

A Philosophical Model of the Relation between Things in Themselves and Appearances

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1. Introduction

The question of how best to understand Kant's distinction between things in themselves and appearances is one of the central interpretive questions concerning Kant's theoretical philosophy, as well as one of the thorniest. By and large, philosophers have approached this distinction by recasting it in terms for which they antecedently believe they have a clearer understanding. In short, these philosophers provide what we can think of as *translations* of Kant's technical jargon into the jargon of contemporary philosophy. In what follows, I will propose what I will call, for want of a better name, a *non-translationist* approach to this distinction, which stresses a methodology I will call *philosophical modeling*. I will then apply this methodology to one of the thorniest questions in Kant interpretation, specifically, to the question of what the distinction between things in themselves and appearances consists in.

As the name suggests, a non-translationalist approach does not attempt to recast, reconstruct, explicate, or explicitly define the Kantian technical terminology of things in themselves and appearances in terms of something we are antecedently more comfortable with. Instead, a non-translationalist approach takes these technical expressions on their own terms as it were, and attempts to provide a coherent account of how they are used in the Kantian philosophy. But of course it is hard to see how else one provides such an account without offering explicit definitions of the Kantian jargon. This is where the methodology of philosophical modeling will prove important. So let me turn to a brief discussion of the idea of philosophical modeling.

Let me start with something relatively obvious. Whenever a philosopher offers a definition of a bit of jargon employed by her historical predecessor, she runs a risk of attributing to her predecessor concepts that he or she might not have possessed. Let me give a stark example of someone taking that risk. Suppose one were to offer the following account of the distinction between things in themselves and appearances; the toy account that I will offer is an instance of the so-called 'one world' family of views, according to which things in themselves are numerically identical with appearances. On this toy account, the distinction is a distinction between things considered with properties that are modally independent of us and things considered with properties that are modally dependent on us; a property is modally dependent on us just in case there is no possible world in which something

exists and has that property and yet there are none of us existing in that world.¹ If we are to take this distinction as amounting to a *definition* of what Kant *meant* by his distinction between things in themselves and appearances, then we *attribute* to Kant an apparatus of possible worlds along with the view that we should understand modal dependence in terms of them. Now *perhaps* these commitments are rightfully attributable to Kant, although I doubt this, and I'm not interested in having that debate at this moment. I merely want to stress that when offering a definition of a historical technical term using contemporary jargon, one takes risks that one might not want to take.

The non-translationalist takes no such risks, but by doing so in turn appears to run the risk of having nothing of interest to offer to the historian of philosophy, or to the contemporary philosopher who wishes to make a form of contact with a historical text. The positive contribution the non-translationalist can make is a philosophical model of how these terms work. I understand a philosophical model as being somewhat analogous to a mathematical model of physical phenomena in two ways: first, the model purports to correspond with some aspect of the phenomena being modeled but second, there are (or might be) features of the model that are 'mere artifacts' of the model. Here is a toy example of a mathematical model. Suppose we wish to describe the relative paths of objects to and from each other in spacetime via a series of graphs. The series of graphs will correspond to the relative paths of these objects, but will also 'impose' structure on these objects that might not be there in reality. First, any graph with an $x/y/z$ axis will have an artificial zero point. Second, sequences of graphs in which everything, for example, is moved one unit to the right on one dimension arguably do not represent distinct structures but rather are accidental features of the model, and so forth. Now perhaps there is this extra structure in reality, but even if there is, it is not what we were trying to model when diagramming the relative paths of objects, and so we can, for the purposes of understanding the paths of objects via the model, remain neutral on whether there is that extra structure, or whether it is merely an 'artifact of the model'.

Similar remarks apply to philosophical models. A philosophical model is a worked out philosophical position that has features that are analogous to the historical position of which it is supposed to be a model. But the philosophical model might have features that are 'mere artifacts' of the model, i.e., not part of the fully faithful account of the meaning of some statement of a historically important philosophical view. But still the philosophical model can be useful if the following conditions obtain. First, it is clear that the philosophical model is itself a coherent philosophical position, and second, when taken as a model for the historical position, it shows a way in which that historical position could be coherently maintained. This is especially important when the position in question is one whose coherence has often been doubted, as is the case with Kant's distinction between things in themselves and appearances.² And finally, there must be no elements in the model that are explicitly contradicted by elements in the theory that is being modeled; I take the importance of this to be self-explanatory.

The non-translationalist in effect takes the non-translated terms as primitive, i.e., undefined, terms. This does not mean that the non-translationalist has no interpretative task though: she must still characterize the role these terms play in the theory that appears in the historical text. In, for example, a metaphysical theory, some of the terms appearing in the historical text will be terms whose intended use is to label a metaphysical kind or category of thing, while others will be relational predicates that purport to link entities from different categories, and so on. So one interpretative task that even the non-translationalist will face is sorting technical terms into appropriate syntactic and semantic categories. This task will not always be easy, especially when the text to be interpreted is one written in a language very unlike the language (or languages) most comfortable to the non-translationalist. But it is still a preliminary task: the articulation of the structure of the theory is the more important and difficult task. In the test case we are considering here, the non-translationalist needs to produce accounts of how terms like ‘appearances’ and ‘things in themselves’ get employed. The easiest way to do this is to use these terms in a way that demonstrates how they are used in the text. For example, one can say that, on Kant’s view, things in themselves and appearances are numerically distinct, might fail to stand in a 1–1 correspondence with each other, are such that we cannot infer from claims about the nature of appearances to claims about the nature of things in themselves, and so forth. This is the strategy that I will pursue here: in section 2, I will lay out a series of constraints that an adequate account of things in themselves and appearances must meet, and use Kant’s own technical terms as I do this.

In what has preceded, I have carefully distinguished the offering of translationalist accounts from the offering of philosophical models. But of course in actual hermeneutic practice, both techniques will often be simultaneously applied to distinct portions of the same historical work. Moreover, in some cases it is possible that we might need translations of some of the technical terms appearing in a historical work in order to assess whether a philosophical model is successful for the historical theory as a whole. So although it is important to be explicit and clear about which tools are available in our interpretative toolkit, we shouldn’t lose sight of the fact that many interpretative jobs will require more than one methodological tool.³

