# Nothing: Kant's analysis and the Hegelian critique

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to throw an illuminating light on the as yet neglected concept of nothing in Kant's system, a concept which is taken into consideration, by Kant, in accordance with the guiding thread of the categories of the understanding. My main argument is that Kant has a fourfold division of nothing and each has a transcendental function in his system. This function is basically a limiting one; setting up negative determinations without which Kant's system would have never been constituted as it is now. It is shown in the thesis that the concept of nothing is divided basically into four: first, nothing as *ens rationis* that limits and thereby protects knowledge, secondly nothing as *nihil privativum* that defines the boundaries of phenomenal reality, thirdly nothing as *ens imaginarium* that makes possible the unity of experience and finally, nothing as *nihil negativum* that draws the lines of logical thinking. All make, in the last resort and by being the concepts of the opposite, experience possible. The thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter is an exposition of all four divisions of nothing, the second is the display specifically of the concepts of *ens rationis* and *nihil negativum*, and the third is of the concepts of *ens imaginarium* and *nihil privativum*. The auxiliary argument of the thesis is that while Hegel makes a strong charge of externality against and thereby severely criticizes the Kantian concept of the thing-in-itself, - the concept of which I propose to be contained under the concept of *ens rationis*- Kant has equally convincing arguments against such a charge. This is the topic of the fourth and final chapter which has an implicit aim of creating the image of a powerful critical Hegel but on the other hand an equally enduring and war-like Kant. Kant is presented as a philosopher who has powerful responses to institute a balance between himself and his opponent. When Kant's differing concepts of nothing are taken into account, Hegel's attack of externality, it is maintained, appears not to have taken into account the full measure of the resources of the Kantian position. Even when it is said that the attack is against one specific concept of the thing-in-itself alone, Kant still seems to have enough resources for toleration and defence indeed.

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# A NOTE ON SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

References to Kant's works are given according to the volume and pages that the cited passages are in the Academy Edition: Immanuel Kant (1910). *Gesammelte Schriften,* edited by the Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin: Reimer; later DeGruyter. The first Arabic numerals indicate the volume, the second Arabic numerals indicate the page numbers. All references to the *Critique of Pure Reason,* in keeping with current practice, are shortened to the pagination of the original edition indicated by A for the 1781 edition, and B for the 1787 edition. English translations are from Kant, Immanuel (2003), *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, first published 1929, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. For Kant's other works, all English translations are from *the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant,* edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood.

All references to Hegel's work are to the English translations of his *Logic*, part one of the *Encyclopaedia; Science of Logic* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit.* I list them below as follows:

Hegel, G. W. F. (1969). *Science of Logic.* Translated by A. V. Miller. Edited by H. D. Lewis. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books;

Hegel, G. W. F. (1975). *Logic: Being a Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830).* Translated by William Wallace. Oxford: Clarendon;

Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford and New York: Oxford University.

I used few abbreviations for both Kant's and Hegel's works. Here is the list of those:

Ak. Akademie der Wissenschaften

*Enc.* Hegel's *Logic: Being a Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830).*

*L.* Hegel's *Science of Logic.*

*Phen.* Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

*Refl*. *Reflexionen.* (These *Reflexionen* are quoted according to the numbering and pagination of the Akademie edition. English translations are from Immanuel Kant (2005), *Notes and Fragments. (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant).* Edited by Paul Guyer. Translated by Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, and Frederick Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University.)

> Now God can annihilate the world with the same facility with which he called forth Being from Nothing [...] But could he remove Nothing altogether? It would be horrible blasphemy to say so [...] For if Nothing were absent and insofar as it is lacking, it would no longer be possible for the power of God to produce new creatures. Lacking Nothing, neither would there be divine omnipotence (G. Castiglione, 1632, quoted from Ossola (1977: 79) by Heisig, 2012: 27).

> Alice: "I see nothing."
> Cheshire Cat: "My. You have good eyes."
> (Lewis Caroll, *Alice in Wonderland*)

## Introduction

In the Western philosophical tradition it is possible to distinguish various approaches concerning *nothing.* For some it has a positive connotation whereas for others negative. However, as it is often acknowledged, *nothing* in its long history has been considered inferior to *something*. It would be a mistake though to take this line of thought as a uniform pattern, for there is an alternative view that has instead taken non-being and nothing as superior to being and something. Plotinus (c. 205-270) is a representative of this line of thought. He places the One beyond being, grounding being in non-being. This differentiation in attitudes does not obscure the fact that from Parmenides on the Western metaphysics has been dominated by the principle of ultimate something. Since Plato and Aristotle this principle has constituted the standard outlook of and become point of departure for metaphysical thought.

For Parmenides all was one, and one was being. Nothing was completely excluded from the category of the one, it was accepted by him as simply 'not'. Plato took over this

notion and applied it to his theory of forms. Forms were constituted as completely exempt from nothing. It was therefore *only* in the world of senses, for Plato, that nothing could be recognized. Aristotle too gave no room to nothingness in his categories. The motto 'nothing comes from nothing' defines the logical pattern of causality that the Western philosophical tradition followed in answering the basic questions about the origins of the natural world. Aristotle, to whom we owe the completion of such pattern of causality, tightly divided reality between *things* as causes and *things* as effects. In this kind of world view there is no room for the spiritual insight that 'everything comes from nothing'.

Reaching back to Antiquity and until the pre-Enlightenment, spiritual or religious wisdom saw another world exempt from time and change. It was the divine realm which represented the highest reality. Deprived of all cause-effect relationships this "absolute" reality as causeless cause or an unmoved mover was grounded upon the insight that proclaimed 'everything comes from nothing' (Heisig, 2012: 18). James W. Heisig points to "a sudden flourishing of Latin treatises and debates about *Nihil*" from the late sixteenth century in Europe. The philosophical discourse of these theological texts reveals three kinds of approaches to the concept of nothing. The first approach sees nothing as nothing of value to say, meaning neither ordinary language nor reason is able to reach it. The second one considers nothing as necessary to explain reality. Finally, for the third approach "Nothing is positioned between being and nonbeing as a third reality" (Heisig, 2012: 27).

In the modern tradition, nothingness becomes the focus of dialectical metaphysics, thanks to Hegel's method detailed in his *Science of Logic* (1812-13). There Hegel grounds being as intermingled with nothing resulting in becoming. His approach is novel in the sense that prior to him there was no grounding dialectics of nothingness that relates it to being and becoming. The influence of Hegel's conception of ontological-dialectical nothingness on the twentieth century Continental philosophy can be traced back to its affirmative and negative

receptions. However, it would be better to distinguish philosophical positions concerning the role of nothingness in philosophy in a rather broader way. In doing so, it would be possible for us to trace differences in positions within a rather bigger picture.

In the twentieth century in particular, two contrasting traditions crystalized their positions vis-à-vis the nothing. On the one hand, there are those who see the nothing as a fertile if difficult topic in philosophy. This is the tradition that finds an essential positive role for nothing. Two representatives of this particular position might be named as Heidegger and Sartre. Although their positions differ as opposed to Hegelian nothingness, - the affirmative and more popular one is of Sartre's whereas the negative one is of Heidegger's- , they both are on the same side when they accept the idea that philosophy would be missing something fundamental if failed to grapple positively with the topic of nothing. Sartre in his *Being and Nothing* (1943) claims that negation has a broader phenomenal scope than affirmation. His point is that negation appears through nihilation not at the level of reflexivity, but at the level of immediate perception. He derives the ontological reality of nothingness from nihilation. In contrast to Sartre's reliance on Hegel, Heidegger's position is openly non-dialectical. He constitutes his position as to the concept of nothingness in his *What is Metaphysics?* (1929). For him, any approach to the nothing through logic, reason, and negative assertions is inadequate. "Nothing is the authentic way to Being" and "Being ultimately fuses with nothingness without resulting in any difference" (Salminen and Sjöberg, 2012: 4). Nothing is non-dialectical and rather than negating something 'it nothings' and thus "more original than the 'not' and negation" (Heidegger, WM 108)

On the other hand, the dominant tradition in the 20$^{th}$ century philosophy sees in nothing nothing but a locus of pseudo-philosophical problems that can be dissolved through logical analysis. A main representative of this tradition is Rudolf Carnap, who in his key text

"The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language" (1932)[1] ridicules the metaphysical tradition that is represented by Heidegger in Germany and finds meaningless all metaphysical statements. In other words, Carnap finds nothing in nothing. This dominant approach in sum sees the nothing as house of mirrors that seduces us into fallacies.

As for Kant, he is the theme of this dissertation as a whole. It may seem at first sight that Kant neglects the concept of nothing. It is certainly safe to say that the topic is not given prominence in his primary work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*. His "table of nothings" is very brief, and appears only at the end of Amphiboly, almost hidden from view. But the placement of the table of nothings should not mislead us as to its importance. As we shall see in the pages that follow, nothing has a crucial function in Kant's overall system and this function is not limited to architectonic reasons. Though affirming Kant as one of the philosophers of nothing may be controversial, it is beyond doubt that there are some words to be uttered on the concept of nothing as it exists in his philosophy. Brief or long, he has a table of nothing and I believe it is a fertile soil to start from.

Kant classifies the concept of nothing under the guidance of his table of categories of pure understanding. Thus, he identifies four kinds of nothing, each having a function varying according to different contexts. Each, however, in the last analysis, has the function of limitative determination. My main argument here is that the concept of nothing has a transcendental function in Kant's system. This function is defined as being the concept of the limitative constituting opposite, in other words, *nothing* opposes and during this it limits and constitutes its own opposite. I believe that without the concept of nothing Kant's system would have never been able to be constituted as such; Kant's brief mentioning of the fourfold

[1] This article originally titled as "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch Logische Analyse der Sprache" appeared in *Erkenntnis* vol. II, 1932. My reference here is its English version translated by Arthur Pap.

division of nothing at the end of the Amphiboly section should not distract readers from paying sufficient attention to it. This does not mean that for understanding Kant one is in need of studying his concept of nothing, but it seems to be an important concept, staying in silence in the background, and studying of it and of Kant through it is likely to produce an unprecedented perspective as to Kant's basic concepts and arguments.

In this dissertation, my argumentative strategy is to illuminate the core aspects of Kant's Critical Philosophy by close consideration of how those elements relate to Kant's table of nothing. Here these core aspects serve as discussion frameworks that help highlighting the roles and functions of variously mentioned nothings. The purpose of such a method is to bring into surface the idea that the concept of nothing plays a significant role in Kant's critical project; making explicit the otherwise hidden factor- the factor of nothing- without which Kant's system could not have been established. The concept of nothing fused so sufficiently with the constitutive components of Kant's Critical Philosophy that one might not hesitate to call that concept as the building block of the entire system. Hence, the argumentation drawn around the diverse contexts clarifies first of all in which contexts the concept of nothing plays its specific role and secondly how an unequivocal context is dependent upon the similarly unequivocal concept of nothing. Respectively then, by way of this particular action, my main argument that the concept of nothing has a transcendental function in Kant's overall system gets validated, in each connection time and again.

Kant, in his table of nothingness, divides the concept into four categories, namely as *ens rationis*, *nihil privativum*, *ens imaginarium* and finally *nihil negativum*. Each division signifies a different something as the concept of the positive. In other words, in each case something different is made possible but in each case it is made so as a result of a limiting function. So what limiting roles do these four concepts of nothing play? The complete

answer to this question will unfold over the course of the first three chapters of this dissertation, but a preliminary sketch will nonetheless be useful at this stage.

