all that make reference to a world beyond this empirical body of perceptions whose patterns are mirrored in our statements to greater and lesser extents. It is not so much that there is a principle preventing habit and custom from verifying anything about objects wholly distinct from perceptions; it is just that they have nothing to say at all about this 'other world'.

This is borne out by Hume's observation that the esoteric view is completely superfluous to the possibility of having beliefs 'confirmed' in habit and experience; even children and (he says) animals have 'knowledge' about the world without ever having formed beliefs about some (other) external world which are supposed then to be true of it. In placing his allegiance with the 'vulgar', Hume is assenting to the exoteric view of objects and renouncing the internal/external distinction, and doing so himself not merely out of habit or custom but because the inevitability of scepticism otherwise demands it.

Ayer senses a certain ambivalence in this stance of Hume's: knowing that Hume thinks we have 'knowledge' of objects, i.e. are justified, to some extent, in believing in them, he is unsure whether Hume, benefiting from the insights of his empirical derivation of the esoteric idea, thinks of them as causes of our perceptions or not.[82] And further, has he renounced knowledge as certain belief in principle, or has he simply given up on it? After having derived scepticism from the false identification

[81] The role, justifiable or not, that Hume played historically in helping to establish the 'ism' of naturalism is quite a different question, of course.
[82] Ayer, 36-37.

of distinct impressions, he must himself realise, of course, that he cannot go back to the exoteric view with honour intact. Perhaps Hume inkles that there is a way of interpreting the esoteric view that does away with the formulation of an 'external world' and makes it compatible with the exoteric view that perceptions *are* objects. But what is to become of all the ideas of endurance, distinctness, causativity, simplicity, and complexity in that case? On this questions, of course, Hume's 'naturalism' has nothing to say at all.

Because of this inherent ambivalence I don't consider the most urgent task to be acceptance of Hume's result and the development of his naturalism into a fully-fledged epistemology.[83] Rather, I think a more promising approach is to consider how the exoteric view, which identifies objects with perceptions, and the esoteric view, which unifies perceptions into something that is not identical with any of them, can be made compatible.

2.6 The road back 2: contingency and necessity of perceptual relations

The interpretation of Hume's explanation and someway justification of the exoteric view as naturalism is not the only one that dissolves the distinction between the external and internal worlds. As I mentioned when discussing the premises of Hume's account, it is not the case that they imply that no perceptions are objective, [84] and in discussing his general sceptical argument I mentioned the possibility of perceptions which are both subjective and objective.[85] In a sense, we have already considered the possibility of such perceptions in the possible restriction of the general sceptical argument to empirical knowledge only, with which Hume may be agreeable, leaving the possibility of certainty on certain formal questions intact (though which for Hume, of course, means the forgoing his thoroughgoing empiricism [86]). I want to now consider this line of thought in a little more depth.

If we take some simple impressions, say of colour and shape and texture, that are combined to give us the perception of a particular object, a carrot say, this complex perception can be regarded two-fold. (The perception consists perhaps in a certain

[83] This is also consistent with my overall approach here of ignoring scientific theory as the source of a ready-made metaphysics until other less presumptuous tacks have been explored.
[84] See page 13.
[85] See page 23.

shade of orange, a certain roughly cylindrical shape, a certain more or less smooth ribbed texture, a certain weight, flexibility and hardness.) On either view perceptions can and do exist in collections, and do so by being related to other perceptions in certain ways. On the first view, call it the 'necessary-subjective' view of perceptions, that certain perceptions exist to form relations with a perception is a *necessary* fact about that perception. If the perceptions with which it is actually related were different in any way from the way they are actually are, then it too would be a different perception. Now, on Hume's view a mind is a collection of perceptions because he does not want to assume the existence of anything over and above perceptions in his epistemology. For a subject to perceive is for a group of perceptions to exist, perhaps a minimal number, and perhaps related in certain minimal ways (these last criteria can be left open for our purposes). On the view I am putting forward here, if a perception is in a group of perceptions, it is *necessarily* in that group, so we can conclude that it essentially or necessarily belongs to the subject who 'perceives' it, since the subject *is* nothing more than the group. This, I contend, is one way of construing perceptions to be subjective. In the example of the perception of the carrot, if all the individual perceptions which go to make it up are considered in the mode of being necessarily related to all the other perceptions which constitute the awareness of the perceiver, the perception of the carrot is subjective. What is then the essential me-ness of my experience of certain things is just the particular way certain perceptions come together, and there is nothing more distinctive about my experience than that.

The counterpart to this view, call it the 'contingent-objective' view, whether a perception enters into relations with other perceptions than it actually does is a wholly contingent fact about it. A perception, in the above example, the entire carrot, or its certain shade of orange, or the same feeling of texture, or its shape (and so on), *may* have occurred in some other collection, although in fact it did not. The very same perception, of course, can occur in two different collections, for perceptions are particulars on Hume's assumptions. (I am here referring to collections not arbitrarily, but defined maximally according to the relations that perceptions have with other perceptions in fact, so that there is only ever one collection of which a perception is a member, the mind being this collection.) So on this view there is no reason in principle why a perception could have existed in some other collection, but in fact it did not. This, I contend, is what it is for a perception to be objective, for it is thus

[86] See page 21.

wholly independent of the particular subject who 'perceives' it (i.e. of the group of perceptions that it in fact is a member of).

If knowledge is taken to consist in perceptions that are wholly objective, then it is clear enough that knowledge will never be derived from perceptions which are taken to be wholly subjective. Hume does admit in the *Enquiry* that an account of knowledge cannot be based on perceptions taken purely subjectively,[87] and his naturalism attempts a certain rudimentary defence of objective perceptions, by claiming that our ordinary beliefs about, for example, the persistence of objects are justified on the basis of the custom of taking similar perceptions to be the same.[88] And taking perceptions to be wholly subjective violates assumption A_3. But Hume's naturalism is not the only way to eliminate the distinction between the internal and external worlds, for the above account of subjectivity and objectivity does not exclude the possibility that some perceptions are both subjective and objective by having parts that are respectively wholly subjective and wholly objective. On this view, for example, a perception of redness may consist of a part which is wholly subjective red, perhaps interpreted as the way the red appears to the particular subject who perceives it, and a part which is wholly objective, perhaps interpreted as that red as it could have appeared to anyone who might have perceived it (or who is perceiving it), or to the same subject at another time, or in different conditions.

Doesn't this kind of a view contradict assumption A_2, about the fundamental simplicity of perceptions? A simple perception is defined by Hume as one which cannot be divided, not one which has no constituents (other than itself). So this view does not violate the assumption if *all* perceptions consist of parts which are wholly subjective and parts which are wholly objective. For then it is impossible for perceptions to exist wholly subjectively or wholly objectively; in other words, some partly subjective and partly objective perceptions cannot be further divided, and are simple. But (the objection continues) if this notion of a double aspect is coherent at all, cannot the subjective and objective parts be distinguished? Have I not just done so, and does this not disprove the simplicity of this double aspect? Not necessarily, for this is not actually separating the two parts of the perception, it is forming two distinct ideas of a single (possibly simple) perception. Both of these ideas can have their double aspect, too. The idea of objective content belongs to an individual

[87] E30; cf. E72, E75.
[88] T2, 197, 239. See also E51-54.

subject, and thus has its subjective part, and the idea of subjective content has as its object the part of the perception that is subjective. Even if this objection were upheld, I have argued elsewhere[89] that assumption A_2 should be replaced by assumption A_2*, which allows the possibility of perceptions which are complex and *not* merely collections of simple perceptions, and this assumption does not preclude the possibility that there are *no* perceptions which are simple.[90]

In any event, I do not mean to consider a perception as having subjective and objective parts in the way that a cake has layers. I intend this idea of parts to be two ways in principle in which the same perception can be taken in relation to all the other perceptions which taken together constitute the mind. These are not mutually exclusive; there is no contradiction in saying the same perception can be taken in these two different ways (and there is a third, as we shall see in a moment).

How, then, would knowledge and objects be defined in terms of contingency and necessity like this? A subject is a collection of perceptions and nothing more; a different collection implies a different subject. Any variation in the perceptions constituting the entire collection of perceptions of which that one is a member would constitute a change in the subject whose perceptions they are. Subjectivity of a perception can therefore be defined as the necessity of that very perception entering into the relations with other perceptions which it in fact did.[91] This is what is meant by saying that a perception has no existence beyond the perceptual occasion to which it contributes. Likewise, the independence of knowledge from any particular subject implies that the perceptions of which knowledge is constituted might not have been perceptions of the particular subject that they in fact were. Independence of a particular perception from the subject of whom it was in fact a perception can be defined as the contingency of that perception being the member of the collection of perceptions that it in fact was. And as for objects, these can be defined as groups of perceptions (or a single perception) taken without reference to any perception not in that group, thus independently to questions either of subjectivity or of objectivity.

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[89] See discussion on individuality and simplicity, page 16, on unity, page 29, and on distinctness, page 32.

[90] On the contrary; the argument that unity is a universal implies that all unified impressions are not simples.

[91] The system of relations need not extend beyond the perceptions directly related; to be aware of the subjectivity of my conscious state, I need not be able to predict the future course of my life, or remember all of its past.

This might seem view of the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity entirely unsuited to a development of an account of knowledge of empirical objects. At this stage, however, I do not want to defend or develop it in any general account of how subjective perceptions, knowledge and objects are interrelated from the point of view of particular perceptions, but rather just propose it as an alternative to that used by Hume when distinguishing internal and external worlds on the esoteric view. For it enables him to avoid the charge that his account makes a distinction between the internal and external world which cannot be found in perceptions, which his account must avoid if it is to maintain that nothing other than perceptions are present to the mind (and which will lead to scepticism otherwise). It is of course (analytically) the case that externality to perceptions cannot be a part of the content of any perceptions at all.[92] But there is nothing in the premises of Hume's account that prevents perceptions having subjective and objective content in the sense of being able to be taken as necessary and contingent in the way just defined, and this redresses the imbalance I mentioned at the start.[93]

We can thus rephrase assumption A_1 thus: (A_1*) Nothing exists outside perceptions, which can be taken in two ways, subjectively and objectively. A given perception is taken subjectively if the relations it has with any other perceptions in fact are taken to be necessary to the identity of that perception; a mind is a collection of such perceptions. A given perception is taken objectively if the relations it has with any other perceptions in fact are taken to be contingent to that perception; knowledge consists of such perceptions.

By considering Kant's view of empirical objects, I wish now to go on to see if this modified form of assumption A_1 in combination with A_2* allows the esoteric account of an empirical object to be combined, productively, with the exoteric. On this proposed account, an object is nothing more than any (arbitrary) collection of perceptions (as before on the exoteric view), whose properties of persistence as endurance or perdurance, independence from the subject of perception, correspondence to perceptions considered subjectively, and simplicity or complexity

[92] I am not denying that externality to perceptions is not a coherent idea (it may be, it may not be); the *idea* of externality is not what Hume's sceptical argument requires, as we saw.
[93] In the discussion of the subjectivity assumption; see page 13.

should be shown to be derivable empirically from the very collection of perceptions which it is, and true of that collection.

3. Kant: the construction of objects in experience

While Hume effectively tears down the foundations of our knowledge, Kant builds them back up again, using nonetheless an approach and premises not very far removed from Hume's own. The result is an account of how objects are constructed from the various constituents of experience, and why they must be so constructed.

3.1 Prior remarks

The cut-down version of Kant's transcendental idealism that is presented here is not intended to be the last word on Kantian exegesis, or even a first word. It is intended to be an interpretation of Kant's philosophy firstly as a reaction to Hume, secondly as a coherent account of how Kant construes knowledge of empirical objects, in particular with regard to their persistence. I make no claim that my interpretation is in fact what Kant intended to say, or even that all the views presented in the chapter are consistent with what Kant in fact *did* say. The purpose of the examination of Kant's views is to get an epistemology of objects from perceptions taking up where Hume left off making use of Kant's help, as far as that is possible.

Nearly all of the interpretation of Kant is based on his critical philosophy as it is presented in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.[94] I am aware that it is a shortcoming of my enquiry not to have taken into consideration more of his later work. However, most of the important and groundbreaking ideas of Kant's theoretical philosophy are present in the *Critique*, and Kant's thought is quite difficult enough to interpret as it is; including other work of his would, in some ways at least, have helped to further complicate an already difficult task. In addition, most of Kant's effect on theoretical philosophy in the English-speaking world has been achieved by the influence of the English-language translations of the Critique. I hope that these are sufficiently mitigating circumstances to excuse in some way the lack of comprehensiveness.

[94] I use the standard "A" and "B" form of labelling citations to the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, respectively. The translations of excerpts from the *Critique* quoted in the text are my own, and diverge to some extent from the translations of Norman Kemp Smith (*Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, MacMillan, 1929) and Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (*Immanuel Kant: Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge University Press, 1997). If necessary, they can be consulted for comparison; in an Appendix I have set out in full Kant's original German text of all passages quoted in this work (cross-referenced by footnote number).

My first task is to present a very general overview of Kant's theoretical philosophy as it pertains to empirical objects; this is primarily restricted to a discussion of his key terms. The second task is to critically contrast it with Hume's scepticism/naturalism, with the intention of distinguishing similarities and differences between Hume and Kant, concentrating on the premises and methodology of both. The third task is to examine Kant's arguments about our knowledge of objects, which proceed by dividing our knowledge into three kinds, corresponding roughly to Hume's division (though proceeding, for important reasons, in a different order): (knowledge of) the distinction of the subjective and objective, which for Kant turns on a distinction between a concept of thing in itself and things as we know them; (knowledge of) the spatial unity of perceptions, hence the spatial unity of objects; and finally (knowledge of) the persistence of objects, which includes a discussion of the important concepts of substance and causality, in particular with consideration to how they are used in experience. My final task is to consider how all this fits together; how knowledge is derived from experience, and how Kant accounts for true knowledge claims about persistent objects made up from diverse and fleeting perceptions. Thus the entire interpretation and criticism represents an analysis of diverse pieces of philosophising from various parts of the *Critique*, united by the common theme of the persistence of empirical objects.

3.2 Some exegesis: Kant's theory of knowledge

Although my use of the term 'empirical object' is owed to Kant, he does not tackle the issue of the identity of empirical objects head on anywhere in the *Critique*, except for one short passage in the section entitled 'On the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection.'[95] Kant is not primarily interested in developing an account of knowledge of objects per se, but rather of an the explication of the foundations of knowledge in general. Nevertheless, empirical objects play an extremely important role, for it is a central tenet of his that only as applicable to objects of experience can knowledge in general be possible. (For Kant, as for Hume, experience represents both the totality of what is epistemologically available as can be systematised in a definitive and comprehensive way.)

[95] A263–4/B319–20. He does discuss identity of persons in the Transcendental Dialectic, however. See A361–66, B407–32.

Kant's stated aim was to avoid past 'dogmatisms' of sense and reason; that is, of relying exclusively on one to the detriment of the other. It is sometimes said that Kant's work achieved a synthesis of the two that, in its time, was revolutionary; that by limiting the aims and possibilities of metaphysics it helped to inspire the development of new approaches to philosophical problems.[96] In particular, it has been said that with Kant's help logical positivism and, subsequently, modern analytic philosophy overcame a far-reaching dichotomy between rationalism and empiricism. Such claims can only be made of a work that is as general in its aims and methods as it is possible for philosophy to be, and it is this generality that demands both that an account of empirical objects be extracted from it, and that this account be developed with regard to the critical philosophy as a whole.

My intention in this section is not to critically examine Kant's theory in any detail, but to present an initial snapshot of it. Thus it does not proceed from his assumptions nor critically assess his arguments. Nevertheless, it may be useful firstly as a way of initially orienting the discussion of what is a very wide-ranging groundwork of knowledge with many often complexly interrelated parts, and secondly as way of interpreting what turns out to be only part of Kant's large and specialised technical vocabulary.[97] The discussion of the terminology is complicated by Kant's lack of explicit definitions, and usages that are not always consistent.[98] In order to try to do justice to the theory, as well as to make my own task somewhat easier, I will attempt

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[96] See Guyer (1992), 155. Kant himself, of course, likened his transcendental philosophy to a rapprochement between rationalism and empiricism or, as he called it, sensualism/empiricism and intellectualism/noologism (A853–4/B881–2). In a similar vein, Henry Allison seeks to justify Kant's claim that virtually all prior thinking had confused the distinction between appearances and things in themselves (Allsion 1983: 16 ff).

[97] I ignore as much of it as I possibly can. Even the synthetic/analytic distinction, which is of enormous importance to Kant, is dealt with in only a cursory way (the basis of the distinction is not discussed). It is a moot point whether Kant's arguments are themselves synthetic or analytic. For some discussion on this topic which considers the apparent weakness of Kant's premises in contrast to the strength of his conclusions, see Anders Wedberg (1982), 162–3. Whereas Wedberg sees Kant's arguments in the *Critique* as being synthetic, Wilfrid Sellars argues that they must be analytic, in order to avoid question begging. See Sellars (1967), 633–639.

[98] This difficulty is exacerbated in translation, where a single English term will simply not carry all the original connotations that Kant intended in various contexts. 'Representation', for example, in English, suggests depiction, and a standing-in for something. The German *Vorstellung* connotes both these meanings (though not "standing in for personally", for which the German is *Vertretung*), but also suggests the imagination and its use. The latter connotation serves as a constant reminder of the function of the faculty of imagination in the *Critique* in the synthesis of representations (and which also bears a resemblance to the function of imagination—in the formation of complex ideas—in Hume). Further, the English 'representation' might well work against the intended effect of using *Vorstellung*, which also suggests the act of an introduction of something into knowledge, and the showing or performance of a thing. Thus while 'representation' seems to emphasise the distinction between thing themselves and pointers to or signs of things, *Vorstellung* suggests a closing of this gap and perhaps even an elimination of the distinction. I discuss the particular problem of translating *Beharrlichkeit* below, which I argue contains two separate meanings, equally important for Kant's purposes, and which should be maintained in English translation or at least in exegesis. (See note 171 on page 86.)

to invoke a minimum of this terminology, while still attempting to cover the requisite ground.

The *general* terms we cannot avoid meeting (in order of our meeting them) are:[99] 'thing in itself' and 'thing in general = *x*'; 'transcendental' and 'transcendent'; 'transcendental idealism' and 'empirical realism'; 'appearance', 'perception', and 'representation'; 'necessary condition of experience/knowledge' and '(synthetic) unity of apperception'; 'intuition' and 'understanding'; '(pure) form of intuition/understanding'; 'space' and 'time' (as forms of intuition); 'pure concept of the understanding' or 'category' (as forms of understanding); and 'determination (of empirical objects) in experience'. *Particular* terms relevant to his theory of empirical objects as I discuss it here are 'empirical object' (usually abbreviated by Kant simply to 'object'), 'inner sense' and 'outer sense', and the categories, in particular those of 'subsistence-inherence', 'unity', and 'plurality', and also 'totality' and 'causality-dependence', and their 'schemata'. In the following overview rather than attempt to specify independent definitions of these terms, I present an explanation of my interpretation of their meanings as Kant uses them.

