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KANT AND THE PARADOX OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

SAHABEDDIN YALCIN
Norman, Oklahoma
2001

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KANT AND THE PARADOX OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

Kenneth Merrill

Wayne D. R

Monte Cook

Christopher Swoyer

Peter Barker

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION AND THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

In the *Concept of Mind*, Ryle metaphorically describes the elusiveness of the self and the difficulty facing self-knowledge as follows:

> "The more the child [who asks 'Who am I?'] tries to put his finger on what 'I' stands for, the less does he succeed in doing so. He can catch only its coattails; it itself is always and obdurately a pace ahead of its coattails. Like the shadow of one's own head, it will not wait to be jumped on. And yet it is never very far ahead; indeed, sometimes it seems not to be ahead of the pursuer at all. It evades capture by lodging itself inside the very muscles of the pursuer. It is too near even to be within arm's reach" (Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p. 186)[1].

As Ryle points out in this passage, despite the crucial role of the self (or the subject) in the formation of knowledge of objects, the self itself is hardly an object of perception. The mystery of the self and the difficulty of grasping it have always amazed philosophers throughout history. Since ancient Greek philosophers the issue of the self has been discussed extensively in many philosophical circles. In the Middle Ages, acquiring a religious tone, its importance did not diminish, but rather increased dramatically. But it is with the advent of the modern period that the questions of the self and self-knowledge acquired a central role in philosophy. In the modern period, both

the rationalist and the empiricist philosophers have seriously considered the issues of the self and self-knowledge. In particular, the rationalist philosophers have attributed a great importance to these questions. Let us look briefly at the doctrines of Descartes and Hume, as they best exemplify the rationalist and the empiricist traditions respectively on the issues of the self and self-knowledge.

2. Descartes as the Rationalist

Descartes, who is considered to be the first modern philosopher, makes the self and self-knowledge his starting point in philosophy. In his now classic *Meditations*, Descartes contends that the first thing he knows for certain is that he exists as a thinking being. In this book, Descartes conducts a methodological doubting process, which leads to the conclusion that we can doubt everything in the world except our own existence as a thinking being (*res cogitans*). Descartes maintains that we may find reasons to doubt everything in the world except our own existence as a thinking being, as the very activity of doubt, which is a species of the activity of thinking, necessarily affirms the existence of a subject that does the doubting. This is because doubting the existence of oneself as a thinking being, maintains Descartes, involves a paradox. Descartes points out that even if I may be

[1] The publication information about the works cited in the dissertation may be found in the 'Bibliography' at the end of the dissertation.

deceived by a *genie malign* (the 'evil demon') about the existence and the true nature of everything else in the world, I am nonetheless absolutely certain about my own existence as a thinking being (*res cogitans*) because, whatever the 'evil demon' attempts to do in order to manipulate my mind, he cannot by doing so make me nothing so long as I am thinking. The proposition 'I exist', says Descartes, when uttered, cannot be false. Hence Descartes concludes: "...I must conclude that this proposition, I am, I exist, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind" (Descartes, *CSM*[1] Vol. II, p. 17). Descartes' classic formulation of this truth is expressed as follows: *cogito ergo sum*: 'I think, therefore I am'. Descartes makes this truth the starting point of his philosophy, and tries to derive from it certain substantial *a priori* claims about the nature of the self.

After proving that he, as a thinking thing, exists, Descartes goes on to investigate what the nature of this thinking thing is. He considers the proposal that he might be a physical substance; but he immediately dismisses this proposal on the ground that he is not yet certain of the existence of physical objects. After dismissing this and other options, Descartes finally concludes that he is an immaterial substantial being that "doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also

[1] *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, tr. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugal Murdoch, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988).

imagines and has sensory perceptions" (Descartes, *CSM*, Vol. II, p. 19). Descartes claims that he knows that the self is a simple, immaterial, thinking substance by an intellectual or rational intuition, which he calls a 'clear and distinct perception'.

Descartes, who approaches the self from a subjective or inner standpoint, seems to put emphasis on the subject-aspect of the self (the self as a subject), rather than on the object-aspect of the self (the self as an object of perception). To know itself as a subject, i.e., as an active agent, the self, according to Descartes, must know itself through a direct rational intuition of its own activities. Descartes' claim that the first thing we know about the self is its mental activity of thinking shows that the self knows itself through its own activities, more precisely through thinking, which does not require the existence of bodies. The Cartesian idea that we know ourselves as a substantial subject through an intellectual intuition is pretty much a distinctive mark of the rationalist perspective on self-knowledge. The two other major rationalist philosophers, Spinoza and Leibniz, though defending a slightly different view of the self, agree with Descartes on this important point that we know the self through a rational intuition.

3. Hume as the Empiricist

On the other hand, the modern British empiricists follow a very different, and to a certain extent opposite, path from that of the rationalists on the issues of the self and self-knowledge. Hume, for instance, who best exemplifies this tradition on these matters, starts out by asking the following important question: Does the rationalist notion of the self as an immaterial, simple, unified substance have a genuine counterpart in the real world? The following passage from his *Treatise* clearly shows that his answer to this question is in the negative:

> "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect non-entity? (Hume, *Treatise*, p. 252).

As tacitly indicated by this passage, Hume rejects any rational or *a priori* knowledge of the self, and adds that we do not have any empirical knowledge of the self as a substantial entity either. In short, according to Hume, there is no substantial, simple, immaterial self, which can be perceived either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. All we can perceive of the self, maintains Hume, are distinct or discrete impressions or ideas, which do not have any necessary (*a priori*) unity. The self for Hume is just "a bundle or

collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (Hume, ibid. p. 252). The self, on Hume's account, is a psychological construction out of these perceptions, which we acquire when we reflect upon our inner states. This of course means that the self for Hume does not have a real unity or identity over time, as the rationalists assumed, because, as Hume says, the self "is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor *identity* in different..." (Hume, ibid. p. 253). As this passage makes clear, Hume does not think that the self has an ontological unity or simplicity.

4. The Rationalists vs. the Empiricists

As may be seen from the above presentation of Descartes' and Hume's theories of the self and self-knowledge, the historical controversy between the rationalists and the empiricists over these questions appears to be centered on the issue whether we know the self through a rational intuition or else through an empirical perception, i.e., introspection[1]. While it seems that the empiricist philosophers, who put stress on the passive aspect of the self, defend the view that introspection is the only venue to knowledge of

[1] The term 'introspection' is here used in the sense of 'empirical perceptions' of one's own self excluding intuitional knowledge of the self.

the self as an object, and that introspection is in fact the same as, or at least similar to, sense-perception of physical objects, the rationalists, who emphasize the active aspect of the self as a subject, claim that the self knows itself through its activities, and that therefore self-knowledge has a higher level of certainty than knowledge of physical objects because a rational or *a priori* intuition is involved in self-knowledge. To illustrate these traditions, as an empiricist, Locke, for instance, maintains that, analogous to our outer sensation of bodies, we have an internal sense ('reflection') that provides awareness of the activities of the self. On the other hand, Descartes, as we have indicated before, asserts that the mind knows itself as a substantial entity or subject (*res cogitans*) through an intellectual or rational intuition.

It seems that both the rationalists and the empiricists have some truth in what they affirm. In support of the empiricist version of self-knowledge, we may mention, for instance, a fact about our everyday experiences. Our everyday experiences clearly show that we can reflect on our inner states. For example, when I reflect on the pain that I now have in my head because of thinking too much about the fate of this dissertation, I certainly consider myself as an object of introspection. The empiricist account of self-knowledge, therefore, seems to point to an important fact about everyday life. But there is nevertheless a danger attached to this way of looking at our

inner states as well. This is the danger that the act of reflection or introspection may actually change or even distort the inner state or object that is being considered. This is because in the case of inner perception, it is hard to separate the act of perception from its content. And that is why the rationalists always look suspiciously at introspection (empirical perception of the self or its operations) as a proper source of self-knowledge.

On the other hand, it appears that the rationalist idea that the self, in addition to its empirical inner perception, has an *a priori* ontological status as the subject of knowledge, and that the intellectual knowledge of the self as a subject has a higher level of certainty than the empirical perception of the inner or outer objects, points to an important aspect of self-consciousness; namely that we have a direct access (through a rational intuition) to the self as a subject. However, the rationalists do not stop here; they also claim that they can prove that substantial *a priori* knowledge about the nature of the self can be deduced from this mere fact about self-consciousness. Although the rationalists appear to be right in their claim that we have a direct access to the self as a subject, the rationalist claim we can prove (through a rational intuition) that the self is an immaterial, simple, substantial entity faces great challenges because of the intrinsic difficulties

attached to self-consciousness, as we will try to show in the following chapters.

5. Kant and the Synthesis of Rationalism and Empiricism

Kant, who seems to be aware of the merits and the weaknesses of both the rationalist and the empiricist accounts of the self and self-knowledge, presents a unique view of the self in his masterpiece, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter the first *Critique*). Kant's theory of the self, which includes both the rationalist and the empiricist elements, tries to do justice to both sides by stressing both the object-aspect and the subject-aspect of the self. Kant, who maintains that the rationalists and the empiricists are right in what they affirm but wrong in what they deny, seems to agree with the empiricists on the point that we cannot have substantial *a priori* knowledge about the nature of the self as a subject (or the thinking self, as Kant would prefer to call it) by a rational or intellectual intuition, but departs from the empiricists by claiming that the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self is not everything that we know about the self. The empiricists reject any *a priori* awareness of the self over and above the empirical awareness of it. Kant, however, contends that, in addition to the empirical awareness of the phenomenal self (empirical apperception), we also have a pure or transcendental awareness of the thinking self as a subject. This pure or *a*

priori consciousness of the thinking self, which Kant calls 'transcendental apperception', though not knowledge *per se* (because knowledge for Kant requires the existence of intuition, which is not available to us in the case of the transcendental self-awareness of the thinking self), nevertheless plays a very important role in Kant's theory of knowledge in general and his theory of self-knowledge in particular. The *a priori* awareness of the thinking self, says Kant, is a transcendental condition of all knowledge of objects, including knowledge of the inner objects. On the other hand, Kant, while agreeing with the rationalists in emphasizing the importance of the 'subjective' aspect of the self (the self as a subject) in acquiring knowledge, nonetheless disagrees with the rationalists on a very significant point about the self, namely that we cannot have substantial knowledge about the true nature of the thinking self through a rational intuition due to the lack of intuition in the transcendental self-awareness. Kant's notion of the transcendental awareness of the thinking self (transcendental apperception) must not, therefore, be confused with the rationalists' intellectual intuition of the self because the Kantian transcendental awareness does not provide any real insight into the nature of the thinking self through an intellectual or rational intuition[1]. In the first *Critique*, Kant presents a theory of the self and

[1] As will be clear in 'Chapter V', even though we do not have any intuitional knowledge of the thinking self, we can nevertheless know certain things about it through inference, though not as an object but only as

self-knowledge, which envisions a two-way awareness of the self: the empirical and the transcendental awareness of the self. While the empirical self-awareness (the awareness of the self through inner sense) is an awareness of the 'determinable self' in time, the transcendental or pure self-awareness is an awareness of the 'determinative self', which is not determined in time[1]. To put it differently, through the empirical self-awareness we become aware of the phenomenal aspect of the self, and through the transcendental self-awareness we become aware of the self as it underlies all the transcendental activities of thinking. The transcendental or pure awareness of the self and the empirical self-awareness are for Kant two distinct yet complementary ways of becoming aware of the same self. These two different forms of self-consciousness aim at different aspects of the self.

Despite the fact that the transcendental self-consciousness is not considered knowledge *per se* in the transcendental philosophy, strictly speaking, it nonetheless plays a crucial role in Kant's theory of knowledge as a whole. This is clear from Kant's assertion that the transcendental unity of apperception constitutes a necessary and universal condition of all possible experience. Kant says that the transcendental self-consciousness

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a logical subject of knowledge.

[1] The phrase 'determinable self' refers to the self or the aspect of the self that appears in time, the inner states of which may be synthesized and connected in accordance with the transcendental concepts and

(the judgment 'I think') must be able to accompany all judgments of knowledge regardless of their form as *a priori* or *a posteriori*. Kant describes this as follows: "...there must be a condition which precedes all experience, and which makes experience itself possible" (*CPR*, A107)[1]. Since experience for Kant appears as a result of the connection and the ordering (synthesis) of the different appearances received through both inner and outer senses, and this ordering or connection is carried out through the guidance of the necessary rules, i.e., categories, which are provided and grounded in the transcendental self-consciousness, experience necessarily demands the unity of self-consciousness. This amounts to saying that in order for the representations to form objects, they must, as connected and unified, belong to the same subject. Kant describes this *a priori* condition as follows:

> "For the manifold [diverse] representations, which are given in an intuition, would not be one and all *my* representations, if they did not all belong to one self-consciousness. As *my* representations (even if I am not conscious of them as such) they must conform to the condition under which alone they *can* stand together in one universal self-consciousness, because otherwise they would not all without exception belong to me"(*CPR*, B132-3).

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principles. On the other hand, the phrase 'determinative self' refers to the active aspect of the self which does not appear in time, but rather grounds the transcendental concepts and principles.

[1] *CPR: Critique of Pure Reason*. All references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the pagination of the first (A) and second (B) editions of it. And all translations are taken from N. K. Smith's translation of *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965).

Although the thinking self plays a crucial role in Kant's theory of knowledge, his epistemological assumptions do not allow us to know it as an object. This is because according to Kant we have neither sensible nor intellectual intuition of the thinking self, which would serve as the basis of the knowledge of the nature of the thinking self as an object. Kant's theory of knowledge instead allows us to have a pure consciousness, though not knowledge, strictly speaking, of the thinking self as a subject, not as an object. This pure consciousness is an awareness that I, as a thinking thing, exist. So Kant says: "...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. This representation is a *thought*, not an *intuition*" (B157). Kant says that the self as a subject, i.e., the thinking self, cannot be cognized as an object because it is itself the ground of all cognition, which requires both categories as well as sensible intuition, which are in turn grounded in the thinking self.

Kant's account of the self does not end with the transcendental self-consciousness, however. Kant provides a unique account of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self as well. His theory of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self (empirical apperception) depends upon his notion of inner sense, which he describes as a source of the sensible

material of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self. In the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' of the first *Critique,* Kant introduces the notion of inner sense (as opposed to the five outer senses, which are said to provide sensible material for the thought of physical objects) as a source of sensible intuition, which may serve as the basis of the thought of the self as it appears through inner sense. According to Kant, while the five outer senses provide the sensible material for the thought (knowledge) of physical objects, inner sense is said to provide sensible material for the thought of the phenomenal self or inner objects. As a sense, inner sense, says Kant, is passive and receptive just like the five outer senses. Similarly, Kant asserts that both inner and outer intuitions have the same perceptual structure, and are therefore subject to the same empirical and transcendental processes. Accordingly, just as outer intuition, in order to lead to the thought of physical objects, must be taken up and synthesized by the imagination, and then subsumed under concepts through the self-activity (*Selbsttätigheit*) of understanding, inner intuition, too, in order to serve as the material for knowledge of inner objects, must be taken up and synthesized by imagination, and finally brought under concepts in a judgment on the level of understanding. In short, for Kant the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self is subject to the same transcendental conditions as

knowledge of physical objects. When we look closely at this supposed parallelism or analogy between outer and inner sense, however, we will soon discover that there are serious problems and inconsistencies with Kant's account of inner sense that may potentially undermine his allegedly unified approach to knowledge.

First of all, Kant's account of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self suffers from a paradox, which does not seem to occur in his account of the empirical knowledge of physical objects, at least as interpreted by the orthodox commentators. This paradox, which Kant himself explicitly recognizes, is caused by Kant's notion of affection (being affected or acted upon by the things in themselves) as a condition of receiving sensible intuition through inner sense. Secondly, Kant's account of inner sense seems to be infected with a more serious problem of 'the manifold of inner sense'. Kant's view of the 'manifold' or the 'matter' of inner sense has such serious ambiguities and inconsistencies that it is difficult to apply his distinction between form and matter in intuition to inner sense. Finally, Kant's account of inner sense faces the challenge of the application of the category of 'substance' to inner intuition. These problems will constitute the bulk of the dissertation. And finally, I would like to briefly state the thesis and the main points of the dissertation that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

6. Conclusion and the Thesis of the Dissertation

In this dissertation I intend to carry out a two-way investigation into Kant's theory of self-knowledge. While the first part of the dissertation will focus on Kant's doctrine of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self, the second part will deal with Kant's theory of the pure self-consciousness or transcendental apperception. In the first part I will argue that Kant's doctrine of the empirical self-knowledge, which depends upon the parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, is infected with certain problems that may undermine that alleged parallelism, and, in turn, his supposedly unified perspective on knowledge of objects. These problems, as we have just mentioned, occur with Kant's account of the 'affection relation in inner sense', 'the manifold of inner sense', and 'the application of the category of substance to inner sense'. I will argue that despite the fact that Kant's epistemological assumptions require the empirical self-knowledge to be subjected to the same transcendental conditions as knowledge of the physical objects, Kant fails to establish this parallelism due to the intrinsic differences between inner sense and outer sense. In the second part of the dissertation, on the other hand, which deals with Kant's concept of transcendental apperception, I will try to show that his doctrine of the transcendental self-consciousness (transcendental apperception), though in a

better position than his doctrine of empirical apperception, has nonetheless some fatal problems that do not seem to be solvable within the context of the transcendental philosophy. I must point out, however, that my focus will mostly be on Kant's doctrine of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self, as the most serious problems that we encounter in Kant's account of self-knowledge occur with his notion of inner sense. My final thesis, therefore, would be that the unity of the Kantian epistemology is in fact in danger because of the problematic nature of his theory of self-knowledge, which is an integral part of his theory of knowledge in general.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the formal structure of the dissertation. In the second chapter, I will begin my investigation with a rather general presentation of Kant's theory of knowledge, as Kant's doctrine of self-knowledge is an integral part of his epistemology in general. In the third chapter, I will consider Kant's theory of self-knowledge in general within the broad context of Kant's theory of knowledge. The fourth chapter will mark the beginning of my critical investigation of Kant's doctrine of self-knowledge. In this chapter, I will unfold Kant's theory of the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self, which includes the problems and the inconsistencies with his notion of inner sense. In the fifth chapter (the last chapter of the dissertation, excluding the 'Conclusion') of the

dissertation, I will critically examine Kant's notion of transcendental apperception, which constitutes the pure aspect of the two-way awareness of the Kantian self. And finally, in the concluding part of the dissertation (in the 'Conclusion'), I will try to summarize the most important points discussed in the dissertation, and attempt to provide a few suggestions about the further consequences of the thesis of the dissertation.

CHAPTER II:

KANT'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Introduction

Kant's theory of knowledge is built upon the assumption that our knowledge of objects is a result of the interaction between the mind and the things in themselves, and that all objects of experience conform to the *a priori* characteristics of our mind, not vice versa. Kant asserts that the Aristotelian idea that knowledge must conform to the objects fails to explain the *a priori* character of knowledge in general, and the *a priori* judgments of such disciplines as mathematics and physics in particular. In the first *Critique*, Kant describes this radical turn in the theory of knowledge as a revolution, the 'Copernican Revolution':

> "Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects *a priori*, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis" (*CPR*, Bxvi).

The reason behind this Kantian claim is that if our ideas were to conform to the objects, as assumed by Aristotle, then it would be impossible to have *a*

priori knowledge of them simply because we find no necessity and universality, which are the marks of *a priori* knowledge in the transcendental philosophy, in experience. Experience can furnish at best certain generalizations and inductive rules, not universal and necessary principles.

2. Kant and His Predecessors on Knowledge in General

Kant's doctrine of knowledge, in addition to being radically different from the Aristotelian conception of knowledge, takes a different approach to knowledge from both the rationalist and the empiricist theories of knowledge as well. The Kantian epistemology, though it certainly contains many empiricist and rationalist elements, does not belong to either of these traditions. Kant believes that both the rationalists and the empiricists have erroneous views about the basic character of experience and knowledge of objects. The rationalists' mistake, maintains Kant, lies in their idea that sense-perception is a confused and obscure version of the clear and distinct rational or intellectual perception[1] (although the rationalists make a sharp distinction between sense (or imagination) and intellect, they still think that what the senses provide is 'knowledge', not just the 'material' of

[1] This is especially true of Leibniz, even if it is less true of Descartes or Spinoza, as Leibniz sees sensory perception as confused and obscure experience, and intellectual cognition as clear and distinct knowledge. While Leibniz thinks that what the senses provide is knowledge, albeit confused and obscure, Kant believes that the senses do not yield knowledge but only 'material' of knowledge.

knowledge); and the empiricists' error lies in rejecting the pure (*a priori*) concepts and principles, and claiming that all concepts are derived from experience.