One final remark on the usefulness of philosophical modeling in interpretative contexts. As interpreters of philosophical texts we must be sensitive to the possibility that there is no precise way of translating the original technical jargon into contemporary terms because the original technical jargon is more indeterminate in meaning than any of the proposed translations of the jargon. This sensitivity to indeterminacy is present in some students of Newton who note that there is no clear way to account for what is meant by technical terms such as ‘mass’ in terms employed by contemporary scientific theories; the latter are in a sense more precise than the former. Did Newton mean by ‘mass’ relativistic mass or proper mass? See Field (1973) for an impressive discussion of this issue, and for arguments that Newton’s use of ‘mass’ is indeterminate with respect to these two possibilities. I think it is likely that this phenomenon of indeterminacy is present in many

texts of interest to us, especially when we consider that many historically important philosophers simultaneously engaged in both natural philosophy and speculative metaphysics, and took considerations from both domains of inquiry to be relevant to each other. For a second example, consider Leibniz's claim that 'living force' is properly measured by the product of the size of an object with the square of its velocity, i.e., mv^2 .⁴ This claim is defended in numerous places in Leibniz's works. One prominent context in which it is used to defend some seriously heavy duty-metaphysics is in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*.⁵ Now set aside concerns about relativistic mechanics; still, it seems highly doubtful to me that what Leibniz *meant* by 'living force' is what later natural philosophers *meant* by 'kinetic energy', even though kinetic energy is measured in pre-relativistic (but post-Leibnizian!) physics by $(1/2)mv^2$. I suspect that we cannot grasp what Leibniz meant by his technical terms without immersing ourselves in the totality of his physics, and perhaps such an immersion is no longer possible for us given our current epistemic situation. We can however *model* Leibniz's physics by appealing to the post-Leibnizian notion of kinetic energy.

When a philosophical technical term is indeterminate in this way, we cannot offer translations of historical jargon into contemporary jargon, since strictly speaking the purported translations will import more determinate content than was present in the original text. But although such importing of content is impermissible if the goal is strictly to give a translation, if the goal is to give a philosophical model of the text, surplus determinate content is par for the course. Such models might be usefully thought of as ways of making an indeterminate text more determinate; and a reasonable interpretative goal could be to provide the full range of possible ways of sharpening the texts in question, even though none of these sharpenings could in itself be rightfully considered to be *the* meaning of the original texts in question.⁶

In what follows next, I offer a philosophical model for the distinction between things in themselves and appearances that has these two features. So let me be a bit more up front about why I take this to be an important task. I want to explore the view that the distinction between things in themselves and appearances is at rock bottom an ontological distinction: that is, that things in themselves are not numerically identical with their appearances. Views of this sort are often called 'two worlds' views.⁷ But there are several important challenges facing friends of two-worlds views that seem to cast serious doubt on the coherence of two-worlds views in general. We can think of meeting these challenges as conditions on the adequacy of the philosophical model for the two-worlds view.

Fortunately, I think the model I offer for the two-worlds theory can meet these constraints. The model for the distinction that I propose is a model on which the relation between things in themselves and appearances is a relation of *constitution*. The relation of constitution is frequently discussed among contemporary analytic metaphysicians, and although there are of course important challenges to theories that make use of it, it is understood well enough that a model making use of it can be theoretically coherent.⁸ Note that I am *not* claiming that the relation between things in themselves and appearances *just is* the relation of constitution. I will be arguing though that a model on which it is the relation of constitution is a coherent

and interesting model, and so we can, without fear of conceptual anachronism, use this model to see how Kant's view could be both coherent and interesting.

Here is the game plan for the remainder of the paper. In the next section, I will lay out a series of constraints that any adequate version of a two-worlds view, whether translationalist or not, must meet. In section three, I provide a quick discussion of the metaphysics of constitution that is the basis for my philosophical model of the relation between things in themselves and appearances. In section 4, I will use this philosophical model to demonstrate the coherence of a version of the two-worlds view. In section 5 I will discuss a potential problem with the model and defuse it. Finally, in section six, I will briefly discuss the reasons for taking the constitution model merely as a good model rather than fully attributing the constitution view to Kant.

2. Constraints

According to the two-worlds interpretation, things in themselves are not identical to their appearances: this is the core claim common to all two-worlds views. But although things in themselves and their appearances are not, in general, identical, they must be related to each other in some important way, and accounting for how they are related is notoriously problematic.

One reason why is that Kant says that we can surely infer the actuality of things from their appearances. It is fairly obvious that Kant never doubts the reality of things in themselves in *the Critique of Pure Reason*. To deny that there are things in themselves would land us 'in the absurd conclusion that there can be appearance without anything that appears' [Bxxvii, CPR: 115]. So he is certain that there cannot be appearances without things in themselves. One of the clearest places where Kant makes this assertion is in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, with the salient quotation being:

For the sensible world lies merely in my senses. These, however, show us only the manner in which they are affected by the things, but not the latter themselves. They show us merely the appearances of the things. But these are not the things themselves. They indeed underlie the appearances, and I can surely infer the actuality of things from the appearances . . . [29: 857, LOM: 214].

With these quotations by Kant in mind, I introduce the first constraint, which is:

The Epistemic Immediacy Constraint: The relationship between things in themselves and appearances is such that, if we know that there are appearances, what we know can fully justify us in inferring that there are things in themselves.

Note that one historically popular two-worlds interpretation of Kant runs immediately afoul of this constraint. This version of the two-worlds view is one in which appearances are identified with mental content, perhaps akin to Lockean ideas, that are somehow generated causally or quasi-causally by our interactions with things in themselves.⁹ If this view of the distinction between things in themselves and appearances were correct, then one could not be *fully* justified in inferring that

there are things in themselves from appearances. See, for example, [A367, CPR: 425], where Kant tells us that a thing that can be inferred only as a cause of a given perception has a doubtful existence. And of course you can't be *fully* justified in inferring the existence of that which has in this sense a doubtful existence. So appearances are not mental content; they are not Lockean ideas caused by our interactions with things in themselves. But what then are appearances? Whatever they are, they must obey what I am calling the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint.

In fact, it is hard to see how, for Kant, one could be maximally justified in believing in things in themselves on the basis of appearances unless the reason that we can surely infer the existence of things in themselves from the existence of appearances is that the existence of appearances metaphysically guarantees things in themselves: that is, unless, *necessarily* if there are appearances, then there are things in themselves. For this reason, I think that the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint licenses a corresponding Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint: the relation between things in themselves and appearances must be such that the latter's existence metaphysically ensures the former's existence.¹⁰

In some way appearances are the products of our encounters with things in themselves. The version of two-worldism that holds that appearances are mental content of some sort does point to an account of how appearances are produced: they are produced by our having a kind of causal interaction with the things in themselves. That is appearances understood as mental content are produced by our causally interacting with things in themselves. On this view, appearances are the products of efficient causal interactions. But, as just argued, this particular version of two-worldism can satisfy neither the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint nor the Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint. As just noted, in general, for Kant, one is not fully justified in believing in the existence of an efficient cause on the basis of its effects. This tells us that a further constraint is a corollary of the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint and the Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint, specifically:

Non-Causal Production: The way in which appearances are the products of things in themselves must not be understood in terms of an efficient causal relation that non-derivatively obtains between things in themselves and appearances.

