REVISITING KANT AND HUSSERL'S ON THE COPERNICAN TURN

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In the following paper, I argue that none of the recent criticisms of Kant's transcendental idealism offered on behalf of Husserl scholars such as Dominque Pradelle give us reason to think that Husserlian phenomenology moves beyond Kant's Copernican turn. I begin by first providing an interpretation of Kant's Copernican turn before outlining three issues with Kant's transcendental idealism that scholars like Pradelle (following Husserl) take as reason to reject Kant's revolution in philosophy: it makes the reference to the thing-it-itself, Kant construes the subject of the turn along psychological lines, and Kant's transcendental idealism results in skepticism. I then provide reasons why these supposed issues with Kant's theory ought not motivate us to think that Husserl's phenomenology does not operate with the underlying assumption of the turn or move beyond it. Finally, I make the case that if we take into the consideration the role played by the unity of apperception in Kant's account of object constitution, then Kant and Husserl, far from differing on the turn, are in fact, and contra thinkers like Pradelle, closer on the topic of objects of consciousness than is typically appreciated.

Keywords: *Philosophy, Kant, Copernican Turn, Husserl, Phenomenology, Transcendental Philosophy*

En el presente artículo, argumento que ninguna de las críticas recientes al idealismo trascendental de Kant ofrecidas por académicos husserlianos como Dominique Pradelle nos da razones para pensar que la fenomenología husserliana supera el giro copernicano de Kant. Comienzo proporcionando una interpretación del giro copernicano de Kant antes de delinear tres problemas con el idealismo trascendental kantiano que académicos como Pradelle (siguiendo a Husserl) consideran motivos para rechazar la revolución kantiana en filosofía: la referencia a la cosa en sí misma, la interpretación de Kant del sujeto del giro en términos psicológicos y el supuesto escepticismo resultante del idealismo trascendental kantiano. Posteriormente, presento razones por las cuales estos supuestos problemas con la teoría de Kant no deberían motivarnos a pensar que la fenomenología husserliana no opera bajo el supuesto fundamental del giro ni lo supera. Finalmente, sostengo que, si consideramos el papel desempeñado por la unidad de la apercepción en la explicación kantiana de la constitución del objeto, entonces Kant y Husserl, lejos de diferir en cuanto al giro, están, en contra de lo que afirman pensadores como Pradelle, más cercanos en cuanto al tema de los objetos de la conciencia de lo que generalmente se reconoce.

Palabras clave: *Filosofía, Kant, Giro Copernicano, Husserl, Fenomenología, Filosofía Trascendental*

Introduction

> *Kant's oeuvre contains gold in rich abundance. But one must break it and melt it in the fire of radical critique in order to bring out this content. (Husserl – from a manuscript ca. 1917)*

Throughout the development of his phenomenology, particularly beginning with and following his summer lecture course of 1907 (published posthumously as *Thing and Space*), Edmund Husserl finds himself in constant philosophical dialogue with Immanuel Kant. However, as is evident from the many references to Kant's work found throughout Husserl's corpus—in everything from his published works to his letters and lecture notes—Husserl's relationship with Kant over the course of 1907-1938 is anything but straightforward.

On the one hand, the signs of Kant's positive influence are unmistakable. Already in 1908, Husserl not only characterizes his investigations into the nature of consciousness as "transcendental" (Husserl, 1988, p. 234), but claims that his phenomenology is to be understood as a kind of "transcendental idealism"; a philosophical position Husserl ascribes to and labors under for the rest of his philosophical career. In *First Philosophy* (1923), Husserl claims that he was motivated to adopt the transcendental approach insofar as the "revolution" in the natural way of thinking accomplished by Kant's transcendental idealism provided the breakthrough needed to solve "all meaningful problems" in philosophy (Husserl, 1956, p. 237). And, in 1925, looking back at and recounting the development of his phenomenology in a letter to Ernst Cassirer, Husserl describes how his readings of Kant led him to continually appreciate the deep affinities between his own phenomenology and Kant's critical project (Husserl, 1994a, p. 54).

On the other hand, there are numerous criticisms and misgivings found throughout Husserl's writings about Kant and what the Kantian transcendental idealism in particular is capable of accomplishing. While his Neo-Kantian colleagues were calling for a return "back to Kant," Husserl instead famously called for a return to the "things" or "matters" themselves, where, in part, he has in mind descriptions of what is originally given in intuition, where these descriptions would be uninfluenced by precisely the kind of philosophical commitments that we find accompanying Kant's critical philosophy. In a letter to addressed to A. Metzger in 1919, Husserl places great emphasis on the differences between his phenomenology and Kant's transcendental idealism, stressing the slogan "back to Kant" had always remained foreign to him and claiming that he "had learned incomparably more from Hume than from Kant, against whom I had the deepest antipathies." (Husserl, 1994b, pp. 411-412).

This ambivalence has provoked a wealth of scholarly debates on the Kant-Husserl relationship, in particular the extent to which Husserl embraces a Kantian form of transcendental idealism. While the differences and similarities between Kant and Husserl's accounts of transcendental idealism have been explored on many fronts, an issue that has yet to be

resolved is whether and to what extant Husserlian phenomenology is a philosophy that embraces the Copernican "revolution" or "turn" that Kant took to be so central to his new approach. Specifically, Husserl scholars such as Dominique Pradelle have sought to make the case that Husserl's phenomenology, far from following Kant's in this regard, actually provides a number of challenges to Kant's turn, and that in fact we should understand one of the advances of Husserlian phenomenology over Kantian transcendental idealism to lie precisely in phenomenology's "anti-Copernican" stance.

According to scholars such as Pradelle, Husserl's phenomenology is a rejection of the Copernican turn not only because it is supposedly based on a number of unwarranted assumptions, but, more importantly, because of the way it fundamentally misconstrues the nature of object constitution. They argue that Husserl's various criticisms regarding the way Kant's turn understands objects of consciousness give us at least three main reasons to deny that phenomenology operates within the theoretical space opened up by Kant's turn. These reasons are, namely, that the turn (i) commits us to thing-in-itself, (ii) is inappropriately construed along psychological lines and (iii) results in subjective idealism and, thus, scepticism.