More specifically, as regards Kant's relation to the rationalist tradition, it can be said that Kant, though brought up in the rationalist tradition, has fundamental doubts about the basic epistemological assumptions of this tradition. Kant rejects, for instance, the fundamental rationalist assumption that we can know things as they are in themselves through a rational intuition, which he thinks is not available to human beings but only to God (all human intuition is for Kant necessarily sensible). To illustrate this rationalist idea, Descartes, for example, claims that he has an intellectual intuition (a 'clear and distinct perception', to use the Cartesian jargon) of the nature of the mind and physical objects. Kant, however, points out that human beings do not have any intellectual intuition, and are, therefore, not capable of knowing things in themselves through an intellectual intuition. Kant's other major criticism of the rationalist theory of knowledge, which is closely related to the one we have just mentioned, is leveled against the rationalist distinction between confused and obscure knowledge (sensible knowledge), and clear and distinct knowledge (the intellectual intuition). To illustrate this point, unlike Leibniz, for instance, who thinks that the both

senses and intellect provide different kinds of knowledge, Kant asserts that the capacities of sensibility and understanding do not provide different kinds knowledge, but only different representations which must cooperate to yield knowledge. According to Kant sensory awareness is not knowledge, not even confused knowledge, but only a source of the 'material' of sensible knowledge. Similarly, the understanding, which according to Kant is the source of the concepts, does not provide any material for knowledge, but only organizes and connects (synthesizes) what is already received through sensibility.

On the other hand, similarly, though he may be considered an empiricist in certain respects, Kant differs from the empiricists on very important points concerning the nature of sensible experience. Contra empiricists such as Locke and Hume, for instance, who believe that all knowledge is based upon experience, Kant, while accepting that all knowledge begins with experience, rejects the empiricist claim that all knowledge necessarily arises from experience, and asserts that there are certain propositions of knowledge such as those of mathematics and physics that are not derived from experience but are known *a priori*. Kant's *a priori* knowledge, however, does not depend upon an intellectual intuition, as the rationalists thought,

but instead upon the pure intuition of space and time. Kant's account of *a priori* knowledge is very different from that of the rationalists.

3. Kant's Account of Knowledge: Understanding vs. Sensibility

Now, as has been indicated above, knowledge[1] for Kant is a result of the interaction between the knowing subject (the mind), and the *noumena* (the things in themselves). Things in themselves provide what Kant calls 'the manifold' of sense-perception by affecting our sensibility, and the subject or the mind contributes the pure (*a priori*) forms (space and time) of sensibility in which this manifold is arranged, and the pure concepts (the 'categories') of understanding through which this manifold is thought. In his words:

> "That experience contains two very dissimilar elements, namely, 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." (*CPR*, A86/B118).

As a result of this interaction, says Kant, we attain knowledge of appearances only, not knowledge of the things as they exist in themselves. The nature of things in themselves (*noumena*)[2] is unknown to us in the transcendental philosophy. That is to say, according to the Kantian

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[1] Knowledge is here understood as a set of propositions or judgments (i.e., 'propositional knowledge'), which include a concept and an object in a judgmental unity. Hence it must be distinguished from other kinds of knowledge such as 'knowledge by acquaintance' or 'knowing a skill', etc.

[2] Although it is sometimes claimed that the Kantian term 'noumena' is used in different meaning from the term 'the things in themselves', we may here safely use them interchangeably, as in this context both refer to the things that transcend our perception.

epistemology, our knowledge is necessarily knowledge of the appearances (the phenomenal objects), which must conform to the *a priori* characteristics of the knowing subject.

To put the same point in terms of the capacities of knowledge, according to Kant, the *a priori* elements of knowledge are provided by two distinct faculties of the mind; the capacity of sensibility and the capacity of understanding:

> "Our knowledge[1] springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; the first is the capacity of receiving representations[2] (receptivity of impressions), the second is the power of knowing an object through these representations (spontaneity [in the production] of concepts. Through the first an object is *given* to us, through the second an object is *thought* in relation to that [given] representation (which is a mere determination of the mind)" (*CPR*, A50/B74).

Sensibility is a passive capacity of receiving impressions, and hence enabling us to represent things in themselves as appearances. And the faculty of understanding, which produces certain *a priori* concepts (Kant calls them 'categories', which include pure concepts of substance, causality, etc.), is a discursive faculty (a discursive faculty is a faculty that operates

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[1] It must noted that Smith's translation of *Erkenntnis* as knowledge may be misleading here because this German term is generally used in the sense of being acquainted with (e.g., a person). The German word for 'knowing that' (propositional knowledge) is *Wissen*. Pluhar renders *Erkenntnis* as 'cognition' which may be a better translation.

[2] Traditionally, the Kantian term *Vorstellung* has been rendered as 'representation', which may sometimes suggests misleading connotations. As Pluhar correctly points out, the term *vorstellen* does not mean to represent something in the sense of 'stand for'. According to Kant *Vorstellungen* do not represent 'things in themselves' or something else for that matter. *Vorstellungen* correspond to the traditional 'ideas and impressions' without the property of representing objects. However, Pluhar's translation of this term as 'conception', 'thought' or 'presentation', does not capture Kant's intention either because 'conception' and 'thought' have different meanings from *Vorstellungen* in the transcendental philosophy.

solely with concepts) that brings these impressions into consciousness, i.e., under concepts. Through the capacity of sensibility an object is given, and through the capacity of understanding this object is thought through concepts. These two capacities, says Kant, cannot do each other's job; that is to say, sensibility cannot provide pure concepts any more than understanding can yield sensible intuitions: "These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, and the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise" (*CPR*, A51/B75). The joint product of these two capacities is a judgment, which contains in itself a concept and an object, and is the only possible form of knowledge in the transcendental philosophy. These two capacities must work together to produce judgments of knowledge. Neither of these two capacities alone can yield knowledge; both are together necessary: "Now there are two conditions under which alone knowledge of an object is possible, first, *intuition*, through which it is given, though only as appearance; secondly, *concept*, through which an object is thought corresponding to this intuition" (*CPR*, A92-3/B125). Or to use Kant's metaphorical expression, "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (*CPR*, A51/B75).

In the transcendental philosophy, knowledge, which is composed of judgments, requires the conceptualization of intuitions. This means that in order for intuitions to lead to knowledge of the objects they must be connected and organized, i.e., synthesized, through the faculty of the transcendental imagination. Synthesis, which is a function of the faculty of imagination, is described by Kant as the "act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in [one act] of knowledge. Such a synthesis is pure, if the manifold is not empirical but given *a priori*, as is the manifold of space and time"(*CPR*, A77/B103). Since according to Kant no unity comes to us from the senses, the impressions must be given a unity in order to form the basis of knowledge of objects. And this unity, maintains Kant, is given to them by the transcendental act of synthesis. To put the same point in a different form, we may say that according to Kant the order that we perceive in the phenomenal objects is not something intrinsic in nature, but bestowed or imposed upon them by the mind. As Kant points out, "...the order and the regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had not we ourselves, or the nature of our mind, originally set them there" (*CPR*, A125). And this order and regularity in nature is the result of the synthetic activity of the mind through concepts.

The act of synthesis can be either pure or empirical. Judgments of geometry, for instance, are formed by pure synthesis, whereas the empirical judgments of physics require the empirical synthesis, which is also conditioned by the transcendental or pure synthesis of the imagination. The end result of the act of synthesis is a judgment, which consists of an object and a concept in a unity.

4. Synthesis

In order to better understand Kant's notion of synthesis, which is described as the process of reproduction and unification of the contents of consciousness according to a rule, consider the following example suggested by William James, which nicely captures the significance of the Kantian notion of synthesis in acquiring knowledge: "Take a sentence of a dozen words, and take twelve men and tell to each one word. Then stand the men in a row or jam them in a bunch, and let each think of his word as intently as he will; nowhere will there be a consciousness of the whole sentence" (James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 160). Here I would like to point out a possible confusion or misunderstanding, which is sometimes seen in some of the texts of certain Kant scholars. Although sometimes the Kantian notion of synthesis is understood or interpreted along the lines of the Humean notion of 'association', synthesis cannot be equated with

association because according to Kant the unity of consciousness is not a result of the mere association of ideas, as Hume thought, but rather takes place only by means of connection, i.e., synthesis. Kant says, that, in order for the association of ideas to be possible, the synthetic activity must already be presupposed.

Kant's notion of synthesis, which plays an absolutely crucial role in his theory of knowledge, is conducted on three different yet complementary levels. The first act of this threefold synthesis, which is called the 'synthesis of apprehension', takes place when intuitions received through the capacity of sensibility are taken up and connected by the transcendental faculty of imagination. Kant defines the synthesis of apprehension carried out by the transcendental faculty of imagination as follows: "...by *synthesis of apprehension* I understand the combination of the manifold in an empirical intuition, whereby perception, that is, empirical consciousness of the intuition (as appearance), is possible" (*CPR*, B160).. On the second level of this threefold synthesis, intuitions that are already apprehended are reproduced and connected, again, by the faculty of imagination. Kant calls this synthesis the synthesis of the 'reproduction in imagination'. He

describes the faculty of imagination as "a blind but indispensable function of the soul, of which we are scarcely ever conscious" (*CPR*, A78/B103)[1].

Although the transcendental imagination plays a crucial role in Kant's epistemology, the way it actually functions is a mystery to us as well as to Kant. The faculty of imagination, which is said to mediate between the sensibility and the understanding, synthesizes the given representations according to the pure concepts of the understanding. It functions as a mediator between the capacity of sensibility and the capacity of understanding by connecting the intuitions and concepts (which are heterogeneous) through what Kant calls the 'transcendental schema', which is a temporal form homogenous with both appearances and the categories. The transcendental schema or the transcendental time-determination is homogenous with the pure concepts inasmuch as it is universal and *a priori*. It is also homogenous with intuitions because all intuitions must necessarily take place in time. Unfortunately, Kant does not say much about the nature of the schematism, as he says that it is an art that we do not know: "This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real

[1] Although it is sometimes asserted that Kant's description of the faculty of imagination suggests that we are aware of its acts, as this and other Kantian statements show, it appears that Kant covers the fundamental structure that lies at the basis of the acts of the imagination.

modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze" (*CPR*, A141).

Finally, in the last stage of this threefold synthesis, the reproduced and connected intuitions are brought to consciousness, i.e., brought under concepts in the understanding, which is called the 'recognition in a concept'. Let us now take a close look at the two capacities of knowledge; namely sensibility and understanding.

5. Space and Time as the Pure Forms of Sensibility

In the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'[1] of the first *Critique*, which Kant describes as a science of all principles of *a priori* conditions of sensibility, Kant aims at discovering the *a priori* conditions of experience as regards to the capacity of sensibility. These *a priori* conditions are the pure forms of space and time. The sensible intuition has, in addition to the pure forms, a manifold, which Kant calls 'sensation': "Space and time are its [our mode of perceiving objects] pure forms, and sensation in general its matter" (*CPR*, A42/B60). Again, "That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*, but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the *form* of appearance." (*CPR*, A20/B34). The pure, *a priori*, form of outer sense,

which consists of the five outer senses, is space, and that of inner sense is time. As Kant points out, all physical objects must exist "outside us, and all without exception in space" (*CPR*, A22/B37), and all internal states must exist in time 'one after the other'. Time cannot be intuited outwardly, and space cannot be intuited as something in us.

Kant's initial remarks about space and time are mostly negative; i.e., what space and time are not and cannot be, given the nature of human experience. Negatively, according to Kant, space and time are not things in themselves; nor are they properties of things in themselves. They are neither empirical concepts derived from experience nor general concepts of relations of things. Space and time are not empirical because they are presupposed by experience. That is to say, in order to experience objects as outside my body, side by side or one after the other, space and time must already be functioning. Similarly, spatial and temporal relations, maintains Kant, cannot be abstracted from physical or mental objects because they are not empirical properties of physical objects like the property of 'yellow', for instance.

Kant's arguments about the status of space and time are mainly indirect, many of which have a form similar to that of *reductio ad absurdum*

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[1] Note that Kant does not use the term 'aesthetic' in the sense of the art or the science of the 'beautiful', but rather uses it in its original Greek sense, which roughly means 'perception' (*aisthesis*). See Kant's note at

arguments. In one of these arguments, Kant says that if space and time were empirical concepts, then the judgments of geometry and arithmetic would be impossible because these judgments have the characteristics of being necessary and universal, features that cannot be attributed to any empirical judgments. Kant's other argument about space and time depends upon the contradiction generated by the assumption that space and time are self-subsisting things. If space and time were as assumed, says Kant, then they "would be actual and yet not actual objects" (*CPR*, A32/B49).

On the other hand, positively, what Kant says about space and time is quite unique and maybe even revolutionary. For, unlike his predecessors, Kant asserts that space and time lie already in the mind as pure forms of sensibility, which makes them the subjective conditions of all appearances. That they lie already in the mind, however, does not mean that they are merely subjective. They also have objective validity in the transcendental philosophy, which amounts to saying that space and time are the *a priori* (necessary and universal)[1] forms of all appearances. All the manifold of intuition, says Kant, is necessarily received within the spatial and the temporal relations. It must be pointed out that for Kant space and time are the only pure, *a priori,* conditions or forms of intuition (i.e., there are no

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A21/B35.

[1] Kant uses the terms '*a priori*' and 'necessary and universal' interchangeably.

other pure forms of intuition besides space and time), even though he does not provide any arguments for this.

According to Kant space and time, in addition to being pure forms of sensibility, are also themselves pure intuitions: "But space and time are represented *a priori* not merely as *forms* of sensible intuition, but as themselves *intuitions* which contain a manifold [of their own], and therefore are represented with the determination of the *unity* of this manifold" (*CPR*, B160). Space and time as the pure forms of intuition consist of the spatial and temporal relations, which constitute the manifold of pure intuition of space and time. This manifold is pure because it does not contain any sensible material received from things in themselves. This characteristic of space and time is especially important because it makes them the source of the synthetic *a priori* knowledge of mathematics. Necessary and universal propositions of geometry, says Kant, are based on space, and those of arithmetic on time. In his words: "Time and space, taken together, are the pure forms of all sensible intuition, and so are what make *a priori* synthetic propositions possible" (*CPR*, A39/B56). According to Kant geometry and arithmetic as universal and necessary disciplines are possible only if space and time, in addition to being the pure forms of all appearances, are seen as pure intuitions themselves. It must be pointed out that Kant accepts the

existence of the *a priori* judgments of the mathematical and the physical science as a fact, i.e., he does not provide any arguments for the existence of these disciplines, and then goes on to prove how these judgments are possible: "Since these sciences [mathematics and physics] actually exist, it is quite proper to ask *how* they are possible; for that they must be possible is proved by the fact that they exist" (*CPR*, B20). And this makes the application of mathematics to the sensible world possible because space and time are also the transcendental conditions of all experience.

From this conception of space and time Kant derives certain quite important principles about the role of space and time in possible experience. The most important of them is the idea that space and time are 'transcendentally ideal but empirically real'. The transcendental ideality of space and time consists of their being limited to sensible intuitions or appearances. To put it differently, space and time are for Kant not the conditions of things in themselves (they are, as indicated before, pure forms of sensibility, and lie already in the mind), and hence ideal beyond possible experience. On the other hand, they have empirical reality because they are the *a priori*, objective conditions of all possible experience, which amounts to saying that they are necessary and universal forms of all appearances.

6. Sensation as the Manifold of Intuition

Kant points out that the sensible intuition, in addition to having the pure forms of space and time, has also a 'manifold' or 'matter', which is received by being affected by the things in themselves. There are for Kant two channels of sensible intuition, which correspond to outer and inner sense. Affection through outer sense by things in themselves provides the outer intuition, and affection through inner sense by ourselves as we exist in ourselves yields the inner intuition. Kant calls this given material the 'manifold of intuition'. According to Kant the human intuition is always sensuous as opposed to God's intuition, which is always intellectual: "Our nature is so constituted that our intuition can never be other than sensible; that is, it contains only the mode [*die Art*] in which we are affected by objects" (*CPR*, A51/B75). Intuition for Kant is always singular and immediate as opposed to a concept, which is always mediate and general. Kant defines sensible intuition as something "...through which it [cognition] is in immediate relation to them [objects], and to which all thought as a means is directed. But intuition takes place only in so far as the object is given to us" (*CPR*, A19).

The process by which we acquire the 'given' (the manifold of intuition) in Kant's epistemology seems to be a psychological or mental process as opposed to some epistemological theories which see the given as something

non-mental, meaning-like abstract things which form the basis of knowledge-claims. Russell's sense-data theory may be seen as an example of the latter view. Kant's account of the given, however, rests on the idea that what is given is gained through a psychological (but transcendental) process through sensibility. Kant does not say much about the nature of sensation, which, he sometimes describes as the material of knowledge. As such, sensation for Kant does not have a unity, as previously indicated; sensation gets its unity from the faculty of the understanding through synthesis under the guidance of the categories. The Kantian manifold of intuition is composed of isolated, atomic items, which are then synthesized by the faculty of imagination. That is to say, according to Kant the elements in the manifold of intuition are not already connected and organized but rather are discrete, and hence have absolute unity. To be sure, Kant does not have much to say about the nature of the manifold of intuition, especially the inner intuition, which is the focus of one of the chapters to come. While Kant equates the manifold of outer intuition (outer sensation) with such elements as colors, sounds, etc., his statements about the inner sensation are very confusing and cryptic.

7. Concepts as the Functions of the Understanding

As we have indicated above, according to Kant human knowledge, besides intuition, depends upon the existence of concepts as well. In the transcendental philosophy a concept functions as a rule whereby the intuitions are synthesized into an object. Concepts, on Kant's account, can relate to objects only mediately, that is, through an intuition, which is in immediate relation to the objects. Hence Kant points out that "...no concept is ever related to an object immediately, but to some other representation of it, be that other representation an intuition, or itself a concept..." (*CPR*, A68/B93). Kant also says that "...a concept is always, as regards its form, something universal which serves as a rule" (*CPR*, A106). It may therefore be said that a concept is a representation of a representation of an object, so to speak. Kant maintains that concepts, which are necessarily general in nature, as opposed to intuitions which are singular and sensible, represent the common features (*Merkmale*) of objects by abstracting from their differences: "Whereas all intuitions, as sensible, rest on affections, concepts rest on functions. By 'function' I mean the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation" (*CPR*, A68/B93)[1]. The concept 'tree', for instance, comprises such features as 'green', 'having branches', 'being in a certain shape', etc., which are

[1] Despite Kant's statement that concepts rest on functions, which he identifies with judgments, he sometimes describes concepts as functions.

common to different individual trees. We cannot know whether the 'greenness' that we see, for instance, is the 'greenness' of a tree or not without having a concept of tree. This is what Kant means when he says that intuitions without concepts are blind.

According to Kant, in addition to the empirical concepts such as those of 'tree', 'gold', 'horse' etc., we also have certain pure or *a priori* concepts (which he calls the 'categories') that are applicable to any appearances whatsoever:

> "Actual experience, which is constituted by apprehension, association (reproduction), and finally recognition of appearances, contains in recognition, the last and highest of these merely empirical elements of experience, certain concepts which render possible the formal unity of experience, and therewith all objective validity (truth) of empirical knowledge. These grounds of the recognition of the manifold, so far as they concern *solely the form of an experience in general*, are the *categories*" (*CPR*, A124-5).

The categories, which are also characterized by Kant as the subjective conditions of thought, have objective validity as well; in this sense, the categories are for Kant the transcendental conditions of the possibility of all experience:

> "The objective validity of the categories as *a priori* concepts", says Kant, "rests therefore on the fact that, so far as the form thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. They relate of necessity and *a priori* to objects of experience, for the reason that only by means of them can any object whatsoever of experience be thought" (*CPR*, B126).

In other words, the categories, which yield the universal functions of synthesis, underlie all kinds of judgments of knowledge. It must be pointed out that the Kantian categories, which relate to objects in general, are 'empty', i.e., devoid of any intuitional content.