Now let be clearer about what the Non-Causal Production constraint rules out. It does *not* rule out that states of appearances are (or might be) causal consequences of how things are in themselves. So, for better or for worse, it does *not* across the board rule out the possibility of transcendental affection, i.e., the possibility of causal relations between things in themselves and appearances. One might initially think that we need a stronger constraint in order to rule transcendental affection, since many seem to think that transcendental affection is incoherent. One standard line of complaint goes roughly like this: the concept of causation is one of the categories of the understanding, and our knowledge of causal relations is supposed to be restricted to those that stand between appearances, rather than between appearances and something beyond them, or between us (as we are in ourselves) and the things in themselves.

This standard line is probably too quick. First, let us note that it is certainly consistent for Kant to speculate whether the unschematized pure categories of the understanding apply to non-sensible objects; this is what Kant tells us when he says that we can *think* things in themselves. Speculation that the pure unschematized category of causation applies to non-sensible things just is speculation that such things are causally related to one another.¹¹ As Karl Ameriks has argued in many places, what Kant denies is our having *specific* and *positive* knowledge of things in themselves.¹² This restriction is consistent with our having the very general knowledge that things in themselves stand in an unschematised causal relation to each other.¹³ This minimal commitment might violate the slogan ‘no knowledge of things in themselves’ were that claim to be taken in the strictest possible way—but Kant does not embrace that slogan understood in the strictest possible way, and he is not to be faulted for failing to embrace it. We know that things in themselves are not toaster ovens, that there is at least one of them, and so forth and so on, and no one in their right mind would deny Kant such knowledge either.¹⁴ And as argued by Westphal (1997), it is plausible that transcendental reflection provides us with evidence that we-as-we-are-in-ourselves are causally affected by things in themselves. Finally, Stang (2013) makes a strong textually-based case that Kant accepted that causal relations obtain between things in themselves and appearances.¹⁵

So the claim that transcendental affection is incoherent needs at best further motivation. This isn’t the place to pursue this here.¹⁶ Fortunately, though, as mentioned above, the Non-Causal Production constraint does not rule out the possibility of transcendental affection. What it does rule out is that the existence of appearances is itself an efficient casual effect of the behavior of things in themselves. This is a subtle distinction, but an important one. For as noted earlier, belief in the existence of things in themselves would not be fully justified by the existence of appearances if the latter were the efficient causal products of the former, and hence the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint would not be satisfied.¹⁷ However, it is obviously correct that we are *not* fully justified in believing anything (specific and positive) about the *states* of things in themselves on the basis of *how* (rather than *that*) appearances are, so there is no corresponding problem with the claim that aspects of appearances are efficient causal products of the behavior of things in themselves. We are fully licensed in inferring the existence of things in themselves from the existence of appearances, but we are not licensed in inferring claims about the nature of these things in themselves from the efficient causal consequences of their natures.¹⁸

In general, it is important that the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint is stated in general terms: it does not say that we are in a position to infer specific facts about things in themselves from specific facts about appearances. (Similar remarks apply to the Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint.) More concretely, the Epistemic Immediacy Constraint does not demand that we be fully justified in inferring that there is a 1–1 correspondence between the number of appearances confronting us and the number of things in themselves underlying them: we are merely justified in believing that there are some things in themselves. Perhaps how many there are, and how they line up with appearances, is beyond our ken.¹⁹

In fact, Kant in several places makes claims that seem to commit him to their not being a 1–1 correspondence between appearances and things in themselves.²⁰ This leads us to a fourth constraint, which is:

The Non-Correspondence Constraint: An adequate account of the relation between things in themselves and appearances must make sense of how the relation between things in themselves and appearances needn't be a relation that puts them in a 1–1 correspondence.

Another constraint that any adequate two-worlds account must satisfy is that it must account for how appearances are in some way ideal or mind-dependent. It is clear from the text that were there no creatures relevantly like us, there would be none of the appearances that we encounter in experience. Among the passages in which this dependence is expressed are the following:

... if I were to take away the thinking subject, the whole corporeal world would disappear, as this is nothing but the appearance in the sensibility of our subject and one mode of its representations [A383, CPR: 433].

... appearances do not exist in themselves but only relatively to the subject in which, so far as it has senses, they inhere [B164, CPR: 263]

Perhaps if there were creatures with a different kind of sensibility, there could be appearances of some sort—but they would not be the sort of appearances that we encounter in experience. So I will focus on the appearances that we encounter, and with that in mind, I introduce the fifth constraint:

The Dependence Constraint: An adequate account of the relation between things in themselves and appearances must make sense of how appearances, but not things in themselves, are dependent on creatures with our form of sensibility.

Let me make another clarifying comment. In this paper, my attention will be directed towards so-called outer appearances, among which are, on my view, ordinary physical objects and the objects of proper empirical scientific inquiry. I will have little to say about the appearances of inner sense and the selves that enjoy them. The kind of two-worlds view that I will be articulating in what follows is provisionally restricted to appearances of outer sense, and holds that such objects are not identical with things in themselves. Perhaps though things such as you and I are both appearances but are also such that we can be considered as we are in ourselves. Moreover, it might be that a 'one-worlds view' or 'double-aspect theory' is the right view for things like ourselves, even though, e.g., no ordinary physical object is a thing in itself.²¹ In what follows, I am just going to set this possibility aside. I mention this now so that we understand what the Dependence Constraint in effect is demanding: it in effect demands that we make sense of how things like ordinary physical objects or the objects of empirical physics are dependent on creatures with our form of sensibility. In short, my focus is on outer appearances, those found in space, and discussed in passages such as the following:

The transcendental concept of appearances in space, on the contrary, is a critical reminder that absolutely nothing that is intuited in space is a thing in itself, and that space is not a form that is proper to anything in itself, but rather that objects in themselves are not known to us at all, and that what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose true correlate, i.e., the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them, but is also never asked after in experience [A30/B46, CPR: 161–162].

The version of the two-worlds view that identifies appearances with mental content or Lockean ideas does an excellent job of satisfying the Dependence Constraint. If appearances are ideas in us that are generated by our interactions with things in themselves, it is clear how it is that appearances are dependent on us—since it is clear that our mental content is dependent on us, and it is also clear that something couldn't have the kind of content that we have without sharing in our forms of sensibility. But, as I noted earlier, this version of the two-worlds view fails to satisfy either the Epistemic Constraint or the Metaphysical Constraint.

