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A Solution to the Problem of Affection

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ABSTRACT

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A Solution to the Problem of Affection

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Immanuel Kant speaks of human sensation in the Transcendental Aesthetic as occurring only on the condition that an object be “given to us” by way of affecting the mind. Some commentators think there is problem with Kant’s account of affection in that they read Kant to be illegitimately applying some of the categories of the understanding, e.g., causality and existence, beyond the realm of possible experience. This is problematic in that Kant repeatedly states that the categories (including causality and existence) have application only to objects of experience and thus have no application to things in themselves or noumena. This reading holds Kant’s philosophy to be internally inconsistent. In this essay, I try to save Kant from inconsistency and offer a solution to the problem of affection that is supported by a specific interpretation of transcendental philosophy. Specifically, I argue that the solution to the problem of affection is given by considering the relation obtaining between affecting object and the senses to be logical. This logical relation is found in the hypothetical form of antecedent and consequent where the antecedent grounds the consequent. I will also argue that we must think of this grounding relation in analogy to a causal one, that is, we think of the affecting object as if it were the cause of the matter of sensibility. In the process of expounding this solution, I will also be arguing for a “one world” interpretation of transcendental idealism.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments ................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction ..................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Transcendental and Transcendent: A Note on Terminology ....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tiefrunk’s Question ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thing in Itself: Cause or Ground? ................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Analogical Thought ...................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Transcendental Idealism .............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Use of the Categories in Thinking in Things in Themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Thinking Grounds .....................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Justification for “Critical Knowledge” ..........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Supersensible Causation and Supersensible Existence ........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Conclusion ............................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References .........................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

“Thus the whole strength and importance of Kant's teaching will become evident only in the course of time, when the spirit of the age, itself gradually reformed and altered in the most important and essential respect by the influence of that teaching, furnishes living evidence of the power of that giant mind.” -Arthur Schopenhauer

It is well known that Kant speaks of human sensation in the Transcendental Aesthetic as occurring only on the condition that an object be “given to us” by way of affecting the mind (A19/B33). Kant seems to assert, in numerous passages in his mature work, that the thing in itself or transcendental object (and even sometimes, noumenon), is what “gives” the content of human sensation and that the relation obtaining is causal, or at least, logical in that the thing in itself is thought to ground the content. For example, Kant writes in the Prolegomena: “Rightly considering objects of sense as mere appearances, we confess thereby that they are based upon a thing in itself, though we do not know this thing as it is in itself but only its appearances, namely, the way in which our senses are affected by this unknown something” (4:314-315), and at A358: “[..] something lies at the basis of outer appearances and affects our sense in such a way that this sense acquires the presentations of space, matter, shape, etc. And this something, considered as noumenon (or better, as transcendental object), might yet simultaneously also be the subject of our thoughts [...]”1

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1 That which affects the senses also affects the mind since the mind has among its powers, sensibility, as well as the understanding and reason. Thus there is no worry that the object affecting the senses isn't the proper object being considered in the problem of affection. All passages from the CPuR are Pluhar's translations. Passages from the Prolegomena, Critique of the Power of Judgment, and Notes and Fragments are taken from the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Passages from the Critique of Practical Reason and the Groundwork are taken from Lewis White Beck's translations of these works.
Passages like these have engendered what is known as the “problem of affection”. The problem with Kant’s account of affection is that some read Kant to be illegitimately applying some of the categories of the understanding, e.g., causality and existence, beyond the realm of possible experience. This is problematic in that Kant repeatedly states that the categories (including causality and existence) have application only to objects of experience and thus have no application to things in themselves or noumena. Typical of the sort of text in which Kant denies a transcendental use of the categories is the following: “We may say, therefore, that the use that the understanding can make of all its a priori principles and, indeed, of all its concepts is nothing but an empirical and never a transcendental use [...]” (A238/B297). A specific statement about the principle of causality comes at A636/B664: “[...] the principle of causality—which holds only within the realm of experience, and which outside that realm, is without use and, indeed, even without signification [...]” Given that he both applies the categories of causality and existence to the thing in itself in order to explain what “gives” experience its content and also denies that any of the categories have application to things in themselves, Kant’s system is internally inconsistent. The system requires the thing in itself to be the cause of appearance; yet, this is nothing more than to affirm a supersensible causation that Kant expressly denies. This inconsistency motivates Jacobi’s famous objection to the critical philosophy: “without the presupposition [of the thing in itself] I cannot enter the system, and with that presupposition I cannot remain in it” (Allison, 2004, p.64). The objection charges the critical philosophy with the following incoherence: the critical philosophy requires knowledge of the thing in itself as a precondition for its construction; yet, once

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2 For more statements of this kind, see A139/B178, B147-8, B303, A248/B304-5.
developed, the critical philosophy entails that nothing can be known about things in themselves. This incoherence raises a dilemma in which we must either admit some knowledge of things in themselves so that the critical philosophy can begin or we must admit there is no knowledge of things in themselves so that we can remain within the critical philosophy. Part of my goal in this essay is to offer a reading of the critical philosophy that dispels this apparent inconsistency and allows Kant to satisfy both horns of the dilemma.

A recent, common trend in work on this problem is to think Kant was not careless in his theorizing by at once requiring and denying supersensible causality, but that he is consistent in his writings and the many passages in which Kant seems to deny supersensible causality and those in which he appears to affirm it are to be read as embedded in a large, complex transcendental philosophy. Once the intricacies of the transcendental system are correctly understood, the worry with the passages, as well as Jacobi's worry, it is alleged, will be relieved. In opposition to this reading of Kant, some think Kant was sloppy in theorizing and that some pre-critical (that is, more rationalistic) tenets had found their way into his mature writings. This view is called the “Patchwork Thesis”. According to this thesis, it is a piece-meal manner of philosophizing in which Kant incorporates unmodified pre-critical texts into his critical works that accounts for the problematic nature of Kant's thoughts on affection and sensibility. In this essay, I continue the spirit of the trend that tries to save Kant from inconsistency and offer a solution to the problem of affection that is supported by a specific interpretation of

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transcendental philosophy. Specifically, I argue that the solution to the problem of affection is given by considering the relation obtaining between affecting object and the senses to be logical. This logical relation is found in the hypothetical form of judgment where the antecedent grounds the consequent. I will also argue that we must think of this grounding relation in analogy to a causal one, that is, we think of the affecting object as if it were cause of the matter of sensibility. In the process of expounding this solution, I will also be arguing for a “one world” interpretation of transcendental idealism.
2. TRANSCENDENTAL AND TRANSCENDENT: A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Before my argument for a solution starts, I would like to take some time to clarify the meanings of a couple crucial concepts in Kant's transcendental philosophy. Kant makes an important distinction between the terms “transcendental” and “transcendent”. He uses these words frequently and perhaps, at times, inconsistently. I will understand “transcendental” to refer, in general, to necessary conditions that make experience possible. What enables experience cannot itself be found in experience, but must be given prior to experience, that is a priori, and so is “transcendental”. Kant will put this point technically: “I call transcendental all cognition that deals not so much with objects as rather with our way of cognizing objects in general insofar as that way of cognizing is to be possible a priori.” (A12/B25). Here Kant is characterizing transcendental cognition, but the adjective is applied to many different concepts that ultimately all refer to these a priori conditions. E.g. Kant calls “transcendental philosophy” a “system” of all a priori concepts of objects in general (A12/B25). Furthermore, by this a priori character, I will interpret “transcendental” to be referring to those methodological and epistemological conditions that explain how a priori knowledge of the world of experience is possible and why the world is the way we experience it to be. This reading of “transcendental” denies any ontological baggage that one may wish to import by way of thinking of a “transcendental reality” that makes experience possible. Even upon conceding this “transcendental reality” (that is, as the supersensible or noumenal realm) is a necessary

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4 I have in mind the crude illustration of looking through glasses so that objects appear clear and distinct while at the same time thinking he who wears the glasses perceives the glass which allows them to be clear and distinct. Kant will also speak as though there is a connection between the source of experience, or empirical cognition, and this source is intimately related the nature of the concept “transcendental” (A238/B297).
presupposition for experience to be possible, this does not establish the actuality of this reality, as if we take ourselves to have discovered some grand ontology that grounds our empirical cognitions.\(^5\)

“Transcendent” is closely related to “transcendental” but is different in important respects. At A296/B353 Kant claims “Hence, transcendental and transcendent are not the same.” He continues to state the difference: “The principles of pure understanding that we have put forth above are to be of empirical and not of transcendental use, that is, use extending beyond the boundary of experience. But a principle that removes these limits—indeed, even commands us to step beyond them—is called transcendent.” (A296/B353). The chief difference seems to be that transcendent characterizes principles or cognitions that indicate no boundary of legitimate use at all while transcendental will contain within its concept a limit of some kind and hence entails a legitimate and illegitimate transcendental use. Kant writes at A296/B353: “Rather, I mean by them [that is, transcendent principles] actual principles requiring us to tear down all those boundary posts and to claim an entirely new territory that recognizes no demarcation at all.” At A643/B672 Kant calls an “overreaching” use of ideas “transcendent”, and in the Prolegomena Kant states a transcendent use is “that use which goes out beyond all possible experience” (4:315), meaning again that transcendent ideas and principles are