The most controversial Kantian category seems to be the category of causality, as the number of texts written about Kant's conception of the cause-effect relation attest to it. By making the principle of causality *a priori*, Kant, in a way, responds to Hume's important questions about the nature of causal relationships in the phenomenal world. As is well-known, Hume gives a psychological explanation to the concept of causality so far as it includes necessity. As an empiricist, Hume appears to be consistent in saying that there is no necessary causal relationship between the phenomena because experience does not yield any necessary principles but only generalizations and well-established rules. Kant, on the other hand, while agreeing with Hume that the 'necessity' in the causal principle cannot be derived from experience, asserts that the principle of causality is an *a priori* concept (not an analytic concept but a synthetic one) because it is already presupposed by experience. Now although there are certainly questions about Kant's formulation of the principle of causality, his idea that the principle of causality must already be presupposed by experience seems to

be a step ahead of Hume's psychological explanation of causality. Kant's *a priori* principle of the cause-and-effect relation is applicable not only to physical objects, but also the inner states of the self, which is our primary concern in this dissertation. In terms of the *a priori* causal relationship, therefore, there is no difference between mental events and physical events in the transcendental philosophy.

8. The *a priori* and the *a posteriori* Judgments

In the first *Critique*, Kant presents twelve categories grouped under four headings: quality, quantity, relation, and modality. Kant's table of categories corresponds exactly to his table of judgments. In fact Kant attempts to deduce the pure categories, which, he says, are possible predicates of judgments, from the pure forms of judgments, which are for him the most general forms of human thought. That is why he sometimes calls the capacity of understanding the 'faculty of judgment'. According to Kant, the pure concepts rest upon the functions of the understanding, which he equates with the pure forms of judgments. As has been indicated before, knowledge, strictly speaking, for Kant consists only of judgments, which are made up of an object and a concept, and are found in understanding. Kant divides judgments first into *a priori* and *a posteriori,* and then into synthetic and analytic. An analytic judgment is a judgment in which the predicate-concept

is already implicitly included in its subject-concept. We can make the predicate-concept explicit by simply analyzing the subject-concept of the judgment. This analysis is carried out without referring to experience or pure intuition. All analytic judgments, which are called 'explicative' in the first *Critique* (A7/B11), are, therefore, *a priori*. And since they depend upon *a priori* analysis, they do not extend our knowledge. Their truth or falsity is established on the basis of the law of non-contradiction. For example, in the proposition 'Gold is yellow', since the predicate 'yellow' is already a part of the concept 'gold', we do not need to go beyond the subject-concept, namely 'gold' in order to establish the truth of the proposition. If we analyze the concept 'gold', we will see that the property 'yellow' is already included in the definition of the concept 'gold'. Therefore the proposition 'Gold is yellow' does not add anything to our knowledge of gold.

Synthetic judgments, on the other hand, do extend our knowledge, and may be either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. As Kant himself points out, synthetic judgments do "...add to the concept of the subject a predicate which has not been in any wise thought in it, and which no analysis could possibly extract from it; and they may therefore be entitled ampliative" (*CPR*, A7/B11). All empirical judgments are synthetic *a posteriori*. Empirical judgments like 'All bodies are heavy' or 'This table is white', for instance, are all synthetic

and *a posteriori* because the predicate-concepts of these judgments are not included in the their subject-concepts. Synthetic *a posteriori* (empirical) judgments are verified or falsified by experience.

On the other hand, the category of synthetic *a priori* judgments, which has been the focus of dispute ever since Kant first introduced them, has a special place in the first *Critique*. The idea of synthetic *a priori* judgment is distinctively Kantian, and indeed Kant sees the first *Critique* as an inquiry into the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments. Kant never doubts the existence of synthetic *a priori* judgments. What he does in the first *Critique* is to try to show how these judgments are in fact possible.

According to Kant the synthetic *a priori* judgments, while necessary and universal just like analytic judgments, are also informative (substantive), i.e., extend our knowledge of objects. Kant maintains that all mathematical judgments such as 'All triangles have the three interior angles equal to two right angles', certain principles of natural science such as 'Every event has a cause', and all metaphysical judgments are synthetic *a priori*. For example,

> "That the straight line between two points is the shortest, is a synthetic proposition. For my concept of *straight* contains nothing of the quantity, but only of quality. The concept of the shortest is wholly an addition, and cannot be derived, through any process of analysis, from the concept of the straight line" (*CPR*, B16).

The truth of a synthetic *a priori* judgment cannot be established on the basis of mere analysis; we need something else or 'a third thing' as Kant would call it. And this third thing is for Kant the pure intuition of space and time. For instance, we cannot establish the truth of the judgment that 'every event has a cause' by simply analyzing the concept of 'event', even though it is a necessary and universal judgment[1].

Now although Kant grounds his epistemological principles with judgments about the physical objects in mind, the transcendental philosophy sees judgments of self-knowledge subject to the same transcendental conditions as knowledge of the physical objects. But when we try to apply the Kantian transcendental epistemological schema to self-knowledge, we face some serious problems and challenges that carry the potential to undermine the alleged unity of Kant's theory of knowledge. These problems and inconsistencies, which are the focus of the present dissertation, will occupy us in the following chapters.

[1] It must be noted that Kant's taxonomy of judgments has received considerable criticism from such philosophers as Quine and Kripke in the last few decades. According to these philosophers the boundaries between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* (as well as synthetic and analytic) judgments are not as sharp as Kant thought, as there are instances which obviously cross these boundaries.

CHAPTER III:

KANT'S DOCTRINE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

1. Introduction

It is generally thought that Kant's theory of self-knowledge is one of the most difficult parts of his transcendental philosophy. Paton, for instance, says that "...Kant's doctrine of self-knowledge is the most obscure and difficult part of his philosophy" (Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, p. 233). This difficulty is partly due to Kant's own obscure and cryptic language, and partly due to the inherent difficulty of self-knowledge. To be sure, Kant does not actually provide us with a full-fledged theory of self-knowledge, but instead discusses the topic here and there in his works. Kant's fragmentary discussion of self-knowledge in different contexts makes it extremely difficult to present his doctrine of self-knowledge in a complete and systematic manner. Most of what Kant says concerning the self and self-knowledge is to be found in the first *Critique*, even though he certainly talks about self-knowledge in his other works as well. But since we are studying Kant's theory of self-knowledge during the 'Critical Period', we will focus mostly on the first *Critique* in writing this chapter and the following ones. In

this chapter we will be examining Kant's doctrine of self-knowledge in general, the details of which will be unfolded in the next two chapters.

In the first *Critique* Kant adopts both a critical and a positive approach to the question of self-knowledge. His critical or negative statements concerning self-knowledge seem to be mainly reactions to the self-knowledge theories of his predecessors, especially Descartes and Hume, who appear to best represent the rationalist and the empiricist traditions respectively in this area of philosophy. As pointed out in the 'Introduction' of this dissertation, Kant's doctrine of the self and self-knowledge, which includes both the rationalist and the empiricist elements, tries to reconcile the rationalist and the empiricist theories by emphasizing both the object-aspect of the self, which is stressed by the empiricists, and the subject-aspect of the self emphasized by the rationalists. Although Kant shares certain views of his predecessors regarding self-knowledge, it is not true to consider him either a rationalist or an empiricist in this regard because of the unique nature of the Kantian doctrine of self-knowledge. For instance, despite the fact that Kant shares the empiricist view that there is no epistemological difference between self-knowledge (the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self) and knowledge of physical objects, he differs from the empiricists in accepting the existence of what he calls the pure

consciousness of the thinking self or the transcendental self-consciousness[1], in addition to the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self. Again, while sharing the rationalist idea that the self is not limited to the empirical inner perceptions, Kant differs from the rationalists in rejecting their claim to *a priori* knowledge of the self through an intellectual intuition. Since Kant's critical approach to the self is fundamentally a response to his predecessors, we will therefore begin our investigation with his critical view of self-knowledge as put forward in the 'Paralogisms' of the first *Critique*.

2. Kant's Critical (Negative) Doctrine of Self-Knowledge

In the 'Paralogisms' of the first *Critique*, Kant launches a series of attacks on what he calls 'rational psychology', which he presents as a metaphysical doctrine which aims at inferring substantial *a priori* knowledge about the nature of the self from the mere analysis of its capacity to think. Kant says that the judgment 'I think' is "the sole text of rational psychology", from which they try to derive their entire *a priori* teaching about the nature of the self (*CPR*, A343/B402). More specifically, according to Kant the rationalist psychologists try to infer from this simple judgment, i.e., 'I think', that the self or the soul is a simple, immaterial, substantial being. Descartes, for instance, asserts that we can know through an intellectual or rational

[1] Kant's doctrine of transcendental apperception (the transcendental self-awareness) will be investigated in Chapter V.

intuition that the self is an immaterial, simple substance (*res cogitans*), which is essentially different from the other created substance, body (*res extensa*). Descartes bases his *a priori* knowledge of the self on the idea that we have an immediate access to the contents of our mind, which he thinks provides a 'clear and distinct perception' of the mind. Kant, however, vehemently rejects this rationalist view of the self on the basis of the assumption that human beings are not capable of intellectual intuition but only of sensible intuition. Kant reserves intellectual or rational intuition to God, whose intuition is always intellectual. Hence, Kant reasons, since the human intuition is always sensible, it cannot provide any *a priori* knowledge about the nature of the self as a substantial entity.

Kant contends that this and other fallacies ('Paralogisms') of rational psychology about the self depend upon the following invalid syllogism, which is tacitly assumed by the rational psychologists:

> "*That which cannot be thought otherwise than as subject does not exist otherwise than as subject, and is therefore substance. A thinking being, considered merely as such, cannot be thought otherwise than as subject. Therefore it exists also only as subject, that is, as substance*" (*CPR*, B410-11).

This syllogism, says Kant, is invalid because it involves an ambiguous middle term. While in the major premise, reasons Kant, the term '*that which is thought*' is taken in relation to an object in general, i.e., in relation to an

object that may presumably be given in intuition and subsumed under categories, in the minor premise it is understood only in relation to self-consciousness without any reference to intuition or categories. In short, in the major premise the self is understood as an object whereas in the minor premise the self is seen as a subject only. The conclusion, therefore, which for Kant is a synthetic *a priori* proposition, cannot be deduced from the two premises. Hence Kant concludes:

> "The conclusion cannot, therefore, be, 'I cannot exist otherwise than as subject', but merely, 'In thinking my existence, I cannot employ myself, save as subject of the judgment [therein involved]'. This is an identical proposition, and casts no light whatsoever upon the mode of my existence" (*CPR*, B412n).

Kant therefore reasons that rational psychology has no philosophical basis because the simple judgment 'I think', which is the 'sole text' of rational psychology, cannot provide any substantial claims about the nature of the self.

Kant applies this reasoning to the individual 'Paralogisms', and says that this invalid argument constitutes the basis of all the rationalist fallacies about the self. In the first 'Paralogism', for instance, which deals with the substantiality of the self, Kant says that rationalist psychology conflates the self as the logical subject of thought with the self as a substance. While the first claim is an analytic proposition, says Kant, the second one depends

upon a synthetic *a priori* proposition, and hence cannot be deduced from the first one. Again, as regards the simplicity or the unity of the self, which constitutes the topic of the second 'Paralogism', Kant says that although a logically simple, unified self is certainly a transcendental requirement (condition) of experience (this requirement or condition, as we will try to make clear below, is found transcendentally by pondering on the nature of human experience itself), we cannot therefore infer from this analytic claim that the self is a simple substance, as the rationalists assumed we could. Kant reasons similarly in the third 'Paralogism', which deals with the identity of the self through time, and the fourth 'Paralogism', which concerns with the mind's awareness of its existence, and which also implies the mind-body problem.

As regards the relationship between mind and body, for instance, which was then a popular subject among philosophers (and still is), Kant says that although it is analytically true that I am conscious of myself as a thinking being distinct from everything else, this does not in any way indicate that I can exist without a body because I do not know "... whether this consciousness of myself would be even possible apart from things outside me through which representations are given to me..." (*CPR*, B409). Hence Kant does not face the Cartesian mind-body problem because he does not

present the self as a substantial entity essentially different from the body. As he points out in the following passage, it is possible that both the thing that underlies outer appearances and the thing that underlies inner appearances are one and the same:

> "Neither the *transcendental object* which underlies outer appearances nor that which underlies inner intuition, is in itself either matter or a thinking being, but a ground (to us unknown) of the appearances which supply to us the empirical concept of the former as well as the latter mode of existence" (*CPR*, A379-80).

It is generally thought that Kant's critical arguments against rational psychology are tenable and well-grounded, compared to his other arguments in the first *Critique*. In particular, most commentators think that Kant is quite successful in refuting rational psychology's substantial claims about the nature of the self. Kant indeed seems to be consistent in rejecting *a priori* knowledge of the nature of the self through *a priori* intuition because in the transcendental philosophy all human intuition is sensible[1], and therefore there is no place for intellectual intuition upon which the *a priori* knowledge of the self is supposed to rest. Although in the pre-critical texts, Kant seems to accept the existence of intellectual intuition, later in the critical period, which begins with the publication of the first *Critique*, Kant abandons this view and rejects the existence of intellectual intuition in

[1] Although the judgments of mathematics, and certain principles of physics depend for Kant upon *a priori* intuition, this *a priori* intuition is derived from space and time, which are also the pure forms of all possible

human beings. Hence the following passage quoted from the first *Critique*, which seems to affirm the possibility of knowledge of the self as an intelligible object, must be attributed to Kant's careless use of terms:

> "Man...who knows all the rest of nature solely through the senses, knows himself also through pure apperception; and this, indeed, in acts and inner determinations which he cannot regard as impressions of the senses. He is thus to himself, on the one hand phenomenon, and on the other hand, in respect of certain faculties the action of which cannot be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility, a purely intelligible object" (*CPR*, A546-7/B574-5)[1].

3. Kant's Positive Theory of Self-Knowledge

Kant's theory of the self and self-knowledge is not exhausted, however, by his critical or negative statements about the self, as has been indicated above. Although Kant rejects any *a priori* knowledge of the self through an intellectual intuition, he nevertheless accepts the existence of a pure consciousness of the thinking self, and the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self. Kant's positive theory of self-knowledge is mainly stated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' and the 'Transcendental Deduction' of the first *Critique*. However, in his other works, too, we may find Kant's positive statements about the self as well. For instance, in the following passage from the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant attempts to provide

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experience. What Kant here refers to as *a priori* or intellectual intuition is an intuition that is independent of sensible knowledge of objects in general, and space and time in particular.

[1] This passage seems to have been transferred from Kant's pre-critical period, as in the pre-critical period Kant defends the idea of knowing the intelligible objects through an intellectual intuition.

a clear statement of self-knowledge, which he divides into empirical and transcendental self-awareness:

> "If we consciously represent (*vorstellen*) two acts: [that of] inner activity (spontaneity) that makes a *concept* (a thought) possible, or *reflection*; and [that of] the receptiveness (receptivity) that makes *perception* - that is, empirical *intuition* - possible, we can then divide our self-consciousness (*apperceptio*) into the self-consciousness of reflection and the self-consciousness of *apprehension*. The first is a consciousness of understanding, *pure* apperception; the second is a consciousness of inner *sense*, *empirical* apperception. So it is wrong to call the first of these inner *sense*" (Kant, *Anthropology...*, p. 15n).

As may also be seen from this passage, Kant's positive theory of self-knowledge depends upon a double awareness or consciousness of the self: empirical awareness of the phenomenal self (empirical apperception) and transcendental or pure awareness of the thinking self (transcendental apperception). As previously indicated, while transcendental apperception is a pure consciousness of the 'determinative self', empirical apperception is an awareness of the self as it is determined in time. It is not wrong, therefore, to say that transcendental and empirical apperceptions are for Kant two distinct yet complementary ways of becoming aware of the different aspects of the same self. Now let us take a closer look at these two ways of self-consciousness. It must immediately be noted that in the transcendental philosophy the transcendental self-consciousness is not seen as knowledge *per se* because while for Kant all knowledge necessarily rests on some intuition, the pure awareness of the thinking self (transcendental

apperception) does not involve any kinds of intuition, whether intellectual or empirical. As we know from previous chapters, Kant rejects the existence of intellectual intuition in human beings, and claims that only God is capable of intellectual intuition. The transcendental self-consciousness, therefore, does not provide any insight into the real nature of the thinking self through *a priori* intuition. But though the transcendental self-consciousness is not considered knowledge, strictly speaking, in the transcendental philosophy, it nevertheless provides a pure awareness of the existence of a thinking self or a logical subject of thought. As Kant puts it: "...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. This representation is a *thought*, not an *intuition*" (*CPR*, B157)[1]. This means, therefore, that we are not totally in the dark as regards the thinking self. Transcendental apperception, which may also be described as a pure awareness of the *functions* of the thinking self or as a simple 'representation' of the self as an intelligence, is, however, just a 'thought' empty of any content. Hence, to repeat, since it does not involve any intuition, it cannot represent the self as an object, but only as a logical subject of thought.

[1] Kant sometimes uses the term 'transcendental unity of apperception' instead of just 'transcendental apperception'; but these two terms seem to be used equivalently in the first *Critique*.

Kant's notion of transcendental apperception, which is one of the most controversial notions in his philosophy, plays a crucial role in his theory of knowledge in general. In the 'Transcendental Deduction' of the first *Critique*, Kant says that experience requires the existence of a logical subject, and that the unity of experience depends upon an *a priori* or transcendental awareness of the thinking self. Transcendental apperception, and therefore the thinking self, is a necessary transcendental condition of all possible experience, including self-knowledge through inner sense. This is because according to Kant the judgment 'I think' must be able to accompany all judgments of knowledge – *a priori* or *a posteriori*. Kant argues that "...there must be a condition which precedes all experience, and which makes experience itself possible" (*CPR*, A107). To put it differently, experience, according to Kant, depends upon our ability to synthesize the manifold of sensible intuition, i.e., to connect representations under the guidance of the pure concepts in order to form objects in understanding. This synthesis or unification of representations, however, demands unity of consciousness, which means that in order for representations to lead to the thought of the objects, representations must belong to a unified, simple, logical, subject of thought. That is to say, the representations, in order to have cognitive value for us, must be connected in one universal self-

consciousness as *my* representations. Without the transcendental consciousness of the thinking self as a logical subject of thought, therefore, there can be no unity in representations, and hence no knowledge whatsoever: "There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection or unity...without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name *transcendental apperception.*" (*CPR*, A107). Again, "...it is only because I ascribe all perceptions to one consciousness (original apperception) that I can say of all perceptions that I am conscious of them" (*CPR*, A122).

On the other hand, empirical apperception, which, unlike transcendental apperception, is not just an 'empty' thought of a logical subject or the thinking self, provides empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self. Kant's notion of empirical apperception rests upon the possibility of an empirical science of the phenomenal self. Kant argues that, just like the empirical knowledge of physical objects, we can have empirical knowledge of ourselves as we appear through inner sense under the pure form of time. To put it differently, Kant's theory of empirical knowledge of the self (the empirical apperception) depends upon his notion of 'inner sense', which he describes as a source of the sensible material of knowledge of the self as it

appears in time. In the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' of the first *Critique* Kant introduces the notion of inner sense[1] (as opposed to the five outer senses, which are said to provide sensible material for the thought of physical objects) as a source of sensible intuition, which would serve as the basis of the thought of the self as an appearance. According to this parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, while the five outer senses provide the sensible material for the thought (knowledge) of spatial objects, the inner sense is said to provide sensible material for the thought of the phenomenal self or inner objects. Although in the transcendental philosophy the object of the inner sense is said to be the self (or the soul), and the object of outer sense is body (including one's own), Kant assumes a strict parallelism between outer sense and inner sense in terms of their functions. As a sense, inner sense, reasons Kant, is passive and receptive just like the five outer senses. Both inner sense and outer sense provide sensible intuitions, which have *a priori* forms and sensible material (sensation). The *a priori* form of outer intuition is space, and that of inner intuition is time. And the 'matter' or 'manifold' of outer intuition is outer sensation, and that of inner intuition is inner sensation. In short, according to Kant, both inner and outer senses

[1] Although Kant sometimes sounds as if he thinks that there is more than one inner sense, this seems to be a careless use of words because the context makes clear that he assumes only one inner sense.

have the same perceptual structure, and are therefore subject to the same empirical and transcendental conditions.

In addition to these supposed similarities or analogies on the level of sensibility between inner intuition and outer intuition, they perform parallel functions in understanding as well. According to Kant's theory of knowledge in the first *Critique*, both inner intuition and outer intuition must follow the same path on the way to the thought of objects in the understanding. Just as outer intuition, in order to lead to the thought of physical objects, must be taken up and synthesized by the imagination, and then subsumed under concepts through the spontaneity of understanding, inner intuition, too, in order to serve as the material for knowledge of inner objects, must be taken up and synthesized by imagination, and finally brought under concepts in a judgment on the level of understanding. Hence, on Kant's account of knowledge, the material of knowledge that inner sense provides –inner intuition – is subject to the same transcendental conditions as that which is provided by outer sense –outer intuition.