3.2.1 The system

Kant's theory is a system in the full-blooded sense, but one of a very special kind. It is not a system of metaphysics, and not exactly epistemology either, but a combination of both with a distinction attached. Depending on which is to be emphasised, it could be epistemological metaphysics, or metaphysical epistemology. For Kant does not set out what exists, although he does in fact assume the existence of some things (such as objects, as we shall see). His strategy is to set out experience and knowledge (for the moment I assume these to be equivalent, and discuss the distinction below) as itself a system consisting in certain things (specifically, intuitions and schematised categories, which combine to yield appearances and representations). Their fully-rendered combination is experience or knowledge, so that Kant's account is partly concerned with examining the structure of knowledge as itself a peculiar kind of thing. This is the sense in which I mean that what Kant advocates doing (with his critical philosophy) is metaphysical epistemology. However, knowledge is *unlike* a thing in that it is dependent on the things of which it

[99] Kant often has two or more terms that are equivalent, for example 'thing in general = *x*' is also a 'transcendental object', and '(pure) form of intuition/understanding' is also a 'formal condition of appearances'. I don't usually make use of such optionally equivalent terms.

is about, in the sense I discussed in the opening discussion on Hume.[100] Knowledge consists of statements which are *true of* such-and-such. The point of knowledge is to get at the things it is about, and one would prefer not to have to assume that there are such things. Kant in fact not only tries to avoid assuming their existence, but 'proves' it (in a special way I discuss below), *and* refuses to say anything else about it, restricting his account of what there is to knowledge itself, in fact, primarily to experience. It is in this sense that I mean he is interested in doing epistemological metaphysics, i.e. metaphysics only through the intermediary of experience and knowledge, rather than straight-forward metaphysics about what there is independently of epistemology. Because of his refusal to do *any* metaphysics of the ordinary kind, beyond making an existence claim, it is an epistemological metaphysics of quite an extremely minimal kind.

Our knowledge of things consists in 'appearances' and 'representations' (of which more shortly), and the things of which knowledge is about he calls 'things in themselves' when considering empirical objects, and 'the thing in general = x' when considering existence in general. This seems at first sight to be a distinction between two different *kinds* of things, i.e. as an ontological distinction between knowledge of things and things themselves, but this is not what Kant wants. For it is uncomfortably close to Hume's distinction between perceptions and the external world. Since Kant is primarily concerned with experience and knowledge, and makes no metaphysical claim of the ordinary kind, the distinction is better put in a different way: as a distinction between two ways in which we are to regard objects for the purposes of accounting for our knowledge of them. We can regard them as the things as we know them, or as the very same things but not as we know them (whereupon we must remain silent). But these things are strictly identical; there is no ontological distinction to make.[101]

The account that makes such a distinction Kant calls 'transcendental', because it transcends experience and knowledge in order to examine their structure as if from without. Any account which likewise attempts to examine the structure of existence (rather than knowledge) as if from without Kant calls 'transcendent'. While he believes the former is both a legitimate and necessary enquiry if knowledge is to be correctly accounted for, the latter is illegitimate and dangerous, for we can easily

[100] On page 10.

[101] This point was suggested to me by John Haugeland.

overreach the bounds of our own kind of knowledge and be engaged in a kind of sophism without even realising it. This is all the more dangerous because the kinds of questions that lead us to these sophisms are ultimate, metaphysical ones full of temptation: the existence of God, of a soul, of good and evil, and suchlike. Hence the transcendental kind of account is also necessary for demonstrating the bounds of our knowledge; part of Kant's account is dedicated to proving that there are such bounds and showing where they are to be drawn.

The transcendental approach is to examine the a priori grounds for the possibility of knowledge independent of particular experiences, that is, inherent in experience as a matter of necessity for the kind of experience we have. The transcendental distinction is required when subjecting experience and knowledge to the surgeon's knife, thus to formulate an account of what it is as distinct from what it is about. But as encountered not in a theory, but in the living world, experience and knowledge themselves make no such distinction. Thus Kant professes to be at the same time a transcendental idealist and an empirical realist; an idealist when distinguishing objects in themselves (real) from objects as known by us (ideal) according to the transcendental method, when all that is known is ideal, and a realist when treating of the world as from the point of view of a subject of experience, where all that is real and exists (as far as we know) is empirically available directly.[102]

Nevertheless, the distinction between things and knowledge of things is not only made in a transcendental argument, for it is also present empirically. Here the distinction takes quite a different form, and is really one of two different kinds of knowledge, rather than knowledge of things and things in themselves. The distinction is one of knowledge of an object directly, in perception, and knowledge indirectly, in judgment.[103] On this distinction, experience consists in perception, knowledge in judgement, and both are subsumed under knowledge generally. All knowledge-claims are judgmental, and are confirmed as true or false in perception (experience). It is a central part of Kant's theory that there is nothing more to knowledge than what is already contained in perception, so that true judgments can be derived directly from experience without appeal to any additional resources. How the distinction is

[102] Kant himself had rather less direct empirical knowledge than most people of his education at the time; in his whole life he never left his home town of Königsberg.

[103] The analysis of judgment was as close as Kant came to the analysis of language and its use; this distinction corresponds to the one Russell called 'knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description'. (See Russell 1911, Russell 1912.)

maintained by Kant and whether it is successful will occupy an important part of my own discussion.

3.2.2 The terminology

Kant needs to be able to refer to both kinds of knowledge in both transcendental and empirical contexts; a transcendental context is one in which knowledge is objectified and systematised, an empirical context one in which existent objects (in experience) are treated as sources of knowledge. An individual part of experience Kant calls an 'appearance'; when this is empirically real it is an empirical object, when it is transcendentally ideal it is taken in contrast to things in themselves which are real, and is thus *itself* a thing in itself, but ideal. An appearance taken *only* as empirically real is called a 'perception'. ('Perception' is thus used only in empirical contexts.) The word 'representation' is always meant to refer to a representation *of* something, and always in a transcendental context, so is never a perception. There are thus two different meanings; it can either be an appearance taken transcendentally (or, as we shall see, a constituent of appearances), when it is a representation of a thing in itself, or it can be the constituent of a judgment taken transcendentally, when it is a representation of a perception/appearance or group of them. (At this stage we cannot know if representations in judgment are another kind of thing distinct from appearances, or simply substitutes for appearances.) Thus knowledge is derived from experience, and while perception consists in the determination of appearances, judgement consists in the formation of representations.

It is clear the knowledge for Kant means *our* kind of knowledge, though he is ready to consider the possibility of other kinds of knowledge which are radically different (of which more below). Having made it a contingent matter that knowledge is the way it is, i.e. to us, he can go on to consider what is special about it, and this specialness being what he calls a 'necessary condition'. In full, this is a 'necessary condition of experience', which by default is also a necessary condition of our kind of knowledge. A necessary condition is a special assumption which if false would make our kind of experience and hence knowledge impossible, and which therefore can be taken to be true (in that transcendental sense which is good only for knowledge of objects and not objects in themselves). To take an obvious example, things do not have to be coloured and no colours need exist in order for us to have the *kind* of visual experience and knowledge we do (for our vision could have been black and white),

but it is the case that our experiences must be temporally ordered. Thus time can be proposed as a necessary condition, and some appropriate proposition of what time is can then be formulated as a special a priori assumption, from which other propositions can then be (transcendentally) deduced.

Kant's examination of necessary conditions of experience and knowledge reveals that they have two distinct sources. These correspond to the distinction between what is sensible and what is cognitive or conceptual, except that Kant does not assume that sensibility and conceptuality are the only possible examples of their kind; he calls what *happens* to be sensible in us 'intuition', and what *happens* to be conceptual 'understanding'. He does not assume that sensibility is the only kind of intuition there might be (as would have been the case had he defined intuition in terms of sensibility), nor that conceptuality is the only kind of understanding there might be.[104] Identifying the distinct sources requires a prior understanding of the particular/universal distinction. Intuition provides partial knowledge particularised of an object, and is thus always related directly to a particular object.[105] Understanding, on the other hand, provides partial knowledge universally of objects, and is thus related to all possible objects. The combination of these sources results in experience, the determination of objects in experience, and thus knowledge, which is both particularised (of some such object) and universal (characterised according to concepts). That the understanding does not intuit (in our case) sets it apart from sensibility; intuition is the mediation of being, understanding is the conceptual representation of it (as something). One or other of these sources acting alone is insufficient for experience (and hence knowledge), thus Kant's quip that without intuition knowledge is empty, and without concepts it is blind.[106]

That understanding is distinct from intuition is in one way a limitation, for it enables concepts to be used apart from intuition and in a way that is out of conformity with it. The most obvious way is when knowledge claims are simply wrong; that is, unlike intuition, which is neither veridical nor non-veridical, concepts can be applied in error. But it is a contingent matter that they are used incorrectly in this way; it is not the kind of use, but the particular use of a concept that is incorrect. However there is

[104] A19ff/B33ff. He considers, for example, the possibility of an intellectual intuition, which, unlike our own, intuits by means of concepts rather than sensations. See B135, B138–9, B145 (also considered here as the possibility of divine knowledge), B148–9, B159, B160, A255–8/B310–4.
[105] A19ff/B33ff, A68/B92.
[106] A51/B75.

also a more subtle and hard to spot way in which concepts can be used nonconformably, that is, when they cannot *in principle* be combined with intuition to yield an object. This leads to the transcendent type of knowledge claims mentioned above; part of Kant's discussion is given over to showing that claims about, for example, the simplicity and persistence of a nonmaterial mind or soul are knowledge claims of this sort.

But the distinctness of understanding and intuition correspond to a division of experience that is essential to our kind of knowing, and that is experience of an objective world and experience of a subjective self. Kant argues that unity of experience is essential, and that this unity has both a subjective counterpart, corresponding to a unity that is self, and an objective one, corresponding to a unity that is world. All perceptions are referenced to the two things of which 'I' (self) and 'thing in itself = x' (world) are representations, though these representations are not themselves perceptions.[107] From their necessity he argues that appearances, which constitute knowledge of empirical objects, are partly made up of a representation of the self that has the experience and partly of a general representation of the object that is distinct from it (the representation), the 'thing in itself'. This must be characterised in purely negative terms, as the existence of something where nothing about it is known (in itself, as opposed to the way we know it) beyond that it is. Kant does not here claim to have shown anything about an 'external world' corresponding to our perceptions. That would imply that his theory include a metaphysic of what this external, independent reality is, and would transgress the bounds of his metaphysical epistemology and hence be 'transcendent'. Yet he does claim to have 'proved' the existence of the 'external world' (in the shape of the thing in itself known in a particular kind of way), because the strongest proof of the existence of something that is not in itself just knowledge is that it is necessary for experience to occur, which is exactly the case (he argues) for this double-representation. Since experience *does* occur, then there is the proof of the existence (in the strongest way available to transcendental arguments) of the thing in general = x as that which is experienced *and* the self as that which experiences, without making any assertions (which would be transcendent) about this thing in itself (including the specific claim either that the

[107] Some commentators think that Kant commits himself to the view that all perceptions are essentially subjective because of the necessity of this representation of the self in them, and that he is therefore arguing for a version of phenomenalism. For a discussion *against* this view, which is most notably espoused by H.A. Prichard in *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford, 1909), see Bird (1962), 6, 12–17, 54–60, and, less specifically, 168–176.

thing in itself as that which experiences and that which is experienced are distinct or that they are identical, so that solipsism is not ruled out, but made unjustifiable on the grounds of being a transcendent claim).

Taken transcendentally, Kant claims that our kind of experience represents the existence of everything that is (as we know it) in itself (not tied to the way we know it). All appearances have these representations as parts. Yet there is no need for an account of correspondence between two sorts of thing, as discussed above, because appearances and things in themselves are the *same* things, considered in different ways. He uses the word 'noumenon' when considering things in themselves contrasted with appearances or phenomena, which enables him to distinguish two types. Strictly, the 'thing in itself' is equivalent to 'noumenon' considered in a *negative* sense, whereby no attributes can be asserted to hold true of it (which would be transcendent). This is not the same thing as a noumenon considered in a *positive* sense, when certain claims are made of it (which are empirical). Only by the use of concepts can such claims be made, since noumena are not objects of sense (i.e., an object in itself is by definition other than how it is presented in intuition). Thus an object is a noumenon in the positive sense when it is considered in itself according to the concepts of understanding (as a cause, for example, of perceptions, or as something unified, persistent, etc), though only phenomena can be positive and objects of knowledge. (The term 'phenomenon', in fact, is used neutrally with respect to the empirical/transcendental distinction.)

Kant's necessary conditions of experience can be divided into two types. There are those which can yield a priori knowledge, and those which cannot. Of the latter type, there are only two examples, the representation of unity of self and the representation of unity of world, which are really two aspects of this single double representation. The former type Kant calls 'pure [or a priori] forms', and corresponding to the two sources of knowledge, these are forms of intuition or forms of understanding. The use of the term 'form' connotes structural ordering or placement, and indeed of intuition we have space and time as pure forms; that is, it is necessary that our kind of experience is ordered sequentially in time and relationally in space. Kant claims (obviously controversially) that the kind of knowledge supplied by pure intuition, independent of any particular experience (thus true of all experience) is exemplified most clearly in the a priori and certain knowledge of Euclidean geometry, and in certain characteristics of time and space, such as the latter's infinite and singular

nature. Further, the kind of intuition we have is sensible, and divided into inner and outer sense. By means of outer sense we obtain knowledge of objects other than the self; by means of the inner sense, 'the mind intuits itself or its inner state'.[108] This division corresponds to the division in the a priori forms; space is the form of outer intuitions and time is the form of inner and outer intuition. Having a form shared by both inner and outer sense means that intuitions of inner and outer sense can be united in the inner sense, so while some representations are non-spatial, there are no representations which are non-temporal. All appearances or representations, whether of outer things, or of the inner self or ego, and whether a priori or empirical, are brought together in inner sense and unified in single temporal sequence.[109]

For Kant it is thus the spatial existence of objects, characterised by the spatial form of intuitions that correspond to them, that distinguishes intuitions of external existence from intuitions of the self, and external intuitions from each other. (He appeals to the necessity of these two kinds of distinctions in arguing that the forms are a priori.) As far as our empirical knowledge is concerned, the distinction is not affected by whether minds have a special non-spatial existence, or whether they, embodied as persons, are simply a special kind of object. If the former is the case, a mind is not spatial, though the objects it perceives are; if the latter, the person and the objects it perceives will occupy different locations in space. In both cases they are distinguished by means of the spatial characteristics of objects. Thus Kant's way of distinguishing inner and outer sense by their a priori forms does not imply that inner and outer intuition correspond to different *kinds* of (empirical) existence; it does not, in other words, mean that Kant is a dualist about minds and bodies.

Whereas space and time are forms of intuition, the categories or pure concepts (of understanding) are the corresponding forms of understanding. They provide the remaining grounds for the possibility of experience and thus knowledge of empirical objects. But being concepts, and therefore general, they provide no knowledge relating to the particularity objects, only universal conditions for experience of reality and production of knowledge in general. Kant has a whole system of categories, and has an argument for their necessity in general as well as specific arguments for the

[108] A22/B37. There is evidently more than one outer sense, but this is not discussed by Kant (it is contingent), who normally seems to think of outer sense as equivalent to the sense of sight (sometimes combined with the sense of touch) or at least combined in such a way as to give visual sensation predominance. Strawson challenges Kant's adherence to the necessity of the spatial from of outer sense by considering whether it must hold of a world experienced only aurally. See Strawson (1959).
[109] A98–9.

necessity of each individual category, as discussed below. Being in a general way forms of experience and knowledge, like space and time they are structural; perceptions are all (without exception) related to each other on the basis of their empirical unity, that they are perceptions of a substance, by being causes and effects, and so on. The categories are not distinct from perceptions, but in their application partly constitute them; they are not themselves possible individual perceptions or representations, but are constituents of *all* possible perceptions. One result of this formative role that categories play is that they relate perceptions to each other without introducing new perceptions which the relations are, which avoids the endless regress argument of Russell, but also means that perceptions are intrinsically related. There is thus an important sense in which perceptions do not stand alone; they are not independent from each other.[110]

Kant calls the ongoing process of knowledge production 'the determination of experience', empirical objects themselves being 'determined in experience'. The use of 'determination' in this way emphasises both the active role that understanding plays in the application of pure concepts or categories as constituents of objects and the simultaneous generation of perceptual knowledge and the objects which are thus perceived in the temporal progression of experience. It also emphasises that the categories' empirical existence is not the same thing as their ideal existence, not because one is empirically real and the other transcendentally ideal, but because concepts in their empirical application are entirely dependent on intuition. Kant calls the application of a categories their 'schematism', and the (quite abstract) consideration of the result of this application the 'schema' of a category. Thus any reference to a category in an empirical context (as in the determination of objects) is really a reference to a schema, not to a category itself.

The categories are thus like 'cookie-cutter concepts'; that which is empirical only, 'intuition' as Kant calls it, can be likened to shapeless, formless dough, and that which is rational, 'understanding' as Kant calls it, to a set of cookie cutters. (Although the concepts are mirrored in the logical structure of reasoning, which is where Kant claims that they are most easily found in the beginning stages of an

[110] Their interdependence is discussed more fully below (see §3.5, beginning on page 78, and §3.6, beginning on page 83, particularly §3.6.1). Kant's way of introducing universals is quite distinct from that of Russell's logical atomism (Russell 1918, Russell 1924), in which it is a contingent matter whether individual sense data are related to other sense data or not. For Kant, it is necessary that an individual perception be both related to others as a part is to a whole, *and* is itself a whole composed of parts.

enquiry about them, their use in perception is subsequently revealed in his transcendental account.) The application of rational understanding to intuition results in the 'determination' of experience, i.e. cookies, or empirical objects. Although a crude analysis, it is not entirely frivolous, for it gives an indication of how Kant sees experience constituted from two very different sources which remain themselves hidden from direct view; in the normal course of things, we never catch a glimpse of the cookie cutters or the raw dough; we just see the end result.

Thus the pure concepts are both necessary and, in a sense, a priori. Their necessity comes from their presence in all knowledge and experience, not, as with Hume, as a matter of fact, but in such a way that their non-presence implies, strictly, the impossibility of knowledge or experience. Their a prioricity is their necessity read as a condition of their being experience and knowledge, not as their being *known* to exist a priori. In one sense they are a priori because there is no particular kind of experience required for their presence in knowledge; any kind will do. In another sense they are a priori because their application to pure intuition (lacking sensory content) does yield a priori knowledge (of mathematics, for instance). And of course they *can* be 'known' to exist a priori in the sense that Kant's arguments, which purport to demonstrate their existence, are a priori. But this is just a consequence of their being conditions for the possibility of experience. And their necessity is epistemological, for Kant is quite clear that he is only and can only be concerned with our way of knowing (there could be others), so if 'a priori' means 'epistemologically necessary', then they are a priori. Both these pure forms of knowledge and knowledge itself are always given simultaneously; neither is prior to the other. But the pure forms are always present; in contrast, any particular piece of knowledge may or may not be (including the knowledge of the existence of these pure forms, which, until Kant, presumably were *not* known to exist, at least not as playing the role he claims for them). There is an important sense, then, in which it is misleading to call them 'a priori' (though the usage is not unacceptable if one is clear what Kant means by it.)

3.2.3 Concluding remarks

The foregoing discussion of Kant's system and his terminology is intended only as a background to the main discussion below of his theory of empirical objects, which is why I have been deliberately uncritical. Quite evidently there are many points at which one would ideally want to expand the account and examine Kant's particular

arguments, for example, that there are necessary conditions of experience, that the representation of a unity of self and world is one of them, that space and time are transcendentally ideal, that intuition and understanding cannot stand alone to form knowledge and experience, but must act together, and many others. Unless these points are relevant to a discussion of empirical objects particularly, as some indeed are (and further examined below), I must now pass beyond them. I have also postponed examination of particular categories, and these too are discussed below as they pertain to the determination of objects. The most important of these are those of unity, plurality and substance, since Kant expects these to do most of the work, against Hume, in establishing objects as empirically real persistent entities. I devote whole sections to their discussion in this connection, as well as to Kant's argument about the distinction between self and world.

