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Appearances and Things in Themselves in Critical Idealism

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Things in themselves play a central role in Kant's critical philosophy, that is, his mature philosophy that he presented to the world in his publications from 1781 onwards starting with the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As allegedly unknowable grounds of all knowable objects, things in themselves are as important in Kant's ontology as they are perplexing in his epistemology. The present book grew out of the question of how to think about things in themselves, according to Kant. This question can be understood in two ways. First, one can take it as a broadly ontological question about Kant's conception of things in themselves. What sort of things are they? What are their properties? What is their ontological status in Kant's critical philosophy? Second, one can regard it as a question about whether, and if so how, we can have meaningful thoughts about or even cognize things in themselves, according to Kant's theory of thinking and cognition. In virtue of what can our concepts refer to them? How can we manage to cognitively access them through our thinking? What sort of cognition of them, if any, is possible for us?

More than a decade ago, in my (then) youthful naïveté and optimism, I decided to select this double-sided question as the topic for a short essay intended as a brief restorative diversion from my 'real' project at the time (which was to sort out the precise relation between Kant's philosophy, the philosophy of Leibniz, and the philosophy of Wolff and his followers). The diversion turned out to be neither brief nor restorative. Kant is a truly systematic thinker; most of his doctrines and arguments are intricately connected with one another. As a result, in order to make genuine headway on any particular question about Kant's philosophy, one is forced to cast one's net rather widely. The question of how to think about things in themselves is no exception. In order to properly understand Kant's conception of things in themselves, one also has to understand his conception of appearances and his views about how things in themselves and appearances are related. One also must take into account Kant's evaluation of the conceptions of things in themselves of other philosophers, in particular, the Leibniz-Wolffian conception, which represents one of the central reference points for Kant's own thinking about this topic. In short, a satisfactory explanation of Kant's conception of things in themselves requires, more or less, a comprehensive explanation of his ontological views in general. Similarly, making real progress with respect to the question of whether, how, and to what extent, we can think about and cognize things in themselves on Kant's view requires giving a detailed account of his theory of meaning, reference, and thought and cognition in general. This is how my envisioned brief essay on how to think about things in themselves, by and by, transmogrified into a long essay, a book, and, finally, two books. I should have published these books a long while ago—the original manuscript (before the 'fission') was completed in 2009—and I confess to feeling considerable embarrassment about having failed to do so. But the devil in the details continued to beckon without mercy, and every 'final' round of revisions kicked up yet other lines of questioning that deserved to be pursued. Not all of these lines of questioning yielded fruits worthy to be included in the books, but they all kept me busy and caused delay over delay. Although this exorcism is by no means completed, I finally got

up the nerve to let at least the first book go. This book, now before you, is devoted to an examination of Kant's critical idealism, understood as an ontological position. Less technically put, it is about Kant's account of what there is in the world, understood as the sum total of everything that has reality, including, in particular, his account of appearances and things in themselves and their relation to one another. The second book, *Thought and Cognition according to Kant—Our Cognitive Access to Things in Themselves and Appearances in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, investigates Kant's theory of thinking and cognition, with a special emphasis on the implications of this theory for the question of whether and how we can think about and cognize things in themselves. I hope it will be released into the world before long, but, for the moment, I have to admit that taking a little break from endlessly curating ever-expanding footnotes seems very attractive, as much as I admire Sisyphus and imagine him happy. These two books are conceived of as companion volumes—one ontological and one epistemological, broadly speaking—but each one can also be read on its own.

I presented different parts of the material included here at Yale University, the University of Michigan, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Oxford, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Miami, the North American Kant Society at the Eastern APA, Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Chicago, New York University, the New School for Social Research, Wake Forest University, Brown University, Syracuse University, and Cornell University. I thank the audiences at these occasions for helpful comments and questions, in particular, Desmond Hogan who was my commentator at Chapel Hill and Julian Wuerth who was my commentator at the APA. I also gratefully acknowledge valuable feedback from Banafsheh Beizaei, Andrew Chignell, Don Garrett, Christian Johnson, Nick Stang, and Eric Watkins. Peter Momtchiloff from Oxford University Press deserves a medal for his patience and has my sincere gratitude for his unwavering encouragement. Last but certainly not least, I want to express my deep appreciation to Robert Adams, Karl Ameriks, and Béatrice Longuenesse for their kind support over the years and their penetrating and incredibly useful comments on various parts of this book.

Abbreviations

All quotations from Kant are cited according to the Academy Edition, in the format 'Abbreviated Title, volume:page number(s),' except for quotations from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which are cited according to the paginations of the original first (A) and second (B) edition, and for quotations from the anthropology lecture transcript by Dohna-Wundlacken, which is cited as 'V-Anth/Dohna, Kowalewski' according to the pagination of the first publication of the lecture transcript by Kowalewski from 1924. All other titles are referenced by the author's name and the year in which the work was first published or written (in the case of posthumous works), as specified in the following bibliography. Some of the bibliography entries contain several publication dates. The date listed first is the one that I use for purposes of reference; dates marked with an asterisk indicate publication dates of the first edition. Unless an English translation is referenced, all translations are my own, from Kant and everybody else not writing in English. I have aimed for as literal translations as possible, grammatical errors, infelicitous word choices, and ambiguities included. I also would like to state explicitly that my interpretation of Kant is based on the *German* text, not the English translation. My efforts to provide a faithful translation notwithstanding, I do think that this makes a difference. In general, I urge all readers to consult Kant's original German text as much as they can stomach while reading this book. (The entire Academy Edition is conveniently available online *for free* at http://www.korpora.org/kant/).

A	Kritik der reinen Vernuft, erste Auflage von 1781 (Critique of Pure Reason, first edition from 1781)
Anth	Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (Anthropology from a Pragmatic Standpoint)
BDG	Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes (The only possible ground of proof for a demonstration of the existence of God)
B	Kritik der reinen Vernunft, zweite Auflage von 1787 (Critique of Pure Reason, second edition from 1787)
BJ	Einige Bemerkungen zu Ludwig Heinrich Jakob's Prüfung der Mendelssohn'schen Morgenstunden (Some comments on Ludwig Heinrich Jakob's Examination of Mendelssohn's Morning Hours)
EEKU	Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft (First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment)
EF	Erklärung in Beziehung auf Fichtes Wissenschaftslehre (Declaration with respect to Fichte's Doctrine of Science)
FM	Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolff's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat? (What is the real progress that has been made in metaphysics in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?)
FM/LB	Lose Blätter zu FM
GMS	Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten (Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals)
Kä	Über Kästners Abhandlungen (On Kästner's Treatises)
KpV	Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (Critique of Practical Reason)
KU	Kritik der Urteilskraft (Critique of Judgment)
LB	Lose Blätter aus Kants Nachlaß (Loose sheets from Kant's literary estate, listed using Reicke's numbering)
Log	Logik nach Jäsche (Logic)
MAN	Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft (Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science)

MS	Die Metaphysik der Sitten (Metaphysics of Morals)
MSI	De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis (On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible world; Kant's Inaugural Dissertation)
NG	Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen (Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Metaphysics)
NTH	Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels (Universal History of Nature and Theory of the Heavens)
OP	*Opus Postumum*
PND	Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio (New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition)
Prol	Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics)
R	Reflexion (Reflection); R followed by a Roman numeral indicates a reflection in Kant's personal copy of the A-edition of the Critique of Pure Reason
SF	Der Streit der Fakultäten (The Battle of the Faculties)
Söm	Aus Sömmering: Über das Organ der Seele (From Sömmering: On the Organ of the Soul)
TG	Träume eines Geistersehers erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik (Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated through Dreams of Metaphysics)
ÜE	Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll (On a Discovery, according to which all new critique of pure reason is supposed to be made dispensable by an older one)
V-Anth/Dohna	Anthropologie Vorlesung Dohna-Wundlacken (Anthropology Lecture)
VA-Prol	Vorarbeit für die Prolegomena (preparatory notes for the Prolegomena)
VA-Söm	Vorarbeit für den Sömmering Aufsatz (preparatory notes for the essay on Sömmering)
V-Lo/Pölitz	Logik Vorlesung Pölitz (Logic Lecture)
V-Lo/Wiener	Wiener Logik Vorlesung
V-Met/Dohna	Metaphysik Vorlesung Dohna (Metaphysics Lecture)
V-Met/Heinze	Metaphysik Vorlesung L_1 Heinze
V-Met/Herder	Metaphysik Vorlesung Herder
V-Met-K2/Heinze	Metaphysik Vorlesung K_2 (Heinze, Schlapp)
V-Met-K3/Arnoldt	Metaphysik Vorlesung K_3 (Arnoldt, Schlapp)
V-Met-L1/Pölitz	Metaphysik Vorlesung L_1 Pölitz
V-Met-L2/Pölitz	Metaphysik Vorlesung L_2 Pölitz
V-Met/Mron	Metaphysik Vorlesung Mrongovius
V-Met/Schön	Metaphysik Vorlesung von Schön
V-Met/Volckmann	Metaphysik Vorlesung Volckmann
V-Mo/Collins	Moralphilosophie Vorlesung Collins (Moral Philosophy Lecture)
V-Phil-Th/Pölitz	Philosophische Religionslehre Vorlesung Pölitz (Philosophical Religion Lecture)
VT	Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie (On a Recently Adopted Pretentious Tone in Philosophy)
V-Th/Baumbach	Danziger Rationaltheologie Vorlesung nach Baumbach (Rational Theology Lecture)
V-Th/Volckmann	Natürliche Theologie Vorlesung Volckmann nach Baumbach (Natural Theology Lecture)
WDO	Was heißt sich im Denken orientiren? (What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?)
WSLK	Wahre Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte (True Estimation of Living Forces)

1
Introduction—the Plan for this Book and the Lay of the Land

1.1 General Project Description: Understanding Kant's Critical Idealism

The project of this book is to develop a comprehensive interpretation of Kant's ontological views in his theoretical critical philosophy, or, perhaps more accurately, of the ontological implications of his theoretical critical philosophy. More specifically, my aim will be to sort out Kant's views on the nature of appearances, the nature of things in themselves, and the relation between them, as presented and hinted at in the *Critique of Pure Reason* ('*Critique*' for short from now on) and associated writings. Following Kant, I will refer to the position defined by these ontological views as 'critical idealism.'[1] Accordingly, one could also characterize this book as aiming at a comprehensive interpretation of Kant's critical idealism in his theoretical philosophy as an ontological position. To be sure, since Kant is an idealist and holds that certain parts of reality are mind-dependent, investigating his ontological views will bring with it an examination of at least some aspects of his theory of cognition and his theory of the human mind. But for the purpose of this book, this examination will be quite selective and restricted to those elements of said theories that have ontological implications or shed light on the nature and ontological status of appearances.

This project description will be met with skepticism, or worse, by readers who subscribe to the assessment that Kant's philosophy, in particular, his theoretical philosophy, is thoroughly anti-metaphysical and self-consciously refrains from making any ontological claims at all. Throughout the history of the reception of Kant's philosophy, the fortunes of anti-metaphysical and metaphysical interpretations have waxed and waned several times; each group had its moments in the sun but also several periods in the shade, so to speak. Proponents of anti-metaphysical, anti-ontological interpretations read Kant as a philosopher who has laid metaphysics to rest once and for all, and who takes worthwhile theoretical philosophy to be coextensive with logic and epistemology, broadly conceived, but has no time for ontology. This kind of interpretation was prominently defended by leading neo-Kantians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, for example, who saw Kant as having effectively destroyed the metaphysical edifices of his predecessors, and who celebrated as one of Kant's main achievements the substitution of *Geltungstheorie* ('validity-theory') for ontology, that is, the substitution of an examination of the conditions for the objective validity of judgments, in particular, scientific judgments, for the

[1] See Prol, 4:293–294. Throughout this book, I will be using single quotation marks as scare quotes and to talk about names, words, concepts, predicates, and sentences. Double quotation marks will be used exclusively to indicate quotations and for essay titles.

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examination of what there is.[2] Anti-metaphysical readings have also been dominant in Anglo-American Kant scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century ever since the publication of Strawson's seminal *The Bounds of Sense* and have retained their popularity to the present day. For example, Henry Allison, who is one of the most prominent living Kant interpreters today, asserts that Kant's transcendental idealism "provides a radical alternative to ontology" (Allison 2006, 2).[3] Proponents of metaphysical interpretations, by contrast, read Kant as the founder of a new kind of, or a new way of doing, metaphysics and see him as taking a stand on ontological matters, while (for the most part) acknowledging that his methodology differs markedly from the methodology of the traditional metaphysicians who are the target of his critique in the *Critique*. Apart from several contemporaries of Kant, this group includes later eminent Kant interpreters such as Friedrich Paulsen, Heinz Heimsoeth, Max Wundt, and Martin Heidegger, who were trying to stem the anti-metaphysical tide unleashed by the neo-Kantians.[4] Although the majority of present day Kant scholars still appears to favor anti-metaphysical, anti-ontological interpretations, if I read the signs correctly, the ray of prominence and popularity has started to move past them and is about to shine its light on the metaphysics- and ontology-friendly group again. There is a growing number of scholars who read Kant as a metaphysician of sorts and as very much interested in ontology, and I count myself among them.[5]

As I see it, the indicated anti-metaphysical, anti-ontological kind of Kant interpretation is misguided. To start with the question of metaphysics, Kant tells us in no uncertain terms that his ultimate philosophical concern, like the ultimate philosophical concern of all of us, is metaphysics, which he understands as a science that aims to provide us with a priori cognitions, in particular, a priori cognitions of the supersensible.[6] And, far from being on a mission to put metaphysics out of business, he is on a mission to put metaphysics "onto the secure path of a science," as he impresses on his readers in the preface to the *Critique*.[7] In a letter, Kant explains his philosophical intentions by clarifying his often misunderstood position vis-à-vis Leibniz-Wolffian metaphysics as follows:

> At the same time, I may be permitted to explain that my efforts, which so far have been directed at critique, are by no means intended to work against the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy, as it might have appeared, (for I have been finding it neglected for quite some time now). Rather they are intended to lead through a roundabout route that, it seems to me, these great men judged superfluous, onto the same track of a schooled procedure and through it to the very same destination, but only through the combination of the theoretical philosophy with the practical—an intention that will become clearer if I live long enough to present metaphysics in form of a coherent system, as I am planning to do. (Letter to Kästner, August [?] 5, 1790, 11:186)

[2] See Cohen 1885; Natorp 1912; Bauch 1917.

[3] Another example of a contemporary self-consciously anti-ontological, epistemic reading of Kant's transcendental idealism is Patricia Kitcher's, in Kitcher 2011.

[4] See Paulsen 1899; Paulsen 1900; Wundt 1924; Heimsoeth 1924; Heidegger 1929. Also see Martin 1948; Martin 1951.

[5] Among others, this group includes Karl Ameriks (Ameriks 2003), Rae Langton (Langton 1998), and Eric Watkins (Watkins 2005). Also see Lipscomb and Krueger 2010.