And the failure of this version of two-worldism provides a good way of seeing why the Dependence Constraint is going to be hard to satisfy. If outer appearances are not mental content, or some sort of constructions whose constituents are mental content, it is very hard to see how they could be dependent on creatures like us. If, e.g., a stone were a mere sum of sensations, or even if it were a kind of logical construction made out of actual and counter-factual sensations, that is sensations we would have were we to be in various circumstances, then we would see how it is that stone would be dependent on us. But absent this kind of ontological picture, the claim that, e.g., stones are dependent on us seems barely intelligible.²²

The final constraint that the friend of the two-worlds solution must meet is accounting the fact that, on Kant's view, appearances have 'a hidden side'. Although appearances are the objects of intuition, and are in some way dependent on us, they are not transparent to us: there are aspects of them that elude our cognition. The two-worldeer needs to make sense of this. But this initially seems very tricky: how can we consider what an object of intuition might be like in itself even though that object is something that is nothing in itself? I will call this constraint:

The Hidden Side Constraint: An adequate account of the relation between things in themselves and appearances must make sense of how appearances, despite being nothing in themselves, can nonetheless be appropriate objects for speculation about what they are like in themselves.

The Hidden Side Constraint is not satisfied by simply pointing out that appearances are in some way related to things that are something in themselves with natures unknown to us, since simply pointing this out does not yet give us an account for how the appearances themselves could have a nature that is unknown to us. It is not obvious that a friend of the two-worlds view is capable of meeting this constraint. And it is important that the friend of the two-worlds view meet the Hidden Side Constraint, for doing so provides the two-worldeer with the blades to undercut the textual support provided to the one-world view by passages like the following:

For in the appearances of objects, indeed even properties that we attribute to them, are always regarded as something really given, only insofar as this property depends only on the kind of intuition of the subject in the relation of the given object to it then this object as appearance is to be distinguished from itself as object **in itself** [B69–70, CPR: 190].

It is obvious from the texts that Kant sometimes wants us to consider the things that appear, i.e., appearances, as *they* are in themselves. A reading of texts like the one above that tells us that we are to consider objects that appear and *some numerically distinct* objects as they are in themselves is a forced reading. I don't see a great way for the two-worlder to make such a reading more palatable.²³ But if the two-worlder can explain how appearances can have a hidden side, and so be in some sense appropriate objects to consider as they are in themselves even though they are not identical with things in themselves, then the two-worlder can take passages like the one above at face value. Their interpretation would be in a considerably stronger position.

There is a second reason to care about the Hidden Side constraint. Kant's attitude towards our epistemic situation is that we are (unfortunately) missing out on some important aspects of reality: even the things that we are most intimately acquainted with have a side that is forever outside our reach, at least insofar as we remain the kinds of beings we currently are. It's hard to see how two-worldees can do justice to Kant's attitude without attributing to appearances—which on their view are things that are nothing in themselves—a property profile that they in some sense enjoy 'in themselves'.

On the philosophical model I propose, each of the above constraints is satisfied. Since the model is coherent, we can see by way of the model how Kant's view of the relation between things in themselves and appearances could satisfy these constraints.

3. Constitution

The paradigmatic case of constitution appealed to in the literature on the metaphysics of material objects is that of a lump of clay and the statue constituted by it. Here is a standard way in which an appeal to a relation of constitution is motivated. Suppose that an artist takes a lump of clay and manipulates it in such a way as to make a bust of Kant's head. Surely this process does not destroy the lump of clay—lumps of clay do not go out of existence simply by being manipulated in this fashion.²⁴ So the lump still exists. But the lump is not identical with the bust of Kant's head, since they differ with respect to various properties: the lump existed prior to the bust of Kant's head; the bust of Kant's head is a work of art that cannot survive being flattened, whereas the lump of clay can survive being flattened; the bust of Kant's head is a proper object of artistic criticism, whereas the lump is just a lump, and so on. In general, the modal, temporal, and broadly-speaking evaluative properties of constituted objects and constituting objects differ. But although the lump is not identical with the bust of Kant's head, they still clearly bear some intimate relation with each other: the lump constitutes the bust.

There are several interesting features about the constitution relation that are of relevance to the project here. They are, in no particular order:

Non-symmetric Generic Dependence: If x constitutes y , then y cannot exist without being constituted by something or other. But, depending on what kind of thing x is, x might be capable of existing without constituting something or other.

Non-symmetric Generic Dependence seems obviously right in the case we just discussed. The bust of Kant's head cannot exist without it being constituted by some underlying lump of matter. Perhaps it needn't be the same underlying lump of matter though—perhaps small pieces of the lump that constitutes it at one minute can be gradually replaced from moment to moment until the end result is a numerically distinct lump that constitutes the numerical identical bust of Kant's head. This is why I call the dependence *generic*: the existence of the bust of Kant's head requires some underlying lump of matter or other. But it also seems that lump could have existed without ever constituting anything. Had there not been an artist shaping the lump with certain artistic intentions, the lump would have failed to constitute a statue. Reflection on this fact leads to the next important feature of the constitution relation:

Constitution in Relational Contexts Implies Dependence: If x constitutes y , and x does not constitute y solely in virtue of x 's intrinsic properties but rather in virtue of x 's intrinsic properties and x 's relations to other things, then, necessarily, in absence of some such relational context, the constituted object y cannot exist.

What Constitution in Relational Contexts Implies Dependence tells us, is that if a constituted object exists in virtue of the constituting objects standing in various relations to other things (besides the constituted object), then the constituted object depends not only on the existence of some underlying constituter, but also on the relational context in which the fact of constitution obtained. Often among these relations will be relations constituted by various kinds of intentional attitudes of agents. The presence of a statue requires more than a mere lump with various intrinsic properties: it requires the presence of various artistic intentions by an appropriate agent as well, and only when those are present is there that in virtue of which a statue comes to be constituted by a lump. Necessarily, a world with no agents is also a world with no statues.

Let me say a bit more about these relational contexts. First, the relations partially in virtue of which constitution occurs needn't be ones that any agents are in any interesting sense knowledgeable of. Perhaps our hominid ancestors made art without having a conception of what they were making; perhaps small children do this as well. If so, in some cases the relevant relational context can obtain in absence of any knowledge of it obtaining. Moreover, in a sense the relational context can outlive its relata. Consider an automated factory that produces statues out of clay. This factory might continue to produce statues out of clay even long after human beings have died out. (Suppose for example humans are wiped out by a plague of some sort.) The statues produced by the factory would not be identical to the lumps of clay that constitute the statues. So although agents must have existed at some

point to set up the conditions for production of statues, the constituted products can outlive the agents themselves.