When we look closely at this supposed parallelism or analogy between outer and inner sense, however, we will soon discover that there are serious problems and inconsistencies with Kant's account of inner sense that may potentially undermine his supposed unified approach to knowledge. Let us

first give an outline of these problems and inconsistencies that occur in Kant's account of inner sense, and then try to examine and evaluate them in detail in the following chapter. First of all, Kant's account of self-knowledge through inner sense suffers from a paradox, which does not seem to occur with his account of outer sense. This paradox, which Kant himself explicitly recognizes, is partly caused by his notion of 'affection' as a condition of receiving intuition through the senses. Kant's notion of 'affection relation' that occurs between the outer sense and things in themselves, when applied to inner sense, leads to implausible and contradictory consequences. Secondly, Kant's account of inner sense suffers from yet another serious problem, which, again, threatens the supposed analogy between outer sense and inner sense. This is the problem of 'the manifold of inner sense'. As we shall see below, Kant's view of the 'matter' or 'manifold' of inner sense has such serious ambiguities and inconsistencies that it is very difficult to apply the distinction that Kant makes between form and matter in intuition to inner sense. Finally, in addition to these problems on the level of sensibility, Kant's account of inner sense faces another problem on the level of understanding. This problem results from the application of the category of substance to inner intuition. All these problems will be dealt with in the next

chapter. Hence before considering these problems, let us take a brief look at Kant's account of the nature and the function of inner sense in general.

4. The Function of Inner Sense

It is commonly thought that the first *Critique* preaches that the object of outer sense is body[1] or its physical states, and the object of the inner sense is mind or its mental states. While there is little disagreement among Kant commentators that the five outer senses provide the sensible material for the thought of physical objects, when we come to inner sense, the commentators start to put forward radically different interpretations. The disagreement among Kant scholars over Kant's account of inner sense is partly due to Kant's own ambiguous and confusing statements. Kant is indeed hard to follow in his account of inner sense. In the following passage, for instance, in which inner sense is compared with outer sense, Kant's description of the function of inner sense is very puzzling, given his supposed parallelism between outer sense and inner sense:

> "By means of outer sense, a property of our mind, we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all without exception in space...Inner sense, by means of which the mind intuits itself or its inner state, yields no intuition of the soul itself as an object; but there is nevertheless a determinate form in which alone the intuition of inner states is possible, and everything which belongs to inner determinations is therefore represented in relations of time". (*CPR*, A22-23/B37).

[1] The term 'body' here does not refer to human body only, but rather to all physical objects.

In this passage Kant first asserts that inner sense is the means by which the mind intuits itself or its inner states, but immediately after stating this, he surprisingly says that inner sense 'yields no intuition of the soul itself as an object'. How are we to make sense of this obvious inconsistency? For saying that inner sense is a means whereby mind intuits itself, and then denying that inner sense yields intuition of the self as an object seems to be a sheer contradiction. On Kant's account of knowledge, intuition that does not lead to cognition of an object with the help of a concept does not have any cognitive meaning and relevance to the subject. But, as it is clear from this passage, Kant denies this, and introduces a rather implausible notion of intuition, which is apparently inconsistent with his general description of intuition in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' of the first *Critique*. The analogy that Kant here assumes exists between outer sense and inner sense requires Kant to say at least that inner sense is the source of the sensible intuition of the self or the inner objects because this is what is indicated in his definition of a sense as a passive capacity that receives intuition. But he astonishingly says that inner sense does not provide any intuition of the self as an object, which clearly violates his definition of the nature and function of a sense as set forth in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', where Kant explicitly says that in order to have knowledge of the objects as appearances (both outer and inner

objects) we must receive intuition through inner or outer sense by being affected by things in themselves. In other words, applying this general scheme to inner sense, Kant would be expected to say that inner sense is the means through which we receive inner intuition of the self as an object by being affected by ourselves.

In fact Kant does say that we become aware of ourselves through inner sense by being affected by ourselves. Consider the following remarks: "We must also recognize, as regards inner sense, that by means of it we intuit ourselves only as we are inwardly affected *by ourselves*; in other words, that, so far as inner intuition is concerned, we know our own subject only as appearance, not as it is in itself" (*CPR*, B156). But this does not seem to cohere with his previous remarks quoted above. It also contradicts the following passage as well:

> "Inner sense...contains the mere form of intuition, but without combination of the manifold in it, and therefore, so far, contains no *determinate* intuition, which is possible only through consciousness of the determination of the manifold by the transcendental act of imagination (synthetic influence of the understanding upon inner sense), which I have entitled figurative synthesis" (*CPR*, B154).

Kant, however, goes on to explain how the self as an appearance (or its inner states) can be an object of inner perception. In a note to B156, Kant says that everybody can perceive in himself/herself that the understanding determines inner sense. He cites acts of 'attention' as evidence of this determination:

"In every act of attention the understanding determines inner sense, in accordance with the combination which it thinks, to that inner intuition which corresponds to the manifold in the synthesis of the understanding" (B156n). Without getting into the details of Kant's explanation (because in the next chapter we will be dealing with this question in detail), it seems that Kant is defending a view of inner sense, which is very different from his view of inner sense set forth in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'. Unlike his 'Aesthetic' account of inner sense, Kant is here maintaining that we can be aware of our inner states by attending to our acts of attention which occur in time. But he does not specify how acts of attention can actually provide intuitional material for the thought of inner objects.

Now even if we accept for the moment that we can have inner intuition through acts of attention, this does not allow us to know the self as an object, which is required by his parallelism thesis. In fact he himself says that inner sense does not yield any determinate intuition of the self as an object. And it is exactly this point that is under consideration now, and will be in detail in the next chapter.

To approach the issue from a different angle, and in fairness to Kant, we may ask the following the question: is it possible that Kant's rejection that we may have intuition of the self as an object implies that we can instead

know the self as a subject? To be sure, Kant does seem to accept the possibility of being aware of the self as a subject of thought, but this awareness is not, as has been indicated above, knowledge, strictly speaking, of the self. Our pure awareness of the self as a subject, says Kant, does not involve any intuition, and therefore cannot provide any insight into the nature of the self as a subject. As we have pointed out above, Kant, in the 'Paralogisms' of the first *Critique*, criticizes the rationalists, who claim that we can know that the self is a simple, identical, immaterial, substantial being or subject through a rational intuition, by pointing out that since we do not have an intellectual intuition of the self as a subject, we cannot form *a priori* judgments about the true nature of it. Without getting into the details of the Kantian account of the self as a subject or as it exists in itself, which will constitute the topic of one of the chapters to come, I would like to briefly point out that Kant first makes a distinction between the self in itself and the self as it appears through inner sense, and then, while accepting the possibility of an empirical doctrine of the self as it appears through inner sense, rejects a rational doctrine of the self as it exists in itself. Later in the first *Critique*, Kant introduces another self or another aspect of the self for epistemological reasons. This new self, which is called the 'the thinking self' has a crucial ontological and epistemological status in the

transcendental philosophy. Despite its importance in his philosophy, however, Kant says that we do not, and cannot, have knowledge, strictly speaking, of the thinking self, but only a pure consciousness of it. As he says: "We do not have, and cannot have, any knowledge whatsoever of any subject" (*CPR*, A350). Again, "...the bare apperception, 'I', is in concept substance, in concept simple, etc., and in this sense all those psychological doctrines are unquestionably true. *Yet this does not give us that knowledge of the soul for which we are seeking*" (*CPR*, A400; emphasis added). Hence we can say that for Kant the actual nature of the self as a subject is essentially unknown to us, though we certainly have a pure consciousness of its thinking activities.

To sum up, although Kant's theory of knowledge as stated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' and the 'Transcendental Analytic' of the first *Critique* seems to allow the possibility of empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self (the self as it appears to us in time) through inner sense, even this kind of knowledge is problematic. Kant seems to be maintaining that inner sense does not actually yield any sensible intuition of the phenomenal self as an object. But if inner sense does not provide any intuition of the self or its inner states, which may form the basis of the thought of the phenomenal self or its mental states as an object, then it

becomes extremely difficult to make sense of the Kantian account of inner sense as the source of knowledge of the phenomenal self.

To put it differently, if inner sense does not provide any sensible intuition of the self as it appears as an object, then how can we form judgments of self-knowledge, which are not merely empty thoughts of the phenomenal self? For in the Kantian epistemological framework a mere conceptual thought is not sufficient for having knowledge of objects. Knowledge- any kind of knowledge, whether *a priori* or *a posteriori*- for Kant, as we have said before, consists of judgments, which require a synthesis of representations under the rule of the concepts in order to be referred to objects. But the absence of sensible representations (sensible intuition) would make it impossible to form genuine judgments of self-knowledge, which may refer to inner objects. This is a fundamental divergence between outer sense and inner sense, and therefore has the potential to undermine the supposed analogy between inner sense and outer sense. For while in outer experience we have sensible representations which are synthesized as representations of spatial objects, it looks like in inner experience we do not have any sensible representations of the self which may form the basis of knowledge of the phenomenal self or inner objects. Thus it seems that this would make Kant's alleged empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self

without any theoretical ground within the context of his transcendental philosophy. But this is not the only problem or inconsistency that Kant's account of self-knowledge through inner sense faces; another equally important problem is Kant's trouble in specifying a proper manifold for inner intuition. This problem, among others, will constitute the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV:

EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

1. Introduction

As we may recall from previous chapters, Kant, in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' of the first *Critique*, introduces a distinction between 'form' and 'matter' or 'manifold' in sensible intuition. According to this distinction, while space and time are the pure (*a priori*) forms of sensible intuition, 'sensation' is said to be the 'matter' or 'manifold' of sensible intuition: "That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*; but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the *form* of appearance" (*CPR*, A20/B34). Space is the pure form of outer intuition, and time is the pure form of inner intuition: "Space and time are its [our mode of perceiving objects] pure forms, and sensation in general its matter" (*CPR*, A42/B59-60). Kant points out that whatever we receive by being affected by things in themselves as the sensible material must be ordered in spatial and temporal relations. It must be noted that according to Kant there are no other pure forms of sensible intuition other than space and time; that is to say, space and time are the only pure forms of sensible intuition in the transcendental

philosophy[1]. In this chapter we will be examining Kant's notion of the 'manifold' of inner intuition, which constitutes the basis of his theory of empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self. Before this, however, I would like to draw attention to an important point about the nature and function of the pure form of inner intuition, i.e., time.

2. Time as the Pure Form of Inner Intuition

According to Kant's theory of sensibility put forward in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', the pure forms space and time cannot exchange their functions; that is to say, inner objects cannot exist in space, and physical objects cannot have time as one of their properties, even though time, Kant maintains, is also a mediate form of outer intuition. Kant expresses this point by saying that time cannot be outwardly intuited, and that space cannot be represented in us. This amounts to saying that physical objects do not have temporal properties, and that inner representations have no spatial dimension. In his words: "Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state. It cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it has to do neither with shape nor position; but with the relation of representations in our inner state" (*CPR*, A33/B49-50). This Kantian view, which is radically different from his predecessors' view of

[1] Kant does not actually provide any arguments for the claim that space and time are the only pure forms of intuition; he appears to accept it as a fact.

time, has been criticized by some commentators. They argue that the Kantian idea that time cannot be outwardly intuited (that is, time is not a determination of outer appearances) does not cohere with his general epistemological assumptions in the first *Critique*. Allison, for instance, asserts that the Kantian idea that outer appearances have no temporal determinations seems doubly paradoxical because, as he says, "Kant repeatedly insists that we must appeal to outer intuition and its form, space, in order to represent time" (Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, p. 256). It seems that the following passage about the inner intuition supports Allison's criticism: "...just because this inner intuition yields no shape, we endeavor to make up for this want by analogies" (*CPR*, A33/B50). The analogies that Kant here refers to are all spatial. For example, Kant maintains that we can represent time only by drawing a line in our imagination (B154). Similarly, in the first 'Analogy' of the first *Critique*, Kant points out that we can represent the 'permanence' of time by only referring to outer intuition, and determine our existence in time by referring to spatial objects. Pointing to these and other passages in the first *Critique*, Allison reasons as follows:

> "We have seen that the 'Analogies of Experience' are concerned with the conditions of an objective temporal order of appearances. These appearances certainly include objects of space. How, then, one is led to ask, can Kant talk about the experience of such an order if time cannot be a "determination" of outer appearances?" (Allison, ibid. p. 256).

However, it appears that Allison is here confounding two things: To represent time in imagination by means of spatial analogies does not by any means indicate that time is a property of spatial objects because the pure apprehension of time is not the same as its image, which depends upon spatial analogies. It may indicate, however, that time is a mediate form of spatial representations in the sense that spatial representations necessarily belong to the consciousness of a subject under the pure form of time. As Kant himself points out, time, which is an immediate form of inner appearances, is also a mediate form of outer representations. As an immediate form of inner representations time, Kant says, already lies in the subject, which amounts to the claim that time is an *a priori* element in the process of acquiring self-knowledge. But since time is not an immediate form of outer appearances, it cannot be a 'determination' of outer appearances.

3. Sensation as the Manifold of Inner Intuition

Time by itself is not sufficient, however, for having sensible inner intuition simply because in order to have empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self in the transcendental philosophy, we must in addition to the pure form of time, have a sensible element that exists in unity with time in inner intuition.

This sensible element, which Kant calls 'sensation'[1], and is received by being in an immediate affection relation with ourselves, is defined by Kant as follows: "The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it, is *sensation*" (*CPR*, A19-20/B34). On the other hand, Kant sometimes identifies sensation with the 'real' in appearances:

> "Appearances, as objects of perception, are not pure, merely formal, intuitions, like space and time...they contain...the real of sensation as merely subjective representation, which gives us only the consciousness that the subject is affected, and which we relate to an object in general" (*CPR*, A166/B207-8).

The above quotations indicate that Kant understands sensation as the content (material) of the intuition as opposed to its pure form. Both 'matter' or 'manifold' and pure form are necessary for having knowledge of objects. Therefore, it may said that in the transcendental philosophy without sensation, we cannot have knowledge at all, not even *a priori* knowledge of the objects. Kant characterizes sensation, which is received by being affected by things in themselves, as the determination of the mind. Sensation for Kant is by itself always undifferentiated and indeterminate; that is to say, it has no unity or order in itself because, as Kant points out, 'no unity comes to us through the senses'. Unlike Leibniz, for instance, who thinks that sensation is a kind of perception (which must be supplemented by

[1] 'Sensation' may also be called 'impression', to use the empiricists' term. It must be noted, however, that the empiricists' 'impression' has a broader connotation than the Kantian 'sensation'. More recently,

imagination in order to become ordinary perceptual experience) of objects, Kant maintains that sensation is not by itself a perception of objects, but only the material condition of the perception of objects. As such, sensation for Kant is a subjective condition as well. This means that in order to be able to represent empirical objects, we must be subjectively affected by things in themselves. Applied to inner sense, this would mean that in order to have inner intuition, which forms the basis of empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self, we must first be affected by ourselves, and then the resulting sensation must be given unity and order by the pure form of sensibility (time), and finally synthesized and connected by the faculty of imagination under the guidance of *a priori* concepts (the categories). What makes inner sensation as the manifold of inner intuition cognitively relevant for us is its *a priori* form (the temporal order) and its synthetic unity, which is provided by the transcendental act of imagination.

Here I would like to point to a possible confusion between two meanings of 'sensation', which Kant uses both to refer to a modification of the mind as a feeling, and to refer to the manifold of the inner intuition. In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant warns us against this possible confusion:

> "When a modification of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is termed sensation, this expression is given a quite different meaning to that which it bears

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philosophers like Russell have introduced the term 'sense-data', which, more or less, conveys a similar meaning.

> when I call the representation of a thing (through sense as a receptivity pertaining to the faculty of knowledge) sensation. For in the latter case the representation is referred to the Object, but in the former it is referred solely to the Subject and is not available for any cognition, not even for that by which the Subject *cognizes* itself" (Kant, *the Critique of Judgment*, p.45).

As Kant clearly points out in this passage, sensations as feelings, though they belong to the self as subjective states, are not for that reason the representations of the objects or the self itself or its inner states. Therefore, when Kant talks about 'sensations' as the manifold of the sensible intuition, he does not mean the subjective modifications of the mind, that is, feelings, which have no cognitive value, strictly speaking, in the transcendental philosophy.

Kant's notion of sensation as the manifold of the inner intuition is not easy to understand because he does not discuss it sufficiently in his works. The texts in which he talks about inner sensation are cryptic and confusing, compared to his description concerning outer sensation, which for Kant includes such elements as colors, tastes, hardness, etc. Despite Kant's cryptic and confusing description of inner sensation, however, two lines of thinking concerning inner sensation may be detected in the first *Critique*. In this book, Kant seems to be holding two totally different views regarding the nature of the sensible manifold of inner intuition, which do not cohere with each other. According to one view, which is generally labeled as his 'official

view', inner sense does not have a sensible manifold of its own, distinct from the sensible manifold of outer intuition. On this view, the manifold of outer sense functions as both the outer and the inner manifold of intuition. However, at other times Kant seems to be defending a radically different view (which may be called Kant's 'alternative view'), according to which inner sense does have a distinctive manifold of its own, different from that of outer sense. As regards the alternative view of the inner manifold, Kant mentions various mental elements (these mental elements will be discussed below) as the manifold of inner intuition, which have nothing to do with the sensible manifold of outer intuition. Although some commentators talk about two different Kantian views regarding the inner manifold, what I call Kant's 'alternative view' has been discussed by any commentator, as far as I know. Allison, for instance, thinks that Kant has two different views of the manifold of inner intuition:

> "Kant seems to work with two distinct conceptions of an object of inner sense. According to his official doctrine, based on the parallelism between inner and outer sense, the object is the phenomenal self (the soul or the mind as it appears to itself). According to the actual account of inner sense, however, this object is more properly described as the succession of representations as they occur in consciousness. The consciousness of this succession requires a reflective act (attention), whereby these representations are made into 'subjective objects' and as it were, 'injected' into the phenomenal world. Since it is only by means of this act that we gain any empirical knowledge of the contents of our own minds, it follows (according to the arguments of the Transcendental Analytic) that we can experience our own mental lives only as a series of conditioned occurrences in the phenomenal world" (Allison, ibid. p. 272).

As I will try to show below, however, both of Kant's views of the manifold of inner intuition, when seen in the general context of the transcendental philosophy, fail to provide a plausible and satisfactory explanation of the manifold of the inner intuition, as required by the parallelism between outer sense and inner sense. We will begin with Kant's 'alternative view' of the manifold of inner sense.

4. The Alternative View

In the following passage quoted from the first *Critique*, Kant argues that what we are aware of through inner sense is the mind itself (*Gemüt*) or its inner states (*innerer Zustände*):

> "Inner sense, by means of which the mind intuits itself or its inner state, yields indeed no intuition of the soul itself as an object; but there is nevertheless a determinate form [namely, time] in which alone the intuition of inner states is possible, and everything which belongs to inner determinations is therefore represented in relations of time" (*CPR*, A22-3/B37).

Without making clear how we can be aware of the self through inner sense, Kant, in A357 of the first *Critique*, attempts to clarify what he means by inner states by mentioning thoughts, consciousness, desires, etc., as the things that we are aware of through inner sense: "...their [thinking beings'] thoughts, consciousness, desires, etc., cannot be outwardly intuited. All these belong to inner sense" (*CPR*, A357). But shortly after saying this, he cites thoughts, feelings, desires, and resolution as the manifold of inner

intuition (*CPR*, A358). Somewhere else he includes representations and thinking in this category. As may be seen from these passages, the mental elements that Kant includes in the manifold of inner intuition have different epistemological values and functions in the transcendental philosophy. Hence the obvious question is: can all these cognitively different elements be included in the manifold of inner sense? Before answering this question, however, I would like to draw attention to Locke's notion of 'internal sense', which may provide an historical insight into Kant's conception of the manifold of inner sense because of the similarities between Kant's notion of inner sense and Locke's concept of internal sense.

In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke uses the term 'internal sense' to refer to a source of knowledge of such activities of the self as thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, etc. Locke calls this internal perception or introspection 'reflection', as opposed to 'sensation', which he describes as a function of the five outer senses. In his words:

> "Secondly, the other fountain, from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas, is the perception of the operations of our mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got; which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas which could not be had from things without; and such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds, which we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings as distinct ideas, as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself; and though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called internal sense. But as I call the other Sensation, so I call this REFLECTION, the ideas it affords being

> such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself" (Locke, *An Essay...*, Bk. II, Ch. I, sec. 4).

