

Kant's construction of the set of functions of representation that support the interaction between the subject and object-as-appearance is dizzying to say the least. Beginning with the concepts of intuition and sensibility, Kant elaborates his distinctions between the a priori and a posteriori by linking them with their analogues: *intellectual intuition* and *empirical sensation*. Since Kant ends with intellectual intuition (B72), it is better to start with a more primary opposition.

What is essential to understand is that intuition is immediate, and thus a priori. Because of their immediacy, intuitions are pre-logical and pre-relational, which means that they exist before ever being thought by the subject. In fact, intuition only arises because of a gift, the gift of the object. Without this gift, intuition cannot function, or, better yet, if the object were never given, there would be no possibility of the (self)-consciousness of the function of intuition at all.

The gift of the object is a force that affects the subject's sensibility, which means that our capacity for receiving the gift is defined by a particular mode which only renders representations of the object, and not the thing-in-itself. Since the thing-in-itself, a.k.a. the *transcendental object* cannot be known to us, it lies outside of the domain of sensibility. Only God has an intuition of this Thing and only by dint of the fact that God's knowledge is not in the *inferior mode of human thought*, that which perpetuates the persistence of a relational and spatio-temporal structure. God is not in space or time, and therefore his knowledge cannot be limited to thought but must be reserved for pure intuition (taking for granted God's existence, of course). The point is that mortal beings of thought have to think these intuitions through the understanding which then forms concepts (A19).

This brings us to the fundamental difference between thinking and pure intuition. As opposed to God, the subject can only experience intuition through thought. Concepts arise which form the structure of our apprehension of intuition. Because it is thought, intuition is not pure, which fundamentally means that it is mediated. If intuition for Kant is immediate, the representations that arise from the force of the object affecting the subject have to relate to the fact that *there is no presentation of intuition, merely thoughts that form representational concepts through the understanding*. Thus, all of our perceptions are a posteriori in the sense that they are mediated by the understanding.

This is what accounts for Kant's introduction of the term *appearance* at the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic. If intuitions of objects are representations, a posteriori and empirical, then the subject always encounters "undetermined objects," in the sense that objects are never things-in-themselves, they only merely appear in the world as phenomena (A20).

But we should ask: why is appearance the only mode for an object to affect a subject? Or, why is the object always mediated in relation to the subject? This of course leads Kant to stipulate the a priori existence of space and time. Objects, insofar as they are given to subjects, are always structured by these two forms. These two forms divide the subject into two senses: the inner and outer sense. Space refers to outer sense because of our perception of objects. Time refers to inner sense insofar as it allows the 'I' to synthesize the diverse and changing, sometimes contradictory states or predicates that inhere in the subject, one after another. Time and space are forms for Kant because they order the "manifold of appearance" and force relations to occur (B34, A20).

This is crucial because at first I didn't really understand how important Kant's definition of space and time really are. They are not grounds, nor are they containers; they do not inhere in

beings or objects; they are *not originary*. They do not generate beings, but instead they are essential as the milieu in which beings and bodies necessarily relate. Space and time are both unitary and infinite. It is for precisely this reason that they are not generative, because they represent perfectly what the paradox of the abnormal set means. I will quote a passage from Kant in order to make this clear:

Space is represented as an infinite *given* multitude. Now every concept must be thought as a representation which is contained in an infinite number of different possible representations (as their common character), and which therefore contains these *under* itself; but no concept, as such, can be thought as containing an infinite number of representations *within* itself. It is in this latter way, however, that space is thought; for all the parts of space coexist *ad infinitum*. Consequently, the original representation of space is an *a priori* intuition, not a concept (B40).

The *abnormal set* is a set which all sets belong to and which includes itself. This paradox was nicely formulated by Russell in the 20th century, but for our purposes the existence of the abnormal set—designated by Space and Time respectively—corresponds to Kant’s antinomies of the Soul, God, and the Universe. I have taken the term abnormal set from the way in which Deleuze describes it in *Logic of Sense*, and I want to expand on it by linking its complementary term with Kant’s antinomy of the soul.