An assumption of Kant's in all three of the Analogies is that all intuitions have spatiotemporal form, and are diverse and disunited because of their spatial and temporal characteristics, which dis-unify them in what Kant calls the diversity (*Mannigfaltigkeit*) of intuition. The prior disunity of intuition, that is, of the intuitive content of experience as it is prior to the unity of apperception, is problematic conceptually because of the apparent impossibility of speaking about what exists (in any sense) independently of the conditions of understanding (such as the unity of apperception). Appealing to the possibility of a transcendental context, where knowledge is itself taken as object, does not help, because neither the forms of intuition nor the categories exist in their original form there. There is therefore some doubt about whether we are justified in talking either of the unity or dis-unity of intuition. Nevertheless, this prior disunity plays a key role for Kant because without it, i.e. in the case of a given unified intuition, the unity of apperception would lose its a priori apodictic necessity and become merely an empirical fact of experience.

3.3 Kant versus Hume: assumptions and strategies

A principal distinction between Hume's theory and Kant's is the sheer complexity of the latter. It is almost inevitable than Kant will be seen to depend on assumptions which Hume neither denies nor affirms. Nevertheless, there is a surprisingly large area of common ground between them, within which their similarities stand out as more striking than their differences.

3.3.1 Combining exotericism and esotericism

Hume depends on the possibility of referring to experience subjectively, separately from objects, in order to justify his identification of the entity that an object is, distinct from perceptions. His sceptical argument leads him to assess this distinction as unworkable, since it leads to an absurd (sceptical) result. His subsequent (naturalistic) response is to take perceptions and objects as indistinct, the exoteric view. In contrast, Kant upholds the legitimacy of *both* kinds of view; the exoteric is simply empirical realism, the esoteric developed into transcendental idealism.[111] Kant then means to deny Hume's sceptical result not by positing radically different grounds for our knowledge of objects, nor by denying all of his assumptions, but by configuring reason and sense differently, in such a way as to show that in combination in subjective experience they contain within them the sufficient conditions of knowledge. Some of his remarks in the *Critique* even suggest that he regarded Hume to have erred not in his choice of assumptions and methodology, but in his having failed to extend the arguments of reason far enough.[112] We may expect, then, that Kant gives reason a more fundamental role than Hume does or is prepared to, and indeed we have already seen how he intends to put rationality (concepts and their use) and the purely empirical content of experience (intuition) on an equal footing.

3.3.2 Experience-first means subject-first

We may also expect Kant to take a strategy very similar to Hume's 'subjective-first' approach, such that an account of objective knowledge can and should begin with subjective experience in which all conditions of knowledge are to be found. He does indeed, affirming that '[n]othing is really given to us but perception and the empirical progression from this to other possible perceptions'[113] Not only does the remark suggest, as with Hume, that nothing whatsoever escapes the domain of perception (leading to the supposition that there can be both pure perception, as of mathematical truths, and empirical perception, as of objects in space, and nothing else[114]), but also that perceptions are subjective in a way not markedly different from Hume's. For the

[111] Kant calls Hume's unmodified esoteric view 'empirical idealism', for it asserts perceptions to be themselves objects (in themselves). See e.g. A376-77. In transcendental contexts Kant himself is also guilty of objectifying pure subjectivity, but does so self-consciously and with the view of developing the approach into a qualified methodology (transcendental idealism).
[112] See in particular B19-20, B127-28, A760/B788-A761/B790.
[113] A493/B521.
[114] See A376.

latter all knowledge consists in that which is 'present to the mind', and for Kant, that which is present to the experiencing self. Far from denying the 'mind-first' or 'subjective-first' approach of Hume, Kant in fact reinforces it, because it is not just any old collection of perceptions that constitute a mind; for Kant experience has a structure, and he argues that a structure (some structure; the one we actually find, according to the categories, transcendentally speaking, is contingent) is a consequence of the necessity of a 'representation' of the unified self in experience which subsequently gives way to perception of an objective world. Nevertheless, like Hume, there is no mind beyond perceptions; there is, as Kant puts it, no justification for holding that mind is a persisting substance.

3.3.3 Epistemological dualism

One of the results of taking this subjective-first stance is that objects are to be taken in two opposing kinds of ways. Whereas for Hume the rational view cannot avoid a 'double existence of perceptions and objects,'[115] a pejorative assessment, for Kant an object *should* 'be taken in a twofold sense, namely as appearance, or as thing in itself,'[116] depending on whether one regards objects empirically or transcendentally. This double aspect of perceptions reveals another point of common ground (this time unopposed in assessment, though opposed in the reasons for it). A relation, generally construed as cause and effect, between objects and perceptions (Hume) or between appearance and thing in itself (Kant) is to be rejected. It is strictly incoherent; for Hume this is because cause and effect can hold only when there is a perceptible manifestation of causes and effects,[117] for Kant because the concept of the thing in itself has no empirical meaning.[118] It has meaning only in transcendental contexts, when one distinguishes between things as appearances and things independent of the conditions of our experience and knowledge in order to account for the possibility of experience as experience of something. Empirically the distinction corresponds to the awareness of a world distinct from the subjective self.

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[115] T215, T216.
[116] Bxxvii.
[117] T84.
[118] Or what is equivalent, that the concept of cause and effect has only empirical applicability (A289/B345–6, A496/B524).

3.3.4 On the unity and individuality of perceptions

Another consequence of the subjective-first approach is that both Hume's perceptions and Kant's perceptions are individuals. There is of course no exact equivalent of Kant's intuitions in Hume, and he likewise denies anything like Kant's pure concepts. Hume's impressions, which are those perceptions conveyed by means of the senses, are ordered extensionally and in series, from which our 'general ideas' of space and time are derived empirically.[119] In contrast, for Kant, space and time are a priori conditions of intuitions. Also, intuitions are indeterminate; they lack the unity of a perception from which Hume claims we derive the idea of the identity of an object, because intuitions are prior to the application of the categories, which unify them. Nevertheless, appearances are unified and hence individuals just as Hume's perceptions are; the difference is that for Hume unity as a 'general idea' is derived from the empirical unity of perceptions, while for Kant, the existence of perceptions presupposes the pure concept of unity whose schema is a constituent of the perception. Thus while the account of the categories is not consistent with assumption A_2, it is consistent with assumption A_2*. Earlier I argued that we should replace Hume's assumption A_2 by A_2*, which entails the replacement of P_1 with P_1*, which we can now see is consistent with Kant's approach.

3.3.5 Further assumptions contrasted

As for the other two assumptions of Hume's, it should by now be clear that they are not compatible with Kant's system. Assumption A_1 needs to be modified to reflect the pure subjectivity or ideality of representations in transcendental contexts, which is the result of Kant's subject-first approach, and the objective character of appearances in empirical contexts, which he takes to be proven by his examination of knowledge transcendentally. Assumption A_3 must also be modified in order to reflect the results of the Analogies of Experience, whose principle is that all appearances are connected by necessary laws in experience. Both these modifications, and the reasons for them, are discussed more fully below.[120]

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[119] Hume, T33–35.

[120] For further discussion of subjectivity in Kant see §3.3.4 (page 63) and §3.4 (from page 64, in particular the discussion beginning on page 72). For discussion on interdependence, see §3.3.5 (page 63) and §3.6.1 (from page 83).

3.3.6 Kant's argument moves against Hume

Kant's account is an account of the structure of experience which leads to an account of objective knowledge of things which are independent of particular experiences. The manner in which representations are formed, the subsequent derivation of knowledge, and the way the a priori conditions of experience make both of these possible is the primary focus of the discussion, because it is these aspects of Kant's theory that most distinguishes it from Hume's and which establish objects as persistent and real. Three moves are made against Hume's account based on individual, subjective perceptions. Very roughly, these proceed as follows: First a general argument for the necessity of the representation of a world distinct from the self is presented. Second, grounds are given for giving appearances the objective characteristic of spatial unity, despite consisting of diverse parts. Third, empirical existence, known through appearances, is shown to be persistent. Finally, in conclusion, a means of identifying and re-identifying objects in experience is discussed.

Two categories which are of central importance to these arguments are unity and plurality, which, through their schemata, or manifestation in experience (the result of their application to intuition), both divide experience into spatial parts and unite spatial parts into spatial wholes. The arguments for the necessity of these two categories, and the empirical implications of their application in experience, constitute the second of the three moves of Kant's mentioned in the previous paragraph. Another category central to the discussion is that of subsistence-inherence, which, again through its schema (substance), accounts for the continuity or persistence of reality and time, i.e. the unity of temporally extended parts of experience. The necessity of this category, in turn, provides the arguments for the third of the above moves. Finally, in conclusion, substance is considered in connection with the application of another category, that of causality-dependence, to yield a criterion of the identification of a relatively permanent object.

3.4 The external world, transcendental version

Empirically the external world appears in the objective character of space; objects are distinct from the experiencing self by being located in space. That objects are distinct by virtual of being spatial is not a priori, however; only that there must be some kind

of a representation of a world distinct from the self. This happens, in us, to be fulfilled by the conceptual representation of the forms of inner and outer sense-intuition, i.e., space and time. Transcendentally the external world, that which is distinct from the subjective representations that constitute the subject of experience, is the thing in itself which requires representations to be distinguished from it.

Kant's discussion is divided between the Transcendental Deduction, where he deduces the role of the categories to unite diverse intuitions in a single representation of something distinct from the representations which go to make up the self, and the Refutation of Idealism,[121] where this distinct other is revealed as empirically real and persistent existence (substance). From the Deduction comes the conclusion that experience is such that objective judgment about it, yielding knowledge of objects, is necessary; from the Refutation, the way in which subjective experience is connected to the external world (through the representation of substance). I discuss only the relevant parts of the Deduction here, and consideration of the Refutation must wait until after I have discussed the category of substance.[122] It will be sufficient, however, to demonstrate that (1) Kant assumes an a priori distinction between self and world which cannot be derived from the assumptions of the Deduction; that (2) he does not provide a means of distinguishing the knowledge expressed by a propositional judgment from that of a perception; and that (3) it is doubtful whether Kant can claim to be laying any grounds in the Deduction for later proving (e.g in the Refutation of Idealism) that the external world does exist to the extent that any of our judgments about it are ever true (i.e. that it exists as something beyond the bare fact of its existence).

3.4.1 Aim and strategy of the Transcendental Deduction

Kant's aim in the Transcendental Deduction is to establish the necessary applicability of the categories which are to unite intuitions in objective representations of objects in the world, including of the self, and which thus yield knowledge, including knowledge of empirical objects. First of all, prior to the Deduction, he argues (or rather states) that the individual categories reveal themselves in the structure of judgment, and so immediately sets them out in a table as (a modified form of) the set of categories from Aristotelian logic.[123] This anticipates (and assumes are sound) the

[121] (B274–79).
[122] See discussion beginning on page 108 below.
[123] The so-called 'Metaphysical Deduction'; see A80/B106.

arguments of the Deduction itself, and in complementary fashion his discussion of the schemata of each of the individual categories which follows the Deduction attempts to show, on an individual basis, why each of them is essential for the kind of experience and knowledge that we in fact have. I am not so much concerned here with the success of this strategy as it pertains to the aims Kant sets himself, i.e., demonstrating the legitimacy and necessity of the categories, but rather with one of its corollaries, which is the possibility of experiencing and making judgments about a world distinct from the self.

That Kant manages to set out all the categories before his discussion of their necessity is perhaps surprising, but not damning. He is not question-begging, but assuming one of the results of the Deduction, which is that the pure concepts of understanding are revealed in judgment as logical categories. But it is experience, rather than subsequent derived judgments about the contents of experience, that contains the categories in their original form as the conditions of knowledge.[124] So after setting them out Kant immediately turns to experience for the arguments of the Deduction.[125] As already seen in the discussion above on the transcendent and transcendentalism, it is Kant's view both that the results of this kind of strategy are a priori certainties on a par (as being certain) with analytic or logical necessities, and that there is no better strategy for attempting to establish the (non-analytic) principles of our knowledge than this (i.e. no strategy leading to more certain results).

3.4.2 Unity of experience

Kant begins in the Transcendental Deduction with the indisputable unity of representations in consciousness as a basic principle. This unity is considered prior to any possible objects of experience or knowledge; it is the unity of representations as considered (ideally) to be constituents of consciousness or mind, not either the unity of a self or object distinct from representations. At this stage it cannot be assumed that there is any such thing. Hence Kant, unlike Hume when considering perceptions 'present to the mind', does not derive unity from the unity of things experienced, but

[124] A239–40/B298–300.

[125] The Transcendental Deduction has come under heavy fire (mostly in the English-speaking tradition) for allegedly presenting a form of 'transcendental psychology' that concerns itself with deriving knowledge from the characteristics of the human mind rather than from the world. See Strawson (1966), 32-3; Bird (1962), 110-11.

claims instead that this particular kind of unity is prior to anything that might be experienced, and belongs essentially to consciousness itself.[126]

That the unity of experience is a basic fact about it is certainly true, for it must be the case that all the parts of my experience must be related to all other parts through me. It is this non-personal 'throughness-of-me' that Kant appeals to in establishing the principle; he says that 'all possible appearances belong, *as representations*, to the entire possible *self*-consciousness.'[127] Despite relying on the distinction between appearances and representations in his wording, Kant clearly wants to rely initially only on the subjective (on representations) and thus uses an approach analogous to the 'subject-first' approach of Hume: knowledge is to be derived wholly from what is contained in experience, and experience can be considered essentially subjective, but this subjectivity itself implies a certain unity. The result is not so very far removed from Hume's principle that a mind is a collection of perceptions, with the crucial difference being that for Kant the unity of the representations is a necessary condition of their existence and presupposed by experience; for Hume, it is merely an empirical fact that anything is unified; mind, perception, or collection of perceptions.[128] It is essential too that this unity is a unity of subjective consciousness, for one thing because at this stage we have nothing more, and for another because the unity itself is inherent to the nature of subjectivity.

This unity is known to us, or manifested in experience, as a certain 'spontaneity' or 'act of spontaneity' of thought.[129] This spontaneity is distinct from any content of experience (is thus pure) and cannot be made a representation of something or have something representing it. It is in a sense empty of all content; any content which experience may have is thus distinct from it. Kant argues further that the unity is a condition of experience, precisely because without it there could be no experience of the kind we have. Thus it is an a priori condition of the possibility of experience, and hence of knowledge; Kant calls it the 'original' or 'pure unity of apperception'. Empirically it corresponds to the undeniable "I think" of Descartes. However, it is not a representation in the sense of an empirical appearance that taken

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[126] A123, B138.

[127] A113; my emphases.

[128] This is not to say that Hume considers the unity of perceptions to be something contingent about them, but that Kant takes the non-contingency to another level. Note that if Hume is to be consistent with his thesis that a mind is nothing but a collection of perceptions, their unity is going to be essential in a way in which he is perhaps reluctant to admit.

[129] B132; B158–9, B278.

transcendentally is a representation, for that depends on the prior possibility of objective knowledge (i.e. of the existence of some object, either the self or something distinct from it). Being a condition of knowledge and thus always present in experience means that it is unchanging and always the same, which is to say, that it is objective just because it is independent of any empirical content which might serve to distinguish it from one occasion to the next.[130] Empirically the unity is only subjectively valid, for it accompanies my own individual representations and has no application beyond them; transcendentally however, the unity is objectively valid because it is seen to be always identically present to experience generally, as a prior condition of it.

We have then that there is this unity and that it is a condition of experience and knowledge in the sense that experience and knowledge would be impossible without it, and that it is a primitive and thus objective because it is always present to experience and knowledge just as it is in its primitive form. This is not too much to grant Kant, but it is questionable whether this bare result in itself will do all the work that he wants of it. In particular, he talks as if the objectivity of this unity establishes by itself the possibility of objects as unities distinct from representations; i.e., the necessity of things in themselves and thus appearances and then knowledge. He says that the unity of apperception makes possible the objective unity of the content of experience (intuition) and thus objects themselves (as things in themselves distinct from representations) insofar as we are able to correctly make judgments about them.

It seems as if Kant considers himself to have given sufficient grounds for the necessity of representations of existent things in the world, distinct from the self. This cannot be right, even by his own lights however, for it is not until much later in the *Critique*, after he has established the objective validity of some of the categories (notably that of substance) that he sets out a 'proof' of the existence of the 'external world', in the Refutation of Idealism. This part played by the 'object' in the Transcendental Deduction is not of something distinct from the experiencing *self* and hence objective, but of something distinct from *subjective representations* and hence objective. The distinction which Kant considers himself to have established is not between (knowledge of) a self and (knowledge of) objects, but between the spontaneity of experience and the (united) content of experience, the objectivity of the former being a necessary condition of the objectivity of the latter. Talk of self and

[130] §18 of B.

objects distinct from the self does not figure in this distinction. The question that remains is whether he can justify establishing the *objective* unity of representations merely from the *objective* unity of apperception, when the original assumption that established the objective validity of this latter unity was that representations have a subjective unity in consciousness.

3.4.3 Objects in general

Put another way, the above question is: How can the subjective/objective distinction of a mere unity (of consciousness) establish or lead to the subjective/objective distinction of knowledge or perception of an object? It is worth looking in detail at the important passage which establishes the connection between the unity of apperception, objects, and knowledge of them. I quote it in full (from the second edition version of the Deduction), with each stage of the argument annotated with letter labels for reference in the following discussion:[131]

> Understanding is, speaking generally, the [abstract] capacity for knowledge.[a] Knowledge is made available in the determination of a conjoining of given representations to an object.[b] For its part, an object is that in whose concept the diversity of given intuition is united.[c] Now every unity of representations presupposes the unity of consciousness in the synthesis of this unity [of representations].[d] Hence the unity of consciousness is that *which alone* produces or makes possible the conjoining of representations to an object and therefore the objective validity of this conjoining and thus that these representations are made knowledge.[e] In conclusion, the very possibility of understanding is founded on the conjoining of representations.[f]

I comment on each of the statements of the above passage below.

(*a*): Kant is here emphasising the interdependency of knowledge and understanding; one cannot exist without the other. Another way of making the same point is to say that understanding is that in us (speaking transcendentally) which enables knowledge to come about. The standard translation of *Vermögen* is 'faculty', which induces Kant to be read as proposing the existence of a 'faculty of knowledge'. I disavow using this translation because it suggests the existence of some thing (a faculty of knowledge) over and above knowledge itself (as a factory exists over and above the

[131] B137; my emphasis (Kant's emphases removed). My translation diverges to some extent from those of Kemp Smith and Guyer & Wood, which should be consulted for comparison. The intention of my own translation is to (somewhat freely) emphasise those features of Kant's system which are most pertinent to the interpretation I am presenting here.

wares it produces), which then presumably needs some separate account, where Kant only wants to refer to the means by which knowledge is brought about, and which forms, in the end, a part of its structure. (This interpretation is supported by the concluding sentence of the passage, which does not mention *Vermögen* at all.)

(*b*): Two words are of particular importance in this sentence: the verb *bestehen* and the noun *Beziehung*, translated here as 'to make available' and 'conjoining'. The standard translations are 'to consist' and 'relation.' Firstly however, the verb *bestehen* has three connotations all of which (I believe) Kant is making use of here, but only one of which is straightforwardly connoted by 'to consist'. The first connotation is that of something existing in the sense of having itself continuously available or to hand, the second that of coming to exist by being produced or constructed out of something else; the third that of consisting in something. Secondly, since the adjective *bestimmt* (here 'determinate') which is predicated of *Beziehung* already connotes the straightforward idea of consisting, I have chosen to translate the noun in a way which emphasises the other connotations of *bestehen*, so that (1) the unity of consciousness plays a part; it is that to which knowledge is made available, and (2) the unity of representations *with* (as) object is suggested, rather than the separate existence of relations which connect or relate representations to an object. At this stage it cannot be suggested that there are such things, for *only* representations and their unity has been admitted. Furthermore, in the general discussion of Kant's system above I pointed out that for him logical and spatial relations of object parts (manifesting as the forms of intuition and understanding) are constituents of objects.