[6] See FM, 20:293–301; B6–7; B21–22; Prol, 4:353.

[7] See Bxiv–xxxi.

While Kant employs a new methodology and offers a new, more sophisticated analysis of our cognitive attitudes toward many traditional metaphysical propositions of the Leibniz-Wolffians—classifying them no longer as a kind of theoretical but as a kind of practical cognition—his ultimate destination is the same as the destination of the Leibniz-Wolffians, namely, the cognition of the supersensible. Indeed, turning to the question of ontology, Kant arguably not only shares the aim of cognizing the supersensible with the Leibniz-Wolffians but also much of their conception of the supersensible as a realm populated by simple substances or souls under the legislation of God, substances on whose perceptions the phenomenal world depends. To be sure, Kant's *theoretical* philosophy by itself does not warrant the ascription of all elements of this Leibniz-Wolffian ontological picture to him. Moreover, it is also undisputed that in his theoretical philosophy Kant spends much of his time and effort on issues in logic and epistemology, broadly conceived. Nevertheless, it seems undeniable to me that, although these theoretical inquiries are not directly targeting ontological questions, they have substantive ontological implications, implications that Kant takes to be of crucial importance for metaphysics and for its subsequent progress in the context of his practical philosophy. This is part of his new methodology, to arrive at ontological results by way of epistemological examinations. As we will see, chief among these ontological implications of his theory of experience and of his analysis of the workings of the human cognitive faculties that are employed in the construction of experience are that space and time are nothing but forms of one of these faculties, namely, sensibility, that empirical objects, such as tables, trees, and cats, are appearances and not things in themselves, and that appearances are grounded in things in themselves. These theses lie at the heart of the new ontological position that is Kant's critical idealism, which is a crucial element of his envisioned revamped form of metaphysics.

Although Kant holds that the most appropriate name for the ontological views developed in his theoretical critical writings is 'critical idealism,' the name that he introduced initially and continued to use most frequently, and that most people associate with him, is '*transcendental* idealism.' So, why do I not describe my project in more familiar terms as aiming to provide an interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism as an ontological position? In order to answer this question, I need to anticipate a terminological suggestion that will be spelled out in section 3.2. Kant uses the expression 'transcendental idealism' in a broader and a narrower sense. In the narrower sense, transcendental idealism can be understood as defined by the two theses about the ontological status of empirical objects and of space and time mentioned in the previous paragraph, that is, that empirical objects are appearances and not things in themselves, and that space and time are nothing but forms of sensibility, plus a corresponding thesis about (what I will call) empirical selves, namely, that they are also appearances and not things in themselves. In the broader sense, transcendental idealism can be understood as a more comprehensive position that comprises transcendental idealism in the narrow sense but also several other elements. These other elements include empirical realism (in a sense to be explicated in chapter 3) and several additional claims, concerning things in themselves and their relation to appearances as well as the nature of our cognitive faculties, that are usually not mentioned in Kant's explicit characterizations of transcendental idealism but still play an important role in defining his ontological position overall, as for example the claim that things in themselves ground appearances, or that sensibility is passive and can bring about sensations only if it is affected by things in themselves. For the sake of terminological clarity, it is

desirable to have two different terms available to signify transcendental idealism in the broad and the narrow sense respectively. This is why I propose to use 'critical idealism' to stand for Kant's overall theoretical ontological position and 'transcendental idealism' to stand for a core element of critical idealism, namely, the three stated theses about the ontological status of empirical objects, empirical selves, and space and time. Given this terminology, saying that my purpose in this book is to provide an interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism would not quite capture the full scope of the present study. Getting to the bottom of Kant's transcendental idealism is only part of my purpose, albeit an important and central one.

1.2 Mapping Different Interpretations of Kant's Critical Idealism

At the core of Kant's transcendental idealism and thus of his critical idealism is the claim that the objects of human experience are not things in themselves but appearances. The question of how to understand transcendental idealism and, especially, how to spell out the crucial distinction between things in themselves and appearances has puzzled many a reader of Kant, and the secondary literature is full of competing interpretations.[8] For ease of communication, I will refer to this distinction as 'the transcendental distinction' for short from now on.

Recent discussions of the transcendental distinction have been dominated by the debate between partisans of what has come to be called the 'two-world' or 'two-object' view and partisans of what has come to be called the 'one-world,' 'one-object,' or 'two-aspect' view.[9] The latter regard appearances and things in themselves as, in some sense, 'the same things,' while the former deny that they are the same things. Unfortunately, despite (or maybe because of) the prevalence of the two-world versus two-aspect terminology, there does not seem to be any clear agreement among commentators about the exact conditions that an interpretation has to satisfy in order to qualify as one or the other of these kinds of views. Indeed, one is hard pressed to find any precise characterizations of these conditions in the literature at all. As a result, the battle lines in the two-world versus two-aspect wars that have been raging for several decades now are rather blurry, and the fighting often appears to be more akin to shadow boxing, or windmill sparring, than to a well-disciplined exchange of attacks and defense maneuvers among real-life opponents. I want to emphasize at the outset that I do not conceive of this book as yet another campaign in this endless war. I agree that there are several exegetical questions haunting this battlefield that are worth clarifying and addressing; and part of my task in the following will be to do precisely that. But those are not the only questions nor, in my view, the most important questions, that deserve close attention if one wants to properly understand Kant's critical idealism, or even his transcendental distinction.

For the purpose of surveying the interpretative landscape, it is helpful to identify a number of classification questions with respect to which different interpretations of Kant's

[8] For a useful review of the literature of the final decades of the last century, see Ameriks 2003b, 69–84; Ameriks 2003c. For a helpful review of the literature that extends into the twenty-first century, see Schulting 2011.

[9] I suppose the grammatically more appropriate versions of these labels would be 'two-worlds,' 'two-objects,' and 'two-aspects' views. But the s-less versions admittedly sound much better, which is presumably why they dominate in the literature. I will follow the practice of choosing sound over grammar in these cases.

critical idealism can be distinguished and categorized. The first classification question will help to set up how I propose to chart the two-world versus two-aspect minefield. It asks whether appearances and things in themselves are the same things, where 'same' is to be understood in the sense of numerical identity. More precisely put, the question is whether every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself.[10] Readings on which appearances and things in themselves are numerically distinct commonly present Kant's transcendental distinction as a distinction between different entities, different things, different objects, or different domains of discourse. Interpretations of this kind are usually called 'two-world' or 'two-object' views. In the following, I will adopt the name 'multiple-object view' for all interpretations that answer our first classification question in the negative, but, for reasons that will become clear shortly, I will reserve the name 'two-world view' for a specific version of the multiple-object view. I prefer 'multiple-object view' to 'two-object view' because the latter might be taken to suggest that proponents of this view, although denying that every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself, still hold that there is a one-to-one mapping between appearances and the things in themselves that ground them. Some people who answer the first classification question in the negative might want to assert that such a one-to-one mapping obtains, but going with the negative answer certainly does not commit one to doing that; hence, the greater suitability of the 'multiple-object' label.[11] Readings on which every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself commonly present the transcendental distinction as a distinction between different aspects of, or different ways of considering, the same thing. The thing (considered) as it appears to us is the appearance, the same thing (considered) as it is in itself is the thing in itself. In the following, interpretations of this kind will be called 'one-object views.' I will use the label 'two-aspect view' more broadly than 'one-object view.' One-object views are a kind of two-aspect interpretation; indeed, they are the most popular kind.[12] But, in my usage of the term, one-object views are not the only kind of two-aspect interpretation, as will be explained shortly.

It is worth emphasizing that the proposed characterization of the multiple-object view is fairly permissive. It requires only that appearances and things in themselves are numerically distinct but places no restrictions on the ontological categories into which they can fall. To a historian of philosophy who is familiar with Descartes' theory of distinction, it may come naturally to read Kant's transcendental distinction against this Cartesian background.[13] According to Descartes, there are three kinds of distinctness: *real* distinctness that pertains to different substances, *modal* distinctness that pertains to a substance and its modes (or, derivatively, to different modes of the same substance), and distinctness *by reason* that pertains to a substance and its attributes (or, derivatively, to different

[10] It is uncontroversial that Kant admits the possibility of things in themselves that do not appear to us, for example, God. That is, not every thing in itself is numerically identical with an appearance. Hence, the need for the more precise formulation.

[11] None of these labels are perfect, but we need some way to refer to the different kinds of interpretations, and since the 'one-object,' 'two-aspect,' and 'two-world' labels have become common currency in the literature (despite not being used in a uniform way) I will work with them but not without clarifying how exactly they are supposed to be understood in my usage. The name 'multiple-object view' is not perfect either, among other things, because, strictly speaking, things in themselves are not proper objects, as we will see in section 2.5.2. So 'object' in 'multiple-object view' must be understood in a broad sense.

[12] Most of the two-aspect commentators mentioned in notes 32–34, 36–39, and 70, endorse a one-object view.

[13] Thanks to Don Garrett for prompting me to think more about the connection of Kant's transcendental distinction and Descartes' theory of distinction.

attributes of the same substance).[14] The historian may be tempted to assert that the 'multiple-object' label is appropriate only for interpretations that present appearances and things in themselves as really distinct in (roughly) Descartes' sense, that is, as belonging to the same, most fundamental ontological category such as 'substance,' or 'thing' (understood in an ontologically robust sense), and as being ontologically independent in a modally robust sense.[15] According to our characterization, however, interpretations that present appearances and things in themselves as modally distinct in (roughly) Descartes' sense also count as multiple-object readings, as for example the reading that appearances are complexes of mind-dependent properties of things, and things in themselves are those very things but without any mind-dependent properties.[16] Similarly, some contemporary commentators express reservations about being classified as proponents of the two-world view because, even though, on their reading, the transcendental distinction is a distinction between numerically distinct entities, only one kind of these entities deserves to be called a kind of *things*, strictly speaking. Something like this appears to be Rae Langton's contention. According to her reading, "things in themselves are substances that have intrinsic properties," and appearances are identified "with the relational properties of substances, and with whatever things are constituted by those relational properties" (Langton 1998, 20).[17] Since a substance that has intrinsic properties and something that is constituted by relational properties arguably are numerically distinct, it is a fair description that, on her view, things in themselves and appearances are numerically distinct entities. But with respect to the question of whether, on Kant's view, there is one world or two, Langton replies that "there is one world, one set of things, but two kinds of properties" (Langton 1998, 12–13).[18] In a related vein, other commentators express reservations about being classified as proponents of the two-world view because, although, on their reading, appearances and things in themselves belong to different domains of discourse and, thus, are numerically distinct, they are not distinct *existents* and, hence, also cannot properly be said to make up distinct worlds, simply because, strictly speaking, appearances do not genuinely exist. James Van Cleve holds a view of this kind. He emphasizes that his virtual-object theory of appearances, according to which appearances are understood as logical constructions out of states of (noumenal) perceivers, does not give us a dualism of two sorts of existents. The only existents, on Van Cleve's view, are things in themselves. But he acknowledges that his interpretation is dualistic in that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is understood as a distinction between two separate

[14] See Descartes 1644, §60, AT 8:28–30. For an illuminating discussion of Descartes' theory of distinction, see Hoffman 2002.

[15] On Descartes's view, x and y are really distinct if, and only if, x and y are substances and it is possible that x exists and y does not exist, and *vice versa*, which, for him, is equivalent to saying that x can be clearly and distinctly understood apart from y, and *vice versa*. See Descartes 1644, §60, AT 8:28.

[16] Interpretations on which appearances and things in themselves are distinct only 'by reason' in (roughly) Descartes' sense do not count as multiple-object, though, since this kind of distinctness is not sufficient for numerical distinctness (on my view). (A substance and its attributes are distinct by reason but, arguably, still numerically identical.) The methodological one-object view, to be described below, is an interpretation of this kind.

[17] Also see Langton 1998, 12–21, 34–40.

[18] I should acknowledge that Langton herself does not explicitly say that appearances are entities. But I do see no reason why "the relational properties of substances, or whatever things are constituted by those relational properties" should not count as entities. (Note that she even says, somewhat misleadingly, that appearances are "whatever *things* are constituted by those relational properties" (Langton 1998, 20, my emphasis). 'Things' must be understood in a broader sense here, I suppose.)

universes of discourse, which is why he calls his reading a "qualified two-worlds view" (Van Cleve 1999, 150).[19] I agree that the 'two-world' label is prone to eliciting various misleading associations, and so I sympathize with Langton's and Van Cleve's reluctance to affix it to their interpretations. But I want to make a few comments with respect to the question of whether appearances should be classified as things or existents. There is a certain danger here of sliding into a mostly terminological dispute—how do we want to use the words 'thing' and 'existent'?—and of imposing upon Kant's view our own understanding of what should count as a thing or existent. (This statement is meant as a general note of caution, not as a specific complaint about Langton or Van Cleve.) As I see it, insofar as we want to engage in this kind of debate at all, we should try to settle it based on Kant's text. That is, we should try to determine, based on Kant's own characterizations of appearances, things, and existents, whether he is prepared to classify appearances as existents and, more specifically, whether he counts them as things of some kind or in some sense. To be sure, there is no question (in my mind) that Kant regards things in themselves to be ontologically more fundamental than appearances, but by itself this is compatible with holding that appearances also exist and are also some sort of things. The upshot of these considerations is that commentators who want to explain Kant's transcendental distinction should not only aim to determine whether appearances and things in themselves are numerically distinct or not but also try to identify to which more specific ontological categories they belong, according to Kant's own understanding of these categories, and exactly what kind of ontological dependence relation obtains between them. But as important as these further questions are, there is no need to over-complicate our classification scheme by introducing special sub-categories for different varieties of the multiple-object view, depending on which ontological categories appearances and things in themselves are assigned to. We will stick with the generously inclusive characterization that anybody who holds that things in themselves and appearances are not numerically identical is to count as a proponent of the multiple-object view.

There are some commentators who see themselves as proponents of a version of the two-aspect interpretation, on account of the fact that they endorse the view that appearances and things in themselves are, in some sense, the same things, but who refrain from asserting that every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself.[20] Some versions of the reading that the transcendental distinction is supposed to be understood as a distinction between the 'world' of appearances and the 'world' of things in themselves or between appearances considered collectively and things in themselves considered collectively, rather than a distinction between individual appearances and individual things in themselves, can be regarded as falling into this category as well.[21] There is one world, one reality, which (considered) as it appears to us is a collection of appearances and

[19] See Van Cleve 1999, 150: "If there is a sense in which I believe in one world only, it is not a world containing objects that are things in themselves or appearances depending on how one considers them. It is, instead, a world whose *only* denizens are things in themselves."

[20] Thanks to Banafsheh Beizaei for pushing me to think more about this kind of version of the two-aspect view.

