

TRANSCENDENTAL DOCTRINE OF THE POWER OF JUDGMENT

([or] Analytic of Principles)

Chapter III

On the Basis of the Distinction of All Objects As Such into Phenomena and Noumena¹²⁵

We have now not only traveled throughout the land¹²⁶ of pure understanding and carefully inspected its every part, but have also surveyed¹²⁷ it throughout, determining for each thing in this land its proper place. This land, however, is an island, and is enclosed by nature itself within unchangeable bounds. It is the land of truth (a charming name), and is surrounded by a vast and stormy ocean, where illusion properly resides and many fog banks and much fast-melting ice feign new-found lands. This sea¹²⁸ incessantly deludes the seafarer with empty hopes as he roves¹²⁹ through his discoveries, and thus entangles him in adventures that he can never relinquish, nor ever bring to an end. But before we venture upon this sea, to search its latitudes for certainty as to whether there is in them any-

B 295

A 236

¹²⁵[See H. E. Allison, *op. cit.* at A 21/B 35 br. n. 22, 237–54. Also Gerd Buchdahl, *op. cit.* at A 176/B 218 br. n. 3, 532–52. Also H. W. Cassirer, *op. cit.* at A 21/B 35 br. n. 22, 212–37. Also J. N. Findlay, *op. cit.* at A 21/B 35 br. n. 22, 185–90. Also Paul Guyer, *op. cit.* at A 84/B 116 br. n. 1, 333–44. Also Norman Kemp Smith, *op. cit.* at A vii br. n. 5, 404–17. Also Gottfried Martin, *op. cit.* at A 22/B 36 br. n. 26, 141–46. Also Arthur Melnick, *op. cit.* at A 22/B 37 br. n. 27, 250–60; and *op. cit.* at A 176/B 218 br. n. 3, 151–56. Also H. J. Paton, *op. cit.* at B 1 br. n. 152, vol. 2, 439–62. Also T. D. Weldon, *op. cit.* at A 21/B 35 br. n. 22, 189–96. And see R. P. Wolff, *op. cit.* at B 5 br. n. 159, 311–16.]

¹²⁶[Or 'territory': *Land*.]

¹²⁷[-*messen*.]

¹²⁸[Taking *es* to refer not to the land (*das Land*) of truth but to the ocean as thought of (by anticipation of the next sentence) as the sea (*das Meer*).]

¹²⁹[-*schwärmen*, which also means 'to rave,' 'be fanatic.']

thing to be hoped, it will be useful to begin by casting another glance on the map of the land that we are about to leave, and to ask two questions. We should ask, first, whether we might not perhaps be content with what this land contains, or even must be content with it from necessity¹³⁰ if there is no other territory at all on which we could settle. And we should ask, second, by what title we possess even this land and can keep ourselves secure against all hostile claims. Although we have already answered these questions sufficiently in the course of the *Analytic*, a summary account of the *Analytic's* solutions may still reinforce one's conviction by uniting their moments in one point.

B 296

A 237

For we have seen that everything that the understanding draws from itself, rather than borrows from experience, it still has for the sake of nothing other than use in experience only. The principles of pure understanding—whether constitutive a priori (like the mathematical principles) or merely regulative (like the dynamical ones)—contain nothing but, as it were, the pure schema for possible experience. For experience has its unity solely from the synthetic unity that the understanding confers, originally and on its own, on the synthesis of imagination by reference to apperception; appearances, as data for a possible cognition, must a priori already have reference to, and be in harmony with, that synthetic unity. Now, these rules of understanding not only are true a priori; but, by containing the basis for the possibility of experience as the sum of all cognition wherein objects may be given to us, they are even the source of all truth, i.e., the source of our cognition's agreement with objects. Yet having someone set forth to us what is true does not seem to us enough; rather, we want him to set forth what we desire to know.¹³¹ Hence if through this critical inquiry we do not learn more than what presumably we would, in the merely empirical use of our understanding, have practiced on our own even without such subtle investigation, then the advantage obtained from that inquiry does not seem worth the expense and the apparatus. Now to this one might indeed reply that no inquisitiveness¹³² is more detrimental to the expansion of our

¹³⁰[*Not.*]

¹³¹[In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 47), Kant amends this as follows. After 'what is true' he inserts 'however little it may be'; and the clause after 'rather' is changed to '[we want] to expand our cognition.']

¹³²[*Vorwitz.*]

cognition than the inquisitiveness that always wants to know the benefit¹³³ in advance, i.e., before we have entered into investigations, and before we could frame the least concept of that benefit even if it were laid before us. Yet there is one advantage that even the most difficult and listless learner of such transcendental investigation can be made to comprehend and also care about. This advantage is, viz., that although the understanding, when occupied merely with its empirical use and not reflecting on the sources of its own cognition, can get along quite well, yet one task it cannot accomplish: viz., determining for itself the bounds of its use, and knowing what may lie inside or outside its entire sphere; for this task requires precisely those deep inquiries that we have performed. But if the understanding cannot distinguish whether or not certain questions lie within its horizon, then it can never be sure of its claims and its possessions; rather, it must then count on receiving a multitude of embarrassing rebukes when (as is unavoidable) it keeps overstepping the bounds of its domain and strays into delusion and deception.