\(^5\) Cf. A592/B620 when Kant is explaining reason's involvement in postulating an absolutely necessary being but that this required postulation does not amount to a proof of its objective reality (objective reality is explained in footnote 20). Kant also claims at A247/B304 that the “proud name of an ontology” that feigns knowledge of things in themselves (things thought to constitute the “transcendental reality”) ought to be called a “mere analytic of pure understanding”. I believe these remarks underscore the methodological meaning of transcendental that I am referring to in that we are remaining within our own conceptual resources (without substantive metaphysical content found in them) to explain the world, and that any reference to supersensible entities is only in the business of serving reason's methodology in explaining the world.
those that force our thought beyond possible experience (force us to think of the
supersensible). Transcendent and transcendental ideas are indubitably indispensable for
reason's endeavor to provide a systematic whole of principles that explains the empirical
world, but we find in this very indispensability the assurance of their methodological and
epistemological meaning and thus also, warrant for my interpreting them as such.6

6 See Allison, 2004, for a well-argued defense of the methodological and epistemological interpretation of
Kant's transcendental idealism.
3. TIEFTRUNK’S QUESTION

Let's turn back to the problem of affection now. It is important when setting out to offer a solution to this problem that one starts with a question that best characterizes and frames the problem. Asking “What affects the mind?” is a good start, but I don't think the question gets to the heart of the matter. The mind is affected by some things that aren't relevant to solving the problem. For example, Kant holds that the mind can affect itself when it exercises certain acts of spontaneity: “Hence by no means does the understanding already find in inner sense such a combination of the manifold; rather, the understanding produces it, inasmuch as the understanding affects that sense.” (B155). We could start with “What causes appearance?”, but this question will prejudice our answer to be in terms of causality and some, such as Henry Allison and Gerd Buchdahl, think the relation obtaining between the mind and the affecting object isn't causal at all. Furthermore, neither of these questions make explicit that the problem involves a sort of transcendental relation, whether causal or not we will discover, between the mind and affecting object. If the relation is causal, we aren't asking about the cause of some given particular appearance since this is always, by the principles established in the analogies of experience, another empirically determined appearance. This sort of relation is empirical causality, the familiar relation obtaining in an event between objects in space and time (e.g., the event of billiard balls colliding). We want to know the transcendental base of appearances where appearances are considered generically as empirical content of human
experience. This transcendental base forces us to examine the relation between it and the appearances as transcendental causality, not empirical causality.\(^7\)

If appearances are mere representations, then according to Kant, they cannot be thought to ground or cause themselves.\(^8\) As Kant writes: “For the existence of appearances [in general], which is never self-grounded but always conditioned, requires us to look around for something different from all appearances, that is, for an intelligible object in which this contingency may terminate [...]” (A566/B594). It is clear that since we require an intelligible object that is “different from all appearances” to terminate the contingency of appearances, we are dealing with transcendental claims, not empirical ones. And insofar as we are making transcendental inquiries, we expect answers in the form of transcendental claims.\(^9\) The point I’m trying to make is that both questions: “What causes appearances?” and “What affects the mind?”, should be subsumed under one that better characterizes and frames the problem of affection and which, when answered, also answers these two questions, and that would be Tiefrunk's question.

In a 1797 letter, J.H. Tiefrunk, keen on this very issue, asks Kant: “But whence does sensibility receive that which it gives out of itself? Whence the material and the empirical as such, if I abstract from that into which it has been transformed as a result of

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\(^7\) Even the great reader of Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, thinks Kant concludes, by means of the principle of causality, that the thing in itself is an “external cause”. He writes: “Kant bases the assumption of the thing-in-itself, although concealed under many different turns of expression, on a conclusion according to the law of causality, namely that empirical perception, or more correctly sensation in our organs of sense from which it proceeds, must have an external cause” (WWR, p.436).

\(^8\) In this paper, both “representation” and “presentation” are understood to be translations of vorstellung, roughly meaning an object in the mind without specifying its kind and thus can refer to either a concept or an intuition.

\(^9\) Kant writes: “We readily see from this that transcendental questions permit only transcendental answers, i.e., answers based on a priori concepts alone, without the least empirical admixture.” (A637/B665). Furthermore, there will be necessity involved in the solution to be proposed which will result in transcendental claims also. Kant writes: “Any necessity is always based on a transcendental condition.” (A106).
the influence of spontaneity and the forms of sensibility?” (Zweig, p.243). I take these two questions to be asking the same thing in different words. The questions put the transcendental nature of the problem front and center. Tieftrunk astutely asks Kant if we abstract from sensation the a priori formal conditions of sensibility and the understanding, what is the source of that which remains after abstraction?, that is, “Whence the content of sensation?” Unfortunately, in his reply, Kant decides not to answer this question directly, but he does make some important remarks, sketching some premises of a solution to the problem of affection:

Similarly, supersensible objects are not objects of theoretical knowledge for us. But since it is unavoidable that we regard the idea of such supersensible objects as at least problematic, an open question (since otherwise the sensible would lack a non-sensible counterpart, and this would evidence a logical defect in our classification), the idea belongs to pure practical knowledge, which is detached from all empirical conditions. The sphere of non-sensible objects is thus not quite empty, though from the point of view of theoretical knowledge such objects must be viewed as transcendent. (Zweig, p.247)

We will be returning to this passage later, extracting the relevant premises. Kant gives a much more direct answer to the question in other writings. A clear statement of what gives the matter of sensibility is found in the Prolegomena where Kant writes:

There are things given to us as objects of our senses existing outside us, yet we know nothing of them as they may be in themselves, but are acquainted only with their appearances, i.e., with the representations that they produce in us because they affect the senses [...] for the existence of the thing that appears is not thereby nullified, as with real idealism, but it is only shown that through the senses we cannot cognize it at all as it is in itself. (4:289)

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10 This response suggests that from the practical point of view, non-sensible objects needn't be viewed as transcendent. In Kant's personal notes from 1796-1798 Kant writes: “We can obtain cognition of things in themselves (the supersensible), God, and immortality only through the reality of the concept of freedom and thus from a practical point of view [...]” (19:315). Remember though, the reality of freedom can never be established in theoretical philosophy and so this condition for cognition of the supersensible is unfulfilled in theoretical philosophy. I do not intend to assume the reality of freedom in this essay or that Kant's arguments for freedom succeed and so, my solution to the problem of affection isn't conditioned by this reality of freedom.
Here, Kant is responding to those who claim his philosophy implies “real idealism”. He states that there are “things” which affect the senses, but that we cannot know what these things may be in themselves. This doesn't sound terribly informative, but it's just what Kant should say. Kant is not saying the thing in itself, nor the transcendental object, nor the noumenon affects the senses but that there is a something affecting us and we know not what it may be in itself, but that we do know the representations it produces through this affection.

There is an important distinction here that I would like to bring to our attention. Kant's fundamental answer to “Whence the matter of sensibility?” is not a claim in the form of: there are unknowable things-in-themselves that give the matter, but that the answer is: there are things, unknowable in themselves, which give the matter. The placement of the adjective “unknowable” is key. The answer “unknowable things-in-themselves” designates objects in transcendental philosophy that are more specific in meaning than the answer “things unknowable in themselves”. Unknowable things in themselves are uniquely related to our human constitution in a way that things unknowable in themselves are not in that the former obtains meaning only in relation to our human constitution. “Unknowable things in themselves” are those things that we cannot, in principle, ever become acquainted with since they are not objects of a possible

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11 It's important to remember the Prolegomena was intended to be a terse, and hopefully, clearer explication of Kant's project in the CPuR. With that in mind, some of the statements he makes are simplified so that the common reader will be facilitated in his or her understanding of Kant's system. Thus, I think some reconstruction and careful interpretation is needed for some passages in the Prolegomena that may at first seem inconsistent with other mature writings, given the nature of the work. That said, I do not think Kant expounds any doctrines differing from those found in the CPuR.
experience for us as human percipients. “Things unknowable in themselves” is a more
generic concept that designates not the specific conceptual counterpart to the
appearances, that is, the things in themselves, but designates a merely indeterminate class
of objects. I think Kant's primary intent on phrasing his answer as “things unknowable in
themselves” is to emphasize their indeterminate relation to other theoretical concepts
within transcendental philosophy. I think that when we put the “thing” before the
adjective “unknowable”, we emphasize the generic nature of these things, meaning first
and foremost, we are dealing with a something which will eventually, once more details
of the transcendental philosophy are understood, be unknowable. The point is, this
indeterminate (generic) character will allow Kant to think the affecting object through
differing theoretical concepts. Later I will show that this answer isn't speculative
knowledge per se, but requisite speculative thinking.

And so, I suggest our solution starts with this thing, or object, as Kant puts in the
Transcendental Aesthetic, unknown in itself, to be that which affects the senses. This is
an important starting point since, as just noted, Kant will consider this thing under
different transcendental philosophical concepts at different points in his writing (as we
saw in the A358 passage above), and we want to be able to explain why and how he does
so. Next, I would like to consider other passages affirming affection where the more

12 This characterization of things in themselves is taken from Kant's remarks in the second edition
introduction. E.g., at Bxx Kant writes: “Suppose that we find, consequently, that the unconditioned is
not to be met with in things insofar as we are acquainted with them (i.e., insofar as they are given to us
[and so, are appearances]), but is to be met with in them insofar as we are not acquainted with them, viz.
insofar as they are things in themselves.” Here I take Kant to be regarding things in themselves as
tantamount in meaning to “things insofar as we are not acquainted with them” which underscores the
unique relation things in themselves have to us that things unknowable in themselves need not have.
specific answer as “unknowable thing in itself” is central and build more on the solution to be offered.
4. THING IN ITSELF: CAUSE OR GROUND?