[21] This kind of reading is proposed in Matthews 1969, for example, esp. 208–11. It is worth flagging that, of all the versions of the two-aspect view, this version has the least direct support in Kant's text. As we will see, the two-aspect interpretation does not have a very strong textual basis in general, but most of the alleged proof passages that are commonly cited in support of this interpretation are much more reasonably read as concerned with a relation between individual appearances and individual things in themselves than with a relation between all appearances taken collectively, and all things in themselves that ground them taken collectively.

(considered) as it is in itself is a collection of things in themselves, but there may not be a one-to-one mapping between the members of these collections.[22] Unfortunately, it is rare to find any detailed proposals in the literature about how this kind of two-aspect view might be spelled out.[23] A promising start would be to question the stipulation that 'same' in our first classification question is to be understood as 'numerically identical,' and to argue that sameness is a broader notion than numerical identity. While all things that are numerically identical are the same, not all things that are the same are numerically identical. Accordingly, there is room for interpretations of the transcendental distinction that (a) hold that every appearance is the same as a thing in itself or several things in themselves taken collectively, or that the 'world' of appearances is the same as the 'world' of things in themselves, but (b) remain agnostic about whether, or even deny that every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself. On account of their ability to accommodate the claim that appearances and things in themselves are the same things or aspects of the same things, so the proposal goes, interpretations of this kind should still count as two-aspect interpretations.

This is another point in the debate where we must be careful not to get mired in a mostly verbal dispute. Everybody, including all multiple-object interpreters of whom I am aware, agrees that appearances are closely related to things in themselves, on Kant's view.[24] But instead of debating whether the relation between appearances and things in themselves is 'close' enough to count as a form of sameness, we are better served, it seems to me, by focusing our efforts on trying to specify as precisely as possible what exactly this relation consists in. In order to forestall this kind of verbal dispute, I will thus refrain from opening the floodgates by counting any view as two-aspect on which appearances and things in themselves are the same in some, however tenuous, sense. Having said that, there still are some possible more specific readings of this kind that, arguably, embody a true two-aspect spirit and also provide a helpful contrast to views that are commonly classified as

[22] See Allison 2004, 459, note 19: "It is one thing to distinguish between things (taken collectively) as they are for us in virtue of the sensible conditions of human cognition and as they might be for some putative pure understanding, unburdened by such conditions, and quite another to affirm a one-to-one correspondence or isomorphism between the members of the two domains." Also see Allison 1987, 168; Allison 1996, 12, 15–16. I cannot refrain from complaining that Allison made it quite difficult for his readers to understand that he does not want to ascribe the view to Kant that every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself. In his writings, formulations abound that, in the absence of explicit instructions to the contrary, anybody would read as expressing such a numerical identity claim, for example, when he says that "in this case also [in the case of the transcendental distinction], what we have is the distinction between a thing considered in a certain relation, in virtue of which if falls under a certain description, and the same thing considered in abstraction from this relation, and therefore not falling under this description" (Allison 2004, 43), or that "it is rather the object that appears that has two sides, one of which is the way in which it appears (under the conditions of sensibility) and the other the way in which it is thought in itself (independently of these conditions)" (Allison 2004, 62).

[23] A notable exception is Marshall 2013. In her earlier work, Lucy Allais presents her reading of the transcendental distinction in terms that quite clearly express a one-object view. See Allais 2004 and Allais 2007. But in her more recent book, she seems to want to distance herself from the claim that every appearance is numerically identical to a thing in itself, while holding on to the claim that appearances and things in themselves are, in some sense, aspects of the same things. See Allais 2015, 72–83. Unfortunately, Allais does not spell out how exactly we are supposed to think about the things that, according to her, have intrinsic natures and relational properties, so that these things as they appear to us are not numerically identical to these things as they are in themselves. Without any additional help in that department, the reader will most naturally continue to spell out her view as saying that the thing as bearer of intrinsic properties is the thing in itself and the very same thing as bearer of relational properties is the appearance, which, in turn, is difficult not to understand as a one-object view.

[24] On many multiple-object readings, this close relation is understood as a relation of grounding: things in themselves are transcendental grounds of appearances.

two-world, so that it would be reasonable and useful to include them under our official two-aspect classification.

First, one could think of the relation between appearances and things in themselves as (what one might call) compositional sameness. Suppose a cabin is composed of logs, or has logs as its parts, that is, the cabin is the mereological sum or fusion of the logs. It is innocent to say that the cabin is numerically identical to the mereological fusion of the logs. It is far from innocent, however, to assert that the cabin is numerically identical to the logs, and many people will want to deny that the latter assertion is defensible. The cabin is one but the logs are many. How could one thing be numerically identical to many things? But one could argue that, while not numerically identical to the logs, the cabin stands in a relation to the logs that bears a striking family resemblance to numerical identity, precisely because the cabin is numerically identical to the logs' mereological fusion. Call this relation 'compositional sameness.' On the imagined reading, appearances and things in themselves are the same things in the sense that every appearance is compositionally the same as several things in themselves, but there is no one-to-one mapping between appearances and the things in themselves that ground them.

Second, one could conceive of the relation between appearances and things in themselves as (what one might call) genetic sameness. We will say that an appearance E and a thing in itself D *are genetically the same* if, and only if, (1) there is a thing T such that (a) E is derived from T by means of an 'as it appears' operation, (b) D is derived from T by means of an 'as it is in itself' operation, and (2) E and D share an ontological ingredient. The ontological ingredients of a thing are elements, constituents, or building blocks, that, in proper combination, make up the thing. If, when, and where the thing is, there are its ontological ingredients as well. Intuitively, one can think of the ontological ingredients of a thing as entries in a recipe for making the thing in question in an ontology 'cookbook,' so to speak. Possible ontological ingredients include bare particulars, substances, attribute instances, property instances, and various kinds of parts or elements (temporal, spatial, etc.). Appearances and things in themselves as conceived on the one-object view are genetically the same in the sense just defined. But not all views on which appearances and things in themselves are genetically the same are committed to classifying them as numerically identical. A popular kind of interpretation on which things in themselves are things as bearers of mind-independent properties, and appearances are the same things as bearers of mind-dependent properties, can be spelled out as a view on which they turn out to be genetically the same but numerically distinct. One way of doing so would be to work with a thing-conception according to which a thing is a compound of a (non-individuating) bare particular, that is, a property-less particular, and various properties, and to explicate a thing in itself as a compound of the bare particular and all mind-independent properties of a given thing, and the corresponding appearance as a compound of the same bare particular and the mind-dependent properties of the same thing.[25] While the appearance and the thing in itself so conceived are numerically distinct, they are genetically the same in that they are derived from the same thing by means of an 'as it

[25] The bare particular in question must be assumed to be non-individuating, that is, it must be assumed not to be, by itself, what makes the thing in question the individual it is, because otherwise all things that include the bare particular would be numerically identical to the thing and to each other, contrary to our present assumption that the thing in itself and the appearance are not numerically identical.

appears' operation and an 'as it is in itself' operation, respectively, and in that they share an ontological ingredient, namely, the bare particular. The 'as it appears' operation in this case consists in deleting all mind-independent properties of the original thing to arrive at the appearance; the 'as it is in itself' operation consists in deleting all mind-dependent properties of the original thing to arrive at the thing in itself.[26] On views on which the relation between appearances and things in themselves is conceived as genetic sameness, appearances and things in themselves are the same things in the sense that every appearance is genetically the same as a thing in itself or several things in themselves, but there may be no one-to-one mapping between appearances and the things in themselves that ground them.

Third, one could conceive of the relation between appearances and things in themselves as (what one might call) collective sameness. Suppose that there are four swimming clubs in Waterville with ten members each. The swimmers in Waterville taken collectively can be considered as persons or as clubs. The swimmers (considered) as persons are a collection of forty and (considered) as clubs they are a collection of four. Since these collections contain different numbers of elements, their members are not related by a one-to-one mapping, and many people will want to deny that they are numerically identical.[27] But one could argue that, while not numerically identical, the collection of swimmers (considered) as persons and the collection of swimmers (considered) as clubs stand in a relation that bears a striking family resemblance to numerical identity, precisely because in both cases we are talking about the very same collection of swimmers, or because both collections share the same basic ontological ingredients. Call this relation 'collective sameness.' On the imagined view, appearances and things in themselves are the same things in the sense that the 'world' of appearances and the 'world' of things in themselves are collectively the same, but there may be no one-to-one mapping between appearances and the things in themselves that ground them.

Despite the fact that none of these readings is a one-object view, they all strike me as deserving of the two-aspect label. They have the similarity that, on all of them, either appearances and things in themselves share some ontological ingredients or things in themselves are ontological ingredients of appearances. For future reference, I will say that A and B ontologically overlap if, and only if, (1) A is an ontological ingredient of B, (2) B is in an ontological ingredient of A, or (3) A and B share at least one ontological ingredient. That things in themselves and appearances ontologically overlap on the sketched readings is a large part of the reason why it is reasonable to count them as two-aspect views. Accordingly, I will record as our second classification question the question whether appearances and some things in themselves are the same things in some reasonable sense without being numerically identical, where being the same things in some reasonable sense minimally requires that they ontologically overlap. I will call views that answer this

[26] A proposal for how to understand the transcendental distinction along these lines can be found in Marshall 2013, which is recommended for further discussion.

[27] Arguably, how many elements a collection contains is part of its identity conditions. So, if collection A and collection B contain different numbers of elements, it directly follows that A and B are numerically distinct, even if they share the same basic ontological ingredients, as in our example (the swimmers). It would not help to protest that, in the case of things in themselves and appearances, what we are considering in two ways is not really a collection of things but just 'reality,' which is not individuated or divided into individuals. Indeed, far from helping, it would make matters even worse. If reality is non-individuated goo, the claim that the collection of appearances and the collection of things in themselves are numerically identical because, at bottom, they are the *same* goo, just 'cut-up' in different ways, is not even meaningful because, by assumption, goo is non-individuated.

question in the affirmative 'same-things views.'[28] Moreover, I will say that an interpretation of Kant's transcendental distinction is a two-aspect view if, and only if, it classifies appearances and some things in themselves as the same things in some reasonable sense, where the latter minimally requires that they ontologically overlap. So, every two-aspect view is either a one-object view—being numerically identical is one way of being the same things—or a same-things view. Readings that are commonly classified as two-world views deny that appearances and things in themselves ontologically overlap, and thus qualify neither as one-object views nor as same-things views. So, by allowing that some two-aspect views are multiple-object views, I am not blurring the line that divides two-aspect interpretations from interpretations that are commonly classified as two-world. In the following, I will call readings that answer both the first and the second classification question in the negative 'two-world views.'[29] All two aspect-views, by contrast, answer one of these questions in the affirmative.[30]

Moving on to our third classification question, it asks whether the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is ontological or merely methodological/epistemological. All two-world interpreters answer this question in the affirmative,[31] but the two-aspect view is compatible with either answer. On a methodological two-aspect reading, the transcendental distinction is understood as a distinction solely between different ways of considering, or different perspectives from which to consider, things. The most well-known contemporary interpretation of this kind has been developed by Henry Allison, who cashes out the two perspectives in the following terms: appearances are things considered as dependent on the conditions of human sensibility, things in themselves are things considered as independent of these conditions.[32] As already mentioned, Allison insists that Kant's transcendental idealism, in particular, his claim that space and time are ideal and do not pertain to things in themselves, does not constitute an ontological position but provides a radical alternative to ontology.[33] According to a similar proposal in the methodological two-aspect tradition, the relevant contrast in the transcendental distinction is between considering things from the human perspective, on the one hand, and from

[28] I am leaving the question open whether there are any other possible same-things views, in addition to the three possible versions just sketched. I am also leaving open what else might be required, in addition to ontologically overlapping, for appearances and things in themselves to count as the same things in some reasonable sense.

[29] Versions of a two-world view have been defended by Sellars 1968; Aquila 1979; Aquila 1983, ch. 4; Van Cleve 1999, ch. 1, esp. sects D and E. Also see Walker 2010 and Stang 2014. Earlier two-world interpretations will be referenced in section 1.4.

[30] What about views on which appearances and things in themselves are derived from the same things by means of 'as it appears' and 'as it is in itself' operations but do not ontologically overlap and thus are not the same things in any reasonable sense? According to the proposed classification scheme, they count as two-world views—and well they should. Even on the classic two-world view, according to which appearances are fully mind-dependent and things in themselves are mind-independent grounds of appearances, one could legitimately say that appearances and things in themselves are derived from the same things by means of 'as it appears' and 'as it is in itself' operations. The relevant 'as it appears' operation could be defined as the affection of sensibility by the thing in question followed by the processing of the sensible material provided through these affections by our cognitive machinery. The relevant 'as it is in itself' operation could be defined as leaving the thing in question as it is.

[31] Perhaps Van Cleve would want to take exception? In my assessment, even on his qualified two-world view the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is ontological. Whether logical constructions out of perceptual states are existents or not, it seems undeniable that they are ontologically distinct from things in themselves.

[32] See Allison 1983; Allison 1987; Allison 1996; Allison 2004; Allison 2006; Allison2007. Other proponents of a methodological two-aspect view are Herring 1953, 77, 80–2; and Prauss 1974. Also see Bird 1962, 28—9.

[33] See Allison 2004, 2, 98.

God's perspective, on the other.[34] Proponents of ontological one-object readings like to use formulations similar to those favored by their methodological counterparts—in particular, expressions such as 'thing as . . . ' or 'object *qua* . . . ' but they emphasize that the transcendental distinction tracks an ontological distinction between different aspects of the same thing.[35] On most readings of this stripe, the relevant aspects consist in different kinds of properties, as for instance, relational and intrinsic properties,[36] mind-dependent and mind-independent properties,[37] and, here, more specifically, between secondary and primary qualities (where the former are often understood as specific kinds of dispositional properties),[38] or properties that are knowable by us and properties that are not knowable by us.[39] Appearances, then, are said to be things *qua* bearers of relational or mind-dependent or knowable properties, while things in themselves are identified with the very same things *qua* bearers of intrinsic or mind-independent or unknowable properties. Or similarly, relational, mind-dependent, or knowable properties are attributed to things as they appear to us, while intrinsic, mind-independent, or unknowable properties are attributed to the very same things as they are in themselves.

A fourth classification question, which does not lead us far from the preceding, concerns the status of empirical objects, the objects of our experience, such as tables, trees, cats, and bodies in general. How exactly are empirical objects related to things in themselves, and how exactly are they related to appearances? To my mind, answering this question is

[34] See Adickes 1924, esp. sect. II; Matthews 1969, 208–14; Robinson 1994, sects 4–5; also see Allison 2004, 16–17. It should be noted that, although Robinson himself does not say so, in the end his two-perspective view might be classified more aptly as a version of fictionalism (to be discussed below), given that, on his view, "the divine perspective lies behind the human one, as a perspective we conjure up to meet human needs" (Robinson 1994, 439).