*Ens rationis* are the ideas; they are noumena and as such transcend the limits of knowledge. Being beyond the boundaries of knowledge, they however set the limit of it, keeping sensibility clear and limited while preventing the categories from an attempt at transgressing the sensible. Moreover, since there is no positive reality that corresponds to *ens rationis*, they are the concepts of reason the knowledge of which is not attainable. They are therefore beings for *ratio* only, and Kant calls them nothing just for this reason that they are unknowable. In addition to this feature of them, they have logical possibility but real impossibility; that is, they can be thought but do not exist in the real sense of the term. *Nihil privativum* is the second division of nothing according to the table of categories. This nothing concerns the absence of phenomenal reality and in that sense it is the nothing that can be said to be working within the phenomenal world. It comes to the fore either by the absence of any positive determination as a result of two conflicting forces or by the entire absence of matter i.e. reality, and in the latter sense as *absentia* that negates reality. Its function is thereby to create the category of limitation. What is more, as I will indicate in the *nihil privativum* and *ens imaginarium* sections of the thesis, it has, like *ens rationis*, logical possibility in both senses of the term but as the entire absence of matter -and for the void itself is impossible-, it has no real possibility at all. It has, as the category of limitation, the individuating function making objects in the empirical world possible. Third division is *ens imaginarium* and it is as the absence of matter in space and time similar to *nihil privativum* as in the sense of the absence of matter. Kant denies the real possibility of *ens imaginarium*, he speaks of it as being only for imagination. They are not even *ens rationis*; they are just empty forms of intuition and as such can only be imagined; never able to exist on their own. I argue that as the opposite of full space and full time, they provide the constitutive limits

for the possibility of the unity of experience, serving as an opposite underlying background for the positivity of the experience. Finally the division of *nihil negativum* is defined by Kant as the concept of the absurd. It lacks even logical possibility for it is against the logical rules of thinking in the first instance. It is again an opposite concept that sets the boundaries of 'something as logical proceeding'. In this case, as being an opposite underlying background for the possibility of logical knowledge, it can be said to constitute the limits of logical inferences.

In developing the contexts for my interpretation, I draw mainly on two pre-critical texts, *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* (1763) (Ak. 2: 165-204) and *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (1763), (Ak. 2: 63-163) and one post-critical discussion on the Ether-Deduction in *Übergang 1-11* in *Opus Postumum* (Ak. 21: 206-553). The First Critique, on the other hand, is the underlying reference for the whole thesis, that is to say, the basic line of my argumentation on the transcendental value of the nothing in the Kantian philosophy will be drawn on Kant's critical project.

I am certainly aware of the risks to rely on pre-critical texts as well as the critical and even post-critical ones to determine the transcendental function of nothing in Kant. I must however underline that it is not my intention to show, or prove a possible continuity in Kant's pre-critical and critical positions vis-à-vis the nothing. In contrast, I intend to show the shift that occurred in Kant's notion of nothing from his pre-critical to critical period with a special emphasis on his argument on the principle of contradiction and the concepts of possibility and impossibility. My argument is that even in his pre-critical works Kant seems to introduce at least three types of nothing: Firstly, an *absolute nothing* as the complete cancellation of all existence which is non-contradictory but thinkable in itself because of its internal possibility (Ak. 2: 79); secondly, negative nothing, *nihil negativum*, which is the

consequence of a logical contradiction that occurs within the concept itself and cancels it altogether; and thirdly, privative nothing, i.e. *nihil privativum*, like *rest* as the lack of motion that occurs with a *real opposition* between two forces moving towards opposite directions. However, in the absence of the guidance of the understanding that "brings the multiplicity of representation under the unity of thinking in general" in judgment (Ak. 4: 324) the concept of nothing could not be differentiated according to the pure concepts of the understanding, and could not be thought with respect to all the functions of judging, and thus, could not be a part of the determination of the empirical judgments. The Kantian critical turn, thus, also assigns a novel critical meaning and function to one of the most abstract notions of metaphysics, by internally differentiating its concept. In this sense I use the *Negative Magnitudes* essay that sets the context for the discussion of the concepts of reality, negation and limitation. There Kant differentiates logical opposition from real opposition, and the latter with its emphasis on two realities of opposed forces leads us to comprehend *nihil privativum* in an adequate way. *The Only Possible Argument* essay sets the stage for grasping *nihil negativum* in an indirect way. The proof of God rests on a concept of nothing which is not *nihil negativum.* I believe that showing the difference between two concepts would help the latter concept be clear and distinct. These two nothings can easily be conflated but I emphasize that the proof rests on a concept of nothing that is not impossible (contradictory) in the logical sense of the term.

This is not a dissertation about Hegel. Nevertheless, Hegel has a role to play in this thesis about Kant's account of nothing. I am going to use the Hegelian critique to stress-test the Kantian position. Hegel's account provides me a very useful tool in settling the Kantian concept of nothing, for it is Hegel who directly assaults the concept of the thing-in-itself. I propose this concept be classified as one of nothings and discussion of Hegel's severe criticism of it in a comparative way, I believe, brings into light the speciality and the very

nature of the concept. The Kantian thing-in-itself might well be taken as one of the concepts of nothing, for it evades all attempts at conceptualization. It is in that sense unknowable; no predicates are assignable to it. Therefore in the debate between Kant and Hegel over the concept of the thing-in-itself, nothing has an important role to play. I appreciate the Kantian thing-in-itself as a transcendental nothing and I argue that it can withstand the Hegelian assault. Therefore my supporting argument in the thesis is that while Hegel has a strong charge of externality against the Kantian concept of the thing-in-itself, Kant seems to have enough weapons to counterbalance such a charge. I suggest that it is crucial to see the debate between Kant and Hegel over the thing-in-itself through the prism of the Kantian doctrine of the nothings. First of all, taking Kant's fourfold division of nothing into consideration, I claim that Hegel's attack is based on an oversimplified image of Kant, and moreover, Kant has very convincing arguments for the externality of the concept of the thing-in-itself.

In accordance with my complementary argument I organize the final chapter, proposing a possible confrontation between Hegel and Kant. I build my argumentation firstly through Hegel's *Science of Logic* and his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and go back to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, as well as his pre-critical works such as *A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition* (1755) (Ak. 1: 385-416) and *The Employment in Natural Philosophy of Metaphysics Combined with Geometry, of Which Sample I Contains the Physical Monadology*(1756) (Ak. 1: 473-487). I want first to display Hegel's dialectical logic as an illustrative source for the place of the concept of nothing in Hegel's system and then to explain some aspects of his concrete philosophy of consciousness as expressed in his latter work. I intend to create an image in the mind of the reader of how Hegel stakes a claim of superiority over the Critical Philosophy in no small part because he claims to have surpassed him in his understanding of nothing. But I then set out to show that this superiority is largely apparent for Kant has too strong weapons to yield, and the resultant equivalence

between the two leads the reader into the mind of a critical perspective instead of a one-sided dogmatic preference.

The thesis is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter intends to identify all four kinds of nothing as having a transcendental function in Kant's system. It aims at throwing some light on question of what these four nothings basically are and how they work in varied settings. What will be clear at the end is that nothings are four in kind and each nothing has a limitative function. However, since the outcomes of such a limitation are not the same, each nothing is in the deep a very different concept than the other.

In the second chapter I first elucidate the fourth division of nothing. I use the pre-critical text of the *Only Possible Argument* as a context for clarification. My specific argument here is that *nihil negativum*, though it is labelled by Kant as absolute nothing, is not the nothing on which *a priori* proof of the *Only Possible Argument* is based. *Nihil negativum* is logical contradiction and the proof of God is not founded upon such a contradiction. The difference is that whereas the concept of nothing upon which God's proof is based can very well be thought, *nihil negativum* as the concept of logical contradictoriness escapes from all attempts of rational thinking. Nothing as the cancellation of all existence hence differs from nothing as a result logical contradiction.

In the chapter, there is a specific reason why I develop an account of *nihil negativum* and *ens rationis* as grouped together. The selection is not random. Both *nihil negativum* and *ens rationis* seem to work at the conceptual level. *Ens rationis* is named as the empty concept without object and *nihil negativum* is the result of two contradictory concepts. Though, in contrast to *ens rationis*, *nihil negativum* has no ontological connotation –since it denotes only logical contradiction-, I thought that grouping them together would be more reasonable than grouping one of them with one of the rest. Above all, *nihil privativum* and *ens*

*imaginarium* are both concerned with the absence of reality in space and time and in that sense it seems to be more convenient to hold them together.

Hence, the unifying thread working throughout the chapter between these two concepts is this: in *nihil negativum* the concept as unitary consciousness is impossible so one cannot speak of a unification of a manifold here. In *ens rationis* the concept is possible but only in the logical sense of the term. The matter is lacking and this lack makes *ens rationis* impossible as corresponding to sensory data. In the last resort then in both *nihil negativum* and *ens rationis* the unification of a manifold is blocked right from the start and this blockage is their unifying thread. The second concept evaluated in the chapter is *ens rationis*, it is unfolded through two main points, i.e. Transcendental Ideal and Complete Determination. Here the role of the concept of *totum realitatis*, taken as an idea, a mere *ens rationis*, is explicated. My aim is to display that Kant proposes this *totum* be taken as a regulative idea, as *ens rationis* only, otherwise he claims that it leads to a dogmatic hypostatization which is detrimental to theoretical and moral affairs.

In the third chapter I analyse the concepts of *ens imaginarium* and *nihil privativum* again separately but again not disparately. Here the guiding thread is the concept of *matter*, which is discussed in detail in the final subsection of the chapter. I choose first *ens imaginarium* then *nihil privativum* and here the choice is again not accidental but for a reason. In Kant the matter first comes under the forms of intuition (*entia imaginaria*) and later on are exposed to the discursive determination of concepts. Therefore, individuating functions of *entia imaginaria* logically precede the limitative function in *nihil privativum* and my ordering of the concepts of nothing just follow this precedence.

Finally, in the last chapter Hegel's account of nothing is discussed with reference to its difference from the Kantian one. In line with his dialectic, Hegel criticizes Kantian

concept of nothing as external to being. This causes, Hegel says, the externality of the concept of the thing-in-itself which should be taken as immanent to mind with all its forms and categories. Such an externality, Hegel continues, creates a chasm between subject and object right from the start and which prevents epistemology to be complete in the final stage. Such an externality is an error of Kant which Hegel claims his own philosophy is marching towards its complete abolishment. I maintain that to such a charge Kant has several and equally strong arguments which put forward the necessity of certain externality for both the maintenance of empirical research and of moral endeavours.

This thesis I think also shows the difference of the concept of nothing of Kant from that of his rationalist predecessors. Before the Copernican turn, in this old rationalist perspective, *Nothing* was taken as the ontological other of *Being.* After Kant's Copernican turn, the concept however gains an epistemological significance and loses its completely external status. In this sense, Hegel's charge is valid not for Kant but basically for these metaphysicians. Kant has four kinds of nothings and only one of them is entirely external to mind. Furthermore, by dividing nothing into four categories Kant opened up a way that separates human knowledge into logical and real spheres. This separation in turn brings forth the importance of the sensible for knowledge and then a strict avoidance from dogmatism when trying to attain the truth. In Kant, nothings work differently in various spheres, all but have a common function: limitation and constitution of the positive.

# CHAPTER I: Kant on the Division of the Concept of Nothing: An Exposition

## 1. Introduction

In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* the concept "nothing" comes to Kant's focus only in the final few pages of the Transcendental Analytic. In the whole of his first *Critique*, those two pages are the only ones where Kant gives an account on the concept "nothing". It seems that even these pages were added as a note to a note which is already a note to the Appendix to the Transcendental Analytic, and which comes under the heading of The Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection[2]. Kant's seeming neglect resulted in a lack of interest in the Appendix and particularly in his account on "nothing" in Kantian studies. It is surprising that even in classics such as Allison's *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*, or Guyer's *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* as well as some texts which focus on the theme of negativity in the history of philosophy that devoted at least one chapter on Kant it is hard to find any mention of Kant's table of the division of the concept of nothing[3]. Among few writers who have commented on the concept of nothing as it is useful in their enquiries, I can mention the names of Béatrice Longuenesse and Marco Giovanelli. Béatrice Longuenesse, because she puts a specific emphasis on both the role of the capacity to judge and of (transcendental) reflection in the Kantian system, provides a careful and close reading on the Appendix, thereby she also comments on the final note on the concept of nothing.