(*c*): This step presupposes the concept of an object, the details of which Kant is attempting to deduce by means of the Deduction (and which ends up taking the form of the categories). Assuming that there is such a concept is not problematic (if there is knowledge); assuming at this stage what this consists in would be. The object itself is simply whatever the content of that concept prescribes; it does not assume the existence of something else over and above this content (such as a thing in itself). I have translated *Mannigfaltigkeit* as 'diversity'; the standard translation of 'manifold' makes the doubtful (and distortive) assumption that, as in German, adjectives in English can be used as nouns without change of meaning.[132]

(*d*): Here we have the principle discussed previously, that the objective unity of apperception is assumed in any unity of representations whatsoever. So far, in (*a*) to (*d*), we have nothing essentially new that has not already been met with.

(*e*): This is the crucial step. All at once, from the presupposition of the unity of apperception for knowledge of an object (i.e. necessity for knowledge), it is concluded that this unity brings about the unity of representation in knowledge of an object (i.e. sufficiency for knowledge), a unity *not* the unity of apperception but nevertheless objective. The move is from one kind of objective unity (of apperception) to another objective kind (of knowledge of an object). But how are we supposed to get from the first kind of objective unity to the second? I place emphasise on Kant's ascription to the unity of apperception the power to *alone* bring about the objective unity of representations, i.e., knowledge. If there were no objective unity other than that of apperception, and the objective unity of representations were necessary, then it would be valid to infer that these unities were one and the same. However, in the first place, Kant is not claiming here that they are the very same, but that the first brings about the second. In the second place, there is no reason why the objective unity of knowledge (or even, going beyond Kant's argument, the unity of an object itself) should *not* exist separately and in addition to the unity of apperception; i.e. there is no reason why the unity of apperception should not be the only kind of objective unity there is. But having admitted this possibility, there seems to be no a priori reason why the unity of apperception should be tied to knowledge in an essential way, other than as a precondition of its existence. In effect, Kant has here merely stated that the unity of apperception plays the role of creator or determiner; he has not argued his case.

(*f*): In what I have here interpreted to be Kant's concluding sentence of the passage, he seems to backtrack and admit that the unity of apperception is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of knowledge (i.e., of the understanding). The remark suggests that there is indeed something else which is to be brought to the account and which will complete it and show how knowledge is generated in experience, but without saying what it is.

What could this extra ingredient be? The answer can be found in the first edition of the Deduction, where Kant makes extensive use of the term 'thing in general = x' as a

[132] 'Manifold' does not exist as a noun in English in the sense of *Mannigfaltigkeit*.

kind of thing in itself or noumenon. He came under criticism after the *Critique* was published in 1781 for this usage, and eliminated the term in the second edition version of the text.[133] In order to make the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon, content of experience (intuition) is seen to be unified into a representation, which if knowledge of an object, presupposes the object as thing in itself and is contrasted with the appearance as mere representation (in transcendental contexts). This is what Kant calls in the first edition the 'something in general = *x*', a pure representation of something wholly distinct from any kind of knowledge. He asks: 'What are we to understand, if we speak of an object corresponding to our knowledge, which is at the same time distinct from it? It is easily seen that this object must be thought only as something in general = *x*, as outside our knowledge we simply have nothing we could set against it as corresponding to it.'[134] But why must we think of such a thing at all? The answer becomes clear a paragraph later:[135]

> It is clear that we have to do only with the diversity of our representations, and that the *x* [of something in general] which corresponds to them (as the object) is nothing at all before us, as it is something distinct from all our representations. Hence the unity which the object necessarily demands can be nothing other than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the diversity of representations.

It is the *object* as object of knowledge whose *existence* demands that the unity of apperception as objective unity be the very same (pure) unity of representations which thereby is made into knowledge. This interpretation is confirmed a little further on in the same version of the Deduction, when Kant says that 'the non-empirical, that is, transcendental object = *x*, ... is that which in all our empirical concepts provides the general connection to ... objective reality.'[136]

The Transcendental Deduction does not then *prove* the possibility of knowledge of an external object, but *assumes* the possibility of an external object (noumenon) as a pure a priori representation in order to establish the possibility of knowledge. As a representation, this 'something in general = *x*' is distinct from the objective unity of apperception, even although the unity of representations that empirically is

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[133] Kant maintained the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon as defined in the following passage taken from the first edition Deduction elsewhere in the second edition version of the *Critique*. For example, see A252, B306–9.
[134] A104.
[135] A105.
[136] A109.

knowledge of it is identical with the unity of apperception. Kant's enquiry thus assumes from the outset the possibility of his transcendental method, not just as a search for a priori conditions of experience, but as a distinction between representations as things in themselves and objects as things in themselves of which they are the representations (which in empirical contexts only distinguishes the self from objects in space).

This 'something in general', which Kant also calls a 'transcendental representation', is clearly another condition of experience and knowledge, in addition to the unity of apperception and not merely brought about by it. Its role in establishing the objective possibility of appearances (as empirically real) is clearly shown in the following excerpt:[137]

> All representations have, as representations, their object, and can in turn themselves be objects of other representations. Appearances are the only objects that can be given to us directly, and intuition is that in them which directly conjoins to an object. Now these appearances are not things in themselves but rather themselves just representations which in turn have their object which cannot be made observable to us, and which therefore should be called the 'non-empirical, i.e., transcendental object $= x$'.

What makes an appearance direct is that it is a representation of something *not* itself a representation (rather than being itself an object), i.e., of something distinct from subjective representations: a non-observable object of the external world. Thus the 'transcendental representation' of something in general = x (distinct from all knowledge) is a *constituent* of an appearance, and not distinct from it. It is precisely this constituent which makes the appearance directly represent an object (speaking transcendentally) or identical to (a part of) an object (speaking empirically).

3.4.4 Judgment versus perception

Judgments about empirical reality in general are nothing more than propositions about empirical objects of various kinds; as far as our empirical knowledge is concerned, the content of experience is organised as a collection of objects with individual properties and causal interactions. What distinguishes making a judgment from having a direct and real empirical experience (the same distinction between knowledge expressed by judgments, i.e., propositions, and direct perceptual

[137] A108-9.

knowledge) is that a judgment consists in representations which are not direct. Kant had already made clear that he considers judgment to be distinct from direct experiences of objects even before introducing the Table of Categories and the subsequent Transcendental Deduction, when he said that 'judgment is ... the indirect knowledge of an object, thus the representation of a representation itself.'[138] Nevertheless, the unity of apperception plays as crucial a role here as with the unity of appearances; in the second edition version of the Deduction, Kant says 'judgment is ... the method of bringing given knowledge to the *objective* unity of apperception. The purpose of the copula "is" [in a judgment] is to distinguish the objective unity of a given representation from the subjective unity.'[139] For example (he continues), with subjective unity, 'I would only be able to say, "When I support a body, I feel a pressure of weight," but not "It, the body, *is* heavy.'[140] This distinction between subjective representations and objective judgment clearly parallels the distinction between subjective representations and objective perceptual knowledge; in both cases subjective representations belong in their unity to the self as indicative of its own state, and is thus dependent on it, while in the objective the representations belong in their unity to something distinct from the self, the thing in general = x (from the first edition), and which thus may exist without it.

How then can the role of the unity of apperception be distinguished in the two cases? And is there any distinction between the objective unity of representations in a judgment and the objective unity of representations in a perception? Further, what exactly are the constituents of judgments if not appearances themselves, but representations of them? Unfortunately Kant leaves these questions largely unanswered. It is consistent with his account that the content of a judgment just is the subjective unity of representations, which represents the objective unity and whose representation of the objective is effected by the use of the predicative "to be" (and which, as a judgment, may be erroneous, unlike direct experience). On this view propositional knowledge of objects as knowledge is not distinct from perceptual knowledge of them, but expresses that knowledge by means of representations which themselves are not knowledge (being subjective). The contents of judgments are then something like faint images or copies of actual experiences, and do not require a

[138] A68/B93.
[139] B141–2; my emphasis. Note that judgment makes explicit the subjective/objective distinction; this does not mean there is nothing more to judgment, nor does it mean that the distinction is not to be found in direct experience of objects.
[140] B142.

special account of their own. However, it is also consistent with Kant's account that the content of a judgment is itself objective but distinct from the further objective unity of the appearances that are represented. An account of what judgments then consist in is required, for it is something other than either the subjective or objective unity of representations we have already met with.

On the former kind of approach, language issues and questions about the structure and content of propositions are not relevant to the issues at large, since the contents of judgments are mere subjective versions (with cognate contents and structures) of the objective syntheses which they represent (if true). The important questions concern the structure and content of appearances and perceptual knowledge as parts of experience. On the latter kind of approach, questions about language and propositions assume an importance at least as great as that of perception. On the strength of the circumstantial evidence, we may assume that Kant opts for the former kind of approach, since his effort is devoted almost exclusively to answering the kinds of questions that correspond to it. Nowhere is there a specific analysis or defence of his taking this approach, however. The fact that he does not discuss exceptions to the rule that judgments are of subject-predicate form (such as judgments that implicate two- or three-way relations), or that the verb "to be" can also be used as a means of identification as well as predicatively, lends further support to the thesis that he simply ignores or is unaware of linguistic and logical issues raised by the latter approach. Further, that experience (perception) taken subjectively presupposes the possibility of objective judgment is consistent with the subject-first approach that denies there are any essential ingredients of judgment not to be found first of all in subjective experience itself. This would mean that there are no constituents of judgment special to it, i.e. not found in perception, as expected if taking the first kind of approach.

However, taking the content of judgment to be subjective leads to a problem of accounting for the truth of judgments whose representations represent objective states of affairs that in principle are not ever directly experienced. That judgments are indirect representations implies that direct representations are presupposed in judgment, even when they are not available, when judging truly about counterfactual states of the world, or about actual states of the world that were never experienced. Now, Kant's subject-first approach has the self as pure unity of consciousness a precondition of all experience, which empirically has every appearance which is

available to a self marked by a 'spontaneity of thought.' The presence of the self (in this way) is a precondition of the possibility of judgment. This in turn implies that all appearances that can be brought into judgment are, in principle, originally present to a self.

So what about in the case when those appearances are not available to the subject who is judging? While it can hardly be maintained that the unity of my consciousness is not something essential about my kind of experience, the thesis that appearances can be considered essentially as subjective, or as having a subjective component, is questionable. I can represent an appearance that is not part of an experience in this way. The perception of a tree falling in the forest with no-one to observe it is one such appearance. Not unlike Hume, Kant's response will be that there is no appearance, just a representation in my imagination of one. But suppose that it actually took place just as I imagined it to, that my judgement with this representation as its content is true. Either no empirical appearance exists, in which case an account of the truth of the judgment that does not depend upon its objective existence is required, or else it does exist and lacks the subjective content. The former case is impossible if the contents of judgments are subjective, for then the required objective content is missing. In the latter case, the objective content cannot be made a subject of the judgment, for its subjectivity is a necessary condition of the possibility of that.

We are thus led back to the view that the content of judgment is itself objective, and thus that it is objectively distinct from the objective appearances it represents. But we require an account of what it is that this objective content is, an account which Kant does not provide in an otherwise comprehensively worked out epistemological system.[141]

A final criticism of Kant's theory of judgment is that even having the representation of external reality built in to judgments themselves, (such that it cannot be consistently denied) does little to allay Hume's general sceptical fears about the existence of an external world. Although Hume does not deny that there is an external world, he doubts that our perceptions in general may correspond to it in a

[141] Kant does discuss concepts, and the concept of substance (as opposed to the schema of substance) is discussed extensively later in the text, as well as the concepts of action, causality and efficacy. It seems that Kant means these to correspond to some kinds of contents of judgements. But other kinds of constituents, their combination, and the way in which they are determined as true or false by experience, all remains unclear.

truthful way. However, it is consistent with Kant's view that *all* our empirical judgements—all judgments that have ever been or ever will be averred—are false. His analysis of the structure of knowledge implies that in principle judgments have the possibility of being true, but that any are actually true are not implied. This follows from the foregoing distinction between perception as content of experience, which includes the direct representation of external reality, and the content of judgment, which consists of an assertion of reality being a particular way. Thus even if all perceptual experience is directly representative of a thing in itself, it is still possible to doubt that any of our judgments, which are indirect representations of those representations, were ever (or ever will be) true.[142] The extent of Kant's reply to Humean scepticism about an external world, even if his arguments are sound, is thus at this stage limited.

Nevertheless, the 'transcendental representation' of an object in general as a condition of experience suggests that this representation will take a particular form in empirical reality as a representation of something distinct from the empirically experienced self. Objects in experience must have a particular kind of empirical unity that is distinct from the unity of the self. And indeed, Kant argues that objects have a unity corresponding to the forms of outer intuition; that is, spatial and temporal unity. The categories of interest here are those forms of the understanding which correspond to these forms of intuition, and which make possible representation by understanding of the intuitive forms. (As discussed further below, the understanding needs to have the forms of intuition representable if representations are to have intuitive content.) These are the categories of unity and plurality (and totality, as it pertains to these), and of substance-inherence (and causality-dependence, as it pertains to the latter). The unity of experience cannot supply any of these unities by itself; in the case of the category of unity Kant says specifically that it is not the same as the 'higher' unity of apperception, which precedes the application of the categories.[143] In other words, the experience of a unified object and the unity of an experience (of anything) are distinct. The distinction supports the contention that the unity of apperception and the unity of that which is experienced, the manifestation of the thing in general

[142] This criticism does not apply to non-empirical, i.e. a priori (pure) synthetic judgments, such as the judgments of mathematics. The truth of these depends directly on the structure of intuition and understanding, i.e. their forms. This exception is reminiscent of the exception granted to Hume's sceptical remarks as discussed above (page 21), an exception which does not, of course, touch on our topic of perceptual knowledge of empirical objects.

[143] B131.

empirically, are inherently distinct and hence that neither one is derived from the other.

It is now to the application of specific categories in experience that we must go to see how Kant explains and justifies our knowledge of empirical objects in terms of their individual unity and persistence.

3.5 The external world, empirical version 1: objects in space

Kant argues that the categories are those a priori rules which can supply conditions for the unity of experience (for our kind of knowledge) as specified in the Transcendental Deduction, and as such they are thus severally conditions of experience. However, the categories are combined as schemata with intuition in the single unity of representations which empirically constitute the (perceptual) knowledge corresponding to the transcendental object in general. Hence in the schematism the categories must be combined together, even although they are considered separately for the purposes of Kant's discussion, which suggests they are thus also jointly conditions of experience of objects. Thus showing how each category in turn is a condition of the unity of experience of an empirical world, together with the result of the Transcendental Deduction that the unity of apperception is at once condition of experience and of the unity of representations in which experience consists, suffices to show that the categories are jointly conditions of experience.[144]

The categories of unity, plurality and totality are those responsible for uniting intuitions spatially. One empirical result is that these allow measurement to take place in perception as a comparison of the extensional magnitudes of appearances in space, although the consequences of their use in experience are in this case merely a result of their a priori role as conditions for the unity of representations. But just as objects can persist through time in more than one way (by enduring or perduring), so they can be unified in space in more than one way. On one kind of view an object (or

[144] Sweet (1993) argues against what he supposes to be the common view that substance is the category above all others which determines the identity of individual empirical objects. He argues that the categories of quantity play an equal role with substance. But given Kant's arguments in the Transcendental Deduction, this is something we can take for granted (cf. A181/B223, where Kant mentions specifically that all categories must play their part in the determination of knowledge). The important question is the kind of role the categories play when combining to produce perceptual and propositional knowledge.

that part of it that is existent at a specific point in time) is nothing more than a number of parts associated together, and thus there exist in the spatial volume occupied by the object no other entities than the n entities which correspond to the spatial parts. On another kind of view there are n+1 entities; the n parts and the further conjunction of these parts corresponding to the spatial volume as a whole which is occupied jointly by them. Hume takes the former kind of view in arguing that a collection of parts is considered only fictionally as a unity (a complex) which the mind invents in order to conveniently associate simple perceptions.[145] Kant's view, on the other hand, is unlike Hume's in that it admits the existence of an n+1th entity, though it is like Hume's in averring that this entity does not add to the complexity of n parts. This is not because the entity is not real, but because the possibility of it is already presupposed in the actual representation of n parts already present. Likewise, the representation of any (non-mathematical) point presupposes the possibility of its division into n parts.

The necessity of the possibility of generating further entities from any given perception is manifested as an ever-present empirical possibility which is a consequence of the necessity of the application of the categories of understanding to intuition in the formation of representations. In the case of unity, the category is straightforwardly required in order for the singularity of a representation to be possible; in judgment, this category corresponds to the individuality of the subject of a judgment, and not to the unity of a judgment itself, which it presupposes and to which the unity of apperception corresponds. In experience, the distinction between the role of the category of unity and the unity of apperception corresponds to the distinction between the representation of unity and the unity of a representation, the latter being 'higher', as Kant puts it. The category of unity is apparently so self-evident as a necessary condition of both experience and judgment that Kant puts no explicit argument forward in its favour. In this way he merely assumes what Hume assumed before him: that every perception is an individual.

This is not to say, of course, that any perception for Kant is also a simple. He holds that the category of plurality is also necessary, which ensures that every perception has parts, since 'an extensive magnitude ... [is] that in which the representation of the parts makes the representation of the whole possible and hence necessarily precedes it

[145] Hume, T30–1. See also the discussion of Hume's simplicity assumption in §2.2.2 (page 14) above.

[the whole].'[146] Kant begins from the premise that representations of outer sense are spatial, since the form of outer sense is spatial, and that as such it must have an extensive magnitude (an intensive magnitude as in inner sense does not suffice). He argues that it follows from these premises that a magnitude of this kind is a composite, not as a construction of given parts, but as a determination which in its given form is already a composite individual and which presupposes the possibility of division only in principle. But what is Kant's argument? I claimed earlier that Hume's assumption A_2, the individuality/simplicity assumption, *could* be modified in such a way as to preserve the individuality of perceptions while admitting universals (as in the assumption A_2*), and that this modification *would* further imply that perceptions or appearances are composite in the way that Kant requires (as in the principle P_2*).[147] However, instead of invoking arguments for the existence of universals[148] which could then lead to the conclusion that extensive magnitudes are inherently composite as one way of accommodating them,[149] he simply states that they are.[150]

It is not that Kant has no argument, it is just that his argument is not explicitly stated anywhere in the Transcendental Analytic. If the a priori properties of geometry are a consequence of space being the form of outer intuition (as an a priori condition of our kind of experience), then the geometric properties of space will be mirrored in the extensive properties of perceptions. Since Kant takes it to be an a priori mathematical fact that points exist as limits of divisions of extensions, then perceptions are capable of an unlimited number of divisions in order for points to be constructible, i.e. they are composite.[151] The crucial step to concluding that empirical perceptions are thus always composite, which is not to be found in the Transcendental Analytic, is that the composite properties of pure intuition are mirrored in the empirical properties of space. However, in making this step amounts to assuming that empirical intuition is epistemologically prior to pure intuition, in the sense that constructs of pure intuition are possible only as modifications of empirical intuition. An example might be the

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[146] A162/B203.

[147] See above, page 17.

[148] As against Hume Russell, for example, does (see note 32 on page 17).

[149] See above, pages 29 and 32, for arguments in favour of the existence of some kinds of universals on Hume's assumptions.

[150] That a perception of determinate size requires to be divisible in order to have a size, which is what Kant's account in the section entitled 'Axioms of Intuition' (A162/B202–A166/B207) seems at first sight to amount to, is no argument, for unless perceptions embed mathematical properties as discussed in the following paragraph, there could simply be a smallest determinate perception that serves as the basis for determining the size of all other perceptions, as in Hume's account.