[35] I should add that not all of the one-object interpretations in the literature are as clear on this point as one could wish. Some of them leave it largely indeterminate whether the distinction between ways of considering objects is underwritten by a distinction between ontologically different aspects in the objects.

[36] See Hanna 2006, 195–6, 425–33. If Allais accepted that the appearance and the thing in itself are numerically identical—as opposed to merely being aspects of the same thing, in some sense of 'same' that falls short of numerical identity—the view articulated in her book would be an example as well; see Allais, 2015, 207–68. The indicated version of the one-object view is also discussed by both Langton and Van Cleve, but neither one endorses it. See Langton 1998, 20; Van Cleve 1999, 150–5. Langton says about the proposal to understand things in themselves as substances *qua* bearers of intrinsic properties and appearances as substances *qua* bearers of relational properties that it "would be basically right," but adds that "it would also be potentially misleading, since it would bring with it a temptation to think that substances are somehow in the phenomenal world" (Langton 1998, 20). I find her acknowledgment that the proposal would be basically right a bit puzzling. Langton identifies appearances with relational properties of substances or with whatever things are constituted by those relational properties, and things in themselves with substances that have intrinsic properties. This characterization is quite different from saying that appearances are substances *qua* bearers of relational properties and things in themselves are substances *qua* bearers of intrinsic properties. The former expresses a multiple-object view; the latter expresses a one-object view (at least on the most natural way of construing it); and not both of them can be right as interpretations of Kant—unless the idea is that the text leaves room for both readings, which would be a reasonable thing to say. Heimsoeth seems to endorse the view that things in themselves are substances *qua* bearers of intrinsic properties, while appearances are substances *qua* bearers of relational properties. See Heimsoeth 1924, esp. 124–36. (I say that he seems to endorse it because he is less explicit than one might wish about whether, on his view, appearances are to be identified with things considered as they relate to us or with the relations of things. In the latter case, Heimsoeth's view would be identical to Langton's, and he would count as a multiple-object theorist after all.)

[37] See Westphal 1997, sect. IX; Setiya 2004; Westphal 2004, 56–61.

[38] See Collins 1999, 11–17; Allais 2004; Friebe 2007; Allais 2007; Rosefeldt 2007; Allais 2015, 101–44. Also see Roche 2013.

[39] See Rogerson 1999, 10–16. Obviously, the indicated various possible ways of conceiving of the two kinds of properties that mark the difference between appearances and things in themselves are not mutually exclusive. For example, one could hold that appearances are things considered as bearers of properties that are relational, knowable, and mind-dependent, while things in themselves are things considered as bearers of properties that are intrinsic, unknowable, and mind-independent.

essential for an adequate account of Kant's ontology, but, unfortunately, not all available readings achieve a satisfactory degree of clarity on this point. The classic two-world view, according to which appearances are mind-dependent and things in themselves are mind-independent grounds of appearances, does give a clear answer: empirical objects are appearances. Most proponents of the two-aspect interpretation talk about empirical objects as if they are the things that are considered in the relevant two ways or have the relevant two aspects, that is, the in-itself aspect and the appearance-to-us aspect.[40] One might argue, however, that the option of identifying them with things as they appear to us, or the appearance aspects of things, is favored by the text.

A fifth classification question is whether Kant is some kind of idealist with respect to empirical objects, and if he is, how exactly this idealism is to be understood, and what exactly he takes its scope to be. As just indicated, the classic two-world view characterizes appearances as mind-dependent and empirical objects as appearances. More specifically, on most variants of this view, appearances are understood to be fully mind-dependent in the sense that they do not have any mind-independent determinations, aspects, features, or ontological ingredients. That is, Kant is portrayed as endorsing a robust form of idealism about empirical objects. By contrast, on a Langton-style two-world interpretation, on which things in themselves are substances with intrinsic properties and appearances are the relational properties of these substances, or whatever things are constituted by these relational properties, there is nothing specifically idealist about Kant's ontology at all. Unless some further specifications are added to the effect that all properties that pertain to appearances are not only relational but also mind-dependent in some way, we are left with a reading on which Kant's ontological position does not amount to any form of idealism. There are also both idealist and realist versions of the two-aspect view. A two-aspect view on which appearances are identified with substances *qua* bearers of mind-independent relational properties is committed to a form of realism. But a two-aspect view on which appearances are identified with substances *qua* bearers of mind-dependent properties incorporates a form of idealism with respect to empirical objects, whose strength depends on whether empirical objects are identified with the things that have the two aspects or with their appearance aspects. Even Allison, who insists on the strictly methodological character of the transcendental distinction, claims that his interpretation presents Kant as a kind of idealist in that, on his reading, the concept of an object is relativized to human cognition and the conditions of its representation, in particular, to its sensible conditions. According to Allison, this means that things that transcend our epistemic conditions cannot count as objects for us, that things have spatiotemporal properties only insofar as

[40] See Allison 1987, 155: "…a number of commentators, myself included, have advanced various versions of what has been called the 'two aspect' view. Proponents of this view contend that Kant's transcendental distinction is between the ways in which things (empirical objects) can be 'considered' at the metalevel of philosophical reflection rather than between the kinds of things that are considered in such reflection." Also see Allison 2004, 51 (quoted in note 126, chapter 5). Actually, Allison's position seems to be somewhat unstable on this point. At a later stage of his discussion, he suggests that "Kant's best, perhaps his only answer to this question [the question of what the thing is that is considered in two ways] is that it is the transcendental object that is considered from two points of view" (Allison 2004, 62). But a little further down on the very same page we are also being told that "the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental object, like that between things as they appear and as they are in themselves, is not between two ontologically distinct entities but between two perspectives from which ordinary empirical objects might be considered" (Allison 2004, 62). So, at that point it looks again as if the things that are considered from two points of view are ordinary empirical objects, while the transcendental object corresponds to one of these points of view. Also see Allais 2004; Allais 2007; Rosefeldt 2007.

they are considered in their epistemic relation to the human mind and its form of sensibility, and that objects that are represented as spatiotemporal entities cannot be said to exist mind-independently in the way in which they are represented to us.[41] Finally, there are also two-aspect readings that ascribe to Kant a robust kind of idealism about empirical objects similar to the classic two-world view. For example, as I understand him, the version of the two-aspect view defended by Gerold Prauss, who is standardly celebrated as one of the 'heroes' of the two-aspect tradition, falls into this category, which seems to have gone largely unnoticed by the celebrants. For Prauss, 'thing in itself' and 'appearance' are concepts belonging to a second level of transcendental reflection. These concepts allow us to express the results of the first level of transcendental reflection, namely, that (a) empirical objects depend for their existence on the subject who interprets or projects (*erdeutet*) them, and (b) this projection includes an objective side, namely, the transcendental object, which Prauss understands, roughly, as a projected ground that the subject represents as distinct from itself. When considering an empirical object as it appears to us we focus on the fact that it depends on us; when considering an empirical object in itself we focus on the fact that it is represented as distinct from us.[42]

A sixth and final classification question that helps to introduce some order into the unruly multitude of interpretations of Kant's critical idealism is whether Kant is committed to the actual existence of things in themselves or whether he regards them as some type of useful fictional objects.[43] The classic two-world view and most contemporary two-aspect views present Kant as a realist about things in themselves. There are various versions of the fictionalist reading that differ with respect to how they characterize the fictional nature of things in themselves. A weaker version would say that the concept 'thing in itself' is a theoretical construct of which we avail ourselves in our philosophical efforts to make sense of the world and our experience, but of which we do not know whether there is anything actually existing and extra-mental that corresponds to it. Stronger versions of the fictionalist reading result from modifying the latter claim to say that we are ignorant not only about the actual existence of things in themselves but even about whether they are really possible or, still more strongly, that we know that there are no things in themselves or even that we know that they are impossible.[44] Different versions of the fictionalist reading can also vary with respect to how they spell out the fiction that determines the nature and properties of the feigned things in themselves. For example, the relevant fiction could

[41] See Allison 2004, 12, 36; Allison 2006, 11–12.

[42] See Prauss 1974, 62–191, esp. 106–46. It is almost commonplace for two-aspect commentators to give a deferential nod to Prauss, claim him as a defender of the two-aspect view, and dutifully praise his ground-breaking textual analysis of Kant's use of the qualifier 'in itself,' which, Prauss argues, should not be understood as adnominal to 'thing' but as adverbial to an often merely implicit 'considered,' an analysis, I might add, that occurs in the very first section of his monograph. But almost nobody ever talks about the (very interesting) rest of the book. As far as I can see, the reading developed by Prauss is reminiscent of Fichte and stands in stark contrast to the realism about empirical objects that is intended by most contemporary defenders of the two-aspect view—which might be part of the explanation for the telling silence about pretty much everything that Prauss says after page 23. Although I do not think that Prauss's interpretation is defensible as an account of Kant's transcendental distinction between things in themselves and appearances, I agree with much of it if it is understood as an account of Kant's theory of the constitution of empirical objects, on which more in sections 2.5–2.8 and 3.5.

[43] Versions of a fictionalist interpretation have been advocated or sympathetically discussed by Bird 1962, ch. 2; Schaper 1966; Melnick 1973; Rescher 1981; and Pogge 1991. For earlier examples of fictionalist readings, see notes 62 and 68.

[44] For example, Hans Vaihinger defends a version of the strongest type of fictionalist reading; see Vaihinger 1918.

characterize things in themselves in classic two-world fashion as supersensible, mind-independent entities that are distinct from and grounds of appearances, or it could describe them in two-aspect fashion as the mind-independent aspects of things.[45] It should also be noted that on readings that endorse both (a) one of the stronger kinds of fictionalism, according to which the existence of things in themselves is not only unknown or unknowable but denied or declared to be impossible, and (b) a conception of appearances as fully mind-dependent, Kant turns out to be an absolute idealist, as one might put it, in the sense of holding that the subject by itself—that is, without being affected by mind-independent, external things—brings about all of its representations and, with them, the empirical world.[46]

It should also be explicitly acknowledged that, in addition to mixing and matching two-aspect or two-world, methodological or ontological, realist or idealist (about appearances), and realist or fictionalist (about things in themselves) elements in one's interpretation of Kant's transcendental distinction, one could introduce a further level of mixing by adopting different mixtures for different kinds of entities, yielding even more interpretative options. For example, one could be a multiple-object theorist with respect to empirical objects or bodies but a one-object theorist with respect to the self. Or one could be a realist about things in themselves that appear to us as empirical objects but a fictionalist about things in themselves that do not appear to us, such as God.[47]

1.3 Putting My Reading on the Map

It is not my ambition to provide a detailed discussion of the virtues and vices of the various different kinds of interpretations of Kant's conception of the relation between appearances, things in themselves, and empirical objects, introduced in section 1.2. To be sure, we will have occasion to talk about a number of problems for and objections to many of them, but my primary objective is to present and defend my own interpretation.[48] To put my cards on the table, here are the answers to our six classification questions according to my reading: (1) Appearances and things in themselves are not numerically identical. More

[45] Prauss's reading, as just described, is an example of the latter type of view.

[46] All strong versions of fictionalism about things in themselves in the literature that I am aware of are of this kind. Given that for Kant things in themselves are quite clearly ontologically more fundamental than appearances, it would be quite awkward, to say the least, to hold both that things in themselves are fictional objects and that appearances are mind-independent.

[47] Robert Adams proposes a mixed view that comprises a two-aspect view with respect to ourselves, as agents or minds, agnosticism or a tentative two-world view with respect to bodies, and the acknowledgment that God is in a special category, being only a noumenon. See Adams 1997, 821–5.

[48] There is no shortage in literature on critical discussions. For Allison's version of the two-aspect view, see Aquila 1979; Aquila 1983, ch. 4; Guyer 1987, 336–44; Guyer 1989; Robinson 1994, 419–28; Van Cleve 1999, 146–50; Ameriks 2003c; Guyer 2007; Wood 2007. For Langton's interpretation, see Falkenstein 2001; Ameriks 2003d; Breitenbach 2004; Allais 2006. For Allais's interpretation, see Roche 2011; Schulting 2011, 9–16; Walker 2016; Guyer 2016. For one-object views in general, see Walker 2010, and Stang 2014. It is also worth flagging up front that my critical engagement with the two-aspect interpretation on systematic grounds in the following chapters will be tilted heavily toward ontological versions of this view. As I see it, the textual evidence conclusively establishes that the transcendental distinction is, and is intended by Kant to be an ontological distinction. Also, I find myself sharing the sentiment expressed by James Van Cleve that the methodological two-aspect view is either "unfathomably mysterious," namely, if it maintains that the properties of things truly vary according to how we consider them, or disappointingly modest, namely, if it maintains that considering things as they are in themselves amounts to no more than abstracting from some of their properties. See Van Cleve 1999, 8.

specifically, they are distinct existents. Also, both things in themselves and appearances are things, albeit not in exactly the same sense. (2) Appearances and things in themselves do not ontologically overlap and thus are not the same things in any reasonable sense. Still, they are closely related: appearances are grounded in things in themselves. (3) The transcendental distinction is an ontological distinction. (4) Empirical objects are appearances. (5) Appearances and, hence, empirical objects are fully mind-dependent. That is, Kant is a genuine idealist about empirical objects. (6) Things in themselves, which are mind-independent, actually exist. Since my reading of the transcendental distinction answers the first two questions in the negative, it counts as a two-world view according to the characterization spelled out in the previous section. And since it views appearances as fully mind-dependent and things in themselves as mind-independent grounds of appearances and asserts the actual existence of things in themselves, it counts as a version of the classic two-world view.

I am happy to call my reading a two-world view, but I want to add two notes of caution about what not to infer from my readiness to embrace this label. First, it should not be taken as an endorsement of the view that the realm of things in themselves and the realm of appearances are *worlds* in the strict sense. For Kant, a world, strictly speaking, is a unified whole of substances that stand in mutual interactions.[49] But we have no way of knowing whether all things in themselves mutually interact (or whether they are substances).[50] Having said that, it seems perfectly acceptable to me to say that the realm of appearances and the realm of things in themselves are two worlds broadly understood. These realms are inhabited by different kinds of entities, are governed by different laws, and are cognitively accessible to us in different ways.[51] Kant himself frequently uses the expressions 'world of sense' ('Sinnenwelt') or 'sensible world' to describe the dwelling place of appearances and contrasts it with the 'intelligible world' or the 'world of the understanding' ('Verstandeswelt') which is populated by things in themselves.[52] Second, my gladly accepting the two-world label should not be construed as an indication that I regard the line that separates the camp of the two-world interpreters from the camp of the two-aspect interpreters as the most important battle line between all the various readings of Kant's transcendental distinction. As already noted, although I do agree that our first two classification questions are worthwhile questions to address, I believe that they have been overemphasized in recent decades and present day Kant scholarship would be in better shape if the two-aspect versus two-world debate had not influenced the general

[49] See V-Met-L1/Pölitz, 28:211–12: "The world is a whole of substances that are in mutual connection and thereby make up a unity, a whole." Also see MSI, 2:407: "... from this it is supposed to follow how it is possible that multiple substances stand in mutual interactions and therefore belong to the same whole, which is called the world..."