[2] A mapping out might show this point clearer: In the *Critique,* chapter three of the Analytic section has an Appendix with the heading of 'The Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection'. Kant adds to this part a note which has the heading of 'Note to the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection'. There are two nested notes, added to this part, which take place consecutively between B336/A280 and B346/A289 and between B346/A290 and B349/A292. The first nested note deals with the impossibility of knowledge without "the data of sensibility". It seems that this note is like a preparation to the second nested note which focuses on the concept 'nothing'. This second note gives a list of the divisions of the concept 'nothing'.

[3] As an example see Diana Coole (2006). *Negativity and Politics: Dionysus and Dialectics from Kant to Poststructuralism.* Taylor & Francis e-Library.

Longuenesse herself explains why the appendix to the Transcendental Analytic, The Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection is of importance to her attempt to examine "the operations by means of which judgment reflects a sensible given supposed in itself to be radically foreign to any conceptual form" (2000a: 79). She chooses to refine her argumentation with the help of this "all-too-neglected chapter of the first *Critique*" for it provides her with "exceptionally fruitful indications as to Kant's conception of the discursive operation he calls "reflection," by means of which the sensible given is thought under concepts combined according to the different logical forms of judgment" (2000: 79- 80). Her interesting and equally significant interpretation[4] of Kant's "guiding thread" introduces a novel ground to determine the role and function of negation and limitation in the formation of concepts that I find useful in developing my argument on the status and role of 'nothing' in the Kantian system. The following citation from her book, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, may provide a useful indication as to why she is, while focusing on discursive judgment, confronting with the issue of nothing:

> Hence, in elaborating his view on the categories of quality, Kant relies on a generally accepted correspondence between ontological determinations (reality and negation) and forms of predication (affirmation and negation in judgment). But he transforms

[4] As opposed to Cohen's, Heidegger's and Strawson's Kant, Longuenesse's develops his "guiding thread" from the identity of the understanding to the capacity to judge as the capacity to think: "We can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgments, and the *understanding* may therefore be represented as a *faculty of judgment*" (A69/ B94). Longuenesse, criticizing the attempts to "disclaim "psychological" or "mental" dimension to the transcendental deduction of the categories, and to the transcendental analytic as a whole", claims fairness to Kant's "own terrain" by acknowledging undeniable psychological and mental characteristic of Kant's argument, and also emphasizing that "even though the psychological hypotheses are always guided by a logical analysis of the conditions of truth or falsity of our judgments" (2000: 6). Her project, contrary to major interpretations of Kant's work such as Strawson's, is based on a "systematic investigation of the relation between logical functions of judgement and categories, and of the import of this correlation for Kant's principles of pure understanding" (6-7). She claims that "neither the argument of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, that is, the demonstration of the role of the pure concepts of the understanding in any representation of an object, nor the System of Principles of the Pure Understanding, can be understood unless they are related, down to the minutest details of their proofs, to the role that Kant assigns to the logical forms of our judgments, and to the manner in which he establishes the table of categories or pure concepts of the understanding according to the "guiding thread" of these logical forms" (5). Her interpretation, thus, provides a ground for me to claim the interdependence of Kant's table of "nothing" on the other two tables, namely the tables of categories and principles under the guidance of the logical forms.

> the meaning of this correspondence by making the latter the origin of the former, and by claiming further that logical forms give rise to ontological determinations only if they are related to sensible given. ... we thus should say that "reality" is "the concept of an object in general, by means of which the intuition of this object is regarded as determined *in respect of the logical function of affirmation in a judgment*," and that "negation" is the "concept of the object in general, by means of which the intuition of this object is regarded as determined *in respect of the logical function of negation in a judgment."* It is thus the "concept of the absence of an object," or of a "privation" (A291/ B347) ... However, since, for Kant, objects are given to us only through the senses, a determination can be considered as "truly affirmative" only if its concept results from reflection upon some sensory given. Conversely, a determination is "truly negative" only if its concept reflects the *absence* of a sensory given [i.e., *nothing*] (2000: 293-294).

As can be seen from the citation above, Kant sets up a correspondence between the logical forms of judgments and ontological determinations. Commenting on this very correspondence, Longuenesse seems to apply the distinction between the logical and the ontological to the relation/correspondence between sensory data, i.e., the transcendental matter, or thingliness, or things in themselves and its concept as a result of reflection. Hence, reality is the concept of that what is intuited, conversely, negation is the concept of the *absence* of the object of intuition, namely *nothing(ness).* Moreover, she defines the absence of the object, that is, the nothingness of it as *truly negative* determination. Since "reflection", as a discursive operation, is a medium through which the sensible given is thought under concepts combined according to the different logical forms of judgment", it is not surprising then that Longuenesse, while dealing with judgmental forms, also confronts with the issue of negation as a form of predication and with nothing as an ontological determination as the *absence* of a sensory given.

On the other hand, Marco Giovanelli discusses in his book *Reality and Negation-Kant's Principle of Anticipations of Perception: An Investigation of Its Impact on the Post-*

*Kantian Debate*, the category of negation vis-à-vis the category of reality within the context of Kant's Anticipations of Perception, namely the so-called "forgotten principle" (2011: xi). Giovanelli claims that "if we are to fully understand the Anticipations of Perception's meaning," it would be possible to elucidate the impact of Kant's second synthetic principle on post-Kantian philosophy. He, while clarifying anticipations as *a priori* knowledge and discussing the distinction that Kant develops between perception and sensation, first of all deals with the category of reality (*Realität*) as "an objective element beyond sensation itself" (2011: 6). Secondly, he argues that the strangeness of the anticipations lies in the question that Kant himself formulates as "how the understanding can thus in *a priori* fashion pronounce synthetically upon appearances, and can indeed anticipate in that which in itself is merely empirical and concerns only sensation" (B217). Giovanelli emphasizes that Kant's solution to this strangeness is as follows:

> According to Kant, one can nevertheless establish *a priori* and thus independently of all experience that sensible qualities have a quantity, or more precisely, that particular form of quantity that is called "intensive magnitude" or "degree": "in all quality … we can know *a priori* nothing save [in regard to] their intensive *quantity*, namely that they have degree. Everything else has to be left to experience" (B 218) (2011: 8).

It means that what we can know *a priori* is only that the quality has a certain degree that can be measured quantitatively not that what quality we will confront in each specific experience. That is completely dependent upon the experience. What can be connected to this idea of intensive magnitude are the categories of reality and negation. He discusses, following Kant's argument, the reality as what 'corresponds to sensation' and negation as the vanishing of this reality and moreover in the way that in Kant, in contrast to the Leibnizian conception of the relation between the positive and the negative, even the negative has a positive ground. These are the ideas which I will elaborate while discussing below the transcendental function of nothing in the Kantian system.

It seems to me that two pages Kant devotes to the division of *nothing* as a pure concept of the understanding, given also that no other concept is put under a similar operation, deserve a more attentive treatment than what has been provided in the Kantian studies until now. I believe that the way Kant's treatment of the concept provides a certain thread in order to claim that only with the note to the note to the Amphiboly chapter that he devotes to the divisions concept of 'nothing' it becomes possible for Kant to *complete* his attempt to give "understanding and judgment" "their canon of objective validity and correct employment" in transcendental logic (B 171/A 132). In contrast to general logic which "abstracts from all content of knowledge, whether pure or empirical, and deals solely with the form of thought in general" (A 131/ B 170), transcendental logic deals with the relation between concepts and intuition; it is intuition and concepts only when combined together can yield knowledge. I will argue that it is only with the category of negation and the ontological state of nothingness that Kant could logically and intellectually assert the possibility of knowledge at all. It is not because those have primacy in themselves as subordinating or generating concepts in the Kantian system, but because both nothing as the division of an object in general and negation as a pure concept of the understanding are inseparable from the whole of the system. Consider Kant's own words:

> The procedure which the understanding follows in representing to itself the sphere of a divided concept it likewise follows when it thinks a thing as divisible; and just as, in the former case, the members of a division exclude each other, and yet are combined in one sphere, so the understanding represents to itself the parts of the latter as existing (as substances) in such a way that, while each exists independently of the others, they are yet combined together in one whole. (B 113)

In addition to this, the division of "nothing" provides us with a ground that enables us to analyse *noumena* recognizing it as "an empty concept without an object", that is, as *nothing* with a (negative) function of *limiting* our cognition. On the basis that "the members

of a division" are represented by the understanding "as existing (as substances) in such a way that, while each exists independently of the others, they are yet combined together in one whole" we may argue that the members of the category quality namely reality, negation and limitation are combined with each other in such a way that the determination of (the concept) of an object becomes possible. In this formula, negation (here, taken as *noumena*)[5] is combined with reality resulting in *limitation:* "*limitation* is simply reality combined with negation" (B 111). The distinction between "to *think*" and "to *know*" an object that Kant presents in the § 22 of B version of the Transcendental Deduction of the first *Critique* provides a ground to think the possibility to draw the boundary between knowledge and non-knowledge with the concept of nothing:

> To *think* an object and to *know* an object are thus by no means the same thing. Knowledge involves two factors: first, the concept, through which an object in general is thought (the category); and secondly, the intuition, through which it is given. For if no intuition could be given corresponding to the concept, the concept would still indeed be thought, so far as its form is concerned, but would be without any object, and no knowledge of anything would be possible by means of it. So far as I could know, there would be nothing, and could be nothing, to which my thought could be applied (B 147).

Only with the intuition is the object possible and so is any kind of knowledge. Without intuition the concept would remain empty, i.e., "empty concept without an object" and this is the definition of nothing as *ens rationis*, *noumenon*. This nothing, as it appears in the *Prolegomena*, belongs to "the manifold differentiation of the *concepts of something and nothing*," (4: 325) together with which three other divisions of the manifold are defined on

[5] I am aware that negation has *at least* a double position in the Kantian system. When he considers it as the member of the category of quality in his table of categories, he places *negation* in the understanding, and considering his emphasis on the relation between the table of judgments and the table of categories, also, within the sphere of a judgment, a sphere thereby the function of thought can be traced properly. However, obviously negation's function is not limited with its function in a judgment as a pure concept of the understanding for it also operates on the limits of our cognition *per se* as *noumena*, as *ens rationis.*

the ground and under the guidance of "the *transcendental* table of the concepts of the understanding," in other words "the system of categories" (4: 303, 322) (emphasis is mine). Here, for the sake of our analysis, it is important to clarify the link between the transcendental function, if it exists, of the nothing and the transcendental system of categories. It seems to me that Kant's treatment in the *Prolegomena* of the pure concepts of the understanding as on the one hand being based on the logical system, and on the other containing the *a priori* conditions for all synthetic and necessary judgments provides us a clear understanding of the reason why the categories form a transcendental system (4: 306). Although Kant himself treats nothing as a topic that can be handled in a note within a note to a note, and as something that should be added simply for architectonic neatness, in fact we find that the nothing as treated according to the guiding thread of the system of categories, has a rather fundamental transcendental function. In understanding the transcendental function of the concept of nothing, one should therefore necessarily apply to the guidance of the table of categories which constitutes itself a "transcendental system."

In this chapter, hence, to set out my intending attempt to show on which ground it is possible for us to claim a fundamental transcendental function for the concept of nothing, I will reconstruct Kant's division of the concept of nothing. I will focus on Kant's conceptualization of nothing, trying to reread his account on the transcendental analytic keeping in mind that nothing is always already in his terrain of analysis. I will use his division of the concept "nothing" as a guiding thread to prove my point that, for instance when Kant distinguishes phenomena from noumena, noumena, as being nothing as *ens rationis,* namely, empty concept without an object, plays a role of *limiting* concept, or from an ontological point of view nothing is like a darkness which *negates* the phenomenal world and thereby the light of the reality emerges as giving a *thing* a character of an object. Nothing does not negate the phenomenal world in the sense that the phenomenal world is *not.* Nothing is the

absence of what corresponds to sensation, i.e. of *matter*. If we take the phenomenal world as reality, "negation, signifies a mere want [i.e., nothing], and so far as it alone is thought represents the abrogation of all thinghood [*die Aufhebung alles Dinges.*]" (A575/ B603).