[151] See e.g. B419.

construction of points as the limits of empirical division, with empirical content abstracted away (which may, in fact, not be consistent with some other of Kant's views).

On this account appearances have dual natures, being both united and composite, and the necessity of the combination of these characteristics in a single representation implies the existence of yet a further category which achieves the synthesis. Kant calls this the category of totality, saying that it 'is nothing other than plurality considered as unity' which allows, among other things, the representation of infinity as the *total* number of possible divisions or aggregations.[152]

In arguing for the necessity of these three categories Kant thus depends on a result of the Transcendental Aesthetic: that intuition has pure forms and that the form of outer intuition is space, together with the assumption that it is the geometrical properties of Euclidean space which are structurally homogenous with perception and discoverable there as certain empirical and a priori properties of perceptual space. In geometry objects have no special status; there are only points, lines, areas and volumes. This has the consequence that empirical objects as spatially extended things and the spatial parts of these objects have the same ontological status in experience; an object is a spatial unity by virtue of the fact that it is spatially extended and thus consists of an infinite number of spatial parts, and that it is likewise a part of space generally, thence a part of any number of other possible objects. That we carve up space in the way we do, linguistically forming judgments about some particular parts of it and effectively ignoring others, is just a matter of convenience. It is a wholly contingent matter, for there is nothing ontologically significant about those particular parts. As far as the application of the categories are concerned, one part of space that we happen to pick out is no more a unity, or less a part, than any other conceivable part.

In stark contrast, Hume considers the only true unity to be that derived from indivisible or simple perceptions.[153] The unity of a complex is strictly a fiction; as an idea it is the idea of this unity combined with the idea of a number of simple perceptions taken together. He considers a spot of ink on a paper so far away from the eye that if taken any further it becomes completely invisible to exemplify a simple

[152] B111; cf. A165/B206.
[153] T31.

perception, for if reduced any further, by division, it vanishes.[154] This indivisibility, at first glance, seems opposed to Kant's view, primarily because any experience of a single appearance presupposes the possibility of its divisibility into parts, and also because every perception consists potentially in an infinite number of parts. However, Kant's principle of compositeness applies not to appearances but only to pure intuition as an abstraction; the mere possibility of endless division of an empirical perception is not inconsistent with the fact that there can be a smallest region in the perceptual field, anything smaller than which is empirically imperceptible; nor is it inconsistent with the fact that a given appearance may only be sectioned into a finite number of perceivable parts. For these facts of appearance are just empirical facts about the limits of human perception, not limitations of the properties of space to which the perceptual field is necessarily thought to correspond.[155]

Hume elaborates on the thought-experiment of a spot of ink to consider the use of a microscope or telescope to enlarge the spot, reintroducing the possibility of division.[156] However, while Hume considers the spot-perception object to be two different objects in the two distinct instances, thus not contradicting his individuality/simplicity assumption, clearly the actual empirical enlargement and subsequent division of the perception corresponds to Kant's theoretical prior possibility of division. The difference is that for Kant the spot-perception in the two cases corresponds to the same actual spatial extension, as confirmed empirically by the use of a telescope.[157] For Kant that individual perceptions have potentially an infinite number of parts is built into perception itself; for Hume this idea is erroneously derived from the incorrect identification of diverse perceptions and thus the identification of part/whole relationships where none exist.

Note these considerations of the determination of representations with respect to their spatial form are independent of the application of those categories which determine representation with respect to their relations in time. Nevertheless, claims Kant, the categories of quantity do come to represent not temporal relations but, indirectly, the

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[154] T27.

[155] Cf. A165–6/B206–7.

[156] In simpler fashion, we can just as well have considered the repositioning of the perceiver with respect to the spot. See T28.

[157] In the First Analogy Kant considers temporal succession of perceptions, the result of which applied to this succession would verify that the succession is subjective and does not represent an objective change

measurement of time as a line extending from past into future moment to moment, analogously to a line extended in space from point to point.

3.6 The external world, empirical version 2: objects in time

Kant identifies the application of the categories of unity, plurality and totality with the representation of the spatial (and indirectly, the temporal) forms of intuition as extension in space (and, indirectly, through time). The temporal form of intuition is also represented by understanding in the application of other categories. These latter, the categories of relation (inherence-subsistence, causality-dependence, and community) ultimately come to play a more fundamental role than the former categories because it is they which fulfil the criterion laid down by the arguments of the Transcendental Deduction for a representation of empirical reality, or existence in general, as distinct from the immediate and given existence of subjective representations. And, as noted above, while time is represented empirically by the understanding as a line, these categories of relation represent temporal relations directly in experience as an ordering of appearances in succession.

3.6.1 Empirical and transcendental versions of time

The categories whose schemata constitute the empirical determination of time as kinds of relations are headed under the title of 'Relation' in the Table of Categories.[158] Schematised these categories are a priori rules, or 'analogies of experience' as Kant calls them, which establish necessary and empirically real connections of perceptions in experience.

For the necessity of such connections Kant appears to have two distinct arguments, both of which are presented in the section entitled 'Analogies of Experience'.[159] One is found only in the second edition and proceeds on the premise that intuitions must be objectively represented in time, whereby the sole means is an a priori conceptual representation, which by virtue of its a prioricity carries with it necessity.[160] The other argument is found in both editions and maintains that intuitions must be connected if

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in that which is perceived. This is the same result that the perception is *objectively* identical in the two cases. See next section and A182/B224–A189/B232.

[58] A80/B106.

[59] The necessity of the connection of appearances is the general principle of the Analogies; each of the three analogies also has its own principle, two of which are discussed in the next two subsections below.

[60] B218–9.

there is to be unity of apperception, and that this connection can be achieved only by a priori concepts.[161] In both cases the necessity is a consequence of bringing intuitions under concepts, i.e., time as the a priori form of intuition is universalised by the categories as a priori forms of understanding,[162] thus making relations in time a priori and necessary.[163]

As for the empirical reality of the connections of perceptions, as stated by the principle it follows directly from the empirical reality of the perceptions themselves, which in turn establishes the empirical reality of the rules; only the mere fact of the existence of rules as regulative patterns of association is known a priori, whereby no a priori anticipation of the contents of experience is implied.[164]

Given Kant's assumptions that intuition is disunified priori to unification in apperception and that the understanding uses fundamental concepts to represent the form of intuition, it does make some sense to grant the pure concept used to represent time a role not shared by the pure concept used for space. While intuitions of the inner sense have only temporal form, intuitions of the outer sense have both spatial and temporal form. The application of the understanding to both kinds of intuition (inner and outer) can generate representations compatible with the form of inner sense. A common shared form of intuition implies that the category (or categories) which represents (or represent) this form can act to bring both internal and external intuitions together to the unity of consciousness, of which the categories are in essence only the conditions.

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[161] A177/B219 ff.

[162] See discussion on the Transcendental Deduction (§3.4, from page 64) for Kant's arguments for the necessity of the conceptual representation of the forms of intuition.

[163] Essentially the second edition derivation of the principle is asserted in the first edition merely on the basis of the a priori transcendental unity of apperception, whereby the representation of relations partly constituting the object of experience must occur in the synthesis a priori in order to make experience of the object possible. (It appears as an additional paragraph immediately succeeding the statement of the principle in the B edition.) The B derivation has attracted more attention because it attempts to establish more independently of the results of the transcendental deduction that perceptions are subject to a priori laws. Paul Guyer suggests that the B statement of the principle is more true to Kant's requirements that the basis of objective knowledge be established in the analogies (and is thus more consistent with the analogies themselves), rather than merely on the basis of temporal knowledge of objects. He says that without the derivation of the principle as it is stated in B, 'there can be no well-grounded judgments about *objective* entities or events at all ... there can be no justification for the interpretation of our *empirical intuitions* as representing *objects and events in time* at all.' See Guyer (1987), 209. This is true insofar as the necessity of existence distinct from the self (objectivity) is an assumption of Kant's in the Deduction, and cannot be taken elsewhere as a consequence of any argument found there.

[164] A180/B222.

The application of one of the categories in particular, that of *substance-inherence*, is claimed by Kant to be responsible for the representation simultaneously of the real in experience and of temporal form as its changelessness. Taken together, these attributes constitute *persistence*, which is supposed to be provided as a representation by the schema of the category, which is called 'substance'. Thus this category, through the result of its application and its simultaneous representation of the form of inner and outer intuitions, relates internal to external existence, and so fulfils, Kant claims, the condition of objectivity established (but not fulfilled) in the Transcendental Deduction. Substance thus plays the double empirical role of accounting for objective reality as it is experienced directly and, through changelessness, of allowing change and thus the empirical passage of time to be known.

Note that neither substance (nor the schemata of the other categories of relation) act as a ground of time determination as empirical duration (though substance is one of its conditions). substance is concerned with the empirical ordering of successive appearances, which is the means by which time is measured, but time measurement is constructive, and the principle of the Analogies is regulative. Just as one can construct "a priori" that so many combinations of moonlight can be combined to yield the strength of sunlight,[165] one can also, for example, combine so many seconds to yield the duration of a week, which requires (as mentioned above) the application of the categories of quantity (unity, plurality and totality). That the categories of the Analogies are regulative means they determine temporal relations only in respect of the mere fact of being successive or not (simultaneous), not by how much.

This principle is incompatible with assumption A_3, the independence assumption. We may modify it in the formulation of assumption A_3*: the existence of a perception implies the existence of relations to other perceptions, but not the existence of any other perceptions in particular. With reference to Hume's assumptions I call this the 'regulative' principle.

3.6.2 Persistence as changelessness in empirical existence

The principle of the First Analogy is that something permanent or changeless is present in all change, though Kant phrases the principle somewhat differently in the

[165] A178–9/B221.

two editions of the *Critique*.[166] Some commentators prefer the A version, as it allegedly does not go so far as to assert the absolute permanence of substance,[167] while others argue that the permanence of substance is in fact justified by Kant on a suitable interpretation of what this entails, which is only properly defended in the second edition.[168] I don't believe engaging with the debate which of these two kinds of interpretations is correct is very productive, however, for it must rely on the underlying assumption that substance is an empirical stuff. It is otherwise impossible to give a sense to the thesis that substance as absolutely permanent, for this requires continuous re-identification of some quantity of it through many different changes.[169] Kant's argument, on the other hand, is to establish transcendentally that it is a condition of the possibility of experience of change (a feature of our kind of experience) that diverse appearances be related by something real which is changeless as one appearance gives way to another, and that this something is substance.[170] His point is *only* that something remains and does not change in every perceptible change (*not* that something unchangeable exists through all changes) and that this something is the schema of a category. We are not justified in treating his claim as if it were about something more than the schema of a category. We would also be wrong to impose our preconceived ideas about what substance as a concept means (a thing or object, a subject of predicates) when Kant merely defines it on the basis of existence (directly in experience) and changelessness (indirect but also in experience), the combination of which is persistence.[171]

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[166] 'All appearances contain both changelessness (substance) as the object itself and changeability as merely the determination of a way in which the object exists' (A182). 'Substance persists with all changes of appearances and its quantum in nature is neither increased nor reduced' (B224).

[167] e.g., Kemp Smith (1918), 358; Bennett (1966), 183.

[168] e.g., Guyer (1987), 215–6; Allison (1983), 200.

[169] As Kant says, matter is a concept derived empirically from experience as ***substantia phaenomenon***, or appearance substantiated (A272/B333).

[170] Kant just takes the name 'substance' as a name for that which is changeless (*beharrlich*) in all changes (*Wechseln*) of appearance. Substance is not the name of the category (which is 'substance–inherence'), but the name of the constituent of representations which is a result of the schematisation of the category. Bennett criticises Kant for being apparently self-contradictory in wanting to prove the permanence of substance when he also says, a few pages later, that this is tautological (Bennett 1966, 183). However, Bennett is misrepresenting Kant in the criticism, for Kant is not interested in proving that one of the usual meanings of the term 'substance' corresponds to his own claim that it is permanent, but that changeless is necessarily represented in experience as existence, giving rise to a concept of existence that we call 'substance'. Bennett also sometimes seems to blur the distinction between the epistemological and the metaphysical; for example, he says that Kant wants to *prove* the existence of sempiternal substance (Bennett 1966, 188), which is not Kant's aim at all; he wants to prove that for our kind of experience empirical existence is represented in experience as changelessness.

[171] Finding the appropriate translation of *Beharrlichkeit* and the verb *beharren* as Kant uses them is somewhat problematic. Depending on context I translate the noun as 'changelessness' or 'persistence' (and the verb accordingly), because Kant sometimes means *just* changelessness, and sometimes means *both* changelessness and empirical existence together, which is persistence. I reserve the word 'permanence' meaning 'relative permanence' (not absolute or sempiternal permanence) for empirical objects rather than the schema of substance. Note that Kemp Smith and Guyer & Wood consistently

Substantiality and existent changelessness are just the same thing on this view; as far as the First Analogy is concerned, 'substance' is a convenient name for that which does not change in any given determination of change.[172] Calling it 'permanence' or even 'persistence' can be misleading because these nouns connote the idea of something whose existence takes it above and beyond the experienced moment of individual determinations of appearances, i.e., to representations in judgment. This in turn leads to the idea that substantiality provides the criteria of identity of an object through changes by allowing the *same* substance to undergo a series of appearance changes. However, even given that objects just are appearances, it does not follow that that which provides the possibility of appearance change also provides the possibility of identifying two outwardly different appearances as the same underlying (substantial) object. Reidentification implies prior distinctness; it requires that two appearances be identified as distinct, that is, as two, before being identified as the same two. Prior identification (or determination) of complete objects requires the application not only of substance-inherence, but of all the other categories too. Taking fully-determined objects as examples of substances obscures and distorts the role substance as schema alone plays, and will certainly lead to incorrect extensions of reasoning to objects of what is only appropriate to the schema of substance.[173]

Perhaps the best example of this kind of conflation is when Kant's principle of the First Analogy is taken to be the claim that substance is sempiternal. This is to assume that substance is something which persists through all changes either because it is re-identifiable as a thing or conjunction of many (perhaps very small) identical things or because it is a materially quantifiable stuff, which amounts to the same assumption (because to quantify an amount of something is always to do so in terms of a number of discrete quantities).[174]

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translate the noun *Beharrlichkeit* as 'permanence' and 'persistence' respectively, which seems to me to ignore the double-role that the schema plays and the consequent double meaning that the word has. (Further increasing the confusion of translation, like the English 'to persist', the German *beharren* has two meanings, that from which persistence in the former sense is derived and that of 'to persist' as in "to keep at something, to be dogged". Unlike in English, however, the former meaning has fallen out of use in present-day German, making Kant's intended use sound rather old-fashioned.)

[172] As a name it is also justified because the *concept* of that which is existent and changeless corresponds to the Aristotelian concept of that which is ultimate subject. See below page 95 and discussing in §3.6.4 (from page 96).

[173] I discuss the distinction between and connection of substance (the schema) and substances (the concept) below; see §3.6.4 (from page 96).

[174] The avoidance of this conflation is admittedly not helped by Kant's own wording of the principle in the second edition which includes the claim that substance has a *quantum*, and that this is in nature and remains constant. In fact, it is not clear what Kant intended by this addition, and it seems to be nothing other than a corollary to his discussion (it is left unmentioned after its appearance in the principle and

Note that the account of the First Analogy is essentially an account of the conditions of the possibility of appearance change, and as such it complements the account of the possibility of appearances independently of whether they change or not, that is, appearances as extensive magnitudes in the previous section.[175] In the latter case, we have something non-changing, rather than something permanent or changeless (which is true of quantified temporal durations as well as of spatial magnitudes). To consider an appearance as non-changing is not to consider it as opposed to change; it is to consider it independently of conditions arising from change. However, changelessness *is* opposed to that which changes; without something that does not change, change is impossible. They are opposites; each requires the other. The claim of the First Analogy (though not there as it is argued) is essenially that change is empirically given; therefore changelessness is known a priori as a condition of it. Change is empirical, is a feature of intuition, and is direct (of objects); changelessness is a priori, is a feature of understanding, and is indirect. What Kant must show is that these two features, one of the understanding, one of intuition, are necessary, and that they belong inseparably together in every representation.

3.6.3 The argument structure of the First Analogy

The principle of the First Analogy, as we have seen, is that all changes of appearances presuppose changeless existence in the representation of that which changes. It is thus an a priori condition of change and the empirical experience of temporal succession. The schema of the category of subsistence-inherence, or substance, is this very existence, and is one of the a priori conditions of experience.

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one further appearance in the initial paragraph of the proof added in the second edition). Taking the claim as empirical suggests Kant thought he had proved a priori the natural science law of the conservation of matter (or conservation of matter/energy). It is far from obvious, however, that Kant intends his use of the Latin-derived term 'quantum' to be equivalent to the empirical notion of a quantity of 'stuff'. It is much more likely that he was simply rewording the claim of the first edition for 'clarity' and not adding any substantially new claim. Even if he does intend it to correspond to some conservation law, he may just mean that in every experience of an appearance change there should be some quantity, discoverable in *that* experience, which is preserved, without specifying what that might be or intending that it should imply a universal conservation principle. Even this limited claim goes beyond the aims and arguments of the First Analogy, since any quantification requires full determination of an object (or objects), notably the application of the quantities of quantity. Kant does, however, impute to others the assumption that substance is some sempiternal or indestructible 'stuff' which really exists when discussing the scenario of a philosopher who assumes the weight of a material is a measure of the quantity of a substance (A185/B228).

Kant's argument proceeds according to the following steps.

(1) Transcendentally, time is unchanging and constantly present in all change (of appearance).

This claim is mirrored in the Transcendental Aesthetic: 'time itself is not changed in itself, but rather something which is in time [changes].'[176] The repetition of the earlier claim here reinforces the interpretation that what concerns Kant about time in the First Analogy is best understood not as permanence but as changelessness. It is important not to be confused by Kant's terminology; although he seems to be saying that time is being denied an attribute which itself is temporal (change), he means rather that there is something distinct from change which, as we will see shortly, grounds it in an important way. That is to say, the transcendental meaning of 'time' as a form of intuition (time as discussed in the Transcendental Aesthetic) is entirely distinct from time as it is known empirically (in change of appearance).[177]

(2) Empirically, time is known through change in either succession or coexistence.

Again, from the Transcendental Aesthetic, in experience time is nothing but knowledge of appearances standing to each other in relations of succession or not-succession (coexistence). 'Time..., in which every change of appearance must be thought, stays and does not change, for it is that in which succession or coexistence only as a determination of itself can be represented.'[178] The circular-sounding final clause indicates Kant's empiricism; he does not look outside appearances in order to find any evidence of time; the passing of time constitutes all that time is, and the passing of time is known only in terms of changes of appearances.

(3) Time cannot be perceived, but nevertheless must be found objectively in objects perceived.

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[175] §3.5 (from page 78).
[176] A41/B58.
[177] To charge Kant with being incoherent or self-contradictory in giving time a temporal attribute is to conflate the two significations of 'time' here. Paul Guyer, for example, says that it is unclear what is meant by the claim that time is permanent, as permanence is a temporal attribute. This is indeed unclear, though it is not a claim of Kant's to attribute permanence; substituting 'changelessness' for 'permanence' alleviates the unclarity by distinguishing the two roles of the word 'time'. See Guyer 1987, 219. Guyer cites Edward Caird, Norman Kemp Smith and Michael Wolff as all pushing the objection; see Guyer (op. cit.) n.8, p.445.
[178] A182/B224–5.