[50] In fact, it is not even clear whether all appearances mutually interact, on Kant's view. It is certainly clear that he holds that all *outer* appearances, that is, all empirical objects, which are in space and time, mutually interact. That is the content of the Third Analogy; see B256/A211. But it is much less clear at all if *inner* appearances, that is, empirical selves, which are only in time, mutually interact with each other or with outer appearances. But empirical selves are also part of the 'world' of appearances.

[51] See KpV, 5:43: "But the law of this autonomy is the moral law, which is also the foundational law of a supersensible nature and of a pure world of the understanding, whose pendant [Gegenbild] is supposed to exist in the world of sense but at the same time without interfering with its laws."

[52] See B480/A452: "The world of sense, as the whole of all appearances..." See GMS, 4:453: "The rational being counts itself as intelligence as belonging to the world of the understanding.... From the other side, it is also conscious of itself as a part of the world of sense..." See Prol, 4:354. See GMS, 4:451; KPV, 5:132; B566–570/A538–542.

conversation to quite the extent that it did. The related point that I want to add now is that the other classification questions are, not only at least as important as the first two but also at least as useful in defining plausible battle lines. In the end, every particular interpretation must stand alone, but if we agree to admit temporary alliances and camps, my preferred allies would be, first, proponents of the reading that the transcendental distinction is an *ontological* distinction, second, proponents of the reading that Kant is an *idealist* about appearances and, hence, about empirical objects, and, third, proponents of the reading that Kant is a *realist* about things in themselves—all of whom include two-aspect commentators among their ranks. Also, if we ever get to a point where all of these battles have been decided and all there is left to fight about is the meaning of 'thing,' 'existent,' 'entity,' or 'same thing,' we should probably declare a truce with respect to these large-scale classification questions and either go our merry separate ways or pour even more energy into developing the details of our respective interpretations so as to engage the remaining competitors in precisely circumscribed local battles over specific questions concerning the transcendental distinction such as how exactly to understand the transcendental ideality of appearance and their dependence on things in themselves.

My reading is a version of the classic two-world interpretation but it is not a mere rehash of it; it improves upon and goes beyond extant readings of this type. The main improvements consist in a precise and detailed account of the mind-dependence, ontological status, and nature of appearances, as well as of their grounding in things in themselves. The main expansions and additions consist in a novel explanation of how to understand Kant's empirical realism in relation to his transcendental idealism by reading him as committed to the view that reality comprises different ontological levels, a comprehensive collection of all core theses that define critical idealism, an original account of Kant's views about space and time, in particular, of his conception of pure space and time as forms of sensibility and their relation to empirical space and time, an explicit story of how to spell out the two-world view for the case of the self, a careful analysis of the differences between critical idealism and ordinary idealism such as Berkeley's, and original proposals for how to make sense of Kant's fictionalist sounding pronouncements and his seeming fondness for the Leibniz-Wolffian conception of things in themselves. Moreover, I will not only offer an interpretation of the meaning of critical idealism but also of Kant's arguments for it, where, again, my reading in part improves upon and in part goes beyond what is already available in the literature. The improvements include comprehensive and detailed reconstructions of Kant's arguments for the theses that space and time are nothing but forms of sensibility, and that empirical objects are appearances; the additions and expansions include a patiently worked-out account of the foundational structure of the core theses of critical idealism and the logical relations obtaining between them, as well as novel reconstructions of Kant's arguments for the theses that things in themselves exist, affect us, and ground empirical objects.

The main recommendation for my interpretation of Kant's critical idealism, I take it, is that it presents a coherent, comprehensive view that makes excellent sense of Kant's text overall. It has a large amount of direct and indirect textual evidence behind it, is well-integrated with many other important Kantian doctrines—which we will have occasion to consider in the course of our investigation—and can accommodate pretty much all passages that allegedly support competing readings. All of the other interpretations have *some* basis in the text—although some certainly have less support than others—but they

struggle if confronted with the whole body of relevant textual evidence and with the full range of relevant Kantian teachings. Their proponents are forced to disregard many passages and important elements of Kant's system or at least read them in a way that is highly strained or outright implausible.[53] Granted, there are also two or three passages that my interpretation can accommodate only if we allow that Kant was a little sloppy in his formulation. Kant is only human, and so he is not always as careful and precise as one would wish. But in all of these cases, the assumption of sloppiness is quite plausible, and it is easy to see how he could have ended up expressing himself in the way he does, even though the formulation does not exactly capture what he means.[54] Overall, my interpretation is a near perfect fit, or so I hope to show.

In this context, it is also worth noting that two-aspect formulations are often quicker and less cumbersome than the corresponding two-world formulations and roll much more easily off the tongue since the relation between things and their appearances with which we are familiar from our ordinary lives, such as the relation between a bunch of water droplets and their appearance as a rainbow or between a fat cat and its appearance as a raccoon in a dark yard, lends itself to being understood in two-aspect terms, as we will see in section 5.3. More generally, as James Van Cleve points out citing excerpts from Locke and Berkeley, it is not uncommon for writers in the modern period to use two-aspect language to express what is clearly a two-world view.[55] So, it would neither be surprising nor unprecedented if,

[53] For an example, see note 12, chapter 2.

[54] The most prominent example of a passage like this is Bxxvi–xxvii, which is one of the main pieces of textual evidence that proponents of the two-aspect view cite in support of their interpretation: "At the same time, the reservation is always made, which must be duly noted, that we must at least be able to *think*, if not *cognize*, the very same objects also as things in themselves. For otherwise, the paradoxical sentence would follow that appearance is without anything that appears there. Now if we were to assume that the distinction, made necessary by our *Critique*, of things, as objects of experience, from the very same things, as things in themselves, were not made at all, the principle of causality, and, thus, the natural mechanism in their determination, would have to be valid for all things in general as efficient causes." The last sentence can be explained relatively straightforwardly. As comes out clearly in the following sentences, the things that Kant has in mind here are human beings, and the problem that he is thinking about is that without the transcendental distinction we would have no way to save human freedom, given that all appearances, including human bodies, are determined by universal causal laws. As will be explicated in section 5.8, in the case of human beings, two-aspect formulations are apt and legitimate even on a two-world reading of the transcendental distinction because human beings are complex entities that are composed of distinct parts, some of which are appearances and at least one of which is a thing in itself. The more problematic part of the passage is the sentence that "we must at least be able to *think*, if not *cognize*, the very same objects also as things in themselves," where, as the context makes clear, 'the very same objects' refers to the objects of experience mentioned in the previous sentence. One way to explain this sentence would be to say that Kant is already thinking about the special case of human beings. Alternatively, one could conclude that Kant's formulation is a bit sloppy. What he means to say, more precisely, is that for every object of experience we must be able to think a thing in itself that appears as this appearance, that is, that grounds this appearance, "for otherwise the paradoxical sentence would follow that appearance is without something that appears there." Other passages that are best explained by taking Kant to be engaged in loose talk are passages in which he seemingly identifies things in themselves with the objects of the senses. See Letter to Tieftrunk, December 11, 1797, 12:224: "... we cannot cognize objects of the senses (of outer as well as inner sense) in any other way than merely as they appear to us, not according to what they are in themselves." Also see MAN, 4:507: "... space is merely the subjective form of our sensibility, under which objects of outer senses appear to us that we do not know as they are in themselves, which appearance we then call matter." What Kant means here, more precisely, is that we cannot cognize or know the things in themselves that ground the objects of our senses but only their appearances, which are the objects of our senses. As Robert Adams observed (in correspondence), these scattered *prima facie* problematic passages also do not reveal any systematic reasons in Kant's philosophy for why the objects of the senses ought to be regarded as numerically identical to things in themselves. Textual evidence in support of a given interpretation that makes contact with systematic reasons for the interpretation is much more weighty than isolated formulations that speak for an interpretation but have no connection to any systematic grounds.

[55] See Van Cleve 1999, 145: "My point in citing these passages, of course, is to raise the possibility that for Kant, too, double aspect language is a rhetorical device for expressing what is actually a double-object view."

on a few occasions, we found Kant guilty of the same kind of imprecision. But a few scattered two-aspect formulations do not a two-aspect view make.

Another general consideration in favor of my reading, which, for reasons of space, I will not have time to develop here but at least would like to mention, has to do with Kant's philosophical development. Compared to other readings, my interpretation of Kant's critical idealism fits much better with the trajectory of his thinking in his pre-critical writings that culminates in the formulation of the critical philosophy. The *Inaugural Dissertation* from 1770, Kant's last major publication before the *Critique*, famously even sports the terminology of two worlds in its title "On the forms and principles of the sensible and the intelligible world."[56] Telling the story of Kant's philosophical development as a guide to a proper understanding of the nature and meaning of his critical idealism is a big project that will have to wait for another day. Accordingly, the present investigation is focused primarily on Kant's views as presented in his critical writings.

1.4 The Vagaries of the Classic Two-World View's Fortune

In preparation for the more detailed presentation of my version of the classic two-world view in the following chapters, it will be useful for us to briefly reflect on the history of this kind of interpretation and its undeserved marginalization over the course of the second half of the twentieth century.

During the first one hundred years or so after the publication of the *Critique*, the main focus of the debate about how to properly understand Kant's conception of things in themselves was not on the question of whether he regards things in themselves and appearances as numerically identical or not but on the question of whether he really holds that things in themselves actually exist and affect sensibility and thereby produce sensations. In fact, the latter question was one of the central interpretative questions about Kant's theoretical philosophy overall on which the philosophical luminaries of the day

[56] To give credit where credit is due, there are some strands in Kant's thinking in the late 1790s that sound fictionalist; to be precise, they sound much like Prauss's two-aspect version of fictionalism (see note 42). In the relevant passages, Kant calls the thing in itself a *Gedankending* (literally a 'thought-thing') and describes its function in a way that is strikingly similar to the way in which he describes the function of the transcendental object in the *Critique*. So, one might say that at least one version of the fictionalist interpretation has the distinction of fitting well with one of the multiple trajectories of Kant's philosophical development that may be discerned in his 'post-critical' period, as some commentators call it. See OP, 22:37: "Space and time are not apprehensible objects but merely modification of the power of representation in which the concept of a thing in itself is merely a thought-thing (*ens rationis*) and serves as thing = x in order to represent the object of the intuition by contrast as appearance." Also see OP, 22:23: "Every representation as *appearance* is thought as something that is distinct from what the object is *in itself* (the sensible from an intelligible); but the latter = x is not a special object that exists outside my representation but merely the idea of the abstraction from the sensible which is recognized to be necessary." Also see OP, 21:4; OP, 22:26–9, 31–2, 36, 37, 42, 46. I should like to add, though, that I am not convinced that Kant actually endorses this version of the fictionalist view in his later years. There are two other options for how to read these and related passages. First, it might be that Kant is merely playing around with a fictionalist conception of things in themselves in an exploratory fashion for the purposes of clarifying his own position vis-à-vis the new bold systems of the German Idealists. Given that the *Opus Postumum* is a mere collection of largely unedited notes and sketches, this hypothesis is not implausible. Second, it might be that he is only talking about the transcendental object and its role in the constitution of empirical objects and not about things in themselves as they figure in his transcendental distinction. For the transcendental object can be classified as an empirical object as it is in itself, as we will see in section 3.5; also see note 131, chapter 3.

focused their attention.[57] According to one of the most discussed objections to Kant at the time, the claim that things in themselves actually exist and affect sensibility is at best unjustified or at worst inconsistent with the main epistemological result of the *Critique* that our substantive theoretical cognition is restricted to the empirical realm and, more specifically, with the result that the categories of actuality and causality can be meaningfully applied only to appearances and objects of possible experience. A version of this objection was first raised by Hermann Andreas Pistorius and forcefully reiterated by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Gottlob Ernst 'Aenesidemus' Schulze; their early discussions of this objection were enormously influential and set the agenda for much of the subsequent debate.[58] On the view of many early critics, the problematic doctrine of the actual existence of things in themselves and of their affection of sensibility ought to be removed from the critical philosophy, much like a cancerous tumor, if the patient is supposed to have any chance of survival. What we are left with after such an operation—and appropriate corresponding changes in the rest of the system in order to avoid inconsistencies and contradictions—is a fictionalist view about things in themselves and an idealist view about appearances and empirical objects, which adds up to absolute idealism, in the sense indicated in the previous section.[59] The affection of sensibility that is said to produce sensations could then be understood either as part of the fiction about things in themselves that we tell ourselves in order to make sense of our experience or as an empirical affection by appearances. (Whether this operation is indeed the panacea it was hoped to be is a question for another time.[60])

During this first phase of the reception of the *Critique*, the boundaries between interpreting the text, interpreting the 'spirit,' and developing revisionist extensions, of Kant's philosophy, were somewhat fluid. While many early readers regarded the fictionalist conception of things in themselves as a 'fix' for Kant's theoretical philosophy in response to the problems of the existence and affection of things in themselves, there are also many early readers who claim that a version of this conception is, in fact, Kant's own.[61] Johann

[57] Other central questions of the early debate concern the relation of Kant's idealism to skepticism and the question of the ultimate foundation, the 'first principle,' of the critical philosophy.

[58] See Pistorius 1784; Pistorius 1788, 444–6; Jacobi 1787, Appendix "On Transcendental Idealism," 209–30; Schulze 1792, esp. 259–75, 294–9; 374–82. Also see Schwab 1796, 119, 123–5, 143; Schelling 1836/37, 81–5; Schelling 1842/43, 49–50. For useful discussions of the early debate of the problem of the existence of things in themselves and their affection of sensibility, see Vaihinger 1881, 172–5; Vaihinger 1892, 35–50; Erdmann 1878, chs 2 and 3, 80–128; also see Herring 1953, §§1–5.

[59] See Jacobi 1787, 229: "The transcendental idealist must have the courage to assert the strongest idealism that has ever been taught and cannot even be afraid of the accusation of speculative egoism, since he cannot possibly remain in his system even if he merely wants to drive this last accusation away from himself." As already indicated in note 42, there is room in logical space for a position that is fictionalist about things in themselves but realist about appearances in asserting their mind-independent existence. But the text quite clearly disqualifies this position as an interpretation of Kant, and (to my knowledge) nobody in the early scholarly debate advocates it.

[60] We will talk about some of the relevant issues in section 5.10.1.