To make it clear how this essay finds its way through Kant's account on nothing I will first of all sketch out the meaning and state of the concepts of negative, negation, and nothing in the Kantian system. I believe that it is important on this level to distinguish these concepts clearly from each other so that one can recognize interrelations among them and posit their functions for and positions in the transcendental philosophy. In the second subsection of this chapter I will begin to reconstruct Kant's division of the concept of nothing according to the table of categories in its relation with the concept of an object in general. This subsection will then be devoted to the divisions of the concept of nothing in the ways in which they are formulated in a table constructed in a similar way of Kant's table of categories in the *Critique*. In the final subsection, in the light of my reconstruction of the table of nothingness, I will try to set out the main elements of my argument for the possibility of fundamental transcendental function of the nothing in the Kantian system.

## 2. A Clarification on *Negative, Negation,* and *Nothing*

Here some clarifications are needed for the difference and relationship between negation and nothing in the Kantian system, since Kant *seems* to use these terms sometimes interchangeably but sometimes differently. Let us map out the problem through the examples from the C*ritique* to illustrate the point. First the places where they seem to be used interchangeably:

> Now every sensation has a degree or magnitude [...] occupy inner sense more or less completely, down to its cessation in nothingness (=0=*negation*) (B 183/A 142).

> Now what corresponds in empirical intuition to sensation is reality (*realitas phaenomenon*); what corresponds to its absence is negation=0 (B 209/A 168).
>
> Reality is *something*; negation is *nothing* [...] (B 347/A 291).

However he sometimes uses the term negation where it is not clear whether it is also 'nothing':

> [...] negations, since negations alone conflict with reality (B 329/A 273).
>
> Negation, signifies a mere want (B 603/A 575).
>
> For all negations (which are the predicates through which anything can be distinguished from the *ens realissimum*) are merely limitations of a greater, and ultimately of the highest, reality [...] (B 606/A 578).

In the first group it is clear that the terms are used interchangeably but in the second group it cannot be easily decided whether the negation is also 'nothing'. An approach to this problem might be this: Though Kant seems to use these terms interchangeably from place to place, if he does so, a contradiction occurs in his system. I believe if we take into account the fact that in the Kantian system, in contrast to general logic which "abstracts from all content of knowledge, whether pure or empirical, and deals solely with the form of thought in general" (A 131/ B 170), the relation between concepts and intuition has a central position in the construction of knowledge, it becomes possible for us to make a clear separation between discursive and intuitive levels, therefore, between discursive functions of negative and negation and nothing as a lack of matter (sensation), and negation is the pure category of this lack, which makes this lack representable as zero=0. Kant, while dealing with the logical forms of judgments, posits the affirmative and the negative as forms of judgments in their relation to the infinite judgments. He, in the Transcendental Analytic, also differentiates empirical concepts either as ''positive determinations'' or *realities*, or as negative determinations, or *negations*. Let us read Kant's differentiation in different formulation:

"what correspond to sensation" are realities; by contrast what correspond to the absence of a sensation, or "a concept of the absence of an object'' are negations.

Let us now consider the various indicators of the different natures of negation and nothing as they appear in the first *Critique*. First of all 'nothing' is not included in the table of categories only negation is. However, 'nothing' as opposed to 'something' is defined by Kant as a lack of something intuited (sensible given), or as a result of an internal contradiction of a concept, and given a special treatment by Kant *separately* at the end of the Analytic. Second indicator for their different natures is that negation, as a category of the understanding, is a logical function of the understanding in judgments. 'Nothing', on the other hand, is a lack of sensible given in appearances; such as *ens rationis* or *nihil privativum.* It is the lack of transcendental matter and therefore has an ontological connotation. In his *Lectures on Metaphysics*[6] Kant explains the transcendental matter as opposed to transcendental form as follows:

> Matter in the *physical* sense is the substrate <*substratum*> of extended objects, the possibility of bodies. But in the *transcendental* sense every given <*datum*> is matter, but the form [is] the relation of the given <*dati*>. Transcendental matter is the thing that is determinable <*determinabile*>; but transcendental form the determination, or the act of determining <*actus determinandi*>. Transcendental matter is the reality or the given <*datum*> for all things. But the limitation of the reality constitutes transcendental form. All realities of things lie as if in infinite matter, where one then separates some realities for a thing, which is the form (Ak. 28: 575).

Transcendental matter comes to be the thing in itself which is transcendentally real object whereas transcendental form is what makes possible the determinations by giving a relation to the given, namely, space and time. Thus, the lack of the transcendental matter

[6] Immanuel Kant (1997). *Lectures on Metaphysics,* (The Cambridge Edition of the works of Immanuel Kant), trans. and ed. by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, Cambridge: Cambridge University.

leaves the forms of intuition empty, and we have only pure forms of intuition, as *ens imaginarium*, which is as such included in the divisions of nothing. For Kant this "imaginary being <*ens imaginarium*> is a non-thing, of which the thought, however, is possible. Such a non-thing is nothing; it is no object that can be intuited" (Ak. 28: 544).

At this point, in order to clarify further the difference among the concepts of negative, negation and nothing, it might be helpful to call for the argument of negative magnitudes that Kant develops in his 1763 essay *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy.* Here the distinction between logical and real opposition is of great importance, I think for us, not only for distinguishing these three concepts but also for capturing the different reflections on nothing. These reflections are basically four divisions of the concept of nothing the table of which is located at the very end of the Analytic. In the beginning of the *Negative Magnitudes* essay Kant introduces two kinds of opposition. The first form of opposition is the logical one which "consists in the fact that something is simultaneously affirmed and denied of the very same thing. The consequence ... is *nothing at all* (*nihil negativum irrepraesentabile*)" (Ak. 2: 171). In the case of such opposition, then, what occurs is the logical cancellation of one predicate, i.e., *A* by the other one, i.e., *not-A*: "A body which is in motion is something; a body which is not in motion is also something (*cogitabile*); but a body which is both in motion and also, in the very same sense, not in motion, is nothing at all" (Ak. 2: 171).

The second form of opposition, real opposition, is that in which two predicates are opposed to each other, "but not through the law of contradiction". The consequence of the cancellation of one posited thing by the other is *something* (*cogitabile*): "The motive force of a body in one direction and an equal tendency of the same body in the opposite direction do not contradict each other; as predicates, they are simultaneously possible in one body.

The consequence of such an opposition is rest, which is something (*repraesentabile*)" (Ak. 2: 171). This is nothing but not of a contradiction. This is *nihil privativum, repraesentabile*. Real opposition is real because it rests upon the opposition of, or *in* the real in the *phenomenal* sense.

Kant's argument in the *Negative Magnitudes* essay can be said to be a good sample of his intention of grounding one part of philosophy that is metaphysics with exact sciences. He claims that "these [some] parts of philosophy, by turning the doctrines of mathematics to their own advantage, have attained to heights, to which they would not otherwise have been able to aspire" (Ak. 2: 168). While introducing the concept of negative magnitudes, therefore, Kant takes mathematicians' use of magnitudes as a ground of the philosophical use. He defines the concept as follows:

> A magnitude is, relative to another magnitude, negative, in so far as it can only combine with it by means of opposition; in other words, it can only be combined with it so that the one magnitude cancels as much in the other as is equal to itself. Now this, of course is a reciprocal relation and magnitudes which are opposed to each other in this way reciprocally cancel an equal amount in each other. It follows that, strictly speaking, no magnitude can be called absolutely negative: '+A' and '-A' must each be called the negative magnitude of the other (Ak. 2: 174).

What is crucial here, however, is that the '+A' and '-A' are to be taken together in opposition and the consequence would amount to =0=nothing: "opposition is a reciprocal relation which only holds between '+' and '-'" (Ak. 2: 173). In a real opposition each part as negative magnitudes negates (cancels) the other, this is negation, an act "in a real conflict, of which the *consequence* is zero"= nothing (emphasis is mine). However, the negation in a real opposition is not a mere negation of one member by the other. Kant by adopting the method of the mathematicians claims that "a real repugnancy only occurs where there are two things, as *positive grounds*, and where one of them cancels the consequence of the other"

(Ak. 2: 176). To conclude the matter one thing deserves to be mentioned. Kant claims that "a negation, in so far as it is the consequence of the real opposition will be designated a *deprivation* (*privatio*) [relative nothing]. But any negation, in so far it does not arise from this type of repugnancy, will be called a *lack* (*defectus, absentia*)[absolutely nothing]" (Ak. 2: 178). A confusion may arise from the preceding definitions of a negation either as a deprivation or as a lack. There the concepts of negation seem to be equated with the consequence of the opposition. However, interpreting the term consequence as 0 = nothing, and negation as the way in which two positive but opposing grounds relates to each other seems to me more correct.

One point might be added to what has been so far said in relation to what comes out of Kant's deriving his conception of real oppositions from the opposition between mathematical magnitudes, and of his specific emphasis on the negative magnitudes. Reality and negation given in intuition is bounded with each other in a way that the result is nothing but limitation, or privation. Limitation is only possible "because negation is only distinguished from reality by degree" (Giovanelli, 2011: 51). Reality given in intuition has intensive magnitude that is a degree of sensation: "Every magnitude has a quality, i.e., continuity. Every quality has a magnitude, i.e., intensity (degree)" (*Refl.* 5636, Ak. 18: 268). The principle of intensive magnitudes concerns the relation and connection between reality and negation which is defined rather as "a transition from one to the other which makes reality representable as a quantum" (A143/ B182). A sensation, which has a certain degree, either descends down to zero, that is, to its vanishing point, or ascends from the same point up to a certain magnitude of it, which might be represented as the relation between *–A, 0, +A.* This vanishing point=zero is the mean, better to say, the point of indifference between descend and ascend without which any differentiation in the direction, or any alteration is impossible. Think of a person climbing a mountain which has a certain (measurable) height,

from the peak he must return back. If we take the peak as the point of changing direction he must pass through it. This is the point of transition between ascend and descend, and in other words the mean (=0) between positive magnitudes and negative magnitudes.

To conclude, the concept of negative is to be clarified as well, since Kant in his *Negative Magnitudes* essay clearly defines it as well as the concepts of negation and nothing.

> It is, of course, obvious that, since everything depends here on the reciprocal relation, I can just as well call descent 'negative rising', as I can call rising 'negative descent'. Similarly units of capital are just as much negative debts, as the latter are negative units of capital. But it is rather more appropriate to apply the name '*negative'* to that on which the intention is primarily focused in a given case, if one wishes to designate its real opposite. For example, it is rather more appropriate to call debts negative 'negative units of capital' than to call units of capital 'negative debts', although there is no difference to be found in the reciprocal relation itself; the difference is to be found, rather, in the connection which the result of this reciprocal relation has to the rest of the intention (Ak. 2: 175).

One important point here is the reciprocal relation between two realities, as rule, as determinations of the same subject. These two things oppose each other and one may regard one of these realities as the negative of the other depending on the rest of the intention. One thing is the negative of the other such as the negative of rising is setting, but this sentence can also be put as the rising is negative setting. What is crucial here that there is a real opposition between two positive things and the concept negative is applied only to one of them. The combination of these two opposing things in one subject gives us the *consequence* of zero=nothing, *nihil privativum*.