The thing in itself is typically considered to be the cause or ground of the appearances. Kant seems to say this much in a revealing response to Johann Eberhard. Eberhard asks Kant the same question Tiefrunk asked: “Who (what) gives sensibility its matter, namely sensations?” and Eberhard proceeds to answer himself: “We may choose what we will—we nevertheless arrive at things-in-themselves.” (8:215). Kant replies:

Now that, of course, is the constant contention of the Critique, save that it posits this ground of the matter of sensory representations not once again in things, as objects of the senses, but in something super-sensible, which grounds the latter, and of which we can have no cognition. It says the objects as things in themselves give the matter to empirical intuition (they contain the ground by which to determine the faculty of representation in accordance with its sensibility), but they are not the matter thereof. (8:215)

I believe that this is Kant's best statement of his treatment of the problem of affection. Kant here states that supersensible objects considered as things in themselves give the matter to empirical intuition. If this is Kant's best statement of his treatment of the problem of affection, why would he not give the answer that I claim is fundamental, that is, why would he not answer there are “things unknowable in themselves” thought to ground empirical intuition and leave it at that? Kant's answer to Eberhard is more detailed than his answer in the Prolegomena and I think the reason is because Kant finds himself replying to a question that is posed squarely in theoretical philosophy and to one conversant with the philosophy. The answer given in the Prolegomena isn't as detailed because of the nature of the work in that the standpoint from which the answer is being given is broader, or at least more casual, if I may, than that found in the CPuR (see footnote 11). This means we would expect an answer that is more generic, and thus Kant
is able to give derivative answers in other works and from other standpoints that are more nuanced and technical. Indeed, I still find emphasis on generic thinghood occurring in Kant's response to Eberhard insofar as he states his answer in terms of first, an object (thing) that is now considered supersensible, and so secondly, is unknowable.

Thus, Kant states here that things (the same ones thought in the generic concept “things unknowable in themselves”) now considered in themselves give the matter of empirical intuition. An important question to be answered when dealing with the problem of affection is in what way, or by what relation, does this “giving” occur? Thus far I have been uncritical of the distinction between cause and ground. Kant will frequently use either term when explaining the basis of appearances and the correlate of sensibility. If we think of the thing in itself as cause of appearance, we are immediately subject to a violation of the inapplicability of the categories to the supersensible. Yet we could think of things in themselves as grounding appearances, as Kant tells Eberhard. In this response Kant also seems to consider this grounding to be the manner in which the “giving” of content is to be thought. This has been an attractive strategy for some scholars working on the problem of affection.

Solving the problem of affection by considering things in themselves to be the ground of appearances allows one to employ the unschematized category of causality.

Remember in the CPuR, schemata are transcendental time determinations brought about

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13 This notion of empirical content being “given” to us is what Schopenhauer considered to be one of Kant's gravest philosophical shortcomings. Schopenhauer believes the critical philosophy offers no account of the origin of sensation and that the expression of the content of sensation being “given” to us is “indefinite” and “metaphorical” (WWR, p.440). The account of sensation being offered in this essay attempts to give meaning and justification to the notion that things in themselves “give” the content and so, for what it's worth, can be seen also as a response to Schopenhauer's worry of the completeness of the critical philosophy insofar as he thinks it offers no account of the origin of sensation.

through an act of the synthesis of the imagination that allow the categories to be applied to sensible intuition. They are the link between understanding and sensibility, that is, they engage the understanding insofar as they are products of the productive imagination that reflects the understanding’s spontaneity and they have the functional role of constructing sensible images that reflect sensibility’s pure and formal conditions (A140/B179). Kant states that the unschematized categories contain only a logical meaning: “The concepts of the understanding do in fact retain a signification, even after their separation from all sensible conditions. But this is only a logical signification, [where the concepts of understanding signify] the mere unity of presentations.” (A147/B186). This logical meaning is crucial to my solution for it allows one to meaningfully think conceptual relations and draw conclusions therefrom without cognizing these relations since there is no object given to the logical signification. Remember also that the logical function upon which the category of causality is based is the hypothetical relation of ground (antecedent) to consequent. Thus, if we think of the affection relation involving things in themselves as one relata, and sensibility the other, we are merely grounding sensibility's object, the appearance, in a supersensible object, the thing in itself. This is entirely consistent with Kant's claims of inapplicability of the categories to things in themselves in the “Phenomena and Noumena” chapter, since in this explanation of affection, the category of causality is not being applied to things in themselves, only the category's logical structure is being applied. As Chad Mohler puts it:

Now, it is this logical relation of ground to consequent that I want to argue we can count as affection considered in the transcendental sense. Just as we considered
objects transcendentally by characterizing them in abstraction from the conditions of sensibility through which they become empirically manifest to us, we can do the same with affection. (Mohler, 2004, p.182)

What this sort of solution does is give meaning to the causal claims Kant seems to make concerning things in themselves and what they produce, but the meaning given is merely logical. This allows us to speak as if things in themselves cause appearances, but we are speaking analogically, in analogy to the relations appearances have between themselves.

Consider the following in support of the analogy claim I just made:

This schema [i.e., the concept of a thing as such] serves only to preserve the greatest systematic unity in our reason's empirical use; and it preserves this unity inasmuch as we derive, as it were, the object of experience [i.e., appearance] from this idea's imagined object considered as the basis [i.e., ground] or cause of the object of experience. (A670/B699) (my insertions)

Hence these [intelligible grounds viewed as thought-entities] are not to be assumed in themselves, but the reality of these [ideas] is to be assumed to hold only as the reality of a schema for the regulative principle of systematic unity of all cognition of nature; and hence these [things] are to be laid at the basis [of that cognition] only as analogues of actual things, but not as in themselves actual things. First we annul in the idea's object the conditions that limit our concept of understanding, but that also alone make possible our having a determinate concept of any thing. And now we think a something of which, as to what it is in itself, we have no concept whatever, but for which we can nonetheless think a relation—analogous to the relation that appearances have among one another—that this something has to the sum of appearances. (A674/B702) (the first insertion is mine, the rest are Pluhar's)

These passages are from the section of the CPuR: “On the Final Aim of the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason” wherein Kant is explaining the merely regulative use of the concept of a highest condition, that is, the original and creative reason (God). Although he is not dealing with the cause of appearance through an affection relation, I believe the exact same story given for reason's act of positing and understanding's involvement in thinking God should be given for reason positing the affecting object. Indeed, on my
reading, God and the affecting object share the relevant characteristics by which the story Kant gives above can reasonably be regarded as a solution to the problem of affection. These characteristics include the transcendental nature of the objects being considered and with this, a reflection on the posited intelligible world of things in themselves, the fact that both are thought to be a basis for appearances in some way, and the fact we are dealing with a transcendental relation where the relata are things in themselves and appearances.

What is the story Kant tells? In the first passage, there is a statement that we “derive” the appearance from the concept of a thing in itself. I take this “derivation” to simply be a deduction, by way of conceptual analysis, of one concept from another. Furthermore, the systematic unity of reason's empirical use, the use of reason when it reflects on the sensible world and its objects, is preserved when it considers the concept of the thing in itself as ground of appearance. Thus, just as we are forced by the concept of appearance to posit its supersensible ground (recall the response to Tiefftrunk), Kant states here that we can perform the same manner of thinking in the reverse when we first consider a thing in itself; that is, we derive the appearance from the concept of a thing in itself to achieve systematic unity in our classification of objects (transcendental reflection or deliberation (A261/B317)). This reading reiterates the position on things in themselves having a semantic relation to appearances by being their conceptual counterpart and so, each concept implies the other.\footnote{Cf. Allison, 2004, p.70 ff. Although Allison will claim the relation between things in themselves and appearances is not semantic, he will claim on page 72 that the \textit{thought} of the thing in itself as ground of appearance is an analytical claim. Allison thinks the relation between thing in itself and appearance isn't logical because occurrences of the phrases “appearance” and “things in themselves” seem to refer} Kant writes at A252:
For appearance cannot be anything by itself and apart from our way of presenting; hence, if we are not to go in a constant circle, then the word appearance already indicates a reference to something the direct presentation of which is indeed sensible, but which in itself—even without this character of our sensibility (on which the form of our intuition is based)—must be something, i.e., an object independent of sensibility. (my emphasis)

This semantic relation of appearances to things in themselves could be interpreted as attributing a status to appearances that amounts to them being thought-entities just as I claim things in themselves are. I would grant this interpretation if we keep in mind that we can view appearances qua appearances from two standpoints. The first is methodological (which I call transcendental also), and then by demand of the theoretical commitments of transcendental idealism, we would be viewing appearances as thought-entities. But we can also take an empirical standpoint concerning appearances and give the concept real content when we look to and perceive the empirical world. If we attempted this dichotomy with things in themselves we would at once realize that the empirical standpoint cannot import real content by looking to the empirical world (things in themselves are not intuitable) and so these remain thought-entities, or theoretical postulates from both standpoints. This reading accords with the logical solution being offered to the problem of affection and my interpretation of transcendental idealism which was sketched at in section 2 and will be further elaborated as the solution progresses.