Now perhaps there are cases of constitution that obtain wholly in virtue of the intrinsic properties of the constituter. Karen Bennett (2004) and John Hawthorne (2006, p. 53), for example, have argued for a plentitudinous view roughly according to which for any given object x and property F that object has, there is a constituted object that exists just in case x has F . Since among such properties are intrinsic properties, there will be cases of constitution that obtain independently of any relational contexts. Such a view is a descendant of Aristotle's theory of qua-objects. On this view, whenever Socrates sits, there is an object *Socrates sitting*. In general, on this view, whenever something x F s there is an object that is x -qua- F .²⁵ There is an in-house dispute among fans of constitution about whether to accept such a view or rather to hold that constitution obtains only in relational contexts. Fortunately, I needn't take a stand on this issue. First, since I am interested in offering a philosophical model using some version of the constitution view rather than arguing for a particular version of the constitution view, which version of the constitution view to take as my model should be determined by primarily *hermeneutical* considerations rather than metaphysical ones. The question of whether a model in which constitution works one way rather than another is more suitable as a model than one based on a different theory of constitution is, for the purposes of this paper, the relevant question. So if need be, I could stipulate that the model of constitution I am employing is one in which constitution occurs only in relational contexts. Second, I believe that I can be neutral on the question of which version of the constitution view is correct: perhaps things in themselves can constitute entities in virtue of their intrinsic properties, but if so, on the Kantian picture we would have no more access to these constituted entities than we have to the entities that constitute them. But more to the point, there could still be appearances, which on the model I am exploring, are constituted by things in themselves in virtue of not merely their intrinsic nature but also in virtue of their relational contexts. We will briefly return to this issue later in the paper.²⁶

We move on to the next interesting feature of the constitution relation. Suppose a statue has fifteen kilograms of mass. The lump constituting it also has fifteen kilograms of mass. But they do not collectively enjoy thirty kilograms of mass. Rather, the lump has the fifteen kilograms of mass non-derivatively, whereas the statue enjoys those fifteen kilograms of mass only derivatively. In general:

Constitution Implies Inheritance: Constituted objects inherit some of the intrinsic properties of the objects that constitute them.

Which intrinsic properties does a constituted object inherit? Here we need to proceed very carefully. If a modal property such as *possibly being flattened* is an intrinsic property, we nonetheless do not want to say that the statue inherits that property. The statue inherits many intrinsic properties from the lump: its chemical constitution, its mass, its shape, and so forth. But it doesn't inherit the property *being a mere lump of clay*. It looks like modal properties and properties that directly imply what kind of thing the exemplifier of the property is, i.e., 'sortal properties',

are not inherited even if they are intrinsic properties. Finally, possibly a statue could have an arm as a part even though its constituting lump does not have an arm as a part, so we also can't assume that the mereological structure of the constituted object is exactly the same as the mereological structure of the constituting object. The safest thing for the friends of the constitution relation to do is to restrict the inheritance to non-modal properties, non-mereological properties, and properties that do not also imply what kind of thing the object is. There is finessing to be done here, but this is a project for another time.

The final feature of the constitution relation worth mentioning is that it is a highly general relation in the sense that its range is not restricted simply to the category of material objects. This has been noted by Zangwill (2012), who claims that objects, events, properties, tropes, and facts can all stand in constitution relations to each other. As evidence for Zangwill's thesis, we can simply note that some friends of constitution have argued that the relation obtains between physical events and mental events (Pereboom 2011) and between sound structures and musical works conceived as abstract objects (Evnine 2009). I mention this feature partly because it does not seem obviously appropriate to think of things in themselves as *physical* or *material* objects given that they are neither spatial nor temporal. This might lead someone to worry that, if material constitution can relate only material objects to other material objects, then it is an inappropriate relation to be used as part of a philosophical model for the distinction between things in themselves and appearances. But, despite the name of the relation, as noted the range of the relation is potentially greater than material objects. So there is no barrier to taking the constitution view as a model for how things in themselves are related to appearances.

In the next section, we will see how far such a model takes us.

4. The Model and the Constraints

Suppose that the relation between things in themselves and appearances is the relation of constitution: things in themselves in the appropriate contexts constitute appearances. What are the appropriate contexts? That is something that we are not in a position to fully spell out, but it must involve some sort of relations they bear to things that have our form of sensibility.²⁷ Since constituted objects are not identical with the objects that constitute them, we have a version of a two-worlds view. But on this view, each of the constraints on being an adequate version of two-worldism is met.

We start with Epistemic Immediacy Constraint, which demands that our knowledge that things in themselves exist given that appearances exist must be secure. I suggested that this Epistemic Immediacy Constraint in turn requires a Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint: the existence of appearances must entail the existence of things in themselves. Note now that the Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint is met on this view. Appearances are constituted objects; if something is a constituted object, then there must be things that constitute them, i.e., the things in themselves that underlie the appearances. If the relation between things in themselves and

appearances is one of constitution, then one's inference of the existence of things that constitute from the existence of things that are constituted is secure.

We turn next to the Non Correspondence Constraint, which demands reassurance that things in themselves and appearances needn't be in 1–1 correspondence. It is clear that, if the relation between things in themselves and appearances is a relation of constitution, then this constraint is satisfied. Set aside any Kantian inclinations you might have and consider the metaphysical picture of the typical proponent of the constitution metaphysics. On this picture, there is no expectation that there be a 1–1 correspondence between constitutors and that which is constituted, for at least two reasons. First, there might be objects that do not constitute anything at all. Similarly, in the Kantian worldview there might be objects, such as God, that do not appear to creatures like us, and so do not constitute appearances. Perhaps God is not in an appropriate relational context to constitute an appearance. Another obvious possibility is one in which a constituting object has parts that stand in no relations of constitution. Perhaps, for example, an electron that helps compose the lump nonetheless does not constitute anything by itself. Second, a constituting object might constitute more than one thing. A single ink-covered piece of paper might constitute two numerically distinct letters, for example.²⁸ So there is no reason to expect that there to be a 1–1 correspondence between appearances and things in themselves. There might be more appearances than things in themselves but there might also be fewer.

We turn now to the Dependence Constraint, which demands that we explain how appearances, which are not constructions out of mental content, can nonetheless be dependent, in some way, on minds. Again, if the relation between appearances and things in themselves is the relation of constitution, we can see how the Dependence Constraint is satisfied. A statue is in no way a construction out of mental content. It is a concrete physical object rather than a sequence of ideas, concepts, or what not. Yet statues can exist only in worlds in which agents with the right sort of intentions also exist. Recall that constitution obtains in this case and others like it not solely in virtue of the intrinsic properties of the constituting object but also partially in virtue of the relational context in which it is found. Similarly, appearances needn't be mental entities to be mind-dependent; their existence can still require the appropriate relational context, which, although we are not in a position to fully account for, must involve in some way the existence of creatures with our forms of sensibility.