B 297

A 238

We may say, therefore, that the use that the understanding can make of all its a priori principles and, indeed, of all its concepts is nothing but an empirical and never a transcendental use; and this is a proposition that, if it can be cognized with conviction, points to¹³⁴ important consequences. A concept is used transcendentially in any principle if it is referred to things *as such and in themselves*;¹³⁵ but it is used empirically if it is referred merely to *appearances*, i.e., to objects of a possible *experience*. That only the empirical use can occur at all, however, can be seen from the following. Every concept requires, first, the logical form of a concept (the logical form of thought) as such; and then, second, also the possibility of our giving to it an object to which to refer. Without an object the concept has no sense¹³⁶ and is completely empty of content, although it may still contain the logical function for making a concept from what data may come up. Now, the object cannot be given to a concept otherwise than in intuition; and if a pure intuition¹³⁷ is possible a priori even before the object, still this pure intuition itself also can acquire its object, and hence objec-

B 298

A 239

¹³³{Of such expansion.}

¹³⁴{in . . . *hinaussieht*—to which Kant adds (*ibid.*): 'against fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*].'

¹³⁵{'things *as such and in themselves*' amended by Kant (*ibid.*) to 'objects that are not given to us in any intuition, hence nonsensible objects.'

¹³⁶{Or 'meaning': *Sinn*.}

¹³⁷{Amended by Kant (*ibid.*) to: 'even if for us a pure sensible intuition.'}

tive validity, only through empirical intuition, whose mere form the pure intuition is. Therefore all concepts, and with them all principles, however possible these [concepts and principles] may be a priori, refer nonetheless to empirical intuitions, i.e., to data for possible experience. Without this reference they have no objective validity whatever, but are mere play, whether by the imagination or by the understanding, with their respective presentations. Just take as an example the concepts of mathematics, and take them, first, in their pure intuitions. Space has three dimensions; between two points there can be only one straight line; etc. Although all these principles, and the presentation of the object that this science deals with, are produced in the mind completely a priori, yet they would signify nothing if we could not always display¹³⁸ their signification in appearances (empirical objects). Hence, too, we require that an abstract¹³⁹ concept be *made sensible*, i.e., that the object corresponding to it be displayed in intuition, because otherwise the concept would remain (as we say) *without sense*, i.e., without signification. Mathematics fulfills this demand by constructing the shape, which is an appearance present to the senses (although brought about a priori). In the same science,¹⁴⁰ the concept of magnitude seeks its hold and sense in number, and seeks number in fingers, in the beads of the abacus,¹⁴¹ or in the dashes and dots put before us. The concept always remains one that is produced a priori along with the synthetic principles or formulas based on such concepts; yet their use and their reference to alleged objects can in the end be sought nowhere but in experience, whose possibility (as regards form) is contained a priori in those concepts.

B 300 But that this is also the case with all the categories, and with the principles spun from them, is evident also from the following. Not even one of the categories can we define really,¹⁴² i.e., make understandable the possibility of its object,¹⁴³ without immediately descending to conditions of

¹³⁸[*darlegen*, used as a synonym for *darstellen* ('to exhibit'), for which cf. B xvii br. n. 73.]

¹³⁹[*abgesondert*.]

¹⁴⁰[Of mathematics.]

¹⁴¹[Literally, 'in the corals of the calculating-board.']

¹⁴²[Rather than merely nominally; 'really' added in B. For the distinction, see ns. 144 and 144b, just below, and cf. the *Logic*, Ak. IX, 143–44.]

¹⁴³[This clause added in B. In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 47), Kant had written next to the present paragraph: 'We cannot explain their [*ihre*] possibility.']

sensibility and hence to the form of appearances; to these appearances, as their sole objects, the categories must consequently be limited. For if we take away the mentioned condition, then all signification, i.e., reference to the object, is gone; and through no example can we then make comprehensible to ourselves just what sort of thing is in fact meant by such a concept.¹⁴⁴

A 241

¹⁴⁴[In A the present paragraph continues with the following passage, omitted in B (and in A the subsequent text is also still part of this same paragraph):]

Above, in presenting the table of the categories, we exempted ourselves from providing definitions of each of them,^a because for our aim—which is concerned solely with the categories' synthetic use—such definitions are not needed, and one must not incur responsibility for needless undertakings from which one can be exempted. This was no pretext, but a not unimportant rule of prudence: viz., not to venture immediately upon defining [a concept], and not to attempt or allege to attain completeness or precision in determining a concept, if one can make do with any one or another of its characteristics—and for this we do not, of course, require a complete enumeration of all the characteristics that make up the whole concept. But we now find that the basis for this caution lies deeper still: viz., in the fact that we were unable to define them, even if we had wanted to.^b Rather, if we remove from the categories all conditions of sensibility, which mark them as concepts for a possible empirical use, and take them as concepts of things^c as such (and hence as concepts for transcendental use), then there is nothing more to be done with them but to regard the logical function that they have in judgments as^d the condition for the possibility of things themselves. Yet we then do this without in the least being able to indicate just where the categories can have their application and their object, and hence how in pure understanding and without sensibility they can have any signification and objective reality.

A 242

^a[For the table, see A 80/B 106; for this comment, A 82–83/B 108–9.]

^bHere mean real definition. Such definition does not merely provide^e for a thing's name other and more understandable words. Rather, it contains a clear characteristic whereby the *object (definitum)*^d can always safely be cognized, and makes the explicated concept usable for application. Real explication,^f therefore, would be explication that makes distinct not merely a concept but also its *objective reality*. Of this latter kind are mathematical explications that exhibit the object in intuition in conformity with the concept.^f

A 242

^c[*unterlegen.*]

^d[What is defined.]