There are three parts to this claim: that time cannot be perceived, that it nevertheless is in objects which are perceived, and that it is objectively so. Again, from the Transcendental Aesthetic, we are familiar with Kant's claim that as a form of intuition, time, like space, cannot itself be perceived; instead of perceptions *of* time (or space) we have rather perceptions *in* time (and space). If time were itself perceivable, it would be self-subsistent and its properties could be derived from experience rather than its standing as a condition of it.[179] That takes care of the first part of the claim. The second part repeats step (2); time is found in objects of appearances (objects consist only in appearances) as relations of succession and coexistence of objects and their parts. The final part of the claim of this step, that time is objective in the empirical sense, follows now from the result of the Transcendental Deduction: by being brought to the synthetic unity of apperception as conditions of experience, the relations of succession and coexistence acquire objective validity (and are thus present a priori in our determinations of appearances as representations of external objects).

(4) Time must be represented in understanding.

We have just seen that, like the categories, in itself time does not exist empirically, which is the sense Kant gives to calling both space and time, and all of the categories, ideal. Relying on this result from the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant holds that understanding must represent time in some specific way. In addition, Kant also needs, once again, the claim of the Transcendental Deduction that all intuitions require, by means of understanding, unity in apperception.[180] This unity is the unity of an appearance, so understanding requires time as a form of intuition to be a constituent of every (united) appearance. This cannot be time itself (as form of intuition), but rather a representation of time; not a free-standing representation as an appearance is, but a constituent of (all) appearances. If the understanding did not represent time, there would be no connection between understanding and intuition and hence no knowledge of the external world.[181]

(5) Therefore, change and coexistence of appearances are represented in understanding through something changeless and objective: a substratum

[179] A32–3/B49.
[180] A119; restated in the First Analogy at A183/B226.
[181] B164.

This intermediate conclusion follows from the above four steps each taken from either or both the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Deduction; so far, the First Analogy has not presented anything essentially new. Appearances have a changeless and objective form which is a constituent of all perceptions and which Kant calls the substratum; but he does not present new arguments to show why such a substratum is necessary for experience; rather he shows that it implicitly follows from features of intuition and understanding already revealed in earlier parts of the *Critique*.[182] In addition, the term 'substratum' is provisional and used for the purposes of the argument; as soon as he shows what this substratum is, the term is discarded. It is obvious, however, that the substratum must be the schema of a category, for the understanding has no other means of forming representations.

(6) The schema of the substance–inherence category is the real existence of appearances as they are determined in experience: a substratum.

There are a number of points when Kant associates the idea of substance with the bare existence of empirically known things in experience.[183] This is the first time,

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[182] Guyer calls the proposition of step (5) variously a premise, a supposition, and a principle, 'that permanence in something imperceivable must be *represented* by permanence in something perceivable' (Guyer 1987, 219). He argues that it is one of the most serious weaknesses of the 'proof' of the first analogy (another being the step equating the forms of permanence; see below). However, this is not a presupposition of Kant's argument, it is an intermediate conclusion that is required prior to the identification of the category with the form of intuition, and one which follows from earlier arguments in other parts of the *Critique*. Therefore, it is achieved as the result of an argument (though admittedly, in the form in which Kant presents it, much compressed and without mentioning the earlier sources), neither the premises nor the structure of which Guyer discusses in his examination of the First Analogy. In addition, the wording Guyer uses to present the conclusion distorts it. The 'something' is transcendental time, and though as form of intuition it is not directly perceivable, it is known indirectly by means of certain relations of appearances (their succession and coexistence), and, if known to be changeless, must therefore be represented as such in the form in which it is known. Guyer attempts to reinforce his position by pointing out that Kant holds that even representations of matter are transitory, so that the permanence of matter must be inferred as it is for time, making the case for the permanence of one in the perception of the permanence of the other doubtful (See Guyer 1987, 220, and the second edition of the *Critique*, *xliii* n.). First of all, however, Kant does not claim permanence for anything which can be empirically quantified as, for example, matter can. He *may* hold the view that the permanence of something which can be empirically quantified follows from certain considerations of the First Analogy, taken with other assumptions (which may or may not be matter as that was known to the physicists of Kant's time, as even in this case, he might not want to hold the additional view that some such thing was known to anybody empirically then), but that is not a part of the view defended in the First Analogy, and so should not be confused with it. Secondly, Kant is claiming changelessness in the representation of things in the outer world, not that the representations themselves are changeless (or permanent), nor that the things they represent are changeless, which would amount to claiming that empirical objects are permanent, which is clearly false. As I mentioned above, when Kant says that a representation of changelessness is required, this is a constituent of fully determined representations, and not another distinct kind of representation apart from them.

[183] See, for example, B6, where Kant compares the bare existence in a concept of a thing as distinct from its other properties with the space in which a thing exists: both must remain, even if all other properties are abstracted away.

however, when the formal and original role of the substance-inherence category is set out, rather than some idea or concept of existence that is empirical and thus derived from it. It is a premise of Kant's account that there is such a category and that its schema is the required one of bare existence. But it is not an unreasonable one given the way in which the categories are picked out from the logical functions of judgment; substance as real existence, what in experience corresponds to mere spatial and temporal presence, becomes, in judgment, the concept of something that exists only as subject in which properties inhere, and never as predicate of something else.[184] By itself, however, this schema achieves nothing; unlike the schemata of unity, plurality and totality, for example, or the schemata corresponding to the Anticipations of Perception, it doesn't contribute anything to the unity of apperception, and thus cannot, at this stage, even be known to be objective. It is only by having a unifying role of some kind that it can be shown to be a condition of experience.

(7) The substrata of (5) and (6) are identical; the schema of substance–inherence, substance, represents time in the determination of experience as the underlying changelessness that makes possible appearance change and hence succession and coexistence.

Having now done the groundwork, Kant moves to the conclusion. On the one hand the schema of substance, if it is the constituent of appearances which makes them empirically real, cannot account merely for *momentary* existence; it must provide lasting existence, existence that persists through momentary change. If it did not, diverse appearances would be entirely dissociated from one another; the unity of apperception requires both that reality external to the self is represented and that the representation unifies diverse intuitions. On the other hand, changelessness is a necessary condition of change and thus of time as it is known empirically; but this changelessness is not just any changelessness; it is *existent* changelessness, a changelessness present or available to the subject or agent of experience. Thus it is by representing time as form of intuition the category achieves its unifying function; it unifies diverse intuitions in temporal sequence (in succession and coexistence) merely by representing the real in existence. The ground of appearance change is then both temporal and substantial; temporal as a form of intuition, substantial as a form of understanding. This is not to equate substance and time, but to assert that

[184] B129, B149, A147/B186–7, B289, A242–3/B300–1, A283/B339.

substance is schematised as (empirically) real existence, which in turn makes time knowable empirically through changes in appearances.[185]

The persistence of substance is thus not entailed by the schema of substance as empirical reality, but by its role in the representation of time as the underlying changelessness that makes change possible. That time is always (and hence everywhere) the same goes back as far as the opening sections of the Transcendental Aesthetic, when Kant says: 'The boundlessness of time indicates nothing more than that all determinate magnitudes of time are only possible through limitations of a single underlying time.'[186] Such as it is, the persistence of substance is established not as a consequence of the schematism of substance–inherence itself (empirical existence), but via its necessary role as the transcendental representation of time.[187] But this permanence is not the permanence of something, a thing or some stuff; it is the 'always-there' existential constituent of representations which gives them the common ground to enter into temporal relations with one another (which is why Kant often uses the German *Dasein* in reference to the existence or 'being-there' of appearances).

There is thus *some* truth to the assertions made by those commentators who see Kant's proof that substance is 'permanent' coming about in two stages: first as relatively permanent, and only subsequently as absolutely permanent.[188] The grain of truth is in the observation that there are two stages, one concerned with time, and the other with empirical existence, and that it is only when these are combined that there is some kind of permanency thesis. However, as already noted, the permanency thesis is *not* that there is some-thing which persists through all changes; it is that in all

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[185] cf.: 'According to just concepts the inner is the substratum of all relations or outer determinations' (A282–3/B338–9).

[186] A32/B47–8.

[187] Bennett finds the identity of reality and time as form of intuition 'unintelligible' (Bennett 1966, 201). In §§47, 48, the last page of §49 and §50 Bennett presents an elaborate argument concerning the annihilation of a porcelain pig that is supposed to show that while Kant can insist that we *may* regard 'existence–change' as always adjectival upon the existence of a substance, there is no reason to conclude that we *must* do so. I believe his conclusion is mistaken, and arises from a combination of attempting to find an argument for the existence of permanent substance in the schematism of the category as real empirical existence, from conflating objective properties or attributes of things with objective determinations of appearances in experience, and from confusing empirical objects with substances. The entire discussion appears to disregard that for Kant the issue is centred in experience, not talk about experience. Talk makes use of concepts (such as that of a porcelain pig) and a concept 'relates indirectly by means of a sign, possibly to many different things at once.' (A320/B376–7).

[188] Guyer is a notable exception; he argues that the derivation of the permanence of substance proceeds in the reverse direction, from the permanence of time to the permanence of the 'bearer of properties'. See Guyer 1987, 220–1.

changes there is something that persists or does not change, and further that this is a *constituent* of a representation, not a fully-determined representation itself.[189]

Many of those commentators who see Kant as unjustified in presenting a thesis about the 'absolute permanence' or 'sempiternality' of substance also take him to *define* the category in terms of something which can exist as subject only, never as predicate. I have already mentioned that Kant only discusses the *concept* of substance in this connection, not the schema.[190] In fact, that the category of substance when applied in experience yields something which is conceived to exist only as subject doesn't just apply to that category, but to *all* the categories.[191] The application of the categories determine empirical existence, which thus differentiated (by the categories) is

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[189] Bennett is perhaps the most notable of those who make the former kind of allegation. He insists that Kant engages in an equivocation by introducing the category of substance as that which exists *only* as the bearer of (objective) properties in the Metaphysical Deduction, and then, by adding time in the schema of substance, to asserting, without good reason, that substance is permanent (Bennett 1966, 183–4). I believe, however, that Bennett makes some mistakes in what he attributes to Kant which are quite fundamental. He says that the 'pre-schematism' version of substance (that is, the category of substance–inherence) is introduced initially as that to which reference is made in a subject–predicate assertion. Then, '[s]ince Kant naturally wants his category of substance to be more limited than this ... he narrows it to the concept of that which can be referred to *only* by a subject–term' (op. cit., p. 183.) He subsequently goes on to claim this shows there is a distortion between the supposedly 'simple relationship' that was meant to hold between the Table of Judgments and the Table of Categories. Firstly, however, the category of substance–inherence does not determine in general the subject of subject–predicate statements, or even the subject of possible judgments. As we saw earlier, that role is fulfilled by the concept of the object in general (B128–9). Secondly, that substance exists only as subject and never as predicate is not a statement about the schema of substance, it is a statement about the applicability of the empirical concept of substance, something quite distinct. (See below, §3.6.4 from page 96.) Substance, being the schema of a category, *only* exists in empirical experience—it has no other existence, whether as subject, predicate or something else. The empirical *concept* of substance, on the other hand, is something derived *from* experience, not a definition of something to be applied *to* it. (This is consistent with the subject-first approach Kant shares with Hume.) At best, the characterisation of substance in these terms could be a stipulation of the use of the category in a possible experience, but which can only be known as a result of actual experience (A242–3/B300–1). Therefore, the above characterisation of substance is not a part of the metaphysical deduction, which only considers the logical form of the categories in actual judgment, rather than abstracted definitions of them. Thirdly, although there may be some reason to doubt the 'simple' correspondence between the table of judgements and the table of categories with respect to the pure concept of substance, if there is, it cannot trade on a distinction between substance-as-temporal and substance-as-atemporal when the concept is actually used. Clearly for Kant no such distinction exists, and if there were such a one, it would disrupt his theory far more than a mere 'distortion' of the relationship between the table of judgements and the categories. Finally, Bennett criticises Kant for operating with two versions of substance: something he calls 'substance$_1$' derived from the table of judgments (something that only exists as a subject of a judgment, never as predicate) and something called 'substance$_2$' (sempiternal substance) derived from the schematism of substance$_1$. But this criticism is misplaced; it is substance$_1$ that results from the schematism, and substance$_2$ (though not sempiternal) which is substance as the transcendental representation of time.

[190] See previous footnote and comment on Bennett, who is not alone in thinking that Kant *defines* substance as that which exists only as subject, never as predicate: Roger Scruton says, for example, that '[a] substance is that which is able to exist independently, and which supports the properties which depend upon it.' (Scruton 1982, 27). Scruton goes even further afield than Bennett, taking Kant's substances to be equivalent to fully determined empirical objects, apparently quite forgetting that Kant's substance is just the application of a pure category or condition of experience to intuition!

[191] B128–9. See also a note in Kant's own copy of the A edition, cited by Guyer & Wood, p.212 n.*d*

determined in the form of empirical objects.[192] Nevertheless, Kant picks out the substance–inherence category for special treatment because it determines the empirically real in experience, while the remaining categories determine the way in which the empirically real exists. However, that which is changeless (substance) and that which can change (the way in which substance exists) are not distinct things (because they are not things at all, not because they are one and the same thing).[193]

Kant's main argument in the First Analogy thus has two interlocking parts that proceed in complementary 'bottom up' and 'top down' fashion. One part takes the necessity of a pure unchanging form of intuition as a premise (from the Transcendental Aesthetic), from which the necessity of its representation by the understanding as the changelessness underlying appearance change is concluded (using the main result of the Transcendental Deduction). The other takes the representation of external existence in the understanding as a premise (from the Transcendental Deduction), from which the necessary representation of its changelessness is concluded (from the Transcendental Aesthetic). The result is that substance is persistent.

For Aristotle, whom Kant claims is his original source for the categories, a substance is a thing like a man or a horse and 'are most properly called substances in virtue of the fact that they are the entities which underlie everything else, and that everything else is either predicated of them or present in them.'[194] This is perhaps the clearest expression of the view of substance I have been arguing Kant is trying to avoid (and which is oftentimes attributed to him), even though Kant owes much to it. However, his view is separated from it by the subtlest of margins: the distinction between the content of a judgment and the content of experience. As a subject of judgments substance of course has unity, but it does not have unity, as I have stressed, by virtue of being a substance, and, as Kant says quite clearly, it 'represent[s] no object'.[195] What does, on the other hand, represent an object is the concept empirically derived from experience and the application of all the categories to intuition, including, but not limited to, the category of subsistence-inherence.

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[192] The necessity of the unity of apperception implies that an object consists in representations which are schemas of all the categories. See also note 144 on page 78.
[193] See A187/B230.
[194] *Categoriae*, 2^b: 15 (tr. E.M. Edghill; gen. ed. W.D. Ross, Oxford University Press: 1908).
[195] A147/B187; c.f. B129, B288–9, A242–3/B300–1, A246.

3.6.4 The relative permanence of objects: efficacy and action

At the level of the formation of experience to which Kant refers in his discussion of substance in the First Analogy, reference to empirical objects or substance in an Aristotelian sense is impossible.[196] The schema of substance is used to form a representation that is prior to the representation of a complete object, which in turn presupposes the application of other categories.[197] Schemata are 'incomplete' representations that each contribute only partially to the fully determined representation with which the unity of apperception is achieved. A schema cannot be abstracted from the determination of experience (form appearances) to stand alone as a self-contained representation itself, but is a necessary constituent of all representations or appearances which are temporal (which are all of them).

But 'substance' is not just the name of the schema of a category, it is also the name of a fully-developed concept which Kant does not hesitate to use at other points in his discussion. The concept is derived empirically from the application of the category (the schema) in the formation of experience and thus corresponds to that in objects which makes them both empirically real and persistent, just as it does in appearances. It is thus not identical with objects themselves, and it is false to say that an object is a substance. The schema of substance is a constituent of objects, and the concept of substance is one of the constituents of the concept of an object, which is complex. In fact, we have already seen one way how the empirically real existence in objects is represented conceptually; it is that which is thought to exist only as subject, and never as predicate.[198] This is the concept of substance as that which is empirically real; it is only after the discussion of the First and Second Analogies that Kant is ready to connect this concept to the concept of changelessness, thus completing the description of the concept of persistence of objects (which is empirically real existence and changelessness combined). For it is the causal power of objects to effect changes which provides the connection, and it is not until the Second Analogy that the principle of cause and effect is properly established. This principle (which is a priori) is that every change of appearance is governed by a law (whose general form is a

[196] In transcendental contexts we have the constituents and structure of perception and knowledge such as schemata; only in empirical contexts do we have things like objects. Kant's discussion of the First Analogy is entirely transcendental.

[197] See for example B291 on the categories that represent spatial extension (unity and plurality) in combination with substance and causality.

[198] See note 184 on page 92 for citations of the *Critique* where Kant mentions or discusses this attribute of the concept of substance.

priori, but whose particular content is empirical) which Kant calls the law of cause and effect. After having presented his arguments in support of this principle, Kant discusses substances in the plural as if they were individuals with the power to effect changes in other substances, an entirely different mode of discussion of substance to that presented in the First Analogy. It is worth quoting at length the passage in which he links the concepts of cause, action, change and substance in a chain of implications which connects them 'merely' analytically:[199,200]

> [The concept of] causality leads [back] to the concept of action, this to the concept of efficacy, thereby to the concept of substance.[a] ... How can one from action directly infer the changelessness of that which acts?[b] ... Action already means the relation of that which causes to its effect.[c] Because all effects consist in that which comes to pass, and therefore in change [of appearances], which reveals time as a succession,[d] so changelessness is the ultimate subject of change, as the substratum of all that changes, i.e. substance.[e] For according to the principle of causality actions are always the primary ground of all changes of appearance, and can thus not be found in a subject which itself changes, because otherwise other actions and hence another subject which grounds them would have to be found.[f] Efficacy of a subject is revealed by action to be a sufficient empirical criterion of substantiality without requiring its changelessness to be sought in the comparison of perceptions.[g]

The following comments relate to the labelled statements of the above passage.

(*a*): First of all Kant stakes his claim: a particular order of concepts, each which can be derived from the previous, beginning with action. The German *führen auf* could mean 'to lead to' or 'to lead back to' in this context. I have retained both in the translation. Kemp Smith and Guyer & Wood use 'lead to', and though it is clear that Kant is leading *us* from one concept to the other, we know that the concept of substance is derived from the schema, upon which all empirical concepts, including that of action, are dependent. Thus the concept of substance is already contained in the concept of action, and only needs to be revealed. I have translated the German *Kraft* as 'efficacy' rather than the more usual 'power', because what is of interest is the presence or non-presence of a specific kind of power, that is, the power or ability

[199] A204–5/B249–51. For other uses of substance as a derived concept see A213/B260, A221–3/B268–70, A259, B321, A635/B663.

[200] Near the beginning of the passage, which is only quoted here in its essentials, Kant remarks that although his critical account concerns itself with the sources of synthetic a priori knowledge, he will deign on this occasion to make an exception to his normal practice of avoiding mere analysis and provide a clarification of the already-established concept of action and its connection to substance (A204/B249).

something has to produce an effect, rather than power as strength, which, when present, is represented as present in degrees.

(*b*): This is the question to be answered. Note that changelessness is a sufficient condition of substance, since empirical existence can already be assumed to belong to that which acts (an object).

(*c*): First of all Kant points out that because both concept of cause and of effect is contained in that of action, so the relation of the one to the other is contained in it, too. Now, just as the concept of substance differs from the schema of substance, the concept of cause differs from the schema of cause-and-effect. The former (concept of cause) is that in an appearance which is efficacious, that is, which causes a change of appearance, while the latter is the constituent of an appearance which connects it (necessarily) with others in succession via the principle of cause and effect (as demonstrated in the Second Analogy). Implicated in every appearance is thus the appearance preceding it, its cause, and the appearance succeeding it, its effect, so that every appearance is both effect and cause. The *concept* of cause, however, refers to that in the first of the three appearances implicated which has the power to effect the appearance change represented by the second two, and action is just the relation linking the cause to its effect. Action is thus di-transitive; it relates a cause and a change, the latter consisting of two appearances in succession. Thus action, which is the concept of a certain kind of relation, is more closely related to the schema than the concept of a cause, as Kant had already indicated in (*a*) by the proposed order of the derivation of the concepts.