I want to make the argument that, although there are substantiative philosophical differences between Kant and Husserl, these three reasons cannot support the claim that Husserlian phenomenology departs from Kant's Copernican turn. In fact, when we look at the details regarding what Kant himself has to say about each of these issues, we see that Kant's position on consciousness ends up being much closer to Husserl's than perhaps even Husserl himself realized. Specifically, I want to make the case that if we understand Kant's account of object constitution in light of what he has to say about the unity of apperception and the way it contributes to structuring given objects, we will see that Husserlian phenomenology very much marks a further elaboration in of the kind of transcendental approach inaugurated by the turn.

I will proceed in the following way. I will begin, in section I, by first offering a brief interpretation of what I understand by Kant's Copernican turn and outline the issues with Kant's transcendental idealism that scholars like Pradelle (following Husserl) take as reason to reject the turn. In section II, I will defend Kant's appearance/thing in itself distinction, before making the case that Kant should not be interpreted along psychological or skeptical lines. It is here in the second half of section II, that I will provide a reading of the unity of apperception and demonstrate its importance for establishing Kant's account of the possibility of the objectivity of objects, as well as how, in the end, we should understand Kant's account of object constitution as not all that different than Husserl's. I will thus make the case in section II that if we give Kant's views full consideration, none of the criticisms offered by scholars like Pradelle give us a compelling reason to think Husserl and Kant should disagree on the issue of the Copernican turn. Finally, I will conclude by comparing Kant and Husserl's different versions of transcendental idealism. It is in this last discussion that I will give reasons why I think, despite their methodological differences, Husserl and

Kant are ultimately closer than they seem when it comes the central feature of transcendental idealism: the mind's contribution to the constitution of given objects initiated by the turn and its new "altered way of thinking" (Bxviii).

I.

Given Husserl's numerous references to the influence of Kant's Copernican turn on his phenomenology, Pradelle argument faces an uphill battle. In a lecture from 1923-4, for instance, after praising Kant and emphasizing the essential connection between Kant's philosophy and his own, Husserl makes it clear that it is the Copernican turn in particular that is to be celebrated as Kant's major philosophical contribution. Indeed, as Husserl himself argues, the turn is responsible for two giant steps forward in philosophy: first, it is responsible for overcoming the naïve realist attitude toward objects of consciousness and, second, points to what Husserl calls "the transcendental attitude" that his phenomenology, as a transcendental science, will itself draw upon and makes use of in its investigations. As Husserl states:

> The lasting meaning [of Kant's philosophy] lies in the frequently discussed and little understood "Copernican" turn to a fundamentally new and strictly scientific interpretation of the world as well as in the first articulation of the "entirely new" transcendental science that belongs to it. (Husserl, 1956, p. 240)

Along similar lines, in a letter from April 14, 1937 to R. Pannwitz, Husserl mentions the "true" Copernican revolution, which Husserl seems to directly equate with the re-orientation towards objects that is also at work in his famous "phenomenological reduction":

> [T]he topic of [my] second article: starting out from a critique of "presuppositions" in Kant's theories … and from there the motivation for the true "Copernican revolution"– the "phenomenological reduction" that has never been understood. (Husserl, 1994b, p. 227)

As Pradelle is well aware, however, statements such as these do not conclusively show that Husserlian phenomenology is committed to the Copernican turn or, if it is committed to some version of it, that Husserl necessarily understands the turn along Kantian lines. Not only is it difficult to neatly separate Husserl's positive views regarding the Copernican turn from his historical recounting of Kant's contributions to philosophy, but it is not at all clear that when Husserl makes use of Kantian concepts, he understands them in precisely the same way as did Kant. Indeed, as we so often find when a philosopher draws upon the work of an earlier thinker, it may entirely be the case that when Husserl draws parallels between Kant's philosophy and phenomenology (e.g., such as likening the Copernican revolution to the phenomenological reduction) he does so precisely in order to highlight the innovative character of his own re-thinking of the concept.

The question regarding the status of the Copernican turn in Husserl's work then, will not be resolved by reference to Husserl's favourable appraisals of Kant as part of his retelling of the history of philosophy; nor will it be decided by the fact that Husserl makes comparisons to or utilizes Kantian terminology and concepts to characterize his own positions. Rather, the fundamental issue is one that comes down to Husserl and Kant's very conceptions of transcendental idealism. Namely, how do Husserl and Kant construe the mind's relation to objects? Put otherwise: is Husserlian phenomenology, modeled on Kant's turn, committed to the idea that the mind not only conforms to objects, but that (at least in some sense) objects conform to the mind? Or is it case the reversal in the mind's relation with objects that characterizes Kant's turn is in some sense overcome in the transcendental philosophy that is phenomenology?

The key to resolving this issue lies in coming to a precise account of how it is Kant and Husserl understand the nature of object constitution. Indeed, thinkers like Pradelle make the case that Husserl's issue with the Copernican turn lies not just in its being based on a number of unwarranted assumptions, but, more importantly, the way it misconstrues the structuring of objects insofar as they are made available to consciousness. But in order to properly evaluate whether or not their arguments have any bearing on the turn and, further, motivate the conclusion that phenomenology can move beyond it, a more basic set of questions first need answering. In what precise way is the turn supposed to "revolutionize" the way we think about the relation between mind and object? And how does this shift change the way we understand objects? In other words: what did Kant understand by the Copernican turn and why did he deem it so revolutionary?

A generally correct but easily misinterpreted account of Kant's turn is that

amounts to the insight that our experience of given objects and the possibility of knowing them involves more than the mind simply mirroring a pre-existing world. Rather, our experience of objects and our coming to know them necessarily involves reference to a cognitive subject insofar as the cognitive subject that experiences and knows also accounts for a number of conditions that allow objects to appear in the first place: transcendental conditions or conditions of possibility that enable objects to be given, as well as thought.

