Kant and Secular Transcendentalism.

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Alexander Ewen Phemister.

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This dissertation is a product of my labours and therefore an original work. I am solely responsible for any errors it may contain.

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Abstract.
This writing argues that some embedded moral and religious linkages in Kant’s metaphysical thought have been unobserved in much recent philosophical commentary, something we may attribute to the de-emphasis of metaphysics within significant parts of the contemporary academic world, combined with a lack of awareness of the religious milieu within which he worked. Paradoxically in the light of this, and based on the religious content I find in the first Critique and elsewhere, I explore what I perceive to be Kant’s attempt to steer traditional religious doctrines and practice into a secular, individualised, scientifically congruent, completely independent and universally acceptable format. From this, I develop the idea that an appreciation of these efforts to reform earlier theological thought allows for a more complete and coherent interpretation of critical philosophy than has previously been available, with application, for example, to a heightened understanding of the employment of the idea of things in themselves. The primary notion involved in this amended reading is the primacy Kant gives to practical reason.

On this reading, Transcendental Idealism reverses the relationship between mind and nature, in that the natural world of appearances in its totality is now seen to have its being contingently within the mind as a perceived manifold of appearances, though not as an innate or permanently indwelling structure. As a corollary, this reverses the usual metaphysical principle that humans, possessing self-awareness and existing as thinking subjects or Gemüter, have embodied minds or souls; rather, we can now have the transcendental view that the human body, as matter and appearance, is ensouled, existing along with all other appearances within the mind.

The argument continues with an analysis of Kant’s attempted synthesis of science and religion through the positioning of practical reason. This includes the human capacity for authentic moral decision-making, something only possible for a mind not subject to the causal constraints of the natural world. As such, I present what I call the ‘view-from’ reading of Kant’s Transcendental Idealism, in which I draw from his writings the implication that the human mind does not maintain a place in its own representations, and may be considered within transcendental reflection as a point of view. Because of this, we can think of mind as a non-corporeal thing in itself of which we can have no predicated cognition, whose attendance is a possible accompaniment of all experience, and something whose presence as soul we
may accept for the purposes of moral praxis. I also argue that such an account in no way commits Kant to any form of spiritualism, since the mind/matter dichotomy dissolves through the realisation that matter is mere appearance, and therefore mind content only, as is the idea of soul, which does not posit the existence of any entity and is of regulative use only. On this reading the mind or soul is an idea whose acceptance is made necessary by normative ethics and for us remains unknown as it is in itself.

Kant’s practical extension of reason derives from the demands of the moral law, that is, the categorical imperative in its various formulations, for which the reward for virtue and submission to duty is uncertain within nature. This creates the moral necessity for the ideas of continuing personal existence and an ens realissimum in order to ensure the ultimate possibility of happiness and justice within a community of rational beings. Such ideas are not made available through the inferences of theoretical speculation, but from the exercise of practical reasoning. The subjection of theoretical reason to the practical enables these to speak univocally, in that theoretical reason, while precluded from the conclusions of the practical, must acquiesce to them and by doing so fulfil the demands of reason for totality and the possibility of happiness.

The moral law gains equal scientific status to the theoretical content of science through the realisation that the dynamics of nature, considered transcendentally, result from the influence of things in themselves, among which we now include free human volition. Consequently, the inferences drawn from the moral law also take on this scientific standing, resulting in a minimalist set of justified rational and secular religious beliefs expressed as the Canon of Pure Reason.

Ultimately, I argue, Kant reduces all forms of human experience to mental content, either as intuited perceptions, or as concepts and ideas. Beginning with this idealist underpinning, I see him attempting to provide a more coherent and unified account of the human condition than is available in other metaphysical or religious systems. Further, I conclude that he was concerned with a unique metaphysical development, and that as we read him a lucid theological reform agenda becomes apparent. In this way, I construe Kant’s writings as offering a new and secular deist outlook that eschews atheism, theism, unwarranted belief systems, and the demands of those endorsing a continuance of the long-standing schism between religious thought and the disciplines of science.
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Introduction.

To write on Kant’s first *Critique* at the beginning of the 21st Century indicates that one is either picking over the diggings to find some small nugget of analysis missed by the many, or that there is a new insight to express. This dissertation attempts the latter, to the extent that it is possible to discern a pattern of inadequacy within much of the available literature. I am interested specifically in what I perceive as a lack of appreciation concerning the work’s practical content and the implications this has for the later religious doctrines and for critical thought as a whole. Few writers express the opinion that the first *Critique* contains thematic religious content, or that it forms the basis on which Kant later constructs his program for religious reform.

Such a view is not intended to downplay other important elements of the work, such as its treatment of causation and the problem of justifying synthetic *a priori* propositions. As will become apparent, these play an essential and foundational role in Kant’s development of a new form of religious thought. Further, his attack on rationalist theology is well known, through his refutation of the traditional proofs for the existence of God, and this may be taken to indicate a rejection of the possibility of rational theology of any sort. In opposing this interpretation, I argue that there is a unifying thread throughout consistent with providing both the rational possibility and the moral necessity for a minimalist set of religious beliefs. In doing this, I need to show that there is a typically Kantian third way lying between revelatory and traditional rationalist theology, while at the same time accepting that Kant is also hostile to the uneasy location of theology in an intellectual landscape dominated by empirically oriented scientific attitudes. I have called this endeavour secular transcendentalism because, while belonging to no specific religious grouping and having no spiritual basis, it entertains certain theological beliefs about individuals and their metaphysical prospects which may achieve a scientifically acceptable formulation.

Consequently, the following writing attempts to take a wider view of the critical writings, especially the first *Critique*, in order to differentiate an otherwise obscured theme. The aim is to demonstrate that the unity of the work grows out of the applications Kant has in mind for practical reason, which become apparent after the limitations of theoretical reason have been established. These applications involve the metaphysical ideas, which give expression to a
limited set of religious beliefs able to provide a religious framework aimed at reforming and rendering redundant many traditional and unscientific theological components. As I see it, this reform aims to amend theological belief and practice with the purpose of removing many sources of conflict based on sectarian disagreement and rivalries, while also overcoming the problems faced by individual humans, as reasoning beings, in achieving a stable and satisfactory metaphysical basis to their lives.

In Kant’s time, the immediate confrontation existed between previous modes of expression and the challenging intellectual demands of Enlightenment derived rationality. Thus, I am interpreting critical thought as providing the foundation for a revised religious environment in which personal rational, emotional, and moral homeostasis is possible, thereby ameliorating those influences likely to induce personal instability, moral relativism, amorality and outright venality, and such theological and political enthusiasms as are likely to breed violence. By reading Kant’s later works, one finds his reformist agenda strongly asserted, and I have attempted to show how a realisation of this opens up a new dimension for the reader in much of his writings from at least the first Critique forward. This is not to say that the work is purely theological in its aims; clearly it has many other objectives. It is just that Kant does arguably provide an intellectual environment from which his later religious writings emerge, based on the liberation of practical reason and his subsequent efforts to justify belief in the possibility of personal freedom, continuing existence and the ens realissimum.

In partly explaining the masked nature of this thematic element, I point to Kant’s practice of not identifying a number of foundational conceptual instruments until long after their initial employment. This applies to the revelation of the supreme role of practical reason in critical thought, for example, which is not fully enunciated until the second Critique, despite its employment in the first Critique. Another example is Transcendental Idealism itself, which, although a basic doctrine and the main topic of the Aesthetic, is not given a name until halfway through the first Critique, at A369 on page 345 of Kemp-Smith.¹ This characteristic belatedness indicates the need to take a very long-range view of what Kant has to say, and constantly refer back to previous readings in order to see the patterning of thought as it

¹ Please note that in what follows, references to the first Critique use the Kemp-Smith translation unless otherwise noted.
emerges. Only by doing this in the widest possible terms are we able to infer from later writings the meaning of what comes earlier. The claim is that the critical oeuvre is predominantly an account of practical reason’s capacity to establish a scientific moral base on which an acceptable and enlightened set of religious responses can be established, along with the perception that principled moral reasoning is a necessary and justified ideal.

Our study of Kant’s mature religious thought begins with the Critique of Pure Reason on the understanding that the ideas therein differ significantly not only from those of other thinkers, but also from the content of his previous writings. A decade of radical and largely undisclosed deliberation forms the background to this first critical opus, evidenced by the break in publication dating from the Inaugural Dissertation of September 1770 (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 xii). Writing to Marcus Herz as early as 1772, Kant says he expects to complete the work within three months (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 xiv). From subsequent correspondence, we learn of extensive and unexpected difficulties with the project. He repeatedly postpones publication, and the decision to finish the work seems to arise from impatience. Telling of his muse, he says he wrote ‘as if in flight’ (Höffe 1994 21). Elsewhere he expresses his sense of age and mortality as factors in deciding to complete the labour poste haste to allow time for further works on ethics and the metaphysics of nature (B xliii). Consequently, the final composition, (or compilation, according to Kemp-Smith) took a matter of months, and we can surmise that at least some of the problems found in the text result from this haste.

Such observations are relevant to a reading of the first Critique in a number of ways. First, the ten-year gap in publication covers a lengthy period of conceptual development, with the consequence that we must expect some rupture between the previous ideas and those we find subsequently. Second, during this period, Kant’s ideas developed largely without the benefit of public debate, and it should come as no surprise to find that those who met them for the first time saw them as innovative, novel, far-reaching, revolutionary, and even incomprehensible.

These remarks need qualification. Inventive as his ideas are, Kant still deals with a range of themes inherited from the pre-critical era, often using the vocabulary common to the philosophy of that period. The derivative nature of Kant’s philosophy was also noted, to the extent that it drew on the ideas of others, and this is particularly so in terms of the Berkeleian
content. Those ideas and their idiom, belonging to and deriving from Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Locke, Wolff, Baumgarten, and Leibniz, among others, are similar in form and content. They cover a wide range of interests and disciplines, including metaphysics, science, ethics, and theology. Topics include the relationship between mathematics and the empirical world, especially as realised by Newton, Leibniz’ distinction between necessary and contingent propositions, the puzzle of the subject-predicate tie (Buchdahl 1969 471ff), the conflict between the possibility of moral freedom and the evident determinism of the world, the possibility of synthetic/ a priori propositions as linked to the necessity of scientific laws, and the problems surrounding the possibility of God’s existence, among many others. At the back of all these interests is Kant’s primary concern, metaphysics.

It must be possible for reason to attain to certainty whether we know or do not know the objects of metaphysics, that is, to come to a decision either in regard to the objects of its enquiries or in regard to the capacity or incapacity of reason to pass any judgment upon them, so that we may either with confidence extend our pure reason or set to it sure and determinate limits. This last question, which arises out of the previous general problem, may, rightly stated, take the form: How is metaphysics, as science, possible? Thus the critique of reason, in the end, necessarily leads to scientific knowledge… (B23)

The primary impetus for Kant’s attempt on these problems seems to have been his exposure to Hume’s insights relating to real, as distinct from logical, causation. The role played by Hume’s observations about causation in sparking Kant’s critical works is well known. Kant’s theories concerning it are in agreement with Hume’s in that they both perceive that the necessity of causal laws cannot be derived from experience. Despite this, they differ in that Kant is able to give an account of the mental structuring of reality, acting through the categorising functions of the mind, which includes the principle of a universal causality having synthetic, necessary, and a priori properties.

We find Kant asserting the law-like nature of appearances in the Second Analogy, where he distinguishes the subjective and therefore random order of events, that is, the subjective succession of apprehension that occurs when we move around, for example, from the objective external order of events, which always behaves according to a causal rule. Consequently, unless appearances exhibit the law-like behaviour of representations, laws established in nature by sensibility through the categories, we could have no sense of order or coherence in our experiences.
…we must derive the succession of apprehension from the objective succession of appearances. Otherwise the order of apprehension is entirely undetermined, and does not distinguish one appearance from another. Since the subjective succession by itself is altogether arbitrary, it does not prove anything as to the manner in which the manifold is connected in the object. The objective succession will therefore consist in the order of the manifold of appearances according to which, in conformity with a rule, the apprehension of that which happens follows upon the apprehension of that which precedes. (A193)

Kant goes on to point out that within everyday experience; we presuppose that events always occur according to a rule. This supposition, which may initially result from experience, always looks to the *a priori* for its regularity, and as such has two consequences for us. First, we cannot reverse the order of events, and second, we cannot prevent the effect once the cause is in place since it follows necessarily. (A198 and B244) The unidirectional passage of time is therefore a necessary and *a priori* law of our sensibility, along with the rule that the past determines the future, even if the cause is simultaneous with the effect. In this case, it is the order in which things happen in time that matters, not the lapse of time involved. (A203). The passage of time itself represents the progressive synthesis of the imagination, which thereby enables the successive and necessary rules governing appearances. (A200)

Kant agrees with Hume that there are no discoverable powers in empirical objects to account for what we usually refer to as causal influence. In contrast to Hume, however, he attempts to explain this by pointing out that appearances, as mind dependent representations, can have no life of their own, that is, they are not things in themselves. This passiveness is hidden from us by the physical contiguity and constant conjunction characterising most causal relationships. Kant accepts, and expects his reader to realise that he accepts, that the concept of causation understood in terms of observed regularities has no empirical meaning beyond the conditioned regularities we experience, as discussed in the *Second Analogy*.

The discussion of causality in the *Second Analogy* refers to appearances and representations in time and space, but there is another aspect of causality that we must consider, that is, the role of the noumenal in bringing about our world as we experience it. Kant tells us that an intelligible meaning to causation is also possible, as expounded in the *Antinomy of Pure Reason*. 
Regarded as the causality of a thing in itself, it is intelligible in its action; regarded as the causality of an appearance in the world of sense, it is sensible in its effects. We should therefore have to form both an empirical and an intellectual concept of the causality of the faculty of such a subject, and to regard both as referring to one and the same effect. This twofold manner of conceiving the faculty possessed by an object of the senses does not contradict any of the concepts which we have to form of appearances and of a possible experience. For since they are not things in themselves, they must rest upon a transcendental object which determines them as mere representations; and consequently there is nothing to prevent us from ascribing to this transcendental object, besides the quality in terms of which it appears, a causality which is not appearance, although its effect is to be met with in appearance.

(A540/B568)

So, regardless of whether the causative influence is subjective or objective, we may conceive of it as having a noumenal source. In this way, we add the notion of intelligible action or causality as well as the more obvious causality exhibited through the conditioned sequences of nature. This dual layering of empirical and intelligible causation is well in advance of Hume’s analysis, which has no way of accounting for the necessity and a priori character needed for a universally acceptable causative principle.

These topics belong to both the pre-critical and later periods of Kant’s life. What makes their expression radically different in the latter is their reconstruction and attempted resolution through the insights provided by Transcendental Idealism, though, as Watkins tells us, even elements of this had prior exposure in the Inaugural Dissertation, where the subjective nature of the sensible world is first described.

There is no doubt that the ‘Critical turn’ initiated by the Critique of Pure Reason …represents a truly revolutionary achievement in philosophy…it is…true that certain aspects of the Critique are anticipated in his pre-Critical period…the Inaugural Dissertation develops the Transcendental Aesthetic’s insight that space and time are merely subjective principles of the sensible world and draws a distinction between the sensible and intelligible worlds…However, most of the major sections of the Critique are not present at all in the pre-Critical period… (Watkins 2005 181)

If the redefinition of previously existing ideas and problems makes Kant’s first Critique and what follows so different, it also makes his ideas problematic for those who fail to orientate their thinking to the new metaphysical viewpoint he provides. This is particularly true for those, such as Ameriks and Wood, who understand Kant to be a continuing rationalist, something we will look at later. That Kant uses, and is obliged to use, much of the language
of his predecessors, both religious and philosophical, only adds to the ambiguities many find here.

I wish to argue that Kant’s theology is not that which preceded him. In stating this, we find an etymological difficulty, in that theology, understood as the study of God, has no place in Kant’s thought since he allows us to know nothing of the supersensible. On the other hand, if we understand theology as a systematic set of beliefs, we are justified in using the term. In what follows it will be employed in this latter manner in reference to critical thought to the extent that it attempts to establish certain limited though fundamental theological assertions as having a rational and universal authority. This requires a fundamental realignment of the definitions of both science and religion, and an appreciation of the role played by the mind itself in working together the raw material of cognitions and ideas. As an example of Kant’s radicalism, we learn from Transcendental Idealism that the world we experience is not precipitated through the creative activity of the *ens realissimum*, as in traditional theology, but through the operations of the finite human mind. Neither does God place humankind in the world, as is commonly thought; rather it is a function of human sensibility to place the world within the mind, thereby bringing it into being and continuance. This revision of the relationship between these elements of thought is deliberately analogous to that of Copernicus’ theory of the placement of the Earth within the Solar System, and arguably so innovative that it has yet to be fully appreciated. The implications of this theory for the continuing and seemingly intractable disputes between those who support evolutionary or creationist theories of species origin, or cosmological theories involving a ‘big bang’, have yet to enter into public or learned discussion, perhaps because of its dismissive conclusions. Transcendental Idealism provides a fusion of the spiritualism of the one and the materialism of the other. As we shall see, it adopts a position of complete indifference to such issues, and characteristically the answer to some common metaphysical questions is that there is no question. Uniquely, it attempts to offer an intellectual congruence between the scientific and the metaphysical, and this parity is to be established in a context arrived at through reflection upon the practice of reasoning itself, whether through its theoretical employment, or the exercise of practical reason as a guide to action.

While much of Kant’s meaning is contentious, the continuing importance and relevance of the work is also disputed. There are differing ways of understanding the text, and differences of opinion must and do occur among commentators concerning both its meaning and
importance. As a result, the position of the *Critique* in philosophical literature is debatable. Some see it as a work of genius, a seminal text responsible for many of the insights and directions available to modern philosophy. To others it seems flawed, incoherent, inconsistent, and of historical interest only. These tensions derive from conflicting interpretations, and stand in need of explanation. It seems beyond debate to observe that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is long, involved, profound, difficult to read and understand, and written within a rigid and predetermined formal structure. Such observations raise the question of how a text allegedly exhibiting such fundamental flaws by some is be seen by others as a great and significant work.

When investigating this state of affairs, one is not in the position of defending the text at every point, and we may admit it is a difficult work while remaining confident that it has a valid and demonstrable overall purpose. We may expect that because of the contradictory readings, at least some commentators are incomplete in their mastery of its contents. Such a deficit is understandable, for not only is it difficult in these various ways, but also, judging from the state of the literature, for many it also presents considerable incomprehensibility in terms of the author’s overall meaning. In such a situation, it is tempting for commentators to offer opinions based on their own confusions, in much the same way that people, when asked for directions to a place unknown to them, will give them anyway, in an attempt to be helpful. Waxman gives a reason for this.

> It is far easier to make nonsense than sense of so provocative and complicated a text as the *Critique*. Yet by indulging ourselves here, we risk the loss of what a better understanding might bring. When dealing with a philosopher of Kant’s stature, it seems to me that we can never entirely discount the possibility that the true sources of difficulty and confusion are our own limitations and lack of a guiding vision, not his. (Waxman 1991 5)

While it is canonical to Western philosophical literature, controversy continues concerning the *Critique*’s meaning and ultimate purpose. It is noteworthy that there is not more disagreement. So few writers actually attempt to discern and present a comparative assessment of Kant’s overall position that debate on this topic is seldom engaged. Much attention is applied to sections rather than the whole, developing a particular theme or interpretation, or attempting to link sections of the work to previous publications in an
attempt to show which ‘patch’ it is, all without regard to its totality. The patchwork allegation, for example, surfaces in Kemp-Smith’s *Commentary*.

It can now be proved that the *Critique* is not a unitary work, and that in the five months in which, as Kant tells us, it was ‘brought to completion’…it was not actually written, but was pieced together by the combination of manuscripts written at various dates throughout the period 1769-1780. (Kemp-Smith 1992 xx)

Waxman objects to this because the case is not proven, and is merely a mistaken opinion.

My own judgement…is that the patchwork thesis is mistaken and wholly misguided. *The Critique of Pure Reason* strikes me as one of the most single-minded and unified works in the philosophical cannon. I have always had the impression while reading it of a single idea informing its contents. In the six months of 1780 during which Kant fashioned it, I cannot but believe that this idea led him to pare away not only everything inconsistent with it but even that which did not follow from it directly. Thus, I find it a work that aspires to and, to a degree rarely rivalled, attains the unity of a truly organic whole. (Waxman 1991 4)

These two points of view do not fully engage, since Kemp-Smith is talking about the structuring of the work, while Waxman argues for its coherence. Nevertheless, the point about it being pieced together implies a fragmented work, which is what Waxman disputes. The single idea referred to by Waxman is presumably Transcendental Idealism and the positioning of time and space as conditions of experience and pure intuitions. One possible result of failing to attain a picture of the whole is to confuse one’s personal difficulties with the work with Kant’s alleged failings.

Adherents of the thesis have…simply made the judgement that their own confusion and inability to arrive at a unified vision of the *Critique* accurately reflects the state of mind of its author. (Waxman loc. cit.)

On this basis, says Waxman, and aided by the assumption that Kant is not in control of his material, the temptation is to make of the *Critique* whatever is considered appropriate. The result is disastrous for our understanding of Kant’s ideas.

Freed from the demand to unify its myriad strands, one can pick and choose and so fit the remainder into virtually any mold one may devise; it is a declaration of open season on the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Indeed, the orgy of speculative historiographical reconstruction unleashed by the patchwork thesis is among its more benign manifestations; ahistorical, anachronistic approaches are less so. But all are justified, if we
excuse the interpreter of Kant’s work from the task of making sense of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a whole. (Waxman loc. cit.)

In the light of such comments, our immediate task is to look at some previous commentaries concerning Kant’s major work, and attempt to assess its underlying thematic emphasis. In so doing, one must acknowledge the perils of the undertaking. The ambiguities within the *Critique*, its sheer bulk, its innovative vocabulary, the alien nature of some of its ideas, and the depth of thought it requires all militate against a clear understanding of its content. Moreover, why should this task be undertaken? Surely, an observer may say, all that could be said about the *Critique* has been said in the past two hundred plus years.

I am proposing the reinterpretation of Kant’s thought based on the proposition that he is fundamentally an intellectual and religious reformer, and that his critical work is bent to realigning the status of religious thought with that of Enlightenment based scientific rationality. Such a proposal is appropriate, not because there is much commentary concerning critical religion standing in need of comment or correction. Rather, there is nowhere near enough, considering the integral thematic importance this plays in the overall content of the *Critique* as I see it, and on which I base my interpretation. Much existing literature largely ignores, denigrates, or at best understates this element, to the detriment to our understanding of the work as a whole. It is customary to write about Kant’s analytical philosophy, or about the religious content, but not both. What is attempted here is the bridging of the two, and a demonstration of some of the linkages which make the work as a whole a complete and sequential unfolding of thought.

Arguably, theology, rational or otherwise, is currently peripheral to mainstream philosophical academia. Specialist colleges or seminaries give instruction and guidance in this discipline, which is of interest primarily to those who would become clergy. Speaking some time ago of the field of rational theology in particular, Wood writes, ‘It is true that at the present time this brand of theology does not command a wide intellectual respect’ (Wood 1978 150). He also points out that many non-believing philosophers are unappreciative of the value of rational theology, especially its claim to be a metaphysical science. This hostility is not restricted to philosophers.
What is ironic is that many theologians and religious thinkers in recent times have been even more contemptuous of rational theology than these unbelievers. Orienting themselves to scripture, to ecclesiastical tradition, or to one or another form of nonrational religious encounter, they have often been even more anxious than the atheists to repudiate the conception of God derived from scholastic and rationalist metaphysics. (Wood 1978 loc. cit.)

Rational theology had few champions then, and we have no reason to think this situation has changed. From this state of affairs, we are able to conclude that, for whatever reason, Kant’s religious reforms have yet to be realised. Further, his attempt to create a synthesis of philosophy, science, and revealed religion has been unsuccessful in creating a distance for itself from traditional theology in the minds of many interpreters. Wood exemplifies this when he says, ‘Kant’s concept of God belongs squarely in the scholastic rationalist tradition’ (Wood in Guyer 1992 398), and that Kant’s theology developed ‘…along the lines of traditional scholastic and rationalist theology’ (Wood 1978 151). This latter may be true when considered as a developmental trajectory, but arguably is not at all representative of the finished product.

During the preparation of this thesis, I have been aware of others involved with Kantian theology, including those described as belonging to an ‘affirmative theology’ movement. Only late in the day did I become fully aware of the work of Stephen Palmquist. His book *Kant’s Critical Religion* exhibits similarities to my own approach to Kant’s thought, though his conclusions and point of view are rather different. The essence of this difference lies in Palmquist’s personal commitment to Christianity in its more mystical form, which informs what he writes. He makes this commitment explicit in Chapter IX, where he adopts the role of biblical theologian. (Palmquist 2000 248)

Among other themes, Palmquist gives an analysis of Kant’s later writings, which concern many subjects relating to Christian theology. He is concerned, for example, with Kant’s attitude to Jesus, and other traditional religious themes including God and prayer, as well as the possibility of direct mystic knowledge of the divine. He refers to ‘critical mysticism’ in this context, and discusses this in Part 4 under the heading ‘Kant’s Perspectival Foundation for Critical Mysticism’. In this vein, Palmquist has relatively little to say about apperception, for instance, which is one of my major themes, and much of what he does say has to do with the mystical aspects of self-realisation as he sees it.
Kant’s treatment of the ‘unity of apperception’ does indeed have a certain mystical flavor. For Kant is not referring simply to the ordinary person’s empirical sense of ‘I’, but to a deeper, transcendental limit of all human experience, a limit that comes into view only as we gradually forget about (i.e., hold in abeyance) the empirical diversity of our ordinary experiences. And this, like Kant’s overall a priori approach, is remarkably similar to the mystic’s claim that in order to experience God (cf. answer philosophical questions) we must first go through an experience of unknowing. (Palmquist 2000 317)

Palmquist’s discussion of the possibility of mystical insight, and the other traditional themes he finds in critical thought, diverges from my own interests, which involve the rational and universifiable aspects of Kant’s metaphysics, made necessary by the attempt to create and understand an authentically scientific metaphysics. Mystical experiences, as I understand them, are personal, belong to the individual, and in general cannot be shared first hand. As such, they can have nothing to add to my enterprise, which may therefore treat them with indifference. The same attitude is appropriate to Palmquist’s work as a whole, since I am more interested in deriving the basis of Kantian theology through the operations of reason. Palmquist, on the other hand, construes the title of Kant’s book, Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, as opening up wider possibilities than I am prepared to engage with.

There are two common assumptions about the title of ... (Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft) which, when made, virtually determine in advance that Kant’s views will be interpreted strictly in terms of eliminative reductionism. Yet both of these assumptions are utterly opposed to Kant’s expressed intentions. The first assumption is that Grenzen refers to a strict limitation placed on religion by reason; a limitation establishing an absolute barrier that cannot in any way be overcome… If Kant had wanted to say reason imposes limits upon religion that must not be surpassed, then he would surely have used the term Schranken. His use of Grenzen indicates that he has in mind a boundary (like a fence dividing two portions of land), on either side of which we can find legitimate (though different) aspects of one and the same territory (viz., religion). (Palmquist 2000 117)

I am interested in staying on one side of Palmquist’s fence, and this demarcates my concerns from his. Christian dogma and the doings of any particular faith, religion, or denomination do not enter into consideration here.

In collaboration with Firestone, Palmquist is also co-editor of a collection of essays based on the idea of reading Kant’s metaphysics as an affirmative theology. The essays represent a tradition of Kantian scholarship that attempts to provide a rational basis for traditional
theological outlooks, that is, to provide an intellectual underpinning for religious belief and dogma, and is in this way related to the Rationalist metaphysics of Kant’s own time. I have noted the pessimistic assessment of this field made by Wood in 1978. A similar cloud hovers over much modern rational interpretation of Kant’s theology, as Firestone notes in his introduction to the essays he co-edits with Palmquist. Here he indicates the shortcomings of these readings by pointing out that ‘…many theologically affirmative interpretations of Kant have not been as effective as the data warrant in mounting an effective challenge to the traditional read…they are not as unified as the traditional interpretation…they seem less persuasive, and because of their relative isolation, they have been less persuasive’ (Firestone and Palmquist 2006 1).

We need not be concerned with the writings of those represented in these collections or in other theologically based works, since the motivation and methodology of such scholarship differs from my own. My emphasis lies in drawing the theological content of scientific metaphysics from within Kant’s own writings, and demonstrating how he sets this out. Consequently, my emphasis is on the scientific nature of Kantian metaphysics insofar as it enables religious expression, not the theology as such.

Any perusal of the type of literature exemplified by the above named essays, of Palmquist’s own writings, and that of others, will reveal that such writers come to Kant with motivations and purposes different to mine. While difficult to summarise, it is apparent that the majority of such authors have theological commitments of their own, prompting them to accommodate Kant into their own worldview.

These theological approaches, while disparate, owe their provenance to historical religious traditions pre-dating Kant. As such, they have no part to play in an analysis based on the idea that Kant is arguing for something entirely new. Not only does Kant’s theology diverge from that which came before, it also ipso facto differs from that which continues those earlier traditions.

A few brief examples must suffice to demonstrate the differing outlook taken by some of the essayists in Palmquist and Firestone’s collection of 2006.
• The first essay, *The Tree of Melancholy*, comes from Gregory R Johnson. In this, Johnson explores the links between melancholy and enthusiasm defined as the search for truth and certain knowledge of the supersensible. (Firestone and Palmquist 43) He also associates the philosopher with the fanatic, the visionary, the crank, and the hypochondriac. Johnson links Kant closely with Swedenborg, and his essay attempts to establish the idea that Kant’s philosophical output, including especially the critical works, results from his melancholy, his ambivalent attitude to *Schwärmerei*, and an interest in Swedenborgian spiritualism that forms a propaedeutic to his later thinking. It also provides an attempted cure for his allegedly psychologically suspect state of mind. This is allegedly manifest as crankiness, melancholia, hypochondria, and a morbid fascination with the grotesque, pathological, and paranormal. (Firestone and Palmquist op. cit.) He says, for example that ‘Kant bored his friends with constant talk of diet and hygiene’ (Firestone and Palmquist 53). As I understand it, Johnson’s deprecation of Kant in this way is part of an attempt to show that he was more interested in and influenced by Swedenborg than is generally recognised, though why he has to be so traduced in the process is not clear.

• A similar attempt at accommodation, in this case to align Kant with the practices of the Society of Friends, occurs in the essay by Leslie Stevenson. He tells us that ‘As a philosopher who has studied Kant’s philosophy of religion and has also become a member of the Religious Society of Friends, I think I discern some deep affinities between the two’ (Firestone and Palmquist 2006 210). Stevenson goes on to adumbrate a series of comparisons between Kant’s theological expressions and the practices and beliefs of the sect to which he adheres. One, which he emphasises, is the downgrading of the position of Christ as the incarnation of God to one of spiritual inspiration, and another, which he calls a ‘…spiritual rather than a metaphysical interpretation of the resurrection…’ (Firestone and Palmquist 2006 218). Nevertheless this ‘Christ talk’ is far removed from Kant’s theology as I see it, which makes little reference to Christ by name, and is alien to his rejection of historically based theological texts as sources of religious validity. Up to a point the Quaker ideals may well be consistent with Kant’s teachings, but this not the sort of thing I am interested in.
Similarly, I do not consider Nathan Jacob’s attempt to discuss the person of Jesus as an empirical representation of a noumenal God. This relies on the idea that since transcendental idealism is compatible with empirical realism, a representation may be accepted as a correspondence of some sort between noumena and phenomena. This is not the place to go into Jacob’s ideas in detail, though a brief illustration is instructive here. He allows that Kant is able to talk meaningfully about a divine prototype as the Son of God, and that Kant allows the possibility of an empirically manifested divine being.

Kant is able to speak intelligibly about the divine prototype…God-talk/God-thought is intelligible because of reason’s need to cognize the descent of the divine Son of God taking on humanity…All such things can in principle, be experienced and thereby spoken of intelligibly amid the Kantian strictures on knowledge. If this reading stands, the prototypal theology of Book Two of Religion already overcomes the God-talk/God-thought problem by grounding cognition of God in a transcendental concept of incarnation, and we may note that both this vision and its foundational assumptions are strikingly Christian in scope. (Firestone and Palmquist 2006 137)

Again, it seems that the essence of this writing lies in the attempt to interpret Kant as a supporter of traditional Christian dogma.

Arguably, this form of affirmative theology seems not to be concerned with affirming Kant’s philosophy so much as the viewpoint of the essayist. Of course, there are others less inclined to grasp Kant to their bosom. Rossi, for example, while a member of the Society of Jesus, is not ‘…arguing for the inclusion of a Catholic reading of Kant—let alone a Catholic Kant—within Firestone’s category of theologically affirmative readings of Kant’. (Firestone and Palmquist 2006 117) Rome’s historical hostility to Kant’s works may account for this. However, it is clear that as a Catholic Rossi finds something of interest and value in discussing the convergence of Kant’s doctrines of grace with that of Augustine, for example.

Behind my dismissal of such writings is the perception that they do not emphasise the transcendental in the Kantian sense, which must be a-priori, synthetic and universal. A belief in Swedenborgian spirituality, mysticism, Quakerism, Catholicism or any form of theology devolved from the existence of a messiah or prophet, whether seen as God incarnate or not, and based on holy writ, cannot turn back the attack of the determined sceptic. Such beliefs are
not universifiable and cannot form part of a metaphysical science as Kant envisages it. It is true that in the later writings there are references which make contact with traditional theological thought forms, but these occur, as I see it, after Kant has come down from his mountain, and is prepared to accommodate to a surprising extent the manner and matter of existing thought. He is aware that few are likely to have the cognitive development or intellectual application needed to access his theory in its native and abstract state, recognising that, as indicated at A xviii, ‘…this work can never be made suitable for popular consumption.’ Real experts in the science of metaphysics, he says at this point, have no need of examples and illustrations to make things easy for them. I have focussed my discussion as far as possible on that which contains necessity and strict universality, which Kant tells us at B4 are the sure criteria of a-priori knowledge, and inseparable from one another. Affirmative theology overall does not do this and to the extent that it does not is irrelevant to my purpose.

In developing a line of thought through exposition, one needs to take into account the views of others where appropriate, though this has of necessity to be highly selective. There is no authoritative, independent, or impartial assessor of philosophical commentary in Kantian studies or elsewhere in metaphysics, though various areas of consensus do manifest themselves from time to time. However, it is likely that philosophy, like science, does not necessarily progress through consensus. If it did, we might still believe the world to be flat and located at the hub of the solar system. Consequently, I have selected the voices of a number of commentators for reasons other than any arbitrary assessment of their significance. Among these I include extensive references to the following, as well as more usual commentators such as Strawson, Kemp-Smith, and Allison.

- Waxman is an appropriate expositor because of his realisation of the close relationship between Kant and such empiricist majors as Hume and Berkeley. His work is also current, and suitable as an example of more recent commentary.

- Gardner also provides a clear summary of much recent thinking, and I found his book on the Critique useful as a takeoff point for several ideas. He provides an excellent and concise summary of what is generally held to be the case in many areas of Kantian thought, allowing a clear insight into the problems he discusses.
• Schopenhauer is included because of his attempt to deal with many of the issues I discuss. By dissecting and exposing some of his muddles, we can learn much about the sort of problems that can occur for anyone attempting to bend Kant’s ideas to suit their own pre-determined world-view.

In the preface to the first edition, Kant tells us that he means by critique an examination of ‘…the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive independently of all experience’ (Axii). Reason in general is not the same as pure reason, however, and in a text devoted to an examination of pure reason, it is telling that its subject matter is not defined until one of its later parts, the Canon of Pure Reason, for example at (A828/B856). This canon is devoted to defining the content of pure practical reason, and in this we find that legitimate pure reason and practical reason attain synonymity.

Now all synthetic knowledge through pure reason in its speculative employment is, as has been shown by the proofs given, completely impossible. There is therefore no canon of its speculative employment; such employment is entirely dialectical. All transcendental logic is, in this respect, simply a discipline. Consequently, if there be any correct employment of pure reason, in which case there must be a canon of its employment, the canon will deal not with the speculative but with the practical employment of reason. This practical employment of reason we shall now proceed to investigate. (A797/B825)

Here Kant isolates elements common to most religions, focussing on two basic practical beliefs, that concerning the soul and its continued existence, and the idea of God. These beliefs are not doctrinal, nor are they mere opinion, but derive their necessity from the moral law.

It is quite otherwise with moral belief. For here it is absolutely necessary that something must happen, namely, that I must in all points conform to the moral law. The end is here irrefragably established, and according to such insight as I can have, there is only one possible condition under which this end can connect with all other ends, and thereby have practical validity, namely, that there be a God and a future world. (A828/B856)

The case to be put in what follows is that, since pure reason, as catalogued in the Canon and elsewhere, reduces to these two religious ideas, religion, insofar as it relates to these ideas is therefore an important thematic element of the work. This is not to say that the work is about
religion exclusively, and such an assertion may seem to conflict with the content of the *Aesthetic* and the attempt to limit the claims of reason in the *Analytic*. Theology is just one of many topics, however, the progression of ideas within the *Critique*, and the conclusions Kant draws, indicate that it is of some greater significance than is usually conceded.

In saying this, one does not wish to portray Kant as an apologist for or proponent of Pietism, Lutheranism, Protestantism or any other established religious system. Kant’s mature ideas are far too radical for that. Rather, on this examination of the theological content of the *Critique*, one gains insight into the attempt to create a rational religion based on the argument that belief in God and the non-corporeal nature of the mind is natural, and even necessary, for the optimal functioning of human reason. This is a legitimate and unfulfilled Enlightenment project, one neglected by the disciplines of both philosophy and theology since Kant’s day (See Wood in Guyer 1992 414). Theological systems and organisations based on historical, miraculous, and unconditioned events derived from alleged interventions by the deity have a long-standing intellectual conflict with those who reject such beliefs as at best unfounded. This dichotomy expresses itself as a divide between fundamentalism and scepticism. The development of atheist and materialist philosophies, including Marxism, derive their rejection of religious belief and practice from this tension, which we can assume was as acute in Kant’s day as our own. Ironically, there is some attempt to lay the responsibility for the development of such animus toward religion at the feet of Kant.² This follows from Kant’s explicit and emphatic rejection of the possibility of arriving at an intellectual, rational or logical proof for the existence of God.

The benefits of a religious framework that is at once rational and able to fulfil the apparently universal need for religious expression are considerable. We might hope to ameliorate the moral excesses and physical atrocities committed in the name of both religious enthusiasm and the Enlightenment-derived tyranny with which we are so familiar. The cognitive and religious schism we experience derives from the creation of the rational worldview characteristic of the Enlightenment, and we may point to the responsibility of all reasonable persons to attempt to overcome it. Based on the premise that Kant’s own ideas have been largely misunderstood or disregarded in the two hundred-odd years since he published the first *Critique*, this dissertation seeks the restitution and redefinition of his doctrines.

² Gordon E Michelson argues this in his 1999 work ‘*Kant and the Problem of God.*’
The Enlightenment paradigm of applied reason was and continues to be the natural sciences and Kant’s concept of a rational religion relates closely to this. One theme in the *Critique* open to our enquiry is the intimate and necessary relationship between science and religion, a relationship which in our own day continues to exhibit the fractures inflicted on it following the breakdown of the medieval synthesis of knowledge enjoyed by such as Anselm and Aquinas. We have seen that Kant is concerned with metaphysics as a science, and the dominant characteristic of modern science is the description of the universe in non-theological terms. Such a description is likely to be largely physicalist, mathematical, and typically makes no overt reference to theological or non-corporeal entities or concepts.

Kant’s exemplars of science include not only logic, as the most abstract example, but also mathematics, geometry and what we now call physics and science in general. This latter includes theories of cosmological origin and structuring, and the development of terrestrial life. In Kantian terms, a rational religion requires a rational science, and arguably, at the beginning of the third millennium we have neither, in terms of both our understanding of theological issues and our account of cosmological origins, which in their various ways attempt to describe our place in the world. The possibility exists that a Kantian perspective on the continuing intellectual dislocation of the two is appropriate for our own time. In the first *Critique*, Kant has a clear and positive teaching concerning the attitude humans should adopt toward God. We need to determine the content of this doctrine, since arguably his insights have been misconstrued by many since the publication of the first *Critique*, and their revival and examination is overdue. However much we might wish to dispute his ideas, our first task is to determine what he proposes in this area.

When reading the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one confronts a formidable text exhibiting the difficulty many have expressed in reading and understanding it. It presents a dense series of propositions, arguments, and innovative, even strange, and now often archaic concepts, expressed in an unorthodox and technical jargon, each embedded in an elaborate array of sections, parts, chapters, books, and divisions. We meet with two editions usually scrambled together in the English translations, and intended for simultaneous reading. The book is lengthy, and its ‘architectonic’ means that sections seem to be included for aesthetic or logical totality rather than thematic purpose. It often presents an abstruse series of arguments packaged into a strictly defined structure intent on completeness and complexity at the
expense of transparency. Its author consciously compresses his material, avoiding illustrative and explanatory content in order to deliver his doctrine (A xix). Added to this is his practice of failing to indicate the direction of his arguments, with the consequence that his account often contains few hints of its final purpose until he arrives at it.

As well as these problems of expression, we find difficulties resulting from translation. At the intellectual level, any attempt to resynthesise empiricist and rationalist viewpoints, including the epistemic and metaphysical elements derived not only from antiquity, but also from Descartes, Locke, Hume, Berkeley Wolff, and Leibniz, among others, was always going to be difficult. Kant’s efforts at establishing the supremacy of his critical outlook are neither piecemeal nor partial, being applied across all areas of philosophy with insistent purpose. His ambitious project attempts to describe and order the human intellectual condition in terms of its fundamental components, including mathematics, science, psychology, philosophy, ontology, epistemology, theology and metaphysics. Perhaps because of this ambition, Kant’s work often meets with both admiration and dismissal. Writing of Hobbes, Michael Oakeshott asserts, ‘A man, it is generally agreed, may make himself ridiculous as easily by a philosophical system as by any other means’ (Oakeshott xiv). Some seem to think that Kant has done this. Brook, for example, quotes William James’ opinion.

Kant’s mind is the rarest and most intricate of all possible antique bric-a-brac museums, and connoisseurs and dilettantes will always wish to visit it and see the wondrous and racy contents. The temper of the dear old man about his work is perfectly delectable. And yet he is …at bottom a mere curio, a specimen. (In Brook, 1994 1)

Other writers see Kant as simply mistaken.

Nature, Kant said, is a system of cause and effect, while moral choice is a matter of free will, for which there is no cause and effect. In making moral choices, in rising above mere instinct, human beings transcend the realm of nature and enter a realm of freedom that belongs to them exclusively as rational creatures.

Now this formulation has a comforting feel to it, but it makes no sense at all in terms of either material or imaginable entities which is why Kant, even apart from his tortured prose, is so hard to understand. Sometimes a concept is baffling not because it is profound but because it is wrong. (Wilson 1998 277)

The denunciation here is unambiguous. Kant’s vision of nature, which would seem to include just about everything, ‘makes no sense’. It is ‘wrong’, and the difficulty we encounter in
reading the text is attributed to this wrongness. Wilson’s objection rests on what he considers
the more convincing empirical observations of contemporary evolutionary theory.

I find it hard to believe that had Kant, Moore and Rawls known modern biology and experimental
psychology, they would have reasoned as they did. (Wilson op. cit. 278)

Similarly, Bennett asserts, ‘…the Critique is full of mistakes and confusion…’ and ‘…wrong
on nearly every page’ (Bennett 1966 viii).

The well-known translator of Kant’s work, Kemp-Smith, begins his Commentary to Kant’s
Critique of Pure Reason with equally critical comments.

…the Critique of Pure Reason is more obscure and difficult than even a metaphysical treatise has any right
to be. The difficulties are not merely due to defects of exposition; they multiply rather than diminish upon
detailed study. (Kemp-Smith 1992 vii)

It is not hard to find technical criticisms of Kant’s writing style. Kemp-Smith continues to tell
us that Kant is ‘…defective in clearness and popularity of exposition (and) flatly contradicts
himself in almost every chapter… there is hardly a technical term which is not employed by
him in a variety of different and conflicting senses. As a writer he is the least exact of all the
great thinkers’ (Kemp-Smith 1992 xx).

These examples establish that the Critique has been roundly criticised for not only its style
and methodology, but also its cogency, intellectual content and logical structure. While such
faults alone are insufficient to justify total rejection of his doctrines, we need to find out why
such observers arrive at the conclusions they do, and if we accept their judgment concerning
Kant’s failings, seek the origin of the faults. The paradox lies in how an influential and
generally respected work could at the same time be so poorly executed.

Understandably, some flaws are likely in such a large and original work. Kant’s attempt to
create a new, rational, scientific and radical basis for the sometimes arcane discipline of
metaphysics, to render compatible and coherent the contrasting factions of Continental and
British philosophy, to provide a way of thinking about moral decision-making which is at
once non-determinist and compatible with the Newtonian world view, and to make congruent
the scientific spirit of his age with the pre-existing underlying religious culture which he held
so essential for the good of society in general, is enough to occupy many lives. Observers generally recognise Kant’s efforts to synthesise conflicting ideas inherited from previous philosophers, though at least one scholar thinks that this recognition does not go far enough.

Unfortunately, by seldom attending to the vast ramifications of Kant’s thought, especially in its scientific directions, or by paying insufficient attention to the models for his later language that are found in his earlier work, many commentaries failed to do justice to the astonishing synthesis which Kant’s work represents. (Buchdahl 1969 624)

As in our own time, warring ideologies existed within Kant’s experience concerning the conflicting knowledge claims of theologians and scientific theories. We find in the Critique an attempt galvanised by the transcendental perspective to synthesise these, to the extent that Kant accepts the non-historical and morally derived doctrines of the Christianity of his time. This attempt at reconciliation is just one of many, and it would not be surprising to find in such remarkable output that the author sometimes goes too far, and in other cases not far enough, or that his work shows the developmental strain of originality. Such faults are found in other philosophers. Selby-Bigge, for example, is critical of Hume, finding the Treatise ‘…ill-proportioned, incoherent, ill-expressed…’ and containing examples of ‘…ambiguities and obscurities of expression…verbal vagueness and slovenliness’ (Selby-Bigge in Hume 1961 x). Errors may appear in texts for a number of reasons, some of them beyond the control of the author, especially in translation. Commentators, looking at the ideas from a different or hostile perspective may fail to grasp the full import of what is said. The language itself may be inadequate for expressing the ideas put forward. The possibilities for misunderstanding are manifold.

In seeking to comprehend and possibly defend Kant’s ideas, one risks taking on the role of an apologist, one who undertakes the reconstruction and modification of the ideas of an original if allegedly slipshod thinker and writer. Such an approach means that faults supposedly committed in the original can be overlooked, and some more acceptable content derived. That is not our function here. Rather we need to look carefully at what is going on in this text, delving objectively and hermeneutically into its content to seek the message within. This is best done in a spirit of genuine enquiry, lacking those elements of combativeness so often encountered. The task of interpreting Kant does not require a complacent acquiescence to everything he says, nor does it demand the antagonism so often displayed by such as Bennett,
who, while denying any ‘...notions like those of charity, sympathy, deference or hostility...’ says on the same page that he is engaged in ‘...fighting Kant tooth and nail.’, which seems hostile enough (Bennett 1966 viii).

How then are we to read Kant, in the light of such criticism? A disturbing dichotomy confronts us concerning the worth of his ideas. Do they stand alone as a clear teaching worthy of study, criticism, and at least partial acceptance? Alternatively, do they merely provide a way station on the road to higher, better or more sophisticated ideas and ideals? Even his harshest critics, such as Strawson, are willing to admire his genius at points while rejecting his philosophy as a whole. We need to explain the existence of these warring readings. If Kant’s work is so important, so innovative, and so influential, how is it seen at the same time by so many as obscure, poorly expressed, and of little lasting significance?

In the Preface to the A edition Kant acknowledges the reader’s right to demand clarity of expression in a writer. (Axviii) He concedes that he may only have succeeded in delivering what he calls discursive or logical clarity, at the expense of the intuitive or aesthetic clearness made possible through examples, since the inclusion of such material would have made the work too large. He concludes that such illustration is necessary only in a popular work, and since his work can never become popular, he says, ‘...such assistance is not required by genuine students of the science...’ (Axviii) He continues to justify this approach at some length.

…aids to clearness, though they may be of assistance in regard to details, often interfere with our grasp of the whole. The reader is not allowed to arrive sufficiently quickly at a conspectus of the whole; the bright colouring of the illustrative material intervenes to cover over and conceal the articulation and organisation of the system, which, if are to be able to judge of its unity and solidity, are what chiefly concern us. (A xix)

Vleeschauwer underlines Kant’s dissatisfaction with what he had done (Vleeschauwer 1962 89). The doctrine of the Critique of Pure Reason was not the source of such vexation, though its exposition (Vortrag) was.

Kant attributed his strong feeling of dissatisfaction to his hasty writing, to his neglect of minor popular touches and to faults in the construction both of the deduction and of the paralogisms. And these feelings could not fail to grow more intense when it became evident to him that these genuine and clearly perceived
faults were responsible for the failure of his doctrine. The term ‘failure’ is indeed not too strong. Far from having been a success, the *Critique* was received with general indifference. Even although Kant himself had not counted on a quick victory it is worth noting that the result greatly exceeded even his most pessimistic expectations. The few readers who did not recoil before the indigestible treatise which he had offered them kept on complaining bitterly. His colleagues found his teaching wellnigh unintelligible… (Vleeschauwer 1962 90)

Condemnation of the *Critique* as flawed in various ways has been perennial, and some attempted explanations have been given. As Kemp-Smith points out, ‘…every commentator has felt constrained to offer some explanation of their occurrence. Thus Caird has asserted that Kant opens his exposition from the non-Critical standpoint of ordinary consciousness and that he discloses his final position towards which he has all along been working, only through repeated modifications of his preliminary statements (Kemp-Smith 1992 xx).’

This explanation seems plausible. If Kant is trying to create within the reader a different, radical or alien worldview, then it seems reasonable for him not to expect the reader to understand his conclusions before the process has been completed. So at each stage, perhaps, the line of thought may subtly change, or be revised in light of the insight expressed in a preceding section, providing the spiral-learning trajectory fostered by contemporary pedagogy. What looks like repetition, contradiction, or misuse of terms may really be the justified modification in outlook and presentation made inevitable by the process at work. Kemp-Smith rejects this type of explanation.

Such a view, however, cannot account either for the specific manner of occurrence or for the actual character of the contradictions of which the *Critique* affords so many examples. These are by no means limited to the opening sections of its main divisions; and careful examination of the text shows that they have no such merely expository origin. (Kemp-Smith 1992 xx)

There may be other forms of progression operating here. Kant would be expected to develop and refine his own opinions and insights in writing the text. If either of these possibilities is the case, what can be the effect of superimposing the two editions? We would find words such as “metaphysics” or “pure reason” written by Kant in 1880, or even earlier, for the first edition, situated near the same term written many years later for the second. Over that time Kant’s usage and meaning may well have changed to a greater or lesser degree, and the context in which they are used may also differ, despite the fact that the words rest
contiguously in the text. A possible consequence is that the blending of the two editions is itself a source of confusion and apparent contradiction if these considerations are unheeded. Some commentators discover faults at a deeper level. Strawson is sceptical of the notion of affection, that is, the idea that noumena ‘cause’ appearances. Here the criticism aims at the conceptual level. Adding a psychological dimension, Bennett refers to the ‘…neurotically inept exposition of the Transcendental Deduction’ (Kant’s Analytic 1966 138).

We could continue with these examples. However, the point is made that many find fault with the Critique in many ways. In attempting to understand Kant’s purposes, for the Critique has more than one, those exposed to such varied and hostile findings must wonder whether the task of reading it in its entirety is worth the effort. Clearly many have decided it is not, or find the task beyond them. Most critics, such as Bennett, deal with it in sections, or they truncate the commentary at some point in the work. Indeed, when we interrogate many of the commentators as to what they think Kant’s overall conclusions are, we meet with silence, or at most a somewhat bewildered questioning of the text’s purpose. In this, we find a possible clue to answering our question asking why Kant’s writing is at once so influential and so poorly expressed. My response to these issues is expressed in the five chapters following, and is based on the contention that a significant element of Kant’s exposition is often overlooked. This involves the extended capacities allowed to practical reason in fulfilling the rational demands for metaphysical totality, providing the possibility of a genuine moral mapping of human potentialities, and making possible a rational religious outlook able to coexist with other sciences.

Chapter One takes a wide view of the first Critique and beyond, in an attempt to discern a pattern of thought found only in this way. This involves the way in which theoretical reason is constrained in the Analytic, and the realisation that this is possible only through the employment of a governing practical reason, which on examination becomes a continuing theme within the work and beyond. By looking at assessments of the Critique by other commentators, I attempt to show how much of the contention and hostility surrounding the work, as well as many of its alleged contradictions and other flaws, can be overcome when this element of Kant’s program is established. The conclusion that practical reason is dominant throughout, and in fact is the instrument used by Kant to write the Critique, becomes clearer when we see that it alone is able to consider the transcendental concepts off
limits to theoretical reason, which must be restricted to the actual if it is not to become speculative.

Chapter Two examines the *Aesthetic*, emphasising the possibility of misunderstanding the terms in which it is couched. This includes the temptation to read Kant’s account as a psychological or psycho-physicalist representational theory involving something akin to corpuscularian sensual impact as the originating mechanism of intuitions. On analysis, we find that Kant’s reflective theory contains a divergent account. In this, sensibility comes to indicate a relationship between the mind, as a thing in itself, and other noumenal influences, whose pre-empirical play on sensibility and the productive imagination brings into consciousness the world as we experience it, including time, space, the appearances they contain, and self-awareness. From this, we discover Kant’s term ‘sensibility’ is used invariably in this transcendental way, and has no reference to the organs of sense. This claim may seem strong, however it must be seen to be the case only from the transcendental point of view and is typical of the reversals this often entails. The organs of sense are present in time and space, and as such are representations, that is, objects intuited in time and space as are all others, and available to us only in this form. Consequently, we are compelled to accept the possibility that they are themselves, like all appearances, the result of intuition initiated through noumenal influence when considered within transcendental reflection. We find an example of Kant’s discussion of this in the *Concepts of Reflection*.

Understanding accordingly limits sensibility, but does not thereby extend its own sphere. In the process of warning the latter that it must not presume to claim applicability to things-in-themselves but only to appearances, it does indeed think for itself an object in itself, but only as transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance and therefore not itself appearance… If we are pleased to name this object noumenon for the reason that its representation is not sensible, we are free to do so. (A288 and B345)

Because of this possibility, sensibility, within transcendental reflection, does not include the senses among the initiating influences, and from the transcendental point of view, they have no reference to the process itself, except as being part of the product and the initiating appearances that make all other appearances possible. That they have the synoptic role of stimulating empirical intuition is consistent with the transcendental account, though it may take some intellectual acrobatics to see how this is the case. It seems that we are aware of our sense organs through the operations they perform, that is, we become aware of our own
visual capacity, for example, through the realisation that we can see other objects in time and space by means of them. We also realise that our own organs perform the same operation we observe in others, and as such they play the empirical role of sensibility for all minds. Despite this, however, they do not participate in the transcendental account, and sensibility, taken in this way, therefore refers to the bringing into existence of the sensible world without reference to the organs of sense themselves.

In order to illustrate this perspectival shift, and the way in which Kant gives voice to his protagonist, I have indicated how he allows a Copernican-like shift in outlook from a sensually oriented location to what Heidegger calls the metaphysical horizon. From here, a completely different and more coherent assessment of self and the conditioned elements of actuality becomes possible, especially as it concerns causation. One result of this repositioning is the annulment of Cartesian scepticism concerning the veracity of appearances, since we no longer refer to the sense organs or any thing else as mediating between perceptions and objects. On this reading, the sense organs themselves become passive empirical objects, that is, appearances in time and space which come into being only at the end of the representational process, rather than the beginning, as in an empirical theory. Because of this, the apprehension of objects is immediate and therefore beyond doubt.

This analysis is important for my overall project, since in this way we can establish that Kant employs a concept of a noumenal mind identified with the practical idea of soul as it emerges later in the work. It also creates the logical space or void within which to locate the ideas of soul and God. A third consequence is that while the transcendental self is now positioned in this unknown void, and able to look only upon nature, it is, as a thing in itself, free of all conditioning influences and able to act independently of the causal matrix of appearances. This freedom makes authentic moral self-determination, legislation, and personal responsibility possible.

Chapter Three is a brief examination of Kant’s theory of self, in which I emphasise his doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception. The establishment of the possibility of an ever present accompaniment to appearances, one that is able to synthesise representations in such as way that not only am I able to identify them as mine, but also the accompanying self, provides, I argue, the basis on which Kant moves to the regulative and analogous
postulate of the soul. I also analyse the aborted attempt in the A edition to establish a noumenal correlate of the self through the theory of the Transcendental Object = X.

This chapter argues that Kant’s theory of self-awareness, and our awareness of the presence of the transcendental subject as an idea is nothing like the doctrines of traditional school or rationalist metaphysics, or the arguments of rational psychology which are repudiated in the _Paralogisms_. The importance of this chapter lies in the mapping of the linkage Kant discovers in pure synthetic apperception between appearances and the underlying noumenal ‘I’ which is never represented. Our discussion of the soul in religious terms is left until Chapter Five.

Given Kant’s views concerning the non-corporeal nature of mind as soul, the temptation is to assume that he is thereby committed to a traditional or other form of spiritualism. In Chapter 4, I show why he is not so committed, and how he is able to position noumenal ideas in a way completely independent of the matter/mind dichotomy. Further, I attempt to show that Transcendental Idealism creates the possibility for sidestepping the duality between mind and its contents, since for us, mind itself, as a noumenal subject, can have no claim to being except as an idea of itself. In this way, Kant reduces all that is possible, the noumenal, the material of all appearances, concepts and cognitions, to mind content only, and his religious doctrines are based on this unity. Metaphysics as a science is involved with nothing more than its own ideas, and what ever else there may be is of complete indifference as far as pure reason is concerned. The character of representations, as distinct from their presence, is determined wholly by the mind through its categorial capacities. While they stand as representations of something, they appear to us in time and space and as such are completely different in nature to whatever they are in themselves, which, by conceptual definition, can have no such characteristics. The escape from Berkeleian idealism is achieved through a justified idea or belief in the presence and influence of things in themselves, including one of which we have a direct awareness, that is, the immediate experience of our own freedom, indicating that at least one thing in itself exists. On the other hand, we can know nothing of the plurality or otherwise of things in themselves. As Kant says at A49, ‘…nothing whatsoever can be asserted of the thing in itself, which may underlie these appearances.’

Chapter Five brings together some strands so far taken in isolation. First, I describe Kant’s theory of theological evolution, in which existing religious forms are intended to slowly track
over time into the moral metaphysical basis he prescribes as the only rational way forward for religious practice. Kant has very strong views concerning the minimalist religion he proposes. There are only two elements of belief, those concerning God and a continuance of the soul. There is to be no lay/clergy divide, no prayer, no worship, no concept of intercession, no reliance on revelation or supernatural intervention, and no Eucharist. He envisages a community of free individuals led by enlightened teachers such as himself who strive to emulate the noumenal Kingdom of Ends on earth by strictly, and as far as is humanly possible, applying the moral law, that is, the categorical imperative.

Kant works outward from the awareness of self as a thing in itself to the world and the moral law, the community of free souls, a belief in a future life and the *ens realissimum*. These he sees as necessary for the attainment of happiness through the reward for virtue, something neither likely nor to be expected within appearances. In this way, he derives the moral necessity for such beliefs.

As well as being morally necessary, these beliefs must also be rational and scientifically justifiable in the full sense of being able to express themselves as synthetic *a priori* and universalisable propositions. Of particular importance is the realisation that the moral law and the laws of nature derive from a common source, that is, noumenal influence, among which we number freely acting human volition. Consequently, both sets of laws, as included in a complete metaphysics, are equally scientific, being derived from reason alone, and contain necessary and therefore transcendental propositions that are synthetic, *a priori*, and at least in principle universalisable. This scientific status of the moral law establishes the basis on which, also as a matter of practical necessity, Kant justifies the rational position of certain basic religious beliefs concerning God and the continuing existence of the soul. In this way, we come to have a religion congruent with the Enlightenment ideals of rationality.
Chapter 1. The Thematic Unity of the Critique.

1.0 Reassessing the Critique of Pure Reason.

It is surprising that so little consensus exists concerning the central theme of the Critique. Both the text and its commentators suggest many things, such as metaphysics, Transcendental Idealism, the nature of time and space, mathematics, science, logic, epistemology, cosmology, ontology, theology, reason and so on. The possibility here is that all these suggestions are correct. The fruitfulness of Kant’s writing derives from its thematic heterogeneity and the sheer inventiveness of his ideas. The Critique of Pure Reason is ‘about’ many things, though that is not the point. We need to know what it concerns in the overall sense. What is the central theme, if there is one? Why did Kant write it? What did he ultimately try to establish?

Possibly, there is no answer to this. We can imagine a work discussing a wide range of topics, though lacking an overriding intent. Such a fragmented text could still be interesting and rewarding, though perhaps we would think it to be rather strange, like a novel or film lacking a progressive plot, character development, or denouement. Such a response is not open to us concerning the Critique of Pure Reason however, since Kant is adamant about his overall purpose and direction. This is strongly expressed in the prefaces.