The second passage continues the story in further detail. Recall what Kant says:

to different types of entities (p.54). This is a rather weak reason for denying the logical relation because one could easily respond to Allison by suggesting that this “seeming” to refer is just that, a semblance of reference and that when understood within the complexity of transcendental philosophy, this semblance of reference ultimately gives way to the actual affirmation of a logical relation.
Hence these [intelligible grounds viewed as thought-entities] are not to be assumed in themselves, but the reality of these [ideas] is to be assumed to hold only as the reality of a schema for the regulative principle of systematic unity of all cognition of nature; and hence these [things] are to be laid at the basis [of that cognition] only as analogues of actual things, but not as in themselves actual things. First we annul in the idea's object the conditions that limit our concept of understanding, but that also alone make possible our having a determinate concept of any thing. And now we think of a something of which, as to what it is in itself, we have no concept whatever, but for which we can nonetheless think a relation—analogous to the relation that appearances have among one another—that this something has to the sum of appearances. (A674/B702)

Kant states we are not to assume the grounds we posit, insofar as they are intelligible grounds, as actual in themselves but are only to assume their actuality is that of a schema of a regulative principle. This schema is not the transcendental schemata discussed in “On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding”. I read Kant here to be using the word schema to mean roughly form, or some structural aspect of the principle involved so that its regulative function is elicited. In this, I read the use as paralleling that which he articulates in the Critique of Practical Reason, 5:69: “Here, however, we are concerned not with the schema of a case occurring according to laws but with the schema (if this word is suitable here) of a law itself [...]” What is important for the issue at hand is that this formal aspect of the regulative principle is to be given an object in thought and that this thought-object\(^\text{16}\) is not to be assumed as actual but only as an analogue of actual things (appearances) so that our empirical thought is facilitated in bringing about a harmonious view of the world.\(^\text{17}\) Not only are the thought-objects laid at the basis of the idea of the objects in the regulative principle to be analogues, but also the

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\(^{16}\) *Gedankending*, “thought-thing”, these are crucial for transcendental philosophy (as the current analysis evinces) even if they are “mere inventions” (B348).

\(^{17}\) Cf. A681/709 for an elaboration on the postulation of an object corresponding to the thought and the reasons why the postulation occurs.
relation thought to obtain between the thought-entities and appearances is to be thought analogically.
5. ANALOGICAL THOUGHT

What does this analogical thought amount to? This manner of thought is the manner in which we are to regard objects under regulative principles, that is, we think of these objects “as if” they were standing in relations and under concepts as the objects of empirical cognition do. Therefore the story Kant is telling about the concept of God and its relation to the sum of appearances can profitably be told about the concept of the affecting object and its relation to the representations it is thought to produce. We must posit an affecting object as if it stood in a causal relation to appearances and as if it were an actual object, but this relation is properly an analogical causality, that is, a logical grounding serving to bring reason in a harmonious state with itself when it reflects on the sensible and its source.\(^\text{18}\) Kant summarizes this point in the following passage:

\[
I \text{ must posit for this idea [of the unity of reason, and so, in turn the thing in itself] an actual object. But I must posit this object only as a something as such with which I am not at all acquainted in itself, and to which, as a basis of that systematic unity and reference thereto, I merely give such properties as are analogous to the concepts of understanding employed in the understanding's empirical use. (A677-678/B705-706)}\(^\text{19}\)
\]

Solving the problem of affection through analogical thought has momentous implications; implications that I think are all true to Kant's project in the CPuR. For one, if the problem is solved in this logical manner, we do not have knowledge proper for Kant. We have not yet determined anything whatsoever in regard to the character of the ground of appearances by applying categories to it nor have we proved its objective

\(^{18}\) See also Rescher, 2000, p.22-36, for a reading that is similar to the one I am suggesting regarding an analogical causality.

\(^{19}\) I think Kant should have said “analogue of an actual object” in the first sentence to be as precise as possible.
validity by showing the ground's possibility.\textsuperscript{20} We have merely acknowledged \textit{that} there is to be \textit{thought} a ground, but we haven't even thought \textit{what} it is or \textit{how} it is. This accords perfectly with Kant's statement in the \textit{Critique of the Power of Judgment} that: “Through the possibility of its \textit{a priori} laws for nature the understanding gives a proof that nature is cognized by us only as appearance, and hence at the same time an indication of its supersensible substratum [i.e., ground]; but leaves this entirely \textit{undetermined”} (5:196) (my insertion). Note Kant states the understanding \textit{indicates} a supersensible ground, not that the understanding \textit{knows} this ground. This indication is what I take to be the thought of there being a ground. This indication is exploiting the “transcendental signification” of the categories when unschematized, as stated at B305: “The pure categories, without formal conditions of sensibility, have merely a transcendental signification, but have no transcendental use.” We are not using the categories in any real way here, that is, a way which determines objects and establishes their possibility, but we are using their transcendental signification in a logical way to preserve reason's consistency with itself.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} “Objective validity” is a phrase that Kant will use relating to the notion of “truth” (A125, A788/B816). If something is objectively valid it holds for all subjects by being in agreement with the formal conditions of the subject's intuition or concepts, and so is “true” for them in this way. In the \textit{Prolegomena}, Kant states that objective validity is interchangeable with the concept “necessary universal validity” (4:298). “Objective reality” is related in that once established, it will hold for all cognizers. “Objective reality” is established once a concept's real possibility has been proved, that is, the concept has been shown to refer to an actual object (a possible object of experience) (A220/B268). “Objective validity” \textit{of a concept} is also dependent upon proving there is an object corresponding to the concept and thus, once done, the concept would be “true”. Remember Kant subscribes to a kind of correspondence theory of truth and when concepts do refer to actual objects, they are thereby “objectively valid” and obtain “objective reality”. Thus Kant's use of “objective” in these concepts is one meaning \textit{intersubjective agreement}, not “apart from subject” (i.e., absolutely external).

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. A219/B267 and also at A225-226/B272-B274 where Kant states: “Hence our cognition of the existence of things reaches as far as does our perception and what is attached to it according to empirical laws.” Existence of an object, expressed through the assertoric modal judgment, has nothing to do with the inner determinations of a thing derived from its concept. Existence has real meaning
Kant writes at A253: “Although a pure use of a category is logically possible, i.e., is without contradiction, it has no objective validity whatever [...]” This pure use is the exploitation of the categories' transcendental signification. This pure use is also permissible, but does not achieve any theoretical insight into what the objects may be that stand under the categories' transcendental signification. Kant writes in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

In these [dynamical] categories it was permitted to add to the completely conditioned in the world of sense (to the causality and the contingent existence of things [i.e., the appearances]) the unconditioned [which is contained in things in themselves] in the intelligible world and to make the synthesis transcendent; this was permissible, even though the unconditioned was not further defined. (5:104)

( my insertions)

We are allowed to think the thing in itself as condition (ground) of the appearances and with this thought, introduce a transcendent synthesis, a synthesis that extends beyond possible experience, although this synthesis is properly, only an act of thought, not cognition. We have merely used the categories in their logical structure, a structure which, when not schematized, doesn't establish even the possibility of the things thought to correspond to the logical structure (that is, things as such). Kant writes: “The possibility of a thing can, however, never be proved merely from the fact that a concept of this thing is not contradictory, but can be proved only by supporting the concept through an intuition corresponding to it.” (A253/B308). The fact that we are to think transcendental affection in Kant's theory of sensation is not to serve as theoretical
justification for the existence of a supersensible world of objects (noumenal realm). The understanding's sphere of objects is larger than sensibility's, but it is problematically extended. This is not a metaphysical doctrine regarding these spheres (A255/B310). The problematic extension, the larger sphere of understanding's objects, is a conceptual space in which neither the objects' existence nor its real possibility can be established by theoretical philosophy. To put this plainly, we humans can think about things that are not known to be actual or even known to be possible by according with our form of intuition.

In the preface to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant underscores the fact that while we cannot obtain theoretical knowledge of the existence of the supersensible realm, it is not an arbitrary contrivance: “For in that work [i.e., the CPuR] the objects of experience as, including even our own subject, were explained as only *appearances*, though as based upon things-in-themselves; consequently, even in that *Critique* it was emphasized that the supersensible was not mere fancy and that its concepts were not empty” (5:5) (my insertion). Thus, even if the supersensible objects we are considering in transcendental affectation aren't theoretically cognizable, this doesn't prevent us from using the concepts of these objects in transcendental reflection so that we may, as it were, tie the ends of our speculative thought.22 This highlights Kant's statement in the preface that the supersensible is not mere fancy but is foisted upon our speculative thought in the service of pure reason.