As may be seen from this passage, Locke, makes a distinction (similar to the Kantian distinction between outer sense and inner sense) between what he calls 'internal sense' or 'reflection', which, according to Locke, provides an awareness of the activities the self, and the five outer senses which yield the sensible material for knowledge of spatial objects. Hence Locke and Kant seem to agree that we have an inner or internal sense that serves as the source for the awareness of the self, as opposed to the five outer senses, which provide the material for the knowledge of physical objects. But they differ on the function they assign to this particular sense. While the internal sense for Locke is the source of a direct awareness of the activities of the mind, the Kantian inner sense is said to provide an awareness of the passive aspect of the self. Kant reserves the pure awareness of the active self, which for Locke is also provided by the internal sense, for his notion of the transcendental apperception. It appears that Locke's notion of internal sense performs the tasks of both the Kantian inner sense and his transcendental apperception in that Locke's internal sense both provides a direct awareness of the spontaneous activities of the self, which is what the Kantian transcendental apperception does, and yields a consciousness of the passive

aspect of the self that includes a time-consciousness, which seems to parallel Kant's concept inner sense.

Now it may be argued that Kant's alternative view of the inner intuition resembles Locke's notion of internal sense because the mental elements that Kant's alternative view includes in the manifold of inner intuition (feelings, thoughts, decisions, thinking, etc.) are the elements that Locke thinks we become aware of through internal sense. However, Kant's alternative of inner sensation does not seem to cohere with his description of the inner and outer sense in the first *Critique*. When we look at what Kant mentions as the manifold of inner sense, i.e., thinking, willing, decision, feelings, etc., we will easily see that these various elements have different mental functions, and that some of them do not even have cognitive value in the transcendental philosophy. Given Kant's account of sense as a passive capacity, these different mental elements cannot exist side by side in the manifold of inner intuition. Nor can they individually function as inner representations. They cannot exist together in the manifold of inner intuition because they have different epistemological statuses in the transcendental philosophy. For example, while thinking belongs to the active aspect of the self, feeling belongs to the passive aspect of it; hence they cannot be included together in the manifold of inner intuition, which is a result of the

passive capacity of sensibility. However, even if we accept that they can exist together in the manifold of inner intuition, they cannot still be meaningfully connected because of the absence of a substratum in inner sense analogous to the physical substance in outer sense. This is the problem of the application of the category of substance to inner sense, which will be examined below.

In first *Critique* Kant presents a theory of knowledge, which is based upon the assumption that the *a priori* concepts (the categories) of the mind apply to both outer and inner appearances. For Kant, non-categorial knowledge is impossible. Hence, inner representation, in order to lead to the thought (knowledge) of the self or its inner states, must be connected and organized according to the pure concepts of the understanding (the categories). However, the absence of a substratum in inner sense makes the application of the category of substance to inner representations so difficult that when we try to apply it to inner appearances it leads to serious inconsistencies in Kant's theory of empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self.

As we know from the previous chapters, the category of substance, just like any other categories, is a necessary and universal (*a priori*) condition for the thought of any object whatsoever. Both inner and outer intuitions must be brought under the pure concept of substance in order for them to

represent any objects. In the case of outer sense, the category of substance shows itself as an ultimate subject or a permanent substratum of outer appearances. The substance in outer appearances, maintains Kant, is what remains constant, whereas the outer appearances are the changing states of this constant substance. This substance must not, however, be understood as a being that exists in itself, but rather as the underlying spatial principle of all physical objects. Although it is permanent, it is nevertheless phenomenal: "In all appearances the permanent is the object itself, that is, substance as phenomenon; everything, on the other hand, which changes or can change belongs only to the way in which substance or substances exist, and therefore to their determinations" (*CPR*, A183-4/B227). Substance in the transcendental philosophy is something that underlies its changing states, which may be called alteration. Its quantity neither increases nor decreases. In other words, the substance for Kant is the substratum of all appearances, and all changes or determinations are just its accidents: "The concept of substance signifies the ultimate subject of existence, i.e., that which does not itself in turn belong merely as predicate to the existence of another" (Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, p. 48).

Kant's notion of substance resembles the modern notion of substance. However, although it is true that Kant's theory of substance is in many

respects similar to that of modern philosophers, Kant gives a new twist to the concept. As is well known, according to Descartes, substance is the ultimate subject which cannot be attributed to anything else. It can exist by itself, whereas everything else resides in it in order to exist. According to Kant, however, substance is a category, and therefore is an *a priori* condition of appearances. It must be emphasized that while the Kantian substance is a permanent subject or substratum of its accidents, it is not a noumenal entity that exists in itself; rather it is a phenomenal entity that exists in space, and underlies all phenomenal objects. In addition being the substratum of all phenomenal objects, Kant's notion of substance is also required for objects' lawful changes. That is why Kant asserts that substance is also the condition for the law of causality to take place (as stated in the 'Second Analogy') because the law of causality is a law of the changes of the permanent substance. Hence without a substance there can be no causal interaction between appearances, and indeed no appearance at all. Substance is also the fundamental element in co-existence. In the 'Third Analogy', when Kant describes the law of co-existence, he states this law in terms of the reciprocity of substances.

When we try to apply this Kantian description of substance to inner intuition, however, the situation becomes very complicated and confusing.

While outer appearances are said to be different states of a permanent substance, which exists in space, in inner intuition we do not see a corresponding concept of a permanent temporal self, which, while existing in time, may serve as the substratum of inner appearances. It seems that Kant himself recognizes this fact, as the following passage attests: "Consciousness of self according to the determinations of our states in inner perceptions is merely empirical, and always changing. *No fixed and abiding self* can present itself in this flux of inner appearances". (*CPR*, A107/B275 emphasis added). Again, in the following passage, in which Kant compares outer and inner appearances as to whether or not they have a permanent substratum, he explicitly says that there is nothing permanent in time which may serve as the substratum of inner appearances:

> "Although both are appearances, the appearance to outer sense has something fixed or abiding which supplies a substratum as the basis of its transitory determinations and therefore a synthetic concept, namely, that of space and of an appearance in space; whereas time, which is the sole form of our inner intuition, has nothing abiding, and therefore yields knowledge only of the change of determinations, not any object that can be thereby determined". (*CPR*, A381).

The following passage also supports the ones just quoted: "For space alone is determined as permanent, while time, and therefore everything that is in inner sense, is in constant flux" (*CPR*, B291).

Despite these passages that clearly indicate that there is nothing abiding (permanent) in time, Kant says that "all existence and all change in time

have thus to be viewed as simply a mode of the existence of that which remains and persists" (*CPR*, A183/B227). However, he does not tell us what this remaining and persisting thing is in inner sense. As we have seen above, Kant rules out the possibility that a permanent self may serve as the substratum of inner appearances, which appears to be the most obvious candidate. In order for the self (the thinking self) to function as the substratum of the inner appearances, the self must itself exist in time, just as the physical substance exists in space. However, in the transcendental philosophy it is impossible for the thinking self to exist in time due to its status as the source or the ground of the pure conditions of experience, which include time itself. There are, however, some commentators who claim that the thinking self must exist in time because otherwise it cannot be the ground of the *a priori* concepts and the principles of experience. Aquila, for instance, says that the self or the conscious subject must be temporal in itself, even if we accept Kant's claim that spatial objects exist only as appearances. This is because we cannot imagine a possible but not actual stretch of time in which we may be aware of inner objects:

> "Intuited regions of space might turn out to be unactualized possibilites. But the very fact that I am aware of them as (at least in my own apprehension) enduring through a stretch of time seems to imply that at least that stretch must itself be something actual. It is, after all, the time during which I had the experience in question" (Aquila, *Representational Mind*, p. 149).

However, despite his claim that a temporal thinking self would cause serious problems in Kant's philosophy, Aquila nevertheless says that "...consciousness at least, and hence the conscious subject, would seem to be temporal in itself, even if everything else is spatial only in appearance" (Aquila, p. 148). This is because according to Aquila while we can imagine a merely possible region of space which can still be brought under pure concepts, we cannot do so with a stretch of time.

Can time perform this function instead, as time for Kant is something that does not change? It seems that the answer to this question would be in the negative because Kant appears to rule out this possibility by saying that time is the *a priori* form of inner appearances. Just as the spatial substance (matter) is not the same as space, the parallelism thesis does not allow time to function as the substratum of the inner objects. Although Kant clearly states that time itself does not undergo change, this is not because it is the substance of inner appearances, but it is because we cannot attribute succession to time itself. For if we attribute succession to time itself, then this would mean that there would be various times following each other which, surely, is incompatible with Kant's description of time in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', where he explicitly says that time is an intuition

given as a whole, and that different times are just various parts of the same time.

Now, as we have tried to show, Kant does not in fact specify a substance that underlies inner representations; does this, then, imply that the inner appearances are the 'functional states', so to speak, of the physical substance, as some materialists claim? To put it differently, does Kant's account of inner representations suggest that mental phenomena as objects of empirical knowledge are actually dependent for their existence on physical objects? As a matter of fact, Kant's language sometimes suggests such a materialistic reading of the inner appearances. Consider the following passage: "... all that belongs to existence can be thought of only as a determination of substance..." (*CPR*, B225). Again, Kant says that "all change or coexistence must, in being apprehended, be perceived in this subtratum" (*CPR*, B225). Hence, if all change must be perceived in the substance, and without the substance there is no change, then inner representations, which certainly undergo change, must belong to the substance as well. And since there is only one substance, i.e., physical substance, the inner representations must be considered different states of the physical substance, though in a different sense. This kind of interpretation would lead us to a material substance which has both mental

and physical properties like the Strawsonian person to whom both the physical and the mental properties can be attributed. Sellars describes this situation as follows: "... he [Kant] is committed to the view that the states of the empirical self borrow their temporal objectivity from states of material substance" (Sellars, '...this I or he...', p. 21). Can we, therefore, say that there is no mental substance that underlies the mental states, and that what underlies the mental states is the physical substance?

It does not seem that Kant would be willing to accept such an interpretation, as his account of inner sense clearly requires a dualistic model of the empirical phenomena. Sellars thinks that such a model of the empirical phenomena does not rule out the possibility of the inner representations being dependent upon the material representations. He maintains that Kant's problem is to explain how alterations which are not of the physical substance can be located in an objective time order. Sellars says that Kant does this "by arguing that the temporal objectivity of the mental is somehow derivative from, or dependent on, the objective order of material events". (Sellars, ibid. p. 18). In the 'Refutation of Idealism' section of the first *Critique*, Kant indeed says that the apprehension of the inner objects or the self is dependent upon the existence of outer appearances in general. But the fact that the apprehension of the inner appearances is, in a certain sense,

dependent upon the apprehension of the outer appearances does not mean that the inner appearances are derived from the outer appearances. For the reverse is also true. That is to say, according to Kant the apprehension of the outer appearances is dependent upon the apprehension of the inner appearances as well, as the Kantian claim that time is the mediate form of outer appearances makes this point clear. Therefore, Kant needs to specify a substance different from the physical substance for the inner representations if he is to be consistent, because the parallelism thesis and the dualistic nature of Kant's account of experience require such a substance. But, as we have seen, it does not seem possible to find a mental substance for the inner objects corresponding the physical substance which underlies the outer objects, as Kant rules out the two obvious candidates, namely, time and the thinking self.

Accordingly, it seems that the elements that Kant mentions cannot exist together in the manifold of inner intuition because they lack a substratum in which they can inhere, analogous to the physical substance that underlies the outer appearances. However, even if there were a substratum in inner sense, we would still be facing the problem of the inner manifold simply because of the different epistemological values of these elements, namely feeling, thinking, willing, etc. To put it differently, it would seem that these elements

cannot individually function as the inner representations either, because none of them are, strictly speaking, intentional or object-directed in the transcendental philosophy. In the first *Critique*, Kant clearly says that only representations are object-directed, i.e., intentional. Therefore, take thinking or thought, for instance. Can it function as the manifold of inner intuition? Given Kant's description of the act of thinking in the first *Critique*, the answer to this question must be in the negative because Kant presents thinking as a 'spontaneous' activity of the mind as opposed to the passivity of inner sense. The same is true with willing or decision-making too, as they belong to the active side of the self as well. As we will see in the next chapter, the awareness of the active aspect of the thinking self is provided by transcendental apperception, not empirical apperception, which depends upon inner sense. Hence thinking and willing cannot be included in the manifold of inner sense because they are not produced by our being passively affected by ourselves, even though they may certainly be part of what Kant means by 'non-intuitional awareness', i.e., pure awareness of the thinking self. But the pure awareness of the thinking self is not knowledge, strictly speaking, because it is devoid of intuition, and is different from the empirical awareness of the self, which is what is under consideration.

The position of feelings in the manifold of inner intuition is even more problematic. Although willing and decision-making may at least be said to belong to the pure consciousness of the thinking self, as opposed to the empirical consciousness the phenomenal self, it is hard to find a place for feelings in the transcendental philosophy. For it seems that feelings belong neither to the spontaneous activities of the self because they are not, strictly speaking, active mental acts, nor to the passivity of inner sense because the inner representations are for Kant intentional, that is, object-directed, whereas feelings are not. Kant himself points to this cognitive difference between feelings and representations in a footnote where he says that

> "...as feeling is not a faculty whereby we represent things, but lies outside our whole faculty of knowledge, the elements of our judgments so far they relate to pleasure or pain, that is, the elements of practical judgments, do not belong to transcendental philosophy, which is exclusively concerned with pure *a priori* modes of knowledge" (*CPR*, A801/B829n).

Hence, feelings, which are said to be purely subjective states in the transcendental philosophy, cannot serve as the inner representations.

It may therefore be argued that Kant's alternative view of the manifold of the inner intuition fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of inner sensation. The mental elements that he includes in the manifold of inner intuition, as inner representations, cannot perform the task they are supposed to. Despite the fact that Kant mentions different and incompatible mental

elements as the manifold of the inner intuition, however, he sometimes seems to be defending an opposite view, according to which the manifold of outer intuition is at the same time the manifold of inner intuition with minor differences.

5. The Official View

In the first *Critique*, in addition to the 'alternative view' just discussed, Kant appears to adopt a different line of thinking regarding the manifold of inner intuition in various contexts. This view, which is usually labeled as his 'official view', provides a totally different account of the manifold of inner intuition. Kant's official view is based upon the assumption that the inner intuition does not have a distinct manifold of its own, but rather shares the manifold of outer intuition in a different form. According to this view there are not two manifolds of the sensible intuition – one outer and one inner – but just one, which functions as the manifold of both outer and inner intuition. Consider the following passage, for instance, in which Kant seems to be advocating the official view: "...the representations of the outer senses constitute the proper material with which we occupy our mind..." (*CPR*, B67). Kant here, and in other contexts in the first *Critique*, appears to be maintaining that the outer representations serve as the material or the manifold for both outer and inner intuition. But can Kant really mean what

he appears to be maintaining in this passage, given his supposed parallelism between outer sense and inner sense which apparently requires inner sense to have a distinct manifold of its own? To be sure, given Kant's strict parallelism between the outer sense and inner sense, which requires inner intuition to have a distinct manifold of its own analogous to the manifold of outer intuition, Kant's claim that inner intuition does not have a different manifold from that of outer intuition clearly contradicts his epistemological assumptions. Despite this incompatibility between Kant's epistemological principles and his official view, however, a great number of Kant scholars seem to agree that Kant's official view is his real view of the manifold of inner intuition. It must be noted, however, that some of the commentators, even though they think that the official view is Kant's real view, believe nevertheless that the official view is not consistent with Kant's epistemological assumptions.

Allison, for instance, points out that the letter of the first *Critique* suggests that the manifold of both inner and outer intuition is almost the same, and asserts that the only difference between the manifold of outer intuition and inner intuition is the "...fact that what we outwardly intuit are appearances with spatial forms and properties, while what we inwardly intuit is the appearing of these very appearances, along with mental states such as

feelings, in consciousness" (Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, p. 258). According to Allison the function of inner sense is not to provide any sensible representations of the self itself as an object, as Kant's parallelism thesis requires, but as a source of awareness of the consciousness of the outer appearances. Although Allison thinks that the official view is Kant's real view, he nevertheless contends that it clearly undermines the supposed parallelism between outer sense and inner sense. In his words:

> "The problem for Kant is that this [that inner sense does not provide any impression of the self as an object] tends to undermine the parallelism between outer sense and inner sense upon which he puts such great emphasis. According to this presumed parallelism, just as outer sense provides the sensible data for the thought of outer objects, so inner sense provides sensible data for the thought of the self. If, however, inner sense has no manifold of its own, if its data include only outer intuitions, which can used only to represent outer objects, and mental states such feelings, which do not represent anything at all, then this parallelism breaks down" (Allison, ibid. p. 258).

Allison argues that inner sense can at most serve the function of making one aware of his own representations. He, therefore, does not believe that the official theory of inner sense can fulfill the task which Kant sets for it:

> "At best it explains how one can have sensible knowledge of one's own representations; what it does not explain is how we can have sensible knowledge of the soul, mind, or the self, considered as the empirical subject to which these representations belong...The fault lies rather with Kant's own account" (Allison, ibid. pp. 260-1).

But this does not mean, maintains Allison, that inner sense yields an awareness of the awareness of outer representations. He criticizes Weldon,

for instance, for thinking that Kant's notion of inner sense is based on the idea that inner sense provides an awareness of the awareness of outer appearances, and hence necessarily dependent upon outer sense for its intuitional matter (Allison, ibid. p. 259). Weldon's interpretation seems to simply misconstrue Kant's account of inner sense and ignores his sharp distinction between empirical and transcendental apperception. As Allison points out, in the *Anthropology* while Kant describes apperception as a consciousness of what we are doing, which belongs to the power of thinking, he characterizes inner sense, which is the basis of the empirical apperception, as a consciousness of what we undergo insofar as we are affected by the play of our thoughts. Hence for Kant the consciousness of the act of thinking belongs to apperception, not to inner sense or empirical apperception. For if inner awareness is just an awareness of past acts of awareness, and the immediate awareness is always of outer appearances, then inner sense as a receptive capacity would lose its meaning. Besides, there is no textual evidence that shows or implies that Kant understands inner sense the way Weldon does.

Allison, on the other hand, unlike Weldon, understands Kant's theory of inner sense in terms of his account of the subjective unity of consciousness:

> "The point is that instead of functioning as representations which can be referred to objects in a judgment of inner sense, the representations contained in a

> subjective unity are themselves represented as the 'determinations of the mind'. Inner sense enters the picture as the means through which these representations are given to the mind as its representations...this account is not incompatible with Kant's denial that feelings, here included among the contents of inner sense, have a representative function. The claim is not that we somehow represent of 'come to know' our inner states through feelings; it is rather that feelings, together with other mental items such as desires and volitions, can be represented as 'subjective objects'. In fact Kant assumes that we are aware of all of these through inner sense (B66)" (Allison, ibid. p. 261).

Allison describes what we receive through inner sense as 'subjective objects', which he understands to be objects that 'belong to the self', 'not objects of the self or inner experience'. He contends that Kant is led to the conclusion that just like the transcendental object that underlies empirical objects, the self (the 'I') underlies the 'subjective objects' as a substratum. But this, says Allison, creates a serious problem in Kant's theory of inner sense in that the self as object of inner sense cannot appear to itself. For

> "...if this object [the self] is regarded as the substratum or owner of its representations, which seems to be the view to which Kant is committed, then it cannot be said to appear to itself at all. Consequently, we cannot draw a distinction between this substratum as it appears and as it is in itself. Nor does it seem to help matters very much if we take the object of inner sense and inner experience to be the representations themselves. The problem here is that representations, as mental entities, are themselves ideal in the empirical sense. Once again, then, we seem to be without any basis for distinguishing between such an object as it appears and as it is in itself" (Allison, ibid. p.263).

Allison's interpretation, however, does not seem to cohere with the Kantian epistemological principles, according to which inner objects have the same ontological and epistemological status. According to Kant's theory of

knowledge, there is no epistemological difference between what Allison calls 'subjective objects' and physical objects. Therefore to argue that what Kant means by inner objects is that these objects are not objects of the self but belong to the self has neither textual nor philosophical basis in the transcendental philosophy. Furthermore, despite the fact that Kant's parallelism hypothesis requires inner sense to provide sensible intuition that can lead to the thought of objects, in this case inner objects, on Allison's interpretation, the representations of inner sense do not refer to inner objects, but are merely 'determinations of the mind', which include feelings, desires, volitions, etc. But, as we have pointed out above, these elements cannot function as inner representations due to the different cognitive natures that they have in the transcendental philosophy.