If we take single passages, torn from their contexts, and compare them with one another, apparent contradictions are not likely to be lacking, especially in a work that is written with any freedom of expression. In the eyes of those who rely on the judgment of others, such contradictions have the effect of placing the work in an unfavourable light; but they are easily resolved by those who have mastered the idea of the whole. (B xliv)

Kant shows an awareness of his text’s weaknesses, asking us to disregard them in the interests of a holistic understanding. We need to discern what he means by ‘idea of the whole’. Typically, he seldom gives his reader many clues concerning where his discussion, at any level, is going. Because of this, it may be a good idea, when dealing with Kant’s chapters, paragraphs, or even a complete text, to skip to his conclusion and work out where he going. Combined with this, a return to the intermediate steps allows a clearer insight into
the role played by them. This principle does not apply to the *Critique of Pure Reason* in isolation. Kant’s work of any period, say that encompassing the three *Critiques*, could be considered in this way though for different reasons.

We have said that Kant’s writing is deliberately bereft of literary devices and what he calls illustrative material (Axix). When he does write lyrically, he employs a number of metaphorical illustrations. For example, he adopts Descartes’ idea of the metaphysical dwelling (A707/B735). He describes the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a process of reduction, a boiling down perhaps, or a distillation process, where the elements of a compound are separated (Bxxi n). Related to this is the idea of a scientific experiment (Bxvi ff), and the possibility of arriving at ‘…a special science which can be entitled the critique of pure reason’ (A11). He repeatedly stresses that metaphysics should be put onto the sure path of a science (Bxiv). One of his most contentious metaphors concerns his claim to have succeeded in completing a revolution in thought similar to that achieved by Copernicus. At another point the progress of critical thought is portrayed in terms of travel, or as the exploration of territory by both land and sea (B295/A236). The journey through the work is described as a path, which Kant would like to see developed into a high road, or ‘king’s way’. This last analogy constitutes the essence of the both the first and final paragraphs of the *Critique of Pure Reason* proper. In the latter, Kant expresses the hope that such a highway could be completed ‘before the end of the present century’ (A856/B884). He refers of course to the 18th Century! It seems fair to say, at the beginning of the 21st Century, that this achievement is yet to be attained. From these metaphors, with their underlying theme of progress or construction, it seems reasonable to derive the conclusion that Kant does have some overall purpose in mind.

1.1 Some Interpretations.

Within our discussion of the rationale of the first *Critique*, we face the basic problem of trying to determine the work’s *raison d’être*. Little consensus concerning this seems to exist, and Giorgio Tonelli begins his analysis of the *Critique* with his view on the subject.

It is obviously impossible to understand a book correctly, if it is not clear what the book is about. It may seem strange, considering how much work has been done on Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, that it has not been finally established what the subject matter of this treatise is. (Tonelli 1994 1)
Therefore, our question remains. We must seek the purpose of this work, as it stands in itself, and not merely consider the parts in isolation. It is a common assumption among writers in English that the *Critique* concerns epistemology, being an attempt to limit the claims of knowledge. We are familiar with the work of empiricist thinkers in this area, and, as previously noted, it becomes apparent that Kant’s ideas spring from and have much sympathy with those of his empiricist predecessors, particularly Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

Once we become aware of the fundamental principles uniting Kant with his British Empiricist predecessors, especially Hume, we can see that the yawning chasm separating his position from theirs stems from a single miniscule divergence at the roots: the addition of a source of representations unconsidered by Locke, Berkeley and Hume—pure sensible intuition. (Waxman 2005 12)

Strawson also points out that Kant’s metaphysics involves empiricist parameters.

Transcendent metaphysics, then, is declared in general, and demonstrated in detail, to be impossible as a form of knowledge, or as Kant would say, as a science. But…there is a large positive task for a genuinely scientific metaphysics, a task which, according to Kant, can be discharged once for all…this is the…investigation of that limiting framework of ideas and principles the use and application of which are essential to empirical knowledge, and which are implicit in any coherent conception of experience which we can form. (Strawson 1966 18)

Strawson here contends that Kant attempts the delineation of the principles behind knowledge claims concerning empirical reality. This is an accurate summation, as far as it goes, but does not answer our question since we may go on to ask why Kant is doing this. Why does he set out to destroy the pretensions of dogmatic metaphysics? Is it only to establish a limiting framework within which empirical knowledge can be determined?

Tonelli disputes interpretations such as Strawson’s concerning the centrality of empirical knowledge.

…the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not a treatise on the theory of knowledge for the simple reason that a particular science called theory of knowledge neither existed in Kant’s time, nor existed before as an independent discipline; and Kant certainly did not introduce it, since it does not exist in his vocabulary. (Tonelli 1994 2)
This is not particularly convincing. One can conceive of a writer, especially one such as Kant, inventing a category of investigation which had hitherto been unknown and unnamed. The fact that he does not give it a name is no better proof that it does not exist, and we find that he employs Transcendental Idealism and other concepts in much of the first Critique without naming them. A modern reader could still assess the Critique of Pure Reason as dealing with what we in contemporary terms would call theory of knowledge, while still being aware that this is only part of the story. Tonelli is happier with the idea that Kant is writing about metaphysical methodology.

The claim that the Critique of Pure Reason is a treatise on metaphysics is certainly much better substantiated, and basically correct, but it is still insufficient for the interpretation of that work, and if asserted exclusively, it becomes misleading…In fact, the Critique is a work on methodology, and more exactly, on the methodology of metaphysics. (Tonelli 1994 3-4)

Tonelli is quite adamant about this methodological interpretation, though again we find his evidence somewhat thin. He admits that ‘…the statement: “it is a treatise on method,” appears only in the Preface to the second edition (1787). But for those familiar with seventeenth and eighteenth-century terminology, this fact is spelled out very clearly on many occasions in the first edition, when Kant compares the Critique to the ‘King’s road’ or ‘high road’ of metaphysics…the terms way, road, high road, et cetera traditionally and unequivocally referred, for obvious etymological reasons, to method. And the study of method belonged to logic.’ (Tonelli 1994 4)

The claim that the Critique of Pure Reason concerns metaphysics as logic may be argued for, but to quote Kant’s few metaphorical forays to support such a contention is inadequate. Kant specifically dismisses logic from the realm of metaphysical knowledge at several points in the first Critique. He points out the limitations of logic in the preface to the second edition, for instance.

Logic, therefore, as a propaedeutic, forms, as it were, only the vestibule of the sciences; and when we are concerned with specific modes of knowledge, while logic is indeed presupposed in any critical estimate of them, yet for the actual acquiring of them we have to look to the sciences properly and objectively so called. (Bix)
Kant returns to the intellectual status of logic much later in the text, where he aligns it with other non-philosophical rational pursuits, which, while sharing the *a priori* characteristics of philosophy as metaphysics, lack the creative spark and the ability to legislate knowledge, which critical philosophy alone possesses.

The mathematician, the natural philosopher, and the logician, however successful the two former may have been in their advances in the field of rational knowledge, and the two latter more especially in philosophical knowledge, are yet only artificers in the field of reason. (A839/B866)

Kant does not seem interested in logic as such. He spends much time distinguishing different kinds of logic, and is keen to employ it in abstracting the ideas of pure reason he is seeking. But this logic is only a means to an end, and plays no part in the end itself. To confuse ends with means, as Tonelli seems to be doing, is to misunderstand Kant’s metaphors. Perhaps Kant uses analogies involving travel because he believes he is getting somewhere, and wishes to take the reader with him. If the *Critique* is not primarily about logic, we are left with our original question: Why does Kant write as he does? It seems that Tonelli mistakes the highway for the destination. Or to use another of Kant’s metaphors, we must not mistake the architecture for the purpose of the dwelling.

As with our previous question concerning the allegedly poor exposition of Kant’s work, we are here faced with a continuing dilemma. If Kant’s work is so profound and important, why do many, if not most, commentators seem to lack a grasp of his overall intentions, or, when they do provide one, as with Tonelli, do we find it so unconvincing? One possible answer concerns the piecemeal approach often taken when dealing with this text. It is usual to discuss parts of the work in isolation, usually some aspect of the *Analytic*, and many disputes have arisen over specific ideas and sections. Such analysis almost inevitably misses the overall perspective we are seeking. Perhaps even Heidegger does this. His view is that all philosophy is about ontology as he understands it. He is so preoccupied with the concept of Being, used, as he says, in its widest possible sense and as the fundamental problem of phenomenology, that it is the primary philosophical concern.

We assert now that Being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy. (Heidegger 1982 11)
Elsewhere, Heidegger also concludes that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not a treatise on epistemology, bluntly asserting ‘The *Critique of Pure Reason* has nothing to do with a ‘theory of knowledge’’ (Taft 1997 11). For Heidegger, the purpose of the *Critique* is to be understood in ontological terms. He returns to the Cartesian building analogy, which he often employs, opening his text on the subject with the assertion that it ‘… is devoted to the task of interpreting Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* as a laying of the ground for metaphysics and thus of placing the problem of metaphysics before us as a fundamental ontology’ (Taft 1997 1).

Heidegger is rare among commentators in not finding difficulty with Kant’s expression. Unlike Kant, however, he defines a world dependent on the worldview of individual consciousness, with the consequence that no necessity arises for a discussion of personal religious beliefs. In contrast, Kant emphasises such necessity, and although he teaches that we can have no knowledge at all of those ‘objects’ or ‘ideas’ which do not present themselves to us as appearances, he does allow the possibility, even the need, for an agnosticism on the part of theoretical reason accompanied by a set of beliefs concerning our relationship to them derived through practical reason. Kant’s examination of these ‘objects’, and reason’s demand for total systematicity as set out in the *Transcendental Dialectic*, is seemingly disregarded by Heidegger.

A full clarification of Kant’s concept of totality is needed before we can pronounce ourselves on whether or not ontology in Heidegger’s sense is truly the ultimate horizon of Kant’s *Critique*. As it turns out, the critical concept of totality is dealt with in the *Transcendental Dialectic*…the concept of the world as totality is one of the three Ideas of Reason—the other two being the Idea of soul and the Idea of God. However, Heidegger, in his own book on Kant, is virtually silent on this whole section. (Kerszberg 1997 pp. 3-4)

From the above cursory inspection of the literature, we find little awareness of Kant’s overall purpose, considered both thematically and stylistically, or even the need to discern it. A closer reading of his texts reveals such a purpose, which we shall attempt to highlight while considering the ideas of various other writers concerning the nature of the first *Critique*.

1.2 The End of the Road.

By turning to the final chapter of this text, we find Kant’s conclusion, subdued and available only to those who reach the end of this particular road, the idea that philosophy is and always
has been ultimately concerned with the possibility of God and the prospect of immortality. Kant’s conclusion is unambiguous in this final section.

It is a very notable fact that in the infancy of philosophy men began where we should incline to end, namely with the knowledge of God, occupying themselves with the hope, or rather indeed with the specific nature, of another world. (A852/B882)

Few philosophical commentators relate the *Critique of Pure Reason* to this apparently orthodox expression of what is, as we shall see, a unique and unprecedented religious outlook, preferring to concentrate on its analytical content. This is remarkable given that the latter sections relate almost exclusively to what we would call religious matters, including references to the nature of the soul, the possibility of belief in God, and moral freedom. One exception to this neglect is Stephen Palmquist, who emphasises the importance of the theological content of the first *Critique*.

[Kant] argues that space, time, and the twelve categories form the transcendental boundary line between what we can and cannot know. But this ‘solution’ itself calls attention to an even more significant problem: what is the status of that which lies outside the boundary of possible empirical knowledge? Kant reveals as early as CPR xxix-xxx that this metaphysical problem of how to verify the fundamental human ideas of ‘God, freedom, and immortality’, upon which he believes all religion and morality depend, constitutes the deepest and most urgent form of the ‘transcendental problem’. It should therefore come as no surprise when he devotes the entire Transcendental Dialectic, the largest section of the first Critique, to the task of solving this ubiquitous perplexity of human reason. (in the opening paragraph of Palmquist 1991)

Palmquist goes on to argue that Kant not only poses this form of the transcendental problem, but offers at least four ways of solving it. This is done by recognising that the limitations of human reason create the logical space needed for the play of metaphysical and theological ideas, an interpretation we now examine in detail.

1.3 Some Problems of Interpretation and Understanding.

Kant’s position on many issues has the immediate appearance of paradox, which applies to not only philosophical topics, but also the empirical sciences, and, importantly for our purposes, his theological doctrines. This leaves even sympathetic commentators gasping.
One can only marvel at Kant’s ability to choose terms which contain such ambiguities to express his lack of logical resolution. (Buchdahl 1969 659 n)

Kant’s role usually involves the synthesis or dissolution of profoundly conflicting and deeply embedded positions, including, for example, the seemingly logical impossibility of rendering moral freedom possible within a causally determined and apparently mechanistic universe. By applying the doctrines of Transcendental Idealism Kant is repeatedly able to present a subtle and interesting way out of this type of impasse. Often the tensions generated seem to render the effort implausible, even incoherent, and some effort is required to orient one’s thinking to comprehend the full extent of the progress he achieves. These observations are particularly apposite concerning the attempt to mediate between the claims of religious faith and those who meet such claims with scepticism and allegations of irrationality. The seeming intractability of this conflict and the triumphant progress of the empirical sciences, is perhaps the best explanation for the consistent lack of interest in, even hostility to, theological discourse within the modern philosophical world, with the exception of dedicated theological colleges and seminaries. Strawson opens his discussion of Kant’s concept of God with an expression of distaste.

It is with very moderate enthusiasm that a twentieth-century philosopher enters the field of philosophical theology, even to follow Kant’s exposure of its illusions. (Strawson 1966 207)

Strawson may be speaking not only for himself but, generously, for philosophers as a whole. As well as indicating his animus to this topic, he also seems to imply that Kant aims solely to demonstrate the origin and nature of metaphysical illusion. There is no awareness of supplementary intent, and this lack of enthusiasm, if representative of the literature, may partly explain why Kant’s achievement in this area is largely neglected. Bennett, for example, in discussing Kant’s notion of the soul as expressed in the *Dialectic*, demonstrates a similar aversion to the possibility that some religious purpose is involved.

We now start on the Dialectic… Its topic is the soul— i.e. one’s mind when considered independently of any beliefs about anything else whatsoever. In this use of ‘soul’, the word has no religious connotations. (Bennett 1974 66)

Such an unconditional dismissal of the religious possibilities of the *Dialectic* contrasts to the usage Kant has for the idea of soul in at least some of his writings. It is true that in another
context such an assessment would be appropriate. In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, for example, when Kant refers to soul, he means appearances only as they relate to self-awareness and internalised experience in general, and no religious content is implied. Today we would call this psychology, though Kant is adamant that no possible science exists in this field, thereby denying the possibility of psychology attaining scientific status through the employment of synthetic *a priori* principles (*Met. Found. Nat. Sci.* Friedman 2004 7). Only when these are combined with applied philosophy do we get the structure of natural science, among which Kant does not rank psychology. Considering its status at the time, this is understandable, though Kant also shows an awareness of the future possibilities open to psychology as an empirical science completely removed from metaphysics.

Empirical psychology must be entirely banned from metaphysics, and is already excluded by the idea of it. Nevertheless, in accord with the customary scholastic usage one must still concede it a little place…since it is not yet rich enough to compromise a subject on its own and yet it is too important for one to expel it entirely…It is thus merely a long-accepted foreigner, to whom one grants refuge for a while until it can establish its own domicile. (A849/B877)

This limitation in meaning and conceptualisation does not apply to Kant’s metaphysical writings. The discussion of the natural sciences in the *Metaphysical Foundations* differs in purpose from those of the *Critique*, with the consequence that no blanket definition of the meaning of soul or Bennett-like dismissal of its potential religious meaning in these varying contexts is adequate. Such misrepresentation has not gone entirely unnoticed. Buchdahl points out that in attempting to reconcile science and religion, the centrality of religious concepts and the ontology they occupy within the critical project is understated, and perhaps because of this, often misunderstood.

This notion of ‘new ontological dimensions’ lies at the very centre of the revolution in philosophy which Kant sought to bring about. It is a putative achievement which especially in respect of the religious side of Kant’s ideas has not received its due appreciation to this day…(Buchdahl 1992 317)

Buchdahl recognises both the centrality of theological concepts in Kant’s new worldview, and the consequent neglect. It is this centrality, and the consequences of its neglect, that we are to explore.
1.4 The Thematic Organisation of the *Critique*.

We need to look at the *Critique* in its broadest possible sense if we are to discern an overall picture of its structure, or to put it more precisely, whether or not a discernible and express thematic principle is at work. Paul Guyer, in writing the introduction for the *Cambridge Companion to Kant*, expresses the view that the *Critique* had specific ends, and that it fails to meet them.

… [the *Critique*] turned out not to be the complete foundation for both science and morality that Kant originally intended it to be… The agenda of this work is enormous but can be brought under two… headings… On the one hand, Kant aims to provide a general foundation for the laws of science, … On the other hand… we can at least coherently consider that at the deepest level we ourselves are free agents bound only by the laws of morality and not by the deterministic laws of nature. (Guyer 1992 12)

Now we may well dispute Guyer’s notion that the *Critique* contains only scientific and ethical themes considered in isolation from the religious implications of the study. The *Analytic*, which he designates as Kant’s theory of understanding, is seen as an argument for the existence of the *a priori* concepts of pure understanding, or categories, and the *a priori* principles of judgement, both of which are necessary for thinking about objects. Guyer also discusses the *Dialectic* in terms of Kant’s attack on the doctrines of traditional metaphysics, and the positing of a non-sensible world.

… we can at least coherently consider that the realm of things in themselves lying behind the appearances of the empirical world not only contains a necessary being but, more important, contains free and not merely determined actions. (Guyer op.cit.16)

For Guyer, in this discussion at least, that is what the *Critique* concerns. He clearly considers theological issues, including the nature of God, as secondary to the ethical content. He does not mention the *Doctrine of Method*, which is strange in light of Kant’s designating it as part II of the first *Critique*, having similar status to the rest. He also seems to believe that Kant postulates a hidden second world in order to sustain his arguments.

This neglect of the latter part of the *Critique* is quite typical. Sebastian Gardner, as another example, provides a diagram of the *Critique*’s structure in horizontal terms, and an examination of his summary will show how mistakes occur, especially if we see this as
exemplifying the orthodox and accepted line on the subject. It should be noted that Gardner modifies this initial representation in the concluding chapters of his 1999 opus. We need not pursue the reasons for this, though it is interesting to compare his two versions concerning the role played by the Dialectic and the Doctrine of Method, especially that section called Canon of Pure Reason. What follows is Gardner’s initial illustration of the Critique’s structure (Gardner 1999 25).

One notable aspect of Gardner’s diagram is its non-linearity. It seems the three main components (Aesthetic, Analytic, and Dialectic) are of equal significance and stand alone in terms of their function. There is, seemingly, no overall conclusion, merely a set of ‘conclusions’. He presents three main divisions of the Critique which each ‘…correspond[s] to a different cognitive power or faculty, and a different area of presumptive knowledge’ (Gardner 1999 25). The Doctrine of Method appears as an appendage with no integral involvement in the story.

The Aesthetic is concerned with…the power of sensibility, and with mathematics, inclusive of geometry…The Analytic is concerned with the power of understanding, and with the metaphysics of experience and natural science.

The Dialectic is concerned with the power of reason (here used in a narrower sense than in the title of the Critique), and with transcendent metaphysics, which divides into three bodies of doctrine: the metaphysics of the soul, (rational psychology), of the world as a whole, (rational cosmology) and of God (rational theology). (Gardner 1999 26)
These descriptions are perhaps adequate as brief summaries, but the positioning and assessment of the *Dialectic* and the *Doctrine of Method* that follows is open to question.

The other — much shorter — official division of the work, the ‘Transcendental Doctrine of Method’, supplements the epistemological and metaphysical argument of the *Critique* with reflections on its methodology. It also includes a section called ‘The Canon of Pure Reason’, which contains important pointers to the rest of Kant’s Critical system.

The organization of the *Critique* can be grasped more clearly in the light of the conclusions that Kant comes to in the work. The real division is between, on the one hand, the Aesthetic and Analytic, which are jointly concerned with knowable objects, and on the other, the Dialectic, which is concerned with (concepts of) objects that cannot be known. The Aesthetic and Analytic are positive: they seek to prove that we can have knowledge of those things which we can experience . . .

The Dialectic is negative: it seeks to prove that we cannot have knowledge of anything at all outside experience. It denies legitimacy to the other kind of metaphysics — transcendental metaphysics. (Gardner 1999 25-6)

We may note Gardner’s idea that the three divisions, (*Aesthetic, Analytic, Dialectic*) each correspond to a different area or form of knowledge. This is correct as far as it goes, since the Aesthetic does spell out the nature of inner and outer sensibility, the Analytic does show us a picture of the understanding at work with the materials provided by sense (the ordering and theorising undertaken by scientific investigation and so on), and finally the operations of reason and the illusions with which it deals as defined in the Dialectic. What is missing is a sense of process. There is little awareness of structural flow here, ignoring Kant’s metaphors referring to distillation, purification, journeying, building and so on. It seems to be Gardner’s opinion that the ‘pure reason’ of the work’s title is not the same ‘pure reason’ dealt with in the Dialectic and the Doctrine of Method. His assessment of the Doctrine of Method is one of dismissal. It merely ‘…supplements the epistemological and metaphysical arguments of the Critique with reflections on its methodology’ (Gardner loc. cit.). He also expresses the idea that the Canon of Pure Reason is a mere auxiliary which only ‘contains important pointers’ for Kant’s later writings, and is not integral to the Critique at all.

We may perceive a change in Gardner’s appraisal when he comes to consider the latter parts of the Critique in detail. We detect this in the penultimate chapter entitled *The Complete Critical System (The Canon of Pure Reason).*
…for all that Kant has achieved by the end of the Dialectic, the problem of metaphysics remains in a crucial respect unsolved…The original problem was…that…metaphysical knowledge is at once a deep need of human reason…and presupposed by morality and the rationality of cognition. But Kant has yet to solve the remaining conflict between the impossibility of knowledge of a supersensible reality proven in the Dialectic, and the need for transcendent metaphysics…Since the motivation for Kant’s philosophy was at the very outset bound up in this way with the fate of morality, transcendental philosophy is not secure until it has settled the conflict of morality — and religion — with the scientific world-view. (Gardner 1999 307-8)

In this, we observe Gardner’s change of mind concerning the importance of the latter chapters of the Critique. He now acknowledges that the Dialectic is not the end of the work, and that the Doctrine of Method contains the moral conclusions Kant had anticipated from the outset. Significantly, he includes religion, though as an afterthought. Perhaps this exemplifies what happens when the entire work is read rather than bits of it, providing a picture of its overall direction. Therefore, based on Gardner’s later insights, an alternative, vertical depiction of the Critique might look something like the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critique of Pure Reason.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transcendental Doctrine of Elements.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Part I.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sensibility and its Limits.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Establishes the ideality of time and space.</td>
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<th>Part II.</th>
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<td>Analytic</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delineates the structure and limits of theoretical reasoning, including the use and validity of a-priori propositions.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dialectic,</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misunderstanding.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illustrates the errors, contradictions, and fallacies that occur when reason overreaches itself.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pure Reason.</th>
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| Describes the legitimacy, necessity and practical usefulness of the employment of the only two possible final and distilled practical ideas of Pure Reason (Soul and God). |

We should note here that when defining the Dialectic in the above box as illustrating ‘…the fallacies that occur when reason overreaches itself…’, I do not mean to be understood as
saying that the *Dialectic* itself overreaches reason, rather, that it analyses how such errors are possible. Also, the absence of freedom from the taxonomy of practical ideas is in keeping with Kant’s decision to more fully explore the role of freedom for a later writing, and in so doing restrict the *Canon of Pure Reason* in the first *Critique* to refer only to God and the possibility of a future life. (A803-B831) As such, the *Canon* is the legitimate application of practical reason alone, with no reference to speculative reason.

Now all synthetic knowledge through pure reason in its speculative employment is, as has been shown by the proofs given, completely impossible. There is therefore no canon of its speculative employment; such employment is entirely dialectical. All transcendental logic is, in this respect, simply a discipline. Consequently, if there be any correct employment of pure reason, in which case there must be a canon of its employment, the canon will deal not with the speculative but with the practical employment of reason. (A797/B823)

Pure speculative reason has no legitimate employment as far as synthetic knowledge is concerned. Only in its practical form is pure reason correctly employed, and the canon of that employment is “…the sum-total of the *a priori* principles of the correct employment of certain faculties of knowledge,” (A796/B824)

Freedom is listed as one of the three transcendental propositions with which speculative reason has interest, and we would expect to find it in a Canon of pure reason. (A798/B826) The problem is that Kant defines the practical as everything which is possible for us through freedom, and since freedom can have only pragmatic employment within the conditioned, it does not as a concept meet the strictly *a priori* criteria needed for inclusion in the *Canon*.

In this field, therefore, reason can supply none but pragmatic laws of free action, for the attainment of those ends which are commended to us by the senses; it cannot yield us laws that are pure and determined completely *a priori*. Laws of this latter type, pure practical laws, whose end is given through reason completely *a priori*, and which are prescribed to us not in an empirically conditioned but in an absolute manner, would be products of pure reason. Such are the moral laws; and these alone, therefore, belong to the practical employment of reason, and allow of a canon. (A800/B828)

The problem of freedom remains unresolved, but it does not fall within the province of pure practical reason, as Kant indicates at A803/B832, and is not included in the *Canon of Pure Reason*, which can include only pure *a priori* concepts. The reasons for doing this derive solely from the assessment that freedom, as a concept, is outside the mandate of pure reason.
because of its *a posteriori* or empirically conditioned content. (A800/B828) He concludes, “The question of transcendental freedom is a matter for speculative knowledge only, and when we are dealing with the practical, we can leave it aside as being an issue with which we have no concern”. (A804/B832)

This layout of the *Critique*’s components mirrors the sequential order of the work and is therefore more likely to reflect the author’s meaning. It provides the potential for a much greater level of coherence, interest, and significance in Kant’s ideas than the sterile, sectional, orthodox and incomplete descriptions exemplified in the writings of Bennett, Strawson and others. Here we find a thematic thread that has been all but lost, beginning with the delineation of human capacities regarding experience, the reaffirmation of empiricist insights concerning the limits of knowledge, the destruction of rationalist metaphysical pretensions, and concluding with the possibility of attaining a set of rational moral and religious beliefs through practical inferences.

1.5 Reassessing the *Critique*.

We have attempted to discover a thematic and central theme in the first *Critique*, and at this point a detailed though brief reconstruction of the thematic trajectory we have proposed seems appropriate. The task is to demonstrate the presence of a practical subject matter within the first *Critique*, and for the purposes of this discussion we now probe Kant’s meaning of the terms ‘metaphysics’ and ‘pure reason’. These are undoubtedly closely related, but we must explain their relationship. We have taken the view that for whatever reason, Kant is often reluctant to indicate the direction of his arguments. We find examples of this in the prefaces. Consider the opening words of the *Preface to the First Edition*.

> Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer. (Avii)

What is the species of knowledge referred to here, and what are the questions? Kant answers by saying ‘The battlefield of these endless controversies is called metaphysics’ (A viii). He clearly holds this subject in some esteem, referring to it with feminine personification; she is for example ‘…a matron outcast and forsaken …’ (Aviii). Despite her fall from grace, Kant
also says metaphysics is still with us, and we cannot treat her with indifference. Reason demands answers of a certain type unique to the questions of metaphysics, and her status may be restored by examining the nature of reason itself. He wants a ‘…a tribunal which will assure to reason its lawful claims. . ’ (Axii) At this point we are given no clear definition of what the term ‘metaphysics’ means, and we find here, at the very beginning of the text, that lack of definition so often found in the work. Perhaps Kant expects his reader to know that he means the Leibniz-Wolffian definition of metaphysics.

Kant does give us various clues to the nature of metaphysics as the text advances. The preface to the B text is more forthcoming, as we would expect in light of the criticisms behind his re-write. He tells us that ‘Metaphysics is a completely isolated speculative science of reason, which soars far above the teachings of experience, and in which reason is indeed meant to be its own pupil .’ (B xiv). This is of interest to us, since we can now understand Kant to be talking about an autodidactic something unrelated to experience.

Metaphysics…is…a quite indispensable science, and ought to contain a priori synthetic knowledge…its business is to extend our a priori knowledge…Thus metaphysics consists, at least in intention, entirely of a priori synthetic propositions. (B18 Italics in original)

If metaphysics as a science contains or ought to contain only a priori/synthetic propositions, what kind of knowledge is it? It cannot be or include geometry or mathematics, since, even though Kant believes that mathematics in general consists of synthetic/a priori propositions, his other comments rule it out.

But the fundamental idea of metaphysics was obscured on yet another side, owing to its exhibiting, as a priori knowledge, a certain similarity to mathematics. Certainly they are related, in so far as they both have an a priori origin; but when we bear in mind the difference between philosophical and mathematical knowledge, namely, that the one is derived from concepts, whereas in the other we arrive at a priori judgements only through the construction of concepts, we have to recognise a decided difference of kind… (B872)

Nor, of course, is it an empirical science, precluded because of its empirical content. Perhaps it is morality, since we know there is a close link between the Critique and the moral law. Indeed, Kant believes that the limit placed on reason by critical philosophy makes morality secure in a way that nothing else does.
...it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason, nay
threatens to destroy it, and it has in reality a positive and very important use. At least this is so, immediately
we are convinced that there is an absolutely necessary practical employment of pure reason—the moral—in
which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility. (Bxxiv-xxv)

It seems we are to have a rational philosophy of morality informed solely by and through
practical reason, and it is the primary but not the ultimate purpose of critique to delineate the
limits of theoretical reason in such a way that it poses no threat to this metaphysics. When
talking about the first Critique, we may look upon the justification of practical reason,
expressed as pure moral reason, as being one of the main aims of the exercise. On this
account, what occurs in the Analytic is a means to this end, and any discussion restricted to
the Analytic and disregarding this element, necessarily limits itself in any discussion of one of
the significant purposes Kant has for his work.

We have learned that metaphysics is by nature non-empirical, independent of experience, and
composed of synthetic/a priori propositions. It is not mathematics, science, or morals. But
what is it? What IS metaphysics in this context, and how does it differ from what it has been
in the past? Kant continues to discuss this subject indirectly.

Yet, in a certain sense, this kind of knowledge is to be looked upon as given; that is to say, metaphysics
actually exists, if not as a science, yet still as natural disposition (metaphysica naturalis). For human reason,
without being moved merely by the idle desire for extent and variety of knowledge, proceeds impetuously,
driven on by an inward need, to questions such as cannot be answered by any empirical employment of
reason, or by principles thence derived. Thus in all men, as soon as their reason has become ripe for
speculation, there has always existed and will always continue to exist some kind of metaphysics. (B21)

Here Kant first raises the question of the status and ubiquity of this form of metaphysics. He
says ‘...all men...', meaning everybody, every human being, as soon as they become capable
of this kind of reflection, undertake metaphysics. Clearly, he does not think that this study
should be available only to philosophers, academics, students of theology and the like. Kant
sees metaphysics as that speculation undertaken by all thinking human beings, and this, by
implication, includes common, everyday religious responses encompassing belief in God and
immortality. Thus, Bennett’s remark that Kant’s discussion of soul in the Dialectic has no
religious connotations clearly misses the point. Nor is Kant’s expression of the proper object
of metaphysics the last word on this subject. The conclusion to *The Canon of Pure Reason* reduces metaphysics, insofar as it involves pure practical reason, to two ideas only, God and soul. Freedom, meaning practical or moral freedom, has been deleted for the reason outlined above, that is, its empirical and normative content. Here he draws what must be an authoritative and convincing conclusion concerning the nature of the metaphysics he has been discussing from the first sentence of the work.

But, it will be said, is this all that pure reason achieves in opening up prospects beyond the limits of experience? Nothing more than two articles of belief? Surely the common understanding could have achieved as much, without appealing to philosophers for counsel in the matter. I shall not here dwell upon the service which philosophy has done to human reason through the laborious efforts of its criticism, granting even that in the end it should turn out to be merely negative; something more will be said on this point in the next section. But I may at once reply: Do you really require that a mode of knowledge which concerns all men should transcend the common understanding, and should only be revealed to you by philosophers? Precisely what you find fault with is the best confirmation of the correctness of the above assertions. For we have thereby revealed to us, what could not at the start have been foreseen, namely, that in matters which concern all men without distinction nature is not guilty of any partial distribution of her gifts, and that in regard to the essential ends of human nature the highest philosophy cannot advance further than is possible under the guidance which nature has bestowed even upon the most ordinary understanding. (B859)

Kant’s metaphysics reduces to exactly those ideas universally created by reason in the minds of reasonable human beings. The assumption of universality here is categorical, and may be open to debate, though we will leave this contention for the moment.

1.6 Theoretical and Practical Reason.

Kant refers variously to reason as speculative, theoretical, practical and pure, though these distinctions do not occur in the main body of the text prior to the *Dialectic*. Before that, as Gardner chronicles, reason is subsumed under the heading of cognitive or intellectual activity in its most discursive meaning.

…whereas earlier in the Critique the term reason is used to mean simply the intellectual faculty as a whole, and so to include the understanding, the two are now sharply differentiated. In the *Dialectic* reason refers to an independent conceptual faculty whose primary function is to engage in reasoning of a special type, namely ‘mediate’ or syllogistic inference... Syllogistic reasoning is concerned with the general conditions under which one piece of knowledge follows from another... (Gardner 1999 216-217)
It is striking that in a text devoted to pure reason, Kant attempts little definition of his major theme in the main body of the text until midway through it. Apart from passing references, for example at A83/B109, B121, A89, B167 and A204, he presumes his reader’s sufficient familiarity with the notion of pure reason as expressed in the *Prefaces* and *Introductions*, and even there he divulges little until the B edition. This belated uncovering of something so fundamental is characteristic of Kant’s delivery concerning other important concepts and is an important topic in itself. For our purposes, these various forms or uses of reason stand in need of analysis concerning their source, whether they are different faculties, or a singular reason able to operate in various modes. Our primary interest lies in the relationship between theoretical and practical reason, the latter defined as the capacity for deciding, through reason, what one is to do. Within the Kantian context, we are specifically interested in normative decision-making, and more specifically, how the individual mind is able to act freely in doing this. Unlike theoretical reason’s ability to resolve and explain factual matters, practical reason attempts to make decisions about, and assessments of, personal volitional activities, past, present and future.

Transcendental Idealism claims to distinguish its worldview from that of more conventional and traditional metaphysics by differentiating the positioning of time and space through the relationship between mind and the external ‘objects’ to which it responds and represents to itself. It creates an entirely different and vacuous depiction of those ‘objects’. They are not experienced as they are in themselves, and their representations, which have no discernable relationship to them, are not mediated by the senses. They can only be experienced as cognitions within the space/time matrix, which as perceptions occur only within the perceiving mind. The original non-empirical stimuli remain unknown in all possible ways including their ontological status, the question of which loses all meaning as far as theoretical reason is concerned.

Failure to separate that which can only be thought from that which is actual or experienced, in this case distinguishing the transcendental positioning of mind as thing in itself from the empirical commitments to selfhood of competing metaphysics and everyday experience, results in the syllogistic invalidity of the *Paralogisms* and the conflicting conclusions of the *Antinomies*. Kant presents the difficulties created by the *Paralogisms* and the contradictions of the first two *Antinomies*, those involving mathematical concepts, as indirect proof of the
validity of his own doctrines. This relies on the strict demarcation of the internal mental positioning of objects of experience from the externalist doctrines of others such as Locke and Descartes, that is, the ultimate idealism he advocates. Consequently, in order to understand Kant’s thought we must be careful when reading him not only to distinguish transcendental from empirical objects, but also from the limitations of inferential reasoning concerning them. For Kant, theoretical reason is permitted positive reference to those appearances which intuition provides, using concepts derived from the understanding. These natural and positive transcendental concepts form the a priori formal component of experience, and contrast starkly with theoretical reason’s incapacity to claim cognition of or draw inferences relating to non-actualised concepts such as God and the soul. On the other hand, he gives license for practical reason to discuss the latter much more fully as ideas, and the first step in this direction is the truncation of theoretical reason’s jurisdiction and the repositing of the viewpoint from which assessments are made within transcendental reflection.

To expand on Kant’s extended Copernican metaphor, we are able to avoid dialectical error using much the same strategy through which we gain astronomical insight. He achieves a similar metaphysical repositioning by removing the conscious mind and its faculty of reason, created as a concept of pure reason by reason itself, from the confines of time and space. Consequently, ‘Pure reason, as a purely intelligible faculty, is not subject to the form of time, nor consequently to the conditions of succession in time’ (A551/B579). Reason is able to act independently of temporal influence. We find the same idea given its transcendental expression shortly after this, when Kant says, ‘…reason itself is not an appearance, and is not subject to the conditions of sensibility…’ (A553/B581).

The reference to the limitations of sensibility means that noumenal influence has no affect on reason. Accordingly, reason is able to act spontaneously and independently of the influence of other things in themselves. Since pure reason is not only free but is itself intelligible, so also is that which thinks. The ‘I’ in the ‘I think’, that which thinks, and by thinking, reasons, must regard itself as a unified and free individual something, though only as an idea, in order to attain a unity experienced only through the ascription of thought to that unity. To put it simply, the mind experiences unity of thought through the thought of unity. This thought is experienced and expressed as the idea of soul or transcendental subject, and is distinct from
the experience of self through inner sense. If this noumenal self is objectified, it becomes speculative and therefore dialectical.

…reason cannot think…systematic unity in any other way than by giving its idea an object, which, however, cannot be given through any experience…Now this being of reason (ens rationis ratiocinatae) is, to be sure, a mere idea…

The first object (Objekt) of such an idea is I myself, considered merely as thinking nature (soul).

(A682/B710)

We have noted that understood through its Copernican analogy, the transcendental strategy begins by repositioning the observer to an alternative intellectually possible and physically inaccessible location. In making such a leap metaphysically, Kant is in no way objectifying or making ontological claims about the occupier of this position or its whereabouts. We know the difficulties involved in trying to explain planetary motions on the assumption that the Earth occupies a centralised locus within the solar system. To combat this, the hypothetical or theoretical position needs to be different from what is immediately apparent, and form a justified basis in observations derived from the exercise of both imagination and reason. The justification for this is a new set of postulates that are both internally coherent and able to explain more fully the initial observation. Because of this latter requirement, we come to realise that complete isolation of the viewpoints is neither possible nor desirable, since the Copernican outlook, once achieved, forever changes our everyday perspective on the universe and our position in it. While the terrestrial experience remains constant, the enlightened astronomical observer knows that the immediate perception is not the full story, and stands in constant need of revision. This perennial correction of experience soon becomes second nature and we forget any outrage the new theory initially incurred.

The same need for revision applies to the metaphysics of everyday experience and the relationship it portrays between the conscious mind and its perceptions as amended by Transcendental Idealism. Kant describes how we fall into intellectual error in various ways, such as attempting to make knowledge claims not supported by experience, or creating insuperable epistemic and ontological problems by treating experienced objects as things in themselves. The hallmark of such error is the employment of theoretical reason in such a way that it goes beyond experience and becomes speculative. These proclivities may be
counteracted, though never completely removed, by an awareness of the critical perspective and the adoption of a Kantian agnosticism concerning the supersensible. This curb on the aspirations of theoretical reason gives a vacant field of play for practical reason in its creation of the metaphysical ideas. Even so, unless we at all times distinguish the world-view expressed by Transcendental Idealism from immediate observation, we find fruitful sources of dialectical illusion. The problem with this is similar to that faced by the astronomer, who can never finally separate the immediately observed from what really is the case, but must synthesis these into a coherent overall outlook.

The Copernican analogy breaks down at this point, since it is not only necessary but possible to imaginatively reposition one’s point of view to an extraterrestrial empirical locus in order to attain a corrected perception of the Solar System. In the case of Transcendental Idealism, this is not possible, since there is no physical or spatio/temporal location to which we can move, even in imagination. Kant is aware of the limitations of his metaphor, and rejects any possibility of equating *mundus intelligibilis* with any physical relocation or theory, a practice he finds in his German contemporaries (B312n). Consequently, the Copernican metaphor can only be taken so far, and treated as an informative if imperfect analogy since it is restricted in content to the actual. At the same time, it is clearly Kant’s idea that we occupy a noumenal location or point of view by default at all times of consciousness, in that the conscious mind looks into and contains the natural world of representations. This consciousness is unitary and singular, and is aware not only of contingent and accidental representations as content, but also of the *a priori* synthetic and necessary formal structures of experience, along with the concepts which express them, whether these be theoretical or, as in the case of the moral law, practical. Since such ideas and their utterances cannot derive from the understanding, or be inferred by theoretical reason, some other faculty must be in play, and that, by default, is practical reason. Since theoretical reason can deal only with experience, we face the problem of understanding how these two faculties work together in harness.

The problem of making transcendental theory compatible with experience will follow us through all the discussions in this and later chapters. The aim is to resolve it in the various terms in which it finds expression, such as the apparent incompatibility between the conditioned nature of the world and the freedom for which Kant advocates a practical necessity, the conflicting properties of empirical and intelligible character, and the problem of making compatible a world-view expressing opinions about the relationship between things
in themselves and representations. In discussing these topics, we have to deal first with the added complexity that Kant’s views are not always easily grasped, and the fact that he develops them as he writes and changes his mind about the positioning of some significant themes. Whatever the reason for some changing emphases within critical thought as it unfolds, we have arrived at a significant stage in our investigations, for we have now identified a significant theme with a continuing and growing presence in the exposition. This is the possibility of using practical reason to fulfil the otherwise speculative and dialectical aims of theoretical reason.

1.7 Kant’s Developed View of Practical Reason.

Our next task is that of exploring the role of practical reason within the first Critique. We have seen that Transcendental Idealism results in a worldview lacking epistemic totality, and the purpose of the Analytic, the disciplining of theoretical reason, once achieved, forever alters the manner in which the enlightened mind addresses and responds to its environment in toto, since no absolute knowledge claims are available to it. There is however, a complicating factor here. So far, we have discussed the propensity of untutored reason to fall into dialectical error, and its corrective, the transcendental perspective. This latter is not singular in its outlook. Rather, it is a combination of the employment of theoretical reason, which deals legitimately with the synthetic a priori content of experienced regularities, and practical reason, which in its pure form deals with the a priori content of moral experience and ethical deliberations. Each of these arrives at quite differing points of view concerning the world and our knowledge of it. Our difficulty in understanding these rational functions lies in the way in which Kant combines them.

One of the problems is the tension between the worldview of theoretical reason and that of pure practical or normative reasoning. We find an example of this when Kant attempts the move from the theoretical to the practical in the First Paralogism.

Consciousness is, indeed, that which alone makes all representations to be thoughts, and in it, therefore, as the transcendental subject, all our perceptions must be found; but beyond this logical meaning of the ‘I’, we have no knowledge of the subject in itself, which as substratum underlies this ‘I’, as it does all thoughts. The proposition, ‘The soul is substance’, however, may well be allowed to stand, if only it be recognised that this concept [of the soul as substance] does not carry us a single step further, and so cannot yield us any
of the usual deductions of the pseudo-rational doctrine of the soul, as, for instance, the everlasting duration of the human soul in all changes and even in death—if, that is to say, we recognise that this concept signifies a substance only in the idea, not in reality. (A350-51)

Here we see Kant’s methodology at work, one that carries over into his religious writings. What is permissible in ‘the idea’ is quite different from that allowed of epistemic claims in concreto. We cannot know if the soul is immortal, or if it even exists, but this very ignorance allows the possibility to think, hope and believe that it is so. In his introduction of the ideas as transcendental concepts of reason, Kant hints that ‘…perhaps the ideas make possible a transition from concepts of nature to the practical, and themselves generate support for the moral ideas and connection with the speculative cognitions of reason’ (A329/B386). In this we find the paradox. On the one hand, he needs consistently and energetically to distinguish between the two modes of reason, keeping them apart while also excluding mundane empirical content from each in their pure form as they relate to the a priori. At the same time, he faces the necessity of interpreting and synthesising the totality of experience under their combined influence, since ultimately there is only one reason and one mind. It should not be surprising that this juggling act is difficult for both Kant to maintain and his readership to follow. One of the tasks of Transcendental Idealism is to give us the criteria necessary to distinguish between that which can be experienced and dealt with by theoretical reason, and that which is by default left to practical reason. This tension is particularly keen when it involves morality, freedom, and the ideas of pure practical reason. Kant’s positioning of his rational components is difficult to follow, and something that he works his way through in the first Critique, but which only reaches a level of finality in the second. This difficulty is reflected in the mountain of literature Kant’s ideas have inspired, and we now have an idea of its origin. Transcendental philosophy is some points a work in progress and Kant is taking his exposition one step at a time. Unless this is kept in mind the temptation to make dogmatic assertions concerning it based on selected passages is always present, and is bound to create unnecessarially polemical points of view and unresolvable disputes.

For Kant, reason’s logical capacity is ‘…the power to infer…’ (A330). Elsewhere, after expressing some difficulty with definition, he refers to it as the ‘faculty of principles’ (B356). A principle in the metaphysical context refers to established a priori judgements, both analytic and synthetic, which includes time and space as conditions of the possibility of appearances, and the categories. Such principles are derived neither from experience nor from
other universal judgments. They can only be established transcendentally, that is, through ‘... a proof from the subjective sources of the possibility of knowledge of an object in general...’ (A149).

Cognition through principles reverses the mathematical process of deriving the universal from the particular, and, through syllogistic reasoning, begins with a universal *a priori* synthetic proposition or principle, from which a particular cognition is derived.

I would therefore call a ‘cognition from principles’ that cognition in which I cognise the particular in the universal through concepts. Thus every syllogism is a form of derivation of a cognition from a principle. For the major premise always gives a concept such that everything subsumed under its condition can be cognised from it according to a principle. Now since every universal cognition can serve as the major premise in a syllogism, and since the understanding yields such universal propositions, these propositions can, in respect of their possible use, be called principles. (B 357)

These universal propositions, as principles of pure understanding, can never be derived from experience because reason has no access to experience or to any object (*Gegenstand*) (B359). The relationship seems to be one of extension, which promotes the understanding’s universal claims into postulates (or principles), which by their nature are universal in ambit and thereby become the property and province of pure reason. The purpose of this activity is the ascension through the conditioned to the unconditioned to provide, not the unity of possible experience, but the unity of the faculty of reason itself. It can do this by determining the particular in the universal, though here in the introduction to the *Dialectic* Kant is not yet in a position to voice this clearly.

Theoretical reason is employed in the investigation of natural *a priori* laws, that is, the field to which it restricts itself in its disciplined application, whereas the practical concerns what ought to be.

For the purposes of this enquiry, theoretical knowledge may be defined as knowledge of what is, practical knowledge as the representation of what ought to be. On this definition, the theoretical employment of reason is that by which I know *a priori* (as necessary) that something is, and the practical that by which it is known *a priori* what ought to happen. (A 633/B661)
In its employment through mathematics, geometry, the sciences and synthetic \textit{a priori} thought in general, theoretical reason concerns the synthetic \textit{a priori} components of experience, which, while they cannot be experienced as objects, are nevertheless justifiable claims to knowledge about nature. When it moves beyond this, it becomes speculative.

Theoretical knowledge is speculative if it concerns an object, or those concepts of an object, which cannot be reached in any experience. It is so named to distinguish it from the knowledge of nature, which concerns only those objects or predicates of objects, which can be given in a possible experience. (A633/B661)

Where theoretical reason cannot legitimately go, practical reason can and must, through its demand for the possibility of happiness defined as the coincidence of the will with the course of events in the world, and involves the discovery and personal legislation of the moral law as a maxim. Obedience to this law is necessary but not sufficient for happiness, and it is the task and the duty of the individual to undertake such discoveries with the aim of achieving happiness for the individual and the \textit{summun bonum}, while simultaneously preserving the natural order as discovered by theoretical reason. Such a law cannot be arrived at through the study of nature alone, but must transcend nature while acting within it.

For reason is then located in its own peculiar sphere, namely, the order of ends, which is also at the same time an order of nature; and since it is in itself not only a theoretical but also a practical faculty, and as such is not bound down to natural conditions, it is justified in extending the order of ends, and therewith our own existence, beyond the limits of experience and of life. (B425)

Freedom, as the \textit{a priori} condition of morality, derives from the employment of pure practical reason, and involves a consideration of the rational exercise involved in attaining the personal worth necessary for happiness. The discovery of practical reason itself, along with the ability to exercise it, is a necessary precursor to this. On this basis, we cannot accept that the first \textit{Critique} is concerned only with theoretical reason and its tendency for distortion and illusion, for what then are we to make of the quite detailed and specific material we find therein relating to practical reason. Consequently, we derive a picture of theoretical reasoning in its disciplined functioning running parallel with and subservient to practical reason and its ideas as concepts.

Practical reason has to do with ideas, and is able to create its objects through freedom. The implications of this proposition are easily overlooked, and something we will pursue. Briefly,
I take Kant to mean that the scientific employment of practical reason through the influence of moral law allows us to act in accordance with it to create harmony and pattern in the world, similar to our obedience of natural law. The difference between natural and practical law is that the former is beyond our control, being grounded in other things in themselves, and can only be determined through investigation. By employing practical ideas through freedom, on the other hand, the individual mind, as a thing in itself, is able to act upon the world and change it for the better or worse, or, as Kant puts it, make the object actual.

Kant does not open discussion of the ideas until the Dialectic, defining them as concepts of pure reason after introducing them just prior to opening Section I of the first book of the Dialectic.

Meantime, just as we have entitled the pure concepts of understanding categories, so we shall give a new name to the concepts of pure reason, calling them transcendental ideas. (B368)

For Kant the terms ‘categories’ and ‘ideas’ are collective nouns relating to the necessary structures he is discussing. Necessity in the context of ideas means that the proper functioning of the intellectual faculties is impossible without them.

By an idea I mean a necessary concept of reason for which no congruent objects (Gegenstände) can be given in the senses. Therefore the pure concepts of reason, which we are now examining, are transcendental ideas. They are concepts of pure reason in that they consider all experiential cognition as being determined through an absolute totality of conditions. They are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding. (A327)

The categories govern the behaviour of Gegenstände of the senses, while the ideas refer to intelligible non-empirical Gegenstände. Another difference between ideas and categories lies in their relationship to actuality, within which the ideas can never appear as representations, though they share necessity and are both transcendental. It is clear that the categories apply a priori to representations, and in his later writings Kant applies this a priori status to one idea only, that of freedom, telling us that ‘Freedom…is the only one of all the ideas of speculative reason of which we know the possibility a priori’ (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Abbott 1996 14).
In the absence of freedom, we can have no justification for denying that the relationship between noumena and the transcendental subject is one of simple reactivity, or that the representations so derived are established through a pre-ordained harmony. Neither of these states of affairs is compatible with Transcendental Idealism. More importantly and perhaps paradoxically, as well as providing for the possibility of genuine spontaneity, freedom must be known a priori to maintain any credibility in asserting the autonomy of the will. In each of these examples of the supersensible, theoretical reason can have no active or immediate involvement. Since it is restricted to considerations of what is, the only possible candidate with the capacity to legislate concerning what ought to be is practical reason. From this we are able to infer that the first Critique is a product, not of theoretical reason, which is disciplined therein, but of a supreme pure practical reason itself, something Kant does not disclose until very late in the first Critique. Since, as is demonstrated in the Canon of Pure Reason, pure practical reason alone is qualified to deal with the supersensible through the ideas, my contention that the Critique as a whole has a primary practical intent is endorsed. Theoretical reason cannot think or write the Critique because of the limitations placed upon it. Further, since it is restricted to considerations derived from the understanding and its intuitions, it also cannot fulfil the functions demanded of pure reason in its full potential. It is unable to contemplate the necessary existence of the categories, the a priori, and things in themselves, since their necessity does not derive from experience. We are able to assert that practical reason attains a privileged and dominant position within and throughout the text, and only by accepting this state of affairs are we able to comprehend more completely both Kant’s thought and his methodology. Any other explanation, I contend, inevitably creates many of the intractable puzzles of comprehension with which the literature is replete.

At this point, we need to underline two sources of confusion concerning Kant’s adjectival references to reason. First, since the first Critique refers to pure reason in its title, we may be tempted to the idea that there is a corresponding impure reason. Kant does not use this term, but refers to reason as pure, practical, speculative, and empirical. This does not mean that these various modes are either synonymous or in any way a contradiction of the unity of reason. His main taxonomy of reason in general divides it into its theoretical or practical modes. For example, at B425, we find the assertion that reason ‘…is in itself not only a theoretical but also a practical faculty…’ The same division applies to reason in its pure form, which is defined as the attempt by reason to deal with concepts having no possibility of empirical employment, that is, the synthetic a priori concepts of metaphysics. The attempted
use of pure theoretical reason, that is reasoning about the \textit{a priori} concepts of metaphysics, results in the various forms of dialectical inference, (paralogisms, antinomies etc.), with their tendency to confuse and deceive, while in its empirical mode it is able to discover and assert synthetic \textit{a priori} propositions about the world which enables the progress of science.

On the other hand, reason in its pure practical usage is enabled to address issues forbidden to the theoretical mode, and is therefore both pure and licit. We have previously noted (on p.47) that Kant’s attitude to pure reason is that, as far as pure or metaphysical synthetic \textit{a priori} concepts are concerned, only the employment of practical reason is legitimate.

Consequently, if there be any correct employment of pure reason, in which case there must be a canon of its employment, the canon will deal not with the speculative but with the practical employment of reason. (A797/B823)

I can see no meaning in this other than the assertion that the practical employment of pure reason in this context only is ‘correct’. From this, we may infer that there is no ‘correct’ employment of pure theoretical or speculative reason. In its empirical form also, practical reason is legitimate, for who would say that deciding which bus to catch in order to arrive at work on time is illegitimate? It is based on the normative empirical maxim that one should or ought to be punctual. In other words, practical reason can never be impure, in the sense of being illegitimate, but only in terms of its empirically conditioned or \textit{a posteriori} content. In this way we find that the relationship between the differing modes of reason is neither symmetrical nor mutually complementary. Theoretical reason may attempt to deal with the purely \textit{a priori} as metaphysics, but is always therefore speculative and illegitimate, while it has legitimate employment in discovering the \textit{a priori} laws of the world of nature. Practical reason, on the other hand, is legitimate when dealing with both nature and metaphysics insofar as this involves the practical \textit{a priori} concepts of pure practical reason. Because of this extended capability, practical reason attains a superior position in Kant’s science of metaphysics.

A second confusion occurs concerning the division of labour between the first two \textit{Critiques}. Both forms of reason are discussed in detail in both, though the second \textit{Critique} relates more directly to practical reason. Consequently, it is easy to think that the two works demarcate the two modes. Höffe, for example tells us that ‘…the first \textit{Critique} could thus be named more exactly “\textit{Critique} of Pure Speculative Reason…”’ (Höffe 1994 31), quoting Bxxii as his
authority. The inadequacy of this assessment becomes evident when we note that in drawing up the *Canon of Pure Reason* Kant allows speculative reason no part, as evidenced above. At Bxxii, he indicates that the room made vacant by theoretical reason is to be available for occupancy by ‘practical data’, and repeatedly refers elsewhere to practical reason and its uses.

While the first Critique is intimately involved with the characteristics of both theoretical and practical reason, in the latter part of the work, in the Paralogisms of the B edition, for example, we find that since practical reason “… as such is not bound down to natural conditions, it is justified in extending the order of ends, and therewith our own existence, beyond the limits of experience and of life.’ (B425) This is one of the conclusions Kant foreshadows in his B preface, where he describes the difference he sees in the two main forms of reason, and which he consistently demarcates in both the first and second Critiques.

Propositions employing both theoretical and practical reason combine elements of the *a priori* and the empirical, and as we have seen, Kant is at pains to exclude empirical content from each when considered in their pure form. While he needs to separate the theoretical from the practical for analytical purposes, he must always resynthesise them because of pure reason’s demand for totality. This relationship is developed further in the *Canon*, where Kant equates the employment of pure reason with the practical.

Now according to the proofs that have previously been given, all synthetic cognition of pure reason in its speculative use is entirely impossible. There is thus no canon for its speculative use at all (for this is through and through dialectical); rather all transcendental logic is in this respect but a discipline. Consequently, if there is to be any legitimate use of pure reason at all, in which case there must also be canon of it, this will concern not the speculative but rather the practical use of reason. (A797/B825)

The *Canon of Pure Reason* can contain nothing relating to theoretical reason employed speculatively or otherwise, and is restricted to the operations of the practical, which is given considerable latitude. For example, expressions concerning the supersensible, such as positive references to soul and God, while forbidden to the theoretical, are permitted for the practical, which is allowed reference to these as ideas and to their predicates. We find Kant emphasising the role of practical reason, I suggest, because only then are the overall demands of pure reason for totality met through a metaphysics capable of fulfilling the series of conditions. Of necessity this also involves the theoretical, which, while it cannot discover or
discuss the supersensible, must acquiesce to the ideas inferred by the practical since there is, on Kant’s own account, ultimately only one reason, and this must be able to operate without internal contradiction. We begin to understand the relationship between the modes of reason through this assertion of rational singularity, and the necessity for reason to pursue its ends in a unified manner. This involves reason’s quest for happiness, and, on Kant’s account, while we cannot expect to attain happiness in this life, we are able to render ourselves worthy of it. We gain worth through the correct employment of pure practical reason which of necessity takes us beyond the limits of theoretical reason, but only through the utilisation of the ideas. In this we may find the key to understanding how Kant ties practical reason to the theoretical, since they must be of one mind and accept the same conclusions.

Clearly, Kant needs to make the transition from the limits of theoretical reason to the wider visions of pure practical reason if he is to fulfil what I take to be the overall practical and theological purpose of the first *Critique*, that is, the possibility of a reasoned belief in God, freedom and immortality. While pure speculative reason can only make dialectical positive claims to knowledge concerning the supersensible, it is also incapable of denying the possibility of the products of practical inferences. Kant again distinguishes between knowledge and thought. What can only be thought is not knowledge *in concreto*, though it may have ‘real’ possibility derived from the practical.

But when all progress in the field of the supersensible has thus been denied to speculative reason, it is still open to us to enquire whether, in the practical knowledge of reason, data may not be found sufficient to determine reason’s transcendent concept of the unconditioned, and so to enable us, in accordance with the wish of metaphysics, and by means of knowledge that is possible *a priori*, though only from a practical point of view, to pass beyond the limits of all possible experience. Speculative reason has thus at least made room for such an extension; and if it must at the same time leave it empty, yet none the less we are at liberty, indeed we are summoned, to take occupation of it, if we can, by practical data of reason. (Bxxi-xxii)

In this passage we find the justification for the inclusion of things in themselves in the exposition. This lies in the creation of an empty space able to be occupied by the practical ideas, and unless this function is included in any discussion of things in themselves, it must be ultimately deficient. Here also we find the idea of speculative and practical reason working in tandem, in that while pure practical reason is able to transcend speculative boundaries, theoretical reason is left to follow in acquiescence, accepting the legitimacy of excursions to which it is forbidden. In this way, and because of this ranking, there can be no
possibility of conflict within reason as a whole. This is the pivotal point around which Kant establishes his religious doctrines.

In the preface to the second edition, we are told that knowledge derived from theoretical reason is ‘…indeed limited to mere objects (Gegenstände) of experience’ (B xxvi). On the other hand, Kant says we must be able to ‘think’ ideas, which I am construing as a form of belief or assent. For example, he allows that we are in a position to ‘think’ freedom of the soul (B xxviii), and God (B xxix).

Because of this ability to ‘think’ ideas, and while theoretical reason concerns only what is, the limitations of sensibility do not apply to practical reason.

So far, therefore, as our Critique limits speculative reason, it is indeed negative; but since it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason, nay threatens to destroy it, it has in reality a positive and very important use. At least this is so, immediately we are convinced that there is a necessary practical employment of pure reason—the moral—in which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility. Though [practical] reason, in thus proceeding, requires no assistance from speculative reason, it must yet be assured against its opposition, that reason may not be brought into conflict with itself. (Bxxv)

We have noted Kant’s propensity to use concepts without fully identifying them until much later, as we discovered in the above examples concerning the thematic primacy of Practical Reason in the Canon, his definition of metaphysics, and the lack of analysis of reason itself prior to the Dialectic. Kant treats the identification of Transcendental Idealism in this way. Despite its implicit presence in the Aesthetic, it is not identified until the Fourth Paralogism of the First edition at A 369, and since he deletes this from the B edition, we find it next at B519, in section 6 of The Antinomy of Pure Reason.

The following definition occurs in the Fourth Paralogism.

By transcendental idealism I mean the doctrine that appearances are to be regarded as being, one and all, representations only, not things-in-themselves, and that time and space are therefore only sensible forms of our intuition, not determinations given as existing by themselves, nor conditions of objects viewed as things-in-themselves. (A 369)
Transcendental Idealism is belatedly linked specifically to the Aesthetic at A491/B519.

We have sufficiently proved in the Transcendental Aesthetic that everything intuited in space or time, and therefore all objects (Gegenstände) of any experience possible to us, are nothing but appearances, that is, mere representations, which, in the manner in which they are represented, as extended beings, or as series of alterations, have no independent existence outside our thoughts. This doctrine I entitle Transcendental Idealism.