Another passage that illustrates both an insistence on analogical thought and the necessity of *thinking* a ground of appearance comes at A540/B568:

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22 I am thinking of this tie as the systematic unity discussed earlier, achieved by analogical thought.
Now according to its intelligible character [i.e., the character of a thing in itself] this acting subject would not stand under any conditions of time; for time is the condition only of appearances and not of things in themselves […] We could not, indeed, ever become acquainted with this intelligible character [i.e., the character of a thing in itself] directly, because we cannot perceive anything except insofar as it appears; but we would still have to think it in accordance with the empirical character [i.e., the character of sensible objects], just as in general we must—in thought—lay a transcendental object at the basis of appearances although we know nothing about this object as to what it is in itself. (my insertions)

In this passage Kant is discussing the possibility of thinking the freedom involved in a subject's causality (will). There is no need here for a digression on free will. For my purposes, I need only to emphasize that insofar as the solution being offered refers to an intelligible ground, we can think of this ground as having an intelligible character which we are not “acquainted” with directly. This intelligible character is not subject to any sensible conditions (A539/B568) and is something we have only a “general concept” of (A541/B569). The important point is that Kant states that we are to think of this character “in accordance with the empirical character”, which is just the analogical manner of thinking laid out above. Furthermore, this passage provides support for the claim being made that the transcendental object must be thought as ground of appearance without any cognition resulting from this requisite speculative thought. We must think a transcendental object as ground of appearance in accordance with the way a ground acts in the empirical realm as cause (its empirical character).

Consider one more passage to further support the notion of analogical thought:

Hence the idea of reason is an analogue of a schema of sensibility, but with this difference: application of the concepts of understanding to the schema of reason is not likewise (as is application of the categories to their sensible schemata) a cognition of the object itself, but is only a rule or principle for the systematic unity of all use of the understanding. Now, every principle that lays down a priori for the understanding the thoroughgoing unity of the latter's use holds also, although only indirectly, of the object of experience. (B693)
The fact that the affecting object forever remains a thought-entity (although an entity necessarily thought) within theoretical philosophy makes it an idea of reason. In this passage Kant calls the idea of reason “an analogue of a schema of sensibility”. The idea of reason is similar to the schematized object by sharing its logical characteristics but, and this is the point, when we apply the categories to this analogue of a sensible schema Kant claims we do not obtain cognition thereby but that we get a regulative principle for the systematic unity of understanding's use. This regulative principle is applied by means of analogical thought.

Now let's return to the Tieftrunk letter and summarize what I've said in light of the letter:

Similarly, supersensible objects are not objects of theoretical knowledge for us. But since it is unavoidable that we regard the idea of such supersensible objects as at least problematic, an open question (since otherwise the sensible would lack a non-sensible counterpart, and this would evidence a logical defect in our classification), the idea belongs to pure practical knowledge, which is detached from all empirical conditions. The sphere of non-sensible objects is thus not quite empty, though from the point of view of theoretical knowledge such objects must be viewed as transcendent. (Zweig, p.247)

Kant herein makes two points supporting the reading being offered. First he says from the standpoint of theoretical knowledge, supersensible objects cannot be known and must be viewed as transcendent. Remember, transcendent ideas force our thought beyond the boundaries of possible experience such that a corresponding intuition can never be given to us. The reason for viewing the supersensible objects as transcendent is well known; it is simply so that we uphold noumenal ignorance in speculative thought. Second, Kant makes a point about our logical thought. If we didn't think of the sensible as having a
non-sensible counterpart, we would have a logical defect in our classification. Here, the
general point being made that supports a solution such as Mohler's and my own is that we
are forced, by demand of logic, to think certain relations to hold between concepts. We
could say the same about affection: we are forced to think of the sensible object being
grounded in a non-sensible one which affects sensibility. If this thought did not occur we
would evidence a logical defect in our classification brought about through
transcendental reflection, that is, the classification determining sensibility to be passive
(and understanding active), and with this passivity, transcendental affection is forced
upon our thought.

This talk of being forced to think, yet not know, is a perfect segue to another
implication of this solution briefly mentioned earlier: the solution does not commit Kant
to the existence of any supersensible objects by which representations are brought about.
Instead, we merely think there to be such objects and further, must think them to stand in
some relation to the representations if we are to employ transcendental philosophy with
sufficient grounding (not building “castles in the sky” as it were). If this relation is
thought through the merely logical function of the hypothetical: “If x, then y”, we needn't
think the subject of the antecedent exist for the hypothetical to be true and useful for what
I will later call “critical knowledge”. As Mohler puts it: “Transcendental affection’s
logical relation of ground to consequent does not entail the existence of the ground itself
any more than the claim that “If x exists, then y exists” implies the existence of x.”
(Mohler, 2004, p.190). The matter of sensible intuition would be the consequent and the
affecting object would be the antecedent. On this formulation, one could charge me with
committing the basic logical fallacy of affirming the consequent. That there is to be thought a ground of appearances is not concluded through the hypothetical relation though; only the logical relation, analogically thought to be causal, is thought through the hypothetical. In other words, the hypothetical is only the vehicle expressing what kind of relation obtains between the relata and would be illegitimately used if we gave it as justification for existential claims regarding the relata. What this implication of the solution entails is that Kant's affection claims cannot be adduced in support of those who think, contrary to my reading, transcendental idealism is a metaphysical doctrine asserting the existence of two worlds of objects: one being the world of appearances, the other being the world of things in themselves. Thus this solution implies a “one world” reading of Kant's transcendental idealism and that a “two worlds” view is not adequate to solve the problem of affection at the level of complexity involved in a “one world” view. 23 In the next section, I want to elaborate a bit on the “one world” and “two worlds” theories and what these entail for the relevant theoretical concepts found in my proposed solution (e.g., existence and cause). In the process, I hope a clearer picture of my one world interpretation will surface.

23 The solution being offered implies a one world interpretation of transcendental idealism and a one world interpretation implies the affection relation is logical in nature and the reason for this is simple: if we haven't an existent set of objects as things in themselves, we haven't given any meaning to the causal claim that these things produce the appearances by affection other than the analogical meaning elaborated. There is nothing existing by which the affection can occur and so our conclusion must turn to a logical grounding instead of genuine causality.
6. TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

Currently, the trendy take on Kant's idealism is a one-world reading. This one-world reading is also commonly associated with the “dual-aspect” reading of the transcendental distinction, which holds there is one set of objects and to call these either appearances or things in themselves is to simply consider the same set of objects from two different standpoints, one being the standpoint from which we consider these objects as conforming to our sensibility (appearances) and the other being a consideration of these objects apart from our sensibility (things in themselves). And so, we have two aspects elicited from the same set of objects. This reading fits nicely with the way I interpreted “transcendental” in section 2 in that the transcendental distinction is an epistemological thesis and so the transcendental idealism based on the transcendental distinction is also an epistemological doctrine.

There are still adherents to a kind of “two-worlds” view, and by extension, the view that transcendental idealism is a metaphysical doctrine. P.F. Strawson interprets Kant's idealism to include the doctrine that the supersensible sphere of objects exists (1966, p.236) and that “reality is supersensible” (1966, p.38). His interpretation does not take into account the points I am making, namely, that the critical philosophy cannot

24 Consider a frequently cited passage in favor of the dual-aspect view: “On the other hand, it must be noted carefully that this [conclusion] [that we can have no speculative cognition of things in themselves] is always subject to this reservation: that we must be able at least to think, even if not [speculatively] cognize, the same objects also as things in themselves. For otherwise an absurd proposition would follow, viz., that there is appearance without anything that appears. Now let us suppose that the distinction, necessitated by our critique, between objects of experience and these same objects as things in themselves, had not been made.” (Bxxvi-xxvii) (my emphasis on “same objects”and my insertion of the second bracketed locution). We can see why this is so frequently cited in support of a one-world/dual-aspect view. It is difficult to read this passage any other way than that Kant is asserting that there is one set of objects and that the transcendental distinction necessitated by the CPuR is a distinction made upon the “same objects”.

establish these claims as claims of knowledge, but that instead, these claims are requisite speculative thoughts. He reads Kant to be committed to the real existence of supersensible reality rather than the thought existence occurring in analogical thought. Kant seems to deny this much when he writes: “The critique of this pure understanding, therefore, does not permit one to create a new realm of objects apart from those that it may encounter as appearances, and to stray into intelligible [supersensible] worlds […]” (A289/B345). Likewise, in Interpreting Kant's Critiques, Karl Ameriks holds that Kant's idealism is an ontological doctrine. Ameriks writes: “[…] even if his most radical idealist claims are left unquestioned […] [there isn't] the slightest ground for doubting that we are always, all along, literally in touch with things in themselves, with the fact of their existence confronting us.” (2003, p.30).

James Van Cleve calls his interpretation of transcendental idealism a “qualified two-worlds view” (1999, p.150). He proposes that we read Kant as a phenomenalist and that his philosophy includes Berkeley's esse est percipi doctrine (1999, p.9 ff.). Reading Kant as a phenomenalist cannot be correct for we then annul the transcendental distinction which is “necessitated” by the CPuR (Bxxvii). Giving up the transcendental distinction is nothing less than giving up transcendental idealism. Moreover, Kant attempts to distance himself from any sort of phenomenalistic reading of the sort we find in Berkeley in his “Refutation of Idealism” section of the CPuR. Kant interprets Berkeley's idealism to be dogmatic, that is, it holds the existence of objects in space to be

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*Kant defines his idealism at A369: “By *transcendental idealism* of all appearances I mean the doctrinal system whereby we regard them, one and all, as mere presentations and not as things in themselves, and according to which space and time are only sensible forms of our intuition, but not determinations given on their own conditions of objects taken as things in themselves.”*
“false and impossible” (B274). If transcendental idealism amounts to a Berkeleyan phenomenalism, then we affirm the phenomena are the only existing set of objects. This leaves no conceptual room for the thought of phenomena as things in themselves, indeed the phenomena are things in themselves.