Allison is not alone, however, in claiming that Kant's official view is his real view of the manifold of inner sense. Aquila and Paton, for instance, provide similar interpretations of the function of the Kantian inner sense. Aquila points out that the proper materials for inner sense are in fact the objects of outer sense as they enter into consciousness under the form of time:

> "The crux of Kant's doctrine...is that self-awareness through inner sense is simply awareness of the flow of our conscious life as manifested is the flow of the objects of outer sensibility, qua pure intentional objects. Conceptualization of such objects in terms of our concepts of material reality may thus be said to

involve the 'determination' of inner sense by reference to outer perception" (Aquila, ibid. p.168).

Likewise, Paton says that "...all the stuff or matter of inner sense (so far as it is matter for knowledge) comes to us from outer sense. The stuff of inner sense and the stuff of outer sense overlap, if they do not coincide" (Paton, *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*, vol. 1, p. 99). Hence Aquila and Paton appear to agree with Allison that inner sense does not have its own distinctive objects of consciousness.

Now there is in fact some textual evidence in the first *Critique* that supports Kant's official view about the manifold of inner intuition. But I am not sure if the textual evidence makes it clear that the official view is indeed Kant's real view, as it obviously contradicts Kant's account of sensibility in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', which assumes a strict parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, and hence requires a distinct manifold for the inner intuition. Besides, Kant seems to defend a totally different view from the official view concerning the manifold of inner intuition (the alternative view). Hence it is not clear which one of these two views is Kant's real view of the manifold of inner intuition. However, even if this is Kant's real view of the manifold of the inner intuition, it still does not provide a satisfactory explanation of the manifold of inner intuition as required by the parallelism

thesis. The official view, therefore, fails to explain the empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self, which requires a distinctively inner intuition, different from the sensible intuition of spatial objects. To put it differently, if the knowledge of the phenomenal self, which has nothing to do with the properties of the physical objects such as shapes, colors, etc., is indeed possible, then inner sense must have a distinctively inner manifold. However, as we have previously indicated, though Kant's account of sensibility in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', which assumes a strict parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, clearly requires inner sense to have a manifold of its own, his official view does not assign such a manifold to inner sense. Therefore, since the lack of a distinctively inner manifold in inner intuition will certainly break down the parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, Kant's alleged unified theory of knowledge, which depends for its existence upon this parallelism, faces a serious problem.

Some of the Kant commentators argue that since the perception of outer appearances is a condition of the perception of the self, the manifold of outer intuition necessarily enters into the manifold of inner intuition. Moreover, these commentators, in support of their thesis, mention the status of the pure form of time as the mediate form of outer appearances. However, it appears

that this thesis depends upon a misunderstanding. Although time for Kant is also a mediate form of outer appearances (because all representations are modifications of the mind), this does not mean that the manifold of inner sense and outer sense are the same or coincide. Again, it is certainly true that, on Kant's account, both inner perception and outer perception are mutually dependent because inner perception requires the existence of outer objects, and vice versa. This can clearly be seen from Kant's language in the 'Refutation of Idealism' section of the second edition of the first *Critique*. Kant here explicitly states that the determination of the phenomenal self in time requires an awareness of the outer representations in general. That is to say, we cannot be aware of ourselves as we exist in time independently of outer experience. It must be pointed out, however, that the fact that inner perception of the phenomenal self requires outer experience is not to be understood as a claim that self-awareness requires a specific perception of certain physical objects. Rather, the requirement is a general one. As Kant points out in the 'Refutation of Idealism', outer experience is only in general required for the inner perception.

It must be pointed out that the reverse is also true, i.e., inner awareness is a requirement for having outer experience as well. This is obvious from Kant's claim that experience requires self-awareness, an awareness of a

subject to which all representations must belong. Consider the following passage: "Whatever the origin of our representations, whether they are due to the influence of outer things, or are produced through inner causes... they must all, as modifications of the mind, belong to inner sense" (*CPR*, A98-9). Therefore the fact that outer perception requires the awareness of a subject does not mean that the manifold of outer experience is the same as that of inner awareness. Otherwise, there would be just one sense, not two, inner and outer. The fact that Kant makes a distinction between outer sense and inner sense implies that they have must have different manifolds. But although Kant's theory requires a manifold of inner intuition distinct from that of outer intuition, he does not seem to be identifying this distinct manifold. As may be seen from what I have said above, Kant's account of the manifold of inner intuition is indeed very obscure and to a certain extent inconsistent. This confusion is clearly reflected in different interpretations of the Kantian account of inner sense which contradict one another. But what is clear is that Kant makes a distinction between inner sense and outer sense both in terms of form and matter, and claims that they perform similar functions. Hence if outer sense provides the sensible material for the thought of physical objects, inner sense must provide sensible material for the thought of inner objects. But this is not what is indicated in the official view.

Hence we cannot just say that inner sense has the same manifold as outer sense because this would nullify the distinction between outer sense and inner sense. Kant explicitly says that space cannot be inwardly intuited, any more than time can be outwardly intuited. Accordingly, contrary to what most commentators think, Kant's official view of inner sense cannot be his real view because it clearly violates the parallelism thesis.

To sum up, as we have tried to show above, Kant does not have just one but two views regarding the manifold of inner intuition, both of which fail to secure the supposed parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, which forms the basis of Kant's alleged unified approach to the theory of knowledge. Kant's official view, which does not assign any distinctively inner manifold to inner sense, causes the parallelism between outer sense and inner sense to break down, for the simple reason that this parallelism obviously requires inner sense to have a different manifold of its own, analogous to that of outer sense, as stated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'. Kant's alternative view, too, fails to meet the parallelism condition because of the inconsistencies of the this view which result from attempting to include cognitively different and incompatible elements in the manifold of inner sense. Hence we may conclude that, given Kant's failure to provide a satisfactory explanation of the manifold of inner sense, which is a clear

requirement of the parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, his alleged unified approach to knowledge, which, in turn, depends for its existence upon this presumed parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, remains without any solid philosophical ground. It seems, however, that the problem that Kant faces in his account of the manifold of inner stems from his notion of 'affection relation' between the self and the things in themselves.

6. The Problem of Affection in Inner Sense

As we know from the previous chapters, Kant bases his theory of perception upon the controversial assumption that in order to receive the sensible material of knowledge of objects, we must be affected in a certain way by the things themselves. One of the most important criticisms leveled against this assumption is that it requires the existence of things (things in themselves) that we are not able to know at all. According to Kant's theory of knowledge the things in themselves, which constitute the one side of the affection-relation, cannot be known at all. Therefore, given that the sensible material of knowledge of objects is the result of the interaction between the mind and things in themselves, how can we even begin to talk about a relation, if one of the relata is unknown? It is indeed unclear how we can make sense of an affection relation which includes objects that we cannot

know. It must be pointed out, however, that although how this affection takes place seems to be a real mystery, Kant sometimes seems to imply that the affection relation is a kind of causal relation, as the things in themselves are said be the 'causes' of our having sensible material of knowledge. However, the assumptions of Kant's transcendental philosophy do not allow such an interpretation of affection because according to Kant the cause-and-effect relation is a category, and the categories cannot be applied to things in themselves.

In addition to this general problem that besets Kant's theory of affection in general, his theory of inner perception, which is based upon the idea that in order to receive the sensible material of inner objects we must be affected by ourselves, faces another more serious problem, which stems from the characteristic nature of self-affection. Before taking a look at this problem, it must be noted that Kant, in the first *Critique*, seems to be adopting two different views regarding the nature of self-affection: one of these is stated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', and the other in the 'Transcendental Analytic'. These two accounts of affection are so different that it is hard to connect them in a meaningful way. While Kant's account of the affection in the 'Aesthetic', as required by the parallelism thesis, claims that in inner sense the self is affected by itself as it exists in itself (as a noumenon), the

'Analytic' conception of affection assumes a determination of inner sense by the faculty of understanding.

A. *The 'Aesthetic' Affection*

According to Kant's description of affection in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic', where he says that an object is given through intuition "only...insofar as the mind is affected in a certain way" (*CPR*, A19), self-affection seems to occur between the self as an appearance and the self as it exists in itself, which are said to be two different aspects of the same ontological entity. However, this will result in a paradox because both what affects and what is affected are the one and the same thing, namely the self. That is to say, in self-affection the self must be in both a passive and an active position at the same time. To put the same point in a different form, in self-affection both the act and the content of awareness would be the same, which is contradictory, because the content of consciousness, which is passive, cannot at the same time function as an act, which, by its nature, is active. While an act is a unity, the content of an act necessarily involves a manifold, which is constituted by different elements. The problem before Kant is, therefore, this: how can the same self be both active and passive at the same time or, to rephrase, how can an act of the self also be the content of itself?

As a matter of fact, Kant himself recognizes this paradox, as may be seen in the following passage:

> "...this sense [inner sense] represents to consciousness even our own selves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves. For we intuit ourselves only as we are inwardly *affected*, and this would seem to be contradictory, since we should then have to be in a passive relation [of active affection] to ourselves. It is to avoid this contradiction that in systems of psychology *inner sense*, which we have carefully distinguished from the faculty of *apperception*, is commonly regarded as being identical with it" (*CPR*, B153).

Kant attempts to resolve the problem by making a distinction between inner sense and transcendental apperception or, from a different perspective, between the phenomenal self and the transcendental self, and contends that in self-affection the phenomenal self, which is passive, is apprehended by the spontaneous act of the thinking self, which is active. On this account, then, the phenomenal self (or its inner states) becomes the content of self-awareness, and the thinking self becomes the active aspect by grasping this content which constitutes the manifold of inner sense.

Kant's explanation seems to work on one condition: if the two selves are two different ontological entities. The paradox of self-affection would indeed disappear, if the phenomenal self and the thinking self were different entities because, then, we would have two selves, one affecting, the other being affected. But this interpretation gets rid of the paradox at the cost of creating a bigger problem. The problem is this: since we now have two

selves, how can we be sure that the self that we are aware of is actually our self? Indeed, the problem of connecting the two selves is even more serious than the problem of affection. Can we, however, make a distinction between the self as it exists in itself and the self as an appearance, analogous to the distinction between appearances and things in themselves in the physical realm? Gram, for instance, says that we cannot, even though Kant's parallelism thesis requires such a distinction in the mental realm too. Gram asserts that we cannot apply the distinction between things in themselves and appearances to the self because this assumes the doctrine of affection, which leads to the paradox of self-knowledge:

> "The notion of an appearance assumes a relation between a self that is appeared to in a certain way and a self that generates the appearance by standing in some relation to the former. Without this relation there would be no difference between the self we introspectively apprehend and the self that somehow generates the self we apprehend. Yet the attempt to invoke this relation only proves to be its undoing. It requires that the self that is affected be the same as the self that does the affecting. And this is what undermines the notion of affection when it is applied to the cases of self-awareness" (Gram, *The Transcendental Turn*, p. 72).

Despite Gram's claim, Kant seems to be committed to the distinction between the self as it appears and the self as it exists in itself, as this distinction is a consequence of his broad distinction between phenomena and noumena.

However, there is a more serious problem facing Kant's supposed solution. This problem results from Kant's official view of the manifold of

inner intuition. As pointed out above, according to Kant's official view, while the function of affection by external objects is to supply the sensible data or raw materials for knowledge, the function of self-affection is to combine these data in consciousness in accordance with the conditions of time. More precisely, since the official view does not assign a distinct manifold to inner sense, the affection relation in inner sense, i.e., self-affection, does not provide any sensible material for self-knowledge. Hence to say that the self or its inner sense yields inner sensible material by being affected from the self as it exists in itself does not seem to cohere with Kant's official view because according to the official view the inner sense does not yield any sensible material of knowledge distinct from the sensible material received from outer sense. Hence, if inner sense does not provide any sensible material, then Kant's parallelism thesis and his claim that sensation is connected to affection would not make any sense when applied to inner sense.

B. *The 'Analytic' Affection*

This is not the only characterization of the self-affection that we find in the first *Critique*, however. In the 'Transcendental Analytic' Kant seems to introduce a different conception of self-affection. In the 'Transcendental Deduction' Kant says that inner sense is determined by the understanding

under the title of a *transcendental synthesis of the imagination* (*CPR*, B153). If this is the case, then the analogy between outer sense and inner sense once again breaks down because this account of affection is very different from outer affection, which takes place when we are affected by noumenal objects, namely things in themselves. According to this new conception of self-affection, it is not the self as it exists in itself, but the faculty of understanding that affects the inner sense:

> "What determines inner sense is the understanding and its original power of combining the manifold of intuition, that is, of bringing it under an apperception, upon which the possibility of understanding itself rests...The understanding, that is to say, in respect of the manifold which may be given to it in accordance with the form of sensible intuition, is able to determine sensibility inwardly" (*CPR*, B153).

Now the difference between this new conception of self-affection and the one stated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' should be clear. While according to the 'Aesthetic' description of affection, we are affected by things in themselves (the self as it exists in itself in the case of inner sense), the 'Analytic' conception is based upon the idea that in inner sense it is the faculty of understanding that affects inner sense, not the self as it exists in itself. Gram nicely captures the difference between the two accounts of self-affection as follows:

> "The notion [of affection] previously denoted the action of an object on our forms of apprehension. It now denotes the action of an intellectual capacity on a series of intuitions. The kind of action involved in each case is very different. To affect

> a mode of sensibility is, on the one hand, to bring about an appearance, which, as Kant explicitly recognizes in the 'Aesthetic', is 'the undetermined object of empirical intuition' But to affect such a mode is, on the other hand, to order a series of perceptions in a certain way" (Gram, ibid. p. 68-9).

Kant describes how affection by the understanding occurs as follows: "The understanding does not, therefore, find in inner sense such a combination of the manifold, but *produces* it, in that it *affects* that sense" (*CPR*, B155). Here Kant seems to be adopting, not the official view, but the alternative view of the manifold of inner sense, though with a different meaning. For he seems to be maintaining that the understanding, when affecting the inner sense, does not arrange what is already there (the sensible material received through outer sense), but rather creates a new manifold, a distinctively inner manifold. Hence it seems that while Kant's account of the affection relation in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' disaccords with both the official and the alternative view of the manifold of inner intuition, his account of the affection relation in the 'Transcendental Analytic' seems to at least cohere with his alternative view, which assigns a distinctively inner manifold to inner sense.

However, the 'Analytic' conception of self-affection does not appear to solve the paradox of self-knowledge either, because even if we accept for the moment that some act of the understanding can affect the determinable

self, one cannot be sure that the self that he/she is aware of is himself/herself due to the lack of connection between the act itself and the content of that act. As Gram correctly says, "My awareness of myself in introspection is one thing; an awareness of the thought of myself is quite another. The self performing the introspective act would not, therefore, be the same self that is part of the content of that act" (Gram, ibid. p. 71). And he continues to reason similarly:

> "Kant's statement of that paradox makes it impossible to resolve even if we abstract that paradox from the context of the theory of affection. We are asked how an act of perceiving can be the simultaneous content of that act. The requirement on which this question implicitly rests is that one entity function as two. And what makes it impossible to satisfy this requirement is that it conflicts with the nature of the distinction between an act and the content of that act. The latter demands a diversity of elements. The former forbids it" (Gram, ibid. pp. 73-4).

Gram thinks that the solution of the 'Aesthetic' affection problem is closely related to the solution of the 'Analytic' affection problem:

> "If affection is the ordering of elements in a manifold, each one of the elements must still stand in some relation to something that acts on our sensibility. For the ordering can take place only on the condition that it be given something to order. Ordering assumes, then, a manifold that it cannot produce. What is given to us in inner sense cannot, therefore, be supplied by whatever ordering rules we have. Yet the problem raised by the paradox of self-knowledge is how to relate those elements to the objects that act on our sensibility. And this is a problem that the doctrine of affection in the Analytic cannot solve. The doctrine of affection assumes a prior solution to that problem in virtue of the fact that it assumes a given manifold as a necessary condition of applying ordering rules at all. The Analytic solution of the paradox is not, accordingly, independent of the 'Aesthetic' solution. It must stand or fall as a solution of the paradox with the Aesthetic doctrine of affection. And this, in turn, means that it must share the fate of that solution" (Gram, ibid. pp. 71-2).

In fact, Kant's claim that the understanding produces the sensible material in inner sense when affecting it does not seem to be consistent with his description of the function of the understanding as a spontaneous capacity which works with the already existing material. That is to say, self-affection through understanding cannot produce any sensible material of inner appearances, but can only connect and organize what is already in inner sense.

Does this mean that we are not actually capable of being aware of the self through inner sense, but only capable of ascribing already existing representations to our mental history? In fact some commentators appear to answer this question in the affirmative. Gram, for instance, maintains that being aware of oneself does not mean to know oneself as an object but instead means that one is able to ascribe the already existing inner representation in inner sense to one's mental history. This is because according to Gram through inner sense we do not have an intuition of the self but only "a thought of the activity by which the combination takes place" (Gram, ibid. p. 71). Gram asserts that the paradox of self-knowledge, which he thinks is not unsolvable, has nothing to do with Kant's conception of the affection relation. He thinks that the problems caused by the notion of

affection as defined in both the 'Aesthetic' and the 'Analytic' are pseudo-problems because the notion of affection so defined is not required by, and hence does not apply to, self-knowledge. According to Gram what causes the paradox of self-knowledge is the traditional interpretation of affection as a causal relation between two different entities (the appearances and the things in themselves), which he thinks does not correctly capture Kant's description of the affection relation. Gram maintains that the distinction between a thing in itself and an appearance is not a distinction between two entities but a distinction between two different states of affairs of the same entity. In other words, the thing in itself and the appearance are one and the same thing described or viewed from two different angles. So he says:

> "The main impediment to accepting this as a solution of the problem of self-affection as it is stated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' is the implied argument that affection is a case of causation, that the causal relation demands two numerically diverse terms, and that there can, accordingly, be no explanation of self-affection" (Gram, ibid. p. 81).

Gram offers a different solution to the paradox of self-knowledge, which is expressed clearly in the following passage:

> "To ask how I can know myself is not to ask - an impossible question - how two things can be one. It is, rather, to ask about the basis of my ability to ascribe events to my own mental history...That notion [of affection] makes sense in the context of the distinction between things in themselves and appearances. It is out of place in the context of a distinction between our idea or thought of an ego and events in our experience that we ascribe ourselves as parts of our mental history" (Gram, ibid. p. 79).

Gram's solution of the paradox of self-knowledge depends upon his interpretation of Kant's notion of self-awareness, which he calls the 'self-ascriptive sense of self-awareness':

> "I am aware of myself whenever I can exhibit an ability to ascribe a series of perceptions to my mental history...Self-awareness is not...an act of awareness of a special kind of object but rather an ability to ascribe the objects of which we are aware to our respective mental histories. To have the ability to identify the contents we have as belonging to our respective mental histories does not require us to say that a self can be both an act and a content simultaneously of perception...What we see, then, in self-awareness is not, say, an act that is its own content but a content different from the act that stands in a unique relation to that act" (Gram, ibid. p. 74).

However, it seems that Gram conflates Kant's notion of self-knowledge through inner sense with his notion of the transcendental self-awareness which Kant calls transcendental apperception. To be able to ascribe representations to one's own self or one's mental history is a function of transcendental apperception but not of empirical apperception, which depends upon the sensible manifold of inner sense. Besides, the ability to ascribe different representations to one's own self does not give us knowledge of the self as it appears through inner sense. Therefore it appears that Gram confuses self-knowledge through inner sense with transcendental apperception.

7. Conclusion

Under the light of the discussion above, we may therefore conclude that Kant fails to account for the manifold of the inner intuition as required by the parallelism thesis. Both his official view and his neglected alternative view do not seem to provide a meaningful and consistent manifold for the inner intuition. While his official view, by not assigning any distinct inner manifold to the inner intuition, violates the parallelism thesis, his alternative, by including conflicting and contradictory elements in the manifold of inner intuition, violates Kant's fundamental assumptions about intentionality, which bestow intentionality on representations only. Hence it can be said since Kant's theory of the empirical self-knowledge depends upon an inconsistent epistemological basis, his allegedly unified theory of knowledge faces a great challenge.

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CHAPTER V:

THE PURE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE THINKING SELF

1. Introduction

In the first *Critique*, analogous to his distinction between appearances and things in themselves in the physical realm, Kant makes a parallel distinction between the phenomenal self and the noumenal self in the realm of inner objects. The latter distinction seems to be already implicitly included in the distinction between appearances and things in themselves because in the transcendental philosophy the phenomenal self is viewed as a part of the phenomenal world. And since the phenomenal self is a part of the phenomenal world, it is subject to the same transcendental conditions and a *priori* principles as outer (physical) objects. The noumenal self, on the other hand, cannot, in principle, be located in the spatial or temporal forms of the phenomenal world. And since it transcends the phenomenal world, we cannot have knowledge of its nature, though its existence must necessarily be assumed for the reason that it is a transcendent condition of the phenomenal self.