(*d*): Kant now traces the principle of cause and effect in the reverse direction, from cause and effect (contained in the concept of action) to temporal succession marked by change of appearance. (It is thus significant that immediately prior to this passage Kant discusses how it is that even in the case when a cause and its effect appear simultaneously, the cause is nevertheless (necessarily) thought to precede its effect in reality.[201] So causes and effects may appear simultaneously does not rule out the possibility of making this reverse trace to temporal succession.)

[201] In this connection Kant discusses a stove which is identified as cause of the heat in a room (or rather, the change of temperature in a room), which is nevertheless simultaneous with it.

(*e*): To now infer changelessness as the subject of changes through the changes from the fact that causality implicates change is jumping the gun (unless Kant wants to depart from an analytic derivation of concepts and bring in the result of the First Analogy); the conclusion must wait until after the next statement of the argument. Here Kant does no more than point out that the succession of appearances which constitute a change, whether we regard that change as an effect of a cause or not, is now going to imply substantiality (as in fact we already know it does from the First Analogy).

(*f*): Here is the justification of the substantiality just mentioned. Between the times in which an effect changes in appearance the cause must remain changelessness in order for its efficacy to be realised. A change must relate the cause to the effect, and the effect begins with the first appearance implicated in the triadic relation of action. The cause must hence last from the period of time which is marked by the appearance change constituted by the second two appearances in the triad. Kant cites the principle of the Second Analogy here, with action as the relation of cause to effect through the change, i.e. existent both immediately before the effect comes about and as soon as it has done so. The citation should not really be necessary if the derivation is to be analytic; the meaning of action in terms of cause and effect can be taken as given, the citation as clarification. Thus, concludes Kant, the persistence of an efficacious appearance (here subject, i.e. subject of a judgment) through a change which it causes is necessarily entailed.

(*g*): The original derivation of concepts is now justified, says Kant, and furthermore, has been achieved without descending from consideration of concepts to consideration of schemata in perceptions. (Though of course the derivation does depend on the correctness of the principles of the Analogies; Kant does not mean to replace the arguments presented there.) It establishes an appearance which acts to produce an effect as a persistent object (appearance), but only through the change implicated by that act. The effect appearances may constitute two (or more) objects; it does not imply that these are appearances of the same object. An appearance in which a cause lies could, for example, be responsible for the creation or destruction of another object. However, it is also possible that the effect is borne by an object which is *not* created or destroyed in the change. In this case the cause-object may change on account of the interaction with the effect-appearances, this change marking out the same period of time as that marked out by the change of appearances constituting the

effect. In other words, if a mutual cause-effect relation occurs, then the effect-appearances belong together as cause and are also established as persistent through the change, i.e., as parts of an object which persists through this change. We may call this type of cause-effect relationship 'reciprocal'. A reciprocal cause-effect relation can never involve the destruction or creation of one of the relata; however, a non-reciprocal cause-effect relation can involve either the destruction or creation of one of the relata as long as it is the effect relatum.[202]

That in the *persistent* relata of cause-effect relationships is what Kant calls a 'substance' (in the plural or countable singular). Substances act only over changes of which they themselves are the causes. Thus when Kant says that an object is a cause, he does not mean that the object is a substance, but that a certain act of an object was the cause of an appearance change (which might represent a change in another object), and that that which is cause in the object is persistent through the corresponding change (and is thus substance). Reference to an object by means of its action is indirect; it is not to the object itself but to that in it (substance) which acts over a specific interval of time, this interval being marked by the appearance changes which also at the same time disclose the action. Calling an appearance or object a cause or saying that it acts is thus speaking somewhat loosely (though not unacceptably so)[203], for it is substance *in* the object which is cause to which acts.

Kant's argument thus far is analytic; it proceeds on the analysis of concepts. It does not stipulate if an object is relatively permanent it is so by virtue of the action of a substance or substances. However, the question whether and how an object is relatively permanent is only pertinent for objects that undergo changes (an appearance can always persist for a period by *not* perceptibly changing),[204] and changes of an

[202] There is thus no hint here of Kant attempting to prove a priori Newton's Second Law, the law of equal and opposite reactions, which requires that every cause-effect relation is reciprocal.

[203] Calling a substance a thing with qualities is also speaking loosely, but *unacceptably* so. Bennett, for example, says that Kant confuses two meanings of the term 'substance', one that substance is 'a thing with qualities', the other that substance is sempiternal (cannot be created or destroyed). Bennett argues that most of Kant's discussion is concerned with the former kind of substance, and that his argument for the latter is unsound. (See Bennett 1966, 183 and ff.) I don't think Kant is confused about the distinction, because it is not a distinction between two different kinds of substances, but a distinction between empirical objects and substances. (In a later book Bennett is actually quite sympathetic to the necessity of substance being 'sempiternal' in the sense that the creation or destruction of a thing cannot be logically expressed. See Bennett (1974) §21, 62–65.)

[204] Note that, according to the Second Analogy, for Kant a change in perception implicated by a cause-effect relation must be objective; therefore appearances persist through subjective changes (such as those due to the perceiving subject changing bodily position) without implication of action and substance. This is quite unlike Hume's view of changes in perceptions, which does not make such an a priori

object are manifested as successions of states, i.e. as successive appearances. The principle of the Second Analogy establishes that all (objective) changes occur as a result of a necessary connection of them, the connection being present in an appearance as the schema of the category of causality-dependence. Therefore, the concept of causality, from which Kant begins the above analytic derivation leading to the permanence of a substance which acts, already implicates all possible changes of appearances (though that it does so is outside the derivation). In order to establish the means by which objects achieve relative permanence through changes it should not, therefore, be necessary to look any further than appearances acting as causes.

Three questions need to be answered in order for this to be done. First, we have thus far that a single substance is identified by a single action, that it is persistent by virtue of its efficacy (capability for action). Second, the creation or destruction of a substance is not a possible experience (which means in effect, empirically speaking, that substances are indestructible). Third, we know that an object is typically efficacious in many different ways at different times, i.e. is associated with many different actions, and is not everlasting. Now the questions. (1) Substances must exist before and after the actions; how come they are not then identified? (2) How do objects achieve relative permanence? (3) How is their relative permanence identified? (These are the ontological and epistemological questions respectively concerned with the relative permanence of objects.) (4) How are objects created and destroyed, and how come substance is not created or destroyed in the process?

(1) We are here dealing with identification of substance, and not existence of substance. Since substances are only identified by their actions, before and after their actions they remain unidentified. No existence claim is then made about them (we *could* make one, but it is not the kind of claim verifiable by experience), and no knowledge is then expressed in terms of them.

(2) This question has already been answered in the previous sub-section. Objects are relatively permanent because they consist in that which is empirically real, i.e. substance, which is persistent. (Substance cannot be observed directly, but only through appearances, which are not persistent.)

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distinction of subjectivity and objectivity. (Subjective and objective, for Hume, must be distinguished in causal relationships by patterns of behaviour of similar perceptions).

(3) We can first of all discount the most obvious answer, which is that a single substance is responsible for all the actions by means of which a single object is identified through the period of time in which it exists. It is inconsistent with the above principles (a single substance is identified by a single action, and objects are not generally associated with a single action).

However, multiple actions of spatially unified parts of an appearance are at the same time actions of the whole, since it is a condition of the unity of the whole that substance is represented in it as a unity (according to the First Analogy). A series of appearances who share identifiable parts each persisting by virtue of its own action will thus appear as a persistent unified whole providing that the actions of the individual parts overlap temporally without breaks. For example, in Kant's own instance of the stove, the stove-appearances may persist as a single object as long as one of its parts continues functionally to heat the room (it is not necessary to identify which one), even if all other parts are changing, for example (rather wildly) if it is simultaneously changing shape, colour, texture, size and location. Here the substance which is identified as cause (heater of the room) is represented in the empirical series of stove-appearances as that in it which is changeless and real. As long as each appearance is united spatially by the schemas of the unity, plurality and totality categories, and because the schema of substance is a condition of the unity of the perception as a whole (of a changing stove) and not merely one of its parts (which would then be a distinct object), the schema is not restricted to any part, but is represented non-separably in the whole. The schema gives persistence to the changes of the whole, while the action of one of the parts allows the whole to be identified as a cause. If the stove (as a spatial unity) later acts as a support for pots and pans soon after which it stops heating the room, it is still the same persisting object throughout the period of time it does both, provided that the periods of each action overlap. An object will thus persist for as long as it has efficacious parts which are themselves persistent sufficiently long to overlap temporally with each other.

The fact that objects can always be identified by the action of a substance, but *may* be identified in other ways (for example, according to their composition from a certain set of spatially and perhaps temporally distributed parts), means that continued action is not a necessary condition of persistence, only a sufficient one. (It is a necessary condition of the identification of a substance, however.) It is at this stage an open question if whether objects are always identified by their actions; certainly all changes

implicate action, and the question of how objects are relatively permanent is only pertinent for when they undergo changes. But objects can be identified in other ways (by other kinds of properties or by consisting of certain parts, for example). And in hypothetical judgments about objects which are identified according to a description, the question of persistence may not be determinate if actions are not sufficiently described. But action gives us an epistemological criterion for the identification of persistence which cannot fail as long as it is applicable (which in experience it always is, for all change implicates action). Note too, that an object can be defined quite arbitrarily as *any* collection of parts, but once it has been identified by means of its actions, as long as it is efficacious, it *must* be persistent.

(4) The third question concerns the creations and destruction of objects, and the lack of creation or destruction of substance in the process. We have already seen how it is a condition of the unity of an appearance in space that it is a plurality of parts, and that the way in which the plurality of parts is arranged to form a unity is indeterminate; there are any number of ways (in principle an infinite number of ways) in which an appearance can be subdivided. No set of these parts, whether the entire collection or a single part, has existential precedence over any other set. So, now given that a persistent object is identified by means of temporally overlapping continuos actions, it can as easily be regarded a persisting efficacious unity as it can a collection of causally interrelated jointly persistent and efficacious parts through any change of appearances. As an object persists, it can be efficacious through the action of substance in it, or its causally related parts can be efficacious through the action of substances in them. In either scenario substance is persistent, but the descriptions are not mutually exclusive in any temporal period. If, in a causal interaction, an action of an object is ceased, the effect of the action is not seen in the object, but in its parts, each of which has persistency through the change. The ceasing of the action of the object that identified it as persistent demands that the loci of causal description and the determination of time be shifted from the level of the object to its parts, and what is then witnessed is not the destruction of a substance, but simply the cessation of an action and thus with it the cessation of the identification of a substance, and the beginning of the identification of a different action which mark the new identification of other substances (not the identification of a new substance). So this explanation serves for both the destruction and creation of objects, since every destruction in experience implies a creation, and vice versa. (Objects *may* continue to persist by

other means, since action is only a sufficient condition of the identification of action and thus persistence.)

Thus whatever material parts of a system are chosen as the loci of causal explanation over an interval of time, the causal interactions will always be arranged so that substance is unchanging in all the actions that are observed or judged (described) in that period. Thus substance is unchanging through all possible causal interactions and thus conserved through all possible individual determinations of the passage of time, and through all changes, destructions and creations of objects.

3.6.5 Concluding remarks

The conceptual considerations arising from the use of the category of subsistence-inherence (i.e., the from the schema of substance) do not provide any new way of deciding *how* objects persist, but only one possible but sufficient way in which we *know* that they do. In fact, substance the schema is not a different thing at all from what substance the concept refers to; the latter just gives us a mark by means of which it may be identified, i.e., as a cause. Thus when we describe objects by means of their actions, we are forced to consider a continuous action as the action of a single unified object through whichever changes it undergoes as it acts. There is an indeterminacy here; it is generally open to consider an object as a single cause, or its parts jointly as causes, and the form of description we choose can determine whether a commitment is made to the persistency of the object or to the persistency of its parts.

Since action is only a sufficient condition of persistence, whether there may be other properties of objects which may be used to identify persistence is left as an open question too. We can certainly define persistent objects into existence arbitrarily according to collections of parts distributed spatially and temporally, or according to a thing with certain properties. The importance of Kant's focus on the concept of cause is that it gives a condition of identifying persistent substance in any change whatsoever, and explains the natural coherency of our experience and subsequent descriptions of the empirical world as a consequence of continuous and temporally overlapping actions constituting our knowledge of persistent substances.

The question whether persistence is to be endurance or perdurance is, for Kant, not applicable. In the determination of experience, it is not applicable because (as

discussed earlier) 'persistence' just means the combination of empirically real existence and changelessness. Substance (as schema) is prior to descriptions of fully-determined objects, but the question of endurance versus perdurance is pertinent only when considering objects (ontologically) in terms of their temporally diverse parts (these parts being, of course, in turn themselves objects). This latter question does not concern Kant, for he does not consider that to say an object *is* just a collection of parts to be an answer to the question what objects are. Claiming that substance is a necessary condition of experience is as close as Kant gets to a metaphysical position about reality relevant to the endurance/perdurance choice. On the other hand, identification of substance by means of action is epistemological, and itself has little to do whether objects persist *because* a set of parts at time t_0 is identical to an object which is also identical to another set of parts at t_1, or whether a set of parts at t_0 is a subset of a superset of parts existent at various times, which is identical to an object, one of whose subsets is another set of parts at t_1. Substance as schema is consistent with either of these possibilities. With endurance, a set of parts is perceived at a certain time, and to say that an object which is identical to these parts is perceived is not to say anything further. With perdurance, only a part of the object is perceived at any one time, but if the thesis is to be successful, it must be the case that the object itself is perceived (though indirectly) by means of the perception of the temporal part. If so, then again, changelessness is represented in the object which is (in this case, indirectly) perceived. As with Hume's account, Kant's account, a system of epistemological metaphysics (or metaphysical epistemology), is underdetermined as far as the issue of endurance versus perdurance is concerned.

4. Conclusions and further work

The three general questions I set out to answer (with respect to Kant's work and its relation to Hume's) are the following:

(1) Do persistent objects exist?

(2) How do objects persist?

(3) How do we know that persistent objects exist?

What are the answers?

4.1 Persistent objects are necessary, but indeterminate

Hume answers question (1) saying that, as far as esoteric reason is concerned, the only objects which are *known* to exist are perceptions, and these do not persist (through changes). It cannot be known whether other objects, which do persist through changes, do exist. Moving straight to question (3), therefore, we have the answer "we don't". However, as far as exoteric common sense is concerned, the answer to (1) is "yes, probably", but the answer to (2) is "we don't know", and so the answer to (3) is "we don't, but habit and custom support our beliefs that they do."

Kant, however, answers (1) in the affirmative; it is a condition of experience that empirical objects (as the fully-determined result of the application of the categories to intuition) exist. Objects persist by virtue of consisting of substance (2), the result of the application of one of the categories to intuition, which is changeless existence present in experience as a condition of it. (Appearances, however, whose presence confers the way substance is known, do not persist through changes.) And we know that objects persist by their actions (3), identification of which are a sufficient condition of the persistence of that which acts.

Which of these sets of responses is correct, if either? Answering this question requires examining the strengths and weaknesses of each account. Hume's reasons for giving a negative answer in terms of reason is a result of his contention that upon

examining experience, all that is found are perceptions, in the sense corresponding to assumptions A_1, A_2 and A_3.[205] These lead to scepticism about the existence of persistent objects. This conclusion is supported by his general scepticism, which is that doubt about matters of truth and falsity is all-pervading. However, I argued that Hume's general scepticism is unconvincing and a dogmatism, and that his special scepticism depends on an avoidable assumption that subjectivity and objectivity are to be distinguished (only) on the ontological basis of the distinction of internal (mental) and external (non-mental) worlds. By replacing this distinction with some other kind of distinction of subjectivity and objectivity Hume's special scepticism can be avoided, thus reintroducing the possibility of accounting for the existence and our knowledge of objects on his assumptions (or rather, on a modified form of them that takes into account this possibility). However, I also argued that his justification of the non-existence of universals is defective, and that his assumptions require the existence of certain universals (such as unity, distinctness from perceptions, and, following Russell, similarity). Universals can be construed not as themselves perceptions, but as the constituents of perceptions, thus preserving assumption A_1 that nothing is known apart from perceptions and the individuality principle that all perceptions are individuals. This accommodation of universals (of a certain type) led to a proposed modification of assumption A_2 to A_2*, with universals constituents of complex perceptions. On the other hand, Hume's own solution to his scepticism, which is to fall back on habitual beliefs in objects (his naturalism), provides neither a metaphysics nor an epistemology adequate to the task of answering the three questions. It is therefore to a different distinction of subjective and objective, and to a specific account of universal relations, that we go in order to continue Hume's exploration of the subject-first approach.

Kant provides such an avenue of possibility. His transcendental method distinguishes experience from the necessary conditions of experience, but to do so treats experience and knowledge itself as an object to be examined distinct from what it is about. Empirical contexts treat the contents of experience objectively, while transcendental contexts, in which most of the work of Kant's discussion is done, treat experience and knowledge subjectively, as ideal content (of the mind or self). The universals which are the constituents of perceptions are the categories, and the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity is maintained by the contrast between transcendental and empirical contexts of discussion. In particular, Kant's account requires a

[205] See §2.2.4 (page 19).

modification of Hume's assumptions A_1 to make explicit his transcendental idealism with its corresponding empirical realism, of the assumption A_2 to A_2*, with the qualification that *all* perceptions are complex, and of A_3 to allow perceptions to be empirically dependent on one another through the regulative function of the categories (in particular, the category of causality-dependence). Does Kant's transcendental idealism provide an argument against Hume's scepticism? Against his general scepticism an argument is not required (as I mentioned above), but whether Kant's argument against Hume's special scepticism is successful or not depends on whether transcendental idealism provides a distinction between subjectivity and objectivity that is not based on a distinction between two different kinds of worlds. I have described transcendental contexts as making a distinction between the external world and representations, but in such a way that a thing in itself is just an object of experience taken independently of the general conditions of knowing it. Equally then, empirical contexts treat appearances and objects in themselves as identical, because there no such distinction is made. (Instead, an ontological distinction between the self and objects is upheld, which empirically are known to be distinct because the latter exist in space.) Kant's empirical context is like Hume's exotericism; truth is determined by the kind of relations that perceptions have with each other, not by the correspondence they have with something else of a different nature. (In particular, appearances are the way substance appears, not a different kind of thing to which appearances correspond.) Since Hume's sceptical argument depended on a distinction of worlds in an empirical sense, such that perceptions could be known to correspond to it, this is indeed a sufficient distinction to distinguish subjectivity from objectivity.

Kant in fact *does* provide an argument against Hume's general scepticism about the existence of an external world to which experience and knowledge correspond (although not necessary, as I mentioned above). The argument is not, however, entirely effective against general scepticism. The first part, in the Transcendental Deduction, which purports to establish the necessity of the possibility of an external world as that distinct from the self, simply assumes this result (through the representation of the thing in general = *x*). The second part fulfils the demand for an external world through substance, the representation of persistence. In the first edition of the *Critique* Kant is content to leave the proof of the external world to reside in the implicit combination of the representation of an external world with the representation of permanence. In the second edition however, in providing an

altogether new section entitled 'Refutation of Idealism,' he recognises a need to provide an explicit proof that the permanence represented is of the external world rather than of the inner self; that is, 'that we really have experience and not just mere imagination of outer things.' [206]

On one hand one may expect this additional section to contain no essentially new material, since by default the representation of permanence cannot fail to be of externality if Kant is right about the role of the transcendental object in the Deduction. On the other hand, one might look to the Refutation for evidence that Kant does not merely assume the transcendental object, or thing in general = *x*, but provides an independent argument for its necessity not found in the Deduction. We will be disappointed, however, if hoping for the latter version of events. The 'proof' of the principle that empirical self-consciousness assumes real existence distinct from the self and not mere representation of real existence hinges on the representation of permanence. Kant takes this to be present in all change, whether change in the represented empirical self or change in anything else, when he says that 'changelessness cannot be something in me because my being or existence in time [empirically, in the form of representations] can, in the first place, only be determined by means of it.'[207] He makes effectively the same point in a note to the proof that, in contrast to the assumptions of the idealist, knowledge of the *self* is mediate and it is knowledge of the external world which is prior and immediate.[208] This knowledge is empirical and temporal, hence implicates the representation of permanence as substance. The self, on the other hand, is manifest as a 'self-activity or spontaneity of a thinking subject' [209] and is to that extent contentless, not an intuition which could be of something, i.e., of something permanent.