This definition is needed to fully flesh out the implications of the Aesthetic, where Kant addresses the ideality of space and time as the a priori conditions of all appearances. A similar expression occurs within the Aesthetic lacking direct identification.

...all our intuition is nothing but the representation of appearance; that the things which we intuit are not in themselves what we intuit them as being, nor their relationships so constituted in themselves as they appear to us, and that if the subject, or even only the subjective constitution of the senses in general, be removed, the whole constitution and all the relations of objects in space and time, nay space and time themselves, would vanish. (A42)

To explain this we need to look at another example of concept anticipation. While we may accept that the above examples occur within the first Critique and the beginning of the second, we would still be surprised to find another not fully resolved until the end of the second Critique. In this later work, Kant considers practical reason and completes the transition (signalled in the closing sentence of the First Paralogism) across the limitations placed on theoretical reason concerning supersensible cognition of the postulates of God, freedom and immortality, which Kant now presents as necessary normative constructs of pure practical reason. The first Critique emphatically reins in the pretensions of the speculative use of reason concerning knowledge of non-empirical Gegenstände, that is, the supersensible, expressed as either ideas or things in themselves. Kant expresses this at many points, asserting, for example, ‘On a cursory view of the present work it may seem that its results are merely negative, warning us that we must never venture with speculative reason beyond the limits of experience. Such is in fact its primary use’ (B xxiv). By this, Kant means that any theoretical claim concerning the supersensible is illicit, even as it relates to their existence. Given that they are redundant for all purposes of speculative reason, we have asked how Kant justifies talking about them at all. The answer lies in the privileged position he gives to
practical reason, which I will argue provides the secondary and more important complement to the primary purpose just given.

Arguably, ‘primary use’ in this context does not relate to the importance of the subject matter so much as the chronological unfolding of the theory. I wish to argue that, perhaps without initially being aware of its necessity, Kant assumes the ascendancy of practical reason throughout the first two Critiques and beyond, although we have to wait until the Dialectic of the second Critique to find it explicitly asserted. In Section III, Of the Primacy of Pure Practical Reason in its Union with Speculative Reason, in the latter pages of this work, Kant belatedly reveals the point of view ultimately dominating the entire critical project.

By primacy between two or more things connected by reason, I understand the prerogative belonging to one, of being the first determining principle in the connection with all the rest…Reason, as the faculty of principles, determines the interest of all the powers of the mind, and is determined by its own. The interest of its speculative employment consists in the cognition of the object pushed to the highest a priori principles: that of its practical employment in the determination of the will in respect of the final and complete end…Thus when pure speculative and pure practical reason are combined in one cognition, the latter has primacy…For without this subordination there would arise a conflict of reason with itself. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Abbott 1996 145-7)

Here we learn that these two functions of reason operate competently only when not in conflict, and this requires the subordination of one to the other. By inference, without such subordination we may fall into both intellectual and moral error. Practical reason derives its supremacy from an awareness of the moral law, and the ability to freely create and will maxims based on it as an a priori normative principle owing nothing to taste or inclination. It has an active, creative, and purposive role to play, unlike the relative passivity of the theoretical, with its restricted role of discovery through experimentation and the unveiling of pre-existing states of affairs relating to a priori synthetic propositions expressed as mathematical equations and scientific natural laws. While theoretical reason must maintain an absolute agnosticism regarding the supersensible, practical reason demands, legislates and imposes certain practical a priori postulates, viz., the moral law, creating thereby the possibility for personal happiness, moral progress and the summum bonum as a necessary object of the will. The ability to do this is only possible through freedom, and this explains the unique position Kant gives it as an idea in the opening pages of the second Critique. This explanation illuminates and dominates the attitude Kant takes in the first Critique concerning
things in themselves. Indeed, unless one is able to deduce the supremacy of practical reason from within the insights made available in that first work, specifically in the *Dialectic*, it is difficult to see how the first *Critique* can be effectively comprehended.

In the *Prolegomena*, Kant says that despite the detrimental effects dialectical illusions and contradictions have on empirical investigations, their existence indicates that they must also have some positive role to play, if only to alert us to the possibility that there is more to the application of reason than a consideration of the empirical. While reason’s tendency to adopt materialism, self-sufficient naturalism and fatalism is illicit, the tendency to do so is partly justified since it has the teleological role of providing, through the ultimate inadequacy of such elements, a sufficient rationale for realising the possibility of moral considerations existing beyond the field of speculation (*Pr. to Any Fut. Met.* Tr. Hatfield 1997 117). Being beyond the scope of speculative reason, such considerations form only a scholium, that is, a secondary explanatory role within any treatise concerning the speculative, and Kant treats them as such in the *Prolegomena*. These conclusions shed much light on the matter dealt with in the previous writings, and would have been of considerable assistance had they been apparent when reading the early sections of the first *Critique*.

We have asked why Kant is slow to reveal in full the conceptual components of his work, or name them when he does so. It could be a deliberate strategy to move the reader’s mind from the known to the unknown by introducing and employing concepts that are only later fully identified, and Kant seems to indicate this at one point.

In a systematic presentation of those ideas the mentioned order would, as the synthetic order, be the most fitting. But in the treatment that must necessarily precede such systematic presentation the analytic order, which reverses the synthetic order, will be more appropriate for the purpose of carrying out our great plans—from what experience provides us with directly, viz., psychology, to cosmology, and from there up to theology. (B395n)

There is another possible explanation for this reticence concerning important details of the theory. We are attempting to explain why Kant delivers and employs partially expressed thematic components, revisiting them later, often much later, with a more explicit and helpful formulation. The possibility exists that because of both the radical and wide-ranging nature of his ideas combined with his eagerness to express them sooner rather than later, he is in the
position of working through them as he writes. We often find ideas clarified by the attempt to express them, and in Kant’s case the use of fundamental concepts, which are not identified until later may be not so much a case of conscious concept anticipation or concealment, as of concept development. To some degree, Kant may be naturally developing his ideas as his narrative unfolds. In this he is not being completely adventitious. He knows in general what the story is, and the content of the Aesthetic clearly illustrates his overall vision, though at what point that was composed is not clear. It may simply be a case of thinking things through more fully as he writes. If this were the case, we would expect not only the gradual and belated emergence of concept identification as noted in the examples above, but also changing views and opinions often amounting to contradictions. The merit of reading the first Critique at least twice becomes apparent here, and we may even include later works in this methodology.

Arguably, the most important example of concept development, and the one with the greatest significance to Kant’s ideas as a whole, is the revelation of the position of practical reason within transcendental philosophy. From being initially excluded, it comes to take a central and defining role in enabling pure reason to achieve, through the employment of the ideas, the totality demanded of cognitions concerning the unconditioned.

1.8 Some Conclusions.

We are now in a position to reassess crucial elements of the first Critique as a whole, and enhance the claim that it has a particular, significant, understated and largely disregarded level of practical subtext throughout. This takes the form of practical reason as it relates to actions undertaken from duty, and the metaphysical justification needed to validate both these activities and the reasoning behind them. I have assessed that Kant writes using what I have called concept anticipation. Subscribers to the patchwork theory of composition, the idea that the first Critique is a collation of previously extant passages and ideas, might find verification in this. This contention is mitigated by the way in which concept anticipation occurs, that is, the progressive unfolding of concepts as the narrative progresses. It is more likely that as he wrote Kant crystallised his concepts and is able to identify them only after their development and utilisation. Using this enhanced understanding of Kant’s methodology, we are able to argue that he gradually comes to outline the need for a practical moral underpinning, though
he is not in a position to express it in the Aesthetic or the Analytic where it is not relevant to the main textual concerns, but in which it is implicitly assumed and embedded.

On this point, I take direct issue with Strawson, who in the latter part of The Bounds of Sense indicates that he is close to establishing one of the major conclusions of my reading of Transcendental Idealism as being intimately related to the practical employment of reason, but by then is too committed to his outright rejection of its coherence to reverse his opinion. He considers the possibility of an overall practical justification for extra-empirical rational conclusions, and rejects it.

Clearly the belief in the supersensible is essential to this part of Kant’s doctrine... but there will be found few, I think, to regard the ideal of moral justice as an adequate basis for such a belief, or to view the problem of human freedom as demanding, while allowing of, solution with its help. Moreover, it would be foreign to Kant’s thinking to rest the case for the doctrines of transcendental idealism on such considerations. Although he claims it as a merit in those doctrines that they make room for faith in human freedom and moral justice, he does not, and he could not consistently, use this claim as a premise from which to argue to their truth. (Strawson 1966 241)

I suggest per contra that the description of the human metaphysical condition from the point of view of practical necessity is a typically Kantian way of doing business. As far as practical reason is concerned, its inferences have nothing to do with establishing empirical truth. Rather, they belong to the realm of belief and possibility, and, since as far as speculative reason is concerned the supersensible is inaccessible, any consideration of their truth-value is irrelevant. Presumably, Strawson means by truth in this context the idea that Kant argues for the existence of things in themselves, and he means to read Transcendental Idealism as a theory of knowledge about something of which on Kant’s own assessment we can have no knowledge, rather than the theory of praxis and belief I am proposing.

One way of overcoming the problem of ascertaining the relationship between pure theoretical and pure practical reason is the consideration that, where the ideas are concerned, we are able to combine practical and theoretical reason into an appropriate synthesis referred to as pure reason. This is necessary if we are to arrive at a worldview able to make congruent the concepts of science and religion. Despite the discussion at A797/B825 in which pure reason is seemingly synonymous with practical reason, Kant provides this possibility. He distinguishes between the two in that the theoretical is concerned with cognitions of
Gegenstände concerning their \textit{a priori} principles, and the practical with the determination of the will in respect of the final ends or aims of human activity (\textit{CR. Pr. Reason} Tr. Abbott 1996 145). Put another way, the will is practical reason in action.

Only a rational being has the power to act in accordance with his idea of laws—that is, in accordance with principles—and only so has a will. Since reason is required in order to derive actions from laws, the will is nothing but practical reason. (Kant 1964 80)

Even this, however, is concerned with \textit{a priori} principles, and it provides the link between pure practical and speculative reason. We find this expressed in the second \textit{Critique}.

But if pure reason itself can be practical and is actually so, as the consciousness of the moral law proves, then it is still only one and the same reason which, whether in a theoretical or practical point of view, judges according to \textit{a priori} principles; and then it is clear that although it is in the first point of view incompetent to establish certain propositions positively, which, however do not contradict it, then as soon as these propositions are inseparably attached to the practical interest of pure reason, then it must accept them, though it be a something offered to it from a foreign source, something that has not grown on its own ground, but yet is sufficiently authenticated; and it must try to compare and connect them with everything that it has in its power as speculative reason. (\textit{CR. Pr. Reason} Tr. Abbott 1996 146-7)

Kant’s meaning attains greater clarity in this sentence of 140 words, and since this comes from the second \textit{Critique}, we are able to accept it as part of his more complete system. Pure reason, as the subject of this sentence, contains as personified sub-classes practical and theoretical reason. There is, Kant consistently asserts, ultimately only one hegemonic pure reason and the proof of this lies in the consciousness of the moral law. Of particular significance is his imperative that speculative reason itself gains legitimacy in its efforts to consider the unconditioned and complete the series of conditions. Consider also the following.

The practical law, derived from the motive of happiness, I term pragmatic (rule of prudence), and that law, if there is such a law, which has no other motive than worthiness of being happy, I term moral (law of morality). The former advises us what we have to do if we wish to achieve happiness; the latter dictates to us how we must behave in order to deserve happiness. The former is based on empirical principles; for only by means of experience can I know what desires there are which call for satisfaction; or what those natural causes are which are capable of satisfying them. The latter takes no account of desires, and the natural means of satisfying them, and considers only the freedom of a rational being in general, and the necessary conditions under which alone this freedom can harmonize with a distribution of happiness that is made in
accordance with principles. This latter law can therefore be based on mere ideas of pure reason, and known
\emph{a priori}. (A806/B835)

There is an obvious consistency of thought here, in passages drawn from two different works. The ‘rule of prudence’, while practical, is concerned with the attainment of happiness and contains empirical content precluding it from having any part in transcendental philosophy. The practical law of morality has, on the other hand, no such empirical handicap, and our awareness of it takes the form of an \emph{a priori} cognition in much the same way as those of theoretical reason. Its primary function is not to provide happiness, but to make us worthy of happiness.

At the beginning of this chapter we noted the difficulties associated with Kant’s teachings about the relationship between theoretical and practical reason. We are now in a position to see how he resolves this by synthesising all forms of reasoning, even the speculative, into a coherent picture of unitary mental activity. It seems reasonable to see the ability of the mind to recognise the moral law \emph{a priori} through the employment of pure practical reason as nothing less than the exercise of practical freedom itself. We know that there also exists within this an inequality or hierarchy of competencies. They are, on this reckoning, not mutually exclusive, and all have relevance to transcendental philosophy despite Kant’s repeated assertions of the need to keep the transcendental viewpoint isolated from the everyday. As we have noted earlier, while this is necessary as an ideal, it is in practice ultimately impossible for any unified experience. Further, the tension between the theoretical and the practical can and must be resolved, and such a synthesis is found in Kant’s later and more developed ideas. Of course, we should not have to rely on the second \emph{Critique} to make sense of the subject matter of the first, which, by my assessment, has pure practical reason as its subject throughout. Fittingly, we find at B672 a lyrical and metaphorical description of the synthesising mechanism which pure reason must bring about between its theoretical and the practical functions.

\ldots the transcendental ideas…have an excellent and indispensably necessary regulative use, namely that of directing the understanding to a certain goal respecting which the lines of direction of all its rules converge at one point, which, although it is only an idea (\emph{focus imaginarius}) i.e., a point from which the concepts of the understanding do not really proceed, since it lies entirely outside the bounds of possible experience — nonetheless still serves to obtain for these concepts the greatest unity alongside the greatest extension. Now of course it is from this that there arises the deception, as if these lines of direction were shot out from an
object lying outside the field of possible empirical cognition (just as objects are seen behind the surface of a
mirror)... (A644/B 672)

The ideas, as products of pure reason’s practical mode, indicate the unification of human thought concerning its relationship to the world. To modernise the metaphor, they function as over-the-horizon radar, producing an image indicative of something we can never experience, or become aware of in any other way. Kant describes the progression from the cognition of self and the world to the metaphysical ideas as a unified and inferential progress created by reason itself. The ideas themselves form the chain of reasoning, beginning with awareness of self, first as the ‘I think’, then the ‘I am’, then as soul, followed by cognitions of the world, whose totality demands the certainty of a supreme being. Kant expresses the naturalness of this sequence.

Finally, we also discern that a certain connection and unity is evident among the transcendental ideas themselves, that by means of them pure reason combines all its modes of knowledge into a system. The advance from the knowledge of oneself (the soul) to the knowledge of the world, and by means of this to the original being, is so natural that it seems to resemble the logical advance of reason from premisses to conclusion. (B337)

Kant teaches that theoretical reason is forbidden to make any cognitive claims about the transcendental subject, as a thing in itself, whose existence is so naturally accepted in the metaphysics of most cultures. As an idea however, the soul is now put forward as an inference of practical reason, whose authority enables it to impose its point of view on the speculative.

From the above discussion, we can see how Kant has moved to a full expression of the supreme position of practical reason. This supremacy needs justification, and Kant provides it through his theory of the *a priori* nature of freedom as an idea. It is now clear that his mature and fully developed metaphysics gives practical reason a centrality that cannot be ignored in any full understanding of his work. The awareness of practical reason as a form of pure reason is also an awareness of freedom in the practical sense. We have seen that practical reason is itself an idea of its own creation and will. It does not legislate itself into existence *ex nihilo*, however, but in response to reason’s demand for totality and the need for happiness, gaining licence in a way not open to theoretical reason to move beyond categorised *a priori* synthetic cognitions or concepts. Practical reason exists because it, as an idea among other
ideas, ought to exist, and through its own self-legislation, we find the only idea of which we can claim *a priori* cognisance, freedom itself. Because of this, and the supremacy of practical reason, we can see that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is dominated by practical reason throughout.

In order for practical reason to have valid claims to duty, it must be free to realise and act on its demands, and in what follows we must look at how Kant justifies our belief in personal freedom. This involves a demonstration of how we are to understand the idea of a free soul operating within the spatio-temporal and determined framework of nature, within which it is not present, but which it contains as the manifold of representations, and to which it is restricted for its source of cognitions and perceptions. This consciousness must necessarily be non-corporeal, and, if successfully demonstrated, allows for a rational belief in a timeless and eternal soul able to fill the need for that personal continuity made necessary by moral law. In order to arrive at Kant’s meaning concerning the soul and its freedom, we must begin by looking at the arguments of the *Aesthetic*. 
Chapter 2 The Aesthetic: More Than Meets the Eye.

2.0 The Origins of Space, Time, and Intuition.

We continue our examination of Kant’s rational theology by seeking its roots in the opening section of the first *Critique*. The Aesthetic is a closely written text in which Kant introduces his primary thematic invention, Transcendental Idealism, providing the foundational concept for all that follows in that work and beyond. The transcendental point of view is not specifically identified at this stage, and Kant simply assumes it as the position from which he argues for Transcendental Idealism. In this, he characterises time and space as *a priori* transcendently ideal representations considered as both preconditions and empirically real components of appearances. They are pure intuitions (A24/B39/A34/B51). Because of these unique metaphysical properties, their origins and epistemic status need explanation, as does the way in which Kant’s theory affects our understanding of the relationship between mind and the objects of experience. Such arguments extend beyond the competence of theoretical reason, since they deal with the pre-empirical circumstances of intuitional acquisition and supersensible entities such as things in themselves, and as we shall see, any attempt to understand Transcendental Idealism through the employment of theoretical reason is futile.

In assessing Kant’s account of the origins of time and space and their relationship to the manifold they encompass, we will take seriously the idea that as pure intuitions they are pre-empirical conditions of sensibility (A39/B56, and not products of the imagination, which synthesises the products of sensibility which comprise that synthesis. This is the first and crucial step for the realignment of the elements of experience needed to make room for things in themselves, which in turn leads to the possibility of accepting the idea of a non-corporeal soul. One radical and immediate consequence of this expression of Transcendental Idealism, and one not often recognised, is the dismissal of reference to the organs of sense in describing the cognitional transactions required to generate appearances. By demoting the sense organs to redundancy within the transcendental representational synopsis in this way, we step away from the usual attempts to understand this topic and end up with an account in which all intuitions and appearances, including time, space and the organs of sense, come to be seen as
mind dependent for their continuance within appearances, though not of course as innate mental contents, since they are contingent on the influence of things in themselves. In this, I suggest, we find the meaning of Transcendental Idealism.

Wayne Waxman gives us an example of a way of thinking about the *Aesthetic* which is to illustrate the ideality of the spatio/temporal world, but handicaps his account by attributing the origins of time and space to the imagination.

Most commentators are understandably reluctant to entertain the thesis that space and time, together with the manifold they contain, were for Kant wholly products of imagination and in no wise data of sense. Hence, when this possibility is not entirely neglected, it is cast aside after only the most cursory examination. For, while commentators invariably recognise that Kant credited many representations of space and time to the imagination (e.g. images in particular spaces and times in reproductive imagination, mathematically constructed intuitions, the transcendental schemata), they see neither textual evidence nor philosophical motivation to suppose that he made space and time themselves dependent on our imaginations (spontaneity), and so denied them any presence in sensibility (receptivity) whatsoever. Why is this so? (Waxman 1991 33)

Now it is the case that time and space as we experience them structure all experience *a priori*, and while we do not experience them directly they do form part of the imaginative synthesis of appearances as intuitions. They are not only pure intuitions in this way, but also form part of the *a priori* conditions of experience and thus participate in the synoptic operations of sensibility. As such, their origins have nothing to do with the imagination. The idea that time and space are imaginative products lacks textual support, and Waxman admits it is contradicted by the text, though even here he gets it wrong.

Certainly, one important reason is that no such claim occurs in the Transcendental Aesthetic, and few seem to be aware that Kant ever made it at all... but probably the principal textual reason the *entia imaginaria* interpretation has so often been ignored or cast aside is the belief that Kant did in fact deny it in the Aesthetic. The source of this conviction is the assertion, right at the outset of the Aesthetic, that space and time are intuitions founded on sensibility and not concepts deriving from the understanding. (Waxman 1991 33)

The explicit contradiction of the imaginative thesis is not the reference to sensibility at the beginning of the Aesthetic, as Waxman thinks, but occurs later when Kant stresses the idea that time and space are conditions of ‘our sensibility’ (A39/B56). He argues that any
assumption of the absolute reality of time and space, either as subsistent or as inherent, conflicts with experience. By inherence, he means time and space as relationships between appearances and therefore an inherent component of them. As such, time and space would occur within experience, though abstracted from it, and form part of the imaginational synthesis, but this is not the whole story. What does originate in imagination are time and space as *a priori* concepts.

On this view, indeed, the *a priori* concepts of time and space are merely creatures of the imagination whose source must really be sought in experience, the imagination framing out the relations abstracted from experience… (A40/B57)

Kant does not source time and space *per se* to the imagination because this would threaten the apodictic nature of such things as *a priori* mathematical knowledge. It is more consistent with his meaning to see time and space as *a priori* conditions of experience, which on our reading, and unlike Waxman’s, have no reference to the imagination or the senses when considered transcendently. Waxman’s theory of imaginational origin seeks to overcome the difficulties involved in understanding how time and space can be perceived through the senses, or postulated as having an existence outside the mind. In my alternative way showing how this difficulty is to be overcome, I will argue in what follows that Kant’s use of ‘sensibility’ refers to a pre-empirical relationship with things in themselves which is responsible for the transcendental synopsis or originating spontaneity by which intuitions are generated and formalised, categorised and finally synthesised through the imagination into the manifold of appearances. Among this manifold we find the organs of sense, which represent to us the empirical causative relationship between mind and spatio/temporal objects and through which alone we can gain cognitions. On this reading, the sense organs are not part of the initiating transcendental process.

In contrast to this, Waxman’s reading of ‘sensibility’ involves the senses, a common and flawed assumption of Kant’s meaning, and one found in most conventional understandings of Transcendental Idealism. We find an expression of the relationship between sensibility and the imagination later in the B edition of the *Transcendental Deduction*.

Imagination is the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is not itself present. Now since all our intuition is sensible, the imagination…belongs to sensibility…imagination is to that extent a faculty which
determines the sensibility a priori; and its synthesis of intuitions...must be the transcendental synthesis of
the imagination. This synthesis is an action of the understanding on the sensibility; and is its first
application...to the objects of our possible intuition. (B151-2)

On this basis, time and space have a logically prior role to that of imagination, since they are
more fundamental in creating access to sensible intuitions, rather than any involvement in
their synthesis. Waxman is badly misled by his sensualist interpretation of sensibility, but
despite this, his question has relevance to the ideality of space, time and the imaginational
manifold which is always present in time and space. By sourcing time and space solely to a
priori mental activity, even though he mistakes their source, he differs from many recent
commentators in taking the ideality of time and space seriously, something he asserts has not
previously been done by anyone.

This work starts from the simple premise that the transcendental ideality of space and time should be taken
at face value, that is, that Kant was fully in earnest when he denied their absolute reality. At first sight, this
may seem thoroughly uncontroversial. However, so far as I can detect, no commentator has yet quite
managed to take Kant at his word, with the result that every existing interpretation ends up saddling him
with positions he would almost certainly have spurned as transcendental realist. (Waxman 1991 33)

By positing this ideality of time and space, we are able to entertain certain radical
conclusions about Transcendental Idealism, supporting the iconoclastic status claimed for it
by Kant, and fully delineating it from all previous theories. Despite this, there is no doubt that
Kant’s doctrines have certain commonalities with other philosophies, particularly Berkeley.
As Waxman points out, ‘...Plato, Spinoza, Leibniz, and innumerable others, both before and
after Kant, have denied ultimate reality to sensible spatial and temporal relations, and
maintained instead that things, as they are intellectually and in themselves, are
incommensurate with not only these but all sensible properties and relations generally’
(Waxman 1991 13). We are concerned to define just what elements are unique to critical
thought, and one of these is the positioning of time and space relative to the mind.

We shall not follow Waxman’s path further in this, since, as we have indicated, his reading is
not radical enough, in that he fails to appreciate the full scope of Kant’s theory in completely
displacing the sensual and imaginational account of cognition. In presenting what I take to be
a more accurate interpretation of Transcendental Idealism, it will be informative to look at the
problems Waxman’s flawed analysis encounters as an indication of how radical Kant’s own
proposals are. In this light, it is instructive to point out how Waxman’s own thesis begins to unravel even in the first sentence of his first chapter.

Most commentators are understandably reluctant to entertain the thesis that space and time, together with the manifold they contain, were for Kant wholly products of imagination and in no wise data of sense. (Waxman 1991 33)

The key phrase here is \textit{together with the manifold they contain}. Part of this manifold is the physical human organism and all its components, including the sense organs. These are, oddly, also empirical objects, that is, appearances existing in time and space. The problem is that while upholding the ideality of time and space, Waxman persists with the concept of sensual affection and synopsis where representations are concerned. By stepping away from this, we get a different picture in which sensibility is understood as that which brings the sensible world to notice. Because of this, all representations, including the organs of sense and their associated mental functions, occur at the end of the transcendental apprehensive process, and as products of the understanding can take no part in its pre-empirical synopsis. In this case, when Kant talks of sensibility in the transcendental context, including the \textit{Aesthetic}, he is not referring to sense organs and their stimuli, but to that spontaneity which brings the sensible world into play through an \textit{a priori} and pre-empirical synopsis. Such a reading of Transcendental Idealism demands a limited form of non-empirical cognition, and therefore a quasi-intellectual relationship between mind and other things in themselves.

Most writers, with the notable exceptions of Heidegger, and, for different reasons, Schopenhauer, see Kant either as rejecting intellectual intuition, or, as with Schopenhauer, needing it, but not realising it. Waxman, for example, says, ‘According to Kant, the pure intuitions of space and time are sensible, not intellectual’ (Waxman 1991 40), though he goes on to point out that this makes the idea of a pure intuition difficult to understand. If time and space are completely independent of sensation, as the claim to purity seems to imply, then they must exist prior to all sensation, and could exist without them. Waxman says that this isolation of time and space from sensible input also makes it difficult to see how they can be sensible at all.

This way of understanding Kant’s definition of pure intuition, (which certainly is the most straightforward) leads directly to the conclusion that, in addition to being neither constituted by nor derived from sensation,
it is in no way conditioned by its presence either. Since this is tantamount to saying that pure intuition could perfectly well exist in us even in the total absence of sensation, it thus becomes as difficult to understand how any pure intuition could be sensible as how any sensible intuition could be pure. (Waxman 1991 41)

These paradoxes are overcome when we accept that all intuitions originate in the absence of empirical sensation, which requires us to understand Kant as advocating a direct relationship between mind and other things in themselves. Waxman does not think this is possible, since ‘As a sensibilist, Kant was opposed to intellectualism’ (Waxman 1991 42). Waxman advocates as the ‘…condition non plus ultra for the interpretation of Kant’s theory of imagination that the independence of sense be maintained’ (Waxman 1991 15). On this account, and in a cognitional context in which sense organs are considered relevant, just how time and space are able to operate as pure intuitions is difficult to understand, or how they can translate noumenal objects into intuitions. As Waxman puts it, ‘…then we might just as well call things in themselves sensible since, according to Kant, they are conditions of sense affection!’ (Waxman 1991 15). The problem for Waxman’s reading is that Kant’s formulation of pure intuition demands that ‘…the pure form of sensible intuition…is met with in the mind a priori’ (A20/B35), in which case they have no play upon the senses or need for sensation in its empirical form. We overcome this paradox by accepting Kant’s concept of sensibility as intellectual in a limited sense.

In saying this, we encounter what appears to be contrary textual evidence because, in the Aesthetic, Kant seemingly rejects intellectual intuition. As Waxman says, the opening sentences stress the priority of experience in explaining how we gain cognitions. In addition, he specifically denies intellectual intuition to human like minds.

But however universal this mode of sensibility may be, it does not therefore cease to be sensibility. It is derivative (intuitus derivatus), not original (intuitus originarius), and therefore not an intellectual intuition. For the reason stated above, such intellectual intuition seems to belong solely to the primordial being, and can never be ascribed to a dependent being, dependent in its existence as well as in its intuition… (B72)

As well as this repudiation of intellectual cognition, Kant also endorses the empirical primacy of the sensual experience, and we must accept that empirical intuition involves time and space, is therefore empirically sensible and involves the sense organs. Kant tells us
specifically that our awareness of the *a priori* and all knowledge begins temporally in this way.

We can, however, with regard to these concepts, as with regard to all knowledge, seek to discover in experience, if not the principle of their possibility, at least the occasioning cause of their production. The impressions of the senses supplying the first stimulus, the whole faculty of knowledge opens out to them, and experience is brought into existence. (A86)

As an account of the sensible origins of experience, this is fully congruent with the further realisation of an independent transcendental process through which the mind has a non-empirical relationship with noumenal entities of the type experienced by the primordial being, but differing from that by the limitation of experience to objects in time and space. Kant goes on to distinguish the two forms of input, only one of which is available through the senses.

That experience contains two very dissimilar elements, the matter of knowledge [obtained] from the senses, and a certain form for the ordering of this matter, [obtained] from the inner source of the pure intuition and thought which, on occasion of the sense-impressions are first brought into action and yield concepts. (A86)

This form/matter distinction is important for our understanding of the role of the senses in the cognitional process. The primary source of pure intuition is invisible to us, but is always active during the exercise of the sense organs. Clearly, the latter without the former would not produce any meaningful or coherent knowledge. Kant goes on to say that his deduction of the *a priori* elements of experience can never be arrived at through an examination of the sensible process.

One consequence of this realisation is the removal of the dichotomy between spatially external objects and the appearances they putatively cause, a division to which Waxman is committed. We can understand his commitment, since there is also apparent textual evidence for it, including, for example, the following footnote at A94, cited by Waxman as evidence of a sensual synopsis.

There are three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul) which contain the conditions of the possibility of all experience, and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty of the mind, namely,
sense, imagination, and apperception. Upon them are grounded (1) the synopsis of the manifold *a priori* through sense; (2) the synthesis of this manifold through imagination; finally (3) the unity of this synthesis through original apperception. (A94 n)

This note is replaced in the B edition by three paragraphs lacking reference to the senses, because, I suggest, in talking of *die Synopsis des Mannigfaltigen a priori durch die Sinn* Kant realises that his terminology will lead to precisely the misreading arrived at by Waxman. Kant’s terminology in this early part of the first *Critique* can be confusing, and becomes clearer in the later parts of the first edition and in the second.

The idea of sensual synopsis is not a major theme in the text, and despite the significance Waxman places on it Kant refers to it only three times in the first *Critique*, at A94 and twice at A97. This should be puzzling, if it carried the importance Waxman gives it. Despite this, he considers it a significant topic, and provides other evidence from the A edition to support his contention of sensual *a priori* synopsis.

If each representation were completely foreign to every other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever arise. For knowledge is [essentially] a whole in which representations stand compared and connected. As sense contains a manifold in its intuition, I ascribe to it a synopsis. (A97)

This is also not capable of supporting the empirical reading of synopsis as being the whole story, since in referring to sense containing or forming a manifold in intuition, it ignores the role of *a priori* sensibility and the positing of a synthesis of apprehension, something that Waxman finds puzzling.

Once again, however, lack of detail leaves us uncertain as to just what this (manifold) is. Again, the ‘manifold’ to which Kant refers almost certainly amounts to no more that a profusion of sense affections— absolutely formless representational primary matter. Like so much else in Kant’s doctrine of sense, the designation of the sensory given as the ‘primary matter’ of representations is never adequately explained. (Waxman 1991 219)

On Waxman’s reading as I see it, things external to the mind, while neither spatial nor temporal, impinge on the senses to provide that unstructured melange of intuitions which enable apprehension, the first of the three-stage synthesis including reproduction in imagination and recognition through concepts. Waxman does not consider how such an
anarchic situation can exist, or even where it can exist. It cannot occur in the sense organs, since intuitions on their own are not representations or a manifold of any sort. The senses have no part in the conceptual processes of the understanding, and their function is presumably one of mere mediation and transmission. On the other hand, if it exists in some atrial function of mind we would understand the structuring process to have already commenced. All such considerations become redundant, however, and the puzzle of Kant telling us so little about the sensual synopsis of representations is resolved through the simple realisation that transcendentally it does not happen. The binary origins of cognition first involves the passive reception of representations, and only then does active conceptualisation kick in allowing the processes of thought to create consciousness. On this reading, when Kant talks of the receptivity of the mind, he is not speaking in physicalist terms.

Our cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind, the first of which is the reception of representations…the second the faculty of cognizing an object (Gegenstand) by means of those representations (spontaneity of concepts); through the former an object (Gegenstand) is given to us, through the latter it is thought. (A50/B74)

Kant mixes these two fundamental object terms in his text, sometimes, as we have noted, using them in the same sentence to refer to the same thing. He expects his reader to discern what they indicate. Unfortunately, their distinctions are usually ignored in the English-speaking world, not least because most of the primary interpretations of Kant’s writing conflate them as referring to objects taken in either their empirical sense or in some abstract metaphysical sense, giving rise to the ‘double affection’ thesis. This holds that the mind is affected by both empirical and noumenal objects simultaneously, and seems to have originated soon after the publication of the Critique. It is elaborated in the writings of Erich Adickes, for example. (Gardiner 1999 291) This misinterpretation, Gardiner proposes, derives in part from Kant’s apparent willingness to talk about two objects, that is, the thing in itself, (Ding an sich), which is an abbreviated form of ‘the thing considered in itself’, (Ding an sich selbst betrachtet), and empirical objects. The second expression referring to ‘consideration’ removes the apparent ontological dichotomy that would be the case if things in themselves were different entities to the objects of experience by setting the distinction at an epistemological level. On this understanding, we may conclude, I would argue, that ‘Gegenstände’ refers to objects in both their empirical and transcendental considerations, and is therefore more inclusive and comprehensive than ‘Objekte’, which I understand to refer to empirical entities only.
Given the view that Kant is referring to only one world, the meanings of these terms can best be understood as indicating a change in the perspective from which he speaks, and this is the basis of my own ‘view-from’ interpretation of this shift. This is indeed the Copernican-like change needed to discern the possibility of the noumenal grounding of experience. Thus, when Kant refers to *Gegenstände*, he indicates that he is speaking from the transcendental perspective. Here he does not refer to the objects of experience in isolation, but within the overall critical environment, which includes the possibility of *Gegenstände* as thought things. In this sense, *Gegenstände* is a collective noun referring to objects in both their empirical and noumenal conceptions, though of course this latter is possible only in the negative sense. His less common references to *Objekte*, on the other hand, indicate that he is referring to appearances in isolation and purely within the quotidian environment. In using these references, Kant implies no commitment to the view that there are dual worlds of *Gegenstände* and *Objekte*, or two different sets of objects.

From this we come to the argument that the a priori of time and space requires that Kant’s notion of sensibility and synthesis, employed in the transcendental sense, be divorced from the physical senses as we commonly understand them, something which few commentators consider. With this insight, we can take seriously Kant’s idealism as it concerns all appearances, including the human sensual capacities. The synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions presupposes and comes together in pure apperception, and in this way, we become conscious both of them and of the singular self-identity we each possess. For the moment, we are interested in the transcendental synthesis which precedes and encloses the empirical synthesis, and which is therefore a priori.

This synthetic unity, however, presupposes a synthesis, or includes it, and if the former is to be necessary a priori then the latter must also be a synthesis a priori. Thus the transcendental unity of apperception is related to the pure synthesis of the imagination, as an a priori condition of the possibility of all composition of the manifold in cognition. But only the productive synthesis of the imagination can take place a priori; for the reproductive synthesis rests on conditions of experience. The principle of the necessary unity of the pure (productive) synthesis of the imagination prior to apperception is thus the ground of the possibility of all cognition, especially that of experience. (A118)
As sources of knowledge, sense, imagination and apperception are manifested empirically, but each also have a corresponding transcendental underpinning on which they depend and which is given logical and metaphysical \textit{a priori}.

There are three subjective sources of knowledge upon which rests the possibility of experience in general and of knowledge of its objects (\textit{Gegenstände})—sense, imagination, and apperception. Each of these can be viewed as empirical, namely, in its application to given appearances, but they are also elements or foundations \textit{a priori} that makes this empirical use itself possible…all perceptions are grounded \textit{a priori} in pure intuition (in time, the form of their inner intuition as representations), association in pure synthesis of imagination, and empirical consciousness in pure apperception, that is, in the thoroughgoing identity of the self in all possible representations (A115-6).

We thus have independent \textit{a priori} and transcendental functions of pure intuition, pure synthesis of the productive imagination and pure apperception, each having an empirical counterpart dependent on them for their origin.

2.1 The ‘View-From’ Reading.

Based on this bifurcation of empirical and the transcendental cognition, I present in what follows a ‘view-from’ reading of Transcendental Idealism. By this I mean the possibility of seeing the difference between the empirical viewpoint and the transcendental as one of perspectival shift, in which Kant is able to divert our point of view away from a sense oriented experience of the world to an intangible and conceptual position made available by reason. This theory accepts and explores the possibility that Kant’s adopted transcendental point of view, one from which he writes, is a non-corporeal platform, and that he allows us to think of a situation in which human-like minds have their being in a very different way from that of everyday experience. Such an account needs to be treated differently from the usual empirical criteria of truth and coherence. It is also what distinguishes his metaphysics from other sciences such as psychology, other forms of theology, and traditional metaphysics. This reading sees Kant placing the human mind within a noumenal environment of which it can have no knowledge apart from the representations it projects before itself through the influence of other components of that environment, that is, other things in themselves. At the same time, it is able to negatively consider the status of objects insofar as they lack empirical instantiation.
At this point, I should briefly indicate one way in which the views expressed here relate to the Allisonian attempt to present a more accurate account of the transcendental distinction between appearances and things in themselves. As this has it, the distinction is based on how objects can be thought of within the transcendental context, that is, employing what Allison calls transcendental reflection. (Allison 2004 56) The impetus for this way of thinking about Kant’s object terms derives from Bird, who in turn was responding to Prichard's theory on the subject, (See Bird 1962 Ch.1) and it is Pritchard’s interpretation he takes as paradigmatic of the traditional reading of Kant. (Allison 2004 6) While there is value in attempting to understand Kant’s terminology and meaning in this way, there is a deficiency resulting from the way it presents objects viewed in transcendental reflection insofar as they refer back to a static and unchanging point of view. In contrast to this, it seems more appropriate to adopt the perspectival metaphor to describe the liquidity and flexibility involved in the changing of position needed to accommodate Kant’s meaning, which it does by allowing the viewpoint to move between the empirical locus and the metaphysical positioning necessary for transcendental thought.

The perspectival metaphor employed here follows and derives from Kant’s own trope as found in the B preface and elsewhere concerning the Umänderung der Denkart, the differing point of view central to the astronomical achievement of Copernicus. Kant clearly intends us to understand critical thought as performing a similar intellectual accomplishment, though in this case no physical repositioning is possible. What my analysis offers, and what is lacking in the Bird-Allison reading, is a position from which the mind is able to make its assessments and legitimately talk about objects in general, including the postulates of practical reason. This is possible when we see that Kant allows reason to function at its fullest and most metaphysically significant manner only when in practical mode. As with the earth, the mind itself ‘moves’, though in this case in the metaphysical and perspectival sense, and thereby achieves the transcendental viewpoint. Kant indicates these moves in the way he uses terminological references such as Gegenstände for the all-inclusive transcendental viewpoint of objects in all their forms, and Objekt for the strictly empirical.

This positioning removes the burden of trying to account for a hierarchy of objects, to the extent that even the distinction between objects of sense and the Lockean ideas representing them are conflated, as are the objects of sense and their metaphysical underpinnings as things in themselves. Kant, on this reading, has no commitment to phenomenology in any traditional
sense. Things are ‘outside us’ empirically only when considered as representations, that is, as objects in time and space; otherwise they are ‘outside us’ from the transcendental viewpoint when mentioned as things in themselves or noumenal objects. Any attempt by theoretical reason to posit non-empirical objects as a something available to non-sensible intuition results in the fallacy of positing noumena in the positive sense; theoretical reason has available to it only the vacuous, void and negative formulation of noumena. No such restriction applies to the practical viewpoint, which is allowed to talk of such noumenal things as God, the soul, freedom and the Kingdom of Ends as matters of faith, which brings us to Palmquist’s views on this subject.

Palmquist analyses Kant’s references to ‘object terms’ in an elaborate and analytically exhaustive manner, demonstrating the architectonic nature of Kant’s various usages, that is, how they vary and are modified as the text progresses. His discussion of the ‘thing/things in itself/themselves’ in chapter 5 of ‘Kant’s System of Perspectives’, is, I have recently discovered, very near to my own view, that in talking of supersensible objects, Kant employs what amounts to a belief system.

Kant suggests it is occasionally necessary for the philosopher to adopt ‘a rational faith which alone may be possible for us, sufficient to our wants, and perhaps even more salutary than knowledge itself.’ Although this would appear at first sight to be precarious ground on which to build an epistemological foundation for a philosophical system, Kant seems to treat it not only as sufficient, but also as the necessary support for both his theoretical and his practical standpoints. (Palmquist 1993 144)

Palmquist goes on to defend what he refers to as this ‘rather unconventional claim’ (ibid.) and in doing so underlines Kant’s use of the word Glaube. In most, but not all, instances, I have preferred to interpret this as ‘belief’, unlike Palmquist, who, perhaps because of his emphasis on the mystical, prefers to gloss it as ‘faith’. Now, there may be little to quibble over here, except to point out that these usages indicate the differences in the way Palmquist and I appreciate Kant’s meaning. Put briefly, I understand Palmquist to be presenting Kant ultimately as a mystic involved with faith, while I am more interested in him as a scientist using belief for his analytical purposes.

To this end, I wish to limit my discussion to what is ultimately universifiable, synthetic, and a priori in Kant’s thought, while Palmquist attempts to establish a relationship between the
critical system as a whole and the more subjective, traditional and individual forms of religious experience. Nevertheless, it is clearly the case that as far as our views on Kant’s references to the supersensible are concerned, Palmquist and I have much in common. This unconventional point of view, that the Critical system requires an axiomatic starting point that is not open to empirical affirmation, becomes more plausible on the consideration that no other explanation is in fact available. How else could we construe any discussion of a something that can have no empirical manifestation as it is in itself? That Kant refers to this at Axxx as *Glaube*, which Kemp-Smith gives as faith, would support the assessment that it plays a significant part in his thought, and is therefore, or at least, should be, uncontroversial.

We may find reference to unknown or unknowable entities in many areas of science and mathematics, although this is not a very exact analogy with Kant’s employment of his metaphysical postulates. Any discussion of noumenal objects as being something like the theoretical entities of science or mathematics would be to see them as noumenal in the positive sense. Kant is insistent that we view things in themselves as unknowable, negative and vacuous. They are so devoid of meaning that we cannot even speculate about how another form of intelligence may view them. Certainly, from the standpoint of practical reason we may, under Kant’s tuition, assent to the postulates of God, continuing existence and freedom as ideas of practical reason. This we may easily accept as a form of faith. However, the doctrine that things in themselves are nothing to us would seem to preclude even belief or faith in them in any meaningful way. Palmquist shows some unease with his usage here, by admitting that ‘… the great majority of Kant’s references to faith do concern its role in the practical, rather than in his theoretical, system; and in a few cases he even seems to deny the validity of applying it to the latter’. (Palmquist 1993 144)

We can now see why Kant does this. To the extent that theoretical reason is concerned with things in themselves, only belief in the negative sense is possible. On the other hand, all matters of faith, being positive, must belong to that which is practical, because otherwise we are attempting to understand things in themselves as objects of non-sensible intuition, that is, as noumena in the positive sense. In this way, we can see how Kant exploits the ambiguity of ‘*Glaube*’ to suit his purposes in the transcendental analysis, since practical reason may then refer to them in terms of belief or faith, thereby licensing an appropriate discussion purely in terms of praxis.
Palmquist’s chapter 6 deals in detail with Kant’s object terms, which he identifies as:

1. Things in themselves.
2. The Transcendental Object.
3. Appearances.
4. Phenomena.
5. Negative Noumena.

Strangely, the terms Gegenstämde and Objekte are not included in this list. These are important for my purposes, since I see them as indicating whether Kant is talking from the transcendental or the empirical perspective. Palmquist’s aim, on the other hand, is to demonstrate, through the changing usage of the terms he isolates, how the architectonic of the first Critique may be mapped using them. From this it would seem that his discussion and mine, in terms of the references used, have little in common, but there are exceptions to this, including our attitude to the transcendental object = X.

Palmquist accepts that ‘Kant’s doctrine of the transcendental object is no less obscure than his doctrine of the thing in itself.’ (Palmquist 1993 170) He goes on to point out that these terms are often treated as synonyms. However, at A253 Kant says that the transcendental object cannot be the noumenon and nearly always refers to it in the singular. We may consider this subject as a rational intelligible construct that is not the noumenon, though both it and the noumenon are things in themselves. This hybrid and unique object arguably forms the a priori vanguard of intuitional synopsis, acting as a portal through which sensibility accesses intuitions. It is unlike other things in themselves in the way it relates to the perceiving subject, and Palmquist expresses what seems like a similar idea.

A metaphor which can help us…is to picture the mediating function of the transcendental object as a doorway between the thing in itself and the subject: although it is directly related to both, it cannot be wholly identified with either. (Palmquist 1993 171-2)

The forgoing similarity of my views of the transcendental object with those of Palmquist’s reveals another, this time concerning the relationship between the subject and things in themselves. Kant is commonly thought of as portraying a sensualist link between mind and
things in themselves, in which noumenal somethings impinge on the senses and produce in
the mind the appearances relating to them. Palmquist is prepared to challenge this view,
saying that ‘…the thing in itself does not directly affect the senses.’ (Palmquist 1993 144) I
will argue for just this insight in the following pages.

As far as any textual distinction between appearances and phenomena is concerned, it is
apparent that Kant often uses these terms interchangeably. For instance, in Chapter III of the
Transcendental Doctrine of Judgement, starting at B295 and A236, he allows that we may
divide the objects of the understanding into phenomena and noumena, where phenomena are
the appearances of everyday experience. Since what we experience are phenomena, how do
these relate to appearances? Kant quite often lumps them together, as at B306, where he talks
about ‘…certain objects, as appearances, and sensible entities (phenomena)…’ Clearly, while
they are the same thing, they can be viewed in different ways. Appearances refer to objects of
experience as they relate to things in themselves, and thus belong within the metaphysical
framework Kant has constructed. Phenomena, on the other hand may be considered in
isolation, that is, from a strictly empirical point of view as categorically determined entities,
and treated as though they were independent of all other non-empirical influences. Kant
expresses the status of phenomena at A249, where he says that ‘Appearances, so far as they
are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called *phenomena.*’ Within
this description we would normally see such objects as ‘outside us’ in space, whereas
appearances, as objects relating to things in themselves, are ‘in us’ in the metaphysical sense,
as mind content. Thus, phenomena are empirically real, since they have an independent
existence in time and space when viewed in this empirical manner, as distinct from the
mental dependence of appearances, which are manifest only so long as the perceiving mind is
conscious of them. In this way, an empirical realism is established which must accompany
the transcendently ideal status of appearances.

The transcendental idealist, on the other hand, may be an empirical realist or, as he is called, a dualist; that
is, he may admit the existence of matter without going outside his mere self-consciousness, or assuming
anything more than the certainty of his representations…For he considers this matter and even its inner
possibility to be appearance merely; and appearance, if separated from our sensibility, is noting. Matter is
with him, therefore, only a species of representations (intuition), which are called external, not as standing
in relation to objects in themselves external, but because they relate perceptions to the space in which all
things are external to one another, while yet the space itself is in us. (A370)
We have seen that for Kant time and space are *a priori* conditions of experience, and part of the intuitional synthesis within which all appearances are experienced. Though they contain all objective experience, they are not experienced directly, since, as pure intuitions, they do not derive from experience. We find this argued for in the *Aesthetic*, and the religious implications of this are of significance to our project. By accepting time and space as components of sensibility, we now have the capacity to understand the mind, as soul, sitting at the horizon or atrium of experience rather than its centre, and observing the representations received through sensibility, which it has spontaneously processed and projected before itself. Unlike time and space, this mind has no presence within experience.

For Kant, the difference between transcendental cognition and experience derives from our ability to gain cognitions in two ways, that is, transcendentally through conceptual thought and empirically through representations. (B74) While the understanding is incapable of intuition, and the senses cannot think, time and space uniquely contain characteristics of both transcendental thought and empirical cognition as representations. Both the thought and experience of time and space are *a priori* to experience in general, but we may consider them only as conceptually transcendental in terms of the former.

Not every kind of knowledge *a priori* should be called transcendental, but that only by which we know that—and how—certain representations (intuitions or concepts) can be employed or are possible purely *a priori*. The term ‘transcendental’, that is to say, signifies such knowledge as concerns the *a priori* possibility of knowledge, or its *a priori* employment. Neither space nor any *a priori* geometrical determination of it is a transcendental representation; what can alone be entitled transcendental is the knowledge that these representations are not of empirical origin, and the possibility that they can yet relate *a priori* to objects of experience. (A56/B81)

Transcendental thought, that is, the employment of transcendental concepts, is that which relates to *a priori* propositions in general, though our interest, like Kant’s, lies primarily in the synthetic variety. This paradoxically refers to a depiction of human mentality and its relation to cognitions in a non-empirical way through the employment of rational inferences. Since transcendental inferences are expressly forbidden to theoretical reason, we need to explain how Kant deals with this apparent contradiction. What we require are the metaphysical insights needed to understand the problems Kant sets himself and the solutions he proposes. These include the following:
• Establishing the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge claims.
• Limiting the dialectical pretensions available to an otherwise undisciplined theoretical and therefore speculative reason.
• Allowing freedom from the conditioned for reason in its practical mode.
• Making possible an authentic, scientific, and universal morality.
• Enabling rational assent to certain metaphysical propositions that constitute a scientifically acceptable religious outlook.

Each of these is of direct significance for the religious concerns of the *Critique*, and we will discuss them in what follows.

### 2.2 Religion and the *Aesthetic*

Kant’s formulation of Transcendental Idealism in the *Aesthetic* interests us because the linkage between this and the ideas of practical reason is obscure, and few commentators attend to the importance of such content and its connections. Although marginal to its main argument, secularised religious *qua* metaphysical content is present in the *Aesthetic* and in the *Preface* to the Second Edition, where Kant gives an epistemic assessment of the soul. The use of such religious terminology may grate on the modern philosophical ear, but we should remember its appropriateness to the environment from which it springs.

… I have taken the soul…as a thing in general, that is, as a thing in itself… My soul, viewed from the latter standpoint, cannot indeed be known by means of speculative reason (and still less through empirical observation). (Bxxvii)

The idea of soul as a thing in itself continues thematically, and there are several references to it in the *Aesthetic*.

• At B 37, in his discussion of inner sense, Kant uses the terms ‘mind’ and ‘soul’ as synonyms. Here he points out again that mind or soul is not intuitable as an object.
• At B 69, while he tells us that bodies, that is, objects of experience, are given only in time and space. At the same time he says we also seem to have an awareness of the mind or soul given in self-consciousness.
Kant contrasts our experience of selfhood existing in time with any such possibility concerning our experience of God, which can only be arrived at through thought. (B71)

From Kant’s discussion of God in the *Aesthetic*, he clearly means that in its traditional and conventional guise it should not intrude into his account of time, space, or morality. Unlike many others, such as Spinoza, Leibniz, Descartes, and Berkeley, Kant wishes his account of reality to achieve coherence without the underpinning of a primal being. The penultimate paragraph of the *Aesthetic* argues merely for the compatibility of Transcendental Idealism with the idea of a primordial being employing only intellectual intuition. He emphasises that this theoretical compatibility “…must be counted only as an illustration of our aesthetic theory and not a ground of its proof” (B72).

This specific exclusion of God as an underpinning for his theory, and the conflation of the concepts of mind and soul indicate strongly the degree to which Kant wishes to secularise and define his idea of metaphysics by enhancing its rationality. His ultimate aims are made clear by the dominant thematic position of the metaphysical ideas in the concluding sections of the *Dialectic*, itself comprising the largest portion of the work. It is likely that such content is equally significant to, though not so apparent in, the earlier sections, including the *Aesthetic*, and it should be possible to reconsider the *Aesthetic* in terms of these themes even though they are considered only in negative terms as something we can never know.

2.3 The *Aesthetic* and the Senses.

The opening sentences of the *Aesthetic* are among the most difficult, dense, and demanding of any written by Kant, and perhaps by anyone. It is fair to say that as they stand, and without prior initiation, they can make little sense to even the most attentive reader, though this is not altogether Kant’s fault. An understanding of his following writings demands their conception, yet, paradoxically, this is not likely until the rest of the work is comprehensively studied. Consequently, more than one reading of the *Aesthetic* is necessary for most readers. The problems involved in fully appreciating Kant’s thought reflect the difficulty he must have experienced in expressing it. First, since he is surely aware of the dilemma facing both himself and his audience in the introductory passages, he has constructed the opening of the
Aesthetic in generalised, discursive and ambiguous terms, while allowing the possibility for finer meanings to emerge on later examination. Second, if coming to terms with any ambiguities is difficult, this compounds when attempting to transmit them in translation, even if the translator is aware of them. That this difficulty has been almost intractable will become obvious as we illustrate shortcomings in the available English versions. Third, confronted with this dense swarm of innovative, technical and obscure terminology and definitions, the temptation is for the reader to pass on to the remainder of the work in the hope of gaining, at some labour, the meanings Kant has in mind. This is to be encouraged, so long as there is a return to reconsider the early sections, something Kant advocates in the Prolegomena.

One consequence of this is, then, unavoidable; namely, that since it is completely impossible to escape from the conflict of reason with itself as long as the objects of the sensible world are taken for things in themselves—and not for what they in fact are, that is, for mere appearances—the reader is obliged for that reason, to take up once more the deduction of all our cognition a priori (and the examination of that deduction which I have provided), in order to come to a decision about it. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 101

The deduction referred to occurs in the first Critique. It is aimed at justifying the idea of the a priori found in the Aesthetic and is therefore included in Hatfield’s edition of the Prolegomena to facilitate this re-reading. Many do not do this, or, by not completing the rest of the work, compound their error by finding fault in Transcendental Idealism itself, retreating in baffled and bewildered hostility.

The Aesthetic gives an account of the origins in sensibility of the a priori components of knowledge, and the relationship between human-like minds and objects. The conventional modern psychological description involving the mediation of the senses in this relationship is familiar to any aware individual and almost universally accepted. To interpret Kant as presenting this physico-psychological description, or, as Strawson does, to entertain the idea that it is an analogical version, opens the door to endless misunderstandings and disputations, and the consequent dismissal of critical philosophy as untenable. In what follows, I shall argue that what underlies this common misreading is to consider mind as we experience it, the senses to which it is conjoined and the objects which stimulate them, as things in themselves, rather than as representations existing in time and space.
We discovered above that Kant’s metaphysics as expressed in the *Aesthetic* presents a way of understanding the attainment of cognitions which differs from the conventional belief that the brain and its related senses interact with nature to produce perceptions. By exploring this doctrine further in the text, we find that it analogously relates to that given by Copernicus concerning the locus of the solar system and the relative positioning of the sun and planets, as well as earlier mistaken views concerning the planar nature of the earth. Part of the error involved in the common description of the relationship between mind and objects stems from confusing mind with the material brain, and the related belief that mind somehow exists within or operates through this. As I shall demonstrate, Kant presents a Copernican reversal of this relationship, in that the *Aesthetic* presupposes that all representations, including the material brain, exist, transcendentally speaking, within the mind, which experiences them as appearances. To suppose otherwise, I argue, is to mistake Kant’s purpose, and as we have seen with Waxman above, the tendency is to read Kant as postulating sensual input of primary representational material. Bossart, for example, makes the reading explicit.

Empirical objects are for Kant the causes of perceptions. It is not the thing-in-itself that causes the manifold of inner sense, but phenomenal objects like houses and ships interacting with outer sense. Perceptions, then, are the effects of an interaction between empirical object and our sense organs. Hence Kant is led to designate empirical objects as appearances of things-in-themselves and perceptions as appearances of appearances. (Bossart 1994 34)

This interpretation of Transcendental Idealism’s theory of intuition is also a tempting way to teach it. In the following diagram, taken from a web page of lecture notes provided online by Deanza College, California, we find illustrated the physicalist notion of the interaction of mind and noumenal objects in the manner of Waxman and Bossart above. In this case, we see a noumenal object relating to a pair of scissors impinging on the sense of vision.
This representational theory involves the physical senses, even though they are appearances since they exist in space and time, and, as in the above diagram, presumably form the horizon between what is and is not noumenal.

We may make three initial observations about this interpretation. First, it shares and probably derives from the dualism involving objects and mental content found in the writings of Descartes and others, including Kant’s pre-critical thought, raising the intractable problems associated with explaining the relationship between them. Second, it also expresses the Cartesian assumption that consciousness has an internal bodily seat, and third, that the interaction between mind and external stimuli must be mediated by the senses.

As pointed out above, we do not have to go far to find apparent textual support for this sensualist misinterpretation. The first sentences of the introduction to both editions of the first Critique seem to support it explicitly.

Experience is without doubt the first product that our understanding brings forth as it works on the raw material of sensible sensations. (A1)

3 www.deanza.edu/faculty/anelli/philo1/lecture.notes/ENLIGHTENMENT/Kant2.html
In the Second Edition, this is re-expressed.

There is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with experience; for how else should the cognitive faculty be awakened into exercise if not through objects (*Gegenstände*) that stimulate our senses and in part themselves produce representations, in part bring the activity of our understanding into motion to compare these, to connect or separate them, and thus to work up the raw material of sensible impressions into cognition of objects (*Gegenstände*) that is called experience? **As far as time is concerned**, then, no cognition in us precedes experience, and with experience every cognition begins. (B1 Emphasis in the original)

In the opening paragraph of the *Aesthetic*, Kant tells us ‘Objects are therefore given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions…’ (A19/B33). Empirically, this is the case, if we take sensibility to mean the empirical senses and their experiences, and is something we experience perennially. We can gain experience of objects in no other way, but Kant indicates this is only part of the process. What is missing here is the realisation that when considered transcendentally, the ‘causal’ nexus, or more precisely, the relationship between objects and our awareness of them, is reversed. ‘Sensibility’ in this transcendental context indicates the immediate non-sensual availability of representational material, which is quite different from and logically precedes that which we experience, and is completely removed from the empirical and the corporeal. Most writers take Kant’s expression at face value, interpreting sensation in a purely empirical way, as does, for example, Kemp-Smith, in his commentary.

Kant’s definition of intuition applies…only to empirical intuition. What he here says amounts to the assertion that through sensation intuition acquires its object *i.e.* that sensation is the cause of intuition. And that being so, it is also through sensation that empirical intuition acquires its relation to the object (= thing in itself) which causes it. (Kemp-Smith 1992 81-2)

Kemp-Smith here means empirical sensation exclusively. We may agree that intuition is relevant to the empirical, but that is not the whole story, and on its own creates problems concerning the relationship between mind and objects. It also creates redundant ontological layers of entities, since on the sensualist reading we have to consider not only things in themselves as well as empirical objects, but also sensations and their associated phenomenal intuitions.
The physico-psychological endeavour to understand Transcendental Idealism in quasi-materialist terms is understandable, yet, as I shall argue, profoundly mistaken. Within it we find the source of such gratuitous ‘problems’ as the double affection interpretation, redundant and inexplicable ontological layers and entities, the difficulties in understanding the difference between pure and empirical intuitions, or how hybrid intuitions which are both pure and sensible are possible. When interpreted in this psychological and sensualist manner, Transcendental Idealism soon falls into contradiction and worse, since perceptions are now seen to be caused by empirical objects, spatio/temporal or otherwise as in some readings, which are in turn appearances of representations of things in themselves. We end up with at least one extra layer of ontology, and in the above scenario a third and even a fourth, each interacting with mind. We see this when Bossart tells us that perceptions are ‘appearances of appearances’ (Bossart Op. Cit.) and he is quick to draw the obvious conclusion that we are still subject to the possibility of Cartesian scepticism.

But this raises once again a problem that the Critique was supposed to solve. For since empirical objects are independent of their perceptual representations, it is difficult to see how our perceptions can yield knowledge unless we can establish a correspondence between the order of our perceptions and the empirical objects that are their cause. (Bossart 1994 34)

On the ‘view-from’ reading, however, Kant is not offering us a simple materialist, psychological or empirical account of cognition or perception. He recognises that we experience a cascading causal and empirical relationship between mind, sense organs and objects, resulting in the experience of the natural world with its spatio/temporal primary properties and such secondary characteristics as colour, heat and so on. When accepted as being the only origin of intuitions, this account leads to the problems encountered by corpuscularians such as Locke, Descartes, or anyone else who attempts to explain perception in physically causal terms. Among these problems is the inability to provide an adequate account of the nature of the observing subject, leading, in Descartes’ analysis, for example, to an untenable dualism, or as with Hume, to its invisibility. Another problem concerns the difficulties associated with delineating primary and secondary properties, beginning with Galileo, and evidenced by Locke’s struggles with this issue, and those of others. Again, Hume famously points out that the notion of causality itself is vacuous when we attempt to find some necessary and a priori link, or go beyond invariant association between phenomena to explain their regularities. This observation further undermines any
psychological account of human experience expressed in terms of a causal relationship between minds and objects. Hume and Kant are often seen as occupying warring positions, but this is not what is discovered in the ‘view-from’ reading of Transcendental Idealism. Rather, we find repeatedly that what Kant has to say is not only fully in agreement with Hume’s observations, but must be seen as a conscious and perceptive extension of them. This is seldom realised. In his most recent book, Waxman advocates a strong link between empiricism, (i.e., the ideas of Locke, Berkeley and Hume), and critical metaphysics.