The Kantian distinction between the phenomenal self and the noumenal self has received considerable criticism from philosophers over the course of

the last two centuries. One of the major criticisms leveled against this transcendental distinction is centered on the issue whether the phenomenal self and the noumenal self are two distinct ontological entities or merely two aspects of the same entity. While some Kant scholars think that the two selves are actually two ontologically different entities, most commentators think that what Kant calls the phenomenal and the noumenal selves are not two distinct entities, but instead two different aspects of the same self. Although the two-entities approach may find textual evidence in the first *Critique*, the traditional double-aspect theory seems to be more in line with Kant's intentions[1]. I will not go into the details of this ontological question, as I am interested in the epistemological aspect of the Kantian theory of the self.

2. 'The Thing That Thinks'

The phenomenal and the noumenal selves are not the only selves that Kant talks about in the first *Critique*, however. In the 'Transcendental Deduction' of the first *Critique*, Kant adds a third self or a third aspect of the self to the ones already mentioned above. The primary function of this new self is, says Kant, to think; hence he calls it "...this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks..." (*CPR*, A346/B404). It would seem that Kant has introduced this

[1] See, for example, *Anthropology*, where Kant says that "The self is...formally but not materially double: double with reference to the way in which it is represented, but single in regard to its content" (p. 15n).

new aspect of the self merely for epistemological reasons, as the thinking self plays a primarily epistemological role in the transcendental philosophy. The thinking self which is characterized by Kant as the formal or the logical subject of thought, functions as the source of the categories and *a priori* principles of experience. This makes the thinking self an absolutely necessary *a priori* element in the formation of knowledge of objects in the transcendental philosophy. Kant expresses this point as follows: "...we demand the absolute unity of the subject of a thought, only because otherwise we could not say, '*I* think' (the manifold in one representation)" (*CPR*, A354).

Interestingly enough, the thinking self, though it has a very important place in Kant's theory of knowledge, evades us when we try to grasp it in the transcendental philosophy. Kant says that we cannot have knowledge, strictly speaking, of the thinking self because we do not have any intuition - whether intellectual or sensible - of this self, which is a necessary element in all knowledge-claims in the transcendental philosophy. Since the thinking self is not an empirical entity, we cannot possibly have sensible intuition of it. But we cannot know it through intellectual intuition either because, as pointed out before, Kant rejects the existence of intellectual intuition in human beings. Kant maintains that *a priori* knowledge about the thinking

self is necessarily synthetic because an analytic proposition does not provide any substantial knowledge about the nature of the self. And since synthetic propositions require intuition, it appears that we cannot form any synthetic *a priori* propositions about the nature of the thinking self because of the absence of the intuition. Kant expresses this as follows:

> "If anyone propounds to me the question, 'What is the constitution of a thing which thinks?', I have no *a priori* knowledge wherewith to reply. For the answer has to be synthetic – an analytic answer will perhaps explain what is meant by thought, but beyond this cannot yield any knowledge of that upon which this thought depends for its possibility" (*CPR*, A398).

This does not mean, however, that we are totally in the dark regarding the functions of the thinking self. Kant contends that, though we do not have knowledge of the thinking self, we nevertheless have a pure or *a priori* consciousness of it. This pure self-consciousness, which Kant calls 'transcendental apperception' or transcendental self-consciousness, is neither an intuition nor even a concept, but rather an empty 'thought' or ' a simple representation', which does not provide any insight into the nature of the thinking self, but only provides a pure consciousness of its existence and its functions: "This 'I' is, however, is as little an intuition as it is a concept of any object; it is the mere form of consciousness..." (*CPR*, A382). That is to say, although I do not know what kind of entity I, as a thinking self, am, I can be sure that I exist as a thinking thing, and that I, as a thinking subject,

am required for the possibility of experience. In Kant's words: "...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. This *representation* is a *thought*, not an *intuition*" (*CPR*, B157).

Transcendental apperception, which Kant expresses with the judgment 'I think', in addition to providing an *a priori* consciousness of the thinking self, plays a very important role in the formation of knowledge of objects in general. It constitutes the basis of the unity of categories, and thereby the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition:

> "There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection or unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name *transcendental apperception*." (*CPR*, A107).

Similarly, Kant points out that experience requires an objective ground,

> "...which constrains us to regard all appearances as data of the senses that must be associable in themselves and subject to universal rules of a thoroughgoing connection in their reproduction. This objective ground of all association of appearances I entitle their *affinity*. It is nowhere to be found save in the principle of the unity of apperception, in respect of all knowledge which is to belong to me" (*CPR*, A122).

As these passages tacitly indicate, Kant appears to maintain that all experience or representation includes consciousness, and that all consciousness (at least all human consciousness) involves self-

consciousness[1]. His statement that the judgment 'I think' lies at the basis of all experience also points to this direction. Since according to Kant's theory of knowledge only judgments, which are the functions of the understanding, are considered knowledge, understanding or thinking must be capable of accompanying all knowledge-claims. To put it differently, the judgment 'I think', says Kant, as the subject of thought, must necessarily be able to accompany all judgments of knowledge – *a priori* or *a posteriori*. This would give representations their cognitive value by unifying them in one unifying self-consciousness: "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me" (*CPR*, B131-2). Comparing transcendental apperception with empirical apperception, Kant describes the role of transcendental apperception in acquiring knowledge as follows:

> "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

[1] Kant is probably referring to human consciousness when he maintains that all consciousness requires self-consciousness because animals, while they do not have self-consciousness, seem to have at least consciousness or awareness of objects around them.

> the same), cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation" (*CPR*, B132).

The importance of transcendental apperception or the thinking self in acquiring knowledge of objects reveals itself most explicitly in the Kantian claim that the representations are connected and unified, i.e., synthesized, into concepts of objects on the basis of the absolute unity of the transcendental self-consciousness. This amounts to saying that all representations must be connected as *my* representations in one unifying self-consciousness. Kant puts this point as follows:

> "For the manifold representations, which are given in an intuition, would not be one and all *my* representations, if they did not all belong to one self-consciousness. As *my* representations (even if I am not conscious of them as such) they must conform to the condition under which alone they *can* stand together in one universal self-consciousness, because otherwise they would not all without exception belong to me"(*CPR*, B132-3).

To put it differently, in order to be conscious of representations, they must be able to be ascribed to an identical self: "For it is only because I ascribe all perceptions to one consciousness (original apperception) that I can say of all perceptions that I am conscious of them" (*CPR*, A122).

As previously indicated, the representations are connected, i.e., given synthetic unity, by the transcendental imagination under the guidance of the categories, which are, in turn, grounded in transcendental apperception. In order to reproduce and unite the sensible representations of outer and inner

objects received through sensibility over time, these representations must be attributed to a unified consciousness, that is, a continuous and unitary self. Kant thinks that the absolute unity or identity (numerical identity) of the self is an analytic result of the transcendental consciousness: "But as self-consciousness is a transcendental representation, numerical identity is inseparable from it, and is *a priori* certain" (*CPR*, A113). That is to say, this analytic unity or identity depends upon the synthetic unity of apperception. And this continuous self, maintains Kant, is the thinking self, which must be simple and unitary, not composite, in order to function as the logical subject of thought. The thinking self or the logical subject must be simple because

> "... suppose it be the composite that thinks: then every part of it would be a part of the thought, and only all of them taken together would contain the whole thought. But this cannot be consistently maintained. For representations (for instance, the single words of a verse), distributed among different beings, never make up a whole thought (a verse), and it is therefore impossible that a thought should inhere in what is essentially composite" (*CPR*, A352).

In short, according to Kant, the logical subject (the thinking self) is the basis of the order and intelligibility of knowledge of the world. As Powell nicely puts it,

> "...given that experience requires a subject, and that experience is not simple and must be synthesized to be intelligible (to be experience rather than a chaotic onslaught of disorderly appearances), then it follows that experience must be ordered by a unitary subject who persists through, and is thereby the ground of, the synthesis of experience" (Powell, *Kant's Theory of Self-Consciousness*, pp. 30-31).

3. Transcendental Apperception vs. Empirical Apperception

Kant's notion of transcendental apperception is closely related to his notion of empirical apperception; so they must be considered together. Transcendental and empirical apperceptions may be seen as two distinct yet complementary ways of becoming aware of the same self. These two different forms of self-consciousness aim at different aspects of the self. While empirical apperception, that is, self-knowledge through inner sense, is an experience or awareness of the phenomenal aspect of the self, transcendental apperception is a pure or *a priori* awareness of the thinking activity of the self. To put the same point differently, empirical apperception is an awareness of the determinable self as it appears through inner sense under the pure form of time, transcendental or pure apperception is an awareness of the determinative self, which does not in any way appear through inner sense under the pure form of time.

As previously indicated, although Kant sometimes seems to be equating empirical apperception with inner sense, this seems to be a result of Kant's careless use of those terms because while inner sense, as a part of the capacity of sensibility, is passive and receptive, empirical apperception is a result of the active thought which includes intuition received through inner sense as well as the concepts of the understanding. Therefore it would not be

correct to compare transcendental apperception with inner sense. Instead, as Allison correctly points out, the comparison must not be drawn between inner sense and transcendental apperception, but between empirical apperception and transcendental apperception because

> "It would seem that the contrast that Kant really needs to draw is between a consciousness of the activity as it functions determinately with a given content and a thought of the same activity, considered in abstraction from all content. To regard apperception in the first way is to consider it empirically, and thus as 'something real'; to consider it in the second way is to consider it transcendentally, and thus as a transcendental condition of experience. Empirical apperception is achieved through ordinary reflection or introspection. It always occurs in connection with inner sense, which is perhaps why Kant sometimes identifies them. By contrast, transcendental apperception is a product of philosophical or transcendental reflection" (Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, p. 274).

4. 'I Think' and 'I Exist'

According to Kant the transcendental awareness of the thinking self is at the same time an awareness of the existence of a subject, the 'I', which thinks. Kant asserts that the judgment 'I exist' is already implicitly included in the judgment 'I think'. In his words: "The 'I think' expresses the act of determining my existence. Existence is already given thereby, but the mode in which I am to determine this existence, that is, the manifold belonging to it, is not thereby given" (*CPR*, B158n). The propositions 'I think', 'I am thinking', and 'I exist thinking', says Kant, are equivalent. It must be immediately noted that the proposition 'I think' or 'I exist' does not depend

upon a determinate intuition; this proposition is rather 'an indeterminate perception' which does not tell us anything about the nature of the thinking self. Kant's claim that the propositions 'I think' and 'I exist' are equivalent seems to be a direct response to Descartes' *cogito*[1] argument because it implies that the *cogito* is nothing but a tautology. As a matter of fact, Kant himself clearly refers to Descartes' *cogito* as a tautology: "What is referred to as the Cartesian inference, *cogito, ergo sum*, is really a tautology, since the *cogito* (*sum cogitans*) asserts my existence immediately" (*CPR*, A355).

Although Kant says that the proposition 'I think' or 'I exist' is an 'indeterminate perception', it is nevertheless an empirical one. Kant contends that the proposition 'I think', which is not an analytic proposition because it does not express any necessary connection between the 'I' that thinks and the activity of thinking, is an empirical proposition because it requires the apprehension of some sensible intuition. Since thinking for Kant can only take place when there is some sensible material to synthesize, in order to be able to think, we must have some sensible material to work with. This constitutes the basis of the Kantian claim that "...sensation, which as such belongs to sensibility, lies at the basis of this existential proposition" (*CPR*, B422n). It must be noted, however, that though the proposition 'I

[1] *Cogito ergo sum*: I think therefore I am.

think' is an empirical proposition, the subject of the proposition, i.e., 'I', is itself a pure representation, not an empirical one. Although the apprehension of some sensible material occasions the awareness of the subject, the transcendental apprehension, that is, the pure awareness of the subject, does not involve any empirical element. Some commentators, however, claim that since the proposition 'I think' is an empirical proposition, that is, requires the apprehension of some empirical intuition, the subject of the proposition, i.e., 'I', must involve some empirical element. Allison, for instance, asserts that since the apprehension of some sensible content is necessary for the awareness of the existence of the self, "...apperception as an actual consciousness of thinking ('something real')[1] always involves an empirical element" (Allison, ibid., pp. 280-1). However, Allison's claim does not seem to agree with Kant's transcendental description of the thinking self simply because, though the judgment 'I think' is itself an empirical judgment, it does not tells us anything about the true nature of the self itself. Kant rejects empirical as well as intellectual knowledge of the thinking self.

Kant's claim that we cannot have knowledge of the thinking self depends upon his assumption that human beings do not have intellectual intuition. Kant says that since we do not have either sensible intuition or intellectual

[1] It would seem that Allison identifies 'something real' with 'something empirical' which does not cohere with Kant's view of reality which does not limit 'what is real' to 'what is empirical'.

intuition (which is a necessary component of all knowledge-claims) of the thinking self, which might serve as the basis of the thought of the thinking self as an object, the traditional metaphysical (substantial) claims about the thinking self are unfounded and illusory. According to Kant the thinking self is just a simple 'representation' or 'thought', which is empty of intuition. As he puts it: "Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = x" (*CPR*, A346/B449). Unlike Descartes, for instance, Kant does not think that the self is a permanent, simple, immaterial substance, which exists independently of experience. Kant points out that in order to be able to say that the thinking self is a self-subsistent immaterial substance, as Descartes does, we must be able to have some intuition- presumably intellectual intuition - which would form as the basis of this synthetic judgments about the thinking self. But Kant vehemently rejects the idea of intellectual intuition of any kind. As he puts it,

> "Now since I do not have another [intellectual] self-intuition which gives the *determining* in me (I am conscious only of the spontaneity of it) prior to the act of *determination*, as time does in the case of the determinable, I cannot determine my existence as that of a self-active being; all that I can do is to represent to myself the spontaneity of my thought, that is, of the determination; and my existence is still only determinable sensibly, that is as the existence of an appearance. But it is owing to this spontaneity that I entitle myself an *intelligence*" (*CPR*, B157n).

It must be immediately noted that the transcendental awareness of the existence of the self neither implies intellectual knowledge nor the application of the category of existence to the self because the category of existence "does not apply to an indeterminately 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" (CPR, B422n). And since we do not have a determinate concept of the thinking subject (all we have, says Kant, is an 'indeterminate perception' or 'bare consciousness') (*CPR*, A346/B404), and the thinking self is already presupposed by the categories, the category of existence cannot be applied to it because, first, the categories are applied to 'determinate perceptions', and, second, the application of the categories to the thinking self would lead to a vicious circle. Hence Kant says:

> "We can thus say of the thinking 'I' (the soul) which regards itself as a substance, as simple, as numerically identical at all times, and as the correlate of all existence, from which all other existence must be inferred, that it does *not* know *itself through the categories*, but knows the categories and through them all objects, in the absolute unity of apperception, and so *through itself*. Now it is, indeed, very evident that I cannot know as an object that which I must presuppose in order to know any object, and that the determining self (the thought) is distinguished from the self that is to be determined (the thinking subject) in the same way as knowledge is distinguished from its object" (*CPR*, A401-2).

5. The Thinking Self and the Categories

Many Kant commentators think that Kant's argument about the inapplicability of the categories to the thinking self is invalid. Gram, for instance, contends that Kant's argument that we cannot have knowledge of the thinking self because of the inapplicability of the categories to it is based upon a misunderstanding: "To show that the categories are logically dependent upon the existence of a self is one thing. To infer from such a fact that the categories cannot be applied to the self is something else that does not follow from any claim about existential dependency" (Gram, p. *The Transcendental Turn*, p. 76). According to Gram the fact that the categories are logically or existentially dependent upon the thinking self does not mean that the categories cannot be applied to the thinking self, even though he thinks that the knowledge of the thinking self is not a result of the application of the categories to the thinking self. Gram summarizes Kant's argument that the self as the ground of categories cannot be known through categories as an object as follows:

(1) In order to know myself, I must be aware of myself by applying categories to a manifold in intuition (*CPR*, A401).
(2) But the self (the transcendental unity of apperception) is "itself the ground of the possibility of the categories" (*CPR*, A401).
(3) Therefore, the self "does *not know itself through categories*, but knows the categories, and through them all objects, in the absolute unity of apperception, and so through itself" (*CPR*, A402).
(4) "I cannot know as an object that which I must presuppose in order to know an object" (*CPR*, A402).

(5) Therefore, "there is nothing more natural and misleading than the illusion which leads us to regard the unity in the synthesis of thoughts as a perceived unity in the subject of these thoughts" (*CPR*, A402).

Gram asserts that this argument is invalid because it depends upon an ambiguity of the term 'object' in step (4): Gram says that if the term 'object' in step (4) as the set of perceptual contents combined according to a rule, then step (4) would indeed express what Kant asserts to be the circularity in the claim that I can know the self as an object. But if the term 'object' is understood as 'whatever can be ascribed to one's own mental history', then this circularity would disappear because, he maintains, the self is not an object of categorial attention. "Step (5), therefore, must be dismissed as an irrelevant conclusion from the premises" (Gram, ibid. p. 76). To put the same point differently, according to Gram, Kant's argument depends upon a conflation of acts of synthesis and acts of combination. Gram points out that while knowledge through synthesis requires the application of the categories to intuition, knowledge through combination, which he thinks includes knowledge of the thinking self, does not need this application. : "What is circular here arises from the claim to know the self as a categorially determined object and not as an object that is a combination of a series of perceptual acts belonging to somebody's continuous mental history" (Gram, ibid. p. 76). However, knowledge of the thinking self, says Gram, does not

have to rest upon the rule-governed synthesis, which is conducted according to the categories, but upon acts of combination, which do not depend upon categories:

> "The fact that the transcendental unity of apperception is the capacity we have for synthesis in general makes it the logically necessary condition of any particular kind of synthesis. But this binds it only to rule-governed acts of synthesis. And this excludes synthetic acts that are mere combinations (*Verbindungen*) without the governance of rules. The distinction between synthesis and combination of manifolds makes it possible for the self to be the object of combination but not of synthesis" (Gram, ibid. p. 77).

He therefore concludes: "We can, accordingly, have self-knowledge without applying Kantian categories to the self. The argument Kant gives us does not show the impossibility of self-knowledge. It shows only the impossibility of categorial self-knowledge" (Gram, ibid. p. 77).

Gram's presentation and, to a certain extent, his criticism of Kant's argument of inapplicability of the categories to the self is indeed well argued. As Gram points out, the fact that the categories are existentially dependent upon the thinking self does not prevent the categories from being applied to the thinking self. The categories can in fact be applied to the thinking self as well, but since we do not have any intuition of the thinking self, this application will not provide any substantial knowledge about the thinking self. It can only provide an 'empty thought' or 'bare consciousness' of the thinking self. I think this is what Kant means when he says that the

categories cannot be applied to the thinking self. However, Gram also points out that knowledge of the thinking self is not a result of the act of synthesis, but the act of combination, which does not require the application of the categories to the thinking self. It must be pointed out, however, that interpreting self-knowledge on these lines would not cohere with Kant's epistemological assumptions set forth in the first *Critique*. Kant here explicitly says that all knowledge of objects requires rule-governed synthesis under the guidance of the categories. Hence for Kant mere combination of the manifold of intuition without the application of the synthesis in accordance with the categories cannot yield knowledge of objects, including self-knowledge. In fact, Kant's entire attempt in the first *Critique* is aimed at showing that non-categorial knowledge is impossible. Accordingly, Gram's claim that we can have self-knowledge without applying synthesis to the manifold of inner sense has no textual and philosophical justification in the transcendental philosophy. Therefore, Gram's alleged solution to the problem of self-knowledge in Kant must be rejected.

6. Transcendental Apperception: Conflicting Interpretations

Kant's transcendental apperception, which is seen as untenable by many commentators, has been the focus of many philosophical discussions since it

was first introduced. The different, and to a certain extent, incompatible, interpretations of Kant's concept of transcendental apperception are partly due to Kant's own obscure and cryptic description of this concept. Guyer, for instance, detects at least three different meanings of the term 'apperception' in the first *Critique*: "...the (necessary) representation of the numerical identity of a self in its different states; the power of the mind which produces this representation or the conditions for its occurrence; and possibly the bare thought or expression 'I think'" (Guyer, 'Kant on Apperception...', p. 207n). On the other hand, commentators like Allison take a different approach, and interpret transcendental apperception as a consciousness of a set of objectively valid judgments, whereas others such as Kitcher provide a more subjective or psychological interpretation. These interpretations, since they emphasize only one aspect of transcendental apperception, appear to be incomplete. To begin with the Allison's interpretation, we may ask: Can Kant's notion of the transcendental apperception be interpreted merely as a set of objectively valid judgments?