^e[Or 'Real definition': *Realerklärung.*]

No one can explicate the concept of magnitude as such, except perhaps by saying that it is that determination of a thing whereby we can think how many times a unit¹⁴⁵ is posited in it. Yet this how-many-times is based on successive repetition, and hence on time and the synthesis (of the homogeneous) in time. Reality contrasted with negation can be explicated only if one thinks of a time (as the sum of all being) that is either filled with something or empty. If from the concept of substance I omit permanence (which is an existence at all time), then I have nothing left for this concept but the logical presentation of subject, a presentation that I mean to realize¹⁴⁶ by presenting something that can occur only as subject (i.e., only without being a predicate of anything). However, not only do I not know any conditions at all under which some thing will possess this logical superiority;¹⁴⁷ but we also cannot make from it anything further,¹⁴⁸ and cannot draw from it the least inference. For through this explication no object whatever is determined for the use of the concept of substance, and hence we do not know at all whether the concept in fact signifies anything whatsoever. Of the concept of cause (if I omit from it the time in which something succeeds something else according to a rule) I would find, in the pure category, nothing more than that it¹⁴⁹ is something from which the existence of something else can be inferred. And not only would we be entirely unable, through this explication, to distinguish cause and effect from each other, but since even that ability to infer the existence of something else will soon require conditions of which I know nothing, the concept would have no determination whatever as to how it fits any object. The supposed principle that everything contingent has a cause does, to be sure, make its

¹⁴⁵[In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 47), Kant notes here: 'Instead of to explicate one could also use the expression to support [*belegen*] something by an example.' For Kant's position that there may be definitions in mathematics but not in philosophy, see below, A 727-32 = B 755-70.]

¹⁴⁶{*Dinge* here, *Sachen* just below.]

¹⁴⁷{Deleting the comma before *als* ('as').]

¹⁴⁸{*Eines*.]

¹⁴⁹{I.e., provide with reality: *realisieren*.]

¹⁴⁷[In his working copy of edition A (Ak. XXIII, 47; see br. n. 144f, just above), Kant notes: 'See the General Comment' (B 288-94).]

¹⁴⁸{Such as cognition.]

¹⁴⁹{*es* refers to *Ursache*; but, being neuter rather than feminine, it does so with (deliberate) vagueness.]

entrance with considerable gravity, as if it carried¹⁵⁰ its own dignity within itself. Yet if I ask what do you mean by contingent, and you reply, that whose nonexistence¹⁵¹ is possible, then I would like to know by what you intend to cognize¹⁵² this possibility of nonexistence, if you do not in the series of appearances present a succession and, in this succession, present an existence that succeeds the nonexistence (or vice versa), and hence present a variation. For to say that a thing's nonexistence does not contradict itself is a lame appeal to a merely logical condition that, although necessary for the concept, is yet far from sufficient for the thing's real possibility. Thus I can indeed annul any existing substance in my thought without contradicting myself; but from this I cannot infer the substance's objective contingency in its existence, i.e., the possibility in itself of its¹⁵³ nonexistence. As regards the concept of community, one can easily gather that since the pure categories of both substance and causality permit no explication determining the object, neither is reciprocal causality in the reference of substances to one another (*commercium*)¹⁵⁴ capable of such explication. As for possibility, existence, and necessity, no one who has sought to draw their definition solely from pure understanding has ever been able to explicate them except through a manifest tautology. For the deception of substituting the logical possibility of the *concept* (where the concept does not contradict itself) for the transcendental possibility¹⁵⁵ of *things* (where to the concept there corresponds an object) can trick and satisfy only the unseasoned.¹⁵⁶

{ A 244
B 302

¹⁵⁰[*habe.*]

¹⁵¹[Or 'not-being': *Nichtsein.*]

¹⁵²[Or 'recognize': *erkennen.*]

¹⁵³[Reading, with Vaihinger (and the *Akademie* edition), *ihres* for *seines*. Kant seems to have thought that he had written *Gegenstand* or *Objekt.*]

¹⁵⁴[Cf. A 213/B 260.]

¹⁵⁵[Changed by Kant to 'real possibility' in his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 48).]

¹⁵⁶In a word,^a if all sensible intuition (the only intuition that we have) is removed, then none of these concepts can be *supported* by anything and their *real* possibility be established thereby. All that then remains is logical possibility, i.e., the fact that the concept (the thought) is possible. What is at issue, however, is not this, but whether the concept refers to an object and hence signifies something.

^a[This footnote added in B.]

B 303 ¹⁵⁷Now from this flows incontestably the consequence that the pure categories can *never* be of *transcendental* but always only of *empirical*

¹⁵⁷[In A, unlike in B, the following is preceded by this paragraph:]