This book is a systematic attempt to read Kant through the British Empiricists, and The British Empiricists through Kant. It is, so far as I know, the first work of its kind, and was written in the belief that there is an affinity between their theories of understanding and self so fundamental and important that, in the case Hume and Kant particularly, their differences pale by comparison with what unites them. (Waxman 2005 Preface)

This is particularly important when we consider causality, and the charge that Kant illicitly employs causative agency when referring to the relationship between noumena, mind and appearances. For Kant, the reason no causal nexus can exist between objects of experience in the sense of one phenomenon having the power to influence another, including empirical objects, sense organs and mind, is that such appearances are not things in themselves. This is because time, space and all they contain are not things in themselves.

Space itself, however, together with time, and with both, all appearances are not things, but rather nothing but representations, and cannot exist at all outside our mind… (A492 Emphasis in original)

Because appearances have no independent being, our inability to discern causative powers within them, as exposed by Hume, becomes explicable, a theme we return to later.

2.4 Empirical and Non-empirical Origins of Intuition.

One alternative to a physico-psychological reading of Transcendental Idealism is to understand it as an elaborate account of the origins of the a priori forms of knowledge. This involves two basic ideas. First, that the mind is a thing in itself among other things in themselves, and second, that the mind spontaneously produces representations from being among those other things in themselves. Kant now takes his point of view from this extra-sensible position, enabling us to see the positioning of mind and objects from a wholly
different perspective. It is not a God-like view, since it retains the elements of human finitude, and Kant does not attempt to breach empiricist protocols when speaking of what is available to us in experience. Only the viewpoint is changed, making certain new insights possible for transcendental thought, and we now have available to us two possible ways of seeing the world, one derived solely from experienced cognitions, and the other that is discursively transcendental.

Transcendental Idealism allows us to understand the natural world as being mere appearances, as experiences generated through mental activity and existing only in this way, as Kant consistently maintains. He is after all an idealist concerning not only time and space but also the manifold associated with them. At the same time, we can see that experienced objects are none the less real for having this dependence. While they lack the independent existence of things in themselves, they nevertheless have all the characteristics needed to make them real or actual as far as human cognition is concerned. They are not a complete imaginative fabrication in the Berkeleian sense since the underlying noumena grounding them are independent of the perceiving mind. Thus, when we say that sound or light impacts on the senses and causes us to experience objects external to the mind, we must accept that those objects, the photons or light waves, the sound waves and so on which they emit, the impacts they generate, the senses which receive them and the attached mental apparatus, are all appearances existing in time and space. As such, no causal relationship exists between them beyond the observed regularities that make science and experience in general possible and coherent. Kant enables us to accept the seemingly paradoxical idea that while everything in the world has a cause, nothing in the world causes anything else.

On this reading, we cannot accept the physicalist interpretation of Kant’s theory. The text at various points contains enough indication that we should not do so, such as the caveat in the B edition concerning the condition of time in such considerations. ‘As far as time is concerned, then, no cognition in us precedes experience, and with experience every cognition begins’ (B1). When considered transcendently, however, this sequence is reversed, justifying the caveat and its emphasis.

We have seen that if the physical brain and its associated senses are appearances existing in idealised time and space, they are consequently mind-dependent for their existence and within transcendental reflection can have no role to play in initiating intuitions. While the
ontological status of such existents is not open to sceptical misgiving, they occur only as factitia fashioned through the involvement of mind with other things in themselves, whose disposition we can know in no other way, and the prospect of which we can discern only through discursive activity. Because of this, appearances, including the physical human brain and all other body parts including the senses, exist only within the mind, and without it dissolve into oblivion.

Of course space itself with all its appearances, as representations, is only in me; but in this space the real, or the material of all objects of outer intuition is nevertheless really given, independently of all invention; and it is also impossible that in this space anything outside us (in the transcendental sense) should be given, since space itself is nothing apart from our sensibility. (A375 Emphasis in original)

The patterned nature and apparently organised structure of this reality enables the anticipation of certain regularities, and without enlightenment, we tend to misconstrue these as causality. We commonly see this as the intrinsic power of objects to influence each other, which on Humean examination becomes untenable. Consequently, to interpret Kant as advocating a physical causal relationship between objects, senses, and minds is to exhibit a misunderstanding of his teaching. He emphasises that treating representations as things in themselves is mistaken. As such, it necessarily, systematically, and invariably creates a series of contradictions between reason and experience surmountable only through critical philosophy. Interpreting Transcendental Idealism as presenting a psychological account of minds and sensibility is to commit this error. As we shall see, something else is required. A closer understanding of what Kant means by ‘mind’ and ‘objects’ is likely to give a fuller insight into the opening section of the Critique of Pure Reason. Consequently, it is now necessary to examine the status of ‘objects’, expressed variously as ‘things’ ‘bodies’, substance, and most importantly, Objekte and Gegenstände, within the critical environment.

2.5 Metaphysics as a Science.

In the introduction to the B edition, Kant probes the meaning of what it is to be a science. Logic as a science, he says, contains only the formal elements of thought, regardless of where the Objekte it considers originate. Logic is to abstract itself from all ‘Objekte of cognition’ (B ix) so that the understanding is able to consider nothing but itself and its forms of thought. Because of this highly abstract nature, logic is Kant’s prime exemplar of a science, unlike
mathematics and geometry which contain empirical content. The success of this science derives from its own theoretical limitations, since ‘... it is thereby justified in abstracting—is indeed obliged to abstract—from all objects (Objekte) of cognition’ (B ix). From this we learn, first, that there are or can be ‘Objekte of cognition’, and second, that logic does not concern itself with these, but with ‘something’ of a different sort, that is the formal structure of thought itself.

Because of its limitations, pure logic is not a fruitful area for anyone attempting to unravel the relationship between empirical content and mind. Consequently, Kant goes on to consider those sciences which of necessity have to deal with Objekte of cognition as well as their a priori content. This latter characterises them as sciences, and is important since he needs to find just this type of content in metaphysics if it is to rank as a science. It is also central to Kant’s religious program on my interpretation since the possibility of establishing metaphysics as the foundation of a rational religious outlook is itself contingent on establishing the rationality of metaphysics. As with logic, the objects of metaphysics have no empirical manifestation, but this does not mean that it is the same as logic, since it does have subject matter beyond that of the structure of thought. As such it can also have Objekte, though Kant seldom uses this term in the transcendental context.

Insofar as there is to be reason in the sciences, something in them must be cognised a priori, and this cognition can relate to its object (Gegenstand) in either of two ways, either merely determining the object (Gegenstand) and its concept (which must be given from elsewhere), or else making the object (Gegenstand) actual. (Bix-x)

Here Kant introduces the term Gegenstand, and we need to know what this is, and what the ‘something’ is. We should note that the concept of a Gegenstand derives from reason, the ‘elsewhere’ referred to in this passage. It is something ‘standing against’ what we experience. Because of their differing origins, transcendental and experiential cognitions are described in terms relevant to their source, and in this way Kant is able to deal with not only appearances, but also concepts such as things in themselves, including mind, as transcendental concepts, the ideas of practical reason and such a priori representational elements as time and space. Kant needs to indicate when he is speaking transcendently and when his topic is empirical through the employment of these specifically delineated descriptors. Consequently, in order to describe cognitions and concepts in terms relevant to their respective origins, he employs
the terms *Objekt* and *Gegenstand*, and in this way his exposition moves smoothly from one form of expression to the other, that is, the Copernican shift from the empirical to the viewpoint of transcendental reflection. In this usage, it is not the case that Kant is speaking of different types of objects, but indicating the positioning of the mind, that is, the mode of thought being employed. These transitions are masked, indeed obliterated, in most English translations through the conflation of these terms as ‘object’. It is necessary to restore this original linguistic device if we are to appreciate the movement between the two points of view, while avoiding misunderstandings of the type discussed above.

By tracking references to ‘objects’ in translation using the uniquely detailed Guyer/Wood annotation as our guide, we can discern Kant’s usage in the original German. While only passing reference to objects of any type occurs in the preface and introduction to the A edition, Kant seems to have realised the need for some introductory material concerning those topics dealt with so abruptly in the opening passages of the *Aesthetic*. Accordingly, to gain clearer insights into the *Aesthetic*, it is prudent to pay heed to what Kant has to say about ‘objects’ in the *Introduction* and *Preface* to the B edition. Thus, we find *Objekte* first mentioned at Bviii, where Kant contemptuously refers to any psychological attempt to inject material derived from empirical sources into the study of subjects such as logic, or introducing human cognitive capacities and anthropological factors.

Apart from Guyer and Wood, and to a lesser extent, Pluhar, interpreters of the *Critique* make little attempt to exhibit Kant’s usage of *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*. Kemp-Smith, for example, makes few allusions of this in his translation. Pluhar, in a footnote to Avii, explains his inability to find any distinction between these terms.

Schwarz…holds…that Kant makes a distinction between *Object* and *Gegenstand*. Here…I remain unconvinced, and am rendering both terms as ‘object.’ (*Cr. Of P. Reason*, Tr. Pluhar 1996 5-6 n7)

Kant uses both terms, and in such a systemic author, we would expect to find some structure in this. Caygill complains about the neglect of this possibility.

Kant’s concept of an object is extremely subtle, though its nuances are often lost in the indiscriminate and unsystematic translation of his terms *Ding, Gegenstand*, and *Objekt*. (Caygill 1995 304)
Caygill underlines a significant problem for anyone attempting to analyse Kant’s writing in translation, and consequently our investigations at this point must take on a different complexion. No longer is it sufficient to interrogate Kant’s text in its English format, or even by simply revert[ing] to the German original. Rather, we are now in a position to undertake an account of Kant’s ideas in terms of the problems created by possible misinterpretation, and only then resolve them by consulting and re-interpreting the original. We need to reconsider the translations we have previously referred to, especially that of Kemp-Smith, who is of particular interest, and Caygill specifically mentions his shortcomings as a translator.

Kant’s distinction between *Gegenstand* and *Objekt* is crucial to his transcendental philosophy, although never explicitly thematized and wholly obliterated in Kemp-Smith’s translation of CPR. (Caygill 1995 305)

If this is so, Kemp-Smith’s translation becomes suspect and unreliable, despite its venerable status. And not only Kemp-Smith. The veracity of all commentators who rely on his or similar translations are equally compromised, and allegations concerning Kant’s incoherence, inconsistency, and opacity stand in need of revision. Caygill does not restrict his criticisms to Kemp-Smith’s translation, since any rendering which distorts the nuances of critical thought disqualifies itself from providing a correct interpretation of the work. Consequently, a strong potential for misunderstanding exists for those commentators who rely solely on such translations.

Kant refers to objects in philosophical terms, that is, within transcendental reflection, as *Gegenstände*, and we find just this occurrence in the opening of the *Aesthetic*, which begins with the following paragraph as rendered by Kemp-Smith.

> In whatever manner and by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects (*Gegenstände*), intuition is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought as a means is directed. But intuition takes place only insofar as the object (*Gegenstand*) is given to us. This again is only possible, to man at least, in so far as the mind is affected in a certain way. The capacity (receptivity) for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects, is entitled sensibility. Objects (*Gegenstände*) are given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yields us intuitions; they are thought through the understanding, and from the understanding arise concepts. But all thought must,
directly or indirectly, by way of certain characters, relate ultimately to intuitions, and therefore, with us, to sensitivity, because in no other way can an object (Gegenstand) be given to us. (A19)

These opening sentences refer only to Gegenstände, indicating that Kant is operating immediately from a transcendental point of view. Consequently, this is not a psychological description, and the temptation for the modern audience to read it in psychological terms is very strong, as we find in Waxman’s most recent work.

Psychologism…kicks in just in case the psychology of the origin of the representation under consideration turns up a constituent essential to its content that is superadded by the mind through the psychological operations it performs on data of the senses that, in and of themselves, lack this content. (Waxman 2005 63)

Waxman commits himself to psychologism through his involvement of the sense organs, allowing them an initiating and primary role in the attainment of cognitions, as we have noted. The problem here lies in the confusion of the metaphysical with the empirical. Kant indicates that only the reproductive imagination and its synthesis are relevant to psychology, at B152.

Buchdahl dismisses this one-dimensional form of analysis because it confuses what he terms phenomenological or φ-level language, with ontological considerations of the world, which he calls o-level discourse. Let us see how this works.

An important footnote at B xix indicates the bifurcation of Kantian discourse about objects.

…Now the propositions of pure reason, especially when they venture beyond all boundaries of possible experience, admit of no test by experiment with their objects (Objekte) (as in natural science); thus to experiment will be feasible only with concepts and principles that we assume a priori by arranging the latter so that the same objects (Gegenstände) can be considered from two different sides, on the one side as objects (Gegenstände) of the senses and the understanding for experience, and on the other side as objects

---

4 Auf welche Art und durch welche Mittel sich auch immer eine Erkenntnis auf Gegenstände beziehen mag, so ist doch diejenige, wodurch sie sich auf dieselben unmittelbar bezieht, und worauf alles Denken als Mittel abzweckt, die Anschauung. Diese findet aber nur statt, sofern uns der Gegenstand gegeben wird; dieses aber ist wederum, uns Menschen wenigstens, nur dadurch möglich, daß er das Gemüt auf gewisse Weise affiziere. Die Fähigkeit (Rezeptivität), Vorstellungen durch die Art, wie wir von Gegenständen affiziert werden, zu bekommen, heißt Sinnlichkeit. Vermittelst der Sinnlichkeit also werden uns Gegenstände gegeben, und sie allein liefert uns Anschauungen; durch den Verstand aber werden sie gedacht, und von ihm entspringen Begriffe. Alles Denken aber muß sich, es sei geradezu (direkte) oder im Umenschweife (indirekte), vermittelt gewisser Merkmale zuletzt auf Anschauungen, mithin bei uns auf Sinnlichkeit beziehen, weil uns auf andere Weise kein Gegenstand gegeben werden kann.
(Gegenstände) that are merely thought at most for isolated reason striving beyond the bounds of experience. If we now find that there is agreement with the principle of pure reason when things are considered from this twofold standpoint, but that an unavoidable conflict of reason with itself arises with a single viewpoint, then the experiment decides for the correctness of that distinction. (B xix Italics added)

This passage exemplifies Kant’s perplexing, unexplained and mixed use of Objekt and Gegenstand, which can create difficulties for the reader, since this neglected distinction is one of the ways Kant indicates the point of view from which he is speaking, that is, whether the matter he is discussing is available to the mind empirically or discursively, or both. In Buchdahl’s terms, we need to know when he is using ф-level or о-level discourse, and this distinction illustrates how we can discern Kant’s contextual framework.

The distinction is between what I will label ‘phenomenologically’ and ‘ontologically’ oriented discourse. ‘Phenomenological’, here used in its literal sense, simply denotes the account of the phenomena—such an account involving both the observational and lawlike and the systems presentation met with in the various sciences. One might think of this as a kind of Husserlian ‘Lebenswelt’…assuming a Quinean ocean of naturalistically conceived objectivity (I shall term this ф-level discourse…)

By contrast, ontological discourse, in the sense of ‘ontology’ adopted here, is best explained through the objectives of classical and modern philosophy, when engaged on reflections about the ф-level of the world…Ontological claims centrally involve assertions about what things or objects ‘really are,’ …For Kant the objects making up what he calls ‘the sensory world’ (A538/B566) — a ф-level expression! — may have variously the status of ‘appearance’ or of something ‘intelligible’ (A538/B566), expressions which I shall understand as operating at the ‘ontological’ level (о-level) of discourse. (Buchdahl 1992 53-4)

As I would explain this, we may see ф-level discourse as that which refers to what the mind has before it as concept, experience, or phenomena, which is usually, but not always, the empirical. It is what we are speaking of, and is therefore referred to as Objekt. On the other hand, о-level discourse refers to Kant’s theoretical or transcendental ‘view-from’, where we talk about things in general in conceptual and ontological terms, which therefore refer to Gegenstände.

By keeping this difference before us, we may glean a more dimensioned set of meanings from the text, for example, when dealing with causation. In ф level discourse, we express our everyday experience of causation, which may be absent in о-level analysis through an awareness of Hume’s account of the peculiarities of the concept. Thus, when Kant talks about
objects affecting the mind, he is not using phenomenon-relative language involving what we normally take to be causation between appearances. To try to interpret him as so doing is to open the familiar disputes about sequential, double, or even triple affect, multiple ontological entities and illicit claims to knowledge about things in themselves and so on. As Buchdahl says, such an interpretation is no solution to the problems involved in understanding the *Aesthetic*.

...there is perhaps little need to refer to the occasional ‘vulgar’ supposition of a source of affection that is viewed as the empirical object exerting its influence on the perceptual apparatus of the subject through physical action. This reading is exceedingly tempting since it is not only probable but absolutely certain (on excellent scientific grounds) that physical bodies act on the sensory organism of the observer. But this was not the problem, and the supposed solution here given amounts to an impermissible mixing up of o-level and ф-level discourses... (Buchdahl 1992 65)

So we conclude that Kant’s usage of *Objekt* and *Gegenstand* portrays the mind moving between its various modes of cognition. Above, we noted Buchdahl referring to the differing discourses reflecting this idea, and we may link it to the Copernican metaphor. Just as Copernicus hypothesised the movement of the earth despite appearances, so too we can see that for Kant the mind moves. By observing the mind, either our own or others, we see the activities Kant notes, and the way it employs judgement and reason in differing ways at different times. The temptation is to say that it takes viewpoints of different states of affairs, but this should also be resisted, for it is not the case that it looks at differing worlds or objects so much as making differing assessments of a single state of affairs. The following diagram illustrates the complexity of this situation, in that there are three ways in which Kant uses each of these terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Cognition</th>
<th>Transcendental Object</th>
<th>Intentional Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sensible</td>
<td><em>Gegenstand 1</em></td>
<td><em>Objekt 1</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Problematic Concepts</td>
<td><em>Gegenstand 2</em></td>
<td><em>Objekt 2</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas of pure reason (God, soul, freedom)</td>
<td><em>Gegenstand 3</em></td>
<td><em>Objekt 3</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One or both of these technical terms can refer to any particular ‘thing’, and to look for the difference in the objects themselves or their ontology is futile. That the mind is able to flit from one term to the other is demonstrated by Kant’s employment of them, often using them in the same sentence. When we say the point of view changes, we see that the mind itself can operate in these various modes. As with so many mental processes, we are not likely to be conscious of it without some external guidance, and under such circumstances we would expect just the lack of control and discipline within the use of reason which critical thought seeks to overcome.

What is important for our investigation is that this soul or mind exists independently of and prior to the cognition of objects as either Gegenstände or Objekte. One of the results of this analysis is to do away with the problems associated with the idea that Kant posits different types of object. This stems from the assumption that Kant adopts the paradigm of a static mind occupying an unchanging locus around which objects, of whatever kind, orbit. The Copernican component of Kant’s thought, as presented here, has the capacity to overcome much of the controversy and confusion concerning this by reducing the number of objects needed to describe what there is. The greater importance of this distinction for our understanding of Kant’s religious thought is now clear. In order to talk of the ideas in the *Canon of Pure Reason*, he needs a distinct vocabulary and form of expression to indicate that what he is speaking of is non-empirical but nevertheless a genuine subject of discourse. We now know how this is done.

2.6 Repositioning, a Taxonomy.

Transcendental Idealism falls into historical perspective when we see that it forms the third part of a maturing description of our position in the world. This includes the following negative discoveries.

1. The Earth is not flat.
2. The Earth is not the centre of the universe or the Solar System.
3. The human mind, as intelligence, is not located at the centre of the perceived world, and does not form part of it, but encloses it.
The type of intellectual exercise in which reason modifies or even reverses seemingly factual empirical data can occur at different levels. For example, this process is required to demonstrate that, despite appearances, the earth is more or less spherical. In this case, a general awareness of the true nature of the Terrestrial configuration probably evolved from the experiences of the early Portuguese explorers, and others such as Columbus, Magellan, Marco-Polo and so on, rather than the imaginative efforts of any individual. While this idea has become widely accepted only in recent historical times, we now take it for granted. Nor does it seem to have encountered the type of theological intransigence experienced by Copernicus and his supporters despite its alleged conflict with scripture. It is likely that many children and uneducated adults react with scepticism to the idea of a non-flat Earth. Indeed, some educated adults still reject this claim.

‘The facts are simple,’ says Charles K. Johnson, President of the International Flat Earth Research Society. ‘The Earth is flat.’

As you stand in his front yard, it is hard to argue the point. From among the Joshua trees, creosote bushes, and tumbleweeds surrounding his southern California hillside home, you have a spectacular view of the Mojave Desert. It looks as flat as a pool table. Nearly 20 miles to the west lies the small city of Lancaster; you can see right over it. Beyond Lancaster, 20 more miles as the cueball rolls, the Tehachapi Mountains rise up from the desert floor. Los Angeles is not far to the south. Near Lancaster, you see the Rockwell International plant where the Space Shuttle was built. To the north, beyond the next hill, lies Edwards Air Force Base, where the Shuttle was tested. There, also, the Shuttle will land when it returns from orbiting the earth. (At least, that’s NASA’s story.)

‘You can’t orbit a flat Earth,’ says Mr. Johnson. ‘The Space Shuttle is a joke—and a very ludicrous joke.’ His soft voice carries conviction, for Charles Johnson is on the level. He believes that the main purpose of the space program is to prop up a dying myth—the myth that the Earth is a globe. 5

There is no sense of irony here, and the phrase ‘It looks as flat as a pool table’ tells the empirical story. The immediate experience can be wholly satisfying, and if not tempered by reason in an individual incapable or unwilling to employ it, is likely to remain so. If we rely solely and innocently on our immediate sensual experience, such conclusions become not only possible but almost inevitable. Interestingly, ancient theological texts can provide seemingly authoritative support for these beliefs. The protagonist in this article quotes

5 See [http://www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/fe-scidi.htm](http://www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/fe-scidi.htm), or Google for ‘Flat Earth’.
Biblical examples, such as Jesus being able to see the four corners of the earth from a mountaintop when in the wilderness, indicating an earth both flat and quadrangular. (Matthew 4:8)

On the ‘view-from’ reading, Kant’s attempt to impose a new metaphysical point of view involves moving the observer from a central position within experience to somewhere else. The best-known scientific example of this in Kant’s time, and on which he specifically and deliberately models his own, is the Copernican interpretation of planetary motion. Copernicus’ vision of celestial movement incorporating a solar planetary locus created a storm of scientific and theological controversy which still influences us today. Using this analogy, Buchdahl speaks of the pre-critical centre of gravity in Kant’s thought, which, as with most rationalists, invoked the divine mind.

…in the precritical position the centre of gravity is something metaphysical, located in the divine understanding, by way of sheer postulation, whereas in the critical teaching the category is instead justified or ‘deduced’ as a condition of the possibility of cognition. i.e., of experience, itself involving the human understanding, as the now (transcendental) centre of gravity… (Buchdahl 1981 42-3)

Within many representational theories of cognition, the centre of gravity, that is, the location of the perceiving mind, lies somewhere within the brain, from which location the conscious self observes the surrounding world by way of the senses. Kant provides the idea of a relocated centre of consciousness within judgement, but it is nowhere, since the mind itself has no spatial location. In this way Kant’s theory differs from that of Copernicus, for while the Kantian shifting of the ‘centre of gravity’ is metaphorical, in Copernicus’ revolution it is not. Kant shows an awareness that his hypotheses are of a similar scale and significance to those of his astronomical predecessor, comparing them to those of Copernicus in the preface to the B edition.

…let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects (Gegenstände) must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an a priori cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects (Gegenstände) before they are given to us. This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest. Now in metaphysics we can try in a similar way
regarding the intuition of objects (Gegenstände). If intuition has to conform to the constitution of the objects, then I do not see how we can know anything of them a-priori; but if the object (Gegenstände) (as an object (Objekte) of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, then I can very well represent this possibility to myself.⁶ (B xvi-xvii) (Italics added)

At this point I would indicate the mixed usage of Objekte and Gegenstände in this paragraph, both of which are rendered in translation as ‘objects’. This is of significance for the case I am making, and we return to deal with this shortly. The translation is from the Guyer-Wood edition, which indicates, incorrectly it seems, that the first two uses of Gegenstände in this passage are Objekte.

This comparison continues a few pages later.

In the same way, the central laws of the motion of the heavenly bodies established with certainty what Copernicus assumed at the beginning only as a hypothesis, and at the same time they proved the invisible force (of Newtonian attraction) that binds the universe, which would have remained forever undiscovered if Copernicus had not ventured, in a manner contradictory to the senses yet true, to seek for the observed movements not in the objects of the heavens but in their observer. In this preface I propose the transformation in our way of thinking presented in criticism merely as a hypothesis…even though in the treatise itself it will be proved not hypothetically but rather apodictically from the constitution of our representations of space and time from the elementary concepts of the understanding. (Bxxii n)

To understand this, we need to examine the methodology of Copernicus. This involves, first, the realisation that what is being observed does not conform to reason, that is, that the order we expect to see in nature is not apparent. When confronting contradictions derived from

⁶ Man versuche es daher einmal, ob wir nicht in den Aufgaben der Metaphysik damit besser fortkommen, daß wir annehmen, die Gegenstände müssen sich nach unserem Erkenntnis richten, welches so schon besser mit der verlangten Möglichkeit einer Erkenntnis derselben a priori zusammenstimmt, die über Gegenstände, ehe sie und gegeben werden, etwas festsetzen soll. Es ist hiermit ebenso, als mit den ersten Gedanken des Kopernikus bewandt, der, nachdem es mit der Erklärung der Himmelsbewegungen nicht gut fort wollte, wenn er annahm, das ganze Sternenheer drehe sich um den Zuschauer, versuchte, ob es nicht besser gelingen möchte, wenn er den Zuschauer sich drehen, und dagegen die Sterne in Ruhe ließ. In der Metaphysik kann man nun, was die Anschauung der Gegenstände betrifft, es auf ähnliche Weise versuchen. Wenn die Anschauung sich nach der Beschaffenheit der Gegenstände richten müßte, so sehe ich nicht ein, wie man a priori von ihr etwas wissen könne; richtet sich aber der Gegenstand (als Objekt der Sinne) nach der Beschaffenheit unseres Anschauungsvermögens, so kann ich mir diese Möglichkeit ganz wohl vorstellen. KrV: B xvi-xvii
everyday observations, we need a more sophisticated explanation, in this case aided by the invention of the telescope. Observations of ships moving over the horizon, the curvature of the maritime horizon, or, in the case of astronomy, the erratic movement of planets, may contradict an individual’s ‘common-sense’ view of the world. Second, one has to move the point of view away from the usual egocentric locus from which immediate appearances derive, and view, imaginatively, a state of affairs quite different from that available to the primitive and unaided senses. This two-stage process requires the suspension of belief in the evidence of the senses, defined, in phenomenological terms as ‘Bracketing’, or ‘epochē’, and the creation of a new viewpoint giving a more adequate description of the phenomena, that is, one in which logical contradictions and conflicts with reason are removed, or at least reduced.

The noumenal grounding of reality, which Kant first proposes as a hypothesis, is the elemental component of his Copernican revolution in metaphysics. It bases itself on the thesis that if appearances are not things in themselves, there must be the possibility of something grounding them which we are unable to experience directly as they are in themselves.

But our further contention must also be duly borne in mind, namely, that though we cannot know these objects as things in themselves, we must yet be in position at least to think them as things in themselves; otherwise we should be landed in the absurd conclusion that there can be appearance without anything that appears. (Bxxvi)

Arguably, such a supposition solves many of our most intractable philosophical problems. Among other possible results, it may:

- Allow for the necessity that natural laws need in order to be genuinely scientific, enabling the confident acceptance of predictions based on experimental discoveries.
- Justify synthetic/a priori propositions in general.
- Open up the possibilities available to an unfettered practical reason, such as an authentic and universifiable set of moral laws.
- Provide a basis for a rational and scientifically congruent religion based on a belief in freedom, God, and eternal life.
- Dissolve the mind/body problem.
- Remove the distinction between mind and matter, so that terms such as materialism and spiritualism become devoid of meaning.
• Undermine the dichotomy involving freewill and determinism.
• Overcome Cartesian scepticism concerning the veracity of experience.

The reference to Copernicus is based on the observation that by adopting a revised view of the structure of the Solar System, at first as an imaginative leap, we gain a more coherent and explicable appreciation of everyday experience, and the ability to more accurately predict future astronomical events. If this is so, we are justified in accepting this as proof of the theory’s verisimilitude. Kant applies the same reasoning to our acceptance of the possibility of things in themselves, and if this is able to provide a plausible resolution of any of the problems listed above, we may be justified in giving it our assent.

While we cannot experience or even imagine the noumenal, that is, things in themselves as they are in themselves, we are able to view them in a negative way, as the underlying reality which our mind deals with in creating experience. We can know nothing of how this happens, but we are able to posit it as a hypothesis and then as a justified belief based on the philosophical rewards and insights we gain from so doing.

Earlier, we noted the link in the flat-earther’s mind between belief in a spherical planet and the heliocentric nature of the Solar System, both of which he rejects because they conflict with his version of common sense. They share the characteristic of appearing to contradict the immediate evidence of the senses, and we may ask what is required to stimulate revision of this ‘common sense’ point of view. The answer is of philosophical significance, and we find it in many philosophical advances. The setting aside of immediate observations in Descartes’ *Meditations* is a good example, where the evidence of the senses is first thrown into systematic doubt because of their unreliability.

What I have so far accepted as true *par excellence*, I have got either from the senses or by means of the senses. Now I have sometimes caught the senses deceiving me; and a wise man never entirely trusts those who have once cheated him. (Anscombe and Geach 1954:61-2)

Descartes presents sensual fallibility as the motivation for Rationalism and ultimately for belief in God. The consequent reliance on reason to attain truth lies at the spectral extremity to that of the flat earther’s total reliance on his senses and ‘common sense’. In his six *Meditations*, Descartes seeks a criterion for empirical truth, and finds it, as does the President,
in theology, though we might find Descartes’ approach more sophisticated. He begins this process at the beginning of Meditation Four.

In the past few days I have accustomed myself to withdraw my mind from the senses; I have been careful to observe how little truth there is in our perceptions of corporeal Objects; how much more is known about the human mind, and how much more again about God. (Op. Cit. 92)

From this basis, he works towards his conclusion, in the sixth meditation, concerning the relationship between himself, his understanding, God, and the phenomenal world.

And indeed I need not doubt the reality of things at all, if after summoning all my senses, my memory, and my understanding to examine them, these sources yield no conflicting information. In such things I am nowise deceived, because God is no deceiver. (Op. Cit. 124)

Descartes was not exposed to Humean questioning concerning such things as causation and our belief that the future events will remain congruent with those of the past, or the resulting scepticism. It is just these questions, among others, which cast doubt on the link between reason and observation, which provoked Kant to his efforts.

We may note the increasing epistemic sophistication here. So far we have considered two stages of intellectual maturity, the first involving the spherical nature of our planet, the second, the more difficult realisation that the Earth is not the gravitational centre of the universe or the Solar System. A third step involves the idea that the human seat of consciousness does not reside within the body of empirical appearance, despite ‘appearances’ to the contrary. This is easily understood when we consider that four of the five primary sense organs are in the head, that is, excluding touch and sensations of gastrointestinal activity, joint pain and so on. The organs of hearing, taste, vision and smell and their stimuli connect intimately to the brain around which they cluster, and which also contains the capacity for memory. All sensations from whatever source come together in the brain, and this is taken to indicate the presence of the mind either within or closely related to this organ.

In his Lectures on Metaphysics Kant notes the illusion of intellectual location.

The location that we represent to ourselves of the soul in the brain is only a consciousness of the closer dependence on that place of the body where the soul works most. It is an analogue of location, but not its place. (Lec. on Met Tr. Ameriks/Naragon 1997 45)
the presence [of the soul] in the body cannot be determined locally but only virtually by the influence it has on the body. This influence is immediate only on the nerves… and is strongest in the brain, because there the nerves come together. (Lec. on Met Tr. Ameriks/Naragon 1997 275)

This idea is compatible with Kant’s pre-critical spiritualist outlook, but takes on a new aspect when incorporated into Transcendental Idealism. Since experience is possible only through these sensible conduits, and damage to the brain results in cognitive disruption, sensual distortion, unconsciousness or death, it is natural to think that the mind resides here. Transcendental Idealism places the atemporal mind ‘outside’ all such appearances, and when we ask where it is we must answer that such a question has no meaning, since it is nowhere. The continuity of this necessary and implicit result of Transcendental Idealism with Copernican insights usually passes unremarked. Kant overturns the comfortable and conventional view that we exist, as minds, within our bodies and respond to external physical stimuli acting on our senses. On his hypothesis, we are not embodied minds, or souls, and the reasoning is quite simple. These bodies, senses, and objects are themselves representations existing in time and space, and consequently cannot come into existence until after the imaginational synthesis, as an operation of the mind, presents them as appearances.

It is absurd to assume a location of the soul in the human body; a human being is an ensouled body… (Lec. on Met Tr. Ameriks/Naragon 1997 397-8)

Rather than being embodied minds and souls as in traditional metaphysics, Kant teaches the opposite, that the body is ensouled and must be seen as such if we are to make sense of the world. The body is within the mind, which itself operates as a free cognitive and moral agent beyond the causal constraints of the formal spatiotemporal matrix. It has no spatial location in the body or anywhere else and has the characteristics needed for the discussion of the self as non-corporeal soul in the religious writings.

On this analysis, Kant’s terminology in the Aesthetic becomes clearer. This is needed, since his usage creates the possibility for ambiguous interpretation of the type we find in the opening passage, where he talks about Gegenstände being given to us through intuition.

…intuition takes place only insofar as the object (Gegenstand) is given to us; but this in turn, at least for us humans, as possible only if it affects the mind in a certain way. (A19/B33)
From the above discussion, we can see how what is ‘given to us’ as *Gegenstände* are referred to in the most general and discursive manner, and is both a thing in itself and an appearance. As a result, this passage may be understood in two distinct ways. We can read it as a simple empirical statement in the way that Waxman, Bossart and many others do, that is, as a description of representations being caused by the influence of external objects on the senses. To do this alone is to miss the point and create unnecessary problems, as I have indicated. Reading it in the transcendental sense, at what Buchdahl terms o-level discourse, gives us an entirely different interpretation. In this, *Gegenstände* affect the mind (Gemüt) to stimulate sensibility and the *a priori* imaginational synthesis. This invokes the formal structuring of time and space and the application of the categories, in other words the full prerequisites of both *a priori* and contingent synthetic cognition, giving rise to the world of nature as we experience it. This process necessarily occurs outside of and logically prior to the experience of time, space and categorised experience in general, and any interpretation of ‘affect’ as ‘cause’ in the temporal or successive sense is inappropriate.

So far, I have argued that the mind or soul is portrayed in the *Aesthetic* as acting and existing beyond or logically prior to the spatio/temporal matrix. What then becomes of sensibility, as *Sinnlichkeit*? If the experience that we derive cognitions through the interplay of empirical objects, senses and mind is misleading, though not of course illusory, how then are they derived? For Kant, only one possibility exists, and that involves the interplay of mind, as soul, with that something variously expressed as things in themselves. Sensibility, on this transcendental reading, has nothing to do with those senses such as sight, hearing and so on, which exist as representations, being themselves the result of the operations of sensibility and the imaginational synthesis. Consider the following as presented by Pluhar.

…when a body is presented in intuition, this representation contains nothing whatever that could belong to an object (*Gegenstand*) in itself. It contains, rather, merely the appearance of something, and the way we are affected by that something. This receptivity of our cognitive capacity is called sensibility… (*Cr. Of P. Reason*, Tr. Pluhar 1996 A44)

We may note the use of *Gegenstand* here, indicating a viewpoint of transcendental reflection. As a non-sensuous activity, transcendental sensibility is the capacity of a mind’ capacity to respond to the mysterious influence of an unknown ‘something’ and then represent to itself
the empirical result of that stimulation. Heidegger, almost alone among the commentators, emphasises this reversal of empirical representational theory.

Human intuition, then, is not ‘sensible’ because its affection takes place through ‘sense organs’, but rather the reverse. Because our Dasein is finite—existing in the midst of beings that already are, beings to which it has been delivered over—therefore it must necessarily take this already-existing being in stride, that is to say, it must offer it the possibility of announcing itself. Organs are necessary for the possible relaying of the announcement…With this, Kant for the first time attains a concept of sensibility which is ontological rather than sensualistic. Accordingly, if empirically affective intuition of beings does not need to coincide with ‘sensibility,’ then the possibility of a nonempirical sensibility remains essentially open. (Heidegger 1997 19)

For Kant’s purposes, nothing beyond the possibility of non-sensual and transcendental sensibility needs to be taken into account when considering the origins of cognitions as finite intuitions. The Metaphysical Lectures, as so often happens, contains a more explicit expression of such doctrines than the Critique, which often assumes them. The following is from Metaphysik Vigilantius (K3) dating from 1794-5, and thus well in to the critical era.

…in regard to the power of imagination, how can something bodily be made noticeable? Should a human being have representations of outer objects, they are still not formed in him as though enclosed in space. He does not cognize the objects in material figure, i.e., the outer material does not flow over into the soul. But an unknown something, which is not appearance, is what influences the soul, and so we obtain in us a homogeneity with things. Herein lies the representation that is produced in us not by the phenomenon itself of the body but, rather, by the substrate of matter, the noumenon. (Lec. on Met Tr. Ameriks/Naragon 1997 495-6 Italics in original.)

We do not transcendentally cognise objects in their material form, but create that form afterwards. We also find this realisation in Heidegger’s analysis of the Critique.

For Kant, sensibility means finite intuition. Pure sensibility must be the sort of intuition that takes what is intuitable in stride in advance—prior to all empirical receiving. (Heidegger 1997 64)

Seen in this transcendental way, sensibility is an a priori function of mind having no immediate employment of sense organs, and the intuition so involved is purely a function of mind. It appears that few commentators are able to discern this necessary component of
Kant’s theory, or, if they do as in the case of Strawson and Schopenhauer, find it hard to believe.

2.7 Schopenhauer’s ‘Errors.’

Schopenhauer is of particular interest, since he works out that Kant is committed to pre-empirical and non-sensuous cognition, and then, in an act of unwitting plagiarism, thinks he invents it himself. He alleges that Kant errs in denying intellectual intuition, which of course he does in the fullest meaning of that term. We find Schopenhauer’s analysis in his Appendix to volume 1 of *The World as Will and Representation*, which is devoted to criticism and amendment of Kant’s thought. One ‘great error’ Schopenhauer alleges derives from the relationship between perceptions and their concepts, what Locke calls objects and ideas of objects.

I now return to Kant’s great mistake…namely that he did not properly separate knowledge of perception from abstract knowledge; from this there arose a terrible confusion… If he had sharply separated representations of perceptions from concepts thought merely in *abstracto*, he would have kept these two apart, and would have known with which of the two he had to deal…His ‘object of experience,’…the proper subject of the categories, is not the representation of perception, nor is it the abstract concept; it is different from both, and is yet both at the same time…Strange as it is, there is constantly running through his mind something between the two, and so there comes about the unfortunate confusion…. (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 437)

On our reading, which understands representations to be empirical objects, Schopenhauer’s criticism loses its plausibility, and Kant’s ‘great error’ is seen as an intentional and integral part of his description. Like Waxman and many others, Schopenhauer is caught up in the idea that, for Kant, sense organs are involved in the representational process, misled by the terminology relating to the outer origins of empirical perception. On this basis, he sets out to give a corrected reading of what Kant should have said as he sees it, and quotes Kant’s account in the opening sentence of the *Transcendental Logic* concerning the origin of cognitions.

‘Our knowledge,’ he says, ‘has two sources, receptivity of impressions and spontaneity of concepts: the former is the capacity for receiving representations; the latter is the capacity for knowing an object through these representations. Through the first an object is given to us, through the second it is thought.’ This is
false, for according to this the impression, for which alone we have mere receptivity, which therefore comes from without and alone is really 'given,' would be already a representation, in fact even an object. (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 438)

We are familiar with this line of reasoning, as we have outlined it above, along with the problems of interpreting sensibility as involving the sensual organs. Rather than re-reading Kant and finding the problems resulting from his own misunderstanding, Schopenhauer persists in taking Kant to be positing a sensual origin of perceptions associated with causal impact, and, having shown its error, goes on to rectify it. His attempt is complicated by the natural result confronting all who attempt a sensual reading of this relationship in isolation, in that an inevitable multiplicity of entities soon occurs. Consequently, we find him listing a number of entities to which he believes Kant is ontologically committed.

…Kant makes a triple distinction: (1) the representation; (2) the object of the representation; (3) the thing-in-itself. The first is the concern of sensibility…The second is the concern of the understanding…The third lies beyond all possibility of knowledge... (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 444)

Having created this catalogue, Schopenhauer proceeds to reduce it. He quite reasonably points out that ‘The distinction between the representation and the object of the representation is, however, unfounded. Berkeley had already demonstrated this…in fact it follows from Kant’s own wholly idealistic point of view in the first edition’ (Schopenhauer ibid). The result of this analysis is that ‘…when we reflect clearly, nothing can be found except representation and thing-in-itself. The unwarranted introduction of that hybrid, the object of the representation, is the source of Kant’s errors’ (Schopenhauer ibid).

According to Schopenhauer, Kant gives no account of the origins of empirical perception, but treats it as a given, with the result that sensation ‘…remains always subjective, and does not put an object into space, even when space is given with it’ (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 445). On the contrary, according to the ‘view-from’ reading of sensibility we are considering, empirical phenomena are always and necessarily subjective, being mind dependent, and this is not seen by Schopenhauer as part of Kant’s transcendental theory. In the ‘view from’ reading, this possibility of synthetic a priori cognition is the essence of Transcendental Idealism, and can only exist on the condition of mediation by formalised sensibility, not the senses, a position we find enunciated in the Prolegomena.
If our intuition had to be of the kind that represented things as they are in themselves, then absolutely no intuition a priori would take place, but it would always be empirical... There is therefore only one way possible for my intuition to precede the actuality of the object and occur as an a priori cognition, namely if it contains nothing else except the form of sensibility, which in me as subject precedes all actual impressions through which I am affected by objects. For I can know a priori that the objects of the senses can be intuited only in accordance with this form of sensibility. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 34)

We may understand this more easily through Buchdahl’s comments concerning A494/B522, where Kant writes, ‘The faculty of sensible intuition is strictly only a receptivity, a capacity of being affected in a certain manner with representation (mit Vorstellungen affiziert zu werden)’ (Buchdahl 1992 160). Consider the use of mit. Seen in any reactive way, affection becomes something that happens to the mind purely in a passive or receptive manner, not something with causal implications. Buchdahl consequently concludes that ‘affection’ in this context is causally neutral, that is, ‘In such cases affection, we may say, works in a phenomenological sense, characterising the experiential process as such, without reference to any ‘external causal source’ (Buchdahl Ibid.). Thus we characterise the link between things in themselves and the ‘I’ as not being causal, but rather the result of some unknown interaction resulting in what Kant refers to as affection in the absence of a more neutral term. To the extent that it involves the ‘I’, it is intellectual.

The abiding and unchanging ‘I’ (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them... It is this apperception which must be added to pure imagination, in order to render its function intellectual. (A124)

The imagination is incapable of registering and interpreting representations on its own, and something else is needed, that is, apperception. Schopenhauer works out that Kant’s theory of sensibility needs direct access by mind to things in themselves, and mistakenly refers to this as intellectual intuition based on a causal relationship, and rejects it. He is also unable to discount the need for physical sense organs in any description of the coming into being of appearances. He repeatedly refers to this, and because he does not distinguish between the intellectual and sensual processes of intuition within Kant’s account is unable to make sense of what is said about intellectual intuition considered in isolation.

Moreover, as regards myself, I must confess that, in my narrow-mindedness, I too cannot grasp or imagine in any other way than as the sixth sense of bats a faculty of reason that directly perceives, or apprehends, or has intellectual intuition of, the supersensible... (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 521)
We see here the failure to understand that for Transcendental Idealism to make sense we must see it as an account of the mind acting within the supersensible, with no reference to mediating sense organs. Consequently, Schopenhauer rejects the idea of noumenal influence, takes authority from Kant himself in denying the possibility of intellectual intuition, and at the same time accuses Kant of employing an illicit and underhand causality.

If he did not wish to admit this relation, he should have expressly denied it, but he does not do even this. He therefore furtively manoeuvres round it, and all the Kantians have stealthily evaded it in precisely the same way. The secret motive for this is that he reserves the causal nexus under the name ‘ground of the phenomenon’ for the false deduction of the thing-in-itself, and then that, through the relation to the cause, perception would become intellectual, a thing which he dare not admit. Moreover, he seems to have been afraid that, if the causal nexus be allowed to hold good between sensation and object, the latter would once become the thing-in-itself, and would introduce Locke’s empiricism. But the difficulty is removed by reflection constantly reminding us that the law of causality is of subjective origin, just as is the sensation itself; moreover our own body, in so far as it appears in space, already belongs to representations. But Kant was prevented from admitting this by his fear of Berkeleian idealism. (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 447)

We have seen Kant refer to the duality of his theory of cognition, which includes both a sensible and transcendental mode. At B150, he spells out the idea that the unity of apperception relates to the manifold combined by the pure concepts of the understanding, i.e., the categories. This in turn makes synthetic a priori knowledge possible through the operations of the understanding, making such a synthesis intellectual, contrary to Schopenhauer’s version of the situation.

The synthesis or combination of the manifold in [the categories] relates only to the unity of apperception, and is thereby the ground of the possibility of a priori knowledge, so far as such knowledge rests on the understanding. This synthesis, therefore, is at once transcendental and also purely intellectual. (B150)

Complete intellectual intuition refers to the God-like capacity to access and know thing in themselves as they are in themselves, something lacking in humans. On this account, human sensibility never becomes intellectual in the God-like sense.

This mode of intuining in space and time … is derivative (intuitus derivativus), not original (intuitus originarius), and therefore not an intellectual intuition. For the reason stated above, such intellectual intuition seems to belong solely to the primordial being, and can never be ascribed to a dependent being.
dependent in its existence as well as in its intuition, and which through that intuition determines its existence solely in relation to given objects (Objekte.) (B72)

Schopenhauer realises that in order for Transcendental Idealism to be coherent, the mind must have a direct non-sensuous relationship with things in themselves. He also correctly discerns that an empirical object and its appearance need to be the same thing. He then fails to realise that Kant’s theory of sensibility provides for both of these, and concludes that it therefore gives no account of the origin of empirical perception. He erroneously concludes that intellectual intuition of the kind proscribed by Kant for humans is needed, along with the causal relationship also denied by Kant involving the sense organs. After rejecting the table of categories and the schematism, he also rejects the reciprocal relationship between concepts and intuitions which Kant demands, that is, the idea that thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. He refers to Kant’s ‘…monstrous assertion that without thought, and hence without abstract concepts, there is absolutely no knowledge at all…that perception without concept is absolutely empty…Now this is the very opposite of the truth, for concepts obtain all meaning, all content, only from their reference to representations of perception, from which they have been abstracted…’ (Schopenhauer 1969 I 474).

These diverse elements come together in the conclusion that a direct intellectual theory of perception is required. Schopenhauer firmly grasps the nettle of intellectual intuition, and identifies the will with the thing in itself, of which we can have a direct and immediate relationship.

[Particular things] are only the object of perception; our empirical perception is at once objective, just because it comes from the causal nexus. Things, and not representations different from them, are directly its object. Individual things as such are perceived in the understanding and through the senses…in perception itself empirical reality, and consequently experience, is already given; but perception can also come about only by the application of knowledge of the causal nexus, the sole function of the understanding, to the sensation of the senses. Accordingly, perception is really intellectual, and this is just what Kant denies. (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 443)

This discussion of Schopenhauer’s attack on Transcendental Idealism is informative in that it demonstrates one of the many ways its components can be rearranged, and its potential for being converted to suit an alternate theory. By analysing this particular attempt, we have been able to highlight some of the components of Kant’s thought, and how they relate to each
other. The point is that any attempt to confuse the transcendental viewpoint with the empirical creates unnecessary and redundant problems such as ‘double affection’, among others, and many of the criticisms relating to empirical sources of cognition we have seen levelled at the cogency of Kant’s philosophy.

The problems we have discussed highlight a number of mistaken readings and assumptions deriving from various interpretations of Transcendental Idealism. These include the following ideas attributed to Kant, each of which I have disputed.

1. Things in themselves causally impact on the senses.
2. Things in themselves causally affect the mind to create ideas.
3. There are two realities, that of appearances and that which ‘really’ exists.
4. The mind and its activities exist within the human body.
5. The soul resides within the human body during its life.
6. Kant’s account of mental processes is psychological.
7. Kant is unable to overcome epistemic scepticism concerning spatiotemporal states of affairs beyond their phenomenological representation.
8. Transcendental Idealism is a form of the primary/secondary properties distinction.
9. Kant has no coherent criterion of truth and his postulated appearances are still susceptible to Cartesian scepticism.

It might be thought difficult to find most of these errors expressed in a single paragraph in recent literature after more than two hundred years of intensive scholarship, but here they are in a recent work dealing with theological history.

But on the other hand, in the Critique of Pure Reason (1781) Kant argued that it was impossible to be certain that the order we think we discern in nature bore any relation at all to external reality. This ‘order’ was simply the creation of our own minds; even the so-called scientific laws of Newton probably tell us more about human psychology than about the cosmos. When the mind receives information about the physical world outside itself through the senses, it has to reorganize this data according to its own internal structures in order to make any sense of it. Kant was wholly confident of the mind’s capacity to devise a viable rational vision for itself, but by showing that it was really impossible for human beings to escape their own psychology, he also made it clear that there was no such thing as absolute truth. All our ideas were essentially subjective and interpretive…Kant severed the link between humanity and the world altogether and shut us up within our own heads. (Armstrong 2004 74)
Returning to our main discussion, it is now clear that despite the problems some readers have with it, Kant has a clear-cut and unique transcendental account of the mind, as soul, and its workings. At this point, it is also clear that the *Aesthetic* contains material able to support the contention that it provides an appropriate base for the later religious writings. One of its achievements is the creation of the room necessary to house and employ the activities of the soul and other things in themselves, a *Spielraum* made possible by limiting the aspirations of theoretical reason. In doing this, Kant assumes and presents us with an active, free, and spontaneous soul as mind acting independently of the constraints of time and space. Such a soul is needed for the practical purposes Kant later reveals in the *Dialectic* and beyond, since, being unconditioned, it is able to act with perfect freedom.

One of the problems we face lies in discerning just what Kant is talking about, that is, what his subject matter is, as distinct from what he was trying to say about this subject matter. In everyday discourse, we assume that when presented with a proposition, such as ‘It is raining’ that a corresponding state of affairs exists somewhere, usually in time and space. It is this correspondence which provides the criterion necessary to assess its truth or otherwise. It is difficult habit to shake, and it is necessary to see that Kant’s metaphysical subject has no material correlate. Consequently, we find repeatedly that when the exposition deals with mind or soul and objects, there is a strong temptation to consider it a form of psychology in the modern sense or spiritualism in the old sense when it is neither. Further, relating mind to brain, and sensibility to the senses, compounds the error, as the references above exemplify.

Kant’s subject matter is analogous to psychology, perhaps, if we see him as a transcendental behaviourist, since he bases his philosophy solely on what is available to empirical observation and the rational conclusions drawn from that. But that is as far at it goes, for Kant is not promulgating any form of psychoanalysis or relating to a psychological state of affairs as defined in his own time or ours, but is interested only in a purely abstract and metaphysical set of ideas. If his account of mental stimulation by ‘objects’ is taken as expressing a transcendental *qua* metaphysical point of view, so must his description of the activities it engages in. Further, if, as I have argued, mind and soul are for Kant the same non-corporeal something, then so are the faculties of that mind giving rise to synthesis.
Synthesis in general is...the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious. (A 78)

The imagination here spoken of does not ‘exist’ anywhere, and neither does the soul, the understanding or the mind which employs it. They are concepts used by Kant to explain our world and our place in it, and should not be confused with what the brain as a physical organ does. The truth-value of this description lies in any coherence it may have, rather than any correspondence to external matters. The striking thing about all this transcendental construction work is the secular terminology in which it is expressed. Kant refers to traditional theological concepts such as God and the soul, but he restricts himself to these, and is clearly intent on distorting his ideas from School metaphysics, theological reifications, and commonly accepted understandings of the human position in the world. Nevertheless, such a description does have the potential for employment within a religious context.

We have seen how in the *Aesthetic* Kant creates a metaphysical space for the metaphysical ideas, that is, the soul and the possibility for belief in God. In the final section of the *Aesthetic*, as we have noted, by denying that time and space are forms of things in themselves, he leaves room for the idea of a God whose cognitive capacity is purely intellectual. The derivative nature of human cognition differs from that of the ‘primordial being’ (B72) whose intellectual intuition can exist independently of time and space, and whose self-awareness, unlike that of humans, is also independent of objects. Kant does not mean his comments about God to be supportive of aesthetic, but a consequence allowed by it. He is not offering a proof of God’s existence, and, because of this, and despite his comments regarding God, Kant’s primary religious interests concentrate on the positioning of the soul and his arguments are more often directed that way.

2.8 Some Conclusions.

We may detect a set of tensions in Kant’s presentation in the early sections of the first *Critique*, especially the *Aesthetic*. He needs to express the positioning of human intelligence, as mind, in broad and necessarily inclusive terms that encompass the full range of meanings he has for it. He also sets the stage for the main purpose of his exposition, that is, the creation of a scientifically compatible practical metaphysics, and this in itself creates difficulties. In the attempt to make possible a religious outlook sharing the intellectual integrity of the
sciences, we find a tendency to secularise the exposition, avoiding references to traditional religious dogmas. On the other, he needs to bridge carefully the now obsolete expressions and his own, and he does this by preserving references to God and the soul, though even this latter is often subsumed under the heading of mind (Gemüt) or even the understanding. This tendency is arguably more pronounced in the B edition. Nevertheless, his aim of creating the possibility of a rational religious outlook becomes clear through analysis. When we read the Critique as having this subtext throughout, and see that it employs practical reason as its instrument, we find the work takes on a clarity and coherence absent in those accounts treating it as a physico-psychological treatise of a mind operating within an empirical environment. From our analysis of the Aesthetic, we have a number of conclusions drawn from the ‘view-from’ understanding of Transcendental Idealism, which are not statements of fact about actuality, but are expressed as ideas, concepts, or beliefs.

1. We understand by the concept of mind an idea of a non-corporeal thing in itself which makes no appearance in time and space.
2. The self is referred to as soul for the purposes of practical reason.
3. Kant’s Copernican turn reverses the relationship between mind and nature, in that the empirical world, transcendentally considered, is seen to reside and manifest itself as appearances within the mind.
4. Conditioned nature comes into experience spontaneously and completely through the operations of mind. This begins with the creation of the manifold of pure a priori intuitions formed through the formal structures of time and space, followed by the uptake of these intuitions through categorial synthesis. (A77)
5. Synthesis is the linking of different representations through concepts, including categorisation and schematisation, and all such activity is the province of the transcendental productive imagination. None of these creative activities occurs within the natural world; rather, they are anterior and atrial to it.
6. The natural world does not have an independent existence, for in that case each of its components would be a thing in itself. Consequently there is only one world, which is neither material nor immaterial in any traditional sense. It is the idea of a world of noumenal reality to which even the predicate ‘existence’ is inappropriate, since its non-existence is equally meaningless.
7. Sensibility is neither fully intellectual nor purely sensuous in its dealings with things in themselves. Nor, for this reason, is the relationship between mind and Gegenstände aetiological.

8. The organs of sense and the brain to which they connect within nature, the body which houses them and all other phenomena existing in time and space number among the appearances thrown up by the imaginational synthesis which derive actuality through intuition and perception.

9. Appearances are not empirically ideal in any Berkeleian sense, since their origin does not derive solely from the interior mental activity of the perceiving mind.

In what follows, we need to reinforce the idea that the viewpoint from which these assessments are made, that is, the protagonist Kant adopts in writing as he does, does not locate itself within nature. Limited as it is to perceptions and concepts, however, it can experience only nature. This strictly empirical outlook is natural and universal, being as common to humans as the time and space in which the world is experienced. Consequent to this limitation, Kant’s postulate of the idea of mind as extraneous to time and space is based on the awareness of selfhood as a representation in general, which is then used to infer that something which is not representation may accompany it. Our discussion of this theme takes place in Chapter Three. The only way to realise such a state of affairs is through reason and the imaginative ability to relocate human intelligence within a thought experiment. One of the characteristics of School metaphysics, traditional theology and much popular thinking is the bifurcation between the material and non-material, usually referred to as the spiritual. The position of soul on this account was one of continuing existence, as distinct from the body within which it resided during corporeal life. Kant’s writing has usually been seen as a continuation and reinforcement of this scenario, and we shall show in Chapter Four that this is not the case. For now we need to look at the notion of self within critical thought.
Chapter 3. Kant’s Self and the ‘View-From’.

3.0 Introduction.

Previously, we discussed the ways in which Kant refers to the idea of transcendental self as conscious mind. Since we are interested in the implications this has for his later religious writings, we now look at his various meanings of selfhood. He refers to the self in a variety of ways, using such terms as the synthetic unity of pure apperception, transcendental apperception, as a thing in itself, as noumenon, an idea, the intelligible self, the ‘I think’, the transcendental subject, and the soul, to which he ascribes freedom from the conditioned. He also talks about a correlate of the self as the transcendental object = X. Our interest lies in these notions of selfhood, their place in critical thought, the freedom or otherwise he attributes to them and their relationship to the religious and metaphysical ideas in general. We are also interested in freedom, since arguably it forms the core of the moral teachings. From this, I hope to arrive at a clear demonstration of the positioning of the transcendental subject as a morally and metaphysically necessary object of reason, and as a soul or mind able to act as an autonomous moral agent guided by practical reason. The purpose here is not to be polemical, critical or supportive of Kant in this way, but through exegesis to analyse as closely as possible his overall position on a number of issues. In this way I aim to attain a point of view aligned with his as closely as possible. Only then, I argue, is it possible to begin any useful criticism or assessment of his doctrines.

Kant establishes the possibility that selfhood, the consciousness of self as the ‘I think’, may accompany all cognitions, indicating the presence of something that is not a spatial appearance. As a conscious being, this something experiences the combination of representations, becoming aware of itself both as a thought and as a representation in general within time through inner sense, accompanied by a tendency to construe itself dialectically as a simple and substantial entity. Kant also thinks of it as a thing in itself capable of awareness of its own cognitions, judgments and reasoning. This complex idea needs explanation if we are to come to terms with the freedom Kant allows the transcendental self, as he acknowledges.
Now let us suppose that the distinction, which our Critique has shown to be necessary, between things as objects of experience and those same things as things in themselves, has not been made. In that case all things in general, as far as they are efficient causes, would be determined by the mechanisms of nature. I could not without palpable contradiction, say...of the human soul, that its will is free and yet is subject to natural necessity, that is, is not free. For I have taken the soul in both propositions in one and the same sense, namely, as a thing in general, that is, as a thing in itself. (Bxxviii)

From this we learn that the doctrine of things in themselves allows the soul, as an idea, to be considered as a thing in itself, and consequently free of the conditioning effects of time, space and the categories. This applies even when it is also experienced as a representation in general through inner sense. This is a seemingly impossible paradox to explain, but as we shall see, Transcendental Idealism makes available an ingenious solution carrying with it a profound insight into the nature of the world as Kant sees it.

Kant says that while we are aware of our own existence through apperception, we have no access through intuition or reason to any noumenal correlate of the representational synthesis we identify as our own, that is, of any transcendental subject, which remains forever non-cognisable and problematic for theoretical reason, as with all things in themselves. Because of this, theoretical reason has no inferential role concerning the soul, and any attempt to apply it in this area is necessarily dialectical. Through practical reason, however, the idea of soul and its freedom from the conditioned comes to occupy a central position in Kant’s later writings, and it is the relationship between the various forms of apperception and the idea of soul which we will explore in this chapter.