In the following section of this chapter, I will firstly sketch out Kant's direct reference to the concept of nothing in his note to the Amphiboly; then, under the guidance of his table of nothingness, I will try to reread first the division on the Chapter 3 of the Transcendental Analytic which focuses on "the ground of the distinction of all objects in general into

Phenomena and Noumena" with the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection. I have chosen the part of the section on "Phenomena and Noumena" because in the table of nothing the first division is attributed to noumena, i.e., *ens rationis.* I have chosen the Appendix not only because Kant puts the discussion on negation and nothing at the end of this Appendix but he also deals with noumena as something with which "understanding … limits sensibility" and "in the process of warning the latter that it must not presume to claim applicability to things in themselves…" (B 344/A 288). Secondly I will try to reconstruct Kant's second division of nothing, i.e., *nihil privativum* with a reference to the categories of quantity and their logical forms of judgment, and also to his concept of negative magnitudes as it appears in his 1763 essay of *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*. I will then focus on the third division of the concept of nothing, i.e., *ens imaginarium,* and try to show how empty space and empty time as the pure forms of intuition are discussed as nothing in the sense of "empty *data*" for a concept (A 292/ B 349). Finally, the fourth division in which Kant defines nothing as *nihil negativum*, i.e., the concept of the impossible or radically the unthinkable will come to my focus, however, since it is a logical nothing arising only from the principle of contradiction I will mention it relatively shortly.

## 3. The Concept of an Object in General and the Division of the Concept "Nothing"

Now let us consider Kant's division of the concept "nothing":

> Before we leave the Transcendental Analytic we must add some remarks which, although in themselves not of special importance, might nevertheless be regarded as requisite for the completeness of the system. The supreme concept with which it is customary to begin a *transcendental philosophy*[7] is the division into the possible and the impossible. But since all division presupposes a concept to be divided, a still higher

[7] Emphasis is added by me because I believe that when Kant refers to "a transcendental philosophy" he, here, in fact, means transcendent rational metaphysics, not his own transcendental philosophy.

> one is required, and this is the concept of an object in general, taken problematically without its having been decided whether it is something or nothing. As the categories are the only concepts which refer to objects in general, the distinguishing of an object, whether it is something or nothing, will proceed according to the order and under the guidance of the categories. (A 290/ B 346)

These opening lines of the 'note' to note to the Appendix tell us that to complete the system there is one more thing required to be taken into account, that is, "to decide an object whether it is something or nothing". Kant, before setting out the criteria of such decision, reminds us that even before we decide whether an object is possible or impossible we need to have "the concept of an object in general", that is a *universal* concept. Kant's emphasis is important that the concept of an object in general is a concept not divided yet. Being so, it is problematic in nature and is in need of division into 'something' or 'nothing'. Here Kant seems to take the problem of the division of an object in general into something or nothing as both a completion of the system and the very first question that the transcendental philosophy has to deal with, and this being so because of the status of the sensible given in the Kantian system, without which it would be impossible to determine or even think an object. Moreover, Kant refers to a neglect on this point by the transcendent metaphysics since it does not take into account the given sensible data in establishing the possibility of knowledge. Kant thus sees the division of the concept of an object in general as necessary for the completion of the system and as the first question to deal with because he thinks that such a division would show us the boundaries of knowledge. His putting this division just before the Dialectic is also meaningful in which he deals with the *ens rationis*; the first division of nothing. However, taking into account the whole of what precedes this note in Kant's account of the transcendental analytic, it might be misleading to attribute a priority to the division of an object in general to decide whether it is something or nothing. I think even though there is not a relation of priority or subordination in the sense that one

subordinates the other as the effect of its existence between the elements of each division there is still a (logical) order we must consider in the co-ordination of one element with another "as cause of its determination" (B 113).

Moreover, Kant, with the phrase 'a still higher one is required, and this is the concept of an object in general', seems to mean the most *universal* concept that includes (before it has been decided whether it is something or nothing) 'nothing' as well as 'something'. Therefore 'nothing' is one part of all possible determinations, as the lack of all determinations, in the Kantian system. It functions thereby as the guardian of the possibility of knowledge, as of all possible positive determinations. Negation is the category but possible in its act, namely in negative judgments, only under the supposition of the inclusion of 'nothing' in the most general concept of an object.

In B 108 of the *Critique* Kant makes a distinction between "the *predicables* of the pure understanding" as "pure but derivative concepts of the understanding" and the *predicaments* as "the original and primitive concepts," *i.e.* the categories:

> In this connection, it is to be remarked that the categories, as the true primary concepts of the pure understanding, have also their pure derivative concepts. (…) I beg permission to entitle these pure but derivative concepts of the understanding the *predicables* of the pure understanding –to distinguish them from the predicaments [*i.e.,* the categories]. If we have the original and primitive concepts, it is to add the derivative and subsidiary, and so to give a complete picture of the family tree of the {concepts of] pure understanding. (...) this supplementary work (...) can easily be carried out, with the aid of the ontological manuals –for instance, by placing under the category of causality the predicables of force, action, passion; under the category of community the predicable of presence, resistance; under the predicaments of modality the predicables of coming to be, ceasing to be, change, etc. The categories, when combined with the modes of pure sensibility, or with one another, yield a large number of derivative *a priori* concepts (A 82/ B 108).

Considering negation as the category of quality we may conclude that it is not a derivative concept, or a predicable but a *predicament*. Negation, therefore, is amongst the *true* primary concepts of the pure understanding. However, Kant also makes a distinction (whose significance can be better understood on the basis of his transcendental project) meaningful between two groups of categories: mathematical and dynamical. According to his classification, the categories in the former, namely quantity and quality are "concerned with objects of intuition, pure as well as empirical," those in the latter, namely relation and modality, are concerned with "the existence of these objects, in their relation to each other or to the understanding" (B 110). The division of possibility and impossibility is located amongst the categories of modality, therefore, amongst the dynamical group of categories. In Section 3 of the Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment Kant constructs his table of principles ("quite naturally") under the guidance of the table of categories, and he makes a similar distinction in terms of the application of pure concepts of experience, namely in terms of their synthesis:

> In the application of pure concepts of possible experience, the employment of their synthesis is either *mathematical* or *dynamical*; for it is concerned partly with the mere *intuition* of an appearance in general, partly with its *existence*. The *a priori* conditions of intuition are absolutely necessary conditions of any possible experience; those of the existence of the objects of a possible empirical intuition are in themselves only accidental. The principles of mathematical employment will therefore be unconditionally necessary, that is apodeictic. Those of dynamical employment will also indeed possess the character of *a priori* necessity, but only under the condition of empirical thought in some experience, therefore only mediately and indirectly (A 160/ B 199).

If we read this quotation with the groupings of the categories as mathematical and dynamical, it becomes clear that the principles which make "the *a priori* determination of appearances according to the categories of quantity and quality" possible are "absolutely

necessary conditions of any possible experience". Certainty of experience is firstly dependent on the "intuitive certainty" that the *mathematical* principles allow, and then is completed with the "discursive certainty" that the *dynamical* principles are capable of. Elsewhere he states that the mathematical principles of pure understanding are constitutive *a priori* whereas the dynamical principles are merely regulative (B 296/A 237). Hence, negation as a category of quality (only its formal aspect being considered) synthesized with the principles of perception (according to the table of principles) together with the categories of quantity is of the *a priori*, unconditionally necessary conditions of any possible experience.[8]

Kant's strategy in "distinguishing of an object, whether it is something or nothing" is to return to the table of categories as a starting point in displaying the divisions of "nothing" since "the categories are the only concepts which refer to objects in general" (A 290/ B 346). Hence all the original pure concepts of synthesis that the table of categories contains within itself correspond to the divisions of nothing. In other words, four categories of the understanding, namely quantity, quality, relation and modality apply to the definitions of nothing and the way of their application to 'nothing' indicates the status of nothing and negation, regardless of whether they are interchangeable or not, in the Kantian system. What is interesting here is that Kant includes negation in the list of interdependent categories of quality together with reality and limitation, and feels the need to explore further on nothing.

[8] Paul Guyer's criticism of Kant on this point is worth mentioning. As he rightly suggests that Kant's distinction between the mathematical principles as constitutive *a priori* and the dynamical principles as regulative does not logically follow from his classification of the principles of pure understanding. The example of the a priori determination of "the degree of the sensation of sunlight by composing it out of 200.000 illuminations of the moon" (A 178-9/ B 221) that Kant gives in order to substantiate his claim, for Guyer, "undermines it instead" (1987: 188): "But this example shows only that the principle of intensive magnitude, an allegedly constitutive principle, is also indeterminate and therefore regulative in exactly the same way as the principle of causation. The principle tells me that I can assign *some* definite degree to the intensity of my sensation of sunlight, and thus to real which it represents, namely sunlight itself, by measuring it with *some* unit based on *some* (in this case surely less intense) sensation of light" (1987: 188).

No other concept but the concept "nothing" is brought under such operation for the sake of the completeness of the system: although the remarks, in themselves, on the division of concept *nothing* is "not of special importance", they should be taken seriously to have a complete picture of Kant's own terrain. This should be taken as a warning, as well, that any reading of Kant's note should be based on what precedes it in the *Critique*.

## 4. Divisions of the Concept of *Nothing* under the Guidance of the Table of Categories

Now let us closely examine the division of the concept "nothing" as it appears in the Amphiboly section of the *Critique*. The structure of the division follows the *order* of the table of categories, and should be read under not only the guidance of the table of categories but also the guidance of the tables of both judgments and principles. In A 291/ B 347, the first division is defined in relation to the category of *quantity* as opposed to the concepts of all, many, and one. This concept that "cancels everything" is *none;* and it is a concept without an object (*ens rationis*). It is interesting that Kant makes an analogy between *none* and noumena, for neither have a support from the experience, and both are empirically impossible. In the second division, Kant applies the category of *quality* and with reference to his analysis of intensive magnitudes (degree) opposes negation (nothing) to reality (something). Here negation refers to a concept which does not correspond to an object, that is, the concept of the absence of an object (*nihil privativum*), such as shadow or cold. The third division concerns with the category of relation and the mere form of intuition as pure (empty) space and pure (empty) time (*ens imaginarium*): "These are indeed something, as forms of intuition, but are not themselves objects which are intuited" (A 291/ B 347). The fourth and the last division concern with a self-contradictory concept, which is by definition *nothing*, "because the concept ... is the impossible", that is, the empty object without concept,

*nihil negativum.* Kant's example to this is a two-sided rectilinear figure (B 348). With this "radically unthinkable" division, the table of the division of the concept of nothing is completed. Now in the following sections of this chapter I will try to focus on each division independently with intention of showing how indeed the division of the concept of nothing completes Kant's system.

### 4.1. First division: *nothing* according to quantity, as *ens rationis*

According to quantity, nothing ("*none*" as opposed to all, many and one) is defined "independently of any relation to sensation", for "what corresponds to it is the absence of any intuition at all, whether pure or empirical" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 303). Kant's example to this "empty concept without an object" is the concept of *noumena.* Longuenesse finds this particular example interesting, and argues that it represents Kant's verdict against rational metaphysics declaring all its *entia* as mere fictions[9], that is, from a cognitive standpoint, they are *nothing* (304).

In the Amphiboly chapter, Kant, indeed, criticizes Leibniz for being "deceived by the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection" and erecting "an *intellectual system of the world"* which lacks "transcendental reflection" only through which we are able to determine whether objects belong to pure understanding or sensibility (A 270/ B 326). His argument on Leibniz's intellectualism stresses that by confounding an object of pure understanding with appearance, or in other words, by taking appearances as the representations of thing in themselves Leibniz *intellectualises* appearances. Kant, against Leibniz and also against

[9] I think that the identification of the concept of a noumenon as "mere fiction" is misleading in the sense that Kant, although he admits the problematic character of the concept, still do not deny that it has a basis in transcendental reflection. I find Allison's interpretation on this point helpful: "[Kant] sought to reinterpret [the concept of a noumenon] in such a way that it could be incorporated into his transcendental account" (1983: 243).