A 245 There is something strange and even preposterous about the supposition of there being^a a concept that [as such] must surely have a signification, but that is not capable of any explication. Yet here, with the categories, the special situation is that only by means of the universal *sensible condition* can they have a determinate signification and reference to some object; but that this condition has been omitted from the pure category, so that the category can contain nothing but the logical function for bringing the manifold under a concept. But from this function alone, i.e., from the form of the concept alone, we can cognize and distinguish nothing as to what object belongs under the category, precisely because we have abstracted from the sensible condition on which alone objects can belong under the category at all.^b Hence the categories require, in addition to the pure concept of understanding, determinations of their application to sensibility as such^c (schemata).^d Without these determinations the categories are not concepts through which an object is cognized and distinguished from others, but are only so many ways of thinking an object for possible intuitions, and of giving the object (under conditions that are still required) its signification in accordance with some function of the understanding, i.e., of *defining* it. Hence they cannot themselves be defined. The logical functions of judgments as such—unity and plurality, affirmation and negation, subject and predicate—cannot be defined without committing a circle; for the definition itself would, after all, have to be a judgment, and hence would already have to contain these functions. The pure categories, however, are nothing other than presentations of things as such insofar as the manifold of their intuition must be thought through one or another of these logical functions: magnitude is the determination that can be thought only through a judgment having quantity (*iudicium commune*);^e reality is the determination that can be thought only through an affirmative judgment; substance is what in reference to intuition must be the ultimate subject of all other determinations. In saying this, however, we leave quite indeterminate just what sort of things it is in regard to which this function rather than some other is to be employed. Hence without the condition of sensible intuition, for which they contain the synthesis, the categories have no reference whatever to any determinate object, and

A 246

use,¹⁵⁸ and that the principles of pure understanding can be referred¹⁵⁹ only, with respect to the universal conditions of a possible experience, to objects of the senses, but never to things as such¹⁶⁰ (i.e., never without taking account of the way in which we may intuit them).

The Transcendental Analytic, accordingly, has this important result: viz., that the understanding can a priori never accomplish more than to anticipate the form of a possible experience as such; and since what is not appearance cannot be an object of experience, the understanding can never overstep the limits of sensibility within which alone objects are given to us. Its principles are merely rules for the exposition of appearances; and the proud name of an ontology that pretends to provide, in a systematic doctrine, synthetic a priori cognitions (e.g., the principle of causality) of things in themselves must give way to the modest name of a mere analytic of pure understanding.

Thinking is the act of referring given intuitions to an object. If the kind of this intuition¹⁶¹ is not given¹⁶² in any way, then the object is merely transcendental, and the concept of understanding has none but a transcendental use, viz., to provide the unity of thought of a manifold as such.¹⁶³ Hence through a pure category, in which we abstract from any condition of sensible intuition (the only intuition possible for us),¹⁶⁴ no object is determined;¹⁶⁵ rather, a pure category expresses only the thought of an ob-

hence cannot define any such object, and consequently do not in themselves have the validity of objective concepts.

^a[*daß . . . sein soll.*]

^b[*überhaupt.*]

^c[*überhaupt.*]

^d[Reading, with Vaihinger, *Schemata* for *Schema.*]

^e[Common judgment.]

¹⁵⁸[In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13 —Ak. XXIII, 48), Kant adds, 'i.e., no principles from mere categories.']

¹⁵⁹[Kant (*ibid.*) adds, 'if they are to provide cognition.']

¹⁶⁰[Kant (*ibid.*) adds, '[referred] synthetically.']

¹⁶¹[I.e., sensible intuition or some other kind; see just below.]

¹⁶²[I.e., specified.]

¹⁶³[Kant (*ibid.*) changes this to: 'manifold of a possible intuition as such.']

¹⁶⁴[Parentheses added.]

¹⁶⁵[Kant (*ibid.*) adds, 'and hence nothing is cognized.']

A 247

B 304

ject as such according to different modes. Now the use of a concept involves also a function of the power of judgment,¹⁶⁶ by means of which an object is subsumed under the concept, and hence involves at least the formal condition under which something can be given in intuition. If this condition of the power of judgment (the schema) is lacking, then all subsumption is lost; for nothing is then given that can be subsumed under the concept. Hence the merely transcendental use of the categories is in fact not a use at all,¹⁶⁷ and has no object that is determinate, or is even determinable as regards form. From this it follows that the pure category is also insufficient for a synthetic a priori principle, and that the principles of pure understanding are only of empirical but never of transcendental use; and it follows that beyond the realm of possible experience there can be no synthetic a priori principles at all.

A 248

B 305

Hence it may be advisable to put the point as follows. The pure categories, without formal conditions of sensibility, have merely transcendental signification, but have no transcendental use.¹⁶⁸ For such use of the pure categories is intrinsically impossible, because they lack all the conditions for any use of them (in judgments), viz., the formal conditions for the subsumption of some alleged object under these concepts. Hence because they (as merely pure categories) are not meant to have empirical use, and cannot have transcendental use, they have no use whatsoever when separated from all sensibility, i.e., they cannot be applied to any alleged object. They are, rather, merely the pure form of understanding's use regarding objects as such, and the pure form of thought; but through them alone we are [therefore] unable to think or determine any object.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶[Viz., a schema.]

¹⁶⁷[Kant (*ibid.*) changes this to: '[not a] use for cognizing anything.']

¹⁶⁸[See below, A 310–11/B 366–68.]