3.1 The Synthetic Unity of Apperception.

We find Kant’s description of our experience of unified consciousness towards the beginning of the Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding. As with other themes, Kant seems to have given this topic much thought between the first and second editions and his exposition in the B edition concerning the synthetic unity of pure apperception is more detailed. This changing emphasis is not welcomed by Schopenhauer, who bemoans the de-emphasis of the earlier discussion of the transcendental subject, with what he sees as its more noumenal and idealistic emphasis.
…the *Critique of Pure Reason* was at that time known to me only in its second edition, or in the five subsequent editions printed from it. Now when later I read Kant’s principal work in the first edition, which had already become scarce, I saw, to my great joy, all those contradictions disappear. I found that, although Kant does not use the words ‘No object without subject,’ he nevertheless, just as much as do Berkeley and I, declares that the external world lying before us in space and time to be mere representation of the subject that knows it. Thus, for example, he says there (p.383) without reserve: ‘If I take away the thinking subject, the whole material world must cease to exist, as it is nothing but the phenomena and in the sensibility of our subject, and a species of its representations.’ However, the whole passage from p. 348 to p. 392, in which Kant expounds his decided idealism with great beauty and clarity, was suppressed by him in the second edition. On the other hand, he introduced a number of remarks that controverted it. In this way, the text of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as it was in circulation from the year 1787 to 1838 becomes disfigured and spoilt; it was a self-contradictory book, whose sense therefore could not be thoroughly clear and comprehensible to anyone. (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 434-5)

Schopenhauer’s protest underlines Kant’s varying expressions in the different editions. These seem to be his response to the allegations of Berkeleian idealism that he found difficult to counter within the mindset of his contemporary critics, and which is still seen as a problem by many today. The difficulty for any analyst, sympathetic or not, is the underlying flux apparent in this and other themes. We have noted how some elements of Kant’s thought develop, and in some cases it is difficult to determine just what authentically represents his final position, if there is one. It is of little use to privilege one text over another, as Schopenhauer does, or otherwise look to selective references in support of interests that are not necessarily Kant’s. Neither is it adequate to pretend that examples drawn from the variable and shattered episteme of the *Opus Postumum* are the final authority.

Kant presents a picture of self-consciousness and awareness of personal unity as a spontaneous and uncaused process whose grounding must remain a mystery. Despite this, he begins with the idea that an awareness of selfhood as the ‘I think’ is an undeniable and immanent fact of human experience and therefore a representation.

It must be possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany all my representations; or otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought of all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me. All the manifold of intuition has, therefore, a necessary relation to the ‘I think’ in the same subject in which this manifold is found. But this representation is an act of spontaneity, that is, it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it pure apperception, to distinguish it from empirical apperception, or, again, original apperception, because it is that self-consciousness which, while generating the representation ‘I think’ (A representation which must be
capable of accompanying all other representations, and which in all consciousness is one and the same),
cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation. The unity of this apperception I likewise entitle
the transcendental unity of self-consciousness, in order to indicate the possibility of a priori knowledge
arising from it. (B131-2)

Here we learn that consciousness of self is a unique representation in general, lacking any
specific experiential presence apart from the manner in which we become conscious of it,
which is through a synthesis or manifold of singular representations. It derives from an act of
spontaneity influenced by neither the noumenal nor the will, and it is therefore both a priori
and a possible source of a priori knowledge. Kant’s use of ‘sensibility’ indicates a reference
to the noumenal precipitation of sensible intuitions, which is not relevant in this case because
of the spontaneous way in which this representation occurs. This is due to its secondary and
logically later realisation, which comes to consciousness after all the representations that
comprise it have formed.

This thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of the manifold which is given in intuition contains a
synthesis of representations, and is possible only through the consciousness of the synthesis. For the
empirical consciousness, which accompanies different representations, is in itself diverse and without
relation to the identity of the subject. That relation comes about, not simply through my accompanying each
representation with consciousness, but only in so far as I conjoin one representation with another, and am
conscious of the synthesis of them. Only in so far, therefore, as I can unite a manifold of given
representations in one consciousness, is it possible for me to represent to myself the identity of the
consciousness in [i.e. throughout] these representations. (B135)

We usually think of ourselves as both conscious of our representations, and of the unity of
this consciousness. Unlike the idea of soul, the ‘I think’, as self-consciousness, is not a
product of reason, neither does it originate in the understanding nor in any specific
experience. It receives itself as a spontaneous representation formed by the clustering of the
totality of individual representations at any one time, giving us an awareness of a unique
personal aggregation of perceptions that we recognise as belonging to a single consciousness,
and that at any given moment we are that consciousness. The spontaneity involved in this
derives neither from sensation nor from noumenal influence, and Kant later sees in this
spontaneity the source and origin of freedom as a practical idea. The other important
implication of this passage is that we view all other specific and collated representations from
the point of view of this selfhood, because it alone is capable of judgment.
The awareness of self as a representation in general has a number of important aspects, two of which are of immediate interest to us. First, we are aware of the unity of consciousness within a mind having the ability to present intuitions only as categorised spatio/temporal representations, including those relating to the physical self, experienced through the manifold of appearances as pure apperception. From this we learn that we are originally aware of our being not as we are, but as a generalised representation in time experienced through inner sense and all its perceptions, and through nothing else. We can know this aggregated appearance within inner sense which represents us, but we have no mode or category through which we can know it in any other way. This awareness of self through pure apperception is not a metaphysical construct, but comes under notice by observing the totality of intuited perceptions and their occurrence within a single consciousness, and is to that extent a purely empirical observation. Such an awareness forms the limit of knowledge concerning the self. We are not even in a position to contrast this being with matter in the traditional dualist manner, since matter, as representation, is merely a property or transient modality of mind itself. Kant expresses this in the A edition *Paralogisms*.

If I understand by soul a thinking being in itself, the question whether or not it is the same in kind as matter—matter not being a thing in itself, but merely a species of representations in us—is by its very terms illegitimate. For it is obvious that a thing in itself is of a different nature from the determinations which constitute only its state.

If, on the other hand, we compare the thinking ‘I’ not with matter but with the intelligible that lies at the basis of the outer appearances which we call matter, we have no knowledge whatsoever of the intelligible, and therefore are in no position to say that the soul is in any inward respect different from it.

The simple consciousness is not, therefore, knowledge of the simple nature of the self as subject, such as might enable us to distinguish it from matter, as from a composite being... it does not suffice for determining what is specific and distinctive in the nature of the self, even though we may still profess to know that the thinking ‘I’, the soul (a name for the transcendental object of inner sense), is simple, such a way of speaking has no sort of application to real objects, and therefore cannot in the least extend our knowledge. (A360-1)

Kant here presents one of his more enduring doctrines, and one often misunderstood by commentators. He denies the dualism between mind and matter common to other metaphysical systems, something we look at more closely in Chapter Four. Viewed from the point of view of Transcendental Idealism, the illegitimacy of this dichotomy becomes
apparent through the recognition that the matter comprising representations is not a thing in itself, but constitutes that which makes up the awareness of self, and which perdure only to and within that self. This breakdown of the mind/matter dichotomy is of significance for the two-world theory of Transcendental Idealism, which relies on this possibility to make its point.

Not only does the breakdown of dualism facilitate incontrovertible knowledge of objects in space and time, but also of the presence of the self which experiences these objects.

From the start, we have declared ourselves in favour of this transcendental idealism; and our doctrine thus removes all difficulty in the way of accepting the existence of matter on the unaided testimony of our mere self-consciousness, or of declaring it to be thereby proved in the same manner as the existence of myself as a thinking being is proved. There can be no question that I am conscious of my representations; these representations and I myself, who have the representations, therefore exist. (A370)

The awareness of self does not justify the Cogito, which involves thought rather than simple consciousness, and from it we cannot deduce or infer the existence of the transcendental subject either as simple or as substance, as in the rational doctrine of the soul. In a footnote to the B edition Paralogisms, Kant denies the inference from ‘I think’ to ‘I exist’ on the grounds that no category or concept is applicable to the self experienced in this way.

The ‘I think’ is, as already stated, an empirical proposition, and contains within itself the proposition ‘I exist’. But I cannot say ‘Everything which thinks, exists’. For in that case the property of thought would render all beings which possess it necessary beings. My existence cannot, therefore, be regarded as an inference from the proposition ‘I think’, as Descartes sought to contend... The ‘I think’ expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e. perception... But the ‘I think’ precedes the experience which is required to determine the object of perception through the category in respect of time; and the existence here referred to is not a category. The category as such does not apply to an indeterminably given object, but only to one of which we have a concept and about which we seek to know whether it does or does not exist outside the concept. An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general, and so not as appearance, nor as thing in itself (noumenon)... (B423 n)

Here we see that the ‘I think’, being empirical, is not the noumenal self nor any specific appearance, which seems to conflict with the earlier observation that it is an empirical proposition, and the other at B131 indicating that as pure apperception it possible for it to
accompany all perceptions. We can clarify this situation through the realisation that it is distinct from both empirical and original apperception.

For it must be observed, that when I have called the proposition, ‘I think’, an empirical proposition, I do not mean to say thereby, that the ‘I’ in this proposition is an empirical representation. On the contrary, it is purely intellectual, because belonging to thought in general. (B423 n)

Expressed otherwise, while the ‘I think’ is empirical, the ‘I’ is not. Since the ‘I think’ seems to be temporally coincident with consciousness, and cannot refer to anything concrete, or used to infer the existence of anything empirically specific, it is also the case that we are acquainted with it from our awareness of aggregated and sequential representations. It is a thought of something in general. We may note at this point that thinking, as a reasoning process, differs from the direct experience of representations. Thinking, as inference, is a function of reason, and reason has no direct access to representations, unlike judgement, as the subject of experience, which does. While we cannot infer our existence from the capacity for or the activity of thought, we are able to find this awareness through the way we experience representations, which is manifest in two ways; first, that those representations are real, and second, that the experiencing subject, as consciousness, is also real. This reality is neither noumenal nor spatial, but it is temporal. While there is no empirical representation of the ‘I’, there remains an awareness of self-hood in time only, owing nothing to intentional or logical inference, or to speculation. We are identified, and we identify ourselves, by those representations acknowledged as belonging to ourselves.

Now to assert in this manner, that all objects with which we can occupy ourselves, are one and all in me, that is, are determinations of my identical self, is another way of saying that there must be a complete unity of them in one and the same apperception. (A129)

The conscious self has no sensual access to the soul as thing in itself as it is in itself, even to the point of not being able to imagine what such an object would be like. Nevertheless, Kant talks about other objects in general (Gegenstände) which are not the soul which we do experience as manifest appearances, and in the Prolegomena allows that we are justified to infer from the experience of appearances that there are things in themselves (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 40). He applies the same reasoning to the self, in that we are able to be satisfied that there is more to our experience of selfhood than mere representations.
…it will probably be objected, that I am immediately conscious only of that which is in me, that is, of my representation of outer things; and consequently that it must still remain uncertain whether outside me there is any thing corresponding to it, or not. But through inner experience I am conscious of my existence in time (consequently also of its determinability in time) and that this is more than to be conscious merely of my representations. It is identical with the empirical consciousness of my existence, which is determinable only through the relation to something which, while bound up with my existence, is outside me. This consciousness of my existence in time is bound up in the way of identity with the consciousness of a relation to something outside me, and is therefore experience not invention, sense not imagination. (Bxl n)

The ‘outside’ here is the noumenal, and Kant is arguing that we can think of the supersensible self by inference from the internal experience of selfhood in time. Again, this is not the Cogito, for the inference is not from the experience of thought, as individual ideas, but from bald and total experience itself. It is interesting to note that this argument occurs as part of a long footnote to the B edition, and as such is a late addition to Kant’s ideas on this subject. In this case the experience of self is not the ‘I think’ but the ‘I am’, and is an intellectual consciousness, as distinct from intellectual intuition, of something that is permanent in existence but not in representation.

… in the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations in general, and therefore in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am…I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination; but in respect of the manifold which it has to combine I am subjected to a limiting condition (entitled inner sense), namely, that this combination can be made intuitable only according to relations of time which lie entirely outside the concepts of understanding, strictly regarded. Such an intelligence, therefore, can know itself only as it appears to itself in respect of an intuition which is not intellectual and cannot be given by the understanding itself, nor as it would know itself if its intuition were intellectual. (B157-159)

Since this self-awareness is a thought, it allows no access to the noumenal self and must be subject to inner sense, that is, temporal positioning. All we can become aware of is our ability to combine appearances in such a way that we know they are ours. From its access to these appearances, the understanding, as the faculty of knowledge, enables us to think the relationship of an appearance to the self in such a way that the concepts of given intuitions are combined, unified and clustered. In this way, unity of thought relies upon the unity of apperception. To put it another way, awareness of the synthetic unity of apperception is the spontaneous, non-sensible and initial step of the understanding, without which the natural world would lack cohesion.
The first pure knowledge of understanding, then, upon which all the rest of its employment is based, and which also at the same time is completely independent of all conditions of sensible intuition, is the principle of the original synthetic unity of apperception. The synthetic unity of consciousness is, therefore, an objective condition of all knowledge. It is not really a condition that I myself require in knowing an object, but is a condition under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me. For otherwise, in the absence of the synthesis, the manifold would not be united in one consciousness. (B137-8)

Our awareness of this synthesis allows and is accompanied by the concomitant idea of a unified non-empirical self which is not an appearance. Since it is not an appearance, it is therefore to be thought of as an idea, that is, a concept of a thing in itself, something of which can have no knowledge beyond the thought through which we become aware of its possibility.

The reality of outer sense is thus necessarily bound up with inner sense, if experience in general is to be possible at all; that is, I am just as certainly conscious that there are things outside me, which are in relation to my sense as I am conscious that I myself exist as determined in time. The representation of something permanent in existence is not the same as permanent representation. For though the representation...may be very transitory and variable like all our other representations...it yet refers to something permanent. This latter must therefore be an external thing distinct from all my representations, and its existence must be included in the determination of my own existence. How this should be possible we are as little capable of explaining further as we are of accounting for our being able to think the abiding in time. (Bxiin)

This clear assertion of a certain kind of indirect awareness of the supersensible is explicable on the understanding that practical reason is employed. Kant makes no indication of this, however, and the likelihood is that he is now adopting the position later expressed in the second Critique that pure reason becomes univocal through the authority of the practical, whose inferences theoretical reason must accede to if the metaphysical demands for totality and the possibility of happiness are to be met. Despite this, Kant’s theoretical agnosticism for the supersensible remains complete, and for theoretical reason things in themselves remain problematical. He later varies his attitude to their ontological status as it becomes the province of practical reason, which needs to infer the ideas of the soul and God, and this necessity indicates the motive for this late and extensive footnote.

So far, we have examined selfhood as the ‘I think’ and the ‘I am’, which result from our spontaneous awareness of apperceptive selfhood as experienced through representations in
general. Kant extends this further to include the idea of the self as noumenon. This set of ideas, if not clear cut and easily understood, is at least consistent throughout the critical writings. There is however, another object (Gegenstand) relating to the self to be considered here, which is a thing in itself and is neither noumenon, nor is it represented, and which appears in the A edition only.

3.2 The Transcendental Object = X.

We have noted that in transcendental methodology theoretical reason has no access to or use for things in themselves as they are in themselves, whether in supposed physical existence, as in transcendental realism, or as vacuous and theoretical somethings in a spatiotemporal void, as in Transcendental Idealism. On the other hand, it initially holds that they may exist as thought things, and there is no doubt that Kant’s position on this can be confusing. To add another level of complexity, we find at A 251-2 and elsewhere discussion of the necessary existence of a non-empirical and singular ‘something’ corresponding and relating to appearances in general.

Kant needs to draw a line somewhere delimiting what we can and cannot say about the empirical, since in this way he may find a solution to the problem of explicating the relationship between the self as representation, and the self as audience to itself. If the transcendental ‘I’ is not in time and space, we may ask the further question as to how it is able to observe that which is in time and space. Kant’s response in the A edition involves, as the initiating component and bearer of imaginative sensibility, the transcendental object = X.

The object to which I relate appearances in general is the transcendental object, that is, the completely indeterminate thought of something in general. This cannot be the noumenon; for I know nothing of what it is in itself, and have no concept of it save as merely the object of a sensible intuition in general, and so as being one and the same for all appearances… (A253)

Kant’s idea here becomes clearer with analysis. He says that appearances cannot occur in isolation, since they must be appearances of something. While we can infer with certainty from the experience of appearances that things in themselves have being, they are nevertheless unknown in any other way. Their being, as it is in itself, sans time, sans space, and depleted of all categorial content, is meaningless as far as theoretical reason is concerned,
and the requirement Kant talks about concerning them refers to the logical necessity of thinking of such objects as underlying appearances. However, we find here another ‘something’ whose function is to bundle or collect intuitions ready for the imaginational synthesis. This ‘something’ is in a unique class of its own, since it can never be experienced as a singular representation and this leads to the question as to how we are able to infer it at all.

The transcendental object = X sounds very much like the ‘I am’, but it is clear that it is not an experience, unlike the latter. Kant also seems to be distinguishing between the transcendental object and the noumenon because we can know something of the noumenal, something he insists elsewhere is impossible for us. This may seem puzzling until we realise that we do experience things in themselves as representations, and this is what is denied of the transcendental object. Another clue involves Kant’s consistently singular reference to it, while at other times referring in both the singular and the plural to other things in themselves.

There are a number of terms involved in the description of the supersensible, and can be perplexing.

- Things in themselves
- The transcendental object = X
- Transcendental objects
- Noumenon.

The temptation is to treat these as synonyms, though Kant distinctly says that the transcendental object cannot be the noumenon, and since it is only referred to in the singular, is a one-member class. One way of understanding this is to posit the transcendental object = X as the supersensible correlate of that notion of selfhood we found earlier expressed as the ‘I think’. The phrase describing it as ‘…the object of a sensible intuition in general, and so as being one and the same for all appearances…’ would indicate this. Thus the temporal ‘I think’, as the empirical ‘…correlate of all our representations…’ (A123), while neither spatial nor noumenal, has a further non-empirical and non-noumenal counterpart, forming a correlate of representations in general.
On this understanding, although the transcendental object = X is a thing in itself, it differs from the others of its kind in that it can never be represented in appearances. On the other hand, we can think of it as the suspensible correlate of transcendental apperception, and thus forms the limits or horizon of what can be experienced. From the generalised concept of aggregated appearances, the idea seems to be that we can rationally infer the presence of a noumenal counterpart in the same way we can know, through the understanding, of other things in themselves as they relate to appearances.

All our representations are in fact related to some object (Objekt) through the understanding, and, since appearances are nothing but representations, the understanding thus relates them to a something, as the object (Gegenstand) of sensible intuition; but this something is to that extent only the transcendental object (Objekt). This signifies, however, a something = X, of which we know nothing at all nor can know anything in general (in accordance with the current constitution of our understanding), but is rather something that can serve only as the correlate of the unity of apperception for the unity of the manifold of sensible intuition, by means of which the understanding unifies that in the concept of an object (Gegenstand). This transcendental object (Objekt) cannot even be separated from the sensible data, for then nothing would remain through which it would be thought. It is therefore no object of cognition in itself, but only the representation of appearances under the concept of an object in general, which is determinable through the manifold of those appearances. (A250-1)

In this way, we become conscious of selfhood through the spontaneous and personal awareness of ownership of the manifold of representations, though we can have no direct predicated experience of what underlies this synthesis apart from its structured and categorised representational content. Kant says that when these aggregated perceptions are removed, so too is the transcendental object, and this dependence clearly cannot apply to other things in themselves. These have no dependency on human intellectuality, for otherwise Kant could not avoid the allegation of Berkeleian idealism. The transcendental object = X is therefore not the noumenon, which relates to representations in an entirely different way, and Kant here posits something with a unique status which, like the ‘I think’ is neither representation nor noumenon. In the case of the Transcendental Object = X we have a thing in itself which is also dependent on the spontaneity of the understanding for its continuance. While it cannot act as the grounding of representations, in its own way it is the precipitating agency of all representations. We may compare it to the invisible surface of a mirror which is not responsible for originating its reflected images, but is the ‘cause’ of all the images seen in it and the properties which it imparts to them.
Accordingly, we find here a rational intelligible construct that is not the noumenon, though both it and the noumenon are things in themselves. To put it another way, things in themselves, purely as thought things, can be divided into the class of noumema which ground representations, and that which is linked to and pre-empirically processes representations, the transcendental object = X. In more modern parlance, we would describe it as being at the vanguard of intuitions, forming the portal within which the operation of sensibility discovers intuitions for categorisation and spatio/temporal representation. The inference of this object derives from the perceived need to explain just how the representations I identify as mine come together in the specific time and place in which I experience them. It is that which bundles my cognitions for me into an objective and coherent manifold, and also demarcates the logical divide between intuitions and the noumenon.

When we see this object = X as the correlate of the empirical unity of apperception, we may also be tempted to understand it as the soul. It would then become the transcendental subject = X, though this is clearly not Kant’s meaning. This transcendental object, as a special form of unrepresented noumenon, is something, which can be thought about specifically as grounding representations. It is not the soul, since it has no capacity for thought.

The transcendental object which grounds both outer appearances and inner intuition is neither matter nor a thinking being in itself, but rather an unknown ground of those appearances that supply us with our empirical concepts of the former as well as the latter. (A380)

He describes it only as the consciousness of the coming together of the synthesis.

The pure concept of this transcendental object (which in all our cognitions is really always one and the same = X) is that which in all our empirical concepts in general can provide relation to an object, i.e., objective reality. Now this concept cannot contain any determinate intuition at all, and therefore concerns nothing but that unity which must be encountered in the manifold of cognition in so far as it stands in relation to an object. This relation, however, is nothing other than the necessary unity of consciousness, thus also of the synthesis of the manifold through a common function of the mind for combining it in one representation. (A108-9)

Without this necessary unity, Kant thinks we would confront representational chaos, and to prevent this, transactions with things in themselves in general must take place under the auspices of the object.
… the object is viewed as that which prevents our modes of knowledge from being haphazard or arbitrary, and which determines them \emph{a priori} in some definite fashion.

But it is clear that, since we have to deal only with the manifold of our representations, and since that \(X\) (the object) which corresponds to them is nothing to us—being, as it is, something that has to be distinct from all our representations—the unity which the object makes necessary can be nothing else than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations. (A104-5)

The transcendental object= \(X\) is intended to border and limit that which is known and that which is not, and is not the transcendental subject or mind or soul. Gardner agrees that it sits on the interface between experience and the noumenal void, and is not transcient.

The concept of the transcendental object may consequently be regarded as expressing the irreducibility of the concept of an object, as well as its \emph{a priority}—just as the ‘I’ of apperception expresses the irreducibility of subjectivity and is not to be reduced to relations between representations. The transcendental object should not, therefore, be identified with the immanent contents of our experience any more than with something transcient; exactly paralleling the transcendental unity of apperception, it sits on the borderline between the inside and outside of experience (as must any pre-categorial condition of experience). (Gardner 1999 157)

The distinction between ‘transcent’ and ‘transcendental’ is significant here. For example, God is transcent when considered as an unknowable external and supersensible entity, such as an agent capable of creating and acting on the world. To avoid confusion, the words ‘transcendental’ and ‘transcent’ need to be clearly delineated when used within the critical milieu, since a transcendental God is unknowable and has no direct governing role in natural law. Kant quite usually talks of things such as God or the soul as transcendental objects, that is, as \textit{Gegenstände}. As such they are suitable subjects for transcendental reflection and open to legitimate discussion from the point of view of practical reason. Such a subject, on the other hand, becomes transcent and therefore speculative when referred to by theoretical reason. In this context, Kant is not so much interested in the subject as such, which is appropriate since we can know nothing of it anyway, but is more concerned with the role they have in engaging the capacity which he sees as responsible for making \emph{a priori} knowledge possible. (See B25) Within the critical context, and as viewed by pure reason, such terms as ‘soul’, ‘God’, or the more usual ‘\textit{ens realissimum}’ are always used in the transcendental sense.
Any attempt to define the interface between things in themselves and intuitions needs in some way to involve the subject experiencing those intuitions simply because, as intuitions, they differ from things in themselves and are available as appearances and as such must belong to somebody. Something which is neither the subject nor intuition must be collating these intuitions ready for experience. Kant places this entity in a transcendental form here to provide a vehicle for both their synopsis and receptivity. Heidegger expresses the positioning of this ’something’ as pure horizon.

But this means a Something = X…which, as just a correlatum of the unity of apperception, can serve only for the unity of the manifold of sensible intuition…

The X is a ‘something’ of which in general we can know nothing at all. But it is not therefore not unknowable, because as a being this X lies hidden ‘behind’ a layer of appearances. Rather it is not knowable because it simply cannot become a possible object of knowing, i.e., the possession of a knowledge of beings. It can never become such because it is a nothing.

Nothing means: not a being, but nevertheless ‘Something.’ ‘It serves only as a correlatum’, i.e., according to its essence it is pure horizon. (Heidegger in Taft 1997 86)

By using this device, Kant seeks to hold the horizon open and always in view, as Heidegger puts it, providing something which acts as the gatekeeper to intuition. It is not, Heidegger says, and as is often supposed from Kant’s terminology, that which relates to things in themselves in the more usual sense.

‘The X is ‘object in general’. This does not mean: a universal, indeterminate being which stands against. On the contrary, this expression refers to that which makes up in advance the rough sizing up of all possible objects as standing-against, the horizon of standing-against. (Heidegger in Taft ibid. 87)

It is clearly Kant’s meaning to identify, while attempting to keep separate, the experienced unity of apperception with the transcendental object acting as a noumenal correlate to that unity. Whether Kant should attempt this construction is another question, and he changes his mind concerning it. It comes to light in the first edition of the first Critique and disappears in the new sections of the second.
We can see that Kant’s description of the correlate of personal identity creates difficulties, since, as an attempt to define the noumenal/phenomenal interface it presents a transcendental version of dualism, though in this case deprived of any physical positioning. As such, it is subject to the same sorts of problems mind/matter dualism encounters, and which Kant attempts to overcome through the positing of schemata. For example, we are unable to conceive the relationship between that which is corporeal and that which is not. It also creates two classes of extra-phenomenal objects which now includes not only noumena but also the object=X, implying and exemplifying positive knowledge of the non-sensible. Kant alters his ideas to the extent that such an interface becomes unnecessary and represents a residual dualism unrepresentative of his more considered position, notable for the unity of the view it holds. It is, therefore, ultimately redundant, and because of this more than anything else, I suggest, Kant removes reference to the transcendental object = X in the B edition revisions. Consequently, his fallback position in the B edition places the noumenal/representational interface within the concept of noumena, with which sensibility (unlike judgement) has only a passive involvement.

The remaining things to which it [sensible intuition] does not apply, are entitled noumena, in order to show that this knowledge cannot extend its domain over everything which the understanding thinks. But none the less we are unable to comprehend how such noumena can be possible, and the domain that lies out beyond the sphere of appearances is for us empty…The concept of noumenon is thus a merely limiting concept, the function of which is to curb the pretensions of sensibility…it is no arbitrary invention; it is bound up with the limitations of sensibility. (A253/B310)

We find here an example of concept development, in this case concerning the transcendental object = X. Kant goes on to ask what it is that thinks, and having decided that we can have no cognition of noumenal entities, concludes that we cannot, and do not need to refer to them when speaking of thinking beings. We are limited to appearances.

I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination; but in respect of the manifold which it has to combine I am subjected to a limiting condition (entitled inner sense), namely, that this combination can be made intuitable only according to relations of time, which lie entirely outside the concept of understanding, strictly regarded. Such an intelligence, therefore can know itself only as it appears to itself in respect of an intuition which is not intellectual and cannot be given by the understanding itself, not as it would know itself if its intuition were intellectual. (B158-9)
Ultimately, Kant’s earlier attempt to add structure to the sensible/nonsensible interface fails because he pushes the search for completeness and abstraction too far. He reverts to a more characteristic unresolved, mysterious, and unknown state of affairs in which the only awareness of self comes through the conditions of inner sense. The attempt to invoke a noumenal correlate of the unity of consciousness is ultimately rejected.

Thus the subject of the categories cannot, by thinking them, obtain a concept of itself as an object (Objekt) of the categories; for in order to think them, it must take its pure self-consciousness, which is just what is to be explained, as its ground. Likewise, the subject, in which the representation of time originally has its ground, cannot thereby determine its own existence in time, and if the latter cannot be, then the former as a determination of the self (as a thinking being in general) through the categories can also not take place.

In this way, then, a cognition going beyond the bounds of possible experience yet belonging to the highest interests of humanity disappears, as far as speculative philosophy is concerned, in disappointed expectation… (B 423-4)

So, the transcendental object is consigned to oblivion as being beyond not only the reach of theoretical and speculative reason, but also the extended capacities of practical reason.

3.3 Practical Reason and the Self.

In contrast to this negativity, the transcendental subject is open to discussion in positive terms by practical reason. This alternative description interests us for the possibilities it opens up concerning the content and justification of later religious writings. The following passage, directly following the above, indicates this

Nevertheless, not the least bit is lost through this regarding the warrant, or indeed the necessity, for the assumption of a future life in accordance with the principles of the practical use of reason, which is bound up with a speculative use; for in any case the merely speculative proof has never been able to have an influence on common human reason. (B424)

The role of practical reason in fulfilling reason’s demand for totality becomes of supreme importance for critical thought because of this possibility, and we have seen in the previous chapter how this comes to be given greater emphasis as Kant writes. The employment of practical reason in terms of the soul is the starting point of his religious thought, and we will
discuss this in Chapter Five as one of the religious themes, the transcendental doctrine of the soul.

3.4 Some Conclusions.

We have determined that while the awareness of discrete and individual representations relates to the understanding, the concept of self-awareness involves reason in its attempt to derive the totality of the manifold presented to it through apperception as it extends beyond appearances. This means that the ineluctable presence of the viewpoint from which we observe a unique cluster of representations (Hume’s bundle) is itself a representation in general, leading naturally and dialectically to the thought of a reified selfhood, the concept of a simple and substantial entity which can be a subject for reason. Our particular interest lies in this irrepressible urge of pure reason, in its theoretical form, to synthesise and order all the conceptual products of the understanding, including the self, in such a way that the sum total of conditions is fulfilled.

In the descending movement from any condition to the conditioned, reason is unexercised since this is the role of the understanding and has no transcendental function. Rather, reason undertakes the ascent through the series of conditions to the unconditioned, with the end of portraying a noumenal agent able to exert influence on the world.

We easily see that pure reason has no other aim than the absolute totality of synthesis on the side of conditions... and that reason has nothing to do with absolute completeness from the side of the conditioned... the transcendental ideas serve only for ascending in the series of conditions to the unconditioned... (B394)

In this way, pure reason attempts to derive the possibility, as an idea, of the independent existence of self as an unconditioned agent acting independently of the conditioned. This postulated being becomes a speculative, transcendent, dialectical and paradoxical illusion unless subjected to critical discipline. Consequently, any discussion of Kant’s positioning of mind or soul depends on whether it is considered through theoretical reason in its speculative form as a thing in itself, or the by practical reason empowered to consider it as an idea. Our earlier discussion of this dichotomy of reason led us to consider what Kant means when talking of reason in its two main forms, the theoretical and the practical. It is apparent that
Kant allows this distinction to bleed together, as evidenced in his footnote to Blx noted above, where he fails to indicate which voice is speaking, but we may deduce that he is employing a unified practical and theoretical voice. If we are to accept the idea that the soul, as mind, is a thing in itself, and forms both the point of view from which we view the world and from which Kant writes, we must look more carefully at the contentious issue of dualism in terms of both the distinction between mind and matter, and mind and ideas.
Chapter 4. Kant’s Radical Monism.

4.0 Introduction.

Previously we described the Aesthetic as synonymously identifying the objects of human experience with the objects of possible experience. In other words, there is no phenomenological distinction between intuitions and objects. On such a transcendental reading, it is not the case that empirical objects cause representations within a mind, but rather that empirical objects are just those representations experienced as intuited appearances subsisting solely within the mind as mind content. We have also examined the view that intuited representations derive from the unmediated receptivity of sensibility through the influence of things in themselves, and that the relationship between things in themselves and appearances is mediated only by the metaphysical and pre-empirical structuring capacities of sensibility. Apart from that modal conversion, they are the same thing, and any attempt to delineate them further is both metaphysically and logically impossible. This reduction of appearances to mind dependent representations gives an ontological priority to things in themselves, in that unlike appearances, we may believe them, as an idea, to have an independent and enduring presence in the absence of human-like minds. However, since the mind is itself a thing in itself such an absence is not possible, and the ontological status of things in themselves takes on an eternal aspect fully in keeping with the theological ideas thrown up by practical reason. In this way the world reduces to nothing but eternal things in themselves, since we number ourselves, as intelligences, among them, and appearances are now seen to be mind content only. The difficulty of the human condition on this account lies in the idea that while there are only things in themselves, we can know only those appearances present to us for the duration of consciousness.

Because of the immediacy of appearances, a common metaphysical tendency is to divide the world into matter, as appearance, and mind, that is, that which experiences matter as objects. Accordingly, it is tempting to understand Transcendental Idealism as dividing reality in toto into two realms, that of the empirical and that of the non-empirical, noumenal, intelligible, intellectual or spiritual. The relevance of this to my understanding of Kant’s religious doctrines becomes clear when we realise that he is not a spiritualist in this traditional manner, but has an original and unique way of establishing the possibility of religious belief not based
on a mind/matter divide. The argument here is that such a dichotomy does not follow from the teachings of Transcendental Idealism, but that, on the contrary, it implies and demands its dissolution.

In this way, the grounds of Cartesian scepticism are removed, as is the need for divine intervention to maintain the continuance of objects and the veracity of experience. The claim is that Kant is not in the business of perpetuating either Cartesian or Berkeleian dualism. To do this we need to accept that the finite human intellect does not itself share the formalised nature of the appearances it encompasses, with the consequence that it cannot be manifest as an appearance. As such, while it is not part of actuality and is always invisible to itself, it does not exist in a world different from that of appearances. There remains only one world containing and enclosing all that is, and because of the universality of this synthesis, I refer to it as a radical monism.

Following from a mistaken perception of Kant’s idealism, some take the opportunity to construe his metaphysical outlook as giving license to ontological and epistemic claims concerning non-corporeal and continuing spiritual minds of the kind envisaged by Berkeley, or traditional rationalist metaphysics. This seemingly permits the interpretation of Transcendental Idealism as an outlook appropriate for the adoption of a wholly unscientific spiritualism. We find this in the 19th Century through the spread of so-called ‘transcendental’ thought, in the English-speaking world at least, and a brief foray into philosophical history will show what happens to such diversions.

4.1 Spiritualism.

The spiritual guise of pseudo-Kantian transcendentalism is evident in the United States and elsewhere from the early 1820’s, based on a willingness to accept critical idealism as a way of describing the relationship between the human mind and non-empirical entities based on an assumed dichotomy between matter and spirit. Emerson, that most influential of 19th Century American essayists, fostered this movement, the clearest expression of which occurs in the essay, ‘The Transcendentalist’, presented at the Masonic Temple in Boston in 1842, less than 30 years after Kant’s death. (Hearn 1907 934-8) His sentiments directly contradict Kant’s expressed viewpoint, exemplifying again the willingness of those who have not fully read or do not understand the original to misinterpret it when it suits their own agenda and
enthusiasms. This is unfortunate and avoidable, since Emerson’s advocacy of spiritualism
ignores Kant’s attempted disillusion of this dichotomy, his rejection of both its elements, and
his intention to supplant these. He makes this clear in two places in the B *Paralogisms*.

Thus, if materialism is disqualified from explaining my existence, spiritualism is equally incapable of doing
so; and the conclusion is that in no way whatsoever can we know anything of the constitution of the soul, so
far as the possibility of its separate existence is concerned. (B420)

We find a similar sentiment on the next page.

Rational psychology…keeps us, on the one hand, from throwing ourselves into the arms of a soulless
materialism, or, on the other hand, from losing ourselves in a spiritualism which must be quite unfounded
so long as we remain in this present life. (B421)

Kant is aware that spiritualism, as dialectical metaphysics, must always fall into contempt
since it constantly offers more than it can deliver.

This is, therefore, the general idea of metaphysics, which, since we initially expected more from it than
could appropriately be demanded and long amused ourselves with pleasant expectations, in the end fell into
general contempt when we found ourselves deceived in our hopes. (A849/B877)

For Kant, rational psychology originates in mistaking the awareness of the unity of
consciousness for an intuition of the subject as a simple substance, and the rejection of this
grounds his opposition to Cartesian dualism. We have also indicated that he subverts the
further distinction between objects and appearances of objects, and consequently we have
two forms of dualism under consideration.

1. The empirical realist’s distinction between (a), empirical objects and (b), perceptions
   relating to those objects, as phenomena and ideas. (Locke)
2. The rationalist matter/mind divide between (a), the same objects as in 1, and (d), non-
   corporeal mental entities such as the perceiving mind expressed as soul, or non-
   corporeal consciousness. (Descartes)

The ‘view-from’ or transcendental reading presented here argues not only that Kant deflates
both of these individually, but also demonstrates that the two forms of dualism are in a
profound way expressions of the same error, since they both accept empirical objects as things in themselves. In Transcendental Idealism not only are (a and b) and (a and d) conflated, but so also are (b and d). As far as human experience is concerned, that is, speaking epistemically, we are left with nothing but mind (d) and its contents experienced as the concepts of reason coupled with our experience of the natural world, the manifold of which comprises the synthesis of apperception. As we have seen, minds, experienced as the ‘I think’ and the ‘I am’, are nothing more than the collective cognitions and concepts they experience, among which we include the idea of mind as the transcendental ‘I’ itself. This mental content comprises the totality of what we can claim to know, while the mind as thing in itself remains inaccessible and meaningless for theoretical and speculative reason. This is in keeping with Kant’s insistence that the mind, as soul, and for us humans, can never be more than an idea, a concept proposed by practical reason alone. The individual soul, whatever it may be, must always remain beyond the reach of reason except as this idea or concept of itself.

Nevertheless, we find that such ideas can be transmuted into something having a similar epistemic status to empirical objects. The attack on dualism creates the possibility that, since both ideas and empirical objects are mind content only, they are equally authentic, or existent, differing only in their origin, form and the rational mode which deals with them. By dealing with these as cognitive equals, the sciences of both nature and metaphysics attain parity, allowing the possibility of rational metaphysical theories with the same intellectual standing as those of the physical sciences. In this way, the moral law is given an equal universality and obligation to that of natural law, since both are imposed on the world by things in themselves, the first through the free operation of the human will, the second through the inexorable influence of things in themselves in general. Both sets of laws are governed by reason, which in its theoretical operation investigates nature to discover its laws, and in practical mode interrogates the mind itself to determine what is requisite for the possibility of happiness, and in so doing arrives at the moral imperative and the ability to legislate it. That this is possible without recourse to any form of dualism, and in fact results from its removal, is arguably the dominant thesis of Kantian thought, an achievement that has been almost completely overlooked. On this insight, Kant bases the beliefs constituting his moral religion as a rational metaphysics, something we examine in the next chapter.
As we have seen, Kant asserts that the experience of selfhood justifies reference to a non-corporeal idea of selfhood, and consequently he is readily and mistakenly interpreted as fostering spiritualism by luminaries such as Emerson, and the New England Transcendentalists who followed him. Our task is to show how the transcendental view of the self as the idea of soul is compatible with the further claim that such ‘things’ as soul and other things in themselves are unknown in every way and beyond any meaning for us except as ideas or concepts. If Kant can do this convincingly, any allegation that he reverts to a traditional rationalist metaphysics, or appeals to spiritualism or immaterialism of any sort, becomes irrelevant. What we have, under such circumstances, is a wholly new, unique and distinct metaphysical viewpoint which refutes all forms of dualism, one that has been largely overlooked by those so imbued with a dualist worldview that they fail to recognise that Kant even makes such an attempt.

The *Aesthetic* at A42 provides a clear and unblushing declaration of idealism, and this is important for our discussion. Kant unequivocally expresses the mind dependence of the material world, including its spatio-temporal framework. Only by distinguishing this transcendental viewpoint from the everyday view of objects of experience, as a type of Husserlian *epochē* is it possible to understand how Kant is innocent of Berkeleian empirical idealism. To do this, we must first contrast Transcendental Idealism with the other main metaphysical points of view, and consider how Kant distinguishes his form of idealism from scepticism, Berkeleian idealism, spiritualism, materialism and so on.

In the *Fourth Paralogism* of the A edition, Kant asserts the discontinuity between empirical idealism and Transcendental Idealism by denying that the latter implies the ideality of outer (spatial) objects and relations. He is aware of the possibility of confusion in terms of what is meant by ‘outer’, in this context, that is, whether it is used in an empirical or transcendental manner.

The expression ‘outside us’ is thus unavoidably ambiguous in meaning, sometimes signifying what as thing in itself exists apart from us, and sometimes what belongs solely to outer appearance. In order, therefore, to make this concept, in the latter sense—the sense in which the psychological question as to the reality of how our outer intuition has to be understood—quite unambiguous, we shall distinguish empirically external objects from the those which may be said to be external in the transcendental sense, by explicitly entitling the former ‘things which are to be found in space.’ (A373)
This ambiguity is important, and we previously discovered Kant working around it by referring to objects of intentional consciousness, and therefore outside us in space, as ‘Objekte’, and those considered within transcendental reflection and outside us metaphysically as Gegenstände. On this basis, empirical objects are not outside us, and Kant is able to say that empirical objects as appearances have no independent existence, leading to the conclusion that denying this status to them is not idealism, as we find in the Fourth Paralogism

The term ‘idealist’ is not, therefore, to be understood as applying to those who deny the existence of external objects (Gegenstände) of the senses, but only to those who do not admit that their existence is known through immediate perception, and, who therefore conclude that we can never, by way of any possible experience, be completely certain as to their reality. (A368-9)

Having established his target as the problematic transcendental realist, one who, whilst assenting to the possible ontological independence of outer objects, doubts the inference from their experienced representation to their existence in space, Kant moves on to show how his own Transcendental Idealism overcomes such scepticism. He does this by removing an entire ontological layer or dimension, that is, the empirical objects referred to by the transcendental realist as existing outside the mind. Kant will have it that objects may exist independently in space, while being wholly within the mind because of the ideality of space and time. In the latter consideration, he is able to do this only if he can undermine the distinction between mind and matter.

Transcendental realism postulates the ontological independence of objects in space, which, in physicalist terms, impinge on the senses through motion and force to create corresponding and representational impressions and ideas. This relationship, says Kant, is necessarily causal, and his response to this description is complex and radical. Considered at the everyday level of performing as a competent human being, or even for scientific purposes, naive realism is perfectly adequate. From a philosophical point of view however, that is, when one applies metaphysical analysis, a different assessment is required because of the difficulties associated with explicating the operations of causality and the relationship between mind and objects. The falling tree in the forest, for example, not only makes no sound when unobserved, but since the experience of sound, in physicalist terms, occurs only in the brain as electrochemical and neurological processes which in themselves are silent and
vastly different to the originating phenomenon, the sound itself on this account disappears altogether. Ultimately, Kant denies that this model is an acceptable description, transcendentally or empirically, of the relationship between mind and objects in time and space, and pushes home one of the important and revolutionary implications of Transcendental Idealism.

We ought, however, to bear in mind that bodies are not objects in themselves which are present to us, but a mere appearance of we know not what unknown object; that motion is not the effect of this unknown cause, but only the appearance of its influence on our senses. Neither bodies nor motions are anything outside us; both alike are mere representations in us; and it is not, therefore, the motion of matter that produces representations in us; the motion itself is representation only as also is the matter which makes itself known in this way. (A387)

This denial of a corpuscularian and dynamic causal relationship between objects in space and the representations of the perceiving mind is part of Kant’s sophisticated response to Humean scepticism concerning causal influence in general. Kant is sometimes seen as attempting to refute Humean scepticism or to undermine Hume’s insights. In the case of the causal relationship between mind and matter, we find Kant’s position at every point is compatible with Hume’s, and one that seeks to extend his insights into a wider and more coherent worldview.

Earlier, we concluded, on the evidence of the Fourth Paralogism and the implications found in the Aesthetic, that, speaking transcendentally, sensibility and its intuitions do not operate through the senses, that we experience the senses as representations, and that representations do not derive from any Lockean notion of particulate impact upon them. Kant makes this theory explicit here, and repudiates any corpuscularian or other representational mind theory relying on material or physical impact for the realisation of appearances. For Kant, the experienced world does not hold within itself any explanation of its own existence as a whole or in its parts, especially concerning its a priori content. Nor, of course, does Transcendental Idealism, though it allegedly provides a more coherent description of it. The appeal to causal relationships, if they are assumed to consist of more than observable a priori regularities, is seen to be illusory or mistaken, and any attempt to understand the cognitional operations of the conscious mind through the involvement of the senses and the objects to which they relate is ultimately futile.
We could understand from this that Kant opposes physiology or even science in general. This allegation is ameliorated by the realisation that we must always separate the transcendental from the empirical. Kant is not saying that we cannot fruitfully study the operations of the senses, the eyes, ears and so on within the framework of causal constancy. Neither is he denying the nature of our everyday experience, or attempting to discourage neurological or empirical investigations of the brain or any other representation, for the same reason. He is speaking transcendentally and from this viewpoint indicating the futility of attempting to causally understand how consciousness or aware intelligence, which on this analysis is neither material nor immaterial, can relate to matter through empirical analysis alone. This claim follows from the idea that what we call matter is nothing more than appearance, having being only as mind content. As such, it is part of the mind itself, and the boundary between the two vanishes.

This removal of an entire dimension of ontology, those things perceived as being transcendentally real, has an important result for our understanding of Kant’s position. If we define phenomenalism as the claim that we can only know the contents of our mind as representations of outer objects, Kant’s claim to immediate cognisance of appearances removes any possibility of interpreting Transcendental Idealism as a form of this doctrine, along with its associated problems. Within immediate perception there is no distinction between the object and the perception. The perception is the object. Strawson, as so often happens, almost discerns Kant’s meaning on this subject.

The transcendental idealist…is, Kant says, an empirical realist, according no superiority of status, as regards reality or certainty of existence, to states of consciousness over physical objects. When we see how Kant supports this claim, however, we must view it with scepticism. It is true that he grants us as immediate knowledge of the physical objects of ‘outer sense’, whose form is space, as he does of the psychological states, the objects of ‘inner sense’, whose form is time…But these parities do not really amount to according equal reality to bodies in space (‘outer objects’) and states of consciousness (‘inner determinations’). The doctrine that the material and the mental constituents of the natural world are alike only appearances turns out…to bear with unequal weight on bodies and states of consciousness. Kant as transcendental idealist, is closer to Berkeley than he acknowledges. (Strawson 1966 21)

Our interpretation of Transcendental Idealism gives the synonymous identity of experience with the consciousness of events in inner sense, and the further realisation that this has nothing to do with psychology in any empirical sense. Strawson maintains his sense of
duality when discussing this, and by so doing misses the point. It is likely that Kant is closer to Berkeley than even Strawson imagines.

Despite this, Transcendental Idealism lacks any commitment to Berkeley’s empirical idealism. Neither is Kant involved in the idea there are unperceived empirical entities which have yet to become phenomena for humans. These only appear and become present as such at the moment of perception and consequently there is no pre-ordained future, and no past except as memory. Kant dispenses with any other level of knowable existence. Because of the close agreement of his own ideas with those of Berkeley, particularly as presented in the Paralogisms, the fourth in particular, we find that the B edition contains a complete restatement of the Paralogisms and a specific refutation of Idealism. We noted above how he expands his definition of idealism, but we must be careful not to conclude that this revision indicates the repudiation of the A edition thinking. Kant remains an idealist in the transcendental sense, and it make little difference to this how he formulates competing or alternate forms of idealism, since they are all ultimately concerned with the reality or otherwise of objects external to the mind in space. This includes not only the problematic Cartesian, but the dogmatic Berkeleian versions, as Kant specifies in the Refutation.

He [Berkeley] maintains that space, with all the things of which it is the inseparable condition, is something which is in itself impossible; and he therefore regards the things in space as merely imaginary entities. Dogmatic idealism is unavoidable, if space be interpreted as a property that must belong to things in themselves. For in that case space, and every thing to which it serves as condition, is a non-entity. (B274)

Making the position difficult, and as we will discover, things in themselves, or noumena, do not qualify as the underlying reality of such experiences, since that would be to predicate them as objects of non-sensible intuition, what Kant calls intellectual intuition, and which he rejects as interpreting noumena in the positive sense. The properties and predicates of things in themselves may be open to speculation, but all such speculation is rendered fruitless because of their essential unknowability as far as humans are concerned. This is the message of the Analytic, and extends to a complete agnosticism concerning knowledge of such things for speculative reason.
4.2 The Refutation of Spiritualism.

It seems clear that within critical thought objects in space are themselves incapable of interacting with a mind which is not in space, but can exist within that mind as appearances. On a dualist understanding of the world, Cartesian or otherwise, this would indicate that mind is immaterial, and distinct from matter. One of the putative achievements of Transcendental Idealism is the removal of this dichotomy. To claim, as is often the case, that Kant is an immaterialist where mind is concerned is to miss the point that he seeks the end of any distinction between mind and matter. For Transcendental Idealism the latter becomes mental content only. They do differ epistemically, however, in that we can cognise the latter but not the former. Kant’s tactic is not to remove or deny the non-corporeal element of this duality, but to retain a theoretical agnosticism concerning it while rendering all matter as appearance. The paradox before us concerns the nature of mind itself. If it encloses matter, and matter depends for its existence on mind, surely this means that mind is not matter. What else can Kant mean?

We noted above Kant’s discussion of dualism in the Fourth Paralogism. In coming to terms with this topic, we need to recognise that the Paralogisms are part of the Dialectic, and the basic thematic concern of the Dialectic is the ideas. These are the basis of his discussions here, beginning with a definition of them as Concepts of Pure Reason, (A310 ff). In the Analytic, Kant described the nature and delineated the limits of experience. The Dialectic concerns the ideas, the way their mishandling results in an almost universal tendency to create dialectical error and metaphysical illusion, and the role they play within critical metaphysics. The most discussed idea in the Dialectic is the soul, and one of Kant’s preoccupations concerns what happens when we get empirical objects mixed up with such ideas. And it is just this type of confusion that Kant highlights, one that most people, including philosophers, engage in whenever they try to think of the relationship between these in dualist terms, since humans are aware of both objects and themselves, and tend to think of these as discrete substances and entities.

Kant equates empirical dualism with transcendental realism, that is, any theory maintaining the independent reality of objects in space, as matter, interacting with consciousness as mind, which is not matter. According to Kant, this is the ordinary way of thinking for humans in
general when considering their place in the world. Moreover, he says it is in this dualism that we find the seat of dialectical illusion.

So long as we hold to the ordinary concepts of our reason with regard to the communion in which our thinking subject stands with the things outside us, we are dogmatic, looking upon them as real objects existing independently of us, in accordance with a certain transcendental dualism which does not assign these outer appearances to the subject as representations, but sets them, just as they are given to us in sensible intuition, as objects outside us, completely separating them from the thinking subject. This subreption is the basis of all theories in regard to the communion between soul and body. The objective reality thus assigned to appearances is never brought into question. On the contrary, it is taken for granted; the theorizing is merely as to the mode in which it has to be explained and understood. There are three usual systems devised on these lines, and they are indeed the only possible systems: that of physical influence, that of predetermined harmony, and that of supernatural intervention. (A389)

The ‘usual systems’ include Locke’s corpuscularianism, Leibniz’ Monadology and Berkeley’s notion of divine sustenance of the experienced world as idealised thought. Unlike Transcendental Idealism, there is an element of phenomenalism and a related dualism in each of these. They attempt to describe the relationship between the thinking subject and extended substance as a dualism, as do both the dogmatic and sceptical forms of idealism, since they assume that external objects might exist, which are then open to sceptical doubt or outright denial.

The ‘transcendental dualism’ of the previous reference is not only the dichotomy of mind and body, but mind and matter generally. This is not so obviously relevant to Berkeley, since he denies the materialist element of this, but becomes so on the realisation that Berkeley’s dualism arises from his assertion of esse est percipi (aut percipere). Berkeley’s ontology not only encompasses ideas as perceptions, but also that which perceives, and he therefore upholds a mind/idea duality also susceptible to Kant’s attack. By attempting to undermine these dualisms, Kant isolates his metaphysics completely from the other schools of thought enumerated above. What he offers in their place is the metaphysical agnosticism we find throughout his writings. This is not to say that he is in a position to offer any understanding as to how the state of affairs he describes is possible.

The much-discussed question of the communion between the thinking and the extended, if we leave aside all that is merely fictitious, comes then simply to this, how in a thinking subject outer intuition, namely, that of space, with its filling-in of shape and motion, is possible. And this is a question which no man can
possibly answer. This gap in our knowledge can never be filled; all that can be done is to indicate it through
the ascription of outer appearances to that transcendental object which is the cause of this species of
representations, but of which we can have no knowledge whatsoever and of which we shall never acquire
any concept. (A393)

As we noted above, even the modest attempt at explanation of the relationship of mind to the
supersensible by reference to the transcendental object mentioned here is ultimately foregone
in later writings. Within experience, objects occurring in space and time are ‘grounded’ in or
by things in themselves through their projection to itself by mind. The perceiving subject, as
soul, however, is not so represented, though we may be conscious of its workings, and Kant
needs to account for this in some non-empirical manner. From the above discussion, we can
see that several themes are in play at any time in the Paralogisms. These include not only
Kant’s idea of soul, but also the relationship between mind and objects both as things in
themselves (non-empirical Gegenstände) and as empirical objects (Objekte or Gegenstände
of the senses), and the nature of causation in this context. The major theme concerns the
concept of soul, and the various dialectical illusions surrounding it. Each of the Paralogisms
deals with one of the four topics listed at A344/B402. These are:

1. The soul is substance. (This refers to category III, of Relation)
2. As regards its quality, it is simple. (This refers to category II of Quality, though
   simplicity is not contained as such in the table of Categories at B106. Kant points out
   in a footnote at A404 that ‘How the simple here once again corresponds to the
category of reality, I now cannot yet show, but rather it will be proved in the
following…’ referring to the Antinomy of Pure Reason.)
3. As regards the different times in which it exists, it is numerically identical, that is,
   unity, not plurality. (Unity is in category I, that of Quantity).
4. It is in possible relation to objects in space. (This refers to category IV, of Modality

We can see how each of these doctrines of rational psychology relates to one of the three
components of the categories. The problem is that soul, mind, transcendental subject,
intelligent consciousness and so on, as a thing in itself, cannot, on Kant’s account so relate.
Our awareness of self depends on our collective experience of categorised representations as
the formative elements of the manifold we experience as ‘ourself’. However, they are
relevant only to experiences existing in time, that is, as inner experience. Consequently, for
Kant, no categorial ascription of empirical properties is relevant as far as the soul or transcendental ‘I’ is concerned.

Kant’s response is quite predictable in the light of what we know about the categories, among which he includes substance. The attempt to apply the categories to things in themselves is always illegitimate, and consequently we can expect him to deny that the soul can be substantial. What we need to emphasise at this point is that by denying substance to the soul, Kant is not thereby committed to the proposition that the soul is insubstantial or immaterial in any traditional, rationalist or spiritualist manner, or that it has any other predicates. This is precluded not only by the unknown status of things in themselves, but as a logical consequence of the breakdown of dualism. Since we can know only experiences, knowledge claims about anything existing beyond experienced actuality have no ontological meaning, and to suppose they do for Kant is to see him committed to the mind-matter dualism which he repudiates. In discussing these themes, we need to mention Karl Ameriks’ contribution to this analysis.

Ameriks prefaces his impressive 1982 work by pointing out that, at that time, Kant’s theory of mind had received little attention (Ameriks 1982 1), and it is notable that in both the Kemp-Smith and Wood/Guyer translations there is no indexed reference to mind. The position of the Paralogisms within the critical literature has been paradoxical, says Ameriks. On the one hand they had until recently been received without controversy since Kant’s contribution to classical theory of mind had been considered slight, and restricted to an anodyne refutation of what Ameriks calls ‘naïve Cartesianism’ (Ameriks 1982 2). In attempting to remedy this deficit, Ameriks shows just how hard it is to shake of older thought forms and penetrate to the level of radical thought we have found in the Paralogisms and elsewhere.

That Kant is as an immaterialist in the rationalist tradition in much of his pre-critical writings is certainly the case, as Ameriks points out (Ameriks 1982 13ff). However, Ameriks also believes that Kant has a continuing commitment to Rationalism in his expression of a modified or ‘scientific’ immaterialism within the critical writings (Ameriks 1982 40). In doing this, I feel, he indicates a failure to recognise the intellectual metamorphosis evident within critical thought. This is exemplified by such assertions as ‘But in fact Kant must accept immaterialism at the noumenal level…’ (Ameriks 1982 45). This conflicts with the
idea that Transcendental Idealism removes the underlying dualism on which the matter and non-matter dichotomy is based. Ameriks sees Kant as committed to dualism, saying ‘The tradition of dualism is well served by his distinction between phenomena and noumena, his notion of the limits of a psychology modelled on physics, his analysis of the complexities in asserting personal identity, and his many advances over the cruder versions of dualism’ (Ameriks 1982 23). Ameriks’ own sophisticated and thoughtful analysis attempts to defend Kant’s alleged immaterialism, while at the same time seeing him as offering a rebuttal of spiritualism. Such a view is only possible if one accepts that these distinctions are evident in transcendental thought, and this, as I see it, is not the case. In what follows, I will argue that my own view of the non-corporeal nature of the mind is based on Kant’s view of it as an idea of practical reason. While an idea cannot be corporeal, neither is it spiritual, and no appeal to mind/matter dualism is implied. Ameriks, on the other hand, argues that since for Kant the mind is not material, it must be spiritual and non-corporeal, and the dualism involved in his view becomes apparent.

In this way, Ameriks finds not only mind/matter dualism within critical thought, but also the dualism underlying phenomenalism, that between ideas and objects which I also take to be deflated. He says that Kant ‘…tended to slip over the distinction between appearance and phenomena…’ (Ameriks 1982 23), which is hardly surprising on the view that Kant transcendentally conflates the two. A further point of difference between us is the assessment of Kant’s philosophical stance. Ameriks repeatedly tells us that ‘… [Kant] definitely was committed to a basically rationalistic position’ (Ameriks 1982 10). As a further point of divergence between us, I have interpreted Transcendental Idealism as placing appearances within the mind, and drawn the implication that if the body is appearance and mind is soul, we are able to describe the body as being ensouled, in opposition to Ameriks’ idea that ‘However positive Kant may be about the possibility of our being in some sense independent of a body, he definitely recognizes that within life our embodiment is an indubitable and peculiar fact’ (Ameriks 1982 99).

Clearly, Ameriks has little in common with the positions taken in this writing, though any attempt to do more than point this out is not possible here. We may explain these differences at least in part through Ameriks’ lack of awareness of the respective functions of the practical and the theoretical modes of reason. In the opening sentences of his Chapter VI, for example, he reluctantly accepts that he is forced to look at the practical philosophy of the second
Critique, which deals with freedom, but once again he says that this theme ‘…is treated most naturally within the domain of rational psychology’ (Ameriks 1982 189). His attempt to defend Kant’s positions is disrupted by his continuing interpretation of it as dualistic. He says ‘…Noumenal immaterialism proper remains quite defensible, for… nothing, including the soul, can be in itself material. As long as this claim is not inflated into transcendental immaterialism, spiritualism, pneumatism, or idealism, there is nothing to be said against it from a Kantian perspective’ (Ameriks 1982 99). If there is no independently existing material, as in transcendental reflection, but all such manifestation is appearance, then any talk of immaterialism loses its meaning, and although Ameriks fails to draw this conclusion, we may do so.

Kant certainly accepts that, as experiencing individuals, we are all dualists, since the experience of the material world differs from our experience of our own minds, but this does not translate to the transcendental viewpoint, the view from the mind as thing in itself which I have described as the ‘view-from’.

The transcendental idealist, on the other hand, may be an empirical realist or, as he is called, a dualist; that is, he may admit the existence of matter without going outside his mere self-consciousness, or assuming anything more than the certainty of his representations, that is, the cogito, ergo sum. For he considers this matter and even its inner possibility to be appearance merely; and appearance, if separated from our sensibility, is nothing. Matter is with him, therefore, only a species of representations (intuition), which are called external, not as standing in relation to objects in themselves external, but because they relate perceptions to the space in which all things are external to one another, while yet the space itself is in us. (A 370)

If then we ask, whether it follows that in the doctrine of the soul dualism alone is tenable, we must answer: ‘Yes, certainly; but dualism only in the empirical sense’. (A379)

Let us examine this further. We have said that for Kant, the problem with accepting objects of outer sense as things in themselves, capable of imprinting themselves on the mind as representations, is to create the division which characteristically results in Cartesian dualism, the division of substance into matter and mind, and either Materialism or Spiritualism, depending which is adopted as the primary form of reality. On the other hand, empirical objects as matter, in the Kantian epochê, that is, when considered transcendentally, exist only as thought things.
For matter, the communion of which with the soul arouses so much questioning, is nothing but a mere form, or a particular way of representing an unknown object (Gegenstand) by means of that intuition which is called outer sense, there may well be something outside us to which this appearance, which we call matter, corresponds; in its character of appearance it is not, however, outside us, but is only thought in us… (A385)

The appropriate question here is not whether Kant supports some form of immaterialism, but whether his doctrine is able to sidestep the issue of mind/matter dualism altogether. Arguably, he achieves this by establishing that matter, as we experience it, is transcendentally one with mind, existing only as mind content, and is therefore, as experience, a property or predicate of mind.

Kant allows the empirical realist to be a dualist where mind/body matters are concerned, but this does not commit him to the traditional metaphysical dichotomies, such as those attributed to Descartes, for example. The critical reallocation of mind and matter collapses dualism by positing appearances as mind things only, and in so doing negates their ontological independence without in any way diminishing their objective reality.