As these transcendental conditions are of two fundamental kinds – those governing the passive receptivity of objects and those governing the activity of representing objects in thought – the possibility of objects appearing in the first place must necessarily refer back the cognitive subject in a twofold way. First, objects must be given in accordance with the form of sensibility (space and time) and, second, these given objects must themselves be thought in accordance with forms understanding (the categories). Insofar as these conditions *condition* objects, they are responsible for an *a priori* structure of objects that lies necessarily at the basis of and presupposed by any and all acquaintance with them.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant famously presents what he takes to be his philosophical innovation here by providing his readers a comparison: the idea that the possibility

of objects being given and thought necessarily presupposing certain cognitive conditions is not unlike the reversal experienced by astronomers regarding the relationship between the earth and sun after Copernicus's discovery that the former revolves around the latter. Supposedly, after having made little headway in explaining the celestial motions, Copernicus was able to make his breakthrough by calling into question the long-standing assumption that the rest of the celestial system orbited around the observer on earth. In a similar way, Kant characterizes his revolutionary breakthrough in terms of objects – that is, the objects given under the conditions of sensibility and thought according to understanding – needing to "conform" to the cognitive conditions of our mind, as opposed to the other way around in order to even be experienced (Bxvi).

Kant takes the insight that in order for objects to be possibly experienced and known they must first appear in light of these cognitive conditions to be a monumental one, for, by demonstrating that the appearance of even given objects requires that we must take into account the subject's cognitive capacities, it brings about a reversal in the very way we understand one of the most basic of philosophical commitments: the relationship between subject and object.

This reversal has at least two significant consequences. Not only does the nominal theory of truth ("the agreement of cognition with its object" (A58/B82; A237/B296)) need to be supplemented by a transcendental theory regarding the possible appearance of the objects that provide the measure or standard for our knowledge, but, as there are truths regarding these conditions of possibility themselves, the reversal opens up a whole new realm of philosophical investigation and knowledge ("transcendental philosophy"). The pre-critical search for knowledge of reality and its fundamentals properties is transformed by Kant's turn into a reflection on the conditions that objects must satisfy in order for them to appear for the mind at all, as well as provide the objects of its knowledge. The project of the first *Critique* at least, is to discover the transcendental conditions and expound, in principles, the necessary, *a priori* contributions these conditions make to the representation of objects; a project that will simultaneously rethink genuine metaphysical knowledge and its possibility as transcendental philosophy and distinguish this well-grounded "scientific" form of metaphysics from earlier, pre-revolutionary forms.

Now, I want to flag that this general outline of Kant's turn is easily misinterpreted. Many thinkers have misconstrued Kant's talk about objects "conforming" to our cognition and taken the comparison with the Copernicus' revolution as evidence that Kant's transcendental idealism is to be interpreted among psychological and idealist lines that, despite Kant's claims to secure the possibility of knowledge, forever puts knowledge out of reach.

Specifically, there are three main issues that arise from Kantian reversal between the subject and object, and subsequently the account object constitution, that supposedly motivate Husserl to reject Kant's Copernican turn. What is more, they claim that successfully overcoming these perceived inadequacies and moving beyond the Kantian revolution is

what distinguishes Husserl's phenomenology, as a form of transcendental idealism, from that of Kant's. These three issues are that the turn:

i. Commits us to thing-in-itself
ii. Construes the subject along psychological lines
iii. Results in subjective idealism and scepticism

To say a bit regarding what Pradelle takes to be Husserl's issues here, it is claimed that the idealism that results from Kant's turn is inherently problematic insofar as Kantian transcendental idealism, in its effort to outline the transcendental conditions according to which objects appear for consciousness, makes reference to what is entirely independent of consciousness and its conditions. This "thing-in-itself," apparently referring to that which is independent of the consciousness and its conditions, is integral to the rethinking of the subject-object relation inaugurated by the Copernican turn, and so is something Kant must commit to if his transcendental idealism is to even get off the ground. However, to mark off transcendental conditions and establish their limits by drawing upon a distinction between the way things are according to and beyond these conditions (i.e., the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction) is a hopeless task, for it is not possible for consciousness to help itself to knowledge of something that cannot function as one of its intentional correlates (indeed, Husserl famously claims the distinction is "mythology" or "myth" (Husserl 1956, p. 235)

Further, establishing of the conditions according to which objects appear and conform to experience in and through a transcendental account of the subject's cognitive make-up such that, as Kant put it, we "cognize of things *a priori* only what we ourselves have put into them" (Bxviii), ends up misconstruing what should precisely be the *a priori* character of *objects*. In fact, by attributing far too much to the subject side in the subject-object relation, construing the object-conditioning subject and its constituting along primary psychological lines, Kant's position ends up not only failing to do justice to objects of experience and their character, but results in a form of idealism that cannot easily ward off the threat of an all-encompassing skepticism.

Only a Husserlian interrogation of intentional consciousness, providing, as it does first-person, original "evidence" for the *a priori* character of objects, can truly establish the possibility of transcendental object-relations, and so successfully realizes Kant's ambition to provide a "critique of knowledge." Presumably, it is this investigation into the bounds and limitations of the knowable objects that accounts for Husserl's claim that the "true Copernican revolution" is inaugurated by way of the phenomenological reduction or *epoché*. Indeed, consider the following essential moments in the re-orientation to our conscious life Husserl thinks is occasioned by way of effecting the reduction:

1. *Epoché* leads us beyond or beneath the natural attitude characteristic of the natural sciences and which has naively been retained from everyday life: namely, that the objects we are acquainted with are simply "out there" in the mind-independent world and possess certain features or properties that we are capable of knowing. By "suspending" or "bracketing" any and all commitments of this sort, we put out of play the everyday and theoretical presuppositions, especially those regarding the status of the reality of so-called "external objects."
2. This also occasions a psychological reduction, which leads us beyond the domain of everyday our psychology by setting aside our commitments regarding the nature of the subject or "I" that is typically understood as undergoing "psychological states."
3. The phenomenological reduction proper, whereby the subsequent phenomena under investigation are no longer construed in terms of a relation between a cognizing subject and the cognized object, but rather the acts of consciousness and their *a priori* constitution of objects. Indeed, here the intending and intended are simply two poles of the same, immanent act of consciousness. It is this "level" of object-orientation that we are enabled to perform the "essential" analyses appropriate to phenomenological description.
4. Finally, this transcendental reduction entails the further claim that the immanent phenomena offered to consciousness are to be analyzed *exclusively as immanent*, that is, that they are to be regarded in total isolation from any objectivities "transcendent" to consciousness.