¹⁶⁹[Instead of the following four paragraphs (to the first part of B 309), A has the following:]

A 249

Appearances, insofar as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called phenomena. But if I assume things that are objects merely of the understanding and that, as such, can nonetheless be given to an intuition—even if not to sensible intuition (but hence^a *coram intuitu intellectualib*^b)—then such things would be called noumena (*intelligibilia*).^c

Now one would think that the concept of appearances, as limited by the Transcendental Aesthetic, provides us already by itself with the objective reality of noumena and justifies the division of objects into phe-

But there is, here, an underlying delusion that it is difficult to avoid. The categories are not, as regards their origin, based on sensibility, as are the

nomena and noumena, and hence also the division of the world into a world of sense and a world of understanding (*mundus sensibilis et intelligibilis*). Indeed, one would think that the concept justifies this division in such a way that the distinction here^d concerns not merely the logical form of the cognition of one and the same thing, viz., as indistinct or distinct, but concerns the difference regarding how things can be given to our cognition originally and regarding which they are in themselves distinguished from one another in type. For if the senses present something to us merely *as it appears*, then surely this something must also in itself be a thing, and an object of a nonsensible intuition, i.e., an object of understanding. That is, a cognition must then be possible in which no sensibility is to be found, and which alone has reality that is objective absolutely—i.e., a cognition whereby objects are presented to us *as they are* while being cognized in our understanding's empirical use only *as they appear*. Hence there would be, besides the empirical use of the categories (which is limited to sensible conditions), also a pure and yet objectively valid use of them; and we could not assert what we have alleged thus far, viz., that our pure cognitions of understanding are nothing more at all than principles of the exposition^e of appearance which even a priori deal with no more than the formal possibility of experience. For a wholly different realm would here lie open before us: a world, as it were, thought (perhaps even intuited) in the intellect^f—a world that could engage our pure understanding not less,^g but indeed much more nobly.

A 250

Now, it is true that all our presentations are by the understanding referred to some object; and since appearances are nothing but presentations, the understanding refers them to a something as the object of sensible intuition. But this something is^h in so far only the transcendental object.ⁱ This, however, signifies only a something = *x* of which we do not know—nor (by our understanding's current arrangement) can in principle^j ever know—anything whatsoever. Rather, this transcendental object can serve only, as a correlate of the unity of apperception, for the unity in sensible intuition's manifold by means of which the understanding unites that manifold in^k the concept of an object. This transcendental object cannot be separated at all from the sensible data, for then there remains nothing through which it would be thought. It is, therefore, not in itself an object of cognition, but is only the presentation of appear-

A 251

forms of intuition, space and time; they therefore seem to admit of an application expanded beyond all objects of the senses. Yet they themselves

ances under the concept of an object as such—a concept determinable through the manifold of these appearances.¹

Precisely because of this, too, the categories present no special object given to the understanding alone, but serve only to determine the transcendental object^m (the concept of something as such) through what is given in sensibility, in order that we can thereby cognize appearances empirically under concepts of objects.

But as for the cause why people, being not yet satisfied by the substratum of sensibility, have added to the phenomena also noumena that only the pure understanding can think, it rests merely on the following. Sensibility—and its realm, viz., that of appearances—is itself limited by understanding so that it deals not with things in themselves but only with the way in which, by virtue of our subjective character, things appear to us. This was the result of the entire Transcendental Aesthetic; and from the concept of an appearance as such, too, it follows naturally that to appearance there must correspond something that is not in itself appearance. For appearance cannot be anything by itself and apart from our way of presenting; hence, if we are not to go in a constant circle, then the word appearance already indicates a reference to something the direct presentation of which is indeed sensible, but which in itself—even without this character of our sensibility (on which the form of our intuition is based)—must be something, i.e., an object independent of sensibility.

Now from this consideration arises the concept of a noumenon. But this concept isⁿ not at all positive and is not a determinate cognition of some thing, but signifies only the thinking of something as such—something in which I abstract from all form of sensible intuition. But in order that a noumenon may signify a true object, to be distinguished from all phenomena, it is not enough that I *free* my thought from all conditions of sensible intuition. I must, in addition, also have a basis for *assuming* an intuition which is different from this sensible one and in^o which such an object could be given; for otherwise my thought is empty after all, even though not contradictory. Above,^p we were indeed unable to prove that sensible intuition is the only possible intuition generally, and were able to prove only that it is this *for us*; but we were likewise unable to prove that a different kind of intuition is also possible. And although our thought can abstract from any^q sensibility, yet we are left

are in turn nothing but *forms of thought* that contain merely the logical ability to unite a priori¹⁷⁰ one consciousness the manifold given¹⁷¹ in

B 306

A 253

with the question whether this thought^r is not then a mere form of a concept, and whether after this separation^s there remains an object at all.^t

The object to which I refer appearance as such is the transcendental object,^u i.e., the wholly indeterminate concept of something as such. This object cannot be called the *noumenon*. For I do not know concerning it what it is in itself, and have no concept of it except merely the concept of the object of a sensible intuition as such—an object which, therefore, is the same for all appearances. I cannot think it through any categories; for a category holds only for empirical intuition in order to bring it under a concept of an object as such. Although a pure use of a category is logically^v possible, i.e., is without contradiction, it has no objective validity whatever, because the category does not then apply to any intuition that would thereby acquire the unity of an object. For a category is, after all, a mere function of thought; through it I am not given any object, but only think what may be given in intuition.

^a[Reading, with Vaihinger (and the *Akademie* edition), also for *als*.]

^b['To an intellectual intuition.' Cf. B x1 br. n. 144g, and B 72 incl. br. n. 183.]

^c[I.e., intelligibles.]

^d[Unlike in Leibniz and Wolff.]

^e[In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 48), Kant adds, 'synthesis of the manifold.']

^f[*im Geiste*.]

^g[Than the world of sense.]

^h[Kant (*ibid.*) expands this to: 'this something as object of an intuition as such is.']