The term *rebel element* refers to an element that “forms part of a set whose existence it presupposes and belongs to two sub-sets which it determines” (Deleuze 75). In closing, and in curiosity, I want to try to link the antinomy of the Soul (as I vaguely understand it) with the concept of the rebel element. Kant might say that the soul is precisely not a concept, cannot be

sensed, and thus cannot yield itself as an object to empirical intuition. It can only be axiomatically assumed a priori. However, if the soul is the rebel element, then it means that it forms part of a set (Man) whose two sub-sets (life, death) are determined by the fact that the soul belongs to both of those planes. The antinomy from this point of view is precisely the fact that man's life and death are significantly determined whether or not we posit the existence of the soul. But man does not equal the soul, and so as a subset, it can be presupposed to not exist without destroying the subject per se. What happens is that the soul *still continues to have an effect on the set and sub-sets precisely to the extent that the soul is not done away with magically and successfully repressed, but instead it returns in the form of its negation*. Thus, (soulless) man enters a completely different dialectical relationship with life and death. The rebel element thus has a way of creating a (dis)order or an alternative order by forcing a reevaluation of the terms to which it relates. It is not simply that the presence or absence of a permanent or temporary soul undeniably changes the individual's relationship with life and death; more importantly, *this has to be understood as a process that is singular for each individual*. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that the soul is understood as an idol (an object of heights)—Monotheism—as a simulacrum (object of depths)—Buddhism—as an image (object of partial corporeal surfaces)—Foucault's "the soul is the prison of the body"—and as a phantasm (soul as pure surface effects of the event of libidinal intensities).

–Taylor Adkins

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Back to philosophy. In my earlier post on Kant, I tried to make a distinction between intellectual intuition and empirical sensation. Kant will say something like: we cannot have a pure intellectual intuition of the object because that would give us the thing-in-itself (also known as the transcendental object). What Kant means is something like: the “transcendental” part of the thing-in-itself means that it serves as the grounds for the possibility of experience. So, the thing-in-itself, for Kant, allows for the object to be given to us, but since we participate in space and time (mediative intuitions) we only have representations of the object and never a pure intuition of it. I am trying to stress that Kant sees our spatial-temporal media as being, in a literal sense, that which keeps us from having truly primary *a priori* knowledge of the object.

However, that’s Kant’s view of human finitude. Rewind. Kant says “intuition has its seat in the subject only, as the formal character of the subject, in virtue of which, in being affected by objects, it obtains *immediate representation*, that is, *intuition*, of them; and only in so far, therefore, as it is merely the form of outer *sense* in general” (71).

Fastforward. “In natural theology, in thinking an object [God], who not only can never be an object of intuition to us but cannot be an object of sensible intuition even to himself, we are careful to remove the conditions of time and space from his intuition—for all his knowledge must be intuition, and not *thought*, which always involves limitations” (90).

But then Kant goes on to say that since time and space are conditions of existence, they must also be conditions of the existence of God. Further down though: “This mode of intuiting in space and time need not be limited to human sensibility. It may be that all finite, thinking beings necessarily agree with man in this respect, although we are not in a position to judge whether this is actually so. But however universal this mode of sensibility may be, it does not therefore cease to be sensibility. It is derivative (*intuitus derivativus*), not original (*intuitus originarius*), and therefore not intellectual intuition. For the reason stated above, such intellectual intuition seemse to belong solely to the primordial being, and can never be ascribed to a dependent being, dependent in its existence as well as in its intuition, and which through that intuition is conscious of its own existence only in relation to given objects” (90).

Long quote, I know—but the point I’m trying to make is that Kant wavers on a fundamental point: does God partake of the conditions of existence, and thus does he exist in space and time? On the other hand—God cannot exist in space and time because he has direct access to the Thing—or the thing-in-itself—pure noumenon. It is intellectual intuition that is equated with this ability—so God, the primordial being, has intellectual or *original* intuition. Doesn’t this sound like a world in which man is fallen and only perceives so many bad copies of the object?

Anyway—the fundamental point I was trying to make in relation to Spinoza—Spinoza considers substance to be God, and God’s substance to consist of an infinity of attributes. The trick is, human subjectivity only works in two dimensions: thought and extension (mind/body—space/time?). However, this does not exclude the very real fact that the true nature of God’s substance exists on an infinity of different dimensions (understood as attributes—understood as possible expressions of being—a truly fractal onto-theology in the sense that there exists an infinity of modes of being that exist outside, inside, between, alongside of the realms of thought and extension. Quantum Physics—String Theory—Spinoza? hahaha. nice.

—Taylor Adkins