The phenomenological reduction supplies the true Copernican revolution insofar as it is responsible for a radical new reorienting of the way we typically approach objects of consciousness, as well as the newfound rigor and certainly in our investigations provided by its descriptions of the phenomena ("immanently" or "intuitively") given on this basis. Phenomenological description not only allows us to definitively account for the "constitution" of every sort valid objectivity or meaning (Husserl 1956, p. 233), but does so in a manner that ensures that what is captured is the objective structure of *objects* and *their a priori* constitution. In other words, by moving away from the kind of theoretical constructions central to Kantian transcendental idealism *via* the methodological maneuver that is the *epoché*, the issues plaguing the kind of transcendental theory put forward by Kant's can avoided, and the critical project truly realized. As Husserl tells us, "*[T]he phenomenological reduction*, correctly conceived, implies *the marching route to transcendental idealism*, just as *phenomenology* … is nothing other than *the first rigorous scientific form of this idealism*." (Husserl, 1956, p. 181)

II.

(i) The thing-in-itself

In many ways, the misgivings outlined by Pradelle about Kant's revolution are not new. The issues raised by Husserl scholars regarding how the turn rethinks the objects of cognition very much mirror the worries given voice to immediately following the reception of the first *Critique* by thinkers such as Jacobi. Almost two hundred years later, in the wake of P. F. Strawson's *Bounds of Sense*, it was widely presumed in the anglophone world that the only way to save the "critical insight" and "truth" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and its "transcendental turn" was to preserve the kind of *a priori* insights into the character of objects the text supplies, while dispensing with its broader metaphysical programme (Strawson, 1996). These two demands could be met by proving an account of the universal and necessary (and hence non-empirical) structures that inform the objects of our experience insofar as they are imminently demanded by our epistemic practices; a so-called "Copernican" procedure that would secure *a priori* knowledge of objects, while, at the same time, dispensing with the *Critique*'s "residual metaphysical commitments," specifically the thing-in-itself. Indeed, given that transcendental philosophy and its critique of traditional metaphysics shows us that only that which can make reference to possible experience and its structure can provide us with genuine *a priori* knowledge of objects, any notion of "things" transcending possible experience ought to be ruled-out from the very beginning.

The underlying suspicion here seems to be that by invoking the thing-in-itself and making it central to his transcendental idealism, Kant not only ends up undercutting the guiding intention of the turn, but that the the thing-in-itself invokes hidden structure and powers that downgrade (or "demote") the objectivity of objects and the objective knowledge of objects that transcendental philosophy was supposed to secure. This seems the case if the thing-in-itself is interpreted to be second thing-in-itself object that is responsible, through its "affectations," for the "mere" appearances that we are acquainted with in experience. If the thing-in-itself lies behind appearances as their cause, then we can rightfully wonder: what kind of objectivity are objects of experience supposed to ultimately possess, given we the mind is never in direct and immediate contact with such objects but only their effects?

Now, however plausible or implausible this worry may strike us as, it is these concerns regarding the positing of a second thing-in-itself object and Kant's undermining of the approach innovated by transcendental idealism that Pradelle takes to lie at the basis of Husserl's main dissatisfactions with Kant. Consider Pradelle's characterization of Kant's basic position:

> [P]ure intuitions and pure concepts can only determine objects *a priori* if these objects are not things in themselves considered in their ontological independence and in abstraction from the knowing subject. Instead, objects [of possible experience] are … appearing objects considered in their relation to our sensibility and to our faculty of

> conceptual determination. These phenomena are simple subjective representations, that, beyond themselves, refer to things in themselves that are not knowable by us. (A 248-253). These phenomena hence fall under the legislation of the Copernican revolution: if they are temporal, spatial, and determinable according to mathematical magnitude and the principle of causality, this is because the pure intuitions of time and space, as well as the categories of quantity, quality, and relation, belong universally to the finite knowing subject (Pradelle, 2022, p. 75)

> Kant's transcendental idealism allows, beyond phenomena, for a non-sensible object that is the true ontological substrate but remains non-appearing in principle: the transcendental object understood as "the merely intelligible cause of appearances." (Pradelle, 2022, p. 77)

Taken together, these two claims make it clear that, for Pradelle, the thing-in-itself is not only an object in its own right and has ontological independence from objects of possible experience, but also that it is the cause of appearances, which are themselves understood to be merely "simple subjective representations" (as opposed to the "true" thing-in itself object). In contrast, claims Pradelle, "Husserl's transcendental idealism does not allow for things in themselves, which would be independent form a constituting subject in their being" (Pradelle, 2022, p. 77).

As Kant scholars have been quick to point out, however, this interpretation of Kant cannot be the way Kant intends for the thing-in-itself to be understood and construing it along these lines is difficult to square with much of what how Kant actually has to say about it.

I would first draw attention to the fact that it does not necessarily follow that if the thing-in-itself is perceived to be an unacceptable consequence of adopting Kant's transcendental idealism more generally that this gives us reason to reject the Copernican turn. Strictly speaking, the turn only commits us to the idea that there are universal and necessary conditions that structure objects of possible experience and that these structures are, as Ameriks (2015) puts it, "immanently determinable" by us as investigators engaged in the pursuit of transcendental philosophy (p. 36). In and of itself, this claim does not require us to answer the question of whether or not we need to posit a thing-in-itself independent of the conditions by which we are acquainted with objects of experience. The reversal only requires us to commit to the thesis that there are *a priori* structural conditions governing *our experience*. It does not require that we advance any claims about what lies beyond such experience (or, e.g., if it is the only one or if experience has come about through natural causes, and so on).

Admittedly, the turn and the thing-in-itself comes to be closely intwined in Kant's transcendental idealism in that the thing-in-itself as one of the elements of the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction that allows Kant to do such things as establish the scope and

limits of genuine metaphysical knowledge. Once again, however, the real question that needs focusing on if we are to come to a decision about the viability of Kant's turn concerns how the turn and its reversal of the subject-object relation construes object constitution, including what is involved and entailed by objects of possible experience being constituted as Kantian appearances.