ⁱ[*Objekt* here and at the beginning of the paragraph, *Gegenstand* just above. For the transcendental object, cf. A 104–5, 109.]

^j[*überhaupt*.]

^k['into,' literally.]

^l[Kant (*ibid.*) notes, 'form of thought only, but no cognition.']

^m[Kant uses *Objekt* here and just above, *Gegenstand* (in the plural) just below.]

ⁿ['is' added by Hartenstein (and adopted by the *Akademie* edition).]

^o[*unter*.]

^p[In the *Transcendental Aesthetic*.]

^q[Reading, with Hartenstein (and the *Akademie* edition), *jeder* for *jener*.]

^r[Of a *noumenon*.]

^s[From sensibility.]

^t[In his working copy of edition A (*op. cit.* in br. n. 169e, just above, 49), Kant changes this to: '... there still remains a *possible intuition* at all. For no one can establish the possibility of an intellectual intuition; and hence it could easily be that no such way of cognizing, in regard to which we would consider something as object, would oc-

intuition. And thus, if one takes away from the categories the only intuition possible for us, then the signification they can have is even less than that of the pure sensible forms.¹⁷² For through these forms an object is at least given, whereas a way—peculiar to our understanding—of combining the manifold signifies nothing whatever if the intuition wherein alone this manifold can be given is not added. On the other hand, certain objects as appearances are called by us beings of sense (phenomena), because we distinguish the way in which we intuit them from the character¹⁷³ that they have in themselves. But if this is so, then our concept of beings of sense already implies that these objects regarded in that character (even if we do not intuit them in that character)¹⁷⁴—or, for that matter, other possible things that are not objects of our senses at all—are, as it were, contrasted by us with the beings of sense,¹⁷⁵ viz., as objects thought merely through understanding, and that we may therefore call them beings of the understanding¹⁷⁶ (noumena). And now the question arises whether our pure concepts of understanding might not have signification in regard to these noumena and be a way of cognizing them.

But here we find, at the very outset, an ambiguity that may occasion great misunderstanding. For when the understanding calls an object in one reference merely phenomenon, then it simultaneously frames, apart from this reference, also a presentation¹⁷⁷ of an *object in itself*. And hence the understanding conceives¹⁷⁸ that it can frame *concepts* of such an object

B 307

cur at all. Hence the positive concept of a noumenon asserts something whose possibility cannot be proved.'

¹⁷⁰[Here Kant uses *Gegenstand*; just above he said *Objekt*. See A vii br. n. 7.]

¹⁷¹['logically' added by Kant himself in his working copy of edition A (*op. cit.* in br. n. 169e, just above, 49).]

¹⁷⁰['into,' literally.]

¹⁷¹[Here 'manifold' is an adjective and 'given' functions as the noun.]

¹⁷²[Of intuition.]

¹⁷³[*Beschaffenheit*.]

¹⁷⁴[Parentheses added.]

¹⁷⁵[i.e., phenomena.]

¹⁷⁶[*Verstandeswesen*. Although in the interest of avoiding reification of the Kantian mental powers (cf. A xii br. n. 16) I usually omit 'the' before 'understanding,' the exception here clarifies that Kant does not mean a being *having* understanding. (Strictly speaking, the context would suffice to resolve the ambiguity—already present in the German also.)]

¹⁷⁷[*Vorstellung*.]

¹⁷⁸[*sich vorstellen*.]

also; and since the understanding supplies no concepts other than the categories, it conceives that the object in this latter signification¹⁷⁹ must at least be capable of being thought. Through this, however, the understanding is misled into considering the wholly *indeterminate* concept of a being of the understanding, as a something as such apart from our sensibility, to be a *determinate* concept of a being that we could in some way cognize through understanding.

If, by abstracting from our way of intuiting a thing, we mean by noumenon a thing *insofar as it is not an object of our sensible intuition*, then this is a noumenon in the *negative* meaning of the term. But if by noumenon we mean an *object of a nonsensible intuition* and hence assume a special kind of intuition, viz., an intellectual one¹⁸⁰—which, however, is not ours and into the possibility of which we also have no insight—then that would be the noumenon in the *positive* meaning of the term.

Now the doctrine of sensibility is simultaneously the doctrine of noumena in the negative meaning of the term; i.e., it is the doctrine of things that the understanding must think without this reference to our kind of intuition, and hence must think not merely as appearances but as things in themselves. But the understanding, in thus separating [things from our intuition], simultaneously comprehends that in considering them in this way it cannot make any use of its categories. For the categories have signification only in reference to the unity of intuitions in space and time; and hence, by the same token, they can a priori determine this same unity through universal combination concepts¹⁸¹ only because space and time are merely ideal. Where this unity of time cannot be found, and hence in the case of the noumenon, there the entire use of the categories—indeed, even all their signification—ceases completely, because we then have no insight even into the possibility of the things that are to correspond to the categories—a point on which I need only appeal to what I have set forth at the very beginning of the General Comment on the preceding chapter.¹⁸² The possibility of a thing can, however, never be proved merely from the fact that a concept of this thing is not contradictory, but can be proved

B 308

¹⁷⁹[As object in itself.]

¹⁸⁰[Cf. B xl br. n. 144g, and B 72 incl. br. n. 183.]

¹⁸¹[Or: 'they can determine this same unity through universal a priori combination concepts.']

¹⁸²[Sec B 288.]