[61] After surveying the literature about the *Critique* published before its second edition, Erdmann concludes that, apart from Schultz and Reinhold, everybody else reads Kant as an absolute idealist. "Without exception, Kant's inquiries concerning the noumenon and the transcendental object are interpreted idealistically. But it is not only claimed that the denial of things in themselves is the main purpose of the work, it is also everywhere assumed, even if in multiply hidden ways, that this solution is impossible. The opponents find in it direct contradictions, the mediators identify irresolvable difficulties, the followers look for extensions—but all in a realistic sense" (Erdmann 1878, 128). As becomes clear from the final sentence of this passage, Erdmann's judgment that Kant is read mostly as an absolute idealist should be understood as restricted to those scholars who critically examined the *Critique* in print during the first few years after its initial publication. The default interpretation among the early Kantians, that is, among those early readers who saw themselves as followers of Kant, was to read him as a realist about things in themselves. Compare in this sense Fichte 1797b, 1:480–1: "The (merely historical) question is the

Gottlieb Fichte's 'interpretation' of Kant is a prominent example here.[62] I put scare quotes around 'interpretation' in the previous sentence because one may very well question whether Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* only makes explicit what Kant himself had in mind all along, as its author insists.[63] Notably, Kant, for one, does *not* think that Fichte has offered a faithful interpretation of the text or the spirit of the *Critique*. In a public declaration from 1799, in response to a demand in a literary journal to position himself with respect to Fichte's philosophy, Kant declares that he regards "Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre as a completely untenable system" (EF, 12:370). More specifically, with respect to the claim that "the *Critique* is not to be taken *literally* with respect to what it explicitly teaches about sensibility," namely, that sensibility delivers sensations in response to being affected by actually existing, mind-independent, supersensible things in themselves, he protests that "the *Critique* must, indeed, be understood according to the letter" (EF, 12:371).[64] Kant sums up the lesson that he has learned from his experience with Fichte—and other supposed allies such as Jacob Sigismund Beck—with the proverb "God save us only from our friends, of our enemies we will beware ourselves" (EF, 12:371).[65]

In contrast to the question about the status of things in themselves as real or fictional, the question about whether things in themselves and appearances are the same things, or

following: Did Kant really ground experience, according to its empirical content, in *something that is distinct from the I*? I know very well that all Kantians understood Kant in this way, with the sole exception of Mr. Beck, whose work, the 'Standpunkt,' which is crucial here, appeared after the *Wissenschaftslehre*. (Note: I do not count Mr. Schelling among Kant's exegetes . . .) He is understood in this way by his exegete who recently was approved by him, Mr. Schulz, whom I bring up here because of this circumstance. . . . How Reinhold still reads Kant to this very hour we have just seen."

[62] See Fichte 1792; Fichte 1794, 1:174–8, 186; Fichte 1795, esp. 2: 444–5, note; Fichte 1797a, 1:427–9; Fichte 1797b, 2: 480–91; Letter from Fichte to Reinhold, July 4, 1797, *Briefwechsel*, 1:562–4. Also see Beck 1796a, esp. 23–30; 43–5; Maimon 1790, 203–5, 419–20; Maimon 1794, 351–4, 377–8; Maimon 1797, esp. 191; Jakob 1786, esp. 33, 130–2; Brastberger 1790, 3–7; Brastberger 1792, esp. 397–405. Also see Letter from Tieftrunk to Kant, November 5, 1797, 12:215—17.

[63] See, for example, Fichte 1794, 1:186, note. At least, Fichte is aware that one might accuse him of not having understood Kant, which, however, he hastens to add, is "truly not an objection," because, on his view, "Kant's writings [are] *completely unintelligible* for anybody *who does not already know* what can be contained in them" (Letter to Reinhold, July 4, 1797, *Briefwechsel*, 1:563).

[64] Also see Letter to Tieftrunk, April 5, 1798, 12:241: "What do you think about Mr. *Fichte's* general Wissenschaftslehre? . . . For the moment I do not have leisure to take it up; but the review of Fichte (which is written with a lot of sympathy on the part of the reviewer) looks to me like a kind of ghost, which [sic], once one believes to have grasped it, one finds no object in front of oneself but always only oneself and here also only the hand that grasps for it."

[65] Beck, a former student of Kant's, started out as a faithful follower of the critical philosophy and first made a name for himself as its able expositor; see Beck 1793 and 1794. (Kant himself had invited and encouraged Beck to write a book explicating his critical works; see Letter to Beck, September 27, 1791, 11:289–92; Letter to Beck, November 2, 1791, 11:304–5). Kant was even initially sympathetic to Beck's *Standpunkt*-project, in which he wanted to present the critical philosophy in a different way and from a different starting point compared to Kant's own presentation in the *Critique*, namely, from the standpoint of the original synthetic unity of apperception; see Letter from Beck to Kant, June 17, 1794, 11:509–11; Letter to Beck, July 1, 1794, 11:514–16; Letter from Beck to Kant, September 16, 1794. But the final product turned out to be rather un-Kantian, and Kant expressed the hope that Beck could be moved "to change his standpoint again and rectify it" (Letter to Tieftrunk, July 12, 1797, 12:183). Among other things, Beck ended up denying the existence of things in themselves and claims that sensations are due to affections of sensibility by appearances; see Beck 1796a, esp. 23–30; 43–5, 156–9, 163, 172–5, 247–8, 265–7, 369–70; also see Beck 1796b, 13–14, 44–6, 66–7; Letter from Beck to Kant, June 20, 1797, 12:165–6, 168. [Appearances of closeness to Fichte notwithstanding, Beck assures Kant, as an "honest man," that he is "infinitely far away from this Fichtean nonsense" (Letter from Beck to Kant, June 24, 1797, 12:174).] Reinhold went through a similar progression away from Kant, from faithful follower and expositor (see Reinhold 1786–1787), to defender, improver, and extender (see Reinhold 1789; Reinhold 1790; Reinhold 1791), and, eventually, serious revisionist à la Fichte (see Reinhold 1798; Reinhold 1799). Reinhold's Fichte-phase also did not last for very long, however.

aspects of the same things, tended not to be explicitly addressed in the first phase of the reception of Kant's philosophy. There is a prevalence of two-world formulations in the early literature, but in the case of many early writers it remains ultimately unclear whether they read Kant as advocating a two-world or a two-aspect view, an unclarity that is aided by the wide-spread practice to present Kant's views through close paraphrase and lengthy *verbatim* quotations.[66]

The question whether Kant should be read as a realist or fictionalist about things in themselves, and thus as a realist or absolute idealist, continued to play a central role during the second phase of the reception of his philosophy, which may be dated, roughly, from about 1865 to the late-1920s. This period saw the rise of neo-Kantianism and the beginning of 'serious' Kant scholarship that is based on a close reading of Kant's texts, mostly in Germany but subsequently and to a lesser extent also in England and other European countries.[67] Both of these developments can be seen, to some degree, as part of the backlash to the metaphysical excesses of the intervening German Idealist movement. Fictionalism, coupled with an understanding of the affection of sensibility as an empirical affection by appearances, was popular in neo-Kantian circles, although many of these fictionalist readings appear to have been intended, not so much as accurate interpretations of the text but as revisionist reconstructions in order to make Kant consistent with himself and to capture the much invoked 'true spirit' of the critical philosophy.[68] Many of the 'serious' Kant scholars, by contrast, made a point of explicitly arguing against the fictionalist interpretation, insisting that Kant's texts unequivocally commit their author to the view that things in themselves actually exist.[69] It is also in this group of scholars, with their focus on exegesis and faithful textual analysis, that the question of the sameness or distinctness of

[66] This also holds, in particular, for the widely read reviews and summaries of Kant's work by Pistorius, Schultz, Jakob, and Schmid, through which his philosophy became known to a broader philosophical audience. See Pistorius 1784; Schultz 1785; Jakob 1786, esp. 29–36; Schmid 1788, esp. 135–9; 167–70. Also see Schulze, 1801, volume 1, esp. 236–48, 375–410. In his review of Jakob, ever insightful Pistorius notes that Kant's text leaves it unclear how he conceives of appearances and their relation to things in themselves, see Pistorius 1788, 429–32, 446–7. It should be noted that in his later *Examinations of the Kantian Critique*, *Part II*, Schultz at one place provides what sounds like a fairly clear articulation of a two-aspect reading, see Schultz 1792, 279. But the subsequent discussion quickly reverts to the usual level of unclarity regarding the two-world versus two-aspect issue, see in particular Schultz 1792, 286–8.

[67] It was also during this time, namely, in 1894, that the Academy Edition of Kant's works was brought under way under the leadership of Wilhelm Dilthey. (The first volume appeared in 1900.) The list of editors reads like a who-is-who of 'old style' German Kant scholarship. Apart from Dilthey, the list includes, among others, Erich Adickes, Benno Erdmann, Paul Natorp, Wilhelm Windelband, and Karl Vorländer. An early British Kant interpreter who followed in their interpretative footsteps is Norman Kemp Smith, see Kemp Smith 1918.

[68] See Liebmann 1865, 25–69, 205–15; Lange 1866, esp. 267–9; Cohen 1871, 15–17; 239–53; Cohen 1885, 107–8; 501–26, 548–50, 605–16; Drobisch 1885, esp. 1–16; Natorp 1912; Bauch 1917, esp. 163–6. Windelband argues that Kant's conception of things in themselves went through several phases, the two main phases being a fictionalist conception and a two-world conception, where the former is philosophically most important, but the latter is the one most central to Kant's own presentation of his views; see Windelband 1877. For a brief overview of the debate about the problems of the existence of, and affection through things in themselves in neo-Kantianism, see Vaihinger 1892, 50–1.

[69] This group includes Ueberweg 1872, 195–6, 199; Riehl 1876, 311–15, 432–43; Riehl 1908, 371−2, 571−2; Fischer 1869, 435–45; Hartmann 1875; Erdmann 1878, esp. 41–2; Paulsen 1898, 155–9; Vaihinger 1892, 20–1, 52–3; and Adickes 1924, 4–19, 28–37. (Vaihinger joined the fictionalist camp later on; see Vaihinger 1918.) Of course, not all of the scholars who understand Kant as a realist about things in themselves take this aspect of his view to be unproblematic. In particular, the objection that Kant illegitimately applies the categories of actuality and causality to things in themselves is still widely acknowledged, for example, see Trendelenburg 1862, 159–60. Also, not all of them share the same view with respect to Kant's doctrine of affection. Vaihinger and Adickes, for example, famously read Kant as being committed to a double affection view, according to which we are affected both transcendentally by things in themselves and empirically by appearances in themselves; see Vaihinger 1892, 52–5; Adickes 1929, 27–94; also see note 145, chapter 2.

things in themselves and appearances first appears on the radar screen as a specific point of possible contention. This question by no means occupied as central a place in the scholarly debate at the time as it does nowadays, but interpreters then were more careful in their formulations concerning the relation between appearances and things in themselves than Kant's earliest readers had been, and one can find occasional explicit discussions of the issue. Against the background of the now customary characterization of the classic two-world interpretation as 'traditional' and, in English speaking circles, as the reading of Kant that was prevalent before the two-aspect interpretation started to conquer the literature about fifty years ago, it is striking that many early Kant scholars in this second phase of the reception of Kant's philosophy were proponents of the two-aspect reading.[70] This is not to deny that the two-world reading had its prominent champions. Kuno Fischer, who was one of the main driving forces behind the 'back to Kant' movement that rolled over Germany then, reads Kant as clearly advocating that things in themselves and appearances are numerically distinct and says of the two-aspect view that it is "how the Kantian Philosophy has been mostly understood and could not have been understood more wrongly."[71]

For the last four decades or so, the two-aspect view, and, in particular, the one-object version of the two-aspect view, has been, by far, the most popular interpretation of Kant's transcendental distinction, especially among Kant scholars working in the so-called analytic tradition. In order to understand how the classic two-world view came to be known as 'traditional,' how, in the 1970s, the one-object reading could have been perceived as a breath of fresh air, and how this reading could have risen to the status of dominant majority view, we must take a look at Peter Strawson's pivotal role in the development of Kant scholarship in the English speaking world. The backlash to German idealism, as well as its British counterpart, that helped to renew interest in closely studying Kant's texts and to allow neo-Kantianism to emerge in the final decades of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century, also contributed to the flourishing of logical empiricism in the 1920s and 1930s in Austria, Germany, and England, which significantly influenced the goals and methods of early analytic philosophy in the 1940s and 1950s in England and the US. By mid-century, the philosophical climate in the English speaking philosophical world was as anti-metaphysical as it was anti-idealist, and the study of Kant cannot be described as much more than a niche interest.[72] The publication of Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense* in 1966 marks a significant turning point for the fate of Kant's philosophy in analytic circles. Strawson deserves great credit for making Kant fit for mainstream analytic philosophical society again, but he famously accomplished this feat by separating transcendental idealism from (what he took to be) the analytical argument of Kant's theory of experience. Strawson is well aware that Kant's text demands a two-world reading of the

[70] See Riehl 1876, 313, 424; Riehl 1908, 405–07; Erdmann 1878, 19, 69, 208; Adickes 1920, 255; Adickes 1924, esp. 20–7; Adickes 1929, 3; Heimsoeth 1924, 125 (but see note 36); Heidegger 1991 (*1928), esp. 31–5. The earliest English language interpretation that is clearly two-aspect of which I am aware is Paton 1936, vol. I, esp. 61–3. Prichard already discusses a version of the two-aspect view as one possible way of reading the transcendental distinction but appears to refrain from identifying it as the view that was intended by Kant himself; see Prichard 1909, 71–100.

[71] Fischer 1869, 439.

[72] This is not to deny that some good work was being done in the area then, such as the earlier work by Lewis White Beck or W. H. Walsh.

transcendental distinction, but he is equally aware that, in 1966, the two-world view would be a hard sell.

> The doctrine of transcendental idealism, and the associated picture of the receiving and ordering apparatus of the mind producing Nature as we know it out of the unknowable reality of things as they are in themselves, are undoubtedly the chief obstacle(s) to a sympathetic understanding of the *Critique*. (Strawson 1966, 22)

This assessment, Strawson's two-world reading of transcendental idealism, and his claim that Kant's more valuable philosophical insights can, fortunately, be "disentangled" from the doctrine of transcendental idealism,[73] inspired legions of Kant scholars to either follow him in setting transcendental idealism to one side,[74] or engage in the business of saving Kant from his bad reputation by devising interpretations that do not present him as a two-world theorist after all—as Strawson did with his 'traditional' reading—nor as an absolute idealist, which would be at least as bad. The hour of the two-aspect view had struck. As I see it, the subsequent takeover of the interpretative landscape by the two-aspect interpretation, and, in particular, the initial take-over by the methodological version, has more to do with the perceived greater attractiveness of this view as a philosophical position than with its merits as a reading of Kant. It is no accident that the two-aspect view's transformation into the new orthodoxy in analytic Kant scholarship occurred during a period in which both metaphysics and idealism were largely out of fashion and out of favor in the general philosophical population. I agree with Kant that the only saving he needs is from revisionist commentators who think of themselves as his friends, and I am hopeful that the stepmotherly attitude toward the classic two-world view in much of the literature since Strawson will prove to be merely an expression of the mainstream philosophical tastes of an era that is drawing to a close, rather than a stable consensus that can withstand the test of time.[75]

Another factor that has likely contributed to the lingering unpopularity of the classic two-world view is that most of the versions of this reading that have been singled out for critical discussion in the more recent literature are of a particularly implausible variety and easily refutable.[76] This is bound to create the impression that the classic two-world view is a

[73] Strawson 1966, 42. Also see Strawson 1966, 253–73.