In terms of the bigger metaphysical picture, I would argue that Kant's transcendental idealism and the argumentative resources allows us to not only consistently hold onto the theory of object constitution inaugurated by Kant's turn, but also commit to the greater critique of the bounds and limits of cognition. This necessarily involves Kant's claim that there must being something independent of our way of cognizing objects of possible experience. If we can come to appreciate the way in which Kant re-thinks metaphysics *as* transcendental philosophy, we can come to see how Kant can successfully make the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction without falling into inconsistences.

This leads to the second reason why Pradelle's account of the thing-in-itself ought not motivate us to reject the turn. I submit that the main reason that marking these bounds and limits has been so commonly viewed as in tension with Kant's theory regarding the possible objects of experience is precisely that Kant overall position on the subject-object relation has been mistakenly grasped along the interpretive lines advocated by Pradelle. However, when we look at how Kant characterizes the distinction between appearances and the thing-in-itself in the *Critique*, we find it is far less vulnerable to the concern that his transcendental idealism ends up transgressing the very bounds it sets for genuine cognition and knowledge.

For instance, at A248/B304-A253/B09 Kant usefully provides the distinction between phenomena and noumena. While phenomena are "beings of sense" such as the objects given in intuition and in accordance with sensibility and its *a priori* conditioning, noumena are "beings of understanding" in that they are objects insofar as they are represented by understanding alone. As Kant makes clear, by the latter he is not referring to the understanding's contribution to the representating of given objects insofar as they are *cognized* by means of its categories (which representations would be objects of possible experience or appearances); nor does Kant have in mind the mere *thinking* of objects *via categories alone* where here categories are deployed as mere logical predicates to entertain the thought of what at other places Kant calls "the transcendental object" or "something (= *X*)" (A250/B305). Indeed, the thought of "the transcendental object" or "something (= *X*)," although a representation capable of being achieved through or by means of understanding alone, and abstracted from what is concretely given in sensibility, marks only the thought of what belongs (via understanding) *to objects of sensibility*—namely, the thought of <objects of possible experience> (A251/B305).

If neither the representing *via* categories that the understanding contributes to the cognizing objects of possible experience or the mere thought of possible objects of expe-

rience in general *via* categories (something (= *X*)) are instances of noumena, then what does Kant have in mind here? And how does the idea of noumena assist us to make sense of the appearance/thing-in-itself distinction? The key lies in seeing that the thinking we are capable of, although always intending an object, not only allows us to represent to ourselves objects as appearances, which Kant defines as given objects insofar as they are cognized according to categories (A248/B305), but also in light of negation, including the "not" of these objects as appearances. That is, we are capable of thinking, as Kant puts it, a "*something*, i.e., an object *independent of* sensibility" (A251-2/B305, my emphasis) where this "something" does not utilize the categories required for representing the "something (= *X*)." This mere representation in thought is what Kant means by the thing-in-itself that is to be distinguished from appearances. Namely, an entirely negative, indeterminate thought of that which is not appearances. This representation avoids drawing on the understanding's categories, which, of course, are bound to their role in cognizing if they are not to be mere logical predicates.

If we took the categories of understanding, as mere logical predicates, to provide determination of *objects as such and in general* independent of their cognizing role in sensibility (or indeed, any transcendental conditions) through some sort of special intellection relation established through them, then we would be attempting to deploy the categories "transcendentally" (A238/B297; A242/B299; A246-8/B303-5) in the illicit attempt not only to merely *think*, but precisely *know* such objects. This, thinks Kant, would be to be taken in by what he calls *transcendental illusion* or the idea that categories apply to objects *as such and in general* regardless of whether or not these objects possibly appear according to certain *a priori* conditions; the same illusion that pre-Copernican philosophers succumbed to when they held that their thought of logically possible objects and their properties could provide them with genuine metaphysical knowledge of supersensible, transcendent being. Here, "the deception [lies in] substituting the logical possibility of the **concept** (since it does not contradict itself) for the transcendental possibility of **things** (where an object corresponds to the concept)." (A244/B302)

Kant's appearance/thing-in-itself distinction can avoid this misstep, however, by thinking the thing-in-itself in a way that is avoids positively utilizing any categories or indeed saying anything positive about what this thought represents. In other words, the distinction draws on the difference between negative noumena, as opposed to positive noumena. The negative thought of the thing-in-itself is indeed an instance of a "being of understanding" insofar as it is representation of "something" (where this is a "not" something) that itself both abstracts from the conditions of sensibility and can only be occasioned through mere thought. However, this does not entail that it is a "being of understanding" if by that is meant a determinate representation that both captures the way *objects as such and in general* (such as supersensible objects) true are and does so through understanding alone. To attempt to positively represent *the noumenon* would be precisely to transcend the restrictions Kant

puts on knowledge and directly grasp objects as having "constitution in itself" (A248/B306) apart from any condition simply using the power of our mind.

Despite Pradelle's characterization of the appearance/thing-in itself, Kant does not help himself to the thought of a supposedly unknowable thing-in-itself object that lies behind appearances. This *would* involve that the understanding transcendentally deploys the categories <substance-accident> or <cause-effect> in order, and in direct conflict with the bounds and limits he sets on possible objects of cognition and knowledge, in the attempt to know the "true ontological substrate" that supposedly is the ultimate "cause" of the objects of intuition. However, Kant goes to great length to distinguish what he calls the "boundary concept" (A254/B310) that is mere thought of "a thing insofar as it is **not an object of sensible intuition**" from the representation *via* categories that aims, but fails, to furnish us with knowledge of the "in itself" apart from their sensible conditions.