One of the initially puzzling things about Kant's views on material objects is that they are both dependent on us and yet capable of escaping our knowledge or even our attention. On Kant's view, there are microscopic objects that might never be actually perceived or thought about [A226/B274, CPR: 326]. And there are appearances that might outlive us despite being dependent on us. Moreover, phenomenal substances (which I do not take to be identical with things in themselves) are guaranteed to be permanent, and so are definitely temporally prior to any human cognizers, and perhaps will continue to exist after all such cognizers have died out, if Kant's practical postulate of immortality is false. And yet they are

mere appearances nonetheless. It is initially very hard to see how it is even barely coherent for mind-dependent things to escape the mind in just these ways. But in light of what was said earlier about the constitution relation we can see how on the constitution model this is possible. Constituted objects can outlive us; constituted objects can escape our attention.²⁹

Next, we turn to the Non-Causal Production constraint, which requires that we not explain the production of appearances from things in themselves in terms of efficient causal production. I think it is clear that on the constitution model, this constraint is also met. The statue that is constituted by the clay is not an efficient causal product of the clay. Now it is true that many philosophers follow Aristotle in distinguishing efficient causation from other kinds of causation. And in the Aristotelian scheme, the clay is a different kind of cause for the statue: it is a *material* cause.³⁰ But material causation, in the Aristotelian sense, is not what is relevant: the Non-Causal Production constraint pertains to efficient causation rather than material causation. The statue is not an *efficient* causal product of the clay. Similarly, on the constitution model, appearances are not efficient causal products of things in themselves. And so on this model, the Non-Causal Production constraint is satisfied. As noted earlier in section 2, the possibility of things in themselves causally affecting appearances is not ruled out by the Non-Causal Production constraint. How best to understand the claim that there is such cross-world causation in light of the constitution model is not something that can be deeply explored here. In my view, it is enough that (i) part of the context necessary for the non-efficient-causal production of appearances is that things in themselves are in some (non-schematized) way efficient causally related to each other and to ourselves as we are in ourselves, (ii) partially in virtue of this fact, appearances stand in (schematized) efficient causal relations to each other, and (iii) accordingly in a derivative way things in themselves stand in efficient causal relations to appearances.³¹ (Something that non-derivatively causally affects how the clay is also derivatively affects how the statue is.) But as noted, the question of whether this way of accommodating causation between things in themselves and appearances is fully adequate is beyond the scope of this paper.³²

Finally, we turn to the Hidden Side Constraint, which demands that an adequate account of the distinction between things in themselves and appearances explain how it could make sense to consider appearances as they are in themselves even though they are nothing in themselves. We have already accounted, in our model, for how appearances are nothing in themselves, that is, how they would not exist had not creatures with our form of sensibility existed. Fortunately, on our model, we can still account for how it is that appearances have a hidden side. Recall that one of the important aspects of the constitution relation is that constituted objects inherit some of the intrinsic properties of the objects that constitute them. For our purposes here it matters only that some of these are inherited. Now provided that we have no insight into the intrinsic properties of things in themselves—and if you are a Kantian you will obviously deny that we have such insight—appearances have a hidden side. Whatever intrinsic properties had by things in themselves that

we are unaware of are also derivatively possessed by appearances—and hence the appearances have an intrinsic nature outside our ken. For this reason, it makes sense to wonder what appearances are like in themselves, i.e., to wonder what the intrinsic nature of an appearance is, even though appearances are nothing in themselves, i.e., owe their existence partially to their standing in certain relations to creatures like ourselves, and would not exist were they not to be in these relations, whatever these relations might be.

Another neat thing about this model is that it allows for the possibility that we might have some insight into some of the intrinsic properties of appearances even though much of their intrinsic nature is hidden to us. The claim that we have no knowledge of the intrinsic properties of anything is ascribed to Kant by Langton (1998) under the label ‘Kantian Humility’. In response to Langton’s thesis, Ameriks (2003, p. 147) discusses worries about *qualia*, which are arguably intrinsic properties of persons that we do have insight into. However, since I am focusing on outer objects only, Ameriks’ worries are not directly relevant to my project here. Bird (2000, p. 106) argues that, on Kant’s view, scientific discovery can lead to knowledge of the intrinsic properties of outer *phenomena*, and cites [A278/B334, CPR: 375] as support. If Bird is correct, then there is no in principle objection to our having knowledge of the intrinsic properties of outer objects—and this is a possibility my model leaves open.

My model leaves this open because constituted objects can have intrinsic properties non-derivatively, although they presumably have these properties in virtue of the (unknown by Kantian lights) intrinsic properties of those things that constitute them. (A property F is had by x derivatively in the sense I intend just in case x has F in virtue of some y’s having F; not every property F had by x in virtue of some property G had by some y is a property that x has only derivatively.) Perhaps *being an appearance* is itself an example of an intrinsic property had by appearances that we have insight into. I don’t want to settle questions about whether we have any insight into the intrinsic properties of appearances, but merely want to make clear that the model is flexible in this respect. (To be clear, the model does not require that we have any insight at all into the intrinsic nature of appearances.)

A final neat thing about how the model satisfies the Hidden Side constraint: friends of constitution stress that, although constitution is not the relation of identity, constitution is enough like identity to warrant counting by constitution rather than by identity.³³ Although a constituting object and the object it constitutes are numerically distinct, and so counting by identity are counted as two things, it is also appropriate to say that they are one thing when counting by constitution. When counting by constitution, we can rightfully count the statue and the lump as one thing. So on the constitution model, we can, in some contexts, rightfully count the thing in itself and what it constitutes as being one thing, even though they are numerically distinct. This aspect of the constitution model might provide further reason to be suspicious of whether texts that seem to support a one-world reading actually do: to put things anachronistically, perhaps in some of these texts, Kant is counting by constitution rather than by identity.

5. A Mereological Concern about the Model

So far the constitution model performs admirably at the task of satisfying the constraints. But the model is of course unsatisfactory if aspects of the model are explicitly contradicted by the texts for which it is designed to respond. There is a reasonable worry that one aspect of the model does this. Here I outline the worry and defuse it. The worry in a nutshell is this: Kant seems to tell us that things in themselves are not *parts* of appearances.³⁴ But if x constitutes y , then x is a part of y . So things in themselves do not constitute appearances.

Fortunately, I think this worry can be defused. There is an intramural debate concerning the extent to which the notion of constitution is tied to the notion of parthood. On one side, some friends of constitution understand constitution as requiring that every part had by the constituting object be had by the constituted object and vice-versa.³⁵ On the opposite side, some friends of constitution reject the claim that any mereological relation is required for the composition relation to obtain.³⁶ A third view, perhaps located somewhere in the middle of the first two, allows that a constituting object and the object it constitutes needn't share parts provided that the parts of the constituted object are either constituted by the constituting object or are constituted by parts of the constituting object. If we take either the second or third view for our constitution model, the thing in itself does not share parts with its appearances. So someone who wants to make use of a constitution model need only select the appropriate theory of how constitution works. There would be a deeper problem for the constitution model were it the case that the constitution relation has the features discussed in section 3 only if the constituting object is a part of the constituted object. This would take a lot of work to demonstrate.³⁷

6. Concluding Remarks

On the constitution model, the relation between things in themselves and appearances satisfies the constraints laid out in section 2. It might be natural to take this fact as providing evidence for the claim that the relation between things in themselves and appearances just is the relation of constitution. Making this move would be tantamount to embracing what I called a translationalist approach to Kant's distinction. I don't believe that translationalist approaches to historical doctrines are across the board mistaken, but merely recommend caution before embracing them. And in this case, I think there is some reason to be cautious. So let me be explicit about the lessons I wish draw from the fact that constitution model meets the constraints.