[74] See Guyer 1987, 335: "One can enter the critical philosophy, or at least the transcendental theory of experience, without the presupposition of the thing in itself, because none of Kant's arguments for the nonspatiality and nontemporality of things in themselves, certainly none of his arguments from legitimate claims of the transcendental theory of experience, succeeds. Thus one can accept the transcendental theory of experience finally expounded in the analogies of experience and the refutation of idealism without any commitment to dogmatic transcendental idealism."

[75] I like to think that the fact that most (all?) more recent two-aspect interpretations are ontological versions of the view and some of them are even multiple-object versions is a sign of the turning tides.

[76] For example, in a 2004 paper, Allais focuses her attack against the two-world view primarily on what she calls 'phenomenalism,' according to which appearances are to be understood à la Berkeley as ideas in the minds of perceivers. Allais takes phenomenalism thus understood to be an integral part of the two-world view, which, accordingly, can be rejected once phenomenalism is refuted. See Allais 2004, 660–5. In a later paper, Allais admits that her objections to phenomenalist readings of Kant only affect certain versions of the two-world view. See Allais 2007, 460. But this does not keep her from continuing to use phenomenalism (as just described), in her book, as the main representative of a genuinely idealist competitor to her own 'essentially manifest view,' according to which Kantian appearances are to be understood as things qua bearers of essentially manifest properties, that is, of ways of perceptually appearing to us. See Allais 2015, esp. chs 2, 5, and 6. If the choice were between reading Kant as a phenomenalist as characterized by Allais or as a proponent of the essentially manifest view, I might also go

dead-end, not worthy of serious consideration, and, hence, deservedly out of favor. It is my aim to rehabilitate the classic two-world interpretation as a viable contender in present day Kant scholarship by offering an interpretation that is, unambiguously and proudly, two-world, but does not suffer from the defects that are usually presented as decisive blows against this kind of reading. Of course, whether Kant's critical idealism thus understood can hold its own as a viable philosophical position in the contemporary arena is a question for another day. (I believe that it can.) But I hope that by presenting it in the best possible light—which will bring with it filling in some details that Kant's own account left a bit vague, as well as thinking through some implications that Kant himself did not explicitly draw—and by bringing out its philosophical depth and richness, I can begin to drum up some interest and whet some appetites.

1.5 Concrete Plan

Due to the genuinely systematic nature of Kant's philosophy, our discussion has to cover a lot of ground. Chapter 2 deals with the nature and ontological status of appearances. We begin by looking at the transcendental distinction. It is shown that things in themselves and appearances are numerically distinct existents whose primary difference consists in that the former are mind-independent while the latter are mind-dependent, in a sense that is explicated in detail. On the proposed reading, the world, understood as the sum total of everything that has reality, comprises several levels of reality, most importantly, a mind-independent, transcendental level, at which things in themselves exist, and a mind-dependent, empirical level, at which appearances exist. Appearances are identified to be intentional objects of experience. The nature and ontological status of appearances is further investigated by way of an examination of Kant's account of perception and his theory of experience, including a detailed consideration of the formal and material conditions of experience and of the implications of the mathematical antinomies for the specific flavor of Kant's idealism about appearances. Chapter 3 examines the core claims of transcendental idealism that empirical objects and empirical selves are appearances and not things in themselves, and that pure space and time are nothing but forms of sensibility. Kant is shown to be a relationalist about empirical space and time in holding that empirical space and time are constituted by the spatial and temporal determinations of empirical objects. Furthermore, it is explicated how Kant can be both a transcendental idealist and an empirical realist about empirical objects, empirical selves, and empirical space and time, and how his idealism differs from transcendental realism, as well as from ordinary idealism such as Berkeley's. The foundational structure of, and Kant's arguments for his transcendental idealism and empirical realism are the topic of chapter 4, with special emphasis on the 'master argument' in the Transcendental Aesthetic of the *Critique* for the thesis that pure space and time are transcendentally ideal and nothing but forms of sensibility, which has as one of its central premises the claim that we have an a priori intuition of space and time. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the theses that things in themselves exist and that

with the latter. But, of course, that is not the only choice we have. One can easily construct much more sophisticated broadly phenomenalist readings of Kant's conception of appearances than the one Allais considers that do not suffer from the problems that she identifies with respect to phenomenalism as construed by her.

they ground appearances by affecting sensibility, which are important elements of Kant's critical idealist position overall. In the context of the examination of the grounding thesis, the difference between an empirical and a transcendental version of the distinction between things in themselves and appearances is explicated, and the role in Kant's explanation of critical idealism of the much discussed analogy between secondary qualities and spatiotemporal determinations is analyzed. Moreover, the relation between the transcendental and the empirical self is revisited, and the two-world reading of this relation is confirmed and integrated with an account of Kant's conception of human beings as composed of various distinct parts, including a body, an empirical self, and a transcendental self. The account of how critical idealism differs from ordinary idealism that was begun in chapter 3 is further refined, and Kant's arguments for the existence thesis and the grounding thesis with respect to things in themselves are reconstructed and shown to ultimately rely on the assumption that the human mind is essentially finite. Finally, two versions of critical idealism that differ in strength are distinguished—bold critical idealism and timid critical idealism—and it is argued that Kant is a bold critical idealist. Our journey ends, in chapter 6, with an account of how Kant's apparent endorsement of fictionalism about things in themselves, as well as his apparent endorsement of the Leibniz-Wolffian conception of things in themselves, can be reconciled with the reading that he is a realist about things in themselves as characterized in critical idealism. In this context, the difference between Kantian things in themselves and noumena, that is, objects of a pure understanding, is explained as well. Furthermore, two additional arguments for transcendental idealism that are suggested by Kant are subject to scrutiny, both of which seem odd at first glance since they rely on premises about things in themselves to which he does not appear to be entitled within the framework of the critical philosophy. The appendix is intended to ease comprehension by providing a comprehensive summary of all foundational theses that define bold critical idealism, timid critical idealism, transcendental realism, and ordinary idealism, respectively, as well as a collection of various other theses, definitions of key Kantian terminology, and special terminology discussed and introduced along the way, and a diagram of the foundational structure of bold critical idealism and the main arguments on which it depends, as reconstructed in the previous chapters.

2
The Nature and Ontological Status of Appearances

2.1 The Full Mind-dependence of Appearances and their Distinctness from Things in Themselves

Appearances and things in themselves are distinct existents; more precisely, appearances are mind-dependent existents, while things in themselves are mind-independent existents, and they do not share any ontological ingredients. The project of this chapter is to lay the foundation for explicating and defending this two-world reading of Kant's transcendental distinction,[1] spell out the relevant sense of mind-dependence and mind-independence, and examine in more detail how exactly Kant conceives of the nature and ontological status of appearances.

First, a couple of terminological matters. The term 'appearance' can be used in a general and a more specific sense. In the general sense, it means something that is mind-dependent in a sense to be characterized later in this section and in section 2.3. In the more specific sense, it refers to Kantian appearances, that is, appearances as conceived in Kant's critical idealism. Like all appearances, Kantian appearances are mind-dependent but they also have several further specific features that set them apart from other kinds of appearances, for example, they depend on a special kind of representations that satisfy certain conditions of objectivity, as we will see. The term 'thing in itself' can also be used in a general and a more specific sense. In the general sense, it means something that is mind-independent in a sense to be characterized later in this section and in section 2.3. In the more specific sense, it refers to Kantian things in themselves, that is, things in themselves as conceived in Kant's critical idealism. Like all things in themselves, Kantian things in themselves are mind-independent but they also have several further specific features that set them apart from things in themselves as conceived by other philosophers. For example, Kantian things in themselves are supersensible and ground Kantian appearances, as we will discuss in chapter 5. Since this chapter is devoted to explicating more fully how Kant conceives of appearances, in the following I will not add the explicit qualification 'Kantian' whenever I use the term 'appearance,' but I should be understood as having Kantian appearances in mind unless otherwise indicated. This is also how Kant typically uses the term 'appearance.' By contrast, until the focus of our investigation shifts to a closer inspection of how Kant thinks about things in themselves, I will use the term 'thing in itself' in the general sense. Kant himself often uses this term in this sense, for example, when he describes the difference between transcendental idealism and transcendental

[1] This explication and defense will be continued throughout the following chapters.

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realism, which consists in that the latter affirms, while the former denies, that empirical objects are things in themselves.[2]

The literal meaning of the word 'entity' is 'being,' which, in turn, is often used interchangeably with 'existent.' But in order to properly capture the nuances of Kant's ontological views, it will prove to be useful to distinguish between entities, or beings, and being, or having reality, on the hand, and existents and existing, on the other hand. Anything that exists also has being, or reality, and, thus, is a being, or an entity. But not everything that has being also exists. Existing is one way of being, or having reality, but it is not the only way. For example, the hobbit Frodo, arguably, has being and, thus, is an entity in the sense just explicated—he is not nothing, he is different from, say, Sherlock Holmes, and he can causally affect us by, for example, making us laugh—but, as a fictional character, he does not exist and, thus, is not an existent. There are several reasons that speak for the reading that Kant regards appearances not just as beings, or entities, but as existents. First, he frequently states that appearances exist and talks about their existence.[3] Second, he classifies appearances as empirically *real* and describes himself as an empirical *realist* about appearances.[4] There is much to say about what exactly Kant means by these expressions—and we will talk about that in chapter 3—but, unless he uses them in a highly unusual sense, it is plausible to assume that by calling himself a kind of realist about appearances he is, at the very least, committing himself to their existence. Third, one of the categories that, in the Transcendental Analytic of the *Critique*, Kant deduces to be a priori valid for appearances is the category of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*).[5] And it seems reasonable to hold that unless something exists it cannot be actual. There are also several reasons that speak for the reading that Kant regards things in themselves as existents. First, he frequently states that they exist.[6] Second, he holds that things in themselves are ontologically more fundamental than appearances.[7] Since existents are ontologically more fundamental than non-existents, the status of appearances as existents means that things in themselves are existents as well. For all of these reasons, we can safely conclude that Kant regards both things in themselves and appearances not only as beings or entities but as existents.

But he does not regard them as the same kind of existents. They do not share the same mode of being. Things in themselves are mind-independent existents, appearances are mind-dependent existents. Appearances are, as Kant frequently puts it, "mere representations" or "nothing apart from representations." As is customary, I use 'representation' to translate Kant's 'Vorstellung,' which he employs as a somewhat loose cover term for all sorts of vehicles of content in the mind that bear, express, or represent some kind of content, including mental states such as sensations, intuitions, and thoughts, as well as more complex conceptions such as scientific or philosophical theories.[8] And it should

[2] Obviously, Kant does not want to ascribe the view to the transcendental realist that empirical objects are Kantian things in themselves.

[3] See B199/A160; B218–265/A177–218.

[4] See A370; B44/A28; B52–54/A35–37.

[5] See B266/A218; B272–274/A225–226.

[6] See Prol, 4:314–315; GMS, 4:451. More passages will be provided later on in this section and in section 5.1; also see note 56, chapter 6.

[7] This comes out, in particular, in his characterization of things in themselves as *grounds* of appearances. See B428; Prol, 4:345; KU, 5:345. Also see note 2, chapter 5.

[8] See the famous *Stufenleiter* at B376–377/A320. In its multi-purpose nature, the expression 'representation' in Kant is comparable to 'perception' in Leibniz and 'idea' in Locke, although, arguably, Kant's 'Vorstellung' is even more comprehensive than these other two expressions as used by Leibniz and Locke.

go without saying that, on Kant's view, representations and all constituent parts of representations are internal to the mind and, in that sense, mental.[9] I will have more to say about what exactly it means for appearances to be mere representations in section 2.2, and I will provide a precise definition of the relevant sense of mind-dependence in section 2.3. For now, I want to start by highlighting two important features of the mind-dependence of appearances that can be easily gleaned from the text right away. First, as anticipated above, the mind-dependence of appearances extends to their existence and being. Things in themselves and appearances differ with respect to their mode of being and kind of existence. The being and existence of things in themselves is mind-independent. The being and existence of appearances is mind-dependent; or, as Kant often says, appearances exist only "in us" or "in our representations." In this context, it is worth pointing out—not least for the benefit of proponents of the two-aspect view who want to read the phrase 'in itself' in the expression 'thing in itself' as elliptical for '*considered* in itself' that when describing the difference between things in themselves and appearances, Kant not infrequently uses 'in itself' adverbially to 'exists,' 'subsists,' and 'is real.'[10] Things in themselves are things that exists in themselves—*an sich existierende Dinge*—while appearances are things that exist "in representations," or "in us."[11] The methodological version of the two-aspect view, in particular, has no way of accounting for Kant's distinction of appearances and things in themselves in terms of their ways of existing. A difference in the way of existing indisputably is an ontological difference.

The second important feature of the mind-dependence of appearances that deserves to be highlighted as we embark on our journey is that it is all-encompassing, so to speak. Given that appearances are said to be nothing apart from representations, and representations are in the mind, appearances are mind-dependent through and through, or fully mind-dependent. Ontologically speaking, there is nothing in them or about them that is

[9] He consistently describes representations as being *in us*. See A378: "If we regard outer objects as things in themselves, it is completely impossible to comprehend how we should attain cognition of their reality outside us in that we merely rely on the representation, which is in us." See KU, 5:359: " . . . the representation of things, since it is something in us, could be thought as proper and useful with respect to the inner purposive harmony of our faculties of cognition . . . " See V-Met-K2/Heinze, 28:759: "All representations are something in us, and we cannot say that they are objects of outer senses." Also see V-Lo/Blomberg, 29:40; KU 5:204. Also see Letter to Beck, December 4, 1792, 11:395: "For representation means a determination in us that we relate to something else (whose spot in us it occupies by proxy, as it were.)" If the non-mental object to which the representation is related were a constituent of the representation, it would not make any sense to say that the representation acts as a kind of proxy in us for the object. Kant also frequently describes representations as "modifications of the mind." See A97; B242/A197. A modification of the mind cannot be partly constituted by something that is not mental, just as a modification of the body cannot be partly constituted by something that is not corporeal. Also see note 12 and the following quotations cited in the main text.