Locke, in his attempt to seeking "in understanding and sensibility two sources of representations which, while quite different, can supply objectively valid judgments of things only in *conjunction* with each other" (A 271/ B 327), takes the doctrine of *transcendental topic* as "a sure safeguard against the surreptitious employment of pure understanding and the delusions which arise therefrom" (A269/ B325). Considering this criticism of the intellectualism of rational metaphysics, I agree with Longuenesse, that the first division of the concept of "nothing" openly refers to the deception of rational metaphysics by the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection. However, I also believe that the first division provides us with a ground for reconsidering the limiting function of the concept "noumenon" –which is a transcendental function- when it is considered as *nothing*.

In Chapter 3 of his Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment, titled as "The Ground of the Distinction of All Objects in General into Phenomena and Noumena", Kant once more sets out the rules of understanding that his critical enquiry so far taught us:

> The principles of pure understanding ... contain nothing but what may be called the pure schema of possible experience. For which the understanding originally and of itself confers upon synthesis of imagination in its relation to apperception; and the appearances, as data for a possible knowledge, must already stand *a priori* in relation to, and in agreement with, that synthetic unity. But although these rules of understanding are not only true *a priori*, but are indeed the source of all truth (that is, of the agreement of our knowledge with objects), inasmuch as they contain in themselves the ground of the possibility of experience viewed as the sum of all knowledge wherein objects can be given to us... . (A 237/ B 296).

If we start with the undeniable point that "the pure concepts of understanding can *never* admit of *transcendental* but *always* only of *empirical* employment" (B 303), those objects "given to us" are nothing but appearances as objects of experience, and under the universal conditions of a possible experience the principles of pure understanding can apply to them. Objects, i.e., appearances, can be given to us only within the limits of sensibility.

The understanding cannot transcend the limits of sensibility, and consequently "its principles are merely rules for the exposition of appearances" (A247). Kant's argument specifically places a strong emphasis upon that the act of thought which relates a given intuition to an object through the function of judgment "whereby an object is subsumed under the concept". Judgment involves a formal condition, *i.e.* the schema ("the pure schema of all possible experience"), which makes all subsumption possible. In the case that this schema is absent, then, there is no determinate, or even a determinable, object for the employment of categories (transcendentally). Kant, therefore, concludes that "the principles of pure understanding are only of empirical, never of transcendental employment, and that, outside the field of possible experience there can be no synthetic *a priori* principles" (A 248/ B 305). Categories without a sensible given, for they are nothing but the pure forms of thought, cannot provide sufficient ground for determining or thinking of an object. It is then nothing but an *illusion* to suppose that "the merely logical faculty of uniting *a priori* the manifold given in intuition" signifies *something* by allowing "an application extending beyond all objects of the senses" (B 306).

When we follow Kant's line of argument, at this precise moment we find his distinction between a *noumenon* in the negative sense of the term and a *noumenon* in the positive sense of the term:

> If by 'noumenon' we mean a thing so far as it is *not an object of our sensible intuition,* and so abstract from our mode of intuiting it, this is a noumenon in the *negative* sense of the term. But if we understand by it an *object* of a *non-sensible intuition,* we thereby presuppose a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual, which is not that which we possess, and of which we cannot comprehend even the possibility. This would be 'noumenon' in the *positive* sense of the term. (B 307)

Before going further on the *problematic* nature of the concept of a noumenon which becomes clear in the above quotation, one more point needs clarification. In A version of the *Critique*, Kant offers a concept of a transcendental object, which is a purely intelligible, yet

inseparable from the empirical data, for its dependence to sensibility is the condition for something to be thought. Transcendental object is the concept of an object (a something=*X*) in general (in other words, a universal concept), "through that which is given in sensibility, in order thereby to know appearances empirically under concepts of objects" (A 251). In the B version (B 307), this transcendental object that the understanding forms apart from the relation in which it entitles an object disappears as a term, but is maintained and considered as simultaneously formed by the understanding as "a representation of *an object in itself*"[10]. It is through its act to form "a representation of *an object in itself*" the understanding comes to be able to form *concepts* of such objects (in themselves). However, what misleads the understanding is that it confuses this "*indeterminate* concept of a something in general outside our sensibility" with "a *determinate* concept of an entity that allows of being known in a certain [purely intelligible] manner" (B 307) by itself. So even though it is perfectly legitimate, and, I would say, necessary[11] to posit an "entirely *indeterminate* concept of a something in general outside our sensibility", it is not legitimate to posit something beyond our sensibility to be *known* by a purely intelligible manner. I would agree with Longuenesse that this object in itself, an object that comes prior to any determination, or borrowing her

[10] Longuenesse claims that the "notion" of the transcendental object which is present in the A Deduction has disappeared from the B. She indicates that in some other parts of the B edition of the *Critique* the concept has been retained. Though I stand close to Longuenesse's interpretation on this point some mention of other interpreters such as Allison is I think necessary. Allison claims for instance that there is a difference between the transcendental object and the thing-in-itself that the former has "the function of conferring "upon all our empirical concepts in general relation to an object" however, if it is said to be true of the latter as well, this would "lead immediately to transcendental realism"(1983: 244). This is an issue I will discuss further in the following sections but for now I will just give some passages from the *Critique* where Kant touches upon the concept of the transcendental object, in both A and B editions: "If the mode of this intuition is not in any way given, the object is merely transcendental…" (A247/ B304), "[W]e may well confess that this object is unknown to us, though not therefore impossible" (A478/ B507). This definition is also important that it shows the unknowability is not necessarily impossibility as Kant clearly states as for the first division of nothing as *ens rationis*. Lastly, "[T]hey must rest upon a transcendental object which determines them as mere representations…" (A538/ B567). Here Kant argues that the transcendental object, not an appearance itself, has the effect of causality where the appearance is the effect.

[11] This is necessary because "the division of a concept" always requires a higher concept, a concept of an object in general, which is a *pure* concept in itself. However, in turn, for every concept subsumes the manifold of representations of appearances under it, we also need to have a division of an object.

terms “thing in itself in the transcendental sense”, seems to function as “the external condition, or ground, for our representations” (2000a: 300-1; 14n). Let us read with her:

> The notion of a transcendental object apparently disappears from the B Deduction. I suggest that it remains implicitly as a component in the interpretation of the term “*x*” in the logical form of judgment. Relating our sensible representations to an object *represented “as” independent of them* (“the ... transcendental object=*x*”), striving thereby to find coherence among our representations, is precisely what we are engaged in doing when forming empirical judgments. *Appearances* become *phenomena*, empirical objects that the terms “*x*”, or “x, y, z,” can stand for, in Kant’s description of the logical forms of judgments, only insofar as these empirical objects are thought as themselves representing an object *independent of our representations*, which “throughout all our cognition is always one and the same,” the transcendental object=*x* (2000a: 110).

The transcendental object=*x*, therefore, remains always one and the same insofar as it represents an object which is outside of all representations, but which gives unity and coherence to our concepts of empirical objects.

Now we can go back to Kant’s distinction between a *noumenon* in the negative sense of the term and a *noumenon* in the positive sense of the term. Through an analysis of Kant’s distinction I expect to have a clearer view concerning the relation between the first division of the concept of nothing and the negative concept of a *noumenon*. It seems to me that the whole chapter Kant devotes to the distinction between a phenomenon and a noumenon perfectly reflects the *problematical* nature of the concept of a noumenon, that is, the amphiboly of this particular concept of reflection: it is either an object (of a *non-sensible intuition*), or a non-object (of a *sensible intuition*). Obviously, independently whether it is an object or a non-object it is surely beyond our sensible intuition. This thing, a *noumenon* that the understanding must think without a reference to our mode of intuition is not an appearance, but a *thing in itself*. Here Kant clearly emphasizes that to claim the possibility

of things in themselves, i.e., noumena, is to claim hopelessly that the understanding would be able to extend beyond the limits of sensibility and apply its categories to those non-sensible things. Clearly it would be impossible for the understanding to make use of its categories because without a reference to our mode of intuition, or in other words, without the unity of intuition in space and time, the understanding would lose its means of determining whether things are even possible (B 308). "If by merely intelligible objects we mean those things which are thought through pure categories, without any schema of sensibility, such object are impossible" (A 286/ B 242-43). To solve this dilemma, the understanding, since it can only prove the possibility of a thing from the fact that it is supported by a corresponding intuition, should have to postulate a non-sensible intuition. However, Kant insists that this does not provide us with a legitimate ground on which we can admit the possibility of the noumenon in the positive sense, that is, an object of a different kind of intuition (which is not ours) for a quite different intuition (and also a different understanding) from ours is itself a problem (A 287/ B 344).

However, Kant does not totally reject the concept of a noumenon. He indeed admits noumena in the purely negative sense:

> If, however, we have in mind only objects of a non-sensible intuition, in respect of which our categories are admittedly not valid, and of which therefore we can never have any knowledge whatsoever (neither intuition nor concept), noumena in this purely negative sense must indeed be admitted. For this is no more than saying that our kind of intuition does not extend to all things, but only to objects of our senses that consequently its objective validity is limited, and that a place therefore remains open for some other kind of intuition, and so for things as its objects. (A 286/ B 342-3)

The problem lingers. There is still one thing left without being solution: the concept of a noumenon remains *problematic* because it is simply the representation of a thing which we cannot decide whether it is possible or impossible. In fact, Kant's attitude towards the

problem of possibility or impossibility of noumena seems to contain a contradiction. In the *Critique*, he, while defining the *ens rationis*, claims that *ens rationis* "[L]ike noumena, which cannot be reckoned among the possibilities, although they must not for that reason be declared to be also impossible…"(A 290/ B 347). One way to solve this dilemma might be to use his distinctions written in the *Lectures on Metaphysics.* There he distinguishes between the logical possibility which "is the possibility of the concept, the principle of contradiction is its adequate criterion" (Ak. 29: 811) and real possibility which is "different from this, here the principle of contradiction <*principium contradictonis*> does not suffice. He then continues that "what is logically impossible is also really impossible, but [it is] not [the case that] what is logically possible is also really possible" (Ak. 29: 811). *Ens rationis* is *logically* possible because it can be thought; it is a 'thought-entity' and there is no logical contradiction in thinking it. It is however *really* impossible because there corresponds no object to it and logic of contradiction here does not suffice for establishing its truth. For it to be really possible as well there must be an object corresponding to it. *Ens rationis* is the empty concept *without* an object, so as a result it is only logically possible and "it is not the case that what is logically possible is also really possible".

Another problematic of the nature of noumena is to come to a decision as to whether it is positive or negative. Kant's rejection of assigning a positive meaning to noumena shows his admitting the inadequacy of our categories to the knowledge of things in themselves. He goes on claiming that without the data of sensibility things in themselves "would be merely subjective forms of the unity of understanding, *having no object*" (emphasis is mine) (A 287/ B 344), in other words, *nothing as* empty concept without an object, as *ens rationis*. However, Kant's system in order to be completed needs to assert that the understanding by applying the term noumena to the things in themselves limits the sensibility and also sets limits to itself. He leaves a place open for some other kind of intuition, and so for its "other

and different objects" that "must not be absolutely denied" (A 288/ B 244).[12] The understanding admits that it is impossible for it to know these other and different objects through its categories. The purely negative concept of the noumenon, i.e., nothing as *ens rationis* thus functions to set the limits of our knowledge. Understanding while limiting sensibility thinks for itself an object in itself, namely a transcendental object, "which is the cause of appearance and therefore not itself appearance, and which can be thought neither as quantity nor as reality nor as substance, etc." (A 288/ B 345). However, this object does not have a sensible (positive) representation, it is an object neither for a possible experience nor for the pure understanding; its representation is therefore merely empty.

### 4.2. Second division: *nothing* according to quality as *nihil privativum*

The second division of the concept of nothing corresponds to the category of negation that we find under the heading of quality in the table of categories. His presentation of this division is as follows:

> Reality is *something*; negation is *nothing*, namely, a concept of the absence of an object, such as shadow, cold *(nihil privatum*) (A 291/ B 347).