(ii & iii) Psychology/Subjective Idealism & Skepticism

Of utmost importance for determining whether or not Kant's account of the subject-object relation is reason for Husserl to reject the Copernican turn is the extent to which Kant thinks of the subject of the turn, and the new way of conceiving of this subject's fundamental role in allowing objects to appear, is to be understood along psychological lines. By all accounts, Husserl himself holds this view and, much to the detriment of what Husserl perceives to be Kant's otherwise laudable attempt to re-think the subject-object relation, this misstep leads to Kant misconstruing the possibility of genuine objective knowledge by inappropriately subjectivizing all of reality. Passages abound, but in in a particularly representative statement, Husserl states:

> It becomes evident that Kant's spiritual gaze lay on [the] field [of transcendental subjectivity], although he was not capable of claiming it and understanding it as a working field of a genuine, rigorous eidetic science. Thus, e.g., the transcendental deduction of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* actually already stands on phenomenological grounds; but Kant misinterprets this ground as psychological and thereby loses it again. (Husserl 1983, p. 386)

Based on this and many other passages, it is not surprising that thinkers in the phenomenological tradition of Husserl like Pradelle have themselves interpreted Kant's transcendental idealism psychologically and, drawing out the devastating consequences this would entail, take this as reason to reject the Copernican turn that supposedly lies at the root of the problem. However, the main issue is whether or not this is what Kant himself thought and, if not, the extent to which the position Husserl adopts actually ends up being much closer to Kant's than he presumed.

In many ways, it is entirely understandable why Husserl would interpret Kant's theory in a psychological way. In addition to original and innovative and arguments being vulner-

able to misinterpretation, Kant does not help his cause with his misleading terminology. For example, to name just a few instances, he refers to extended bodies and their motions as "representations in us" (A387), confusingly draws on spatial language such as "inner"/ "outer," as well as writes of "boundaries" in order to distinguish what can be possibly experienced in accordance with the conditions of space and time from that which cannot (e.g., A254/B310; A367), and refers to objects of possible experience throughout the *Critique* as "mere" appearances (A49/B66; A357; A371; A392).

It will be unnecessary to simply reiterate the various defenses Kant scholars offer in order to avoid the charge of Kant's subjectivizing, where this means psychologizing, of the greater world of extended objects. These lines of argumentation are familiar enough: there are differences outlined in the Amphiboly between the character of given representations of spatially extended objects from the representations by which the mere thinking of objects traffics (A264/B320); Kant clarifies in the fourth paralogism (starting at A367) that he is making "intellectual" or "transcendental" use of spatial concepts like "inner" and "outer," rather than drawing an empirical distinction between what is "inside us" and our mere "subjectivity" and what lies "outside" of it; that the "mere" in mere appearance does not to demote these representations to the merely subjective sphere, but is used only to flag that, unlike "original" or "intellectual" intuition which grasp immediately objects "in themselves," sensible intuition makes the objects available to us as potential objects of knowledge under certain *a priori* conditions (A248/B307).

Taken together, these arguments show that something's being "inside" us for Kant simply conveys for him that it does not belong altogether "outside of us" possible experience. These same appearances and can still very well be "outside of us" in the empirical sense of being spatially distinct from us and so capable of having objective features and properties such as, e.g., motion. Further, that our experience with objects is necessarily conditioned, and so unlike a divine being that stands in an intuitive relation to things that is not defined by any conditions, we must be careful to establish what is a possible object of cognition and knowledge and what is not, which apparently does not prevent us from utilizing spatial language in order to make these points.

What I would like to draw attention to, however, is the role the unity of apperception plays in the constitution of objects insofar as it provides the ultimate ground for the representing *via* categories. This aspect of Kant's theory, I submit, demonstrates most convincingly not only that we can distinguish between mere "psychological," "subjective" states and the objective world, but that the Copernican turn is very much in line with, and presupposed by, the approach Husserlian phenomenology takes to investigating the *a priori* structures of objects immanently offered to consciousness.

It is worth pointing out at this point, that when look at the passage in which Kant introduces the Copernican revolution, we see is that the turn does not involve an entirely subject-independent thing-in-itself object "conforming to our cognition" and "merely"

appearing under its psychological conditions. If this were the case, if the thing-in-itself were the "true ontological substrate," as Pradelle puts it, then the turn would certainly mark a radical departure from the traditional way philosophers construe the relation between subject and object. As the objects of our knowledge claims require that they be capable of corresponding with our judgments, if transcendental conditions barred us from contact with the objects as they are "themselves," if they could only be made available to us as they mere appear in our psychological states, then there seems to be no way around concluding that the Copernican turn results our never being able to know what "truly" lies behind our representational states. That is, if the turn is seen as one in which an object must conform to the mind before the mind's representations of objects ("appearances") can possibly correspond to its knowledge claims, then the turn certainly results in subjective idealism and skepticism. Kant's turn would provide us with a reversal of the traditional subject-object relation whereby the objects that are figure in our knowledge correspondence would already be "in" the mind. If the standard for our knowledge were simply subjective appearances in the mind of something that does not appear, however, it is difficult to see how we could ever really claim to know anything at all.

In the Copernican passage itself, it is objects that *already appear* to us in sensibility and are thought in understanding (that is, the objects that philosophers, pre-Copernican revolution, naively took the mind to simply mirror) that themselves need to conceived of as in conformity with certain *a priori* conditions in order to so appear (Bxvi-xvii). That there is a reversal here in the direction of fit between cognition and world, knowledge and object, has least two important consequences.

First, when it comes to the story about how its objects of intuition come to be constituted so that they can be cognized as objects experience and knowledge, there are number of resources that would not be at his disposal if it were thought that the thing-in-itself object conforms with cognition. For example, possessing the bare spatial-temporal structure allowed for by sensibility, the account of how spatial-temporal objects come to be "synthesized" and "united" so as to be capable of being represented by categories can draw upon these structural features of intuitions (especially their temporal dimension) (A27/B43).

Second, the specific way we think of the understanding's categories making a structural contribution to the given objects of sensibility will have repercussions for how it is we construe the character of the objects that stand in conformity with the understanding. At points in the *Critique*, Kant seems to suggest that although we should not see the turn as one whereby the thing-in-itself comes into conformity with our cognitive conditions, objects of intuition are subjected to the "higher" faculties of mind in such a way as to be imposed upon or molded. Indeed, Kant sets up the issue of the relation between categories and intuitions as a problem of how it is categories can "apply" or "subsume" or "determine under rules" (A137/B176) objects of intuition, where this can be mistakenly assumed to mean that given intuitions, altogether different from categories that lie waiting in the mind and anticipate

intuitions, are actively shaped with form or that given objects are such that, miraculously, they are somehow amenable to and coincide with the structuring of the categories. Either way, the conformity of objects of possible experience with sensibility and understanding that allow these objects to be cognized and potentially known will be misidentified and correct interpretation of Kant's revolution missed.