Kant is more agnostic than this. To my knowledge, nowhere does Kant affirm the appearances are the only possible objects that exist (or are actual), he simply thinks we can't know what it would be like for objects other than appearances to exist since existence itself is a category and is thus applicable only to sensible objects (existence has meaning only to those with our forms of intuition). In other words, phenomenalism is empirical idealism. Moreover, empirical idealism is, according to Kant, a version of transcendental realism in that it holds that our presentations of things as outer appearances exhausts the nature of those things and thus presents them as they are in themselves. Transcendental realism is problematic insofar as the doctrine can never establish the actuality of external objects (objects in space) since we never directly perceive external objects but only perceive modifications of our inner sense. This forces the transcendental realist to infer the existence of external objects from their effects (modifications of inner sense, perception) and this inference is always suspect since it doesn't determine some one thing to be the cause rather than another. As Kant puts it,

26 At B252 Kant makes a curious remark to the effect that if we took the phenomena as things in themselves then the words we use to describe their behavior would be of a “different signification”. I take this to suggest that the normal language we use to describe the world would be very much different in meaning if we forgo the transcendental distinction. And insofar as an intellectual intuition would be required to know things in themselves, we would speak in the language of divine cognizers, whatever that would amount to!

27 Empirical idealism is the idealism that, in contrast to Kant's empirical realism, regards objects of outer sense as mere mental objects which have no reality which can be imputed to them in experience. The empirical idealist will always then infer the actuality of those objects of outer sense and so leave uncertain whether the object (as matter) whose presentation is outer exists (A371).
empirical idealism leaves it a possibility, regarding the cause of our perception of outer appearances, to be nothing more than “a mere play of our inner sense” (A368). Transcendental idealism overcomes these difficulties and Kant thinks this to be one of its chief merits.²⁸

²⁸ See the A edition of the Fourth Paralogism for more on the discussion of empirical idealism and its shortcomings and how transcendental idealism handles these shortcomings.
7. THE USE OF THE CATEGORIES IN THINKING THINGS IN THEMSELVES

As already noted, Kant will repeatedly deny a transcendental use of the categories. A transcendental use of a concept is defined at A238/B297: “A concept is used transcendentially in any principle if it is referred to things as such and in themselves [...]” Consider the following passages in which denials of a transcendental use of the categories occur:

We may say, therefore, that the use that the understanding can make of all its a priori principles and, indeed, of all its concepts is nothing but an empirical and never a transcendental use [...] (A238/B297-8)

In view of what has been shown in the deduction of the categories, I hope that no one will have doubts in deciding this question: whether these pure concepts of understanding have a merely empirical use [only] or also a transcendental one [...] (A139/B178)

Now from this flows incontrovertibly the consequence that the pure categories can never be of a transcendental but always only of an empirical use [...] (B303)

Hence the merely transcendental use of the categories is in fact not a use at all [...] (A248/B304)

The pure categories, without formal conditions of sensibility, have merely a transcendental signification, but have no transcendental use. (B305)

In light of these passages and in respect to the solution being offered, a pressing question is: What use of the categories occurs in thinking analogical causality? In fact, my view seems to be using the categories of causality and existence transcendently. As I briefly mentioned in section 5 my solution doesn't make a real use of the categories in the sense that the mere thought of there being an analogical causal relation obtaining between the matter of sensation and the affecting object leaves the objective reality of these relata unestablished. A real use of the categories determines objects and this determination can
occur only if the categories' objective reality has been established, that is, if an object corresponding to the category has been shown to be possible. I claim that there is a logical or pure use being made of the categories and that it is transcendental in that it attempts at cognitions of things as they are in themselves or, nonsensible objects, but never reaches this cognition. I call a pure, or logical use of the categories one which applies the categories’ logical function or structure to things whether actual or not. Psychologically or in the act of thought, I think the logical use is the same as the real use. The difference lies in the determination resulting from the uses. The logical use determines no object since the logical use takes things as such to be the objects cognized and things as such can never be shown as possible objects for us by definition of being non-sensible. Consider this passage from the A edition in the chapter on “On the Basis of the Distinction of all Objects as such into Phenomena and Noumena” in support of my claim regarding a connection between a transcendental and logical use:

Rather, if we remove from the categories all conditions of sensibility, which mark them as concepts for a possible empirical [i.e. real] use, and take them as concepts of things as such (and hence as concepts for transcendental use), then there is nothing more to be done with them but to regard the logical function that they have in judgments as the condition for the possibility of things themselves.

(A242) (my insertion)

Here, I take Kant to be connecting a transcendental use to a logical use in that the transcendental use of concepts “regards” the logical function that conditions things themselves. Indeed, although Kant denies a transcendental use of the categories, he does so only insofar as we affirm there to be a cognition resulting from the use. This point isn't explicit in the published edition of the CPuR, but we do find it suggested in Kant's
working copy of the A edition (Nachträge).\textsuperscript{29} Recall two of the passages given at the beginning of this section where Kant writes:

Now from this flows incontestably that the pure categories can \textit{never} be of \textit{transcendental} but always only of \textit{empirical} use, and that the principles of pure understanding can be referred if they are to provide cognition only, with respect to the universal conditions of a possible experience, to objects of the senses, but never to things as such (i.e., never without taking account of the way in which we may intuit them).

The underlined portion was an addendum in the \textit{Nachträge}. And at A248/B305:

Hence the merely transcendental use of the categories is in fact not a use \textit{at all}, and has no object that is determinate, or is even determinable as regards form.

In this passage the underlined portion is changed to read “use for cognizing anything” in the \textit{Nachträge}.

These additions and alterations suggest that Kant thought a transcendental use of the categories is possible, just not possible for theoretical knowledge of objects (cognitions). Indeed, my solution proposes the pure or logical use of the categories occurring in analogical thought is a transcendental use and that, like Kant, I claim this use doesn't yield theoretical knowledge. The reason I think this logical use of the categories is also a transcendental use is that unschematized categories attempt cognitions of things as such, and to this extent, the attempt is by definition a transcendental use. But remember the category itself is not being applied to things in themselves, the categories logical structure is being applied to the thought of things in themselves.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} Thanks to James Petrik for pointing this out to me.

\textsuperscript{30} I think this thought provides another solution that responds to those who wish to maintain there is no legitimate transcendental use of the categories. In particular, I state here that the categories themselves are not being used and that only the logical function upon which the categories are based is being used transcendentally. This does not violate Kant's claims of the categories having no transcendental use. Indeed, it's only when we have analogical thought do we find the categories in their entirety, that is, with schemata, but that prior to thinking analogically, we have purely logical (not categorical) thought
schematized concepts are applied to the thought of things in themselves, the concepts are used transcendentally and Kant denies this use in the *Nachträge* but only insofar as we grant there to be cognitions resulting from this use. Yet I see no incoherence in applying unschematized categories to the thought of things in themselves so long as we do not call conclusions drawn from this application cognition: I call them requisite speculative thoughts.

Requisite speculative thoughts are not ontological cognitions. Remember that in the CPuR ontology has been relegated to a “mere analytic of pure understanding” since the putative objects of metaphysics are things in themselves and these can never be given in intuition. When we fancy ourselves to have made metaphysical insights, we have really done nothing more than decompose our a priori concepts of substance, causality, reality, etc., and thereby, never take a single step beyond the depths of our own mind and its powers. If we attempt metaphysical assertions about things in themselves we are attempting to use our concepts transcendentally, a use which we’ve seen, Kant flatly denies insofar as we affirm cognitions to flow from this use. Again, the reason for the denial of a transcendental use of the categories is given by our inability to establish the categories' objective reality abstracted from all sensible conditions. Kant writes: “For the deception of substituting the logical possibility of the concept (where the concept does not contradict itself) for the transcendental possibility of things (where to the concept there corresponds an object) can trick and satisfy only the unseasoned.” (A244/B302). In the *Nachträge*, he alters the phrase “transcendental possibility” to read “real possibility”. This substitution suggests Kant thought “real” would describe the possibility he has in occurring.
mind better than “transcendental”. A real use of concepts beyond the boundary of possible experience is transcendent and as such, is illegitimate. Nonetheless, there is a legitimate transcendental use of the categories, as I have proposed, and that it is tantamount to a logical use of categories. And so Kant's substitution in the Nachträge no longer expresses a contrast between logical and transcendental, substituting instead a contrast between the logical and real, a contrast that my solution draws upon.

Let me pause for a moment and take stock of what has been said. My interpretation of Kant's is as follows: Transcendental idealism isn't committed to the real existence of a supersensible world as those two worlds theorists discussed in section 5 claim. Transcendental idealism is committed to the thought existence of the supersensible. We must think there to be an intelligible world of things in themselves which grounds the sensible and that this thought is analogical so that our construal of the world is of a harmonious whole, a whole which reason naturally seeks by positing the unconditioned in the things in themselves. These things in themselves are thought-objects and are thought to affect the mind by analogically thinking a causal relation obtaining between them and the senses. Properly though, the relation is a logical one in which the supersensible grounds the sensible. This logical relation entails there is no real connection between the relata since all real connections stand under the principle of causality which holds only for the world of experience. In other words, the connection is logical and as such, is merely thought to exist (as is also the supersensible relatum in the logical relation).