…matter…is not however outside us, but is only a thought in us, although this thought…represents it as existing outside us. Matter, therefore, does not mean a kind of substance quite distinct and heterogeneous from the object of inner sense (the soul), but only the distinctive nature of those appearances of objects -- in themselves unknown to us -- the representations of which we call outer as compared with those which we count as belonging to inner sense, although like all other thoughts these outer representations belong only to the thinking subject. … Consequently, the question is no longer of the communion of the soul with other known substances of a different kind outside us, but only of the connection of the representations of inner sense with the modifications of our outer sensibility… (A385-6)

This passage from the fourth paralogism of the A edition indicates that if we see all appearances, and the space and time which underlies them, existing as mental entities within a mind or soul experienced as the unity of apperception, no mind/matter dualism is created. All ‘objects’, whether Gegenstände or Objekte, have their being only as mental entities i.e., as thoughts, and therefore sit alongside each other as thoughts and ideas within the mind. This monism not only sidesteps the mind/body problem but on examination may be seen as dissolving it.
Clarifying Kant’s position is necessary to counter confusions such as those created by not distinguishing between the transcendental and the experiential components of Kant’s reflections on the human condition. Any questions concerning immaterialism, I would argue, as with those about phenomenalism, can only arise if these perspectives are confused.

To understand this we must turn to that which underlies inner intuition as subject. Kant calls this the doctrine of the soul (A381), and the study of both this and extended substance is the physiology of inner and outer sense respectively. They have the notable difference that in outer sense we encounter states of affairs with causal relations, while nothing of the sort can occur in inner sense. Inner sense consists only of thoughts, which have ‘…no relations of place, motion, shape or spatial determination…and we wholly lose the guidance of causes in the effects which they are to exhibit in inner sense’ (A387). The implications for his religious doctrine as they concern the soul as a metaphysical idea come more sharply into focus here. The thinking ‘I’, experienced through inner sense, loses much of the categorised content of spatial representations, everything in fact except time itself. From this, we can see that Kant’s success in stepping out of the dichotomy of mind and matter created by dualism depends on how convincingly he can transcendentally reduce the material world to thought content, that is, as mind dependent representations or appearances, while simultaneously maintaining their empirical independence. This paradox is only resolved by positing space itself as a mind dependent precondition of experience.

At this point we are not so much interested in the latter of these arguments, but with the description of the transcendental relationship between mind and the objects it experiences. Kant has to show that the mind and its contents have such a close relationship that each is reciprocally dependent on the other, while also being different, if he is to avoid creating another form of dualism. This is not to say that the mind depends on appearances for its continuance, merely that our awareness of it is, since without that awareness it is nothing to us. This synonymity and reciprocity is established through his assertion that we can know only appearances and ourselves as pure apperception through generalised appearances. This means that were there no representations or appearances as objects in space, we could have no awareness of self in the way we do.

Kant is certain that his description is more coherent and sustainable than any other. As an example, he says the primary function of the mind/body distinction in School metaphysics is
to allow the transience of matter to be divorced from the substance that is mind, which is then
deemed capable of continued existence. This is achieved through the expedient of designating
mind as being simple, immune to decay and therefore non-corporeal (A356). The adequacy
of this is disputed, since even if we allow that everything that thinks is simple, this is still
insufficient to distinguish it from matter. By considering matter as appearance, that is, as a
representation of things in themselves, the distinction collapses because of its occurrence as
mental content only. Because of this, mind and matter, as things in themselves, share
simplicity, and as such, this criterion is unable to distinguish them.

If matter were a thing in itself, it would, as a composite being, be entirely different from the soul, as a
simple being. But matter is mere outer appearance, the substratum of which cannot be known through any
predicate that we can assign to it. I can therefore very well admit the possibility that it is in itself simple…
(A359)

The only way to establish the non-corporeal nature of the soul, he says, is to apply Aesthetic,
in the realisation that since bodies are appearances of outer sense only, and all appearances
are bodies, the thinking subject cannot appear with them. The attempt to distinguish mind
from matter on the basis of its alleged simplicity collapses because as mind content, matter
itself loses any claim to complexity.

From this brief description, we can see how we are to understand that all the components of
human experience, including the experience of selfhood, exist solely as mind content, and lie
united within the mind. Kant may avoid any suggestion of dualism if he can maintain this
synonymity of the experience of self and the world, which is the role of apperception. If
apperception unites that which is the world with that which is self, the resulting awareness of
unity also provides the noumenal boundary between actuality and the unknown. An important
consideration is the ontological status of those unknown transcendental components referred
to, i.e., things in themselves, including the transcendental subject, and the relationship
between them. If they differ, then we would find a continuing dualism, which although
transcendental, would be of the type Kant is attempting to avoid, while also positing a form
of positive knowledge about them. Kant repeatedly stresses that in transcendental thought
things in themselves are to be considered only as unknown somethings, and that any further
question concerning them is meaningless for theoretical reason. Since they are all equally
unknown, they are, as far as human cognition is concerned, of equal significance. They may
even be the same thing, though we can never know this. Because of this, he argues toward the negative conclusion that we are unable to distinguish between the ‘I’ and other things in themselves.

But if we compare the thinking I not with matter but with the intelligible which lies at the basis of the outer appearances that we call matter, then, since of the intelligible we know nothing whatever, we also cannot say that the soul is in any respect intrinsically distinct from the intelligible. (A360)

The unknowability of the mind as thing in itself gives rise to a problem concerning just what it is that thinks. We normally think that we think, but clearly the empirical human organism is itself a representation and the result of thought, while the thinking mind as thing in itself is unknown. Kant addresses this problem by applying his unitary commitment.

In such a way the very same thing that is called a body in one relation would at the same time be a thinking being in another, whose thoughts, of course, we could not intuit, but only their signs in appearance. Thereby the expression that only souls (as a particular species of substance) think would be dropped; and instead it would be said, as usual, that human beings think, i.e., that the same being that as outer appearance is extended is inwardly (in itself) a subject, which is not composite, but is simple and thinks. (A359-360)

Kant embraces this conclusion following a radical discussion of the relationship between minds and matter in general. By asserting that what thinks is the human being considered in its totality, and combining both empirical and intelligible components, he denies the application of the distinction between mind and body. Such a formulation is consistent with his earlier observation that the ‘I’ in the ‘I think’ is always to be considered as a thing in itself. In this way what some commentators refer to as the empirical self and the intelligible self become one thinking being.

These passages exemplify the problem Kant has in explaining himself, and the difficulty in understanding his position. First, he says it is illegitimate to ask if matter and mind or soul, as things in themselves, are the same sort of thing. He then provides what appears to be an answer by asserting that they are different! To explain this, we must see how his rejection of dualism is intended to show that mind as a thing in itself is not only different from matter, but also so removed from it that no association is possible. Kant responds to the question, ‘Is the thinking being the same as matter?’ by saying that there is no question, as we find so often in such matters. Matter, represented as an object of some sort, is for Transcendental Idealism a
constitutive part of the condition of the mind. Put another way, it is part of the state in which the thinking being presently finds itself, and something it is aware of only as representations. The idea that we, as minds, are and can be conscious only of this state and not the experiencing mind itself, removes the possibility of relating mind and matter in any way. Consequently, the attempt to confound or compare the two is futile. So while mind and matter are part of the same transcendental state of affairs, within experience they are divorced, and we are unable to establish their relationship in any meaningful way.

Kant is not content to allow his description to rest on this basis. He is tempted in this section of the Second Paralogism to speculate further about the cognitive state of the intelligible which underlies empirical objects in general. He muses that since thinking things are simple, and appearances relate to things in themselves, which are also simple, we may speculate that appearances too are capable of thought and consciousness. The following quote is from Guyer/Wood.

…that same Something that grounds outer appearances and affects out sense so that it receives the representations of space, matter shape, etc—this Something, considered as noumenon (or better, as transcendental object (Gegenstand)) could also at the same time be the subject of thoughts… (Cr. Of P. Reason, Tr. Guyer & Wood 1997 A358)

Perhaps because Kant’s meaning here is so radical, earlier translators such as Pluhar and Kemp-Smith assumed that since only humans, and perhaps other higher organisms think, Kant must be referring to our minds. They have rendered this last phrase as ‘…the subject of our thoughts…’. employing ‘subject’ to mean that which is thought, as distinct from Kant’s denoting it as that which thinks. The original reads ‘…könnte doch auch zugleich das Subject der Gedanken seyn…’ lacking the reference to human thinking. Such an idea is completely consistent with a unitary view of the mind and its contents within the transcendental environment, and encompasses the possibility that appearances themselves may be capable of thought.

I may further assume that the substance which in relation to our outer senses possesses extension is in itself the possessor of thoughts, and that these thoughts can by means of its own inner sense be consciously represented. In this way, what in one relation is entitled corporeal would in another relation be at the same time a thinking being, whose thoughts we cannot intuit, though we can indeed intuit their signs in the [field] of appearances. (A359)
The idea seems to be that since mind, as a thing in itself with an empirical representation in inner sense, is capable of thought, so may other spatial entities which are representations of other things in themselves. His motivation for this is straightforward enough, and derives from his willingness to accept the full implication of deflating the dualisms outlined above. Since discrimination cannot be allowed between mind, as transcendental subject, and other things in themselves as they relate to representations, then these other things in themselves, those that form the intelligible substratum of matter itself, may also be capable of thought, though these ‘thoughts’ are necessarily hidden from us. To put it another way, if humans, considered holistically and including their physical manifestation, are capable of thought, they may also share other putative characteristics of the soul as considered practically, such as simplicity, thought, consciousness, or even continuing life itself with the intelligible groundings of other appearances. This is a particularly modern idea given the difficulty of demarcating between the living and the inert, a distinction currently seen to be somewhere near the level of viruses. Consequently, the attempt to remove dualism within the intelligible components of Transcendental Idealism opens the possibility of removing dualism within appearances. Kant does not resile from the idea that material objects, as thinking subjects, could experience intuitions and the full mechanisms of conscious representation of other objects, perhaps even self-awareness, and the possibility of some level of reasoning capacity. Under these conditions, the usual metaphysical distinction between thinking substance and matter would disappear, and empirical dualism itself would collapse, a result fully in keeping with the thrust of Kant’s enquiry. We may describe the passages related to this subject as dabbling, and Kant removes them completely in the 1787 opus, but they are important in giving us an insight into the direction of his thoughts on this subject. They are a direct result of the attempt to remove both the possibility of Cartesian scepticism, and the dualism on which it rests.

4.3 Things in Themselves.

One of the results of the ‘view-from’ reading is the discovery that there is only one world within transcendental reflection, and that, paradoxically, is an intelligible world of which we can know nothing. The singularity of this world is a direct result of the deflation of the dualities we have examined. On the other hand, we can know appearances and concepts, and our knowledge of material things is limited to these appearances. We have also seen how
Kant ultimately sets the limits of sensibility not through reference to the transcendental object, but to the noumenal. On this understanding, the influence of things in themselves and the appearances they relate to within the mind resolve into a noumenal collation ultimately experienced through intuition as the manifold of representational activity which we identify as self. Fortunately for us, Kant does not completely close the door between what we experience as epistemology and what there is as ontology. Through the inferences of pure reason, we are able to discern what must be the case, that is, how our experience relates to its underlying grounding in order to stabilise our moral well-being through the quest for justified happiness. It is the role of the postulated existence of the intelligible world and our place in it to provide this linkage.

As Kant indicates in the preface to the B edition, although we cannot know anything about things in themselves, he allows that they exist problematically. A problematic concept is indeterminate in nature, and holds open the possibility of something ‘…that contains no contradiction but that is also, as a boundary for given concepts, connected with other cognitions, the objective reality of which can in no way be cognized…’ (B310). In an alternative expression, he tells us that a concept such as a noumenon ‘…taken merely problematically, remains not only admissible, but even unavoidable, as a concept setting limits to sensibility’ (B 311-2).

We see here an emphatic claim about the reality of things in themselves, whose being is a perennial condition of the possibility of experience. Kant reiterates this in a latter part of the A edition.

The Transcendental Aesthetic, in all its teaching, has led to this conclusion; and the same conclusion also, of course, follows from the concept of an appearance in general; namely, that something which is not in itself appearance must correspond to it... Unless, therefore, we are to move constantly in a circle, the word appearance must be recognised as already indicating a relation to something, the immediate representation of which is, indeed, sensible, but which, even apart from the constitution of our sensibility (upon which the form of our intuition is grounded), must be something in itself, that is, an object independent of sensibility. (A252-3)

This is a fundamental tenet of critical thought, and it is no surprise to find that Kant has not changed his mind in the *Prolegomena.*
...I by all means avow that there are bodies outside us i.e., things which, though completely unknown to us as to what they may be in themselves, we know through the representations which their influence on our sensibility provides for us, and to which we give the name of a body—which would therefore merely mean the appearance of this object that is unknown to us but is nonetheless real. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 41)

Thus we find across a range of texts the consistent assertion that there are things in themselves, and, paradoxically, that they are unknown. A recognition of practical reasoning as an immanent theme operating within the first Critique allows us to reconsider this most contentious of exegetical problems, puzzled over since the earliest days of publication. We have expressed the view that the critical works can only be written from the point of view of practical reason, and here we see why. Put simply, only practical reason has license to speak of things in themselves.

Kant’s placing of the thing in itself has stimulated a degree of bewilderment, hostility, and even contempt. Ameriks, for example, has little sympathy for Kant concerning this topic, asserting him to be ‘...unfortunately liable to fits of inexplicable raving about the thing in itself’ (Ameriks 1982 3). Ralf Meerbote comments that ‘Little agreement about either the meaning or the truth of Kant’s claims concerning [the notion of things-in-themselves and of their knowability] has ever been reached’ (In Chadwick and Cazeaux, 1992 276).

Arguably, the confusion results to a large extent from a lack of appreciation of the changing emphasis of practical reason as outlined above, and the resulting repositioning of things in themselves relative to the ideas of practical reason. We have seen that as Kant writes, practical reason is promoted to a position of ascendancy as he comes to more fully distinguish practical from theoretical and speculative reason. In this way, the conceptual vacuum constituting things in themselves for theoretical reason, is partially occupied by a limited number of practical ideas whose predicates we may legitimately discover through reason.

To say that practical reason has license to deal with things in themselves needs further explanation. One of the reasons for Kant’s confidence in postulating them is his concept of freedom. He develops the position that the realisation of freedom of the self as a thing in itself is an a priori cognition and therefore one of the most significant discoveries of critical
philosophy. This, combined with the awareness of self through pure apperception, provides a link between that which is sensible and that which is not. As mind, Kant positions the transcendental subject at the limits of sensibility, but able to look only upon the sensible world, or more precisely, to look into itself to see representations grounded through the relation of self with other things in themselves. At B69 Kant refers to the self-intuition of the mind, which, when looking into itself becomes aware of its own workings, but that is as far as it goes. The self as thing in itself cannot be seen, and there is no rear view mirror.

The thought of mind as thing in itself is not, however, the only or even the main reason behind Kant’s confidence in assuming the presence of things in themselves. We have noted how his initial exposition concerning several themes, including the soul as an idea, things in themselves, and Transcendental Idealism, involves the employment of such concepts prior to identification or specific definition, and I have argued this is partly responsible for the difficulties many have had in understanding critical philosophy. Another problem has been the paradoxical segregation of things in themselves from any possible epistemic or cognitive support, with the result that many commentators find it difficult to see how he is justified in talking about them at all. The following comment is typical of Kant’s agnosticism, drawn from the very outset of the critical writing.

… the thing in itself, is not known, and cannot be known, through these representations; and in experience no question is ever asked in regard to it. (A30)

In isolation, this type of expression is contradictory. While this early material must be seen as introductory, the subject of the sentence is indisputably the thing in itself. Yet, if no question or knowledge is possible of something, we may ask how anyone is able to speak significantly of it at all. Gardner illustrates this paradox through the dilemma of Jacobi.

Perhaps the most intriguing single comment made about transcendental idealism is the famous remark of Kant’s contemporary Jacobi that, year after year, he had been forced in confusion to recommence the Critique because he had found himself unable to enter into the system of Kantian philosophy without the presupposition of the thing in itself, and yet, with that presupposition, unable to remain within it. (Gardner 1999 269)

The question remains as to how Kant is able to talk about things whose meaning is so vacuous. We might take the attitude that they function as something like the unknown
theoretical entities with which science sometimes has to work, or that they are useful devices. That this is not Kant’s view will become clear in what follows.

In the first *Critique* at least, his explanation is incomplete, and unless one takes a wider view of his theory, taking into account its practical implications, it all too easy to reach erroneous and confused conclusions. One of these follows from the temptation to confound the Lockean/Cartesian explanation of experience with the transcendental viewpoint; that is, to create unnecessarily complex and ultimately untenable metaphysical structures which in no way resemble Kant’s theories. The tendency to give up on things in themselves altogether is always there. Strawson does this, finding them beyond the bounds of sense, or Guyer, who declares them redundant, since 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. So in the final analysis we are also delivered from worry about the reconciliation of transcendental idealism and the refutation of idealism, even though Kant shows us how to effect such a marriage’ (Guyer 1987 336).

From the above brief comments, it is clear that a wide range of responses is available concerning things in themselves. These include:

- Guyer’s outright rejection on the grounds of incoherence and redundancy. (Guyer 1987 335-6)
- Werkmeister and Allison’s idea of them as adverbial constructs or conceptual instrumentalities. Werkmeister, for example, poses the reasonable and fundamental question, ‘But what are the things-in-themselves?’ (Werkmeister in Chadwick and Cazeaux 1992 276) and he bases his answer on various references from the *Critique* and the *Opus Postumum*, such as ‘… the object is to be taken in a twofold sense, namely, as appearances and as thing-in-itself’ (B xxvii). He continues;

It seems clear from the passages quoted (and from others that could be added) that in most of the relevant statements Kant uses the terms ‘thing-in-itself’ and ‘things-in-themselves’ as abbreviations of the expression ‘things viewed (or contemplated) without reference to our experiencing them in sensory intuition’. That is to say, the distinction between objects of experiences as phenomena and as things-in-themselves is not an ontological distinction but one of the perspectives for viewing the objects. Kant thus refers quite explicitly to ‘things when they are considered in themselves through reason’ (A28/B44), and says ‘when I view all things not as phenomena but as things-in-themselves’ A206/B257; my italics). This
implies, I submit, that ‘in itself’ and ‘in themselves’ are adverbial rather than adjectival determinants and should be read: ‘things-considered-in-itself’ and ‘things-considered-in-themselves. (Werkmeister in Chadwick and Cazeaux op. cit. 278)

- Langton’s view of them as substances possessing qualities of various types. This theory accepts that things in themselves are substances and carry or bear both intrinsic and relational properties, and that we can be aware of the former through the causal influence the latter has on our sense organs. (Langton 1998 3)

These interpretations offer three possibilities; first, the dismissal of things in themselves as beyond comprehension and ultimately redundant; second, the reduction of things in themselves to semantic devices, and third, the acceptance that things in themselves exist in some external and non-sensible realm but are nonetheless able to impact on the mind, either through the sense organs or otherwise. Each of these is difficult to square with the textual evidence, and we can overcome the difficulties of all of these by adopting the view that Transcendental Idealism allows us to consider the possibility of a single noumenal world within which lies the mind, not a ‘two-world’ or ‘two-view’ account of the position of mind and its experience. We can better understand Kant’s meaning through the ‘view-from’ interpretation, in which we get a more coherent interpretation. By considering a non-sensual transaction between things in themselves and mind, and thereby removing mind from any empirical location, we create a relationship completely different from those that contemplate a categorial or other form of causal influence relying on an implicit dualism to maintain its error.

We can see what happens when we do away with the idea of the mind and other things in themselves as having a spatial location by looking at Allison’s commentary on Vaihinger’s difficulty in understanding things in themselves as causal agents.

1. Either one understands by the affecting objects the things in themselves; in which case one falls into the contradiction discovered by Jacobi, Aenesidemus and others that one must apply beyond experience the categories of substantiality and causality which are only supposed to have meaning and significance within experience.
2. Or one understands by affecting objects the objects in space; but since these are only appearances according to Kant, and thus our representations, one falls into the contradiction that the same appearances, which we first have on the basis of affection, should be the source of that very affection.
3. Or one accepts a double affection, as transcendent through things in themselves and empirical through objects in space. In this case, however, one falls into the contradiction that a representation for the transcendental ego should afterwards serve as a thing in itself for the empirical ego, the affection of which produces in the ego, above and beyond the transcendental representation of the object, an empirical representation of the very same object. (Allison 2004 65-6)

On the ‘view-from’ reading, in which the mind is described as a thing in itself responding to the influence of other things in themselves, Vaihinger’s alternatives cease to be a representative or exhaustive description of the available possibilities. Options 2 and 3 involve space in the interaction between mind and objects in space, creating the problems noted by their author. He rejects 1 because he sees it as employing an illicit causal relationship which again seems to assume that the mind itself is a spatial entity and therefore subject to the categories. So, it seems that each possibility assumes either things in themselves and/or a mind existing in space which is causally affected by them. Since such a mind would also be a representation, it becomes difficult to see how something which is not spatio/temporal could influence it. Conversely, if the stimulatory object is spatial, the relationship with a non-spatial mind is equally incoherent for the same reason.

By removing space and time from this relationship, we get a much more coherent picture, since any notion of causation dissolves into the unknowable operations of sensibility. In this way, we get the idea of the mind as a thing in itself, and of the physical brain as a representation, and therefore a product of noumenal presence and spontaneous imaginational activity along with all other such empirical manifestations.

The temptation to accept the mind as a denizen of the empirical world is strong. As noted above, while we are seemingly committed to this by Kant’s apparent dictum that all experience begins with experience and the stimulation of the physical senses (B1), this is subject to the caveat that we consider it only as far as time is concerned, that is, in its empirical manifestation. I have argued that the transcendental viewpoint is rather different, and an awareness of Kant’s nuances makes this clear. Because of this, things in themselves are not ontologically divorced from appearances, since appearances are things in themselves as viewed through human intellectual finitude. Consequently, we can agree that Kant has at all times to show that appearances differ epistemically from things in themselves, while at the same time allowing that they are the same thing in a different manifestation, and this
ambiguity bedevils all discussion of Transcendental Idealism unless it is taken into account. Again, we find an appreciation of this in Heidegger.

Appearances [Erscheinungen] are not mere illusion, but are the being itself. And again this being is not something different from the thing in itself, but rather this [thing in itself] is precisely a being. The being itself can be apparent without the being “in itself” (i.e., as a thing in itself which stands forth) being known. (Taft 1997 22)

When Kant says that the object is to be thought of in two ways, he is not referring to two objects, or to one object and a predicated reference to it. There is only one object and it is experienced only in time and space as an appearance. This is not a positive declaration about the supersensible, but a synthetic a priori proposition about human capacities, and as such is a claim to self-knowledge. The denial of certain predicates to an unimaginable something is a necessary consequence of Transcendental Idealism when we see it not as an argument, but a transcendental reflection undertaken by reason which must (ought to) refer to things of which we can have no cognition, but in which we may have justified belief.

We have noted that this reading of Transcendental Idealism sees it as performing a Copernican reversal concerning mind and nature. Our everyday experience places the mind, as finite and mortal consciousness, within nature, existing within the natural body and surrounded by material objects of various types, all of which have continuing being in time and space. From the transcendental point of view, we have seen how this relationship is reversed. I have argued that Kant asks us to view the world of nature as enclosed by mind, that this enclosed natural world obtains its a priori characteristics through the structuring influence of mind itself. This affection is not a causal relation in the empirical or categorial sense, but rather the acknowledgment that things as they are experienced cannot adequately explain themselves in much the same way that everyday non-Copernican astronomical experience is incoherent. Transcendental Idealism teaches that all experience, while objectively real, is mind dependent for its continuance. The mind considered transcendentally as a ‘thought thing’ enclosing the natural world and as a thing in itself does not share the spatiotemporal characteristics of nature. In Kant’s later writing it becomes the practical idea of the soul, immortal and eternal. It is neither material nor immaterial, but merely, for us, the concept of analogical substance lacking objectification. The important point to be made concerning these assertions is that they are ideas or concepts only, and in no way a claim to
knowledge of any sort about an existence of any sort. They do not posit any supersensible substantial or other object, nor are they something that Kant argues for in any positive or direct sense as having concrete existence. Their purpose is purely aimed at establishing the possibility of the regulative principles which practical reason requires.

Consequently, I see Kant as positioning human awareness in a world of things in themselves, among which we number ourselves as an identifiable consciousness, and through which we experience all representations as grounded in other things in themselves through their a priori influence on our sensibility, and as structured and categorised by our own finite mental capacities. My reading of Transcendental Idealism differs from the following interpretations.

- A ‘two-world’ theory that interprets Kant as postulating an independent world of things in themselves in parallel with the world of nature. (Strawson, 1966)
- A ‘one-world’ theory in which we can experience some but not all of a set of overlapping properties, that is the relational but not the intrinsic properties of things in themselves, which ipso facto exist and affect us through the senses. (Langton 1998).
- A ‘two-aspect’ theory in which non-sensible Kantian objects are conceived merely as concepts by a mind positioned within nature, and reasoning in this way about experienced phenomena considered as things in themselves, that is, as objects abstracted from the conditions of sensibility. (Allison 2004).

It may appear that the last of these examples has a close affinity with the ‘view-from’ reading. That this similarity is superficial will become clear in what follows, due to the absence of the practical dimension from Allison’s theory. As noted above, the ‘view-from’ reading sees Kant as positing one world, and it is noumenal. We find this conclusion in the Canon.

Happiness, therefore, in exact proportion with the morality of the rational beings who are thereby rendered worthy of it, alone constitutes the supreme good of that world, wherein, in accord with the commands of a pure but practical reason, we are under obligation to place ourselves. This world is indeed an intelligible world only, since the sensible world holds out no promise that any such systematic unity of end can arise from the nature of things. (A814/B842)
Such a point of view is made both possible and necessary by the practical imperatives of the search for happiness, the systematic unity of ends and a supreme cause as the objects of a moral theology. Consequently, Kant is not interested in a ‘two-world’ description of reality, and while being empirically real, the natural world is not the seat of intelligence. From this perspective, sensuous cognition is experienced and observed by a noumenal subject situated at the limits of both transcendental and empirical sensibility, gazing at its own intuited representations and restricted in perception to categorised spatio/temporal appearances. Kant’s point of view, the protagonist he adopts, on this reading, is expressed as a non-corporeal thing that is not experienced and can never be experienced. We find Kant asserting this non-corporeality in the Second Paralogism.

…we can rightfully say that our thinking subject is not corporeal, meaning that since it is represented as an object (Gegenstand) of our inner sense, insofar as it thinks it could not be an object (Gegenstand) of outer sense…thinking beings, as such, can never come before us among outer appearances… (A357)

We can accept this negative concept of mind as thinking subject as a condition for the possibility of understanding, while allowing that it always remains incapable of representation in concreto. Despite this, as we have seen, it is also a representation in general. Neither is there any possibility of non-sensible intuition (B 307). It is central to the thematic integrity of the first Critique that an epistemic disregard of the noumenal should be maintained as far as theoretical reason is concerned.

Hence intelligible beings are thereby allowed only with the enforcement of this rule, which brooks no exception whatsoever: that we do not know and cannot know anything determinate about these intelligible beings at all… (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 68)

While Kant consistently maintains things in themselves are unknown, as he writes he develops the view that their possibility is a logical and moral necessity, and then later as something we can claim to know with certainty, though his meaning of knowledge in this context is new because it derives from the activities of practical reason and its ideas. In the preface to the B edition, things in themselves are possible as thought objects only.

But our further contention must also be duly borne in mind, namely, that though we cannot know these objects as things in themselves, we must yet be in position at least to think them as things in themselves… (B xxvi)
Some things are thinkable as non-contradictory possibilities, which in no way undermines the agnosticism about them. They are algebraic abstractions. The possible via media between what is and what may be is crucial for the later expansion of practical reason when considering the ideas as postulates. In later writings, the tone is more emphatic.

…the understanding, just by the fact that it accepts appearances, also admits to the existence of things in themselves, and to that extent we can say that the representations of such beings as underlie the appearances, hence of mere intelligible beings, is not merely permitted but is unavoidable. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 68)

Our conclusions concerning things in themselves are now well established. The human mind can know only appearances, which exist within it through the ideality of time and space. This is Kant’s epistemic teaching. His ontological teaching is that there is nothing else but things in themselves. The mind is a thing in itself, as are all other independently existing Gegenstände, and as such they remain beyond our knowledge. This is in keeping with the conclusion that Kant postulates only one noumenal world of things in themselves, and that as a matter of practical necessity we are obliged to see ourselves as having our being within this environment at all times while having empirical access to appearances only.

4.4 Some Ambiguities.

From this discussion, we can see that when looked at in this transcendental manner the relationship between things in themselves and representations radically alters what we mean by causation. There is no possibility of any observable a priori force or power acting between empirical objects, explaining Hume’s discovery that no such power is discernable. The actions of natural objects in a causal relationship therefore occur in isolation of each other, and for Kant the action of forces acting at a distance, such as the apparently arcane universal gravitational influences that gave Newton and others so much concern, are no more mysterious that the usual contiguous activity we associate with observed regularities. This is not to say that Kant would advocate that we give up investigating such phenomena, it is just that the noumenal objects grounding appearances remain unknown except for their representations, and these subsist solely within the mind with no extra-empirical counterpart
outside of the mind, for example, in space, which itself exists as a mind dependent condition of cognition.

In the absence of a full understanding of the independent positioning of things in themselves, this description can lead to the charge of Berkeleian idealism. Kant’s ability to escape this complexity is tested repeatedly, and a typical example of his response occurs in the *Prolegomena*.

Idealism consists in the claim that there are none other than thinking beings; the other things that we believe we perceive in intuition are only representations in thinking beings to which in fact no object existing outside these beings corresponds. I say in opposition: there are things given to us as objects of our senses existing outside us, yet we know nothing of them as they may be in themselves but are acquainted only with their appearances, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect our senses. (*Pr. to Any Fut. Met.* Tr. Hatfield 1997 40)

Here we have a clear statement of things external to ourselves affecting our senses, apparently the very idea against which I am arguing. However, Kant is not saying that things in themselves in the transcendental sense are impacting on our sense organs, and we know why. The answer lies in the independent source of the grounding of all representational phenomena, and this Kant explains in the sentence following. This second statement is a deceptively similar sounding proposition.

Accordingly, I by all means avow that there are bodies outside us, i.e., things which, though completely unknown to us as to what they may be in themselves, we know through the representations which their influence on our sensibility provides for us, and to which we give the name of a body—which word therefore merely means the appearance of this object that is unknown to us but is nonetheless real. Can this be called idealism? It is the very opposite of it. (*Pr. to Any Fut. Met.* Tr. Hatfield 1997 40)

It appears that Kant is reiterating the point here, referring in both cases to things ‘outside’ us as influencing us in such a way that we experience representations. However, a closer reading indicates that the passages contain quite different meanings. Why should Kant repeat himself? That he does not becomes apparent when we consider the nuanced differences of which we are now aware, and which on analysis gives us a very different interpretation. First, we should note the change in reference from ‘senses’ in the first paragraph to ‘sensibility’ in the second, a distinction we have noted in our earlier analysis. Note also our earlier
discussion of the continuing ambiguity of the word ‘outside’, which we find in both these paragraphs. In the first paragraph, Kant is talking of the empirical relationship, that is, of objects appearing to exist outside our empirical self in time and space, both of which possess representational characteristics. The second paragraph does not duplicate this description. Rather, the objects referred to as outside us are not in space, are unknown and have an existence independent of the perceiving mind. It is these objects, which Kant refers to as things in themselves, and whose independent existence, now confidently asserted, removes any possibility of idealism in the Berkeleian sense. Confusion will result if we do not recognise the ambiguities he allows. It is not only words such as ‘outside’ which demonstrate this, we find it also in the term ‘thing in itself’, as in the following from the *Prolegomena* at 4:315.

In fact, if we view the objects of the senses as mere appearances, as is fitting, then we thereby admit at the very same time that thing in itself underlies them, although we are not acquainted with this thing as it may be in itself, but only with its appearance, i.e., with the way in which our senses are affected by this unknown something. Therefore, the understanding, just by the fact that it accepts appearances, also admits to the existence of things in themselves... (*Pr. to Any Fut. Met.* Tr. Hatfield 1997 68)

We may construe this usage of ‘things in themselves’ in two ways. Kant may be ambiguously using it in the Lockean manner, speaking of things physically outside us impacting on the senses, and to anyone schooled in empirical philosophy this is a wholly natural interpretation. However, a far more convincing possibility exists. On this alternative reading, Kant is justified in saying that our senses are affected by things in themselves since it is only through the senses that we are able to gain cognitions, and in that manner they are so affected. However, this is not to say that things in themselves somehow impact on or causally interact with the senses in any organic or physical manner. His theory demands that there are things in themselves, and that their influence on sensibility ultimately results in the sensual perception of representations of those same things in themselves.

Therefore, we see that Kant is not postulating two worlds at all, with the result, for example, that there can be no double affection. Rather, our native worldview of the empirical nests within and is superseded by the less obvious but ultimately more coherent transcendental description of mind/object relations. The continuing occurrence of the ambiguities we have noted are not the result of sloppy expression or thought, as is so often claimed, but the natural
outcome of Kant’s unified approach to experience. As appearances, objects are the appearances by another name, of which the mind has direct cognition and includes the organic apparatus with which we must necessarily experience them. Another result is the breakdown of any ontological duality involving appearances and things in themselves, since, as we have seen, they are the same thing expressed in different ways, that is, as appearances and as concepts.

Making this picture more complex is the perspectival move from the consideration of the limits of theoretical reason to the wider possibilities available to practical reason. Any blanket observations concerning Kant’s position which do not register these shifts is likely to be inadequate. Again, Strawson comes close to realising Kant’s meaning as we have interpreted it.

It might be urged that when Kant declares bodies to be in us as a species of representations, he does not mean by this to deny that, even in terms of the scheme of transcendental idealism, they really enjoy an existence in space distinct from the existence of our perceptions of them. He merely means to affirm that their existence in space is the outcome of the transcendental subject being affected by things in themselves. It seems almost too obvious for argument that this is not his view. None of the problem-solving powers he ascribes to the thesis that bodies are not things in themselves would even seem to belong to that thesis on this interpretation. Moreover, the thesis would generate problems of its own. For example, we should have to answer the question whether our perceptions of bodies and space were the direct outcome of our being affected by things in themselves or were the outcome of our being affected, in our empirical constitution, by bodies in space. The former answer would require a thesis of pre-established harmony such as Kant explicitly rejects; the latter would require us to have knowledge of the real causes of our perceptions, a thesis which he also explicitly rejects. (Strawson 1966 263)

Strawson does not say why direct cognition of things in themselves requires a relationship of pre-established harmony. Kant describes the freedom and spontaneity of the understanding as providing the a priori components of experience, as well as the formal characteristics of time and space, giving sufficient reason to say that there can be no knowable isomorphic or other resemblance between them. Strawson’s other objections are easily responded to. For example, we have attended to the question concerning the relationship between noumenal and empirical causation. We know from the Fourth Paralogism that physical impact does not cause representations (A387), and in the case of noumenal influence, Kant is quite happy to maintain a position of agnosticism. Neither is it obvious how the problem solving capacities of transcendental idealism are in any way reduced on this reading. Indeed, it is the only
reading allowing Kant to overcome the allegation of Berkeleian idealism while also removing the possibility of Cartesian scepticism. Kant is in this way enabled to assent to and render compatible the following propositions:

1. The mind is a thing in itself having its being among other things in themselves which affect it in such a way that it experiences appearances.
2. As they exist within the mind, representations are mind dependent for their properties and continuing existence, but are not wholly the result of mental activity and are therefore not innate.
3. The mind has direct access to representations without any mediating faculties, and the objects of experience are just those representations as appearances.
4. Appearances have an indubitable and objective existence within the mind.
5. The mind is aware of itself through its consciousness of the collective bundle of appearances making up its world, and therefore of its own indubitable being.

The character of representations, considered epistemically, is determined wholly by the mind through its formalising and categorial capacities. While they stand as representations of something, they appear to us in time and space and as such are completely different in nature to whatever they are as things in themselves, which by conceptual definition, can have no such characteristics. On the other hand, the presence of representations, that is, their ontological being, results from noumenal influence, although the way in which this occurs ‘…through the ascription of outer appearances to that transcendental object which is the cause of this species of representations…’ (A393) is not something we can know anything about. On this analysis, the natural world depends solely on the mind for its characteristics, but not for its coming into being through apprehension.

As far as things in themselves are concerned, it is not just that claims about any unlikely, useless or fictional something not existing in time and space may occur without any commitment to the existence of that something. This would include reference to unicorns not existing in time and space, for example. Things in themselves differ from unicorns in the use Kant finds for their unknowability, and his consequent agnosticism concerning them, in solving a raft of metaphysical and ethical problems by making certain possibilities available as ideas to practical reason.
The main point is that if we reject dualism as having any part in Kant’s account, we retain a strictly one-sided theoretical view of the empirical and intellectual reality available to us balanced by an open minded and problematic approach to whatever else may be the case. On the other hand, pure practical reason infers from the representational nature of appearances to the presence of things in themselves. One thing distinguishing things in themselves from unicorns is not just that unicorns do not materially exist in time and space. Unicorns, as concepts, or as we imagine them, do possess spatiotemporal characteristics of the type denied to things in themselves. Consequently, we cannot even imagine things in themselves, and it seems very strange to think that Kant is in the business of postulating any adjectival or conceptual properties or content concerning them. They are negated thought objects only, and since they have no predicates, the mind can have no conceptual purchase as far as theoretical reason is concerned. Kant’s theoretical interest focuses not so much on the nature of things in themselves, but on the Spielraum they occupy as a logical construct. His interest is not so much in the objects but in the logical void they inhabit. Their role becomes one of non-contradictory possibility, and in talking of things in themselves in the preface to the second edition, and by inference elsewhere, Kant is not postulating any characteristics for them so much as clearing a conceptual area to be occupied later by the ideas made available by practical reason. As erstwhile speculative concepts, things in themselves may also be considered as forming the basis on which practical reason operates, and the crucial importance of this practical aspect of Transcendental Idealism needs to be taken into account at all times, including any discussion of things in themselves. Kant’s dogmatism concerning the objective reality of things in themselves has nothing to do with the earlier metaphysical work, but derives from the needs which become apparent for the successful establishment of practical reason as the prime component of critical thought. We have seen how this progression occurs, and the position of things in themselves only comes fully into focus when we take this into account.

The interpretation of Kant’s metaphysics as opening the reflective possibility of independent and non-corporeal things in themselves as ideas, among which we include our own minds, avoids many problems implicit in other readings, and is more at home with Kant’s expressed thought. It is an account of perspectival change, something previously attempted by Henry Allison, and at this point it will be instructive to distance our own interpretation from his.
Allison begins his discussion of this topic by emphasising the problem of referencing of things in themselves.

Of all the criticisms that have been raised against Kant's philosophy, the most persistent is that he has no right to affirm the existence of things in themselves, noumena, or a transcendental object, much less to talk about such things as somehow ‘affecting’ the mind. Any account of Kant's transcendental idealism must, therefore, include an analysis of this issue. (Allison 2004 50)

Allison presents his text as a sympathetic analysis and defence of Transcendental Idealism, including Kant’s right to talk about things in themselves. On the ‘view-from’ reading, we explain this usage through the liberty given to practical reason, a dimension missing from Allison’s account. His justification therefore has to operate by default fully within the context of theoretical reason, which, by my assessment, can offer no such explanation.

Allison notes that Kant uses phrases such as ‘thing in itself’, ‘noumenon,’ and ‘non sensible object’ in two distinct ways. First, these terms are used when referring to a phenomenon considered as it is itself. The distinction here is between that which appears and the thing in itself on which it is grounded. Second, Kant uses such expressions as ‘noumenon’ to refer to objects having no presence in human experience.

The conception of a noumenon as an ontologically distinct entity is required only in order to allow for the possibility of conceiving of God (and perhaps rational souls). This conception is, therefore, important for Kant's metaphysics, including his metaphysics of morals, but it does not enter directly into a transcendental account of the conditions of the possibility of human knowledge. (Allison 1983 239)

In this attempt to divorce the discussion of things in themselves, as distinct from noumenon, from the moral content of Kant’s thought, Allison misses the intimate link they have in Kant’s account of knowledge in way I have set it out. Arguably, the transcendental point of view is taken from that of the self as a thing in itself, an idea of practical reason towards which theoretical reason must maintain an acquiescent silence. Because of his reliance on theoretical reason, Allison places himself in the position of searching for some way of justifying reference to things in themselves in isolation from the practical dimension of critical thought.
While Allison agrees that Kant sometimes talks about ‘…entities ontologically distinct from the sensible objects of human cognition’ he also agrees that this does not ‘… license the appeal to a set of unknown entities distinct from appearances.’ (Allison 1983 239) We may make two points about this apparent friction in Kant’s exposition. First, Kant’s assumption of the ontological independence of appearances is justified on our reading, since they result from the influence of things in themselves, which possess an autonomy denied to appearances. Second, we may assent to Allison’s assertion that there are no distinct and unknown entities apart from appearances, since appearances are just those supersensible entities made manifest through sensibility. In this case, no causal relationship is implied, nor is there one of logical necessity, since this implies the involvement of two sets of entities.

Allison’s’ ingenious suggestion is that the distinction is one of perspective.

…the appearance-thing in itself, phenomenal-noumenal distinctions indicate a contrast between two ways in which the objects of human experience can be considered in transcendental reflection. (Allison 1983 239)

While we are in full agreement with this assessment, Allison’s problem lies in how it is to be justified. With no access to the practical justification, he casts around for one, finding difficulty with the lack of textual support.

One possibility Allison considers is a semantic reading. On this, Kant affirms a relationship by which the concept of an appearance is implied by the concept of a thing in itself, that is, the relationship is one of implication rather than causality. The legitimacy of the expression ‘thing in itself’ therefore presupposes or is parasitic upon the usage of ‘that which appears’. Kant says, for example, that ‘… from the conception of appearance in general… something which is not in itself appearance must correspond to it.’ (A251-52) He continues in similar vein; ‘… the word appearance must be recognised as already indicating a relation to something… which must be something in itself, that is, an object independent of sensibility.’ This certainly looks like some semantic necessity, though of course it could also be interpreted as epistemic or even logical necessity. Allison rejects the semantic interpretation because it either presupposes that which we are attempting to avoid, that is, the existence of two classes of entities, albeit at a semantic level, or else, he says, it falls into incoherence, since we arrive at the contradictory conclusion that the same thing is both an appearance and a non-appearance.
Allison does find something of interest in the semantic solution, however, reverting to the second main way of interpreting Kant, what Gardner calls the two conception view (Gardner 1999 299). If we interpret the transcendental distinction so that ‘... the distinction is not between a thing considered as an appearance and the same thing considered as a thing in itself; it is rather between a consideration of a thing as it appears and a consideration of the same thing as it is in itself.’ (Allison 1983 240-241) This manoeuvre involves moving the emphasis away from what is being reflected upon to the manner in which it is so contemplated. ‘To consider things as they appear, or as appearing, is to consider them in their relation to the sensible conditions under which they are given to the mind in intuition. Correlatively, to consider them as they are in themselves is to think them apart from all reference to these conditions...’ (Allison 1983 241) This formulation preserves the negativity clearly intended by Kant, while also allowing the functionality required. While we cannot gain any knowledge of the thing in itself, we can nevertheless formulate for ourselves how they must be conceived in terms of their epistemic position within transcendental thought. This is similar to the ‘view-from’ reading I have been advocating, but missing in Allison’s account are the reasons for adopting this perspectival shift. Consequently, despite these insights, Allison’s view will not do, since he restricts his discussion to the employment of the understanding and theoretical reason. Let us see why this is inadequate.

After admitting the abstract nature of this formulation, Allison offers what he calls an empirical analogy. Here he refers to the Newtonian concept of weight, which considers a body as such having weight only when in a state of repulsion or attraction to another body. In the experienced world, all bodies do in fact have some such relationship, and the body considered in isolation has no empirical status, being always beyond possible experience. Despite the impossibility of experiencing or knowing such bodies, they can nevertheless be conceived of in an abstract way, as in Newton’s First Law of Motion. In the same way, claims Allison, we can think the thing itself, even though we can never experience it.

As is well known, within Newtonian physics bodies can be said to have weight only insofar as they stand in relation of attraction and repulsion to other bodies. Hence, only insofar as a given body is ‘considered’ in such a relation is a description which includes a reference to weight applicable to it... The point is simply that bodies can very well be conceived although not experienced apart from their relation to other bodies (Newton’s First Law of Motion is precisely about bodies so conceived). (Allison 1983 242)
Unfortunately for Allison’s example, and while he qualifies its applicability, this precise analogy is rejected by Kant at B313. Here he objects to theoretical physics being equated to an investigation of the intelligible, as construed through Copernican theory or Newton’s laws of gravitation, where a body and its gravitational properties are considered in a physically impossible form of idealised isolation. It is worth looking at this objection in some detail.

In the writings of modern philosophers I find the expressions mundus sensibilis and intelligibilis used with a meaning altogether different from that of the ancients—a meaning which is easily understood, but which results merely in an empty play upon words. According to this usage, some have thought good to entitle the sum of appearances, in so far as they are intuited, the world of the senses, and in so far as their connection is thought in conformity with laws of understanding, the world of understanding. Observational astronomy, which teaches merely the observation of the starry heavens, would give an account of the former; theoretical astronomy, on the other hand, as taught according to the Copernican system, or according to Newton’s laws of gravitation, would give an account of the second, namely, of an intelligible world. But such a twisting of words is a merely sophistical subterfuge; it seeks to avoid a troublesome question by changing its meanings to their own convenience. Understanding and reason are, indeed, employed in dealing with appearances; but the question to be answered is whether they have also yet another employment, when the object is not a phenomenon (that is, is a noumenon); and it is in this latter sense that the object (Gegenstände) is taken, where it is thought as merely intelligible, that is to say, as being given to the understanding alone, and not to the senses. The question, therefore, is whether in addition to the empirical employment of the understanding... there is likewise possible a transcendental employment, which has to do with the noumenon as an object. This question we have answered in the negative. (B313)

This passage has negative implications for Allison’s theory, in that Kant only licenses an adverbial manoeuvre when referring to intelligible entities such as things in themselves. He does not present them as theoretical entities of some sort, or in any way comparable to the unknowns of physics. Such a view is clearly repudiated by Kant through his denial of the possibility of the transcendental employment of the understanding, or its use in referencing the intelligible in the positive sense of formulating them as something available to a non-sensible intuition. When considered in the manner recommended by Allison, and using his example of the imaginary Newtonian weightless object, we are looking at a singular thing, considered on the one hand as we experience it, and on the other as the object in isolation. The second type of consideration involves Newton’s theoretical ‘body as such,’ and a moment's reflection reveals that this is just the idea of positive imaginary objects depleted of Cartesian secondary properties such as weight. It is not just that we find here an analogous
application of the primary/secondary property distinction. The problem is that Allison wishes to remove reference to all properties, in the manner of Strawson’s scientifically minded philosopher. And in doing this, says Strawson, we move into incoherence.

Kant’s conception of the contrast between things as they are in themselves and things as they appear seems to have the same starting point as the scientifically minded philosopher’s conception of the contrast [between primary and secondary properties]. They hold in common that, because we are aware of objects only as being affected by them and only as they appear as a result of our being so affected, we are not aware of objects as they are in themselves. But the next step is quite different…Kant denies the possibility of any empirical knowledge at all [and]…when it is added that we are to understand by space and time themselves nothing but a capacity or liability of ours to be affected in a certain way by objects not themselves in space and time, then we can no longer understand the doctrine… (Strawson 1966 40-41)

From this, we can see that Allison’s solution is foreshadowed by Strawson’s prior analysis. Within the theoretical context in which Allison works, Strawson’s criticism of the incomprehensibility of construing things in themselves in this way is justified. Consequently, Allison’s strategy fails because we are left with the absurdities associated with an ontologically meaningless abstraction of which we can know nothing, and lacking any practical application.

Such an objection does not apply to the ‘view-from’ reading, in which we see Kant postulating the possibility of things in themselves as thoughts, firstly as algebraic unknowns, which are ultimately justified on practical grounds when reconsidered as practical ideas. As such, they initially form a set of thought things, allowing room for later beliefs, which, in the absence of any ontological contradiction, take on a reality of their own to serve as part of the practical component of critical thought. As Kant puts it, we can think, or believe, whatever we like as long as no contradiction is involved. We find an example of this in the footnote to the discussion of things in themselves in the *Preface* to the Second Edition.

To know an object I must be able to prove its possibility, either from its actuality as attested by experience, or *a priori* by means of reason. But I can think whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself, that is, provided my concept is a possible thought. This suffices for the possibility of the concept, even though I may not be able to answer for there being, in the sum of all possibilities, an object corresponding to it. But something more is required before I can ascribe to such a concept objective validity, that is, real possibility; the former possibility is merely logical. This something more need not, however, be sought in the theoretical sources of knowledge; it may lie in those that are practical. (Bxxvi)
By linking things in themselves to the practical elements of cognition in this way, Kant indicates their role as foundational elements in the unfolding practical components of the first *Critique*. Arguably, any discussion failing to consider this is incomplete, and the status of things in themselves in isolation is not likely to be found coherent or comprehensible, resulting in a propensity to disregard them as an essential part of critical thought.

We may recognise that critical philosophy relies on the idea of things in themselves in at least four ways:

- They provide a grounding for representations, without which empirical objects would be independent things in themselves.
- The charge of Berkeleian idealism is overcome since, while the natural world is described as mind content only, there are other independent *Gegenstände* whose influence is a necessary condition of its being.
- Kant needs to reserve the logical space putatively occupied by things in themselves for the later deployment of the ideas of practical reason. This space is possible because ‘…the domain that lies out beyond the sphere of appearances is for us empty…’ as far as theoretical reason is concerned. (B311)
- The positioning of mind as a thing in itself provides a seat from which the transcendental viewpoint is maintained.

The substrate of experience, as things in themselves or noumena, is for theoretical reason only a logical or algebraic abstraction. Whatever other ontological status they may qualify for in other non-human minds is necessarily and permanently beyond our ken, and we are left in a state of modest ignorance such that we may choose to believe or disbelieve what we like about them, as long as no contradiction is involved. This theoretical agnosticism is all that Kant needs to allow room for the play of practical reason employed in its closely related metaphysical and theological employments.
4.5 Some Conclusions.

Our conclusion then presents transcendental philosophy as not presenting any form of ontological dualism, nor standing in need of a sphere of experienced representations differing from the phenomenal. This interpretation is fully compatible with Kant’s confidence concerning both the possibility and the necessity of the idea of things in themselves. Their vacuous and unadorned presence is part of Kant’s proof against Berkeleian idealism, the other element of which is the immediacy given to our apprehension of appearances through the operations of transcendental sensibility. We can appreciate this in the realisation that the sense organs, as appearances in time and space, cannot provide mediation between a mind that is never represented, and the transcendental *Gegenstände* grounding representations. Combined, these two circumstances remove any possibility of scepticism concerning our experience of the world.

We have seen how Kant presents a fuller description of this overall structure as his work progresses, making any generalist analysis not taking account of this process inadequate to some degree. Consequently, we are now in a position to indicate the origin of much combative confusion about things in themselves. It results from successive attempts to construct a point of view with seemingly impeccable textual support, only to find that a different later expression and interpretation is often possible. This is not to say that all problems can be dealt with in this way; there are residual problems that have yet to be dealt with. For example, while we have denied that Kant constructs any form of transcendental dualism, we have interpreted him as dividing the employment of reason into two modes or uses, that of the theoretical and the practical. We have also seen that one of these gains supremacy over the other. We are left at this stage with the problem of how we may reconcile these usages in such a way that they operate together, since what they are allowed to claim is very different, and there is ultimately only one pure reason.

The aspect we are involved with now is the influence these considerations have on Kant’s later religious writings. Kant’s secular religion, as we shall see, complements and is built upon the *Critique’s* analytical metaphysics, and, as moral and cognitive beings, our relationship to things in themselves figures prominently in these considerations.
Chapter 5. Kant’s Religious Thought.

5.0 Introduction.

This chapter attempts to draw together the themes we have discussed so far, and focus on the relationship they have to Kant’s religious thought. These include the limitation he places on theoretical reason, the extended capacities of practical reason and the implications this has for critical religion. We have also looked at how Kant finds a way of allowing certain inferences concerning the self, leaving open the possibility of further rational practical assertions about the noumenal self. As well, we have seen how Kant reduces all that exists to the radical monism of things in themselves as an idea which we may adopt as a belief. Again, I should note that in order to express Kantian thought here, it is necessary to remember the religious environment in which he wrote, and the adoption of his theological terminology is basic to this discussion.

In order to distinguish what is new in the light of Kant’s apparently orthodox religious expression, especially where it concerns Christian dogma, we first need to look at his motives. We find one incentive to retain traditional religious forms in the realisation that he is neither a would-be martyr nor a theological revolutionary in any literal sense. He is no Martin Luther. He consciously sets out to construe existing theological expressions in such a way as to intellectually align them with a rational moral outlook, something he understands to be an innate and universal component of the human constitution and potentially available to established religions worldwide.

We shall also find that this is how all types of faith—ancient and the new, some written down in holy books—have always been treated, and that rational and thoughtful thinkers of the people have interpreted them until, gradually, they brought them, as regards their essential content, in agreement with the universal principles of moral faith… That this, however, can be done without ever and again greatly offending against the literal meaning of the popular faith is due to the fact that, long before this faith, the predisposition to moral religion lay hidden in human reason, and, though its first raw expressions were indeed intent on just the practice of divine service and, for its sake, gave rise to those alleged revelations, yet they thereby also implanted on their poetic fabrications, though unintentionally, something of the character of their supernatural origin. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 143)
In this passage, we gain insight into Kant’s reasons for writing as he does. As a ‘thoughtful and rational thinker’, he is willing to bring received doctrine, from whatever source and however tainted, into the sphere of natural moral religious impulses. He is not intent on obliterating established popular and religious norms for fear of fostering anarchy, and the idea of a state hostile to religious practice, or a state sponsored atheism, would have been both alien and morally incomprehensible to him. At the same time, his destruction of scholastic dogmatism must be complete and irrevocable, leaving open the possibility of creating an evolutionary religion appropriate to the population at large to the extent that it should be universally accessible and acceptable to all rational humans.

While we may accept that Kant has a genuine and iconoclastic theological and religious purpose in mind, this is not always obvious to some commentators. Schopenhauer, for example, thinks Kant is simply protecting himself from the wrath of the Schoolmen and their political allies. He does give Kant the credit for the destruction of the theistic component of philosophy, where its presence is inappropriate.

... [Kant] has eliminated theism from philosophy; for philosophy, as a science and not a doctrine of faith, only that can find place which either is empirically given or is established through tenable and solid proofs. Naturally, there is here meant only real, seriously understood philosophy, directed to truth and nothing else, and certainly not the facetious philosophy of the universities, in which, now as ever, speculative theology plays the principal part, and where also, now as ever, the soul appears without ceremony as a well-known person. (Schopenhauer 1969 v 1 511)

Schopenhauer attributes Kant’s hostility toward speculative theology to the influence of Hume, as expressed in the Natural History of Religion and the Dialogues of Natural Religion. The first of these works, Schopenhauer admits, while criticising popular theology, upholds the possibility and worth of rational speculative theology.

But Kant uncovers the groundlessness of the latter; on the other hand, he leaves popular theology untouched, and even sets it up in a more dignified form as a faith founded on moral feeling. This was later distorted by the philosophhrasters into apprehensions of reason (Vernunft), consciousness of God, or intellectual intuitions of the supersensible, the divine, and so on. On the other hand, when Kant demolished old and revered errors, and knew the danger of the business, he had only wanted to substitute here and there through moral theology a few weak props, so that the ruin and would not fall on top of him, and he would have time to get away. (Schopenhauer loc. cit.)
This is not a very dignified opinion of the great philosopher. Schopenhauer’s willingness to help himself to the concept of the thing in itself and construe it as ruthless and irrepressible ‘Will’ results, I suggest, from his attempt to cloak himself in Kant’s cachet in order to justify his own doctrines. He has no appreciation of the role of practical reason in critical thought, and no sympathy for Kant’s discussion of the Supreme Being. Referring to the \textit{Transcendental Ideal} in the first \textit{Critique}, he concludes that ‘…Kant was compelled to write this strange chapter, so unworthy of him, merely by his fondness for architectonic symmetry’ (Schopenhauer loc. cit.). He compares it ‘…with the rigid scholasticism of the Middle Ages. We think we are listening to Anselm himself. The \textit{ens realissimum}, the comprehensive totality of all realities, the content of all affirmative propositions, appears, and in fact claims to be a necessary idea of the faculty of reason! I for my part must confess that for my faculty of reason such an idea is impossible, and that from the words which express it I am unable to think of anything definite’ (Schopenhauer 1969 v1 507-8). From this, we may conclude that Schopenhauer exhibits little respect for Kant’s theological thought.

Schopenhauer is not alone in his contempt. Kemp-Smith assesses the discussion of the \textit{Transcendental Ideal} as an archaic example of Wolffian/Leibnizian rationalism, as having ‘…an old-time flavour and familiarity that rendered it by no means distasteful; and he is here, as it were, recalling, not altogether without sympathy, the lessons of his student years’ (Kemp-Smith 1992 522). This disdain does not match Kant’s personal assessment of his achievements. Though he acknowledges that it may take some time for this to be realised, he is in no doubt that he has left dogmatic religion behind.

This much is certain: whosoever has once tasted of critique forever loathes all the dogmatic chatter with which he previously had to be satisfied out of necessity, since his reason was in need of something and could not find anything better for its sustenance. Critique stands to the ordinary school metaphysics precisely as chemistry stands to alchemy, or astronomy to the fortune teller’s astrology. (\textit{Pr. to Any Fut. Met.} Tr. Hatfield 1997 120)

Kant’s wider aims arguably involve the development of a set of religious beliefs based on the moral law and able to sit alongside and in harmony with Enlightenment ideals of empirical science and democratic republican political thought. In this way, he attempts to provide a satisfactory personal theological outlook ultimately able to supplant the dogmas and practices of historically based revelatory religions.
While Kant shows an interest in the religious capacities of people at large, he has clear opinions about academic theology. First, he envisages a sophisticated demarcation of interests between practicing theologians and the philosophers of rational religion. We find this expressed in the preface to the first edition of *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

Now the theologian who judges on books can be appointed either as one who is to care simply for the welfare of souls, or as one who at the same time is to care for the welfare of the sciences: the first judges simply as divine, the second as scholar as well. It rests on the latter, as a member of a public institution to which (under the name of ‘university’) all the sciences are entrusted for cultivation and protection against encroachments, whether to restrict the prerogatives of the first so that its censorship shall not disrupt the field of the sciences. And if the two are biblical theologians, then primacy on censorship pertains to the second as a member of the University in a faculty charged with the treatment of this theology; for, as regards the first concern (the welfare of souls), both have one and the same mandate, whereas, as regards the second (the welfare of the sciences), the theologian in the capacity of university scholar has in addition another special function to discharge. *(Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 61)*

These have abutting responsibilities and overlapping interests, and each have their specific responsibilities and limitations. While the clergy with parochial responsibility may be allowed authority within their field, this must have limits. Theological domination of science runs the risk of creating intellectual anarchy, as in the time of Galileo, and needs to be curbed from encroaching on the freedoms of the academic theologian who retains authority over the fundamental theoretical components of religious studies. Kant also sees a place within the university for an academic hierarchy.

Over against Biblical theology, however, there stands on the side of the sciences a philosophical theology which is a property held in trust by another faculty. This theology must have complete freedom to expand as far as its science reaches, provided that it stays within the boundaries of mere reason and makes indeed use of history, languages, the books of all peoples, even the Bible, in order to confirm and explain is propositions, but only for itself, without carrying these propositions over into Biblical theology or wishing to modify its public doctrines which is a privilege of divines. *(Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 61)*

We also find this sentiment concerning the supremacy of academic theologians over moral philosophers in *The Conflict of the Faculties*. 
In any conflict having to do only with purely practical reason, no one can dispute the prerogative of the philosophy faculty to make the report and, as far as the formal rules of procedure are concerned, draw up the case. But with regard to its content, the theology faculty occupies the armchair, the sign of precedence—not because it can claim more insight than the others in matters of reason, but because it deals with the human being’s most important concerns and is therefore entitled the highest faculty (yet only as *prima inter pares*). (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 282)

We might sympathise with Schopenhauer’s allegation that the motive for Kant’s approach is placatory and intended to deflect the suspicions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the day. However, it is more likely that Kant perceives the entrenched position of traditional theological forms, both culturally and institutionally, and the virtual impossibility and inherent dangers of peremptorily attempting to supplant these with a radically transformed and revolutionary religious outlook. On reflection, we find that the theological hierarchy he suggests is needed for the preservation of the ability to promulgate and develop doctrine, while retaining its stability through the nomination of a controlling power over such matters. Interestingly, this allocation of academic authority parallels the relationship between theoretical and practical reason in critical metaphysics, which is here replicated in the supreme authority of the academic theologian over the philosopher who deals with theoretical matters.