Since the constitution model is a coherent model that satisfies the constraints explained in section 2, there is at least one way in which things in themselves and appearances might be related that satisfy these constraints. So even without offering a translationalist account of Kant's technical jargon, we can see how his use of this jargon could be coherent. This is important—we are now free to take Kant's views on Kant's terms.

But we should hesitate to do more than this for two reasons. Both concerns about anachronism and extraneous determinate content motivate not ascribing a constitution view to Kant, but rather its use as a model for Kant's view.

First, the rich philosophical notion of constitution was arguably developed or discovered (I remain neutral on this apparent dichotomy) only late in the 20th century. Perhaps the notion of constitution can be found in medieval philosophy, although I am skeptical. The notion of a hylomorphic compound was in play, of course, but the concept of the relationship between a statue and its matter, where the latter is understood to be a kind of stuff and the former to be a union of stuff and form, seems different to me than the contemporary concept of a constitution relation between a constituting object and a constituted object; this contemporary concept is a concept of a relationship between one thing and another thing. And even if there is evidence that some of Kant's predecessors had the contemporary concept of constitution, we should be hesitant to attribute this concept to Kant without a compelling account of how Kant acquired this concept from his predecessors.

Second, I suspect that the notion of constitution is a notion with more determinate conceptual content than is contained in whatever conception of the relation between things in themselves and appearances that we can distill from the Kantian texts.

One way to make this suspicion of extraneous determinate content more concrete would be to develop alternative models for the relation between things in themselves and appearances that also satisfy the constraints in section 2. Unfortunately, I only suspect that this can be done—I haven't tried to develop alternatives in any detail. One possible model worth considering is the doctrine of *qua objects* inspired by Aristotle, which briefly mentioned in section 3. On this view, whenever Socrates sits, there is an object *Socrates sitting*. In general, on this view, whenever something *x* Fs there is an object that is *x-qua-F*.³⁸ Perhaps the Kantian distinction between things in themselves and appearances can be modeled by a view in which appearances are a kind of *qua object* rather than a kind of constituted object. Another possibility, one that has been explored elsewhere, is that appearances are bundles of mind-dependent properties that inhere in things in themselves.³⁹ Such a view would nicely satisfy some of the constraints mentioned in section 2 and perhaps all of them. (I am not sure if this view could make sense of the Hidden Side Constraint, but it might be that on this view there are other ways to make sense of the passages that appear to support one-worldism.)

As I said, I haven't done the work of fully developing these alternative models. But if alternative models for the distinction can be developed, each of which satisfies the constraints, then we would have a strong reason for thinking that, although each of them model Kant's distinction, none of them should be taken as translations of Kant's distinction into contemporary jargon. I strongly suspect that this is the case.

We are in a position to conclude that there is at least one possible model in which all of the constraints are met. Accordingly we are entitled to believe that there is a coherent use of Kant's technical terms, and we are entitled to use these terms without offering translationalist accounts of them.⁴⁰

Notes

¹ Formally, property F is modally dependent on the existence of human persons if and only if there is no world *w* in which (i) something instantiates F in *w* but (ii) no human person exists in *w*.

² Strictly, what a philosophical model is designed to do is to show ‘relative coherence’, that is, that the doctrine modeled is at least as coherent as the doctrine that is the model. Perhaps it would be better to say that a philosophical model must be a position antecedently viewed as *defensible* and *more understood*, since it might be that after intensive philosophical investigation, the model is revealed to be itself ultimately incoherent. But still we might reasonably think that interpretative progress is made by producing a defensible and more understood position to model a historical position that was previously viewed as being either straightforwardly confused or deeply obscure.

³ I thank an anonymous referee for helpful discussion on this point.

⁴ Let’s set aside perfectly justifiable qualms about whether what is meant ‘mass’ in post-Leibnizian pre-relativistic physics is even properly thought of as proportionate to what was dubbed ‘size’ or ‘bulk’ during the period in which Leibniz wrote. (Such qualms serve only to further motivate that such a translation is inapt, and so we must rest content with a model instead.)

⁵ Specifically, sections 17–22 of the *Discourse*, the entire text of which can be found in Leibniz (1989).

⁶ We should also be open to the opposite situation, in which the terms employed by the historical text are actually more determinate in content than their ‘counterparts’ in contemporary jargon. It is less clear how the method of philosophical modeling is appropriate in such situations. Whether there are cases of this sort is one of the things at issue in McDaniel (2009).

⁷ For a recent and sustained defense of two-worldism, see Stang (forthcoming).

⁸ For approachable arguments for and defenses of the relation of constitution include Baker (1999, 2000, 2002) and Wasserman (2002). There are of course many other such texts that could be cited as well; the literature on constitution in contemporary metaphysics is voluminous. Stang (forthcoming) is particularly useful in tying the literature on material constitution to interpretative questions concerning Kant’s metaphysics. Stang advocates the following strategy in defense of the two-worlds interpretation. First, determine the extent to which the friend of the one-world view can explain apparent differences in properties between a thing in itself and its appearance in terms of differences between how one and the same thing be considered in a way that is analogous to how one who wishes to identify the constituted object with its constituter explains apparent differences between them in terms of differences in how they are represented. Second, argue this strategy cannot succeed without collapsing the one-world interpretation into the two-worlds interpretation.

⁹ Guyer (1987, pp. 280–281) seems to attribute this view to the Kant of the A-edition. Langton (1998, p. 15) aptly describes this view as ‘the worst of all veil of appearance philosophies: Berkeley plus unknowable things in themselves’. Ameriks (2003, pp. 33–35) also tries to explain how we can infer claims about the existence of things in themselves from appearances.

¹⁰ Ameriks (2003, pp. 38–40) characterizes the relationships between the two worlds as ones of grounding or dependence, which would ensure, perhaps trivially so, that the Metaphysical Immediacy Constraint is satisfied. It is less clear whether the other constraints to be discussed would be satisfied by a view that identifies the relationship with the metaphysical notion of grounding.

¹¹ See Falkenstein (1995, pp. 327–333) and van Cleve (1999, pp. 162–166) for a discussion of the propriety of speculating about transcendental affection.