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31 A real use of the categories is restricted to an immanent use, or a use that remains within the bounds of possible experience.
8. THINKING GROUNDS

Is there any more textual support for the reading that the things affecting the mind are merely thought to exist so that the logical notion of a grounding can be thought as analogical to a causal relation?; and not only this, but that the affection relation itself is only thought to obtain and can never be known within transcendental philosophy?

Textual support abounds. First consider a passage in the second edition preface to the CpuR, at a footnote in Bxxvi:

In order for me to cognize an object I must be able to prove its [real] possibility (either from its actuality as attested by experience, or a priori by means of reason). But I can think whatever I want to, even if I am unable to commit myself to there being, in the sum of all [logical] possibilities, an object corresponding to the concept. All that is required in order for me to think something is that I do not contradict myself, i.e., that my concept be a [logically] possible thought. But I require something further in order to attribute objective reality to a concept (i.e., real possibility, as distinguished from the merely logical possibility just mentioned). However—and this is my point—this something further need not be sought in the theoretical sources of cognition but may also lie in practical ones.

With this passage in mind, can we say we know (cognize) anything regarding the concept of the affection of the mind and the relata therein? If we remember that this is a transcendental affection we are dealing with that has, as one of its relata, a supersensible object, then we cannot say we have any knowledge proper. In principle, supersensible concepts cannot be ascribed objective reality from the theoretical standpoint (recall the premises extracted from the Teiftrunk letter). We can say that we think there to be this claim of transcendental reflection by demand of our transcendental philosophical commitments, that is, that our sensibility is defined by Kant as purely passive, and that for there to be appearances (which Kant doesn't bother proving since it is manifest there
are representations in our mind) there must be a supersensible ground corresponding to them.

From the theoretical standpoint of transcendental philosophy, we think such things are the case. I want to say that we also know such things to be the case from a broader standpoint, the standpoint of the critical system in general and thus, I would call such thought regarding transcendental affection “critical knowledge”. Even though we have merely reasoned to these claims from the commitments of the transcendental philosophy and the critical system and even though the content of the claims are not intuitable, the claims are still of a legitimate service to us. Kant writes, “Thus if intuition is lacking, the thought of the object can otherwise still have its true and useful consequences for the subject's use of reason.” (B166, footnote 324). To phrase all this in light of Jacobi's objection, I think Kant satisfies both horns of the dilemma. Recall the dilemma was to either admit some knowledge of things in themselves so that the critical system can begin or admit there is no knowledge of things in themselves so that we can remain within the critical system. I propose that it is critical knowledge for the system to require the thing in itself and thus one is able to enter the system, but that the necessity of thinking a ground for the appearances via the logical function of the hypothetical is not speculative knowledge, and thus one is able to remain within the system while consistently denying that the categories can be used to know things in themselves within speculative philosophy.

More textual support is available. Consider the following from the Prolegomena,
Although I therefore do not have the least concept of such a connection of things in themselves, how they can exist as substances or act as causes or stand in community with others (as parts of a real whole) […] we nonetheless do have a concept of such a connection of representations in our understanding, and indeed in judging in general, namely: that representations belong in one kind of judgments as subject in relation to predicate, in another as ground in relation to consequence, and in a third as parts that together make up a whole possible experience.

Here Kant states that he hasn't the least concept of how things in themselves can act as causes. This is so because our causal concept is one which involves time determinations (schematized causality), and so sensible predicates, can never, in principle, be ascribed to things in themselves. As Kant elaborates a page later: “I have no insight at all into the possibility of a thing in general [i.e., thing in itself] as a cause, and that indeed because the concept of cause indicates a condition that in no way attaches to things [in general], but only to experience […]” (Prolegomena, 4:312) (my insertions). Although, we do not have understanding of things in themselves as causes, Kant states that we do have the concept of a causal connection, judged in general, as being the relation of ground to consequence. In the Critique of Practical Reason Kant will make this point again when examining practical reason's transferring of our causality as rational agents to the intelligible world:

It [pure reason] can altogether abstract the concept of cause itself from that application to objects which has theoretical knowledge as its purpose, since this concept can always be found a priori in the understanding, independently of any intuition. Thus reason uses this concept only for a practical purpose, transferring the determining ground of the will to the intelligible order of things, at the same time readily confessing that it does not understand how the concept of cause can be a condition of the knowledge of these things [...] But the concept which reason makes of its own causality as noumenon is significant even though it cannot be defined theoretically for the purpose of knowing its supersensuous existence [...] the concept has no definite theoretical significance and application but is only the
understanding's formal but nevertheless essential thought of an object in general [thing as such]. (5:49-50) (my insertions)

Notice Kant states that reason confesses that it hasn't knowledge of how the concept of cause can condition intelligible objects. Not only is reason ignorant of this, but reason also cannot make use of this concept of noumenal causality to know the existence of the supersensible because the concept has “no definite theoretical significance and application”. Although it hasn't this significance nor application, Kant states that it is essential to the thought of things as such. None of this should be taken to deny the pure concept's transcendental signification, but only its theoretical signification. This transcendental signification is exactly the signification that is to be exploited in my solution. Although Kant writes that reason uses the pure concept of causality only for a practical purpose, I am suggesting that reason also uses the concept transcendentally or logically when its formal structure is incorporated into the regulative principle that engenders the analogical thought. This incorporation of the formal structure is necessary for the requisite speculative thought I am proposing. These passages strongly support the solution to the problem of affection being one in which we merely think, or judge in general (that is, we make no determinations), the cause of appearances to be a logical grounding in things considered in themselves.

Consider a similar thought being explained in the *Groundwork*, 4:459:

Obviously, then, the separation of his causality (his will) from all natural laws of the world of sense in one and the same subject is a contradiction, but this disappears when they reconsider and confess, as is reasonable, that behind the appearances things-in-themselves must stand as their hidden ground and that we cannot expect the laws of the activity of these grounds to be the same as those under which their appearances stand.
First notice that we must “confess”, not know, that there is a supersensible ground of appearances. This fits our reading in that the confession, though not knowledge within the system, would be critical knowledge from without the critical system and this does not violate the doctrine that the noumena cannot be known. Second, and what is to be emphasized, is that again Kant states that the “laws of the activity” of things in themselves cannot be expected to be like those that appearances stand under. For example, appearances stand under the law of causality so that experience is possible, but to expect that this law would hold of things in themselves is something the transcendental philosopher ought not do since we “have no insight at all into the possibility of a thing in general [i.e., thing in itself] as a cause” (Prolegomena, 4:312).

Reflecting on the solution being offered, we are apt to think these things considered in themselves as existing, as Kant writes: “[...] although this way of determining the object is a mere logical form without content, it nonetheless seems to us to be a way in which the object exists in itself [...]” (A289/B346). We mustn't, however, be fooled by this penchant of our speculative thought.32 Things in themselves become hypostatized if we affirm their reality through the principle of causality. Thus a transcendental subreption (“the ascribing of objective reality to an idea that serves merely as a rule” (A509/B537)) occurs to those affirming the reality and existence of the ground of appearances. I am suggesting that this confession of there being a supersensible ground and the relation resulting from this thought (one of the “laws of the activity” of things in themselves) is to

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32 See Piché, 2004, for an argument that the solution to the problem of affection involves knowledge of the existence of the affecting object while denying knowledge of its characteristics (its “whatness” if I may).
be thought analogically in just the manner explained in section 5 and that no speculative knowledge will ever be forthcoming from such analogical thought.

As mentioned above, the thing thought to affect the senses and bring about appearances is called by several different names, and in the chapter “One the Basis of the Distinction of all Objects as such into Phenomena and Noumena”, Kant calls the cause of appearances the transcendental object. Kant writes:

Accordingly the understanding limits sensibility, but without therefore expanding its own realm. And inasmuch as the understanding warns sensibility not to claim to deal with things in themselves but solely with appearances, it does think an object in itself. But the understanding thinks it only as transcendental object. This object is the cause of appearance (hence is not itself appearance) and can be thought neither as magnitude nor as reality nor as substance, etc. (because these concepts always require sensible forms wherein they determine an object). Hence concerning this object we are completely ignorant as to whether it is to be found in us—or, for that matter, outside us; and whether it would be annulled simultaneously with sensibility, or would still remain if we removed sensibility. If we want to call this object noumenon, because the presentation of it is not sensible, then we are free to do so. But since we cannot apply to it any of our concepts of understanding, the presentation remains empty for us, and does not serve for anything but to mark the bounds of our sensible cognition and to leave us with room that we can fill neither through possible experience nor through pure understanding. (A288-89/B344-45)

Kant states that the understanding thinks for itself an object in itself as cause of appearance but that this object is only the transcendental object which is a highly indeterminate concept (a something=x (A104)). It is a perfect candidate for the “things unknowable in themselves” given in the rejoinder from the Prolegomena above (4:289) to Tieftrunk's question “Whence the matter of sensibility?”. This object is grasped under its problematic concept which Kant underscores by professing ignorance to its transcendental location to be within us or without us and even professing ignorance of its existence if we abstract sensibility. The point is, there is no knowledge of this object's
character or of its relational status, but it is indispensable to transcendental reflection and to the systematic unitary view of the world reason seeks.