Kant makes it clear that there should remain a place for both biblical and philosophical theology within the university, the latter expressed as natural theology and governed by reason. This compartmentalisation aims to preserve a sanctuary for the basic canon as it evolves, where it can be safe from extremist interference, while also having access to the contributions of reason without which its own survival is endangered. This synthesis is typically Kantian, in that he attempts to include human endeavours of whatever sort in the knowledge that proscription of any morally acceptable natural tendency is likely to create conflict.

Kant’s religious project is rational because of the commitment to the *a priori* potentialities of practical reason. This curriculum is bereft of subjective historical notions, revelatory experiences and claims to knowledge of the supersensible. Yet he allows a continuance of the rituals and language of established religion, including Christian orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Protestant, which refer to historical, miraculous, uncaused and unconditioned supernatural
events and personages. Presumably, he does this in the interests of maintaining inclusiveness for diverse and traditional theological thought forms that can be refined into the critical viewpoint later. Despite this, at the purely metaphysical level, he is not interested in any form of theological fundamentalism based on historically based doctrines, supposed supernatural occurrences or alleged holy books. Unlike traditional forms of faith or belief, Kant’s articles do not ask the believer to accept irrational and unnatural elements simply because they claim to offer certainty in an uncertain world.

Whether adherents of a faith take such claims in a literal sense may be a source of contention for them, but such fundamentalism is not available to Kant, and his writing concerning miracles shows the delicate touch needed to avoid appearing excessively dogmatic. Philosophically, he has no interest in any form of theological fundamentalism based on historically based doctrines, supernatural occurrences, or holy books. His theology asks us to believe in the critical account exclusively through the application of reason, specifically pure practical reason, including the possibility of things in themselves considered in the negative sense, and such corresponding ideas as the soul, God, freedom, and the Kingdom of Ends. His appeal to the workings of practical reason and its assessment of the implications and needs made apparent by the moral imperatives is intended to provide a small body or canon of universally acceptable and necessary beliefs, which owe nothing to unsubstantiated faith in any traditional sense. His attitude to fundamentalism is not so much one of hostility as of indifference, since while some may claim to have experienced miraculous proceedings, such assertions can have nothing to do with metaphysics as a science.

At the same time, we see in Kant’s later works the realisation that he is prepared to accommodate those who lack the application or the cognitive ability to come to terms with the intellectual demands of his philosophy. Because of this, he is prepared to allow individuals considerable latitude in the way they express their theological outlook. These concessions are not likely to be genuine endorsements of older beliefs, and any form of ‘affirmative theology’ attempting to claim them as endorsements of a particular form of theism is likely to be mistaken. Such a move would illicitly attempt to put Kant forward as a supporter of their own brand of supernatural or mystical beliefs that on their own can never attain more than the status of opinion or possibly irrational acceptance. Kant sees the need to guide believers through various levels of rationality in something like the Piagetian stages needed for the development of a fully functioning rational person. There is no mandate to
reverse this process by falling back on outmoded and intellectually retarded belief systems. Wood points out that the title *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* contains the implication of unaided or unassisted reason as being sufficient for establishing religious knowledge, while elsewhere a more placatory and compromising tone is evident. (Wood in Rossi and Wreen 1991 2)

Nevertheless, the reasoning behind Kant’s view of revelation is convincing if not altogether original. Since revelatory claims are not analytic, they are therefore synthetic, and the subjects of such propositions are not contained in their predicates. Synthetic judgments have two forms; those having a mediating factor linking subject to predicate, and those that do not. In the first case, we have a logical argument, which, when sound, entails the conclusion, while the other is always synthetic and a posteriori, that is, lacking universalisability. These latter are mere opinion with no *a priori* or universal content, and Denis Savage points out that on these grounds Kant is able to reject supernatural claims as unscientific.

This is the reason why Kant rejects, not the logical possibility of supernatural revelation, but the objective truth-value of such a revelation. For Kant, the statements of revelation, and the rules or commands expressed in those statements, are mere opinions, synthetic judgments for which we have no evidence beyond our mere wish for them to be true. It is in this sense that revelation can never be universal: the so-called divine laws or rules expressed in revelation, even if known and believed by every human being, have no true universalisability, no force as law or as truth, for they have no necessity, neither the unconditional necessity of analytic, *per se* known propositions nor the hypothetical, grounded necessity of synthetic propositions for which we have a third or mediating factor (i.e., evidence) for joining the predicate to the subject. (Savage in Rossi and Wreen 1991 61)

We have noted Schopenhauer’s disparaging comment that Kant’s discourse reminded him of Anselm. Without the negative overtone, Savage points out that Kant’s position on revelation also resembles that of Aquinas.

Interestingly, Thomas Aquinas approaches the question of revelation in exactly the same way as Kant. In *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Q. 1, Art. 4, and Q. 6, Art. 1, and in his work on truth, *De Veritate*, Q. 14, Art. 1, Aquinas asks whether the strict judgments of revelation are per se known, i.e., analytic propositions. He answers, No. Are they therefore synthetic? Yes. Can we prove them through some third factor, some demonstration, as hypothetically necessary conclusions of arguments? No. Are they then to be classified as mere opinions?; Here Aquinas differs from the position of Kant; he maintains they are not mere opinions but rather fall midway between demonstrated conclusions and opinions. For Aquinas, the third factor that
somehow mediates between the subject of the predicate in the judgment of historical revelation is twofold: miracles, which, as Aquinas thinks, do occur but which nevertheless are not sufficient to cause belief, and grace, which is a free gift from God that supernaturally enables a believer to assent to the non-self-evident and non-demonstrated judgments of revelation with complete certitude. (Savage in Rossi and Wreen 1991 62)

Kant is able to ignore any justification based on alleged theistic tampering with the conditioned because such an intrusion on the normal representational process is morally immaterial. For example, the individuals who report celestial conversations has no way of knowing who their interlocutor is (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 444). If we consider the self as a thing in itself, and as a self aware, self-directed noumenal entity acting in community and combining itself with the influence of other things in themselves in general, including that of other humans, we can conceive of the world as a structured set of appearances held in common by all human like minds. No direct involvement of the Supreme Being is needed or included in this description, and consequently revelatory manifestations of divine will are superfluous in establishing this concept or its possibility. If the ens realissimum, as a noumenal influence, is to have access to the human soul as mind through direct non-empirical means, this must, by default, take place through the exercise of human moral reason.

Only a moral interpretation [of the Scriptures], moreover, is really an authentic one — that is, one given by the God within us; for since we cannot understand anyone unless he speaks to us through our own understanding and reason, it is only by concepts of our reason, insofar as they are pure moral concepts and hence infallible, that we can recognize the divinity of a teaching promulgated to us. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 271-2)

This potential for discovering the moral and the rational within religious texts is supplemented by the use of logic in discovering the teleological within nature. Kant’s wider aims arguably involve the development of a set of religious beliefs based on the moral law and able to sit alongside and in harmony with Enlightenment ideals of empirical science and democratic republican political thought. In this way he attempts to provide a satisfactory personal theological outlook ultimately able to supplant the dogmas of historically based revelatory religions.
5.1 Kant and Christianity.

Kant’s moral theory is based on the concept of the free and rational individual who, upon realising the possibility and reality of freedom, immediately accepts the obligations of the moral law. It is simply not logically possible for a fully rational being to do otherwise, though it is likely that such a being is an unrealisable ideal. Since the transcendental subject is unknown, any specific concepts concerning its moral status are in need of some justification, and Kant attends to this in Part One of The Philosophical Doctrine of Religion. This is one of four essays, the organisation and structure of which is not arbitrary, but typically architectonic and based on earlier Christian documents.

... the very composition of the Religion through a structure of four ‘Books’ is transparently based on the traditional Christian doctrine of creation and fall, justification and christology, ecclesiology, and sanctification. Drawing especially on the theological manuals of his own Pietist teacher, F. A. Schultz, as well as on the multi-volume Foundation for the True Religion by the Swiss Calvinist J. F. Stapfer, Kant rather ingeniously devises points of contact between their concern for sincerity of belief, spiritual struggle, and the experience of rebirth, and his own emphasis on the moral dimensions of authentic religious faith. This procedure is a model of a liberally minded mediating theology and sets a powerful precedent for Protestant theologians in the 19th century. (Michalson 1999 102)

This relationship of Kant’s text to Christian documentary authority is in line with his expressed purpose in writing, as outlined above. His interest lies in theological evolution and development, seeking the way ahead with no interest in past dogmas. This explains why he seldom mentions Jesus by name, for example, since he is not interested in historical events or persons as the foundation of religious belief.

The Christian faith, as a learned faith, rests on history, and, to the extent that erudition (objectively) is at its base, it is not in itself a free faith or one derived from insight into theoretically sufficient grounds of demonstration (fides elicita). (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood\Giovanni 1996 185)

Kant also echoes widely held doubts about the historical veracity of the Christian story when he points out that ‘… its sacred events occurred openly under the very eyes of a learned people, yet its history was already more than one generation past before it penetrated among its learned public; hence the authentication of those events must do without the corroboration of contemporaries’ (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood\Giovanni 1999 187). Despite this, Kant is prepared to accept Christianity ‘... as coming from the mouth of the first teacher not as a
statutory but as a moral religion’ (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood\Giovanni 1999 187). In this way, Kant is prepared to accept Christ not so much as an historical figure, but as an ideal of moral behaviour and an exemplar of moral reasoning. He presents the growth of Christianity itself from within Judaism as an example of the theological evolution he has in mind.

But the first founders of congregations found it necessary to intertwine the history of Judaism with it (Christianity), and this, granted the founders’ situation at the time, was the sound thing to do, though only sound perhaps with respect to that situation; and so, that history has come down to us together with the founders’ sacred legacy. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood\Giovanni 1999 188)

From his attitude to Judaism, it seems that, for Kant, the Old Testament is of historical interest only, having little moral relevance to his plans concerning the future development of theology. Religious evolution, it seems, proceeds largely as a modification of what has gone before, and in that sense Kant attempts to follow a similar path. There are themes common to most religions, and Kant shares the basic concepts of God and the soul. On the other hand, the appeal to reason and an innate sense of the moral law as the sole foundation for religious thought is something new, entailing as it does the jettisoning of supernatural and revelatory historical claims except as analogous expressions. His rejection of rational psychology gives very meaningful limits to any knowledge claims concerning these. We can see the difference to the claims of other religious impulses, including those of recent times, which assert encounters and communication with supernatural beings. Kant does not offer himself as a prophet of any kind, nor does he profess revelatory communion with non-human entities. Because of this, his interest in Christianity lies primarily in its implicit expression of the moral law.

There seems little doubt about the radical nature of Kant’s theological thought. We may see it as forming the groundwork for a new religious outlook promoting, as products of pure reason, a belief in the practical postulates of God, freedom and the spatio/temporal independence of the mind. I hesitate to use the word ‘revolutionary’ in this context, since it seems clear that Kant does not advocate the forcible overthrow of the then existing religious institutions, beliefs and practices. As I see it, while we might refer to his ideas as revolutionary, he clearly prefers an evolutionary approach to religious reform, expecting that
it would take time, perhaps much time, to bring about the conditions conducive to the universal acceptance of a rational religion based on moral principles.

Because of Kant’s attitude to the theology of his time, it is possible to find apparent contradictions in what Kant writes at different times and stages of his philosophical development. For example, Palmquist refers to Kant’s advocacy of the necessity of prayer, based on references to a series of lectures on ethics given during 1775-1781. (Palmquist 2000 488) This material, having been prepared prior to the first Critique, is clearly superseded by later writings. The condemnation of prayer as a means of grace is made explicit in Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason of 1793. Here, prayer as an inner ritual is described as ‘…a superstitious delusion…’ (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Di Giovanni 1996 210) This represents an indication of Kant’s later attitude to this subject. While he affirms that what he calls the spirit of prayer requires us to act in the service of God, it is actions, not words, which count, and which we are bound by duty to perform. Words, as prayer, are not only morally useless, but may also be detrimental to moral worth.

It is rather necessary to endeavour that, through progressive purification and elevation of the moral disposition, the spirit of prayer alone should be sufficiently stimulated within us, and that its letter (at least as far as we are concerned) should finally fall away. For the letter, like everything which is trained at a given end indirectly, rather weakens the effect of the moral idea… (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Di Giovanni 1996 212)

As discussed above, it also seems beyond dispute that Kant does not see himself as a spiritualist. His rejection of this position is evident when we consider his solution to the mind/matter problem, expressed in terms of the breakdown of the distinction between material and spiritual substances. When he tells us that “Matter, therefore, does not mean a kind of substance quite distinct and heterogeneous from the object of inner sense (the soul), but only the distinctive nature of these appearances of objects… (A385), we know we are witnessing, theologically, a revolutionary idea.

5.2 The Soul.

One of Kant’s fundamental principles maintains that the supersensible, including the transcendental self or soul as a thing in itself, is beyond the reach of empirical cognition. His
attack on this component of Rationalist thought in the Paralogisms is as thoroughgoing as anything he writes. Consequently, it seems that the epistemic status to the soul is restricted to that of being a problematic concept, an idea, or a postulate of practical reason. At the same time, there are numerous references to the soul and our awareness of self through apperception throughout the critical writings, and the possible contradictions involved in this stand in need of explanation if we are to avoid problems of exposition.

In the paralogisms, Kant teaches that, if by reason we are led to concepts concerning the soul as a simple and unified substance through dialectical syllogisms having no empirical premisses, these are rational, or rather, pseudo-rational, inferences, based on a logic of illusion. (A339 and B397) He acknowledges that reason is always inclined to such conclusions, even in the knowledge of their invalidity. An obvious problem concerns the willingness of Kant to talk of and discuss at length the very objects that he so discounts, and by implication, our capacity to follow him in so doing.

Kant retains the possibility of inferring from the manifold of appearances, as categorial and formalised nature, that the unity or synthesis of thought that accompanies and forms the unity of apperception, betrays and demands the presence of the accompanying ‘I think”. This is something we become aware of through the categorial synthesis; that is; we know that something is employing and harmonising the categories to structure the unity of perceptions we experience as the world. We may illicitly employ the ‘I think’ as the basic and only premises of the pseudo-science of rational psychology in an attempt to apply the categories to this entity, thus giving the idea of the soul as a substantial, immaterial, incorruptible, and immortal unified spiritual personality embedded within and surrounded by material bodies. (A345/B403) Kant denies any knowledge, as distinct from thought, of the ‘I am’.

Accordingly I have no knowledge of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself. The consciousness of self is thus very far from being a knowledge of the self, notwithstanding all the categories which [are being employed to] constitute the thought of an object in general, through combination of the manifold in one apperception. (B158)

By rejecting the ‘I think’ as indicating any more than the transcendental synthesis of apperception, Kant denies any possibility of arriving at any knowledge of this ‘I’. He says ‘It
is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we can have no concept whatever…’ (B404/A346) As such, the ‘I think’ becomes a concept which does not give any object, as in Descartes’ ‘cogito’, but whose object may be considered as a mere possibility. In this, we find a similar tactic to that used by Kant to talk about things in themselves in general; i.e., it becomes a problematic idea which we are able to ‘think’, which I see as a matter of belief. Again, Kant sees this as a form of experimentation ‘…in order to see what properties applicable to its subject…may follow from so simple a proposition’. (A405 and A347) While the experience of selfhood in consciousness and time is undeniable, Kant is adamant that no object is given in this experience, and that as a transcendental idea, neither is it a concept of an object.

Now it does appear as if we have something substantial in the consciousness of ourselves (i.e., in the thinking subject), and indeed have it in immediate intuition; for all predicates of the inner sense are referred to the I as subject, and this I cannot again be thought as the predicate of some other subject. It therefore appears that in this case completeness in referring the given concepts to a subject as predicates is not a mere idea, but that the object, namely the absolute subject itself, is given in experience. But this expectation is disappointed. For the ‘I’ is not a concept at all, but only a designation of the object of inner sense in so far as we do not further cognize it through any predicate; hence although it cannot itself be the predicate of any other thing, just as little can it be a determinant concept of an absolute subject, but as in all the other cases it can only be the referring of its appearances to their own unknown subject. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 89)

Because of this experiential limitation, there is no possibility of inferring the persistence of the soul. If we wished to infer the persistence of the soul as substance, even this would only be possible in principle for the duration of temporal existence, and thus is incapable of establishing life after death.

If, therefore, we want to infer the persistence of the soul from the concept of the soul as substance, this can be valid of the soul only for the purpose of possible experience, and not of the soul as a thing in itself and beyond all possible experience. But life is the subjective condition of all our possible experience: consequently only the persistence of the soul during life can be inferred, for the death of a human being is the end of all experience as far as the soul as an object of experience is concerned (provided that the opposite is not been proven, which is the very matter in question). Therefore the persistence of the soul can be proven only during the life of the human being (which proof will be granted us), but not after death (as is actually important to us)… (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 89-90)
Having established this problematic concept, Kant proceeds through the four paralogisms, and in each case, while denying the empirical reality of the conclusion, allows for something else which suits his purpose. The four invalid inferences in dispute are:

1. Substantiality: The soul as the ‘thinking I’ is substance.
2. Simplicity: The ‘thinking I’ is simple.
3. Unity or personality: The soul is a conscious person.
4. Ideality: The existence of outer objects is doubtful.

Insofar as they refer to the soul, we need to deal only with the first three of these at this point.

In the case of 1, we are denied knowledge of the substantiality of the self, but we are allowed to retain the concept or idea of such a property, since “The soul is substance, may, however, quite well be allowed to stand…if…we recognize that this concept signifies a substance only in idea, not in reality.” (A350-1).

Regarding 2, a similar conclusion is available to Kant. He denies the possibility of proving the simplicity of the soul through any conceptual analysis of the a priori unity of apperception, or of identity, or through experience. (A353) Yet, we find that if we treat the soul as a thing in itself, the distinction between it and matter dissolves, since matter is ‘…merely a species of representation in us…’ (360) If we are able to say this about matter, it is not a great leap to apply the idea of simplicity to the mind. Kemp-Smith has Kant saying ‘…we may still profess to know that the thinking ‘I’, the soul (the name for the transcendental object of inner sense) is simple.’ (A360-1) This seems paradoxical, in that it seems to imply that we can know what we cannot know. In Wood/Guyer we find a different rendering, where Kant advocates that ‘…one may still pretend to know that the thinking I…is simple’. (Cr. Of P. Reason, Tr. Guyer/Wood 1997 A360-1) Pretending, (as distinct from professing) to know something is closer to what I see as belief or faith, a supposition that may or may not be justified in various ways. Again, we see Kant denying the possibility of knowledge in order to make room for this.

The same result appears in the third paralogism. We can have no proof of substantial identity, says Kant, because nothing within our representations is permanent, and on these alone do we base the persistence of personality. Again, we find he has an answer to this, and it is the same
as in the preceding two cases, since ‘…we may still retain the concept of personality—just as we have retained the concept of substance and of the simple—in so far as it is merely transcendental, that is, concerns the unity of the subject, otherwise unknown to us, in the determinations of which there is a thoroughgoing connection through apperception’. (A365) Personality is here retained as a concept, that is, an idea, as in the previous instances.

At this point, Kant introduces a highly significant element of his thought. We may have been curious as to why he wishes to retain these predicates of the soul in such a nebulous and seemingly ineffectual way, that is, as mere concepts. Knowledge, we may say, is justified belief, but this is not clearly the case with these concepts, which can never attain the status of knowledge. They must be justifiable in some other way, and Kant’s answer is in the sentence following the above.

Taken in this way, the concept is necessary for practical employment and is sufficient for such use; but we can never parade it as an extension of our self-knowledge… (A365-6)

The point to be emphasised here is the nature of how we are to think of the transcendental subject. In each case, Kant denies us knowledge of it, but retains the possibility of retaining its concept. On this reading, we may accept the possibility of the soul as a concept available for practical purposes, and all later discussion of the transcendental subject must be considered within this epistemic limitation. Thus, when I talk about the ‘view-from’ reading of Kant’s thought, I am not advocating any ‘real’ or geographic positioning of the protagonist, but the point of view which would be experienced by the transcendental subject as a conceptual postulation. Treated as a ‘thought-thing’, there is no immediate conflict with Kant’s denial of knowledge concerning this subject.

Given that the understanding’s concept of selfhood is arrived at in this way, it is reasonable to claim that this is the seat, the position within the transcendental subject, from which Kant writes. As with all people, it is objectively necessary that each of us, as a matter of necessity, hold our concepts to be our own, and accept responsibility for their exercise through reason and our expressions of them. Kant includes the idea of soul as one of two necessary conditions for the experience of time and space; first there must be the objects which occur in them, and second, the awareness of selfhood he calls soul. Neither of these is an illusion.
Thus when I maintain that the quality of space and of time, in conformity with which, as a condition of their existence, I posit both bodies and my own soul, lies in my mode of intuition and not in those objects in themselves, I am not saying that bodies merely seem to be outside me, or that my soul only seems to be given in my self-consciousness. It would be my own fault, if out of that which I ought to reckon as appearance, I made mere illusion. That does not follow as a consequence of our principle of the ideality of all our sensible intuitions—quite the contrary. It is only if we ascribe objective reality to these forms of representation, that it becomes impossible for us to prevent everything being thereby transformed into mere illusion. (B69)

The case is that Kant affirms the objective reality of this experience, and legitimates the conjecture from the experience of synthetic personal unity to, first, the problematic concept and regulative possibility of the soul, and later, to full acceptance of it as a demand of practical reason. In neither case is any extension of theoretical reason or knowledge implied, nor is there any conflict with the limits he imposes on theoretical reason, since nothing more is supposed than a concept in the first instance, and an idea in the second, concepts that are presupposed and necessary if legitimate and rational metaphysical thought is to be possible.

In the Paralogisms, we see how Kant vigorously refutes the conclusions of what he calls pure psychology, in which the soul is seen as a substantial object in some spiritual sense, simple, unified, immaterial, incorruptible, causally related to matter as bodies, and ultimately immortal. (A345-B403) The four Paralogisms deal with substance, simplicity, personhood, and the ideality of objects as appearances as they persist outside the mind. In the process, Kant dismantles the epistemic binary division of objects as being either spiritual or material.

The Third Paralogism is of particular relevance to our present discussion, for in this Kant disputes the Cartesian inference from ‘I think’ to ‘I exist’, or, as he puts it, ‘Now the soul is conscious, etc. Therefore it is a person. (A361) Kant’s argument is that while we are indeed conscious of the unity of our awareness and therefore of ourselves as a unified inner sense, this is simply a condition for knowledge rather than knowledge itself, and allows for no further conclusions concerning continuance or personality. We have seen something of how this is arrived at, in the relationship between the experienced manifold and the awareness of empirical apperception. What we cannot do is infer from this that the self has a continuing or single identity.
The identity of the consciousness of myself at different times is therefore only a formal condition of my thoughts and their coherence, and in no way proves the numerical identity of my subject...we are unable to prove that this ‘I’, a mere thought, may not be in the same state of flux as the other thoughts which, by means of it, are linked to one another. (A363-4)

Despite this lack of continuity, which, while still a possibility, remains unknown, the mere thought or possibility of this unity is sufficient for Kant’s purposes. We have seen that Kant allows us a limited though significant awareness of the self, and that, although this as thing in itself remains unknown. Further, we can have an awareness of noumenal presence, not within the empirical manifold, but as in some way accompanying it. From this awareness, he affirms that we can know of our own existence with the same certainty that we can know the reality of appearances, and also that we are equally justified in expressing our sense of personal freedom and consequently our moral obligations. This consciousness is not so much cognition as an a priori and unmediated ‘feeling’. He tells us in the second Critique ‘...respect for the moral law is a feeling that is produced by an intellectual ground, and this feeling is the only one that we can cognize completely a priori and the necessity of which we can have insight into’ (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 63-4). This explanation may appear overly vague, but Kant evidently holds that the combination of the demands of pure reason for totality and happiness with the necessity of being able to discharge what he sees as our duties provides sufficient foundational material on which to base his moral religion. In short, he teaches that we are aware of the presence of a thing in itself as a spontaneously acting and morally responsible soul, and that we are that non-corporeal subject having a presence in a community of equals.

This thinking something, the ‘I’ expressed as the idea of soul, can only be thought as an analogue of the experience of selfhood, and this is necessarily experiential (A682/B710). Despite this, it is not a real thing, and its nature is undetermined. It is a point of view.

...what this ground which eludes our concepts may be in its own inherent constitution is left entirely undetermined; the idea is posited only as being the point of view from which alone that unity, which is so essential to reason and so beneficial to the understanding, can be further extended. In short, this transcendental thing is only the schema of the regulative principle by which reason...extends systematic unity over the whole field of existence. (A682/B710)
Since the ‘I’ is only a regulative idea, we can see from this that Kant is not talking of a spiritual being but the concept of a viewpoint. From this viewpoint, which on my reading is the transcendental viewpoint, the critical writings make their account of human reason and the position of the mind in the world. Transcendental reflection looks out from this metaphysical site. In the absence of any categorial properties relating to the subject, such an investigation necessarily assumes, as its only subject, the concept of the empirical unity of all thought.

... reason takes the concept of the empirical unity of all thought; and by thinking this unity as unconditioned and original, it forms from it a concept of reason, that is, the idea of a simple substance, which, unchangeable in itself (personally identical), stand in association with other real things outside it; in a word, the idea of a simple self-subsisting intelligence. Yet in so doing, it has nothing in view save principles of systematic unity in the explanation of the appearances of the soul. (A682-3/B711-10)

This process gives us the idea of the soul, with its attendant dialectical illusions of substantiality, simplicity and so on. However, this “…psychological idea can signify nothing but the schema of a regulative concept. For were I to enquire whether the soul in itself is of a spiritual nature, the question would have no meaning’ (A684/B712). We have seen how Kant is able to avoid the claim that he postulates a spiritual status for the transcendental self. Nevertheless, he indicates that we should so act on this regulative principle ‘…as if it were a real being…’ (Ibid). In order to discuss the soul viewed in this pretended manner, we must first recall our previous discussion concerning the breakdown of mind\matter dualism. The soul becomes a concept among other concepts, in this case a regulative concept whose predicates are extremely limited, but in any case is not seen to reside within the body.

The soul in itself could not be known through these assumed predicates, not even if we regarded them as absolutely valid in respect of it... nothing but advantage can result from the psychological idea thus conceived, if only we take heed that it is not viewed as more than a mere idea, and that it is therefore taken as valid only relatively to the systematic employment of reason in determining the appearances of our soul. For no empirical laws of bodily appearances, which are of a totally different kind, will then intervene in the explanation of what belongs exclusively to inner sense. No windy hypotheses of generation, extension, and Palingenesis of souls will be permitted. The consideration of this object of inner sense will thus be kept completely pure and will not be confused by the introduction of heterogeneous properties. Also, reason’s investigations will be directed to reducing the grounds of explanation in this field, so far as may be possible, to a single principle. (A683-4/B711-12)
In short, Kant concludes that, although it is unknown, we are both entitled and morally obliged to talk analogously about the soul as an object of some sort, while bearing in mind at all times that the attribution of predicates must be kept to the minimum compatible with the realisation of practical ends. This compatibility lies in the postulated nature of objects made necessary by the moral law.

Now since there are practical laws which are absolutely necessary, that is the moral laws, it must follow that if these necessarily presuppose the existence of any being as the condition the possibility of their obligatory power, this existence must be postulated; and this for the sufficient reason that the conditioned, from which the inference is drawn to this determinate condition, is itself known *a priori* to be absolutely necessary. (A634/B662)

Kant ascribes to the soul, as a postulate, certain moral predicates relating to its virtue, and his discussion of this topic is sophisticated and open to misunderstanding. Viewed from an empirical point of view such dialogue may be construed as both imaginative and fanciful. When we take into account the ‘view-from’ reading of critical thought, these assertions take on a different light. We can now see how human consciousness, as a finite mind operating through reason and seeking totality of the synthesis of the manifold, is able to turn upon itself, not from a position in nature, but as a thing in itself contemplating itself. From this position, it is able to question its moral obligations, their origin and the duties relating to them, and in so doing arrive at a rational and ultimately secure theological attitude not open to scepticism.

The scope and power of this reasoning coincides with Enlightenment thought, and here practical reason undertakes the vital task of completing the failed assignment set itself by speculative reason. In the process of destroying speculative metaphysics, Kant establishes the value of the individual through the equity and universality bestowed on the practical potentialities of all human-like minds. It becomes the initial duty of each soul to conduct a critical examination of its own capacities and abilities, acknowledging both their limitations and the possibility of moral progression made available through freedom. The realisation of freedom morally implies the immediate adoption of tutelage through the moral law, though it may not appear to be in the immediate interest of the individual to accept this.
Kant pictures the soul in its native state as viewing itself immersed in the manifold of appearances and existing as an object, either material or spiritual, among other such objects. He takes it to be the case that this description occurs almost universally in those cultures and individuals given to metaphysical speculation. These illusions, as he sees them, may be expressed either as materialism or as spiritualism and in either case are dialectical. Such a misplaced perception of the self is likely to result in irrational belief systems and mistaken, even dangerous, moral precepts, and his attack on rational psychology in the *Paralogisms* is intended to subvert this possibility. Kant is sympathetic to the reasons for their adoption, but when they are allowed to persist they are not only likely to be associated with a lack of respect for moral law, expressed as materialist scepticism, moral relativism, or through superstitious and irrational belief disguised as religion, but also by an inadequate appreciation of natural law.

Since both sets of laws derive from a common source, that is, pure reason, it not coincidental that the two failings often go together. One insight drawn from this concerns the all too frequent moral lapses of persons who putatively uphold strict ethical and religious standards which on examination turn out not to be based on universalisable principles. Only the critical employment of practical reason can create the possibility of a community of free and autonomous individuals whose value for their fellows is unconditional and second to no other consideration, in other words, the creation of the Kingdom of Ends. This is a systematic community of rational beings in a *mundus intelligibilis* where humans, acting collectively in trust and accord as rational moral agents, are able to proceed on the understanding that each will perform according to the moral law (Paton 1991 118).

The initial awareness of the self as a thing in itself is therefore the beginning of moral understanding. This awareness, and the implication that cognition of the natural world does not occur through sensual intuition, is crucial to the ‘view-from’ theory of Transcendental Idealism, and I have argued that without it any full appreciation of Kant’s thought is unavailable. When we apply this outlook to his religious writings, we find a similar consequence. He asserts that things in themselves are completely unknown, while also allowing assent to the presence of at least one thing in itself, that is, the individual transcendental subject. This is the initiating step in ascribing moral responsibility to this thing in itself as soul not only for its actions, but for its own disposition to act, as *Gesinnung*.
By definition, such a state of affairs is non-corporeal. Under these circumstances, the causal matrix of the natural world, the conditioned chains of events it exhibits, and the possibility of imputing causative responsibility for present actions in past events is not possible.

But the very same subject, being on the other side conscious of himself as a thing in itself, also views his existence insofar as it does not stand under conditions of time and himself as determinable only through laws that he gives himself by reason; and in this existence of his nothing is, for him antecedent to the determination of his will, but every action—and in general every determination of his existence changing conformably with inner sense, even the whole sequence of his existence as a sensible being—is to be regarded in the consciousness of his intelligible existence as nothing but the consequence and never as the determining ground of his causality as a noumenon. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 82)

Since the individual soul as thing in itself is considered to possess noumenal freedom, not only does it have personal responsibility for its actions expressed through natural causality, but also responsibility for its own moral capacities and motives as manifested in these actions. Because of this, no appeal to prior causative circumstances in assessing or judging the actions of any individual is appropriate. This implies that it must at all times be possible for the individual to be aware of the obligations imposed through its awareness of the moral law and retain the capacity to act spontaneously according to whatever maxims they maintain, whether in accord with the law or not.

If... we were capable of... an intellectual intuition of the same subject... then we would become aware that this whole chain of appearances, with respect to all that the moral law is concerned with, depends upon the spontaneity of the subject as a thing in itself, for the determination of which no physical explanation can be given. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 83)

The obvious question concerning obedience to the moral law asks why it should be in anyone’s interest to do so. Clearly, there will be many times when empirical and sensual interests clash with that duty, so why should the latter be privileged? Kant’s answer is that we have a direct and personal interest in the moral law because not only is it of our own rational construction, but since we must allow that all other people are equally free, it is universal in application and to deny it would be to deny our own rational capacities and the freedom of others. (Paton 1991 111)

The noumenal community of souls Kant presupposes cannot exist empirically, however, it is the idea of a realm of rational minds. If we consider that there is a head of this Kingdom, we
might consider an autocratic God as the appropriate candidate, but this is not necessarily the case, since Kant has a very democratic concept of this headship. If we recall that the idea of the *mundus intelligibilis* consists of things in themselves, in the first *Critique* at least God is simply the aggregate of all of these, and also at the same time a single idea.

But the concept of what thus possesses all reality is just the concept of a thing in itself as completely determined; and since in all possible [pairs of] contradictory predicates one predicate, namely, that which belongs to being absolutely, is to be found in its determination, the concept of an *ens realissimum* is the concept of an individual being. It is therefore a transcendental ideal, which serves as the basis for the complete determination that necessarily belongs to all that exists. This ideal is the supreme and complete material condition of the possibility of all that exists—a condition to which all thought of objects (*Gegenstände*), so far as their content is concerned, has to be traced back. It is also the only true ideal of which human reason is capable. (A576/B 604)

In this way, each individual thing in itself comes to be seen as part of the greater whole, which in turn encompasses and possesses all reality. Again, this ideal does not entail any being corresponding to it, but always remains merely an idea ‘... for the purpose of deriving from an unconditioned totality of complete determination the conditioned totality, that is, the totality of the limited. The ideal is therefore the archetype (*prototypon*) of all things, which one and all, as imperfect copies (*ectypa*), derive from it the material of the possibility, and while approximating to it in varying degrees, yet always fall very far short of actually attaining it’. (A578/B606) Considered in this way we find the concept that individual souls and all they contain as representations, along with all other things in themselves, constitute the *ens realissimum*. We, as souls, are part of the Godhood.

The concept of the soul, as an idea of practical reason, has a number of properties of interest to us. These include self-awareness, non-corporeal being and freedom exhibited through moral spontaneity. From these descriptors, it is tempting to consider Kant as merely perpetuating traditional School metaphysical dogmas. Since he sets out to destroy traditional School metaphysics and traditional theological structures, it is clearly not his purpose to replace it with a similar body of doctrine but with something radically different and appropriate to an age of revolution and rational discipline in general. We now look at how the ‘view-from’ reading can illuminate what is new in transcendental theology, being the idea that religious belief can claim a scientific and objective status. Our task is to determine what ‘scientific’ means in this context.
5.3 Practical Metaphysics.

In previous sections, we have seen that the hallmark of scientific theory is the synthetic and *a priori* nature of its propositions, along with their universality and reproducibility, and that Kant’s moral theory attempts to accord with this ideal. Michalson expresses this insight in terms of a universal good will.

It is... the principle of universalizability that is the form definitive of the good will: the will is good in so far as it prescribes to itself a form for its willing that could be replicated across all possible worlds, regardless of any difference of autobiography or circumstance. We might say that the good will does for our conception of moral endeavour what the laws of physics do for our apprehension of the natural world, providing underpinnings of objectivity as well as regularity for both. (Michalson 1999 65)

We have said Kant’s moral religion consists of synthetic *a priori* propositions inferred by practical reason. These ideas are expressions of what he calls metaphysics in general, the possibility of which is established through critique, as is their universality, and their derivation stands in need of the same sort of justification as the categories of theoretical reason. The ideas perform a function similar to that of the categories except that, unlike the categories, they have no associated *in concreto* objects. Just as we have discovered, the objects of perception do not cause representations but are the representations, so too the ideas concerning God, the soul and freedom do not cause us to have beliefs concerning them, but are in themselves beliefs thrown before the mind by reason. Ideas, as synthetic *a priori* concepts, differ from those of mathematics and the natural sciences since they have no representational application in actuality, and are of greater importance to metaphysics because, unlike the other sciences, metaphysics has no empirical demonstration of the truth or falsehood of its propositions. Kant’s attempt to justify the *a priori* propositions of science and mathematics aims at establishing the possibility of such propositions as a genus, not only for the use of theoretical reason, but to establish the plausibility of pure practical reason and its ideas. Unlike metaphysics, both science and mathematics can function quite well without justifying their origins. Seen in this light, Kant’s discussion of the *a priori* content of natural science and mathematics is a means to an end, as he tells us in the *Prolegomena*.

Apart from concepts of nature, which always find application in experience, metaphysics is further concerned with pure concepts of reason that are never given in any possible experience whatsoever, hence
the concepts whose objective reality (that they are not mere fantasies), and assertions whose truth or falsity, cannot be confirmed or exposed by any experience; and this part of metaphysics is moreover precisely that which forms its essential end, towards which all the rest is only a means... (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 81)

The deduction of the fundamental propositions of metaphysics has no purpose beyond those of metaphysics itself. Kant defines this as ‘... the preoccupation of reason simply with itself, and that acquaintance with objects which is presumed to arise immediately from reason’s brooding over its own concepts without its either needing mediation from experience for such an acquaintance, or being able to achieve such an acquaintance through experience at all.’ (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 82) The categories apply only to objects of possible experience, and the understanding requires them only when dealing with experience. The ideas have no such employment, and the third main transcendental question as set out in the Prolegomena, ‘How is Metaphysics in General Possible?’ concerns the objective establishment of the ideas, for ‘...without a solution to this question reason will never be satisfied with itself.’ (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 Ibid) They must be shown not to be an illusion by removing their subjectivity, and in this way the whole of transcendental theology depends solely on the ability of reason to fulfil the need for totality and moral necessity. Kant’s revolution consists in removing the possibility of theoretical assertions concerning nature perverted from its course by the supernatural as having any religious relevance, while retaining the inferences of practical reason as objectively established through reason alone. Kant’s ideas are empirically empty, and can never be used to establish the objective existence of God or the soul, which as things in themselves are only concepts as far as we are concerned.

Despite these limitations, as we have said, Kant allows that we are conscious of the soul through inner experience. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 91) It is as real to us as the objects of actuality. At the same time, and as a thing in itself, it is beyond experience, consequently all assertions regarding it must ultimately be derived through reason, and only practical reason is appropriate for this. For this to be true, we must accept that the ideas of practical reason stand alongside the objects of experience and the a priori content of science with equal though different ontological and epistemic authority, and share an equivalent scientific status. The difference lies not in this status but in origin, and we find Kant expressing this as early the introduction to the first Critique.
...certain modes of knowledge leave the field of all possible experiences and have the appearance of extending the scope of our judgments beyond all limits of experience, and this by means of concepts to which no corresponding object can ever be given in experience.

It is precisely by means of the latter modes of knowledge, in a realm beyond the world of the senses, where experience can yield neither guidance nor correction, that our reason carries on those enquiries which owing to their importance we consider to be far more excellent, and in their purpose far more lofty...These unavoidable problems set by pure reason itself are God, freedom, and immortality. The science which...is in its final intention directed solely to their solution is metaphysics... (A3/B7)

The solution to the problem of deriving the intelligible from what is given in experience lies in the possibility of making authentic moral judgments by beings operating through unconditioned causality as determined by practical reason. In this way, we are able to think our own freedom.

Therefore, that unconditioned causality and the capacity for it, freedom, and with it a being (I myself) that belongs to the sensible world but at the same time to the intelligible world, is not merely thought indeterminately and problematically (speculative reason could already find this feasible) but is even determined with respect to the law of its causality and cognized assertorically; and thus the reality of the intelligible world is given to us, and indeed determined from a practical perspective, and this determination, which for theoretical reason would be transcendent (extravagant), is for practical purposes immanent. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 88)

Here is a major conclusion of critical thought, that is, the claim that the intelligible is ‘determined’, or realisable as an object of cognition able to act freely on the conditioned. This link between what is actual and the intelligible is established through self-examination and the inferences we draw from the positioning of our own intelligence, from what I have called the ‘view-from’.

...on the other hand this is quite possible, as is now clear, with respect to our own subject inasmuch as we cognize ourselves on the one side as intelligible beings determined by the moral law (by virtue of freedom), and on the other side as active in the sensible world in accordance with this determination. The concept of freedom alone allows us to find the unconditioned and intelligible for the conditioned and sensible without going outside ourselves. For, it is our reason itself which by means of the supreme and unconditional practical law cognizes itself and the being that is conscious of this law (our own person) as belonging to the pure world of understanding and even determines the way in which, as such, it can be active. In this way it
can be understood why in the entire faculty of reason only the practical can provide us with a means of
going beyond the sensible world and provide cognitions of a supersensible order and connection which,
however, just because of this can be extended only so far as is directly necessary for pure practical
purposes. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 88)

This justification for referencing the soul as transcendental subject is one of Kant’s major
achievement within metaphysics. Since such an attainment is possible only through the
concept of freedom, this has to be seen as a central tenet of critical metaphysics from the
beginning. This is not to say that Kant himself was always clear on the matter, despite his
later certainties.

On this occasion permit me to call attention to one thing, namely, that every step one takes with pure
reason, even in the practical field where one does not take subtle speculation into consideration,
nevertheless fits with all the moments of the Critique of theoretical reason as closely, and indeed of itself,
as if each step had been thought out with deliberate foresight merely to provide this confirmation. Such a
precise agreement—in no way sought but offering itself (as anyone can convince himself if he will only
carry moral considerations up to their principles)—of the most important propositions of practical reason
with the remarks of the Critique of speculative reason, which often seemed overly subtle and unnecessary,
occasions surprise and astonishment, and strengthens the maxim already cognised and praised by others: in
every scientific investigation to pursue one’s way with all possible exactness and candour, to pay no heed to
offence that might be given outside its field but, as far as one can, to carry it through truly and completely
by itself. Frequent observation has convinced me that when such an undertaking has been carried through to
its end, that which, halfway through it, seemed to me at times very dubious in view of other, extraneous
doctrines was at the end found to harmonise perfectly, in an unexpected way, with what had been
discovered independently, without the least regard for those doctrines and without any partiality or
prejudice for them. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 88-89)

Kant’s satisfaction with his methodology is tempered by his evident surprise that everything
comes together harmoniously in this way, something he expresses on at least two occasions
in the first Critique. His relative positioning of the practical and the theoretical components
of pure reason is in his opinion thus fully justified.

The breakdown of dualism, as outlined above has various rewards for Kant’s philosophy. For
example, the problem of rendering the a priori determinism of nature compatible with the
freedom he alleges for mind is overcome through the realisation that the laws governing
nature are an unwilled though spontaneous and universal imposition of mind on its own
representations. In such an account, the mind is transcendentally external to the natural
world, and the relationship between them becomes reversed to that which appears to be the case, in that nature is now interior to the mind. Consequently, this mind is free of the causal system it imposes on appearances, which remains intact, universal, and immutable. In this situation, the mind is also able to act freely to wilfully impose actions driven by moral and other motives that constitute the results of practical reasoning. The dissolution of dualism and the consequent placing of the metaphysical ideas next to those of theoretical science will go a long way to establish the congruity Kant is seeking between science and his form of deistic religion. His aim is to speak meaningfully and without contradiction of the idea of a free and timeless subject and an *ens realissimum*. We need to work out how Kant is able to move from the establishment of the moral law as a scientific proposition, to a set of rational and scientific religious doctrines. In order to understand fully the logic of this argument, we need to enter into a necessarily cursory discussion of freedom, looking at how it is possible to derive the inferences Kant needs.

We have seen something of how Kant positions the metaphysical self within critical thought, and we need to relate this to his religious teachings. We have looked at several themes relevant to this study, including:

- The primacy of practical reason and the metaphysical ideas it infers.
- The perspective provided by the ‘view-from’ reading of the first *Critique*. This interprets Transcendental Idealism as providing and demonstrating a viewpoint from the position of the occluded and unknowable self as thing in itself.
- The awareness of the possibility of the unknown transcendental subject as thing in itself and its assured reality. This awareness is arrived at through the experience of representations *in toto*, that is, as pure apperception.

We have seen how Kant observes that selfhood experienced as the ‘I think’, is a possible ever-present accompaniment to all cognitions, indicating the presence of a noumenal something which is not a representation. As a conscious being, and through the experience of the combination of representations, it becomes aware of itself as the thought of a representation in general, leading to a tendency to construe itself dialectically as a simple and substantial entity. As a non-sensible and unknown thing in itself, it also possesses an awareness of its own cognitions, judgments and reasoning. We have seen how this seemingly
paradoxical duality can be explained, and from our discussion we learned that the soul, even when thought of as representation in general and subject to causality, is not to be considered otherwise than as a thing in itself, and consequently as free of the conditioned. The discovery of this overlap within the concept and the experience of self allows a linkage between the noumenal and the empirical.

Through this, Transcendental Idealism makes available an ingenious solution to the seemingly impossible paradox of personal freedom acting within a conditioned nature, carrying with it Kant’s insights into the nature of the world and our position in it. Our conclusions concerning this will establish that Kant has created a secular transcendentalism able to alter our perspective on the world in such a way that our appreciation of it must be forever changed. On this realisation, our surroundings are not altered, in the same way that the insights of Copernicus make no change to the solar system, only our appreciation, as an idea, of our position in it.

In describing this achievement of Transcendental Idealism, one makes certain claims about some benchmarks overlooked by eminent commentators including, for example, Strawson, who maintains that Kant achieves nothing of any lasting significance as far as Transcendental Idealism as a narrative is concerned.

Among the doctrines which together form the metaphysics of transcendental idealism we have not yet found, nor shall we find, any which there is a case for preserving as well as explaining. (Strawson 1966 263)

Strawson is of the opinion that we can jettison the doctrine of Transcendental Idealism and at one blow thereby solve the problems besetting any who cannot find meaning in it. It is clear that by depleting critical thought in this way, any reconstruction is a caricature of the original as proposed by its author, rendering unattainable any intended achievements in the form originally projected. It is arguable that Kant can achieve little of what he sets out to do if we excise transcendental idealism from his system of thought, since there can be no understanding of the noumenal limits set on theoretical reason, no room for the operations of practical reason, and ultimately no moral religion as Kant envisages it. Strawson does not see it this way, holding that transcendental idealism is dispensable. This very assessment,
however, by inference becomes applicable to the work as a whole, damning it at once to uselessness in terms of the project described above.

In explaining at least one putative achievement, our topic is the freedom of the transcendental subject and its ability to make moral decisions with causal impact on conditioned appearances. Even here, however, we do not find merely an end, but also an opportunity for further exploration of the religious implications this freedom creates in terms of the moral obligations it incurs and the possibility of establishing a rational religion. In keeping with Kant’s emphasis, ours has been to deal with the non-corporeal mind that Kant refers to as soul, but Kant’s thought also extends into theology proper. One immediate difficulty here is that God, either considered as an individual or as a collective, is a noumenal being, of which, by definition, no knowledge is available. We now need to see Kant can move from the objective reality of the moral law and its free adoption to a completely and universally justifiable set of religious beliefs, including a subjective belief in the ens realissimum expressed in the first person, which are as certain as knowledge itself. We now need to map Kant’s reasoning to this conclusion, and his justification of the epistemic certainty of belief alone. We begin this by looking at Kant’s idea of freedom.

5.4 The Exercise of Freedom.

The importance of freedom to Kant’s metaphysics is matched only by that of Transcendental Idealism, and the dominance of practical reason throughout. Allison introduces his essay on freedom by expressing this.

There can be little doubt regarding the centrality of the concept of freedom in Kant’s ‘critical’ philosophy. Together with the ideality of space and time, it constitutes a common thread running through all three Critiques…Surely, then, it is no exaggeration to claim that at bottom, Kant’s critical philosophy is a philosophy of freedom. (Allison 1990 1)

As Allison points out, ‘…Kant does not claim to have established the reality of freedom in the Critique of Pure Reason, he does claim, on the basis of transcendental idealism, to have established its conceivability, that is, its compatibility with the causal mechanism of nature’ (Allison loc. cit.). In his later writing, Kant overcomes this tentativeness, and such a change must be considered in any account of this theme. I will dispute Allison’s interpretation of
Kant’s position as one of compatibilism, which I consider an inappropriate way of rendering it since it assumes either a ‘two-world’ or a ‘two-aspect’ reading of Transcendental Idealism, each of which relies on a discarded dualism. As part of a complete, unified and holistic depiction of an intellectually finite being in a noumenal world, there is nothing with which his theory of freedom can or need be compatible. Korsgaard expresses an objection relating to this, and others will become apparent later.

Kant’s theory of free will is sometimes described as ‘compatibilist’ because both freedom and determinism are affirmed. This description seems to me to be potentially misleading. Most compatibilists, I believe, want to assert both freedom and determinism (or, both responsibility and determinism) from the same point of view—a theoretical and explanatory point of view. Kant does not do this, and could not do it without something his view forbids—describing the relation between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds. (Korsgaard 1996 187)

I have argued that Kant’s transcendental account is holistic, attempting to include and unify all that is possible in thought through reason and cognised through experience, and to render a universal synthesis of the components of the human environment interpreted in its widest possible form. As such, it is not an environment where it makes sense to talk of one thing being compatible with another.

On the other hand, we may agree with Allison’s assessment of freedom’s centrality in critical thought, since we find that freedom gains absolute primacy over the other ideas. Indeed, we learn from Kant late in the day that it is the central tenet of critical philosophy as a whole. Despite the apparent and crucial relevance of this to the first Critique, Kant delays its full expression until the opening pages of the second Critique.

Inasmuch as the reality of the concept of freedom is proved by an apodeictic law of practical reason, it is the keystone of the whole system of pure reason, even the speculative…Freedom…is the only one of all the ideas of speculative reason of which we know the possibility a priori. (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Abbott 1996 14)

The keystone metaphor is significant here, analogously comparing the concept of freedom to the highest stone within an arch consisting of dual weight bearing columns brought together at a central point. We now know that this late revelation results from and is indicative of Kant’s own conceptual trajectory as he works to unify, stabilise and develop transcendental thought and its unfolding implications. As a keystone, we should not be surprised to find it
occurring after everything else in this metaphorical building process is in place, including the two columns of theoretical and practical thought.

Our task at this point is to explain this freedom in the light of Kant’s description of soul. In particular, we are interested in the relationship between the conditioned elements of experience and the results of the exercise of practical freedom, which I interpret as being the two sides of the arch in Kant’s analogy. These two potential influences come together in the mind as the totality of possible experience, and form a consistent and continuing whole, which is available for analysis by reason in both its theoretical and practical modes. If Kant is successful in creating this synthesis, he has established a necessary element of his religious teachings in that a rational belief in the existence of a free non-corporeal soul able to act freely within nature becomes available for the first time.

Kant’s reference to the unique a priori property of freedom as an idea relating to both practical and theoretical reason is significant for several reasons, not the least in that it seems to fly in the face of what he sets out to establish concerning the limitations of theoretical reason in the Analytic of the first Critique. There Kant cannot be talking of transcendental freedom as it relates to the self as thing in itself, since he denies knowledge of the self as a thing in itself.

… even the inner and sensible intuition of our mind (as an object of consciousness), the determination of which through the succession of different states is represented in time, is not the real soul as it exists in itself, or the transcendental subject, but only an appearance of this to us unknown, being, which was given to sensibility. The existence of this inner appearance, as a thing thus existing in itself, cannot be admitted, because its condition is time, which cannot be a determination of any thing in itself. (A492)

Because the transcendental subject is unknown, we likewise can know nothing of its properties and predicates, including freedom.

I obviously cognize this thinking self no better as to its properties…or…the independence of its existence from whatever transcendental substratum of outer appearances there may be. (A383)

At this point in the Paralogisms of the A edition, Kant has little use for transcendental freedom and its attempted derivation through speculative reason. He shows this by the deletion of transcendental freedom from the Canon of Pure Reason. However, he expands on
this when writing the second *Critique*. Here, the attitude towards practical freedom is another story, and what we need to explain is the reversion of practical freedom into theoretical or speculative reason in the way he indicates. While he sidelines theoretical reason from contact with the ideas in his initial critical investigation, it is also necessary, in the interests of unity and totality that it comes back into play through the enhanced status of the practical. It is also a moral necessity, since the venal would profit more than the virtuous if there were no reward for good living.

Were there no hope for a future life then the vicious, who by any means and intrigue attempted to put himself in possession of earthly happiness, would be the happiest...Therefore one sees that metaphysics first arose from this practical interest of our reason. (Lec. on Met Tr. Ameriks/Naragon 1997 284)

The demarcation of practical reason is difficult to follow, though the metaphysical questions at A804-5/B832-3 show us something of how Kant unites reason’s theoretical and practical interests. He says the first question, ‘What can I know?’ is purely speculative since we cannot know what we can know, or to be more precise, we cannot know everything expressed as the totality of conditions. The second, ‘What ought I to do?’ is purely practical, and while it belongs to pure reason, Kant says, ‘...it is then a moral rather than a transcendental question and hence cannot in itself occupy our present critique’ (A805/B833). On the other hand, it seems that practical reason does hold the possibility of invoking and legitimately responding to the needs of speculative reason when applied to Kant’s third metaphysical question, ‘What may I hope?’ The importance of this lies in Kant’s opinion that the hope for happiness makes not only morality but also metaphysics itself possible. This latter dimension is not available to theoretical reason, and involves the practical, which is able to interrogate and assess which acts are appropriate for our future moral well-being.

On Kant’s account, while we cannot expect to attain happiness now or in the future, we are able to render ourselves worthy of it. This worth is attainable only through the employment of pure practical reason as it contemplates the path of duty, which of necessity takes us beyond the limits of theoretical reason through the utilisation of the ideas and the exercise of freedom. Because practical reason is able to concern itself with the metaphysical ideas of God and continued existence through the exercise of intellectual freedom, the two concepts are reciprocally linked, since practical reason without freedom is impotent, and freedom without reason is useless.
We are particularly interested in the synthesis implied by the third question. It involves the ability of mind, as an active agent, to function independently of the conditioned, determined and universal causal framework, and question what can be done to be happy. Freedom in this context is the ability of reason itself to initiate a first cause on conditioned representations, guided by the will (Wille) of a mind that, as we have seen, does not have any specific representation in time and space. In this context, the capacity for hope is a necessary precondition for willing that which is hoped of. Essentially, claims about the abilities of the noumenal self are *ipso facto* claims to knowledge about things in themselves, and therefore illicit within the limits set by Transcendental Idealism. Yet Kant is able to conclude that such claims are not only allowable, but present no contradiction to the strictly conditioned nature of representations.

Our problem was this only: whether freedom and natural necessity can exist without conflict in one and the same action; and this we have sufficiently answered. We have shown that since freedom may stand in relation to a quite different kind of conditions from those of natural necessity, the law of the latter does not affect the former, and that both may exist, independently of one another and without interfering with each other. (A557\B585)

This gloss is Kemp-Smith’s, and the word ‘exist’ is misplaced here when talking about ideas and seems to have no counterpart in the original. Pluhar renders it rather differently.

For [our] problem was only this: whether freedom conflicts with natural necessity in one and the same action; and this we have answered sufficiently. For we have shown that, because in the case of freedom a reference to a quite different kind of condition is possible from the kind found in the case of natural necessity, the latter’s law does not affect freedom, and hence both can take place independently of, and without interfering with each other. (Cr. Of P. Reason, Tr. Pluhar 1996 A557\B585)

From this, we can see that Kant is not advocating a compatibilist theory concerning freedom and the conditioned natural world. Rather, their conceptual modes of operation, and the conditions under which they are seen to operate are so different as to be independent of each other. They are not simply compatible, but have nothing to do with each other. In this way, Kant agrees with Hume’s dictum that what is has no bearing on what ought to be.
This conclusion is in keeping with the view that Kant advocates the conceptual separation of the intelligible and the empirical, to the point where they are not even compared to one another. At the same time they must work together, and this is another expression of the problem we encountered when dealing with the soul as thing in itself and as an idea of practical reason able to operate in a causal context, that is, the need to ultimately combine and resynthesise these two differing points of view as we must do to achieve an integrated and coherent worldview. This is made possible by giving practical reason the ability to establish an indubitable set of beliefs to which theoretical reason must accede. The acting practical self is both free and morally responsible for its actions as they affect the course of appearances. The conditioned nature of appearances, in which events are determined by prior events, is seemingly incompatible with this possibility, and Kant overcomes it by outflanking the limitations of theoretical reason with those of the practical thought.

5.5 The Common Origins of Natural and Moral Law.

In order to understand how moral decision making and its resultant actions can co-exist with the conditioned without contradiction, we must see how appearances, which are causally passive, are driven to behave as they do. This insight lies in the common source of both the moral law and those laws nature universally obeys. While appearances are not things in themselves, their properties and dispositions result from the influence of things in themselves, including the capacity of the human mind to influence them. Seen in this way, the harmony of nature and freedom is established through the thinking of freedom as a characteristic of reason, a faculty of mind acting as a thing in itself. Speaking transcendentally and concerning ourselves only with sensibility, Kant sees things in themselves in general projecting, and in this transcendental sense, ‘grounding’ or originating the intuitional raw material taken up by the mind and experienced as determined appearances. At the same time, the free individual human soul, also as thing in itself is able to intervene in nature, and influence its behaviour. It is not just normative actions which exhibit this freedom, nor do they even need to be the result of reason. Kant concludes in the *Prolegomena* that while we can act from reasoned duty or from other motives, in either case the action is always free. In the first case, we act freely through reason according to the moral law, which is always compatible with the natural law, since they both originate in reason, and in the second from the influence of natural law, which, as we have seen, takes its authority from the structuring capacity of
sensibility over which reason has no legislative capacity, but which also has no control over reason itself.

But I say: the law of nature remains, whether the rational being be a cause of effects in the sensible world through reason and hence through freedom, or whether that being does not determine such effects through rational grounds. For if the first is the case, the action takes place according to maxims whose effect within appearances will always conform to the constant laws; if the second is the case, and the action does not take place according to principles of reason, it is subject to the empirical laws of sensibility, and in both cases the effects are connected according to constant laws; but we require nothing more for natural necessity, and indeed know nothing more of it. In the first case, however, reason is the cause of these natural laws and is therefore free, in the second case the effects flow according to the natural laws of sensibility, because reason exercises no influence on these; but, because of this, reason is not itself determined by sensibility (which is impossible), and it is therefore also free in this case. Therefore freedom does not impede the natural law of appearances, any more than this law interferes with the freedom of the use of practical reason... (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 99-100)

In what follows, I argue that the ‘view-from’ reading gives us a more coherent picture of Kant’s doctrine of freedom on the basis that only by considering the soul in isolation can we gain a unique image of our capacity to act independently of the conditioned. This view asserts that the causal matrix of the natural world is itself mind dependent, along with the appearances it controls, and the potential for the transcendental self, acting spontaneously and externally through practical reason to intervene in its operations becomes evident when the commonality of natural and moral law is understood. Both laws are arrived at by rational inference, and their synthetic *a priori* nature informs on their transcendental origin and grounding in the noumenal. While natural law is imposed spontaneously through sensibility under the influence of unknown things in themselves, the moral law is discovered by practical reason, and has as its noumenal source the free human mind or soul as a thing in itself with the capacity to act wilfully on appearances. Seen in this light, the *a priori* laws of nature have no reference to the will or to reason, whose task is their discovery. At the same time, we may think of mind, as a free thing in itself, being able to influence appearances, imposing not only standard practical actions, but also moral actions in accordance or otherwise with an *a priori* moral law.

We find a significant expression of this in the *Prolegomena*, overcoming the problem we found at Bxxviii concerning the conflict between freedom and the conditioned.
I can now say without contradiction: all the actions of a rational being, in so far as they are appearances (encountered in some experience or other), are subject to natural necessity; but the very same actions, with respect only to the rational subject and its faculty of acting in accordance with bare reason, are free. What, then, is required for natural necessity? Nothing more than the determinability of every event in the sensible world according to constant laws, and therefore a relation to a cause within appearance; whereby the underlying thing in itself and its causality remain unknown. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 99)

The underlying thing in itself mentioned here may be a human soul or something else as thing in itself. Similarly, the constant laws referred to may be natural, moral, or both. The answer to the metaphysical paradox of freedom lies in this combination, which must always be the case when human agency is involved. The exercise of personal practical volition is possible only because, transcendentally speaking, nature itself consists merely of representations experienced as appearances created through the grounding of things in themselves and governed by natural law. Soul, as a thing in itself is simultaneously able to apply the moral law and wilfully act according to it in such a way as to influence the naturally conditioned. In this way, moral and natural law attain an equality of influence and status achieved in no other philosophy.

Again, this is not so much a case of compatibilism, but two distinct forms of influence able to operate seamlessly and in unity. Kant’s doctrine of the coincidence of free moral volition with the influence of other things in themselves has been rarely recognised, and by taking the ‘view-from’ reading we are able to put ourselves into a position to appreciate it. Tonelli, in questioning Kant’s subordination of ethics to metaphysics, finds it expressed in the first Critique, though he sources it to at least 1770 (Tonelli 1994 278). One motivation for this in 1781 and later is the idea that ethics, as practical reason, fulfils several purposes in critical thought.

…ethics becomes a pillar of metaphysics inasmuch as it becomes the only argument for God’s existence and for the immortality of the soul. But it is also possible to advance another justification. Kant suggested but did not develop the idea that both nature and freedom are objects of the ‘legislation of human reason,’ a justification which depends on the ‘Copernican revolution’ itself. (Tonelli loc. cit.)

It should be clear that on the ‘view-from’ reading Kant is no way arguing for the theoretical existence of God or any other noumenal entity. He is emphatic that such knowledge is not available, and to say that he has a theological ontological commitment without the necessary
qualifications concerning justified belief is to mistake his purpose. On the other hand, Tonelli clearly has a concept of the Copernican revolution similar to that argued for here, in which natural law is not imposed from outside the mind, but is seen as intellectually internal.