¹² See, for example, Ameriks (2000, p. 8), who has provided independent reasons for thinking that Kant’s critical epistemology only rules out our making positive and specific claims about things in themselves. I am in wholehearted agreement with Ameriks on this point.

¹³ For similar remarks, see also Pereboom (1991, p. 366).

¹⁴ See, for example, Adams (1997, p. 810).

¹⁵ See also Hogan (2009), who suggests that noumenal causation is required given the possibility of transcendental freedom. However, Stang (2013) provides what I regard as a serious objection to the argument of Hogan (2009).

¹⁶ An anonymous referee has suggested that there is no difficulty with there being an unschematized relation of cause and effect bridging the ontological divide between things in themselves

and appearances. I'm not sure that this is correct, but lack the space to more here pursuing this line of inquiry.

¹⁷ See, for example, A372, in which Kant clearly indicates that inferences from effects to efficient causes are always doubtful inferences.

¹⁸ I benefited greatly from the comments of an anonymous referee who forced me to much clearer about what is at stake when thinking about transcendental affection.

¹⁹ That is, given that there are *some* appearances, we are fully justified in inferring that there are *some* things in themselves. This is the epistemic constraint. The metaphysical constraint is that, necessarily, if there are *some* appearances, then there are *some* things in themselves.

²⁰ See Ameriks (2003, pp. 82–83) and van Cleve (1999, pp. 160–162) for discussions of these claims. Stang (forthcoming) presents an interesting strategy on behalf of the one-worlder for accommodating this non-correspondence constraint, but argues that a consequence of adopting this strategy is that the one-world view collapses into the two-world view.

²¹ See, for example, Ameriks (2003, pp. 75–76 & 83–84) for the defensibility of this kind of mixed view. Stang (forthcoming) is also sympathetic with this kind of two-worldism.

²² Similar concerns motivate van Cleve (1999, pp. 8–12) to adopt a view according to which appearances are 'virtual objects'; on van Cleve's view, to say that a virtual object exists is really a kind of shorthand for saying that certain representational acts occur. Strictly speaking, there are no such things as a virtual object, and so, strictly speaking, there are no such things as appearances for van Cleve's Kant. This strikes me as going too far. Note that van Cleve does very briefly come close to the philosophical model suggested here; see his discussion of Sosa's snowball on pages 11–12.

²³ Van Cleve (1999, pp. 144–146) tries to downplay these passages by pointing out that philosophers prior to Kant sometimes distinguished two different sets of entities even though the language they used suggests that what is being distinguished is two different aspects of one and the same set of entities. For example, Berkeley's Hylas distinguishes between the sound as it is perceived and the sound as it is in itself, but it is clear that in this particular text that this is a distinction between two numerically distinct things. So there is precedent, but I find this fact not terribly persuasive. It would be good for the two-worlder to have another interpretative option.

²⁴ But see Burke (1994) for arguments to the contrary.

²⁵ See Matthews (1982) and (1992) for discussion of Aristotle's qua-objects, which Matthews calls 'kooky objects'.

²⁶ I thank an anonymous referee for pushing me to much clearer on the issues here.

²⁷ There is a special reason for why it is not possible for me to do better than be schematic: in order to fully spell out the appropriate contexts, I would have to be in a position to specify the exact properties and relations that things in themselves and ourselves as we are in ourselves must exemplify in order for them to constitute appearances. And for obvious reasons, this is not a possibility that Kant would allow—I would need specific, positive knowledge of the features of things in themselves! But in this respect, the model I offer is no worse off than alternative and equally schematic models cast in terms of, for example, a relation of grounding.

²⁸ See Fine (2000) for an example of this sort of case.

²⁹ Admittedly, it is initially strange that constituted objects can *predate* ourselves, but I regard this strangeness as a symptom of the strangeness of there being in general any entities in times prior to when we are located in time, given that time is itself dependent on us—and this latter view is one that Kant indubitably holds. It would be nice to have a clear precedent of constituted objects that exist prior in time to the persons whose intentional states are those partially in virtue of which these constituted objects exist. Here is an unclear precedent, but one that I find plausible. Consider a sum of stellar objects whose light has taken a very long time to reach our planet, but whose arrangement comes to have great religious and practical significance to us. Given the constitution view, it would not be out of place to hold that this sum of stellar objects constitutes something (say, a *constellation*, perhaps) partially in virtue of our intentional stances towards it. But these stars have long since burned out—and so the object they constitute also is no longer present. This is not an air-tight example, but given that we can seriously entertain such an example, we should be open-minded about the possibility of the kind of Kantian constitution model I am offering here.

³⁰ Aristotle's four-fold causal scheme is discussed in his *Metaphysics* V2, as well as in other places in his works.

³¹ I thank Nick Stang for helpful discussion here.

³² One might worry that, on this account sketched here, there are only derivative causal relations between things in themselves and appearances. It's not clear to me whether the texts in question demand non-derivative causal relations. A question for another time!

³³ See, for example, Baker (2002, pp. 39–41) for a discussion of constitution and counting.

³⁴ This claim of course follows from Kant's doctrine that all parts of appearances are extensive magnitudes [A208/B254], at least if the 'all' is absolutely unrestricted, as it seems to be in this context. See also Alison (1973, p. 120) and Langton (1998, pp. 198–199). Interestingly, Ameriks (2003, p. 38) is willing to allow that things in themselves might be parts of appearances. See also Stang (forthcoming).

³⁵ See Wasserman (2002) for extensive discussion. Baker (2001, p. 181) and Doepke (1982, p. 51) deny this total mereological overlap.

³⁶ Baker (2000) in fact makes use of no mereological notion in her analysis of the constitution relation.

³⁷ Similar remarks apply to the requirement that constitution requires spatial coincidence, as is suggested by Baker (2000) and (2002). Obviously requiring spatial coincidence with things in themselves and appearances would be decidedly un-Kantian. Fortunately, I do not think that spatial coincidence is plausibly necessary for constitution, since as noted earlier it is also plausible that the constitution relation can also relate abstracta to abstracta.

³⁸ See Matthews (1982) and (1992) for discussion of Aristotle's qua-objects, which Matthews calls 'kooky objects'.

³⁹ I explore this view in McDaniel (ms).

⁴⁰ I thank Ayal Donenfeld, James Kreines, Andrew McGonical, Eric Schliesser, Eric Schwitzgebel, and Nick Stang for very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I had helpful discussions concerning unusual cases of constitution with Elizabeth Barnes and Carrie Jenkins. I received helpful feedback on an earlier version of this paper that was presented at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst at a conference in honor of Lynne Rudder Baker's retirement. I also received excellent comments from an anonymous referee that greatly strengthened the paper—and moreover I received these comments in an extremely reasonable time-frame. Whoever you are, I thank you for the work you put in to your referee report.

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