Another important point Kant makes is that he thinks we can call this cause of appearance the noumenon since it is nonsensible but that we must keep in mind by doing this we do not add any content to the concept of this cause but merely consider it as a limiting concept which curbs the pretensions of understanding's claims to supersensible knowledge. Again, the thing causing appearances can be called by different names depending on which part of the transcendental philosophy we find ourselves in, or on what aspect of thing we wish to emphasize. In particular, if we find ourselves in the realm of theoretical philosophy, we will be apt to call the thing the transcendental object or thing considered in itself, whereas if we are doing practical philosophy, this thing is likely to be the noumenon. This point is reiterated at A494/B522: “We may, however, entitle the purely intelligible cause of appearances in general the transcendental object, but merely in order to have something corresponding to sensibility viewed as receptivity.” We are free to call the intelligible cause (ground) of appearance the transcendental object, but I am claiming that we are not free to forgo the thought that there is a ground since otherwise we would evidence a logical defect in our transcendental reflection on our faculties and their actuation. In brief, there is no univocal answer as to what the affecting object is, but that, true to Kant's fundamental

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33 For example, in the preface to the Critique of Practical Reason, 5:5, Kant writes: “So long as one had no definite concept of morality and freedom, no conjecture could be made concerning what the noumenon was which should be posited as the ground of the alleged appearance [...]” (my emphasis). Notice Kant speaks of the ground as noumenon here, and what is even more important, he asserts that the ground “should be posited”. Part of the intent in this essay has been to give reasons why we must posit the ground and that this positing is not theoretical knowledge.

34 Cf. A380
answer, we *think* it to be a “something”, we know not what it is in itself, which grounds the appearances.\footnote{As shown, Kant will call the affecting object a “something” often. Another clear example of this is at A44/B61: “On the other hand, when \textit{body} is presented in intuition, this presentation contains nothing whatever that could belong to an object in itself. It contains, rather, merely the appearance of something, and the way we are affected by that something.”}
9. JUSTIFICATION FOR “CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE

At the end of the last section I mentioned again a reason why the critical philosopher must think there to be an intelligible ground to sensible objects. When we step outside the critical system and reflect on its theoretical entities and basic commitments, this thought within the system becomes critical knowledge. Why is this speculative thought requisite?One reason already given was Kant's assertion that we would evidence a logical defect in our classification brought about by transcendental reflection. This was explained when we covered the Teiftrunk letter. Another reason has also already been stated: we are required to posit intelligible grounds so that we preserve the systematic unity of reason's empirical use. These reasons are different insofar as reason's empirical use is directed solely at the world of experience while transcendental reflection is directed at the sources that can be pure, that is, without empirical admixtures.

A third reason comes from the Critique of Judgment, 5:341, Kant writes:

Thus one sees that the removal of the antinomy of the aesthetic power of judgment takes a course similar to that followed in the Critique in the resolution of the antinomies of pure theoretical reason, and that in the same way both here and in the Critique of Practical Reason one is compelled, against one's will, to look beyond the sensible and to seek the unifying point of all our faculties a priori in the supersensible: because no other way remains to make reason self-consistent.

Kant states that the solution to the antinomies of the CPuR are resolved by the vocation of reason compelling us to transcend the sensible and posit the supersensible so that we

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36 In “Noumenal Affection”, Desmond Hogan will call this question the “Indispensability Problem” and proceed to give an answer similar to the one I am suggesting: “Extended to the mature transcendental idealist framework, this argument will reveal noumenal affection to be an indispensable presupposition of some basic knowledge claims consistently upheld by Kant” (Hogan, 2009, p.504). Hogan will exploit Kant's doctrine of practical reason and its necessary postulation of freedom as justification for thinking noumenal affection is indispensable.
unify our faculties (an exercise in transcendental reflection) because “no other way remains to make reason self-consistent”.

Although the problem of affection isn't considered by Kant scholars to be an antinomy, there are antinomical features involved. For example, Jacobi's dilemma, which, as already noted, contains the basic thrust of the problem of affection, is antinomical insofar as the critical system appears to require knowledge of things in themselves while at the same time denying this knowledge. If we consider the problem in this way, the solution at hand resolves this antinomical feature of the problem by admitting critical knowledge of the requirement the thing in itself as affecting object and, at the same time, admitting analogical thought, not knowledge, so that one may remain consistent within the critical system.
10. SUPERSENSIBLE CAUSATION AND SUPERSENSIBLE EXISTENCE

Now that my interpretation of Kant and my solution to the problem of affection has been fully developed, let's see how I would handle problematic texts where Kant seems to affirm a causal relation obtaining between the thing in itself and appearances? Not only is a causal relation affirmed at times, but an existential affirmation also seems to occur at times.37 First the causal claims. I think the best response would be given by Kant himself in sect. ix of introduction to the Critique of Judgment: “the word cause when used of the supersensible, of course only signifies the ground” and this is because: “the intelligible world contains the ground of the world of sense” (4:453). In the CPuR a similar thought occurs at A564/B592: “For then [the expression] intelligible cause means only the basis, to us merely transcendental and unknown, of the possibility of the sensible series as such.” This is strong support for arguing that the best interpretation of the passages which seem to make causal claims regarding nonsensible objects (things considered in themselves, noumena, transcendental object) are really logical claims about grounds. Indeed, when we examine transcendental affection, we are doubtlessly considering the supersensible and so when Kant says: “no one can have a basis for claiming to know anything about the transcendental cause of our presentations of outer sense” (A391), he should be read as asserting there is a ground to our presentations, not a cause. A similar reading should be followed in all passages where Kant is considering the cause of appearances, and as I have already said, thinking of the problem of affection as in terms of a grounding relation does not violate Kant's doctrine of noumenal

37 See Bxx, B72, B164, 4:289, 4:315, 22:320
ignorance or his doctrine of the inapplicability of the categories beyond the experiential realm.

What about the passages where Kant seems to affirm the existence of the affecting object? Kant's distinction between sensible intuition and intellectual intuition poses great difficulties for those maintaining that Kant is not committed to the existence of supersensible objects which would include the affecting object being considered. One of the most troubling passages where an assertion of this commitment occurs is at B72: "our kind of intuition is dependent on the existence of the object, and hence is possible only by the object's affecting the subject's capacity to present."\(^{38}\) If we intuited intellectually, our representation would give the existence of the object. But as Kant asseverates, we intuit sensibly, and because of this, our faculties' actuations and our having representations is dependent on the existence of an affecting object considered transcendentally. What makes this passage worrisome is that we find no reference to acts of *thinking* the said object exists, which I claim, are implicit to the meaning of the passage. One espousing the solution to the problem of affection and the interpretation of transcendental idealism being offered in this essay can avoid this worry by reading the existential assertion at B72 in the same way we read the causal assertions, that is, with implicit qualifications. We are to read Kant at B72 as qualifying the existence of the object affecting the senses as a "thought-existence", as we read the causal affirmations as "thought-causality".\(^{39}\) Recall the point made in section 7: if Kant defines sensibility as purely passive and if there are presentations, then it follows logically that there is an object which affects sensibility to

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\(^{38}\) Cf. A92/B125, and the 1772 Letter to Marcus Herz (Zweig, p.70) which is prior to the CPuR but contains the germ of Kant's thought expressed here.

\(^{39}\) Here, I am contrasting "thought-" with "real-".
produce the presentations but that this conclusion is not theoretical knowledge; it can't be on pain of not violating noumenal ignorance. This conclusion is critical knowledge which cannot be established from the theoretical standpoint within transcendental philosophy, but can and must occur within the philosophy as analogical thought.40

40 One way to think of the solution I am offering is that the proposition expressing the solution is analytic since no existence is thereby determined and that this solution was governed when drawing conclusions by dynamical principles (principles concerning the existence of things). Dynamical principles are properly only regulative, not constitutive, that is, they cannot establish the existence of the objects in question and grant knowledge. In the Critique of Practical Reason Kant writes at 5:110: “Two terms necessarily combined in one concept must be related as ground and consequence, and this unity must be regarded either as analytic (logical connection) according to the law of identity or as synthetic (real connection) according to the law of causality.” The concept at hand would be transcendental affection and if we regard this as analytic, a logical connection obtains and not a real connection between the relata in the transcendental affection relation.
11. CONCLUSION

The picture I am offering is one which allows “critical knowledge” of the transcendental affection relation and its relata but disallows this knowledge from the theoretical standpoint which we can take in transcendental philosophy. Rescher puts this idea in terms of “items of knowledge” and “creatures of theory” (Rescher, 2000, p.26). He rightly thinks the affecting object is not an item of knowledge but rather a theoretical entity which is found in the “realm of information” and not in “realm of experiential knowledge” (Rescher, 2000, p.34). I am claiming that what Rescher calls the realm of information includes knowledge, namely, critical knowledge of the conclusions deduced from the basic commitments of transcendental idealism. Rescher does not claim that noumenal causality is in anyway known within theoretical philosophy, and this is doubtlessly correct, but he also doesn't say the critical philosopher knows transcendental causality from any standpoint, which I say, the critical philosopher does. The critical philosopher knows there to be transcendental causality by way of analogical thought for the reasons given in section 9; however, this critical knowledge is not in any way speculative or theoretical knowledge of things in themselves as causes. It is a mere recognition of the necessity of thinking things in themselves as causal analogues in order to ensure the coherence of the system that begins with sensory content (appearances) given to a passive faculty of sensibility.
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