Given Kant's description of transcendental apperception in the 'Transcendental Deduction', the answer to this question seems to be in the negative. For the 'Transcendental Deduction' of the first *Critique* contains two closely related sections (one subjective, the other objective), which

correspond to the objective and the subjective aspects of transcendental apperception. While the subjective part of the 'Transcendental Deduction' emphasizes the need for a unitary subject of thought, to which all mental states or representations must be attributed, the objective part, as the name indicates, focuses on the objective aspect of transcendental apperception, which requires that all representations must be united objectively in accordance with the categories. There is a close connection between these aspects of transcendental apperception. Kant points out that the objective function of the thinking self is grounded in the subjective aspect of it. To put it differently, according to Kant, categories, which represent the objective aspect of the thinking self, are grounded in the absolute unity of the thinking self as a subject of thought. Therefore, to interpret the transcendental apperception merely as a system of objective judgments, as Allison does, would be incomplete because this kind of interpretation ignores the subjective aspect of transcendental apperception and its close relationship with the objective aspect. This 'objective' interpretation of transcendental apperception has led some commentators to push it to its extreme limits. Brook, for instance, even claims that transcendental apperception does not refer to any self-consciousness at all: "If TA [transcendental apperception] is our capacity to tie inner appearances together into one unified global

object...I cannot see that it either is or requires self-awareness" (Brook, *Kant and the Mind*, p. 145). Brook interprets transcendental apperception as a faculty for connecting representations into what he calls 'one unified global object'. By 'one unified global object', Brook means a system of representations, which do not stand separately but instead are connected and unified into a whole ('global') object that can be perceived in a single, unified act of experience. Brook, too, emphasizes the 'objective' side of apperception ignoring the 'subjective' part, which is clear from his statement that transcendental apperception does not refer to self-consciousness. Brook's interpretation, however, does not seem to cohere either with either the letter or the spirit of Kant's description of transcendental apperception, as Kant explicitly says that the transcendental apperception is a form of pure self-consciousness, and that it exists at the ground of all-claims of knowledge. The following passage clearly shows that Kant uses transcendental apperception to refer to pure or transcendental self-consciousness:

> "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*'...cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation. The unity of this apperception [transcendental apperception] I likewise entitle the transcendental unity of self-consciousness..." (B132).

On the other hand, Keller, though he provides a different interpretation of transcendental apperception, seems to ignore the subjective aspect of transcendental apperception as well. Keller, who interprets the transcendental apperception in terms of an objective point of view, asserts that our ability to form concepts in general, which, according to Keller, is the capacity to represent individual representations that are accessible to others, is based upon our capacity for transcendental self-consciousness, and that the very notion of a representational content that has any significant cognitive value for us depends upon the existence of transcendental apperception. Keller says that representations have cognitive value only to the extent that they are potential candidates for comparison and contrast by some subject. Keller interprets transcendental apperception as an impersonal self-consciousness. In his words:

> "I argue that the key to a proper understanding of the thesis that our experience is subject to the demands of self-consciousness is a proper understanding of the fundamentally impersonal character of our representation of self. We have an impersonal or transpersonal representation of self, which is expressed in our use of the expression 'I' to refer to ourselves. When each of us refers to him-or herself by means of the expression 'I', each of us refers to him- or herself in a way that could, in principle, apply to any one of us. This is the basic, minimal, idea that Kant tries to express with his notion of transcendental self-consciousness" (Keller, *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness*, pp. 2-3).

Keller adds that his interpretation of transcendental apperception makes it possible to take alternative points of view. And to represent the point of

view of another rational being amounts to saying that "I represent myself and other persons in an impersonal manner" (Keller, ibid. p. 4). Keller says that transcendental apperception for Kant is a representation of oneself that abstracts from what distinguishes one from other persons. Keller contends while empirical apperception is equivalent to personal self-consciousness, transcendental apperception is equivalent to impersonal self-consciousness. According to Keller, while personal self-consciousness involves an awareness of the distinction between me and my representations and other persons and their representations, transcendental apperception or self-consciousness abstracts from such a distinction between me and other persons. Keller contends that knowledge requires both kinds of self-consciousness. So he says:

> "Judgment presupposes personal self-consciousness (empirical apperception) insofar as judgment involves an implicit or explicit commitment as the part of the person who forms the judgment that things are thus such. But judgment also presupposes the impersonal self-consciousness because when making judgment one asserts that things are thus and such for anyone" (Keller, ibid. p. 3).

Keller's interpretation, too, does not represent the whole picture because while it stresses the objective aspect of the transcendental apperception, it ignores the subjective aspect, which, as we have just pointed out, is closely related to the objective aspect.

Not all Kant scholars, however, interpret transcendental apperception as an awareness of a system of objective judgments. Patricia Kitcher, who provides a psychological reading of transcendental apperception, for instance, asserts that Kant's transcendental apperception cannot be understood without considering his concept of the transcendental synthesis, which is dismissed by many commentators as a psychological notion that does not have any role in the formation of knowledge. Kitcher, who interprets the transcendental apperception as 'a contentually interconnected system of representations', argues that the transcendental apperception is an awareness of a transcendental subject that, through transcendental synthesis, connects and unifies all representations into 'an existentially dependent system'. To connect representations as a contentually (existentially) interconnected system means, says Kitcher, that representations must be ascribed to an identical self, namely myself. She does not, however, provide any explanation as to how her notion of 'contentually dependent system' can be interpreted as a system that requires all representations to be ascribed to an identical self. She nevertheless points out that representations that are not part of an interconnected system of representations do not represent anything at all, which is a Kantian idea put into a different context. Kicther, who thinks that his interpretation is in conformity with Kant's text, mentions

the following passages as textual evidence that she thinks clearly indicates that Kant really meant the transcendental apperception as a system of representations connected through the transcendental synthesis: "[I call my representations mine]. This amounts to saying, that I am conscious to myself *a priori* of a necessary synthesis of representations - to be entitled the original synthetic unity of apperception..." (*CPR*, B135). And,

> "That relation [belonging to an identical subject] comes about, not simply through my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but only in so far as I *conjoin* one representation with another... Synthetic unity of the manifold of intuitions, as generated *a priori*, is thus the ground of the identity of apperception itself, which precedes *a priori* all *my* determinate thought" (*CPR*, B133-4).

Comparing Kant's theory of the transcendental apperception with Hume's conception of self, Kitcher points out that in the transcendental philosophy the self is not just a bundle of representations, as Hume assumed, but a synthetically interconnected set of representations, which involves a causal dependence among representations. So she says: "Contra Hume's denial of a relation of existential dependence among mental states, Kant argues that all representations, which are possible as representations, must be regarded as belonging to a contentually interconnected system of mental states- an I that thinks" (Kitcher, 'Kant's Real Self', p. 117). Kitcher, who asserts that Kant's theory of the transcendental apperception constitutes a response to Hume's skepticism (Kitcher thinks that Hume's criticism is a result of the

absence of an existential (real) connection among mental states in the Humean philosophy of mind), points out that Kant's transcendental apperception is an answer to Hume's concerns about the existence of an identical and continuant self. Kitcher claims that Kant is trying to show basically that there is a necessary existential, contentual connection among mental states, a connection that is rejected by Hume. She maintains that Kant shows this by introducing his notion of the transcendental unity of apperception and transcendental synthesis. She says:

> "Kant successfully meets Hume's challenge by showing that we cannot attribute mental states (judgments or intuitions) at all unless we acknowledge a relation of existential dependence among them. The linchpin of Kant's argument is the claim that we cannot attribute any *content* to judgments as intuitions unless we regard those states as part of an interdependent system of states. When Kant talks about the relation of 'synthesis' among mental states, at least part of what he means is that mental states occurring at different times depend on each other for their contents (and so for their existence as mental states)" (Quoted in Powell, *Kant's Theory of Self-Consciousness*, p. 12).

Given that Kant's account of the self appears to be more in line with that of Hume than with that of the rationalists to the extent that both Kant and Hume deny that the self is a self-subsistent substantial entity, Kitcher's claim does not seem to be without justification. But the agreement between Hume and Kant does not last longer. As is well known, Hume asserts that there is no impression or idea of a substantial self that is identical to itself over time. This view of self corresponds to Kant's conception of the

empirical self. But Kant differs from Hume in a very important aspect of the self. While Kant claims that there is a necessary unity of apperception, i.e., a unity of the transcendental consciousness of the self that makes the self identical over time, Hume denies that there is such an awareness of the unity of the self. Instead Hume says that all we have when inspect our self is a collection or bundle of perceptions. But whether Kant's notion of transcendental apperception is actually a direct response to Hume's skepticism about the existence of a continuous self remains to be seen.

Kant's view of the self does not end with the empirical self, as Hume's view does. Hume explains his notion of sequence as a succession of impressions, whereas Kant says that the succession of impressions does not give a representation of a sequence simply because they exist in time and time is not an objective determination inherent in things. Therefore the representation of sequence cannot be received from things in themselves. Instead Kant says that these impressions must be connected, that is, synthesized, in order to be in order and coherent. This synthesis, says Kant, must take place 'in accordance with a fixed rule': "If each representation were completely foreign to each other, standing apart in isolation, no such thing as knowledge would ever rise. For knowledge is a whole in which representations stand compared and connected" (*CPR*, A97). Again,

> "If we were not conscious that what we think is the same as what we thought a moment before, all reproduction in the series of representations would be useless...If, in counting, I forget that the units, which now hover before me, have been added to one another in succession, I should never know that a total is being produced through this successive addition of unit to unit, and so would remain ignorant of the number"(*CPR*, A103).

Although Kitcher's interpretation of Kant's notion of transcendental apperception is certainly a philosophical advancement over the 'objective' interpretation that we mentioned above, it does not, however, seem to justify the existence a continuant self across time, which, according to Kitcher, is the ultimate purpose of Kant's notion of transcendental apperception. For the transcendental apperception understood as a system of causally dependent mental states does not necessitate the existence of a perduring self, as it intends to show. Reducing Kant's notion of transcendental self-consciousness to a causally interconnected system of mental states will not solve the problem of the existence of a unitary, perduring self over time because the transcendental apperception as a contentually dependent system of representation seems to be in no better position than Hume's conception of the self as a bundle of perception to require the existence of a continuant self. Kitcher's interpretation of the transcendental apperception, therefore, fails to provide a feasible response to Hume's skepticism about the existence of an experiencing self. Contrary to what Kitcher tries to achieve by her psychological interpretation of the transcendental apperception, which she

thinks provides a satisfactory explanation of the connection between the transcendental self-consciousness and the objective knowledge of things, it seems that her interpretation actually separates Kant's theory of apperception from his notion of objective experience. Kant explicitly says that the two are closely connected, and that the categories, which give experience its objective character, are grounded upon the logical subject of thought.

This is not the only drawback of Kitcher's interpretation of transcendental apperception, however. Arguing on the basis of her psychological interpretation of transcendental apperception, Kitcher makes an astonishing remark about the ontological status of the thinking self. She asserts that the thinking I must be understood as a phenomenal entity because "the relation of contentual interconnection holds among mental states, which are themselves phenomenal" (Kitcher, ibid. p. 120). She compares the ontological status of the transcendental apperception with the ontological status of Kant's notion of causality which, according to Kitcher, though a transcendental law, is also an empirical claim. This comparison, however, does not seem to be working because of the difference between the epistemological status of a category (the category of causality) and that of the thinking self which is the source or the ground of the categories.

Besides, Kitcher's claim that Kant's notion of causality is an empirical claim is simply false because the categories for Kant are not empirical but rather pure concepts, which underlie the empirical concepts of objects.

Kitcher points out that, though Kant had reasons to reject the phenomenality of the thinking beings, and clearly implies that the thinking beings are noumenal, his reasons, in addition to being unjustified, are totally independent of the theory of apperception itself. She maintains that the transcendental apperception must not be understood as a noumenal entity because the nature of the noumenal things in the transcendental philosophy is hidden from us. Whether Kitcher is right in her claim about the Kantian motives behind his account of the noumenal character of the thinking self remains to be seen. But whatever the reasons behind this Kantian view, it would seem that Kant cannot sustain the noumenal character of the thinking self due to the unknowability of the noumenal entities.

Allison, too, argues that the Kantian thinking self cannot be understood as a noumenal entity. Allison does not, however, say that it is a phenomenal entity either. Allison claims that in the first *Critique* there are two different doctrines about the ontological status of the thinking self. According to one, which, Allison says, is Kant's official doctrine, the thinking self is the same as the noumenal or 'real' self. Allison cites the following passage in the

Reflexion as evidence for this view of the thinking self: "The soul in the transcendental apperception is *substantia noumenon*,[1] hence it has no permanence in time, since this belongs only to objects in space" (Allison, pp. 286-7). Allison maintains that this view is 'incoherent and in conflict with the critical thrust of the argument in the Paralogisms'. (Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, p. 287). The other doctrine about the ontological status of the thinking self, which according to Allison is both coherent and consistent with Kant's critique of rational psychology, considers the subject of the apperception as distinct from the noumenal self, "indeed, from any kind of intelligible *object*". (Allison, ibid. p.287). However, Allison does not specify what kind of object the thinking self is. It seems from the context that Allison would not accept the phenomenal character of the thinking self either.

As these two different interpretations (Kitcher's and Allison's)[1] of the ontological status of the Kantian thinking self clearly show, Kant's description of the thinking subject does not suggest just one view of the ontological status of the thinking self. Although Kant sometimes, perhaps as a result of careless wording, states that the thinking self is a noumenal entity, to view the thinking self as a noumenal entity would cause serious

[1] It is not clear what Allison means by '*substantia noumenon*', as substance is something phenomenal in the transcendental philosophy.

epistemological problems in the transcendental philosophy. Given that the thinking self is the ground of the unity of categories, and through them, of all experience, the thinking self cannot be understood as a noumenal entity because a noumenal entity, which cannot be known in the transcendental philosophy, does not have any direct epistemological role in experience. The thinking self, on the other hand, plays a crucial epistemological role in Kant's theory of knowledge. And since it cannot be argued that the thinking self has no role in the Kantian epistemology, it cannot be regarded as a noumenal entity. But it seems that the thinking self cannot be seen as a phenomenological entity either because, given that the phenomenal entities are existentially or logically dependent upon the thinking self, and that they exist in space and time, the thinking self cannot be regarded as a phenomenal entity because it does not exist in space and time, which prevents us from having sensible intuition of the thinking self.

7. Conclusion

Now if the thinking self is neither phenomenal nor noumenal, then what kind of an entity is it? Or is it an entity at all? The Kantian term 'transcendental' may guide us here. As we know, Kant uses the term 'transcendental' to refer to *a priori* conditions of experience. When we look

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[1] Others might be added to these two interpretations.

at the first *Critique*, we see that a transcendental condition or concept functions as a medium between the transcendent (noumenal) and the phenomenal entities. Kant does not regard the transcendental conditions or concepts as entities but as a *priori* principles which necessarily regulate experience into an order. The thinking self, as a transcendental condition of experience, may be as well seen as a mediating epistemological instrument between the noumenal self and the phenomenal self.

However, to say that the thinking self is not an entity but just an *a priori* condition of experience would further complicate the question because Kant explicitly says that the thinking self has active powers which determine the manifold of intuition. But how can something that is not even an entity have active powers and determine intuition? That is to say, if the thinking self is actively involved in experience, then this activity must belong to an active agent, namely an active entity. But, as we have seen, Kant denies that the thinking self is an agent. Therefore, I would like to conclude that since Kant's notion of the thinking self is an inconsistent notion, his conception of the transcendental self-consciousness or, in his terms, transcendental apperception, does not seem to rest upon a solid philosophical ground, and hence must be revised. But how this revision must be carried out cannot be

examined in this dissertation, as it is beyond the scope of the subject matter of the dissertation.

CHAPTER VI:

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have attempted to show that Kant's allegedly unified theory of knowledge faces the possibility of being undermined by certain fatal problems with his theory of self-knowledge. In the first *Critique*, Kant presents a theory of self-knowledge which assumes a twofold awareness of the self: the empirical awareness of the phenomenal self and the transcendental consciousness of the thinking self. Although Kant's notion of the transcendental self-consciousness (transcendental apperception) has been extensively discussed in the last couple of centuries, his theory of empirical knowledge of the phenomenal self (empirical apperception) has largely been neglected by the commentators. That is why we have mainly focused on this aspect of Kant's theory of self-knowledge.

Both of Kant's doctrines (of transcendental and empirical apperception) are infected with problems so serious as to threaten his theory of knowledge as a whole. As for empirical apperception, despite Kant's claim that empirical self-knowledge is subject to the same transcendental conditions as knowledge of objects other than the self, his account of inner sense, which forms the basis of the thought of the phenomenal self, and is dependent upon

the alleged parallelism between outer sense and inner sense, fails to provide a proper manifold for the inner sense as required by the parallelism thesis. This will undermine the assumed parallelism between outer sense, which may, in turn, undermine the foundation of Kant's allegedly unified perspective on knowledge, which sees no methodological (epistemological) difference between empirical self-knowledge and knowledge of objects other than the self.

Kant has two different views regarding the manifold of the inner intuition, both of which fail to provide a satisfactory explanation of the matter (sensation) of the inner intuition: the official view and the alternative view. According to Kant's official view inner intuition does not have a distinctively inner manifold of its own, different from that of outer intuition. Instead, on this view, outer sensation functions as both the inner and the outer manifold of intuition. This view clearly violates Kant's parallelism thesis between outer sense and inner sense because the parallelism thesis requires a distinctively inner manifold (analogous to the manifold of outer intuition) for inner intuition. The alternative view, on the other hand, though it attempts to assign a different manifold to inner intuition as required by the parallelism doctrine, nevertheless fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of the manifold of inner intuition because the mental elements, which Kant

includes in the manifold of inner intuition, have no representational value in the transcendental philosophy, and therefore cannot function as the inner representations. That is to say, the mental elements that Kant mentions as the manifold of the inner intuition - feelings, willing, thinking, decision-making, etc. - are not seen as intentional, that is, object-directed, elements in the transcendental philosophy, and cannot, therefore, be included in the manifold of inner intuition. Besides, there is no harmony between these elements either because, for instance, while feelings may be said to be the results of the passive affection of the self, thinking, on the other hand, belongs to the active aspect of the self.

On the other hand, Kant's notion of the transcendental self-consciousness, while certainly an advancement over Hume's psychological explanation of the self, faces a great epistemological problem, which corresponds to the uncertainty regarding the ontological status of the thinking self. As I have tried to show in the last chapter, according to Kant's theory of knowledge, transcendental apperception does not provide any insight into the nature of the thinking self through an intellectual intuition, but only yields a pure consciousness of it as logical subject of thought. This pure consciousness, however, falls short of acquiring the status of knowledge because of the absence of the intellectual intuition in the transcendental philosophy. And

since it is not knowledge, strictly speaking, it does not extend our knowledge of the self. But what it really is, is not made clear by Kant. The ambiguity of the pure consciousness of the thinking self makes the ontological status of the thinking self unclear as well. It seems that the thinking self is neither a phenomenal nor a noumenal entity in the transcendental philosophy. Although Kant sometimes seems to be maintaining that it is a noumenal entity, this does not cohere with the function that he assigns to the thinking self, namely that it is a transcendental condition of experience. For the noumenal entities, according to Kant, are not knowable, and hence cannot directly participate in the process of our cognition of objects. But since there is no other ontological category in the transcendental philosophy, it is very difficult to find an ontological status for the thinking self, and therefore an epistemological status for the pure consciousness of it as well.

Finally, I would like to point out that although emphasizing the different aspects of the self (the phenomenal, the thinking, and the noumenal aspects of the self) appears to help Kant in accounting for certain epistemological issues, he nevertheless fails to successfully connect these different aspects afterwards, which further complicates the issues of the self and self-knowledge. I would like to end this conclusion by the following quotation

from Wolff which nicely captures this point, and maybe even the central point, of the dissertation:

"In the end, Kant failed to find a satisfactory theory of the self which could reconcile the transcendental ego, the empirical ego, the moral self, the noumenal self, and all the faculties of reason, will, judgment, imagination, understanding, feeling, and sensibility which he attributed to them" (Wolff, *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity*, p. 109).

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