This new argument of the Refutation goes no further than to make explicit the tie between the general object of representation, the thing in general = *x*, which is a presupposition of all representation whatever, and the representation of permanence,

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[206] B275. The 'idealism' to be refuted is that of Descartes, which denies certain knowledge of existence other than of the self, rather than that of Berkeley, which denies real existence to what is external to the self and spatial in nature. The latter, as Kant points out, is precluded by the result of the Transcendental Aesthetic.

[207] Ibid. Kant admits the formulation of the argument to be obscure here and changes it in a footnote in the preface to the second edition as follows: 'This changelessness cannot however be an intuition in me. For all grounds of determination of my own being which can be met with in me are representations and these require, as such, themselves a changelessness distinct from them in relation to which their changes, and hence my existence in time, in which they change, can be determined.' (Bxxxix)

[208] B276–77.

[209] B278.

which is the presupposition of all temporal representation. Indeed, it does not establish that any of our judgments based on existence are necessarily true, just that it is necessary that they possibly are. In other words, the general structure of experience is non-disclaimable. In essence, Kant's general claims amount to that experience has a certain internal spatial and temporal structure, that knowledge of this structure depends on the categories, that the empirical world consists of persistent objects distinct from the self which is aware of them, and that truth statements about them are established on the basis of coherence. Kant only claims that a certain kind of coherence is certain; certainty with regard to knowledge about empirical objects in particular is in practice unachievable beyond the general form that such knowledge must take. As much is admitted in the third note to the Refutation, when he says: [210]

> ...it does not follow [from the preceding proof] that every intuitive representation of outer things entails their existence, for they may well be merely the effect of the power of imagination (whether in dreams or in insanity) ... As much as has here been shown is that inner experience is in general only possible through outer experience in general. Whether this or that intended experience be not purely in the imagination must be ascertained from its own special features and through its consistency with the criteria of all real experience.

Thus Kant reveals the untenability of general scepticism not, like Hume, by pointing to the practical absurdity of believing in it, but by showing that a belief in it is quite meaningless. Our kind of knowledge is crucially dependent on what is in principle knowable empirically, i.e. in experience, and there is no escape from the form of experience as experience of an external world. But at the same time, it is the thorough-going universality of this conclusion which is its weakness, for it is not able to establish that any of our apparent knowledge can really be trusted. The existence of the external world is not derived from the necessary veridicality of some of our experience, but is the general form of all of our experience. Hence it is impossible to conclude that there is some particular part of experience which is veridical. Hence general scepticism, as the worry that none of our experience might be veridical, is not allayed.

As for the persistency of objects, I argued that both Hume and Kant present accounts which are consistent with endurance and perdurance. For Hume this is only half-true, that is, in the case when objects are composed of perceptual parts, a view he comes to

[210] B278–79.

deny. His naturalism, on the other hand, does not have an ontology to which the endurance/perdurance distinction can be brought. Kant's view, on the other hand, is underdetermined, for his empirical ontology does not commit itself to the view that objects are composed of momentary or non-fleeting parts. If one takes the view that objects are literally constructs of percepts, then his view is consistent with either perdurance or endurance, but the same is true for the scientific-realist view that objects are composed of physical particles. As for our knowledge of persistent objects, Kant presents an account of action, claiming that the concept of cause and the concept of substance are related to it analytically, which provides an empirical criterion for the identification of substance and thus persistent objects. But at best this account provides a minimal conceptual framework for explaining the ability of our descriptions to make coherent reference to persistent empirical reality (which it must do, since the persistency of reality is a condition of experience); it does not provide a general decision theory for determining which of the objects we have experience of are persistent and for how long. Of course, there may be no such decision theory, but the fact that Kant's theory is consistent with this possibility is reason to doubt that it provides the means for deciding whether there is or not.

Given the above considerations, Kant's account, despite its complexity and limitations, is considerably more plausible than Hume's, for it provides an epistemological methodology and empirical ontology which provides positive, though limited, answers to the above three questions. But there are a number of obscurities and difficulties which it has been impossible to address in this work, but which should nevertheless be pointed out.

4.2 Remaining difficulties

First of all, some general points about Kant's approach. There are various aspects of his system which I have taken for granted, notably the division of knowledge into intuition and understanding, each having pure forms united in consciousness. Kant presents arguments to support his contentions, for example regarding time and space as the pure forms of intuition which he introduced in the Transcendental Aesthetic, and other parts of the system as discussed in §3.2.1 and §3.2.2. Although I have tried to present what I take to be the most plausible interpretation of Kant's ideas in order to extract his account of empirical objects, I have not attended to other arguments of

his concerning the more general aspects of his system, and the grounding of these remains unexplored. (The assumptions A_1*, A_2* and A_3*, however, act as substitutes for some of these grounds.) In particular he uses the subject-first approach which begins with the averred direct contents of experience, but finishes up with things (categories both pure schematised, pure forms of intuition) which are indisputably *not* present directly to experience. My discussion of the Transcendental Deduction throws further doubt on the success of this derivation, for Kant simply assumes the existence of the external world. There is also the question of Kant's psychologism, which I have avoided except to the extent that I have presented his views in the most non-psychological way I was able. This issue is of particular importance to the distinction between the content of perception and the content of judgment. Finally, there is perhaps the most obvious criticism of all, which is that it is hard to see how Kant's system, with its archaic talk of substance and use of Aristotelian logic, grounds in any important way or is even consistent with modern-day science, logic and mathematics (which it certainly must do in at least a modified form if it is to have any of the general significance Kant claimed for it.)

Second of all, there are some problems with the individual arguments which are pertinent to the development of his account of empirical objects. I have ordered these as follows: (1) Judgment plays a crucial role in Kant's account, for it is the possibility of making judgments which is used in the Transcendental Deduction to demonstrate the existence of knowledge as opposed to mere subjective experience. But although it seems clear that judgments have their own special and objective content distinct from experience, particularly in the form of empirical concepts, Kant provides no arguments for demonstrating what, exactly, this content is and how it relates to perception, in particular how it can be veridical. (2) In his subsequent 'proof' of the principle of substance in the First Analogy, he combines the representation of changelessness with the representation of empirical existence, but it remains uncertain if this combination is necessary or simply by default the only means available that understanding has if it is to represent the pure form of intuition. (3) Although for Kant substance plays a crucial role in the demonstration both of the possibility of experience and in the possibility of an external world distinct from the self, the empirical criterion for its identification is limited to action and efficacy (in cause). It is not clear whether this is (a) the only means of identifying substance, and (b) the only means of identifying persistent objects.

4.3 Further work

I have presented Kant as providing a plausible subject-first epistemologically-based enquiry into the existence of and knowledge about persistent objects. Some of the general problems I indicated above concerning the grounding of his subject-first approach and the resultant system need to be considered with respect to more recent philosophy which deals with these or related issues. Wittgenstein's so-called private-language argument, for example, claims that analysing propositions with reference to the purely subjective in experience is impossible in principle. This has been seen as principally an attack on the Russellian view that empirical statements about objects can be analysed as statements about (subjective) sense-data, and is probably not directly applicable to Kant's view, if that is to be taken as holding that the reference of statements is subjective only in transcendental contexts (empirical statements, on the other hand, having objective content through his supposed theory of judgment). Nevertheless, the considerations that led Wittgenstein to the above-mentioned view are certainly of relevance to any attempt to clarify Kant's position or develop a Kantian approach to the constituents of judgments, as well as the more general attempt to account for Kant's distinction between transcendental (subjective) and empirical (objective) contexts.

To the former consideration, on the contents of judgments or the constituents of propositions, the Frege-Russell debate about the possibility of referring to concepts at all is clearly of great relevance. Russell presented his original argument in 'On Denoting' in 1905, but the issue is still open.[211] Russell's argument depends upon treating a concept as a kind of thing to which, it is demonstrated, reference with a proposition is impossible.[212] However, it is debatable whether a Kantian type of view, such as of Frege's, depends on the characterisation of concepts in this way.[213] Development of a Kantian view on the contents of judgment could provide a definitive account that avoids the Russellian kind of argument altogether.

Other work on the connection of language and experience might consider Kripke's causal chain theory, whereby the reference of a proper name is achieved by its

[211] See Kremer (1994), 277–97; Blackburn and Code (1978), 34; Pakaluk (1993), 41–61.
[212] See Russell (1905), 48–51 (the so-called 'Gray's Elegy Argument').
[213] Dummett for one argues that Frege's sense/reference distinction treated sense as a 'mediate'. See Dummett (1994), 104–9.

connection to a naming event through a chain of uses of the name.[214] In Kripke's theory an 'intention to refer' plays a crucial role. It links each use of the name to a previous use, and determines the reference of the name during the initial naming event. Firstly, a non-psychological account of what intentions are is required if Kripke's account is to amount to more than an argument opposing the rival description theory of names. For Kant an intention is probably nothing more than a formation of a representation, which requires no further account binding it to an object, since empirically an object is known through representations and known only through them. Secondly, Kant makes use of possible worlds in order to account for reference to actual objects with counterfactual properties (and which can possibly be extended to reference to fictional objects). For empirical objects a Kantian approach renders possible worlds as possible experiences or possible perceptual contexts, with possible worlds being distinguished from fictional worlds by having a possible historical connection with the actual world. This could provide an interpretation of what Kripke's 'stipulation across possible worlds' amounts to in the absence of an actual causal chain, providing the theory with a far greater epistemological richness that it currently enjoys.

In all of these possible developments, it is to be hoped that the further a Kantian-type approach is taken, the less firmly wedded it will be to Kant's own systematic style and its accordant pitfalls, though this is a hope I realise that I have only been able to somewhat marginally fulfill here.

Nevertheless, although this work has only provided a partial and limited answer to the three questions with which we began, it is one which, I hope, is not altogether devoid of promise.

[214] Kripke (1972)

Appendix

This appendix contains excerpts from the *Critique of Pure Reason* which correspond to the English translations appearing in the main text. Each excerpt is identified by the number of the footnote which contains the relevant reference. The excerpts are taken from the following edition of the *Critique*: Kant, Immanuel, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Hrsg. von Wilhelm Weischedel, Bände III & IV der Werkausgabe, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1974 (orig. Insel Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1956).

[108] ‚Der innere Sinn, vermittelst dessen das Gemüt sich selbst, oder seinen inneren Zustand anschauet, ...' (A22/B37)

[113] ‚Uns ist wirklich nichts gegeben, als die Wahrnehmung und der empirische Fortschritt von dieser zu anderen möglichen Wahrnehmungen.' (A493/B521)

[116] ‚Wenn aber die Kritik nicht geirrt hat, da sie das Objekt in *zweierlei Bedeutung* nehmen lehrt, nämlich als Erscheinung, oder als Ding an sich selbst; ...' (Bxxvii)

[127] ‚Alle mögliche Erscheinungen gehören, als Vorstellungen, zu dem ganzen möglichen Selbstbewußtsein.' (A113)

[129] ‚Diese Vorstellung aber ist ein Actus der Spontaneität...' (B132)

[131] ‚*Verstand* ist, allgemein zu reden, das Vermögen der *Erkenntnisse.* Diese bestehen in der bestimmten Beziehung gegebener Vorstellungen auf ein Objekt. *Objekt* aber ist das, in dessen Begriff das Mannigfaltige einer gegebenen Anschauung *vereinigt* ist. Nun erfordert aber alle Vereinigung der Vorstellungen Einheit des Bewußtseins in der Synthesis derselben. Folglich ist die Einheit des Bewußtseins dasjeige was allein die Beziehung der Vorstellungen auf einen Gegenstand, mithin ihre objektive Gültigkeit, folglich, daß sie Erkenntnisse werden, ausmacht, und worauf folglich selbst die Möglichkeit des Verstandes beruht.' (B137)

[134] ‚Was versteht man denn, wenn man von einem der Erkenntnis korrespondierenden, mithin auch davon unterschiedenen Gegenstande redet? Es ist leicht einzusehen, daß dieser Gegenstand nur als etwas überhaupt = X müsse gedacht werden, weil wir außer unserer Erkenntnis doch nichts haben, welches wir dieser Erkenntnis als korrespondierend gegen über setzen könnten.' (A104)

[135] ‚Es ist aber klar, daß, da wir es nur mit dem Mannigfaltigen unserer Vorstellungen zu tun haben, und jenes X, was ihnen korrespondiert (der Gegenstand), weil er etwas von allen unsern Vorstellungen Unterschiedenes sein soll, vor uns nichts ist, die Einheit, welche der Gegenstand notwendig macht, nichts anders sein könne, als die formale Einheit des Bewußtseins in der Synthesis des Mannigfaltigen der Vorstellungen.' (A105)

[136] ‚[D]er nichtempirische, d.i. tranzendentale Gegenstand = X ... ist das, was in allen* unsern empirischen Begriffen überhaupt Beziehung auf ... objektive Realität verschaffen kann.' (A109. *Akad.-Ausg.: „was allen".)

[137] ‚Alle Vorstellungen haben, als Vorstellungen, ihren Gegestand, und können selbst wiederum Gegenstände anderer Vorstellungen sein. Erscheinungen sind die einzigen Gegenstände, die uns unmittelbar gegeben werden können, und das, was sich darin unmittelbar auf den Gegenstand bezieht, heißt Anschauung. Nun sind aber diese Erscheinungen nicht Dinge an sich selbst, sondern selbst nur Vorstellungen, die wiederum ihren Gegenstand haben, der also von uns nicht mehr angeschaut werden kann, und daher der nichtempirische, d.i. transzendentale Gegenstand = X genannt werden mag.' (A108-9)

[138] ‚Das Urteil ist ... die mittelbare Erkenntnis eines Gegenstandes, mithin die Vorstellung einer Vorstellung desselben.' (A68/B93)

[139] , ... so finde ich, daß ein Urteil ... sei, als die Art, gegebene Erkenntnisse zur objektiven Einheit der Apperzeption zu bringen. Darauf zielt das Verhältniswörtchen *ist* in [jedem Urteile,] um die objektive Einheit gegebener Vorstellungen von der subjektiven zu unterscheiden.' (B141–2)

[140] , ... würde ich nur sagen können: Wenn ich einen Körper trage, so fühle ich einen Druck der Schwere; aber nicht: er, der Körper, *ist* schwer; ...' (B142)

[146] ‚Eine extensive Große nenne ich diejenige, in welcher die Vorstellung der Teile die Vorstellung des Ganzen möglich macht (und also notwendig vor dieser vorhergeht).' (A162/B203)

[166] ‚Alle *Erscheinungen* enthalten das Beharrliche (*Substanz*) als den Gegenstand selbst, und das Wandelbare, als dessen bloße Bestimmung, d.i. eine Art, wie der Gegenstand existiert' (A182). ‚Bei allem Wechsel der *Erscheinungen* beharret die *Substanz*, und das Quantum derselben wird in der Natur weder vermehrt noch vermindert.' (B224)

[176] , ... die Zeit selbst verändert sich nicht, sondern etwas, das in der Zeit ist.' (A41/B58)

[178] ‚Die Zeit also, in der aller Wechsel der Erscheinungen gedacht werden soll, bleibt und wechselt nicht; weil sie dasjenige ist, in welchem das Nacheinander- oder Zugleichsein nur als Bestimmungen derselben vorgestellt werden können.' (A182/B224–5)

[185] ‚Nach bloßen Begriffen ist das Innere das Substratum aller Verhältnis oder äußeren Bestimmungen.' (A282–3/B338–9)

[186] ‚Die Unendlichkeit der Zeit bedeutet nichts weiter, als daß alle bestimmte Größe der Zeit nur durch Einschränkungen einer einigen zum Grunde liegenden Zeit möglich sei.' (A32/B47–8)

[187] ‚[Anschauung bezieht sich unmittelbar auf den Gegenstand und ist einzeln, [Begriff bezieht sich aber] mittelbar, vermittelst eines Merkmals, was mehreren Dingen gemein sein kann.' (A320/B376–7)

[195] ‚[D]ie Kategorien, [die] ohne Schemate ... nur Funktionen des Verstandes zu Begriffen [sind], stellen aber keinen Gegenstand vor.' (A147/B187)

[199] ‚Diese Kausalität fuhrt auf den Begriff der Handlung, diese auf den Begriff der Kraft, und dadurch auf den Begriff der Substanz. ... Wie will man aus der Handlung sogleich auf *die Beharrlichkeit* des Handelnden schließen...? ... Handlung bedeutet schon das Verhältnis des Subjekts der Kausalität zur Wirkung. Weil nun alle Wirkung in dem besteht, was da geschieht, mithin im Wandelbaren, was die Zeit der Sukzession nach bezeichnet: so ist das letzte Subjekt desselben *das Beharrliche,* als das Substratum alles Wechselnden, d.i. die Substanz. Denn nach dem Grundsatze der Kausalität sind Handlungen immer der erste Grund von allem Wechsel der Erscheinungen, und können also nicht in einem Subjekt liegen, was selbst wechselt, weil sonst andere Handlungen und ein anderes Subjekt, welches diesen Wechsel bestimmte, erforderlich wären. Kraft dessen beweiset nun Handlung, als ein hinreichendes empirisches Kriterium, die Substantialität, ohne daß ich die Beharrlichkeit desselben durch verglichene Wahrnehmungen allererst zu suchen nötig hätte ...' (A204–5/ B249–51)

[206] ‚...daß wir von äußeren Dingen auch *Erfahrung* und nicht bloß *Einbildung* haben ...' (B275)

[207] ‚[Dieses] Beharrliche aber kann nicht etwas in mir sein; weil eben mein Dasein in der Zeit durch dieses Beharrliche allererst bestimmt werden kann.' (B275) ‚Dieses Beharrliche aber kann nicht eine Anschauung in mir sein. Denn alle Bestimmungsgründe meines Daseins, die in mir angetroffen werden können, sind Vorstellungen, und bedürfen, als solche, selbst ein von ihnen unterschiedenes Beharrliches, worauf in Beziehung der Wechsel derselben, mithin mein Dasein in der Zeit, darin sie wechseln, bestimmt werden könne.' (n. Bxxxix)

[209] ‚...[eine bloß *intellektuelle* Vorstellung] der Selbsttätigkeit eines denkenden Subjekts.' (B278)

[210] ‚... folgt nicht, daß jede anschauliche Vorstellung äußerer Dinge zugleich die Existenz derselben einschließe, denn jene kann gar wohl die bloße Wirkung der Einbildungskraft (in Träumen sowohl als im Wahnsinn) sein; ... Es hat hier nur bewiesen werden sollen, daß innere Erfahrung überhaupt, nur durch äußere Erfahrung überhaupt, möglich sei. Ob diese oder jene vermeinte Erfahrung nicht bloße Einbildung sei, muß nach den besondern Bestimmungen derselben, und durch Zusammenhaltung mit den Kriterien aller wirklichen Erfahrung, ausgemittelt werden.' (B278–79)

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