The unity of apperception is the key to making sense of these issues, for it is only with unity of apperception that we get the full story regarding how objects are constituted by the mind, as well as the possibility of our standing not only in a mere "subjective," but, more importantly, "objective," relations with objects.

To see this, consider an issue that Kant raises as part of his answer to the *quid juris* question posed by in the Deduction, but which he does not fully begin to tackle until the Schematism: how is it possible that objects of intuition are represented by categories? Objects of intuition and categories are "heterogenous" representations (A138/B177) in that a category, as that which accounts for the possibility of cognizing intuitions as objects of experience, is never encountered in sensibility as *an* object or particular *empirical feature* of objects of intuition (A137/B176). What is the unknown "root," as Kant put it at A15/B29, the "third thing" (A138/B177), that "mediates" between sensibility and understanding such that given spatial-temporal objects are the kind of representations capable of being thought generally under categories?

Kant's answer is that the imagination and its power of synthesizing that provides this common root. The imagination is responsible for synthesizing or combining of objects of intuitions such that they exhibit the kind of general unity required to be represented according to categories. The synthesis of the imagination, in other words, "collects the elements [of intuition] for cognition and unifies them into a certain content" (A77-8/B103) which involves that the "manifold first be gone through, taken up, and combined in a certain way in order for a cognition to be made out of it." (A76/B102).

Indeed, categories are not imposed on and give shape to intuitions that themselves possess a pre-formed character; nor is it simply a happy coincidence that the objects sensibility are capable of being represented by the *a priori* conditions of thought. The synthesis of objects supplies them with a necessary unity such that they are capable of being grasped by our higher cognitive faculties. As Kant makes clear, the categories are simply, "concepts of [synthesis or] combination" (B130-1), which is to say, "pure synthesis, generally represented [i.e., by way of concepts], yield pure concepts of the understanding" (A78/B104; see also A79-80/B104-5).

As Kant only reveals at A142-7/B182-7, however, the unity of synthesis that categories represent is characterized in *temporal terms*. Categories can represent the unity of synthesis insofar as synthesis allows given intuitions to instantiate a number of temporal schemas, which are principles of temporal unity that, when instantiated, allow us to think intuition in accordance with a corresponding category (A137/B176).

Now, I want to stress that the imaginative unity of synthesis, despite being in part guided by concepts, is not itself attributed by Kant to the understanding; nor is it, strictly speaking, ultimately a task that the imagination is able to carry out in and of itself. Although Kant certainly lets the Table of Logical functions, a table outlining the various ways the understanding can bring its concepts together in a judgment, provide him with the "clue" to the Table of categories, when it comes to actually accounting for the possibility of the temporal unity that synthesized objects of intuition exhibit such as to be represented by categories, it finds its ultimate ground in different kind of unity. As Kant states:

> Combination is the representation of the **synthetic** unity of the manifold [of an object of intuition]. The representation of this unity cannot … arise from the combination; rather, by being added to the representation of the manifold, it first makes the concept of combination possible. This unity, which precedes all concepts of combination [or categories] *a priori*, is not … the category of unity … The category … ready presupposes combination. We must seek this unity … someplace higher, namely in that which itself contains the ground of the unity of different concepts in judgments, and hence of the possibility of understanding. (B130-1)

As is made apparent by the following section of the Deduction (§15), the "higher" unity that ground the synthesized temporal unity represented by categories is the unity of apperception. The "unity of apperception" is Kant's term for the unity that obtains among our conscious representations insofar as they are the representations of a single conscious subject (B132-33). To claim that the unity of apperception is what grounds and makes possible synthesis or combination is thus Kant's way of saying that the ultimate condition of possibility of our having objects of cognition is that our consciousness possesses a unity that enables the (imaginative accomplished) temporal unity of objects passively received from sensibility. This is why in the passage above it is claimed that the unity of apperception is even the "ground" of the unity of concepts in a judgment, and so accounts for the very possibility of the understanding: given objects of intuition can ultimately only be synthesized or combined and represented by way of our concepts (including categories) if it stands under the condition of being for a single, unified subject of consciousness. Indeed, if our conscious states did not stand together in such a "synthetic" unity, then there would be no correlating "synthetic" unity of the manifold and thus no cognizing or discursive representing of given objects.

Indeed, the original unity of consciousness throughout its representing of objects *via* schematized categories is also the ground that allows us to differentiate between mere subjective occurrences and objective states of affairs. The synthetic unity of apperception allows for the corresponding represented objects to appear in accordance with a *necessary* synthetic unity of given manifolds, and this necessary temporal unfolding provides the basis for the objective unity and connections that characterize the "outer" objects that pop-

ulate the greater spatial-temporal world. In other words, consciousness' categories (both the "dynamical" and "mathematical"), representing the temporal unity of such objects, together allow for, as Kant puts it, "the one experience" – the publicly accessible correlate of the mind as it appears in conformity with *a priori* the conditions of cognition insofar as this cognition is that of (any particular) unified subject of consciousness. As Kant states:

> There is only **one** experience, in which all perceptions are represented as in a thoroughgoing and lawlike connection, just as there is only one space and time, in which all forms of appearance … take place. If one speaks of different experiences, they are only so many perceptions insofar as they belong to one and the same universal experience. The thoroughgoing and synthetic unity of perceptions is precisely what constitutes the form of experience, and it is nothing other than the synthetic unity of appearances. (A110-12)