He explains in B349 that "[if] light were not given to the senses we could not represent darkness", and negation "in the absence of a something real" is not object. Hence, in an attempt to determine the status and role of the concept of nothing in Kant's whole system it seems necessary to examine the categories of quality, i.e. reality, negation and limitation, in terms of their interdependence. This examination will also require considering the relationship between the logical forms of quality in judgment, namely, affirmative and

[12] One must keep in mind that Kant absolutely rejects the *transcendental* employment of categories of the understanding, but he still admits that the concept of the noumenon is indispensable in its negative sense as a *limiting* concept: it indicates the limits of the understanding, and thusly of our capacity to know.

negative judgment. Here I think that Longuenesse's claim that "Kant relies on a generally accepted correspondence between ontological determinations (reality and negation) and forms of predication (affirmation and negation in judgment)" (2000a: 293) provides us with a legitimate ground to discuss the relationship between the categories of reality and negation and their logical forms. However, we must also consider the rule for the objective employment of the category of quality, in order to see how, or according to what principle those ontological and logical levels are bound together. So I will start with the logical form of the categories of reality and negation, and go on with the pure categories themselves[13].

Affirmative judgment is the logical form of reality, while negative judgment is the logical form of negation. Since the categories are "concepts of an object in general, by means of which the intuition of an object is regarded as determined in respect of one of the logical functions of judgment" (B 129), and there is a correspondence between the logical form of a judgment and the categories of quality, then both "reality" and "negation" are concepts of an object in general and the means of determination of the intuition of this object in respect of the logical function of affirmation or of negation in judgments. In the case of a truly affirmative determination the object of the concept is *given* to sensibility, and its concept arises from "reflection upon some sensory given" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 294). In contrast, a truly negative determination is a determination of nothing, that is, of the absence of an object (which was there present once, but disappeared now). In other words, it is privation:

> Reality, in the pure concept of understanding, is that which corresponds to a sensation in general; it is that, therefore, the concept of which in itself points to being (in time). Negation is that the concept of which represents not-being (in time). The opposition

[13] In structuring my argument I will follow Longuenesse for I believe she is right when she claims that Kant makes forms of predication (affirmation and negation in judgment) the origin of ontological determinations (reality and negation) given that the logical forms are related to a sensible given, they are not just empty concepts of reason, i.e. *ens rationis*.

> of these two thus rests upon the distinction of one and the same time as filled and as empty. (A 143/ B 183)

Hence what we are dealing with here is strictly within the boundaries of our experience. We can represent the *absence* of an object for its presence is given to our senses: "If light were not given to the senses we could not represent darkness" (B 349). I can, likewise, represent the absence of my book on my desk, for I saw it on my desk just a while ago. These examples show us that an object in its absence remains still a possibility for the sensation: the fact that it is not sensibly given (yet) does not mean that it might not be given in sensibility. Hence, negation, or nothing, is the possibility of a corresponding reality in the absence of it. It is the concept of a privation or lack of a real determination. The schema of reality is "its continuous and uniform production *in time*" (emphasis is mine) which is made "representable as a quantum" by "the relation between reality and negation, or the transition from the one to the other" (A 143/ B 183). The transition from the presence to the absence of a corresponding reality requires time to be presented as continuous and uniform in sensibility. The emphasis on *time* provides us a ground to suggest that both reality and its negation are equally possible, thus representable on the basis of the schema of reality. It also confirms that Kant's argumentation on nothing as *nihil privatum* locates it strictly within the boundaries of our experience.

Here it is important to understand the link between Kant's expression for nothing as the mere lack of determination and his pre-Critical analysis of negation. Kant in his pre-Critical essay, *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* (1763) makes a distinction between two kinds of negation: "A negation in so far as it is the consequence of a real opposition, will be designated a *deprivation* (*privation*). But any negation, insofar as does not arise from this type of repugnancy, will be called a *lack* (*defectus, absentia*)" (Ak. 2: 177-178). In the latter there is only a lack of a ground whereas

in the former there are two grounds opposed to each other of the same magnitude. A body is either in a *rest* that is a lack of motion in so far as no motive force is present, or in a *rest* as a deprivation in so far as there is a motive force present but is cancelled by an opposed force (Ak. 2: 178). In the *Critique*, however, it seems to me that when Kant refers to nothing as *nihil privatum*, and contrasts it with reality as appears in B 183, what is in his mind is the first kind of negation, namely *privatio.* The interplay of presence and absence might be considered, since it produces either a determination of a thing given in space and time or the absence of such a determination, with its continuously limiting function. It is within this interplay that opposing determinations limit each other in space and time: "*…limitation;* this is the negation which contains reality" (*Met. L*$_{2,}$ Ak. 28: 560).

Thus, we have pure categories of quality: reality, negation and limitation. However, we must recall Kant's emphasis on that without schemata, i.e., "the universal condition under which alone the category can be applied to any object" (A 140/ B 179), the pure categories are "merely functions of the understanding for concepts; and represent no object" (A 147/ B 187). In A 246, which was omitted in the B version, Kant emphasizes that the pure categories have no "relation to any determinate object, cannot therefore define any object, and so do not in themselves have the validity of objective concepts". Reality as a pure category is the mere form of affirmative predication, and it is "that determination which can be thought only by an affirmative judgment" (A 246). However, this affirmation remains *empty* without a sensible given, so we have the schematism of the categories of quality. Reality as pure category of quality remains equal to *nothing* unless it has an object. Thus, nothing as *nihil privatum* is the lack of a real determination, the absence of a given sensible.

As I underlined above, negation as a pure category of quality also requires the schema. Similar to reality, negation as a predicate, or as the mere form of negative predicate,

is anything sensibly not given, yet *giveable*. One question is what the schema for negation might be. As it is indicated in Kant's words that "[the] schema of a reality, as *the quantity of something in so far as it fills time* (emphasis is mine), is just this continuous and uniform production of that reality in time (A 143/ B183)" and "[n]egation is that the concept of which represents not-being (in time)", the schema of negation, then, is the real's "descent from a sensation which has a certain degree to its vanishing point" in time. "Since time is merely the form of intuition, and so of objects as appearances, that in the objects which corresponds to sensation is[14] the transcendental matter of all objects as things in themselves (thinghood, reality)[*Sacheit, Realität*]" (A 143/ B 182). In other words, "... every sensation has a degree or magnitude whereby ... occupy inner sense more or less completely, down to its cessation in nothingness (=0=*negation*)" (A 143/ B 182):

> [O]nly in virtue of the general condition of sensibility can they [the categories] possess a determinate meaning and relation to any object. Now when this condition has been omitted from the pure category, it can contain nothing but the logical function for bringing the manifold under a concept. By means of this function or form of the concept, thus taken by itself, we cannot in any way know and distinguish what object comes under it, since we have abstracted from the sensible condition through which alone objects can come under it. Consequently, the categories require, in addition to the pure concept of understanding, determinations of their application to sensibility in general (schemata) (A 245).

With these words we are directed to the correspondence between ontological determinations and logical forms. Reality and negation as pure categories without a relation to any object have only a logical function, and are nothing but mere forms of the concept. However, in order to posit a correspondence between the ontological determinations and the

[14] In Norman Kemp Smith's original translation the sentence is reversed into the negative (*nicht die* for *die*), following Wille: "… to sensation is not the transcendental matter…" However, in Guyer and Woods' translation, "not", is omitted. Here I prefer their translation.

logical forms we need to accept the necessity of the latter's relation to a sensible given. I agree with Longuenesse that Kant's argument gives a new meaning to this correspondence, by making the logical forms of predication (affirmation and negation in judgment) the origin of the ontological determinations. However, this is only possible if there is a corresponding sensible given.

### 4.3 Third division: *nothing* according to relation as *ens imaginarium*

Kant's third division of the concept of nothing as *ens imaginarium* corresponds to the category of relation in the table of pure concepts of understanding. This division is identified with space and time as the forms of intuition when they have no empirical content in themselves:

> The mere form of intuition, without substance, is in itself no object, but the merely formal condition of an object (as appearance), as pure space and pure time (*ens imaginarium*). These are indeed something, as forms of intuition, but are not themselves objects which are intuited (A 291/ B 347).

Here one may easily recognize as the common feature of the first three divisions of the concept of nothing *the mere absence of an object, namely a sensory given*. Kant, in various parts of the *Critique*, but specifically in the Transcendental Aesthetic, and also in the *Prolegomena*, equates nothing with the complete emptiness of intuition in time (and in space). He claims that no perception is possible that would show such a complete emptiness (or the absence or the lack of any sensory data)(4: 307). Consider his wordings in the B 219 of the *Critique* that "time however cannot itself be perceived [experienced]"; and in the *Prolegomena* "nothing, i.e., the complete disappearance of sensation" (4: 309), and "nothing, i.e., the complete emptiness of intuition in time" (4: 307). Although space and time in themselves cannot be perceived, this does not mean that they cannot be thought: as to space, Kant claims that "we can never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can

quite well *think* it as empty of objects" (emphasis is mine) (A 24/ B 38); and as to time, his argument is as follows:

> We cannot, in respect of appearances in general, remove time itself, though we can quite well *think* time as void of appearances. Time is, therefore, given *a priori.* In it alone is actuality of appearances possible at all. Appearances may, one and all, vanish; but time (as the universal condition of their possibility) cannot itself be removed [emphasis is mine] (B 46/A 31).

Hence, space and time as (infinite) *a priori* representations are the conditions of the possibility of appearances. In the beginning of the Aesthetic Kant gives some concise and clear definitions which might be helpful to comprehend how empty space and empty time comes to be the concept of nothing. He starts with *intuition* and defines it as that through which our cognition is in immediate relation to objects and "to which all thought as means is directed" in so far as the object is given to us. "Objects are given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yields us *intuitions*" (A 19). In relation to the effect of an object he defines *sensation* as such effect upon the faculty of representation. Empirical intuition is the one which is in relation to the object through sensation, and appearance is the indeterminate object of this empirical intuition. Appearance can be divided into two components: one is what corresponds to sensation, i.e., the matter of appearances; and one which orders the matter in certain relations, namely the form of appearances:

> For since only by means of such pure forms of sensibility can an object appear to us, and so be an object of empirical intuition, space and time are pure intuitions which contain *a priori* the condition of the possibility of objects as appearances, and the synthesis which takes place in them has objective validity (A 89/ B 122).

Kant discusses space and time with a background of Newton's conception of absolute space, according to which space and time are "real existences" and Leibniz's relational one, according to which they are "only determinations or relations of things" (A 23/ B 37). In

contrast to these two Kant's critical alternative is that space and time are no containers that exist self-sufficiently as substances. Nor are they ideal logical constructions out of relations between objects. In the Transcendental Aesthetic space and time are firstly subjected to a *metaphysical exposition* that, as Kant understands it, contains that which exhibits the concept *as given a priority*. In a second step, those become subject to a *transcendental exposition* which is "the explanation of a concept, as a principle from which the possibility of the other *a priori* synthetic knowledge can be understood" (B 40). So, space and time are metaphysically exposed in order to exhibit that their representations are given a priori and also that they are intuitions; and they are transcendentally explained in order to establish the conditions of possibility of a synthetic a priori knowledge, here geometry and the general doctrine of motion:

> Our [transcendental] exposition therefore establishes the *reality*, that is, the objective validity, of space in respect of whatever can be presented to us outwardly as object, but also at the same time the *ideality* of space in respect of things when they are considered in themselves through reason, that is, without regard to the constitution of our sensibility. We assert, then, the *empirical reality* of space, as regards all possible outer experience; and yet at the same time we assert its *transcendental ideality* –in other words, that it is nothing at all, immediately we withdraw the above condition, namely, its limitation to possible experience, and so look upon it as something that underlies things in themselves (B 44/A 28).