[10] See A380: "But if the psychologist regards appearances as things in themselves, he may include in his doctrine only matter as a materialist or only thinking beings as a spiritualist . . . , or both as for themselves existing things as a dualist." See B519/A491: "The realist in the transcendental sense turns these modifications of our sensibility into in themselves subsisting things, and thus *mere representations* into things in themselves." See Bxx: " . . . the result of this first assessment of our a priori cognition of reason, namely, that it only applies to appearances, but, by contrast, sets the thing in itself aside as for itself real but uncognized by us." See Prol, 4:354: "The world of sense is nothing but a chain of appearances that are connected according to general laws, it thus has no subsistence for itself, it is not properly the thing in itself, and thus it is necessarily related to that which contains the ground of this appearance . . . ." Also see many of the quotations collected in the main text below and in the appended notes. This point is also emphasized by Richard Aquila, see Aquila 1983, 89f.

[11] The German 'an sich existieren' is much less harsh on the ears than the English 'exist in themselves.' Also note that by saying that 'in itself' in the phrase 'thing in itself' can be used and often is used by Kant as adverbial to 'exists' or 'is,' I do not mean to deny that it can also be used and is used by Kant as adverbial to an implicit or explicit 'considered.' But that is perfectly compatible with a two-world conception of the transcendental distinction. On occasion, it may be useful to consider things that exist in themselves as they are in themselves.

not mind-dependent.[12] By contrast, things in themselves are completely independent from us, or fully mind-independent.

Turning to the textual evidence, there is a veritable flood of passages, including many passages from the allegedly more 'realist' B-edition of the *Critique*, in which Kant asserts, unambiguously and clearly, that appearances are fully mind-dependent and exist only "in us" or "in our representations," in contrast to things in themselves, which are said to be completely independent from us.

> It thus follows that appearances in general are nothing apart from our representations, which is just what we wanted to signify by their transcendental ideality. (B535/A507)
>
> The world of sense contains nothing but appearances, but these are mere representations . . . (B591/A563)
>
> For laws exist as little in the appearances but only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere insofar as it has understanding, as appearances do not exist in themselves but only relative to the same being insofar as it has senses. (B164)
>
> Thus we wanted to say: that all our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance . . . and that if we take away the subject or even merely the subjective quality of the senses in general, all quality, all relations of objects in space and time, indeed even space and time themselves, would disappear and can as appearances not exist in themselves but only in us. (B59/A42)
>
> . . . if I take away the thinking subject, the whole corporeal world must disappear, which is nothing but appearance in the sensibility of our subject and a kind of representation of it. (A383)
>
> . . . space and time together with the appearances in them are nothing that exists in itself and outside of my representations, but [they are] themselves only kinds of representations, and it is obviously contradictory to say that a mere kind of representation exists also outside of our representations. (Prol, 4:341–342)

[12] Allais attempts to accommodate the many passages in which Kant identifies appearances with mere representations (Vorstellungen) on her anti-phenomenalist reading by claiming that 'Vorstellung' does not refer to something internal to the mind, or mental. See Allais 2015, 24–5. Never mind that, in many of the passages in question, Kant himself explicitly concludes from the fact that appearances are mere representations that they exist "only in us," this reading is also highly questionable from a historical point of view. If one wants to ascertain the meaning of a term that is common currency in eighteenth-century German philosophical circles, Christian Wolff's German writings are the first place to look. (I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that they did for philosophical German what Luther's bible translation did for German in general.) Given Kant's lifelong entanglement with the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy, those writings are an especially pertinent place to look if one is interested in the 'default' meaning of a certain term employed by Kant. Wolff uses 'Vorstellung' as a cover term that centrally includes what Leibniz (and Wolff himself in his Latin writings) calls 'perceptio.' *Vorstellungen* are modifications of the soul, which is characterized by one principal power, namely, the power to represent (*Vorstellungskraft*). See for example Wolf 1729, §§744–755. From the way Wolff describes *Vorstellungen*, I do not see how it would be possible to avoid the conclusion that he regards them as necessarily internal to the mind, or mental, just as *perceptiones* are necessarily internal to the mind/soul, or mental, for Leibniz. There is no indication anywhere in Kant's writings that he deviates from this established usage of the term. In fact, the famous *Stufenleiter*-passage at B376–377/A320, in which Kant enumerates the different kinds of representation, lists exactly the same items that you would expect to find in such a list if it was prepared by Wolff; Kant even adds the corresponding standard Latin terms in brackets. Also see B61/A44: "By contrast, the representation of a *body* in intuition contains nothing at all that could pertain to an object in itself but merely the appearance of something and the manner in which we are affected by it . . . " Also see the second part of note 66, chapter 4.

> A thing in itself does not depend on our representations, and thus can be much larger than our representations reach. But appearances are themselves merely representations and their size, i.e., the idea of their generation through progress, cannot be larger than this progress . . . (R5902, 18:379)[13]

There might be readers who are inclined to dismiss the idea of a mind-dependent mode of being or a mind-dependent kind of existence as confused. They might hold that the assumption of different kinds of existence or different modes of being is implausible, and that the characterization that something exists only in representations should be understood as intended to mean that the thing does not *really* exist and thus cannot possibly be a genuine existent. Everybody is entitled to their own intuitions about what is plausible when it comes to matters of fundamental ontology. But I fear that clinging to the indicated view while attempting to do serious work in the history of philosophy, where the idea of different ways of being can be encountered rather often, will prove to be problematic.[14] The question is not what we may or may not find plausible from our contemporary perspective but what is plausible from the point of view of one's author and against the background of one's author's text. And, as

[13] Also see B520/A492: "But this space itself, together with this time, and together with both, all appearances, are in themselves not *things* but nothing but representations and cannot exist outside our mind at all . . . " B521–522/A493–494: "For that it [an appearance] exists in itself, without relation to our senses and possible experience, could indeed be said, if we were talking about a thing in itself. But we are merely talking about an appearance in space and time, both of which are not determinations of things in themselves but merely of our sensibility; therefore, what is in them, (appearances) are not in themselves something but mere representations, which, if they are not given in us (in perception), are nowhere to be found." See B523/A494–495: "But the appearances are given, according to it [the transcendental object], not in themselves but merely in this experience, since they are mere representations . . . "Also see A101: "One soon discovers this if one remembers that appearances are not things in themselves but the mere play of our representations that in the end amount to determinations of inner sense." See A114: "But if one remembers that this nature in itself is nothing but a sum total [Inbegriff] of appearances, and thus not a thing in itself but merely a multitude of representations of the mind . . . " See A120: " . . . without the relation to an at least possible consciousness appearance could never become an object of cognition for us, and thus would be nothing for us and nothing anywhere, since it has in itself no objective reality and exists only in the cognition." See A127: " . . . for appearances, as such, cannot take place outside us but exist only in our sensibility." See A129: "For as appearances they amount to an object that is merely in us, since a mere modification of our sensibility is not at all encountered outside us." See A369: "The transcendental realist thus regards outer appearances (if one admits their reality) as things in themselves, which exist independently of us and our sensibility, and thus would be outside us also according to pure concepts of the understanding." See A372: " . . . those are merely appearances, i.e., mere kinds of representations, that are always only in us and whose reality is grounded in immediate consciousness, just as the consciousness of my own thoughts." See A387: "But we should take into account that bodies are not objects in themselves that are present to us but a mere appearance of who knows which unknown object, that matter is not the effect of this unknown cause but merely the appearance of its influence on our senses, that, consequently, both are not something outside us but mere representations in us . . . " See A391: " . . . that surreptitious dualistic assumption that matter as such is not appearance, i.e., mere representation of the mind to which an unknown object corresponds, but the object in itself such as it exists outside us and independent of all sensibility." Prol, 4:342: "Thus, the objects of the senses exist only in experience; on the other hand, to also give them an existence that subsists for itself without experience or before it means as much as to imagine that experience is actual without experience or before it."

[14] One can find the thought that there are different kinds of being in Aristotle, Aquinas, and Leibniz, for example, to name just a few especially prominent figures. According to Aristotle, "being can be said in many ways," Aquinas holds that God exists in a different sense than creatures, and Leibniz distinguishes between the mind-dependent being of well-founded phenomena and the mind-independent being of monads. See, for example, Aristotle, Metaphysics *Γ*.2, 1003a33–1005b18; Aquinas 1947, Part I, Query 13, article 5; Leibniz, Letter to Remond, January 10, 1714, G 3:606; Letter to Remond, March 14, 1714, G 3:612. A noteworthy contemporary defense of the fragmentation of being is mounted in McDaniel 2017.

we have seen, our author clearly takes appearances to be existents, despite their mind-dependence.

Appearances are "mere representations" and exist only "in us," that is, they are fully mind-dependent, while things in themselves are fully mind-independent. In order for things to be numerically identical or the same in a reasonable sense, as defined in chapter 1, they must ontologically overlap. But something that is fully mind-dependent does not ontologically overlap with something that is fully mind-independent. Therefore, appearances and things in themselves neither are numerically identical nor the same things in any reasonable sense. In a similar vein, if x considered in one way is a fully mind-dependent entity and y considered in another way is a fully mind-independent entity, x and y are not the same thing. No mere change in perspective can transform a fully mind-independent thing into a fully mind-dependent thing. In sum, things in themselves and appearances are not aspects of the same things. Two-aspect readings face several other insurmountable problems, both textual and systematic, but the argument just given by itself is already sufficient to conclusively settle the dispute about whether Kant conceives of the transcendental distinction in two-world or two-aspect terms. No two-aspect reading can do justice to Kant's full-blooded idealism about appearances. Therefore, the two-aspect interpretation must be rejected.[15] There are many passages in which Kant quite clearly says that appearances and things in themselves are distinct or ontologically non-overlapping, as for instance, when he asserts that "these [appearances] really relate to something that is distinct from them (and thus completely dissimilar), insofar as appearances always presuppose a thing in itself and thus give an indication of it . . . " (Prol, 4:355); or when he claims that "one has to admit and assume behind the appearances still something else that is not appearance, namely, things in themselves . . . " (GMS, 4:451), and that one must concede "that behind the appearances there must still be the things in themselves as grounds (although hidden)" (GMS, 4:459); or when he states that "appearances are the only objects that can be given to us immediately" and in the very next sentence adds that "those appearances are not things in themselves but themselves only representations" (A108–109); or when he explains that sensibility is affected by "objects that are in themselves unknown to it and entirely distinct from those appearances" (Prol, 4:318).[16]

[15] The other major, equally fatal, systematic problem is that the two-aspect interpretation cannot do justice to Kant's empirical realism either. We will discuss this failing of the two-aspect view in section 3.5.

[16] Also see the following passage from a letter to Mendelssohn in which Kant explicitly characterizes things in themselves as "other objects" in addition to empirical objects (which are appearances). He says there that his "final conclusion" in the *Critique* is "that all speculative cognition a priori that is possible for us reaches no farther than to the objects of an experience that is possible for us, only with the qualification that this field of possible experience does not comprise all things in themselves, and thus indeed still leaves over other objects, yes even presupposes them as necessary, without it being possible for us to determinately cognize anything of them." (Letter to Mendelssohn, August 16, 1783, 10:346). Note in passing: the formulation that "this field of possible experience does not comprise all things in themselves" is somewhat sloppy and sounds a little odd, for it suggests that the field of possible experience comprises some things in themselves, just not all of them. But the context, in particular the following sentence, makes clear that what Kant means is that the field of possible experience does not comprise all things, namely, it does not comprise things in themselves, which are "left over" and "necessarily presupposed." We find a similarly sloppy formulation in B43/A27: "Since we cannot turn the special conditions of sensibility into conditions of the possibility of the things but merely of their appearances, we can indeed say that space comprises all things that might outwardly appear to us, but not all things in themselves, whether they be intuited or not . . . " The sloppy bit here is the formulation that "space does not comprise all things in themselves," which suggests that it comprises some things in themselves. Obviously, what Kant means is that space does not comprise all things, since it comprises only appearances but not things in themselves.

These are exactly the kind of statements that one would expect from somebody who conceives of the transcendental distinction in two-world terms.

2.2 Appearances are Intentional Objects of Representations

Kant distinguishes between two different kinds of appearances. *Outer* appearances are appearances of things in themselves that affect outer sense; they are in time and space. *Inner* appearances are due to affections of inner sense by ourselves; they are only in time.[17] Both outer and inner appearances are fully mind-dependent and numerically distinct from the things in themselves that ground them by affecting us, but there are also some differences between them that subtly affect their ontological status. In the interest of clarity, we will examine these two kinds of appearances in turn, starting with and focusing on outer appearances, which are also Kant's primary focus. In the following, 'appearance' is to be understood as 'outer appearance' unless otherwise indicated. We will turn to considering inner appearances in section 2.9.

On my reading, appearances are intentional objects, which, utilizing scholastic terminology (in a slightly modified sense), may be said to 'in-exist' in our representations as part of the content that these representations present or disclose to the cognizer who is entertaining them.[18] The indicated scholastic terminology is probably most familiar to contemporary ears from Franz Brentano.[19] Closer in time to Kant than the scholastics, Descartes' conception of the 'objective reality' of ideas also provides a helpful comparison to the mode of being of intentional objects that I take appearances to have.[20] As I see it, that appearances are representation-immanent intentional objects, or that appearances exhibit a special kind of mind-dependence characteristic of intentional objects, is a central part of what Kant expresses with his frequently repeated formulations, cited in the previous section, that appearances exist only "in our representations," or "in us," or "in our mind." It is important to note that the term 'Vorstellung' is ambiguous. Kant mainly uses it to refer to what does the represent*ing*, that is, the content-bearing vehicle, for

[17] See B37/A22: "By means of outer sense, (a property of our mind), we represent objects to us as outside us and them altogether in space.... The inner sense by means of which the mind intuits itself or its inner state does not provide an intuition of the soul itself, as an object; but it is still a determinate form under which alone the intuition of its inner state is possible, so that everything that belongs to the inner determinations is represented in relations of time." See B43–44/A27–28: "All things, as outer appearances, are next to each other in space..." See B49/A33: "Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, i.e., of the intuiting of ourselves and our inner state." We will talk about and look at textual evidence for the claim that inner and outer sense are affected by things in themselves in sections 2.4, 2.5, and, in detail, in chapter 5.

[18] Different versions of an intentional object reading of Kantian appearances are defended by Vaihinger 1892, 33–4, 58–72; Sellars 1968, ch. 2; Prauss 1971; Aquila 1983, ch. 4; Pereboom 1988; and Aquila 2003.

[19] See Brentano 1874, vol. 1, 115–16: "Every psychological phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we would call, albeit not entirely unambiguously, relation to a content, direction toward an object (which is here not to be understood as a reality), or immanent objectivity. Every psychological phenomenon contains something as an object within itself, although not each in the same way. In representation something is represented, in judgment something is acknowledged or rejected, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional inexistence is exclusively characteristic of psychological phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything similar. And so we can define psychological phenomena by saying that they are such phenomena that intentionally contain an object in themselves."

[20] See Descartes 1649, AT 7:161: "III. By the 'objective reality of an idea' I understand the being of the thing represented by the idea, insofar as it exists in the idea.... For whatever we perceive in the objects of ideas exists objectively in these very ideas." Also see Descartes 1649, AT 7:40.