Sure enough, the way in which we happen to undergo this one experience and the way in which we *merely* think and represent (perhaps discursively or in images) to ourselves the objective world of space and time may differ from individual to individual. What is more, on the basis of this one experience we will certainly be furnished with the sensations and ideas that come to inform our psychological make-up and personal identity. But the "I" as subject of the unity of apperception is to be confused with representing to ourselves of these (representationally downstream) subjective states and psychological "experiences." To think that determinate and necessary spatial-temporal objects and their connections are sustained by indeterminate and contingent psychological happenings, ideas, inferences or connections would be to embrace the kind of approach found in earlier thinkers like Descartes and Hume and which Kant's transcendental idealism sets out to replace. Hence Kant's "anti-Cartesian" lines of argumentation in the Second Analogy and the Refutation of Idealism (A182-211/B244-256; B274-294), as well as his demonstrating in the futility of Hume's attempt to ground cause and affect relations on the mind's associate connections throughout the Doctrine of Elements (particularly at A111-14). Our grasp of objective sequences such as a boat moving downstream or a causal interaction between two spatial-temporal objects bringing about changes in each other's states is not formed and ultimately justified by the subjective sequence in which they happen to be encountered or the psychological states that accompany these experiences, but rather *vice versa*. The necessary unity that is the correlate of a unified consciousness is precisely what supplies the basis for our particular, psychological representations and states, even if these representations are themselves governed by, e.g., laws of association as Hume would have it.

Conclusion

Our mere psychological states play no role the revolutionary rethinking of the subject-object relation that defines the Copernican turn. The arguments of the *Critique* take off not

from the perspective of an individual and its particular psychological makeup, but from the perspective of the common, intersubjective stance on objects that defines the "one" experience. This "one" experience is not only capable of providing us with knowledge of objective, publicly accessible phenomena, but it can furnish us with transcendental knowledge of their conditions of possibility This latter knowledge is itself expressible in principles (e.g., Axioms of Intuition, Anticipations of Perception, etc.) that are not simply valid for the individual consciousness undertaking such an examination, but objectively valid insofar as it definitely establishes how it is *objects* necessarily appear for any unified consciousnesses. For instance, that appearances, as phenomena, are extensive magnitudes with continuously gradable sensible qualities standing in lawful connections with other such magnitudes is not something that is merely psychologically imposed on a thing-in-itself object; it captures the "things" or "matters" themselves, as long as this is taken to mean *insofar as these objects are for consciousness* (B207-18/A166-76).

This all makes plain that Kant's position on consciousness and its objects is much closer to Husserl than maybe even Husserl himself may have realized. And it certainly shows that the reasons Pradelle takes Husserl to reject the Copernican turn are unconvincing ones. The Copernican turn proceeds by showing that in order for our knowledge to possibly correspond to objects, these objects must stand in accordance (or "conform") with the transcendental conditions that characterize consciousness. This turn and the knowledge it affords us, far from being reason for Husserl to reject Kant's transcendental idealism, is thus very much like the perspective of consciousness effected by the transcendental reduction. Indeed, as part of phenomenology's expounding of the meaning-bestowing conditions of sense involves, as Husserl himself puts it, both a "transcendental aesthetic" which determines how "the object is constituted in *intuition* [or] how [it] is constituted in chains of perception," as well as a "transcendental logic" that clarifies how the "laws of thought are precisely laws of *thought,* while being conditions of possibility of objectively valid being in general" (Husserl 1956, p. 379). To the extent that phenomenology aims to accomplish these two tasks, it seems to operate very much in the space opened up the Copernican turn explored by Kant.

Where the two thinkers really begin to diverge, is not only with regard to their (obviously) different methodological approaches to conscious experience, but on the much bigger issue of whether or not we are compelled hold positions about what is independent of consciousness as an essential component of the transcendental project.

> From what we have seen, Kant can certainly agree with Husserl when he says things such as: But experience is not an opening through which a world, existing prior to all experience, shines into a room of consciousness; is it not a mere taking of something alien to consciousness into consciousness. (Husserl 1978, p. 232)

> Consciousness ... has to hold as a connection of being that is, for itself, closed off, i.e., as a context of absolute being into which nothing can penetrate and from which nothing can slip away. (Husserl 2014, p. 90)

Kant also holds there is no "the side-view" on our consciousness that could account for how a so-called thing-in-itself object comes to conform to our cognition and provide sensibility with intuitions. In this sense, for Kant, there is no pre-existing world "prior" to experience and, to this extent, the unity of apperception and its appearing correlates mark the limits of the experienceable. Indeed, consciousness for Kant is "closed off" from considerations of other (perhaps supersensible) realms of being and must remain so if we are not to lapse back into pre-critical metaphysics.

At the same time, Kant argues that the notion of the thing-in-itself is something we must necessarily think in order to ultimately make sense of *appearances*. (A251/B306). His line of thought is that if we grant that objects appear to us in conformity with certain *a priori* conditions – a philosophical commitment that presumably a transcendental thinker like Husserl would ascribe to – then we are also committed to the idea that there must be *something* (the thing-in-itself) independent of these conditions. To deny that there is something independent of the conditions by which we are acquainted with objects, argues Kant, would be to hold the "absurd" position that "there is [the transcendental conditioning of the mind that characterizes] appearance without anything *that* appears" (Bxxvi, my emphasis).

The *that it is* of appearances or that they *are* and are capable of being interrogated transcendentally by consciousness is not something consciousness can wholly take responsibility for. While we take note of a pre-existence something *in* and *through* consciousness (via representing the negative noumena) and, indeed, must do so, is a point, however, which Husserl would disagree. Phenomenology limits intentional relations in such a way that makes it hard to see how Husserl could grant that we need to necessarily intend, if only in thought, the notion of something "apart from the conditions of consciousness." As he states:

> Every imaginable sense, every imaginable being, whether the latter is called immanent or transcendent, falls within the domain of transcendental subjectivity, as the subjectivity that constitutes sense and being … if transcendental subjectivity is the universe of possible sense, then an outside is precisely—nonsense. (Husserl 1960, p. 84)

The universe of sense established by the reduction thus rejects "a Kantian idealism, which believes it can keep open, at least as a limiting concept, the possibility of a world of things in themselves" (Husserl 1960, p. 86). This is the case even if this is to risk neglecting the task of philosophically accounting for the fact *that* phenomena *are*. But this, of course, is to raise important issues regarding how Husserl understands the relation between his phenomenology and metaphysics; an issue that will need to be pursued elsewhere.