In Kant’s philosophy, the opposition between the physical world, which imposes its intrinsic laws on the human mind inquiring into it, and the ethical world where it is the human mind which imposes the moral law intrinsic to it as a dictate of conscience, disappears. Both the physical and the moral laws originate in the nature of the human mind. (Tonelli loc. cit.)

Despite their common rational roots, moral and natural law differ in the way they are discovered. We, as reasoning beings, establish natural regularities through scientific investigation and rational observation. Moral law may also be exposed by reference to the consequences of actions, but for Kant it must ultimately be a product of reason and considered independently of any results accruing from its exercise. It is a principle, that is, a synthetic a priori proposition not derived from experience. Kant realises with some surprise late in the final pages of the first Critique that as constructs of human rationality, natural and moral law can be synthesised.

The legislation of human reason (philosophy) has two objects, nature and freedom, and therefore contains not only the law of nature, but also the moral law, presenting them at first in two distinct systems, but ultimately in one single philosophical system. (A840/B868)

Kant is here talking about laws as a priori concepts derived from pure reason, since only such cognition is pure. We have seen something of the process leading to these conclusions, and how he develops them as writes. This process and its conclusions is not altogether the result of forethought and planning, however. Just prior to expressing the above conclusions in the first Critique, we find his surprise at the way things have come together.

It is unfortunate that only after we have spent much time in the collection of materials in some what random fashion at the suggestion of an underlying idea hidden in our minds, and after we have, indeed, over a long period assembled the materials in a merely technical manner, does it first become possible for us to discern the idea in a clearer light, and to devise a whole architectonically in accordance with the ends of reason. Systems seem to be formed in the manner of lowly organisms… (A835/B863)
5.6 Causation.

A discussion of the free causal agency of the will demands a brief description of Kant’s concept of causation in general, since we find here the bridging material between science and religion. In this regard, talk of intelligible cause is particularly troubling, since on Kant’s account, observed regularities, as law-like occurrences, occur only within the spatiotemporal framework. Reason, a faculty of mind as thing in itself, possesses no such empirical predicates, and while we may accept the possibility of experiencing the affects of things in themselves within material manifestations, it is quite another thing to assent to knowledge of their causal capacities. Yet this is what Kant asserts in several passages. To overcome these difficulties, we could begin, as usual, by reverting to the empirical/transcendental distinction.

But if the critique has not erred in teaching that the object should be taken in a twofold meaning, namely as appearance or as thing in itself, if its deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding is correct, and hence the principle of causality applies only to things taken in the first sense, namely in so far as they are objects of experience, whilst things in the second meaning are not subject to it... (B xxvii)

Applying the ‘two-fold’ meaning to causation does not seem to get us very far when talking of the noumenal mind, which is not expressed empirically. When things in themselves are isolated from empirical causality, it is difficult to see how Kant could introduce a concept of extra-sensible and non-categorial causality. Even if we accept the efficacy of this new type of causation, other problems follow from it. For example, there is presumably a plurality of minds experiencing both a shared natural world and personal freedom, and thus forming a community of empirically conditioned individuals as appearances. Given their conditioned commonality, how one mind, in its freedom when acting according to the moral law, can interact with the experience held by another without in some way reducing the freedom of that other is not clear. Of course, the will itself remains free, but it is possible for one person to interfere with the physical freedom of another by acting outside the law, that is, by treating them unjustly, or to take away the freedom of another who has been acting outside the law, as in criminal punishment. The problem for Kant, or at least for us in attempting to understand this issue, is to resolve the possibility of physical conflicts arising between individuals in their exercise of practical reason when both are compliant with the law. We need to know if injustice is possible in these circumstances, and if not, why not. In this situation, it seems that
no appeal to pre-ordained harmony or a predestined coincidence of intent is possible without destroying or at least undermining the claims to individual freedom.

Another difficulty lies in the perception that, by definition, transcendental causality of the categorial type existing between things in themselves and representations is not possible as far as theoretical reason is concerned, actual, or indeed something for which Kant argues. On the other hand, he allows that it is possible for noumenal expression in general to arrange the behaviour of and relationships between appearances in such a way that they exhibit the regularities experienced as causality. In addition, he also contends that practical reason, with the capacity to will, is able to influence or at least operate within the conditioned framework of nature. Our question here again asks how this can be possible.

Through the ‘view-from’ reading, we are now in a position to gain a clearer idea of Kant’s causal theory. Because of its representational status, the causal matrix of the conditioned does not result from forces acting between appearances, and no such powers are ever visible or discoverable within nature. Kant agrees with Hume that observable regularities occur around this deficit since, as appearances, they can have no such capacity. We also find this doctrine of the inertness of representations expressed by Berkeley, who refers to them as ideas.

A little attention will discover to us that the very being of an idea implies passiveness and inertness in it; insofar that it is impossible for an idea to do anything, or, strictly speaking, to be the cause of anything.

(Armstrong 1965 71)

Berkeley seeks the origin of causation elsewhere, in ‘…an incorporeal active substance or Spirit’ and again the similarity to Kant’s doctrines is apparent. On this account, there is no causal nexus between ideas, but of ideas. Kant’s doctrine is similar, in that what we perceive as empirical change is described in the Second Analogy as mere alteration of substance, here given the role of maintaining the continuity of the world. This substance of itself does not pass away or come into existence (B233), and while each change is conditioned by what has gone before in the sense of its a priori and in principle inevitability, it is not the result of any past occurrence. In other words, everything has a cause, although nothing causes anything else, in the sense of being a precipitating influence. On this reckoning, what we call causation is simply the description of change occurring according to a rule, which Hume termed constant conjunction, or, in more modern parlance, lawlike regularity.
If, then, we experience that something happens, we in so doing always presuppose that something precedes it, on which it follows according to a rule. (A 195)

This rule cannot be derived from empirical observation, says Kant, since such a rule ‘... would be as contingent as the experience upon which it is based’ (A196). A causal rule is the result of a priori mental spontaneity, and we can extract regularities from experiences of inner sense only because we place them there along with the experiences themselves. Consequently, the observed causative rules do not exist or persist within appearances as some sort of power or influence, but like the synoptic material of appearances themselves, are ultimately of noumenal origin. In this way causality anticipates and is a priori to perception whose relationships when considered in isolation can only be contingent, an observation which Kant accuses Hume of missing.

Hume was therefore in error in inferring from the contingency of our determinations in accordance with the law the contingency of the law itself. (A766/B794)

Given this understanding, we discover what Kant means when ascribing freedom to a mind as thing in itself and its capacity for spontaneous causal activity within nature. All causative influences are ultimately only explicable through the agency of things in themselves, among which the human mind ranks itself in critical thought. In this, we find the answer to the riddle of how human action on the conditioned is possible, for the efficacy of human causative agency becomes no more and no less mysterious than the affective influence of other things in themselves.

Such activity does not take place in time.

For the relation of an action to the objective grounds of reason is not a temporal relation; here, that which determines the causality does not precede the action as regards time, because such determining grounds do not represent the relation of objects to the senses (and so to causes within appearance) but rather they represent determining causes as things in themselves, which are not subject to temporal conditions. (Pr. to Any Fut. Met. Tr. Hatfield 1997 100)

From all this, we learn that just as we are aware of the presence of the noumenal mind, we are also aware of its freedom and the capacity to will and act on that freedom, since one without
the other is meaningless. And just as sensibility creates the natural regularities which theoretical reason discovers and are independent of the will, practical reason is able to spontaneously discover freedom and legislate the moral law, and apply it wilfully through noumenal influence on nature. It is necessary to conceive of the mind as a noumenal agency in order to achieve this insight.

The origins and characteristics of the moral law as it applies to human agency under the guidance of reason are different from those governing nature.

But when I consider these actions in their relations to reason…in its practical bearing, we find a rule and order altogether different from the order of nature. (A550/B578)

Within the timeless seat of the will, nothing can happen as we understand it, and Kant relies on this to describe how no contradiction with observations in time and space can occur. He simply brings down the shutters at this point, denying the possibility for further analysis or cognition. He describes his position concerning the status of the intelligible toward the end of the Antinomy of Pure Reason.

Thus in our judgements about the causality of free actions, we can get as far as the intelligible cause, but not beyond that. We can know that it is free, that is, it is determined independently of sensibility, and that in this way it may be the sensibly unconditioned condition of appearances. But to explain why in the given circumstances the intelligible character should give just these appearances in this empirical character transcends all the powers of our reason, indeed all its rights of questioning, just as if we were to ask why the transcendental object of our outer sensible intuition is intuition in space only and not some other mode of intuition. But the problem we have to solve does not require us to raise any such questions. (A557-B585)

Given these limitations, it becomes obvious that in the first Critique at least, Kant is not describing the exercise of the will as something we are able to know.

The reader should be careful to observe that in what has been said our intention has not been to establish the reality of freedom as one of the faculties which contain the cause of the appearances of our sensible world. For that inquiry, as it does not deal with concepts alone, would not have been transcendental. And further, it could not have been successful, since we can never infer from experience anything which cannot be thought in accordance with the laws of experience. It has not even been our intention to prove the possibility of freedom. For in this also we should not have succeeded, since we cannot from mere concepts a priori know the possibility of any real ground and its causality. Freedom is here being treated only as a transcendental
idea whereby reason is led to think that it can begin the series of conditions in the field of appearance by means of the sensibly unconditioned...What we have alone been able to show, and what we have alone been concerned to show, is that... causality through freedom is at least not incompatible with nature. (A557-8/B585-6)

This negative construal is modified towards the end of the second Critique, where Kant confidently asserts the existence of the intelligible self and its freedom. The difference here is not so much a change of mind, as of the changing emphasis favouring the supremacy of practical reason. In both cases, assertions concerning the possibility of freedom are neither ontological nor epistemic in nature, but rely on justified belief.

A corollary of the ‘two-world’ reading is the ascription of freedom to a transcendental subject considered as possessing both an intelligible and empirical self, and passages such as the above seem to reinforce this. On our one-world understanding, such an interpretation is misleading. By adopting the ‘view-from’ reading, we comprehend a self with a transcendental status only, but also limited to the experience of appearances. Despite this, self-awareness is possible in various ways. One of these is awareness of the capacity for transcendental freedom, and the previous reference indicates Kant’s confidence in drawing conclusions based on this. Such awareness does not provide any object, and consequently is initially available only as an idea, in Kant’s unique meaning of that term, and the later assertoric status given to freedom and the self indicate the coming together of two views of reality. The dichotomy between appearances and objects in the ‘view-from’ position does not refer to things as they appear and things as they are in themselves, but to things as they appear and the view from the transcendental perch, that is, the consciousness of the synthetic unity of apperception through the manifold of appearances experienced by a mind absent from that manifold. The idea of soul or transcendental self, as distinct from the awareness of selfhood as the ‘I think’, and the other ideas, God and continuing existence, are concepts made necessary through reason’s demand for totality, happiness, and the possibility of practical freedom. On this analysis, the transcendental view is not a view of things in themselves in general. It is the world as seen from the point of view of a thing in itself, through its intuitions, representations and percepts, but does include an awareness of at least one thing in itself, that is, the idea of the transcendental self.
This awareness is not something we have to consciously adopt, for, as I see it, Kant’s philosophy teaches this as the default position of all human-like minds. The soul, as mind, and the seat of this viewpoint, is aware of itself only through the understanding’s spontaneous cognition of apperception, which is the aggregate of the representations available to it, and through reason as an idea of practical reason. It is because of this that it can be said to be aware of freedom, a characteristic only available to the soul as thing in itself expressing its experience of self as a freely acting moral agent again only as an idea of practical reason. What we see coming together in Kant’s thought is the reality of the objects of both practical and theoretical reason, and in this way Kant brings his arch together. In this fruition of thought, what began as the idea of practical freedom is now seen to be able to function within the conditioned in the same way as other noumenal influences, and through the experience and exercise of freedom, the interests and capacities of speculative and practical reason are combined, synthesised and unified.

5.7 Freedom and the Moral Law.

Freedom relates fundamentally to the moral law, since without the capacity for spontaneous and temporally uncaused activity the moral law is not binding. Allison describes the close relationship between moral law and freedom as one of reciprocity (Allison 1990 Ch.11), and this reciprocity, in his view, consists in the capacity of the will to causally affect otherwise conditioned events, which presupposes, first, that the will is free, and second, that the moral law is unconditionally binding on the free will. On Allison’s thesis, both presuppositions have a mutual entailment, in that if we accept the concept of the rational free will, we have a sufficient condition for accepting the validity of the moral law, and conversely, the moral law can have application only by a rational free will.

For Kant, this relationship results from the need to discover a unique law necessarily able to determine actions. His case is that a free will must be determined not by the matter of the law but by the form of its maxim, defined as a subjective and self-imposed moral policy arrived at through the exercise of will itself. Such an exercise can only take place in an environment containing the type of self-awareness outlined above, and which therefore provides the origins of morality.
Thus, freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other. Now I do not ask here if they are in fact different or whether it is not much rather the case that an unconditional law is merely the self-consciousness of pure practical reason, this being identical with the positive concept of freedom; I ask instead from what our cognition of the unconditionally practical starts, whether from freedom or from the practical law. It cannot start from freedom, for we can neither be immediately conscious of this, since the first concept of it is negative, nor can we conclude to it from experience, since experience lets us cognize only the laws of appearances and hence the mechanisms of nature, the direct opposite of freedom. It is therefore the moral law, of which we become immediately conscious... (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 26-7)

We are not so much interested in the operations of the moral law as the consciousness within which it originates. Apperception as the awareness of our own ability to act and think freely derives from a consciousness of thought itself, the ‘I think’. As we have discovered, this is not an intuition of any kind, but an intellectual representation of spontaneity (B278). In the second Critique, Kant expands on this accompaniment to inner sense to include awareness of both the moral law and the freedom and obligation to adopt it, and in this way completes a picture of an active mind or soul able to act on and modify the conditioned. A justified belief in the existence of such a mind, (as causa noumenon) is derived through the complex reasoning processes of critical thought, and arguably forms one of its major accomplishments and ultimate ends.

5.8 The Community of Souls.

As we have noted, in the first Critique Kant exhibits little awareness of community and his discussion of the self is essentially individualistic. This contrasts with his notion of the Kingdom of Ends found in the latter writings involving the relatedness of morally free and spontaneous agents acting through and upon each other. By realising the idea of soul, practical reason is liberated through moral necessity to discuss more completely what it is to be a non-corporeal citizen among like citizens in a Kingdom of Ends or, as he sometimes puts it, a republic of equals. The mixed metaphor is interesting; perhaps it reflects the changing times in which Kant lived, but it also seems to depend on context, relating the republican metaphor to appearances as exhibited by humans, and the monarchical more appropriately to the noumenal with its unelected and eternal supreme being. He also relates it metaphorically to the kingdom of nature, emphasising the intellectual origins of the rules of both natural and moral law.
Thus, a kingdom of ends is possible only on the analogy of a kingdom of nature; yet the kingdom of ends is possible only through maxims—that is, self-imposed rules—while nature is possible only through laws concerned with causes whose action is necessitated from without. (Paton 1991 118)

The external necessity referred to here is the spontaneous and unwilled \textit{a priori} influence of mind as a thing in itself imposing universally applicable rules on the successive passage of temporal appearances. This contrasts with self-imposed moral laws, which coming from the same source, though in this case originating in the will, can also influence nature. Reflecting this, we have the juridical obligations and intentions of these individuals acting in concert with others to produce an ideal cosmopolitan union, initially within discrete states and then on a worldwide basis, to provide a common moral law able to legislate perpetual world peace and universal wellbeing and progress. Our interest lies not so much in this political utopianism, but in the other element of Kant’s thought relating to his third metaphysical question, ‘\textit{What may I hope?}’, which is primarily practical and therefore involves the traditional metaphysical elements of God and the continuing soul as defined in the \textit{Canon} of the first \textit{Critique}. The egoism of the question indicates the individualistic primacy of this theme; it is not ‘\textit{What may we hope?}’

We find a departure from Kant’s usual individualistic discussion when it comes to dealing with the idea of human-like minds in community. This is a wholly different religious theme, and something of considerable importance for our project. Whatever spatio/temporal relations exist between mortal humans, there is for Kant the possibility of a universal moral relationship with the potential to overcome conflict. This influence would extend into religion, law enforcement, diplomacy, marriage, education, commerce and elsewhere, that is, into any human endeavour in which duplicity, conflict and the breakdown of relationships is possible. We noted above that the operation of individual freedom might have implications for the freedom of others even when they act in accordance with the moral law, and the problem this creates for maintaining the capacity for all to act freely in community. An examination of the categorical imperative, considered in its most rigorous form, provides an answer. From the formula for autonomy found in the \textit{Groundwork}, we get an idea of Kant’s meaning in ‘…the Idea of the will of every rational being as a will which makes universal law’ (\textit{Groundwork} Paton 1964 98). This principle demands that all maxims which are not universalisable are inappropriate. Further, the will itself, as well as being subject to the law, is
also the only legislative authority of that law and consequently the realisation of the law through reason immediately imposes it on the individual concerned. Because only humans can make the law, and it must be a universal law not based only on individual, sensual or subjective interest, it follows that, ideally, all rational beings will first realise, legislate and then put into practice actions compatible with and legislated through the universal law. This scientific universalisability ensures that, as with natural law, all actions will consequently be harmonious each with the other. The ends of the individual will necessarily always correspond with those of other individuals and the community as a whole.

The concept of every rational being as one who must regard himself as making universal law by all the maxims of his will, and must seek to judge himself and his actions from this point of view, leads to a closely connected and very fruitful concept—namely, that of a Kingdom of Ends. (Groundwork, Paton 1964 100)

If the actions commanded by an individual will are made in accordance with the moral law, that is, the maxim that one is to act so that the maxim is universalisable, arguably no limit is imposed on what others can do if they also act under its guidance. For they also will to act so that their action is in accordance with that desired by any benevolent being, that is, one acting out of good will, and no consequential clash of will is likely or even possible. Thus in the kingdom of ends, when fully implemented through moral law and good will, no conflict is possible within collectivised rational moral activity. When this harmony is replicated in appearances, greed, war and conflict as we know them becomes redundant as a means of attaining happiness, and the *summum bonum* is created through the harmonious operation of disparate wills acting uniformly and in concert.

I understand by a ‘kingdom’ a systematic union of different rational beings under a common law. Now since laws determine ends as regards their universal validity, we shall be able…to conceive a whole of all ends in systematic conjunction (a whole both of rational beings as ends in themselves and also of the personal ends which each may set before himself); that is, we shall be able to conceive a kingdom of ends which is possible in accordance with the above principle. (Groundwork, Paton 1964 100-1)

These conclusions become significant for our purpose when we consider that Kant has established a rational foundation for belief in autonomous, eternal, morally responsible and free intelligible individuals with their being in a community of peers and entered on a developmental moral trajectory. It is notable that little discussion of this trajectory takes
place, since Kant nearly always discusses the highest theoretical form of moral motivation, that being the undiluted motivation of duty to the moral law alone. He is also clearly aware that this level of moral reasoning is an ideal that may seldom if ever be consistently attained by any individual, with the consequence that moral worth appropriate for the attainment of happiness is rare. Further, since it is apparent that the reward for virtuous living is uncertain within appearances, such reward must accrue externally to appearances. Similarly, those individuals who fail to meet the ideal standard of deontological perfection, which an invariant observation of the moral law would demand, must be allowed further opportunity to conform to it within a noumenal environment. Since moral perfection is attainable within appearances by few if any individuals, the moral necessity for a non-corporeal and continuing being acting independently of representations becomes apparent. The further possibility of a merciful and just God is also part of this case.

In summing up this section, we have seen that on the ‘view-from’ theory, the intelligible being as soul and conscious mind creates the natural manifold of appearances and can operate wilfully within it through practical decision-making. Such a description contains no obligation to spiritualism, supernatural events or historical, miraculous or intrusive activity on the part of the deity. Not only does Kant refuse to accept transgressions of natural law to establish his beliefs; on the contrary, we can accept the invariant and inexorable nature of such laws without jeopardising the possibility of this being. As such, it enables metaphysical discussion to consider rationally the possibilities of a community of eternal souls and the ens realissimum.

5.9 God and the Regulative Principle.

It is appropriate, following Kant’s methodology, that we have primarily concentrated our attention on his religious views of the soul. He begins with the individual, working outward to comprehend other rational beings, and only then to include the ens realissimum. Because of the noumenal nature of the idea of God, no awareness within appearances is possible in the way we have of the self as unity. Consequently, it is necessary for Kant to work outwards from the experience of the self to a necessary belief in God. Necessity, for Kant, provides us with all we need to assert the reality of the intelligible world as far as it relates to the individual human soul, but such a derivation cannot be made concerning God.
We could not, however, take a similar step with respect to the second dynamical idea, that of a necessary being. For, if we wanted to attempt it we would have had to venture the leap of leaving all that is given to us and bounding into that of which nothing is given to us by which we could mediate the connection of such an intelligible being with the sensible world (because the necessary being is to be cognized as given outside us.) (CR. Pr. Reason Tr. Gregor 1997 88)

Kant is very much interested in justifying a belief in God, and while he advocates that such a being is necessarily unknown in any empirical sense, and even rationally incomprehensible, the role of the deity is very much central to what he has to say about the human theological response.

It seems that for Kant, God, either as an idea or postulate of practical reason or as a product of speculative pure reason, is not something of which we can ever claim any knowledge. We can get to various analogous expressions of such an idea, but no further, and Kant in several places is quite specific about the rational incomprehensibility of the *ens realissimum*.

Pure reason thus furnishes the idea for a transcendental doctrine of the soul (psychologia rationalis), for a transcendental science of the world (cosmologia rationalis), and, finally, for a transcendental knowledge of God (theologia transzentdentalis). The understanding is not in a position to yield even the mere project of any one of these sciences, not even though it be supported by the highest logical employment of reason, that is, by all the conceivable inferences through which we seek to advance from one of its objects (appearance) to all others, up to the most remote members of the empirical synthesis… (A335 B392)

We find a similar expression later in the text.

I do not at all share the opinion which certain excellent and thoughtful men (such as Sulzer), in face of the weakness of the arguments hitherto employed, have so often been led to express, that we may hope sometime to discover conclusive demonstrations of the two cardinal propositions of our reason -- that there is a God, and that there is a future life. On the contrary, I am certain that this will never happen. For whence will reason obtain ground for such synthetic assertions, which do not relate to objects of experience and their inner possibility. (A742/B770)

When we are talking about practically ratified belief, however, things are rather different. While Kant is consistent in his claim that God’s existence can never be theoretically established, and that God is always unknowable by human-like minds, he does allow that we can express our beliefs in any way we see fit, as long as no contradiction with experience is
entailed. In this way, we find him presenting quite detailed descriptions of God’s characteristics expressed as concepts or beliefs made legitimate on moral grounds. We may be able to rationally comprehend our own beliefs by so doing, but such inventions are not related to the *ens realissimum* in any other way, and the predicates and adjectives so employed apply only to our beliefs, not to God as an existing entity. It is possible to do this so long as no conflict with reason occurs, and since we have no theoretical knowledge about the existence or otherwise of the *ens realissimum*, we may talk about it under the aegis of the moral imperatives we encounter.

Kant indicates the direction of his thought in the first *Critique* with a description of the ideal being he has in mind.

Thus the highest being remains for the merely speculative use of reason a mere but nevertheless faultless ideal, a concept which concludes and crowns the whole of human cognition, whose objective reality cannot of course be proved on this path, but also cannot be refuted; and if there should be a moral theology that can make good this lack, then transcendental theology, up to now only problematic, will prove to be indispensable through determining its concept and by ceaselessly censoring a reason that is deceived often enough by sensibility and does not always agree with its own ideas. Necessity, infinity, unity, existence outside the world (not as the soul of the world), eternity without all conditions of time, omnipresence without all conditions of space, omnipotence, etc.: these are purely transcendental predicates, and hence a purified concept of them, which every theology needs so very badly, can be drawn only from transcendental theology. (A642/B670)

As conceptualised in the *Ideal of Pure Reason*, the *ens realissimum* does not have any hypostatised being. We are tempted to think it does by determining it as a primordial being which is one, simple, all-sufficient, eternal and so on, leading to the concept of God as an entity in its traditional and dialectical form.

Kant’s discussion of God is relatively understated, and the unknowability involved results in a rather muted discussion of this idea, unlike the more accessible sense of selfhood.

Kant’s sustained interest in the problem of God over many decades is... telling but, in the end, not altogether revealing. In contrast to his treatment, say, of Newtonian science or the concept of freedom, Kant does not address the issue of God as a central feature of his philosophy from which he then worked outward, but always seems to be trying to make room for it within a philosophical vision that finds its animating principles elsewhere. The very notion of God appearing as a ‘postulate’ of practical reason—in
effect, a kind of residue, arising both subsequent to and parasitic upon the development of themes associated with our experience and freedom—is symptomatic of this situation. (Michalson 1999 33)

We have discussed how the idea of the soul originates through a form of self-awareness. Given that God is not realisable in this way, our link to this particular idea is more tenuous, and we must ask how we can arrive at the idea of an *ens realissimum*. One answer seems to lie in the relationship of God to the experienced manifold. In the previous discussion of the ‘view-from’ reading, we have described the way in which appearances are projected before the mind through the noumenal influence of things in themselves in general. This experience includes two forms of *a priori* components, each relating to the moral and theoretical elements it contains. We have seen how the soul, as thing in itself, is able to act noumenally, freely and spontaneously concerning the former, while the latter contains the conditioned matrix. Given the idea that God is the sum total of all that is, and that, on the ‘view-from’ reading, there is only one world and it is noumenal, the collective idea of all things in themselves acting in unity is therefore the *ens realissimum*. On this understanding, while the inexorable, unchangeable, formal, and structural components of human experience are shaped by pre-empirical mental capacities, representations ultimately occur through God’s influence acting as things in themselves *in toto*. We find the same idea in the *Prolegomena*, where Kant presents his resolution of the *Fourth Antinomy*.

For if only the cause in the appearance is distinguished from the cause of the appearance insofar as the latter cause can be thought as a thing in itself, then these two propositions can very well exist side by side, as follows: that there occurs no cause of the sensible world (in accordance with similar laws of causality) whose existence is absolutely necessary, as also on the other side: that this world is nonetheless connected with a necessary being as its cause (but of a distinct kind and according to distinct laws)… (*Pr. to Any Fut. Met.* Tr. Hatfield 1997 101)

We have pointed out that Kant’s description of the human condition is complete without recourse to divine intervention, and this remains the case. At the same time, it is possible to see that he holds the idea that things in themselves expressed as God underlie the happenings we experience. He is not too interested in such ontological considerations, however, since the *ens realissimum* is merely a regulative principle for theoretical reason, something whose universal and necessity influence we accept, but cannot know in any way. We can frame no predicates appropriate to describe it (A676-7/B704-5). The rational need for such as idea arises from the necessity to explain the teleological design found by reason within nature.
I think to myself merely the relation of a being, in itself completely unknown to me, to the greatest possible systematic unity of the universe, solely for the purpose of using it as a schema of the regulative principle of the greatest possible empirical employment of my reason. (A679/N707)

While we are able to propose it as an idea, it becomes speculative when we seek to objectify it, and this can never be justified. Kant tells us this in *The Final Purpose of the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason*.

The third idea of pure reason, which contains a merely relative supposition of a being that is the sole and sufficient cause of all cosmological series, is the idea of God. We have not the slightest ground to assume in an absolute manner (to suppose in itself) the object of this idea; for what can enable us to believe or assert a being of the highest perfection and one absolutely necessary by its very nature, merely on the basis of its concept, or if we did, how could we justify our procedure? (A686/B714)

From his attribution of divine causality, we may be tempted to think that Kant argues for what we now call intelligent design. He says, for example, that we need to establish the systematic unity of the world, and this can best be done by assuming within it the hand of an intelligent supreme being.

The speculative interest of reason makes it necessary to regard all order in the world as if it had originated in the purpose of a supreme reason. Such a principle opens out to our reason, as applied in the field of experience, altogether new views as to how the things of the world may be connected according to the teleological laws, and so enables it to arrive at their greatest systematic unity. The assumption of a supreme intelligence, as the one and only cause of the universe, though in the idea alone, can therefore always benefit reason and can never injure it. (A687/B713)

Given such statements, Kant seems to hold a position relevant to the current debate between those who support a theory of intelligent design in explaining the structures of nature, and those who advocate a Darwinian approach. On the one hand, the notion of evolution as we understand it, while being anachronistic to Kant, would not have been acceptable to him in its cosmological form, since it contains a description of an empirical universe originating and developing in the absence of human-like minds, something impossible for Transcendental Idealism as I have interpreted it. He would also not support those who attempt to argue from design to any objectified being, since the teleological principle is to be of regulative use only. For specific and localised natural phenomenon, Kant is committed to the rule of causal law in
bringing about changes. Any attempt to stray beyond this leads to various errors, such as *ignava ratio* or lazy argument, where God is the assumed immanent causal agent within the empirical manifold, rather than its transcendental and external origin. Such an erroneous theology looks to God’s influence in establishing the singular characteristics of particular events, such as the colouring of a flower, rather than the universal principle of causation through whose laws this comes about, and which we need to investigate if we are to understand them. In this case, Kant would be able to accept an evolutionary approach. Another mistaken approach of *ignava ratio* is what Kant elsewhere calls a lazy fatalism, as the accepting and passive attitude toward occurrences such as, say, a serious illness.

If it is your fate to recover from this illness, you will recover, whether you employ a physician or not. Cicero states that this mode of argument has been so named, because if we conformed to it, reason would be left without any use in life. (A689/B717 n)

This is a mistake since it prevents and discourages empirical investigation as the true function of the understanding and of reason, and which, in the case of an illness, may result in a cure. The person who sees God’s hand in all specific natural events and uses it as an excuse not to investigate further is thereby abusing the faculty of reason by ignoring it.

The second potential error comes about when we mistake systematic unity for a kind of anthropomorphic activity, or *perversa ratio*. In this case we anthropomorphise nature itself, and see it as a living and intelligent life form with ends of its own in much the same way as a human being. Arguably, we find such a doctrine advocated in the modern world by those who see the Earth or even the universe as a coherently operating, self-regulating and aware organism able to adapt its functions to changing environmental exigencies. In this case, instead of the principle of systematic unity being used to discover unity and design through empirical investigation, the unity of the world is simply assumed and hypostatised, even though the totality of such an organism is completely beyond our understanding. We are not in a position to assume such a teleological completeness, says Kant, and further, such an assumption is a hindrance to reason fulfilling its authentic investigative function. Nevertheless, we can and must ‘…assume a wise and omnipotent Author of the world…’ (A607/B725) On the ‘view-from’ reading, we can see how this is possible for reason alone, for on this interpretation our back is always turned to things in themselves, which includes not only the transcendental self, but also the *ens realissimum*. Consequently, our use of the
idea of God has application only to the rational consideration of nature. This means that Kant has no interest in the modern debate between Darwinians and those who advocate intelligent design as an explanation of the origin and unfolding of empirical phenomena. The unity we seek and assume is regulative only, and we cannot claim any insight into either point of view. Since we can face only the empirical, in which we assume and seek design and coherence, and then only with the instrument of the regulative principle in hand, the origin of such unity cannot be of any interest to us.

In other words, it must be a matter of complete indifference to us, when we perceive such unity, whether we say that God in his wisdom has willed it to be so, or that nature has arranged it thus. (A609/B727)

This indifference is the result of the transcendental realisation that nature is appearance only, and is therefore formed and ordered by the human mind acting under influence. The ultimate origins of the causal unity it exhibits in systematic totality is not and can never be available to us, and the questions and answers posed by both creationists and Darwinians, insofar as they attempt to transcend the empirical or deal with the world as a totality, are ultimately meaningless in theoretical terms and irrelevant to the practical exercise of reason. As for cosmology, the idealistic dependence of nature on the conscious mind for its existence means that the world comes into being not through the direct hand of God, nor through a large explosion at the limits of time and space, but in the dawning of the first consciousness and the opening of the first eyes, something about which again we can know nothing. The laws of nature are only there to be discovered individually and as they work together, not explained in totality. The demand for totality is futile when it employs theoretical reason in its speculative mode by attempting to seek knowledge beyond what is available empirically. There is no doubt that we continually discover an apparent purposiveness within nature, but this is ‘contingent and hyperphysical in its origin’ (A700/B728).

5.10 The Practical Justification for Religious Belief.

Given the failure of such dogmatic justifications when dealing with questions about the origins and unity of the world, and in answering the demands of reason for totality, we are left, Kant says, with a moral response only. This must be expressed analogously and anthropomorphically, without which no expression of it is possible. For this reason, Kant’s religious thought is in appearance similar to that of the traditional theology he seeks to
supplant, and because it automatically exhibits itself in this way, we can understand why it so often seems to those who encounter it to be little different from older forms of theology.

The practical justification for a deistic faith is Kant’s trump card, if, as I have argued, the final aim of transcendental philosophy is the description of a system of rational religious beliefs. Such beliefs are quite different from those theories and laws provided by theoretical reason and its concepts relating to the science of nature, though both sets of concepts, by Kant’s reckoning, are universal, synthetic, and available \textit{a priori}.

All conviction is of two kinds: either dogmatic or practical. The former must be sought in mere concepts \textit{a priori} and has to be apodictic. But we have already seen that by the path of mere speculation we cannot convince ourselves with certainty of God’s existence. At most the speculative interest of our reason compels us to assume such a being as a subjectively necessary hypothesis; but nowhere has reason sufficient capacity to demonstrate it. Our need makes us wish for this being, but our reason cannot grasp it…Yet there still remains to us another kind of conviction, the practical. (\textit{Kant’s Rational Theol.} Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 414-5)

Kant indicates that all action freely entered into is practical. We find this again in the \textit{Canon}, where he says that ‘…by ‘the practical’ I mean everything that is possible through freedom. (A800/B828). We noted above that the exercise of pragmatic freedom aims to create happiness, which is defined as the coincidence of the will with the happenings in the world. Let us say I wish to catch a bus. In this, we unify in thought our finances, our nutrition and the laws of physics that govern the bus, an examination of its timetable, along with all the other factors we need to consider and regulate in attaining our ends. Such an activity does not yield us any \textit{a priori} law though it may make us happy. Moral freedom, on the other hand, is so exercised as to make us worthy or deserving of happiness, and according to Kant, this is only possible and rational on the understanding that there is a moral law, a continuing life and a God. Of course, the two forms of practical reason are compatible, and even complementary.

But this distinction of the principle of happiness from that of morality is not…at once an opposition between them, and pure practical reason does not require that one should renounce claims to happiness…It can even in certain respects be a duty to attend to one’s happiness. (\textit{CR. Pr. Reason} Tr. Gregor 1997 78)

Through the utilisation of practical reason, Kant seeks to establish first the \textit{a priori}, synthetic nature of the moral law, along with its universal application, meaning that it is binding on all
rational human-like minds. This leads to a justified belief in God as a necessary inference, which belief also shares the scientific status of the moral law even though it is subjective, that is, it is my belief only and cannot be imputed to others. We find this in the first *Critique*, where we find the idea that in order to attain happiness, we must accept that such an end is possible. By happiness, Kant is not talking merely of hedonistic pleasure, but the ability to fulfil both our desires and our duties as moral agents.

Happiness, taken by itself, is, for our reason, far from being the complete good. Reason does not approve happiness (however inclination may desire it) except in as far as it is united with worthiness to be happy, that is, with moral conduct. Morality, taken by itself, and with it, the mere worthiness to be happy, is also far from being the complete good. To make the good complete, he who behaves in such a manner as not to be unworthy of happiness must be able to hope that he will participate in happiness…Happiness, therefore, in exact proportion with the morality of the rational beings who are thereby rendered worthy of it, alone constitutes the supreme good of that world wherein, in accordance with the commands of a pure but practical reason, we are under obligation to place ourselves. (A813/B841)

Given this end, it is reasonable to expect that individuals may attain it. In other words, if we are worthy of happiness, and able to act freely in a manner which brings this about, we should be able to expect that our hopes will be fulfilled in one way or another. In this way our hope for happiness and morality are inextricably linked.

I maintain that just as the moral principles are necessary according to reason in its practical employment, it is in the view of reason, in the field of its theoretical employment, no less necessary to assume that everyone has ground to hope for happiness in the measure in which he has rendered himself by his conduct worthy of it, and that the system of morality is therefore inseparably—though only in the idea of pure reason—bound up with that of happiness. (A809/B837)

As well as linking morality, through necessity, to the possibility of happiness, this passage is also significant for bringing together the interests of practical and theoretical reason, which have previously been kept apart. Kant goes on to point out that the problem with this formulation is its inability to stand alone, for it is merely an idea, and would depend on the universal acceptance and implementation of the moral law by all other rational beings acting freely. This is never likely to be the case, and consequently there can be no guarantee of a good result for the virtuous since they have little control over the actions of others, who may even harm their endeavours.
It is, therefore, only in the ideal of the supreme original good that pure reason can find the ground of this connection, which is necessary from the practical point of view, between the two elements of the supreme derivative good—the ground, namely of an intelligible world. Now since we are constrained by reason to represent ourselves as belonging to such a world, while the senses present to us nothing but a world of appearances, we must assume that moral world to be a consequence of our conduct in the world of sense (in which no such connection between worthiness and happiness is exhibited), and therefore to be for us a future world. (A810-1/B838-9)

By invoking God in this manner, Kant is not submitting a ‘proof’ in any traditional sense. Rather, he offers something that he calls the ‘ideal of the supreme good’, the idea of something belonging outside the natural world, but which must be taken into account when we act and reason about that world and our place within it. The ideal of supreme goodness is the only way for reason to unite hopes and rewards concerning happiness and in this way provides a justification for belief in the intelligible, not only for the purposes of practical reason, but for the theoretical also. In this way, as we have seen, pure practical reason is brought into harness with pure theoretical reason, and one of the most significant synthesising achievements of critical philosophy becomes apparent.

Kant’s thought moves quickly in this section, which of course falls very late in the first Critique, and we may sense his haste to conclude his work in the realisation that he has probably strained his reader’s patience as well as his own more than enough already. He moves from the demands of practical reason to the establishment of a belief in God and a future life as a full member of the intelligible world within the space of a few pages. We must be wary of taking isolated passages as being definitive of any particular assertions of our own about Kant’s ideas. However, when we take Kant’s description of the place of the mind as being necessarily noumenal, as evidenced by the above passage, and place it into the context of the work as a whole, I believe that the ‘view-from’ reading takes on a plausibility that renders it an indispensable means of understanding critical philosophy as a whole.

The description of a rational intelligible being limited to the experience of appearances and seeking happiness and a future life lacking this limitation is therefore constrained to accept the necessity of a supreme being. Our question now turns to ask two things; first, just how we are to think this belief, especially concerning its alleged scientific status, and second, the wider question as to what sort of religion is involved in this theology. Even the term theology
seems out of place here if defined as a study of God, since on Kant’s account no such
discipline is possible.

5.11 Belief in God.

Kant is insistent not only that we can have no knowledge of God’s existence, but that such
knowledge is likely to be morally detrimental.

…our faith is not knowledge, and thank heaven it is not! For divine wisdom is apparent in the very fact that we
do not know but rather ought to believe that a God exists. For suppose that we could attain to knowledge of
God’s existence through our experience or in some other way….suppose further that that we could really reach
as much certainty through this knowledge as we do in intuition; then all morality would break down. In his
every action the human being would represent God to himself as a rewarder or avenger; this image would force
itself involuntarily on his soul, and his hope for reward and fear of punishment would take the place of moral
motives; the human being would be virtuous from sensible impulses. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr.
Wood/Giovanni 1996 415-6)

Kant does not explain why knowledge should bring about this motivational shift more than
belief does. One thinks of Pascal’s wager, and the reasoning that we might as well believe in
God since no possibility of reward lies elsewhere. The believer through faith may well act in
the hope of reward and forgiveness, as does one who claims to have certain knowledge.
Perhaps in the state of belief a lingering doubt as to the truth of one’s belief would keep one
in check, but Kant is adamant that we can have an indubitable belief about God’s existence
without any possibility of certain knowledge. There is, it seems, a difference between
knowledge and certain belief, and he is insistent that we can have a convincing certainty
concerning God.

Such a moral theology not only provides us with a convincing certainty of God’s existence, but it also has
the great advantage that leads to religion, since it joins the thought of God firmly to our morality. (Kant’s
Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 415)

As usual, Kant uses the distinction between the practical and the theoretical to explain the
paradox. Theoretical knowledge concerns actuality, and has nothing to do with the
intelligible, where practical belief is appropriate. We find a suitable definition, one of many
possible references, in the second section of the Lectures, which concerns moral theology.
All cognition is of two kinds: either dogmatic or practical. The former must be sought in mere concepts *a priori* and has to be apodictic. But we have already seen that by the path of mere speculation we cannot convince ourselves with certainty of God’s existence. At most the speculative interest of our reason compels us to assume such a being as a subjectively necessary hypothesis; but nowhere has reason sufficient capacity to demonstrate it... Yet there still remains to us another kind of conviction, the practical. *(Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 414)*

By referring back to the first *Critique*, we find how Kant is able to argue for this form of belief, which, in order to be rational and scientifically acceptable, must possess those characteristics we have previously discussed. He divides assent, in which we accept the truth of a proposition, into opinion, belief and knowledge (A822/B850). Within this taxonomy, opining is the holding of a judgement as consciously insufficient, not only objectively, but also subjectively. When the assent is subjectively sufficient, but objectively insufficient, it is belief. Knowledge by contrast, consists of subjective sufficiency, which is conviction, and objective sufficiency, which is certainty and therefore universifiable and scientific. These distinctions are applicable to the transcendental use of reason in that opining is too weak for any purpose, while the claim to objective knowledge, as we have seen, is too strong, with the result that as far as theoretical reason is concerned there is no category available or appropriate for transcendental objects and knowledge. Speculative beliefs lack universalisability and the possibility of being transmitted to others under all circumstances since the sceptic has no reason to accept them.

In the case of practical reason, however, something that is theoretically insufficient can be practically sufficient if nothing else can do the job. To put it another way, when a moral belief has necessary ends, such as the attainment of happiness and the *summum bonum*, practical reasoning becomes necessary and therefore adequate if there is no other way in which that end is attainable. On the ‘view-from’ reading we can see why this is the case, since knowledge in its strongest sense is gained only from exposure to the natural world. The correspondence of concepts with actuality is available for verification by consulting our cognitions of nature, while practical concepts and cognitions are not. We cannot turn and face the noumenal, or have any direct experience of it, and consequently the best we can do is to form concepts, as beliefs or ideas, about what may be the case. When the formation of such ideas is morally necessary, we have sufficient grounds to accept them, and when they derive from an *a priori* universifiable and synthetic set of propositions such as the moral law, they
also share the status of that law. Although it is subjective and on its own would be unscientific, belief in God falls into this category because it is made necessary by the moral law, which is necessary and universalisable. As a belief, it makes possible the necessary, sufficient and sole way in which the moral ends of the human soul in its search for happiness can be attained.

Any doctrinal or dogmatic belief may be subject to scepticism and doubt, and it is not uncommon to hear of people who have lost their faith. Practical religion is not open to this failing, since, once realised, it becomes a necessary and permanent set of convictions.

It is quite otherwise with moral belief. For here it is absolutely necessary that something must happen, namely, that I must in all points conform to the moral law. The end here is irrefragably established, and according to such insight as I can have, there is only one possible condition under which this end can connect with all other ends, and thereby have practical validity, namely that there be a God and a future world. I also know with complete certainty that no-one can be acquainted with any other conditions which lead to the same unity of ends under the moral law. (A828/B856)

At this point, we might turn to examine and criticise Kant’s ideas, but that is not the task we have set for ourselves. Rather, our purpose has been to show what Kant’s overall purpose is in writing as he does, and it has become clear that his purpose is ultimately to establish a set of religious beliefs which necessarily apply to all rational minds, and are based on the moral law.

5.12 Kant’s Religion.

We may well query the sort of religion we would get using Kant’s blueprint. We do not have the ability here to do more than sketch this briefly since such a study needs a book of its own. The best we can do now is show briefly the moral implications of the assumption that the human mind has a perennially noumenal point of view and its affect on how we should live our lives. We need this, since our discussion is incomplete without some idea of what it all means in terms of the impact such beliefs might have on the observances and practices of those who base their religion solely on moral law.

Kant presents us with a minimalist deism depleted of the dogmatic doctrinal and supernatural claims traditionally associated with religious observance. He has no room in his metaphysics
for superstition dressed up as faith, pretended disruptions of the conditioned, historical and miraculous supernatural events, or divine intervention in the course of nature. He sees no way for us to address God or other noumenal beings which lack representation through prayer. All of these he sees as dialectical illusions made necessary to distinguish faith from the observations of science and the everyday which can offer no insights into the rational totality we demand.

We may see a problem in this. If within transcendental reflection we view ourselves as unknowable noumenal beings, the question may arise as to how communication between such entities, especially those possessing human-like minds and their associated limitations, is possible. The answer is simply that, unlike God and other things in themselves, humans, as we experience them, appear in time and space as representations. Consequently, we are able to communicate within the formalised environment we share and in no other way, employing various forms of sensible interaction such as sound, touch, vision and so on. While the senses can be seen as playing no part in the originating processes of sensibility in the transcendental sense as outlined above, this in no way contradicts the apparent circumstance that human sense perception is still the only way in which we can become empirically aware of ourselves and of other appearances, including other persons, and to communicate with them.

While rejecting traditional religious dogmas doctrines, Kant is also sympathetic to those who are able to gain some moral benefit from adopting them, and makes room for the reverence of holy books and traditional observances. Generally speaking, though, his alternative is a religion reduced to its minimum, and so structured as to be comprehensive in outlook, morally obligatory, and universally acceptable. I have attempted to argue that the establishment of this outlook is at least a major aim of the first *Critique* and much of what comes after.

This minimalist religion has enough in it to satisfy the human need for religious expression. This includes, at least in part, reason’s search for totality and the need for a moral justification of and potential reward for virtuous human activity.

Now let us ask: What is the minimum of theology required for religion? What is the smallest useful cognition of God that can accordingly move us to have faith in God and thus direct our course of life? What is the smallest, narrowest concept of theology? It is that we need a religion and that the concept is sufficient
for natural religion. There is this minimum, however, if I see that my concept of God is possible and that it
does not contradict the laws of the understanding—Can anyone be convinced of this much? Yes, everyone
can, because no one is in a position to rob us of this concept and prove that it is impossible. Hence this is
the smallest possible requirement for a religion. Provided that this alone is made a ground, there can always
be religion. But the possibility of the concept of God is supported by morality, since otherwise morality
would have no incentive. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 345)

Our previous discussion of Kant’s God dealt with the reasons he gives for such belief. It rests
in the concept of both the possibility and the moral necessity of the ens realissimum, and is
not an attempted moral proof of God’s existence as is sometimes thought. We turn now to
look at what characteristics we are able to attribute to the Godhead and how they may be
rationally considered. I referred above to Kant’s theological outlook as deist, as distinct from
theism, but typically he is able to synthesise even these, since unlike a strict deism, Kant
allows personification when describing God. Kant’s discussion of this in the Lectures is
complex, but in summary, he divides natural theology into that which is based on reason
(theologia rationalis) and its opposed empirical theology (theologia empirica). The former is
based on reason, while the latter must be based on revelation, since God is not an empirical
phenomenon.

These two categories exhaust all theological possibilities, and Kant points out the
significance of this transcendental concept of God.

The concept of an ens originarium as an ens summum belongs to transcendental philosophy. This
transcendental concept, in fact, is the foundation of transcendental philosophy… (Kant’s Rational Theol.
Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 347)

From these definitions, we can see that Kant attempts to encompass as many theological
forms as are compatible with a rational theology, and consequently the distinction between
deism and theism is not easily applied. Kant even sanctions the need for revealed faith
because of individual human weakness.

The only faith that can found a universal religion is pure religious faith, for it is a plain rational faith which
can be convincingly communicated to everyone, whereas a historical faith, merely based on facts, can
extend its influence no further than the tidings relevant to a judgment on its credibility can reach. Yet, due
to a particular weakness of human nature, pure faith can never be relied on as much as it deserves, that is,
[enough] to found a Church on it alone. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 136-7)
Typically, dispute occurs between those who seek to categorise Kant’s theological views into pre-existing moulds. Palmquist, for example, argues for a theistic interpretation not only of Kantian theology, but of his philosophy as a whole, that his critical philosophy left his basic pre-existing beliefs untouched, and that he simply replaced the metaphysical unknown usually thought of as God by the thing in itself, freeing God ‘…to play a far more important and determinate role…’ (Palmquist 2000 73) God, on this reasoning, is now able to become immanent, and this ‘…rich concept of a “living God” forms the very heart of Kant’s entire philosophical project.’ (Ibid.) Wood, on the other hand, argues for Kant’s deism (in Rossi and Wreen 1991), and Di Giovanni asserts that ‘…Kant, the real individual, not only claimed not to know anything about God, he also personally did not care to know anything about him. For all practical purposes, Kant was an agnostic’. (Di Giovanni 2005 xi) The contradictions in these assessments are obvious and striking, and I have indicated that such disparate assessments can be derived from Kant’s various moods, which may allow for much ambiguity if taken in isolation or not kept within a strictly critical framework.

On balance, I would argue that taken in its most powerful, rigorous and austere form, critical philosophy projects itself as deistic. Were he proposing a theist doctrine, Kant would need to allow that the ens realissimum has a personal relationship to us. This could be metaphorically expressed, for example, as a one-on-one interface with something possessing the same sorts of predicates as a supremely powerful person who at the same time has no failings. As Wood puts it, ‘…a theist is someone who admits a “natural theology,” applying to God, by analogy, the properties of creatures known to us through experience.’ (Wood in Rossi and Wreen 1991 1) At no point does Kant point to a personal acquaintance with a God-like figure in the first Critique, restricting his definition as relating to an unspecified and impersonal concept, postulate or idea. Even in the later works, we find that, as distinct from revelation, the appeal to reason is paramount. We see this in the title of Kant’s major religious work, which contains the word ‘bloß’, meaning unassisted, as in Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason of 1793. There is no appeal to a personal God here.

It is sometimes hard to discern Kant’s case. For instance, he says that ‘The end is here irrefragably established, and according to such insight as I can have, there is only one possible condition under which this end can connect with all other ends, and thereby have practical validity, namely, that there be a God and a future world.’ (A828 B856) Is this an
argument for belief, or an ontological commitment? I would suggest that it is the former, offered as a postulate. The use of the word ‘validity’ and the implication of the conditional in the conclusion point toward the former. Such a belief in God on reasoned and conditional practical grounds can be held either in an abstract impersonal form, or given a more anthropomorphic expression if necessary. In either case, the deism remains, and this I take to be Kant’s position. Ultimately, we can have no knowledge of God or his ‘feelings’ and ‘attitude’ toward us, and Kant makes the distinction between knowledge and belief in this area quite succinctly.

No one, indeed, will be able to boast that he knows that there is a God, and a future life; if he knows this, he is the very man for whom I have long [and vainly] sought. All knowledge, if it concerns an object of mere reason, can be communicated; and I might therefore hope that under his instruction my own knowledge would be extended in this wonderful fashion. No, my conviction is not logical, but moral certainty; and since it rests on subjective grounds (of the moral sentiment), I must not even say, ‘It is morally certain that there is a God, etc.’, but ‘I am morally certain, etc.’ (A828-9 B856-7)

The conditional and personal nature of this commitment to God’s possibility is based on the moral consequences of such a belief. Further, a belief cannot have or produce a personal relationship with anything. Of course we are able to believe in such a personal relationship, but this, as a belief, is not the same thing as saying that such a relationship actually exists. I may believe my wife loves me, but this in no way entails that she does, since my belief, on its own, does not establish a relationship. My case is that theism cannot spring from belief alone, and to infer it from Kant’s writings is to mistake his meaning.

It might be thought that this doctrinal flexibility is symptomatic of a lack of rigour, or, following Schopenhauer’s assertions, that Kant is too willing to concede traditional forms for the sake of a quiet life. More charitably, and I believe, correctly, we can see that the willingness to comprehend varying forms of worship and their expression is that as noumenal beings, we are able to encompass various activities within a rational framework. Ideally, this means that we are able to say and think what we like as long as it provides no contradiction with the conditioned, and that we declare no insight into the supersensible. At the same time, some latitude seems to be allowed in the above remarks for those who lack the moral and cognitive capability to achieve the principled ideal. While in principle all that is necessary for the proper observance of faith is observance of the moral law, Kant recognises that not
everyone is able to meet this ideal, and shows an awareness of the need to meet this inadequacy.

Conscious in their impotence in the cognition of supersensible things, and though they allow every honour to be paid to faith in these things…human beings are yet not easily persuaded that steadfast zeal in the conduct of a morally good life is all that God requires of them to be his well-pleasing subjects in his Kingdom. They cannot indeed conceive their obligation except as directed to some service or other which they must perform for God. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 137)

We might think that Kant shows a remarkably precise knowledge of God’s requirements here, but we can understand this apparent dogmatism on the grounds that he is speaking from a transcendental point of view, that is, in the knowledge that no service to the *ens realissimum* is possible. In order to please God and fulfil our moral duties we should behave as though we were already in heaven, though still on earth and able to influence only appearances (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 138). I have argued that this is what Kant assumes when he is writing, that is, that the human mind, as soul, is always to be considered a noumenal entity, and forms the basis of the ‘view-from’ reading I have presented.

Kant is able to justify even the anthropomorphic natural theistic forms of dogma and ritual, as long as they comply with the other strictures he places on belief, accepting the former as being necessary for some people. These concessions to those with truncated moral and cognitive attainments is more apparent in his later religious writings, and demonstrates a consideration of those unable to reach the intellectual and rational plateau of those who make rational moral decisions based purely on considerations of duty as a principle. What he seeks is the possibility of the universal acceptance of the principles of rational religion, and anything else, although it may not be present in his theology, is acceptable, at least on a short-term basis, so long as it does not contradict or interfere with the basics.

Religions based on historical events and revelation need interpreters and intercessors, who may also claim to provide an exclusive channel of communication with God. Such clergy, priests, pastors, ministers and so on are redundant in Kant’s religion, though his own position may seem to contradict this. While Kant does not see himself as any sort of messiah or intercessor with God, the need for enlightenment necessitates a role for the teacher, but
nothing more than this. He is scathing of what he calls the degrading distinction between lay
and clergy, and of priestcraft in general, which he holds responsible for what he seems to
perceive as the recurrent break-down of morality in ecclesiastical practice.

Priestcraft is therefore the constitution of a church to the extent that a fetish-service is the rule; and this
always obtains wherever statutory commands, rules of faith and observances, rather than principles of
morality, make up the groundwork and the essence of the church. Now there are indeed many ecclesiastical
forms in which the fetishism is so manifold and mechanical that it appears to drive out nearly all of
morality, hence also religion, and to usurp their place, and thus borders very closely on paganism. (Kant’s
Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 198)

Perhaps we glimpse an example of Kant’s Pietist leaning here, and we are not told what
exactly is wrong with paganism though we may presume that its lack of moral voluntarism is
at fault. He goes on to point out that a hierarchical religious organisation, whether
monarchical, aristocratic or democratic, is always despotic, and when combined with articles
of faith as tenets, its clergy tend to adopt the power to rule with indifference to reason and
even scripture itself, by pretending to have sole authority to gain insight into the mind of
God. In this way, the clergy can become authoritarian and hypocritical, giving orders instead
of teaching and persuasion, thereby undermining the morality of all they touch. Rather, God
has no favourites or minions, and treats each individual equally.

God’s impartiality consists in the fact that God has no favourites; for this would be to presume some
predilection in him and that is only a human imperfection… (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni
1996 419)

At the same time, Kant says, God is not obliged to be equitable in the sense of being more
than just. We can enter no contract with God and his obligations to us extend no further than
the necessity to give us what we deserve as indicated by his earthly agent, our consciences.
(Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 loc. cit.)

Along with the clergy, Kant sees the gradual dissolution of all revelatory dogmas, and the
practices of traditional religious observances become more and more redundant as reason
takes hold of mature communities.
The leading-string of holy tradition, with its appendages, its statutes and observances, which in its time did good service, become bit by bit dispensable, yea, finally, when a human being enters upon his adolescence, turn into a fetter…The degrading distinction between laity and clergy ceases, and equality springs from true freedom, yet without anarchy, for each indeed obeys the law…which he has prescribed for himself, yet must regard it at the same time as the will of the world ruler as revealed to him through reason. (Kant’s 
Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 151)

The result of this growing moral maturity is a new theocratic order not arrived at through revolution, with a corresponding and continuing need for violence, but through reason as revealed through moral insight. The end is a ‘…divine ethical state on earth…’ (Kant’s 
Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 152), and Kant evidently believes that the dynamic he proposes can result in something like the beginnings of the kingdom of heaven in earthly form.

Such is therefore the work of the good principle…in erecting a power and a kingdom for itself within the human race, in the form of a community according to the laws of virtue that proclaims the victory over evil and, under its dominion, assures the world of an eternal peace. (Kant’s Rational Theol. Tr. Wood/Giovanni 1996 153)

When Kant writes this way, we get an idea of his enthusiasm for religious reform. He really does wish to change the world, and his motivation is evident in this. I have attempted to explain how this impulse may be relevant to our understanding of all his critical work, not just the specifically religious writings, and that only by accepting this insight can we begin to understand the otherwise cryptic nature of some of his expressions.

5.13 Conclusions.

In this thesis, I have attempted a reconstruction and portrayal of Kant’s thought, which I will now attempt to summarise. One difficulty for anyone attempting to understand Kant’s undertaking is that the differences between what is, and what ought to be, what we can believe, and what we can know, become blurred through the application of pure reason in its dual forms. What is the case for theoretical reason is of little interest to the practical in its normative employment, while what ought to be is beyond the scope of the theoretical, yet they must work together if the human potential for cognitive and moral development is to be achieved. I have attempted to draw from Kant the doctrine that the primary ontological truth,
for us only established as a morally justified true belief, is that as human minds we have our being in a noumenal world and must view our reality from such a viewpoint if we are to avoid falling into manifold errors. Noumenal objects, as things in themselves among which we rank as conscious and self-aware intelligences, have independent and eternal being, and taken collectively make up the sum total of all possibilities which we call God or the \textit{ens realissimum}. This noumenal environment has no conditioned component available or suitable for consideration by theoretical reason, and is therefore primarily a moral realm within which personal moral advancement and reward can come to fruition.

As a thing in itself, the human mind has a direct though unknown relationship with other things in themselves in general, with the result that we experience the world of nature as something we spontaneously throw before ourselves for the duration of consciousness, and the resulting appearances are the field of play for theoretical reason. Human-like minds are finite, and as such must experience their environment as representations or images constrained within time and space. We can know only this experience, and tend to find it so compelling that we are easily engrossed in it while finding that it lacks causal completeness. By accepting it in this way, we are tempted to theorise about the noumenal in the same way that we investigate the empirical, with conflicting and contradictory results that inevitably end in disappointment. We are also inclined to think of reality as having two major components, resulting in a belief in a duality between matter and mind which is ultimately unsustainable in theoretical terms, and redundant for the practical. Kant’s idea is that only by clearly defining the differing status of appearances and things in themselves can we arrive at a correct assessment of our condition. The first step in this process is the realisation that time and space are ideal preconditions of experience, while also existing within experience as imaginational constructs, with the consequence that all appearances are also subject to this ideality.

On this understanding of Kant’s thought, it is the case that all knowledge begins with sensual experience, and that all we can know is derived from this source. This is compatible with the further transcendental possibility that perceptions, as the objects of experience, are not precipitated by sensual impact but through the influence of things in themselves on a mind not present in appearances. We thus accept that the totality of conditions is unavailable to theoretical reason, and desist from making unwarranted claims about the supersensible of the type shown to be almost universally irresistible. Since all experience is of appearances only,
we are obliged to consider ourselves as holding a moral perspective within appearances and so order our lives as to achieve happiness through the exercise of practical reason and its conclusions. We must also acknowledge the improbability of attaining full happiness within appearances, since our will and the way of the world are never likely to coincide. Consequently, we are justified through the exercise of practical reason to adopt certain specific beliefs, which, while never knowledge in the theoretical sense, are able to provide a universal and binding moral and metaphysical framework within which we can fully employ our rational and physical abilities to the betterment of others and ourselves. By demonstrating that such beliefs are rational and universally binding, and by enrolling others in their application, the ideal of the creation of the kingdom of ends on earth becomes available though never attainable.

We may conclude with Kant’s expression of the relationship between belief and knowledge, and the necessity to rein in the transcendent pretensions of speculative reason.

[From what has already been said, it is evident that] even the assumption--as made on behalf of the necessary practical employment of my reason -- of God, freedom, and immortality is not permissible unless at the same time speculative reason be deprived of its pretensions to transcendent insight. For in order to arrive at such insight it must make use of principles which, in fact, extend only to objects of possible experience, and which, if also applied to what cannot be an object of experience, always really change this into an appearance, thus rendering all practical extension of pure reason impossible. I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith. (Bxxix-xxx)

I have argued that the motivation behind this type of intellectual restructuring underlies much of what Kant writes in later life, and that any assessment of his thought neglecting this component is necessarily incomplete and likely to result in an unjust assessment of its achievement.
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