B 309 only by supporting¹⁸³ the concept through an intuition corresponding to it. Hence if we wanted to apply the categories to objects that are not regarded as appearances, then we would have to lay at the basis an intuition other than the sensible one; and then the object would be a noumenon in the *positive signification*. Now such an intuition—viz., intellectual intuition—lies absolutely outside our cognitive power, and hence the use of the categories can likewise in no way extend beyond the boundary containing the objects of experience. And although to the beings of sense there correspond beings of the understanding and there may indeed be beings of the understanding to which our sensible power of intuition has no reference whatever, yet our concepts of understanding, as mere forms of thought for our sensible intuition, do not in the least extend to them. Hence what is called noumenon by us must be meant as such only in the *negative signification*.

A 254 If from an empirical cognition I remove all thought (through categories), then there remains no cognition at all of any object. For through mere intuition nothing at all is thought; and the fact that my sensibility's thus being affected¹⁸⁴ is [an occurrence] in me does not at all amount to a reference by such a presentation to any object. But if, on the other hand, I omit all intuition, then there does still remain the form of thought, i.e., the way of determining an object for the manifold of a possible intuition. Hence the categories do in so far extend further than sensible intuition, because they think objects¹⁸⁵ as such without yet taking account of the special way (viz., sensibility)¹⁸⁶ in which they may be given. But they do not thereby determine a larger sphere of objects;¹⁸⁷ for, that such objects can be given cannot be assumed without presupposing as possible a kind of intuition other than the sensible—which, however, we are in no way entitled to do.

B 310 I call a concept problematic if, although containing no contradiction and also cohering with other cognitions as a boundary of given concepts involved in them, its objective reality cannot be cognized in any way. The concept of a *noumenon*, i.e., of a thing that is not to be thought at all as an object of the senses but is to be thought (solely through a pure understanding) as a thing in itself, is not at all contradictory; for we cannot, after all, assert of sensibility that it is the only possible kind of intuition. Moreover,

¹⁸³[*belegen.*]

¹⁸⁴[*diese Affektion der Sinnlichkeit.*]

¹⁸⁵[*Objekte.*]

¹⁸⁶[Reading, with Erdmann, *die Sinnlichkeit for der Sinnlichkeit* ('[kind] of sensibility').]

¹⁸⁷[*Gegenstände.*]

the concept of a noumenon is necessary in order not to extend sensible intuition even over things in themselves, and hence in order to limit the objective validity of sensible cognition. (For the remaining things,¹⁸⁸ to which that validity does not reach, are called noumena precisely in order to indicate that those cognitions cannot extend their domain over everything thought by the understanding.) Yet, in the end, we can have no insight at all into the possibility of such noumena, and the range outside the sphere of appearances is (for us) empty. I.e., we have an understanding that *problematically* extends further than this sphere; but we have no intuition—indeed, not even the concept of a possible intuition—through which objects can be given to us outside the realm of sensibility, and through which the understanding can be used *assertorically* beyond sensibility. The concept of a noumenon is, therefore, only a *boundary concept* serving to limit the pretension of sensibility, and hence is only of negative use. But it is nonetheless not arbitrarily invented; rather, it coheres¹⁸⁹ with the limitation of sensibility, yet without being able to posit anything positive outside sensibility's range.

A 255

B 311

Hence the division of objects into phenomena and noumena, and of the world into a world of sense and a world of understanding, cannot be permitted at all in the positive signification,¹⁹⁰ although concepts do indeed permit the distinction¹⁹¹ into sensible and intellectual ones. For we cannot determine any object for intellectual concepts, and hence also cannot pass them off as objectively valid. How, if we depart from the senses, are we to make comprehensible that our categories (which would be the only remaining concepts for noumena) still signify anything at all—given that in order for them to refer to some object, there must still be given something more than merely the unity of thought: viz., in addition, a possible intuition to which they can be applied? The concept of a noumenon, as taken merely problematically, remains nonetheless not only permissible, but, as a concept putting sensibility within limits, also unavoidable. But that noumenon is then not a special [viz.] *intelligible object* for our understanding. Rather, an understanding to which it would belong is itself a problem, viz., as to how it can cognize its object not discursively through categories, but

A 256

B 312

¹⁸⁸[Reading, with Erdmann, *die übrigen* for *das übrige*.]

¹⁸⁹[Or 'connects.']

¹⁹⁰['in the positive signification' added in B.]

¹⁹¹[Of concepts.]

intuitively in a nonsensible intuition;¹⁹² of such an understanding we cannot frame the slightest presentation as to its possibility. Now in this way¹⁹³ our understanding acquires a negative expansion. I.e., it is not limited by sensibility; rather, it limits sensibility by calling things in themselves (things not regarded as appearances) noumena. But it immediately sets bounds for itself also: it acknowledges not cognizing things in themselves through any categories, and hence only thinking them under the name of an unknown¹⁹⁴ something.¹⁹⁵

In the writings of the more recent philosophers,¹⁹⁶ however, I find a quite different use of the expressions¹⁹⁷ *mundus sensibilis* and [*mundus*] *intelligibilis*¹⁹⁸ that deviates completely from the sense employed by the ancients. And although this use involves no difficulty, we also find in it nothing but an idle fiddling with words. According to this use, some have opted to call the sum of appearances, insofar as it is intuited, the world of sense; but they have opted to call it the world of understanding insofar as the coherence of appearances is thought according to universal laws of understanding. The first world¹⁹⁹ would be presented by theoretical²⁰⁰ as-

A 257

B 313

¹⁹²[Concerning an intuitive understanding and its intellectual intuition, see B xl br. n. 144g, and B 72 incl. br. n. 183.]

¹⁹³[I.e., through the concept of a noumenon as used problematically.]

¹⁹⁴[*unbekannt*.]

¹⁹⁵[See W. Watson, *op. cit.* at B xvi br. n. 71, 57, 59–60.]

¹⁹⁶[Kant very likely means Leibniz and Wolff. See A 249.]

¹⁹⁷[Which mean 'sensible world,' 'intelligible world.']

¹⁹⁸We^a must not use, instead of this expression,^b the expression *intellectual world*, as writers commonly tend to do when they set forth their views in German. For only *cognitions* are intellectual or sensory;^c but what can only be an *object*^d of the one or the other kind of intuition^e—i.e., the objects [themselves]—must be called (regardless of the harshness of the sound) intelligible or sensible.^f

^a[This note added in B.]

^b[*mundus intelligibilis*.]

^c[*intellektuell oder sensitiv*.]

^d[Kant uses *Gegenstand* here, *Objekt* (in the plural) just below.]

^e[I.e., intellectual or sensory (sensible, in the *customary* meaning of *sinnlich*) intuition.]

^f[*intelligibel*; *sensibel*. in the *literal* meaning of 'capable of being sensed.' The "harsh sound" seems to be that of the ending, *-ibel*, since the pairs of terms are otherwise similar.]

¹⁹⁹[Viz., the sensible world.]

²⁰⁰[I.e., observational; cf. the etymology of 'theoretical.']

tronomy, which sets forth our mere observations of the starry sky; the second world, on the other hand, viz., an intelligible world, would be presented by contemplative²⁰¹ astronomy (as explained, say, according to the Copernican system of the world, or even according to Newton's laws of gravitation). But such twisting of words is a merely sophistical subterfuge intended to evade a burdensome question by toning down its meaning to one's convenience. Understanding and reason can indeed be used in regard to appearances; but the question arises whether they still have any use even when the object is not appearance (but noumenon); and in this meaning the object is taken when it is thought as in itself merely intelligible, i.e., given solely to understanding and not at all to the senses. Hence the question is whether, apart from that empirical use of understanding (even in the Newtonian presentation of the world structure), there can also be a transcendental use of it that deals with the noumenon as an object. This question we have answered negatively.

Hence when we say that the senses present objects to us *as they appear*, but the understanding presents them *as they are*, then the second [description of objects] is to be taken not in transcendental but merely in empirical signification: viz., it refers to them as they must, insofar as they are objects of experience, be presented in the thoroughgoing coherence of appearances, and not according to what they may be apart from the reference to possible experience and consequently to senses as such, and hence not according to what they may be as objects of pure understanding. For this will always remain unknown²⁰² to us—even to the point that it also remains unknown to us whether such transcendental (extraordinary) cognition is possible at all, at least as a kind of cognition that is subject to our usual categories. In us, *understanding* and *sensibility* can determine objects *only in combination*. If we separate them, then we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions; but in either case we have presentations that we cannot refer to any determinate object.²⁰³

If, after this entire discussion, anyone still harbors qualms about forgoing the merely transcendental use of the categories, let that reader try them in some synthetic assertion. For an analytic assertion does not advance the understanding. And since the understanding here deals only with what is already thought in the concept, it leaves unestablished whether the concept

A 258

B 314

²⁰¹[i.e., reflective.]

²⁰²[unbekannt.]

²⁰³[See A 50–52/B 74–76.]

A 259

refers in itself to objects, or whether it signifies only the unity of thought as such (which unity abstracts entirely from the way in which an object may be given). The understanding as so used is content to know what lies in its concept; it is indifferent as regards what the concept itself may apply to. Accordingly, let that reader try the categories with some synthetic and supposedly transcendental principle, such as: Everything that exists as substance or as some determination attaching thereto; or: Everything contingent exists as effect of another thing, namely, its cause; etc. Now I ask: whence does he intend to obtain these synthetic propositions, given that the concepts are to hold not in reference to possible experience but for things in themselves (noumena)? Where is here the third something²⁰⁴ that we always require for a synthetic proposition²⁰⁵ in order thereby to connect with one another concepts that have no logical (analytic) kinship²⁰⁶ whatever? That reader will never be able to prove his proposition; indeed, what is still more, he will never be able to offer justification for the possibility of such a pure²⁰⁷ assertion without taking into account the empirical use of understanding and thereby forgoing entirely the pure and sense-free judgment. And thus the concept²⁰⁸ of pure and merely intelligible objects is entirely empty of any principles for the application of such concepts. For we cannot think of any way in which such objects might be given; and the problematic thought which yet leaves open a place for them serves only, like an empty space, to limit the empirical principles, but without containing or displaying any other object of cognition outside the sphere of these principles.

A 260

²⁰⁴[In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 49), Kant changes this to: 'this third something, [consisting] of intuition.']

²⁰⁵[See A 216–17/B 263–64 br. ns. 238 and 241.]

²⁰⁶[Or 'affinity': *Verwandschaft*. Cf. A 662 = B 690.]

²⁰⁷[I.e., completely nonempirical.]

²⁰⁸[In his working copy of edition A (see *Preliminary Studies and Supplementary Entries*—cited at A 19/B 33 br. n. 13—Ak. XXIII, 49), Kant changes this to: 'the positive concept, the possible cognition.']