A similar line of argument applies to time:

> What we are maintaining is, therefore, the *empirical reality* of time, that is, its objective validity in respect of all objects which allow of ever being given to our senses. And since our intuition is always sensible, no object can ever be given to us which does not conform to the condition of time. On the other hand, we deny to time all claim to absolute reality; that is to say, we deny that it belongs to things absolutely, as their condition or property, independently of any reference to the form of our sensible intuition; properties that belong to things in themselves can never be given to us through the senses. This, then, is what constitutes the *transcendental ideality* of

> time. What we mean by this phrase is that if we abstract from the subjective conditions of sensible intuition, time is nothing, and cannot be ascribed to the objects in themselves (apart from their relation to our intuition) in the way either of subsistence or of inherence (A 36/ B 52).

Empty space and empty time is defined by Kant as the mere forms of intuition, without substance and are metaphysical nothings, i.e., *entia imaginaria*. Space and time in themselves are mere *entia imaginaria* as nothings under the category of relation. As such they are the conditions for representing any reality. Space and time cognized as relations of things are real, but outside the function of ordering sensations they are nothing, i.e., purely *ideal.* Space and time as considered purely ideal, then, come to the absence of reality as something corresponding to sensation.

Here, one point should be noticed that for Kant, unlike for the old metaphysicians' taking nothing as prior over reality, reality has a priority over negation: "I can very well think of a negation if I have a reality, but not if no reality is given. Thus reality is the first *logice*, and from this it is inferred that it is also *metaphysice* and *objective* the first and the gloom out of which the light of experience elaborates shapes" (*Refl*. 5270, Ak. 18: 138). Disconcertingly, however, space and time as *entia imaginaria* precede sensible reality and that is to say that nothing has an ontological priority over reality. This reversal of the relationship of priority between reality and nothing seems to indicate Kant's regression to the position of rational metaphysics. One solution to this problem may be as offered by Longuenesse as follows:

> We would form no representation of "pure" space and "pure" time unless sensations were to be ordered "in" space and time, thus generating the "matter" of appearances, as "that which corresponds to sensation." In this sense, there definitely would be no representation of space and time without a sensory given. But on the other hand, reality would not appear as such (as "that which corresponds to sensation") unless it were

> ordered in space and time, and even in space and time as "infinite given magnitudes," as described in the Transcendental Aesthetic (Longuenesse, 2000a: 309).

It seems to me that Longuenesse's assertion is a rather plausible way to legitimize the primacy of space and time as *pure* forms of intuition over sensory given (matter) given that both have a sensible quality in themselves. On this basis, one may conclude that the priority of *entia imaginaria* as nothings is indeed a transcendental priority.

Another point to be emphasized concerns the location of *ens imaginarium* as empty intuition without object in the table of nothingness. Kant locates *ens imaginarium*, i.e., purely ideal space and time, under the category of relation. This is interesting if we consider that reality (as what corresponds to sensation) and negation (as what corresponds to the absence of sensation) are the first two categories of quality in the table of categories. However, if we take into account the argument of the schemata of reality and negation, the schema of reality as "being (in time)", and that of negation as "not-being (in time), Kant develops in the Schematism chapter of the first *Critique,* it becomes obvious that the categories of quality and relation are inseparable. The reason for this is that the category reality is defined as something existing in time and space. But this something is determined by means of the categories of relation such as substance, the schema of which is permanence in time. Hence, when substance disappears, space and time (as *empirically real*) also disappear. What is left are space and time but as only transcendentally ideal, that is as nothing as the absence of substance, namely *ens imaginarium.*

In the Transcendental Aesthetic, the representations of space and time are considered through the category of magnitude, as "infinite given magnitudes". In his *Lectures on Metaphysics,* Kant distinguishes two types of infinity, as real and mathematical. The real infinity, as he defines it, contains no negations or limitations since it is a pure concept of the

understanding. Kant takes our attention to the second sense of infinity, namely mathematical infinity, in his discussion of space and time as infinite given magnitudes. *Mathematical infinity*, which refers to space and time, and therefore to the objects of the senses is created by successive addition of homogeneous units to one another, without reaching any totality at all: "but with mathematical infinity <*infinito mathematico*> I can never think the collective totality <*omnitudinem collectivum*>" (Ak. 28: 569). We should notice here Kant's definition of mathematical infinity <*infinitum mathematicum*> also as "a *quantum*[15] given [concerning space] or givable [concerning time] into infinity" (Ak. 28: 569). In the Schematism section of the *Critique*, Kant further elucidates the schema of magnitude as *quantitatis* as number:

> The pure image of all magnitudes (*quantorum*) for outer sense is space; that of all objects of the senses in general is time. But the pure *schema* of magnitude (*quantitatis*), as a concept of the understanding, is *number*, a representation which comprises the successive addition of homogeneous units. Number is therefore simply the unity of the synthesis of the manifold of a homogeneous intuition in general, a unity due to my generating time itself in the apprehension of the intuition (B 182/A 143).

Number as the schema of magnitude (*quantitatis*) that is number provides the pure images of space and time for the magnitude as the concept of understanding through "a universal procedure of imagination" (A 140/ B 180). The concept of magnitude, thus, synthetically unifies the multiplicity of intuitions *a priori* according to the rules of schematism, and as consciousness of this synthetic unity it makes the representations of a determinate position in space and time and of any object in space and time possible. Thus, Kant's basic principle as it is reflected in this claim is that the representation of the unity of

[15] Kant uses German *Größe* for magnitude, sometimes as *quantum*, sometimes as *quantitas*. *Quantum* is the name of an object immediately given in intuition. It is called quantum because in which we recognize the possibility of determining its *quantitas*. Magnitude as *quantitas* is, on the other hand, this quantitative determination of the *quantum*. In Kant's terminology, *quantum* is either continuous (*continuum*) or discrete (*discretum*). Space and time are not only "infinite given magnitudes (*quanta infinita*)" but also, continuous magnitudes (*quanta continua*).

the manifold of a given intuition in general requires a synthetic activity in a generative consciousness.

In the "Axioms of Intuition" and the "Anticipations of Perception" two transcendental principles of mathematics are applied to appearances, and by that appearances are claimed to have two kinds of magnitudes, i.e., *extensive* and *intensive*. In "the Axioms of Intuition", the first mathematical principle that provides the rule for the objective employment of the category of quantity as a pure concept of understanding is defined as that "[a]ll intuitions are extensive magnitudes" (B 202). Space and time as elements of pure intuition in all appearances are extensive magnitudes. Kant defines extensive magnitude by assigning it a number which represents its parts by making possible the representation of the whole. What necessarily follows from this is the primacy of its parts over the whole. That is to say, they can be known "only through successive synthesis of part to part" in their apprehension (A 163/ B 203-4).

In his exposition of the "Anticipations of Perception", Kant deals with the principle of intensive magnitudes: "In all appearances, the real that is an object of sensation has intensive magnitude, that is, a degree" (B 207). As the rule of the objective employment of the category of quality, this second mathematical principle states that the schema of "reality, as the quantity of something" (A 143/ B 183) provides a synthetic unity for the representations of all appearances as intensive magnitudes. In other words, the real in all appearances can be represented as continuously and uniformly produced in time:

> Now from empirical consciousness to pure consciousness a graduated transition is possible, the real in the former completely vanishing, and a merely formal *a priori* consciousness of the manifold in space and time remaining. Consequently there is also possible a synthesis in the process of generating the magnitude of a sensation from its beginning in pure intuition =0, up to any required magnitude. Since, however, sensation

> is not in itself an objective representation, and since neither the intuition of space nor that of time is to be met with in it, its magnitude is not extensive, but *intensive.* This magnitude is generated in the act of apprehension whereby the empirical consciousness of it can in a certain time increase from nothing = 0 to the given measure (B 208).

The real of sensation, therefore, as merely subjective representation, gives the subject the consciousness of being affected by an object, and thereby Kant explains empty space and empty time as a consequence of a gradual alteration of the magnitude of a sensation towards its cessation point which is at the same time the pure consciousness equaling to nothing =0. Kant, in the *Prolegomena*, contrasts the principle of extensive magnitude with the principle of intensive magnitude. While the first principle "subsumes all appearances, as intuitions in space and time, under the concept of *magnitude*", the second "does not subsume the properly empirical –namely sensation, which signifies the real in intuitions- directly under the concept of *magnitude* since sensation is no intuition *containing* space or time"; instead it "places the object corresponding to it in both space and time" (Ak. 4: 307). Kant, while dealing with intensive magnitudes in the Anticipations section also deals with the degree of *phenomenal* reality. This reality, not the *noumenal* one, is capable of transforming itself into complete *absentia* which results in pure space and pure time. This *absentia* is the point of 0 towards which reality as *realitas evanescens* vanishes. *Absentia* is also pure intuition where there is no reality in space and time. It is the point of metaphysical nothingness in terms of space and time, and being empty they now hold no degree of concrete manifold within themselves. Consider two quotations below together:

> Now what corresponds in the empirical intuition which to the sensation is reality (*realitas phaenomenon*); what corresponds to its absence is negation= o. Every sensation, however, is capable of diminution, so that it can decrease and thus gradually vanish. Between reality in the [field of] appearance and negation there is therefore a continuity of many possible intermediate sensations, the difference between any two of which is always smaller than the difference between the given sensation and zero or complete negation. (A 168/ B 210).

> A magnitude which is apprehended only as unity, and in which multiplicity can be represented only through approximation to negation = 0, I entitle an *intensive* magnitude. Every reality in the [field] of appearance has therefore intensive magnitude, or degree. If this reality is viewed as cause, either of sensation or of some other reality in the [field] of appearance, such as change, the degree of reality as cause then entitled a moment, the moment of gravity. It is so named for the reason that degree signifies only that magnitude the apprehension of which is not successive, but instantaneous (B 210/A 169).

Reality is that which fills pure intuition and thereby pure intuition becomes empirical intuition. Now pure intuitions are space and time and so reality fills space and time. This reality, which is capable of diminution down to the point =0 and whose representation becomes possible only through the approximation to a vanishing point is intensive magnitude. When this reality has disappeared, there remains empty space and empty time only; this is pure consciousness which is *a priori* and formal; devoid of content. This pure space and time is full not of reality but of the manifold of space and time; in that sense, they signify complete negation; negation of reality which corresponds to sensation. Kant here conceives a twofold alteration of reality within space and time. One is an increase in a certain time from nothing =0 to a certain measure (limit), and the other is a decrease from any certain measure down to the reality's complete cessation.

To capture the nature of nothing as *ens imaginarium*, its comparison with the *nihil privativum* might be helpful: In the *nihil privativum* one thing cancels the consequence of another thing in the same subject, which is real opposition. Here these two things are both positive and one thing cancels the consequence of the other thing in the same subject either completely or in part. Kant in the *Critique* gives the examples of cold and shadow as *nihil privativum.* In shadow example, for instance, one thing might be the sunlight and the cancelling thing might be a wall. There are two positive things (the sunlight and the wall) here and the wall negates the sunlight either completely or in part. In *ens imaginarium*,

however, it is the complete absence of reality in space and time. No object to be intuited. Both include negation as the way or a process of diminution or cancellation of reality but in *nihil privativum* some-thing such as shadow still remains. In *ens imaginarium*, by contrast, there is or remains nothing in space and time, only "not-being (in time)" therefore, no reality to be perceived at all. This does not mean that the *ens imaginarium* cannot be represented. Since it cannot even be thought, only the negative nothing (*nihil negativum*) cannot be represented (*nihil negativum irrepraesentabile*). *Ens imaginarium* can be represented but only as a fiction of imagination, never to be experienced in the phenomenal world[16].

### 4.4 Fourth division: *nothing* according to modality as *nihil negativum*

The fourth division of the concept of nothing is exposed according to the category of modality. The fourth predicament of the table of categories, namely modality subsumes

[16] In this framework, the below quotation extracted from *Metaphysik Mrongovius* neatly details the idea of empty space and empty time as beyond our experience, an idea that underlies Kant's critical opposition to both Leibnizian idea of relational space and time, and Newtonian idea of absolute space and time:

> (II) There is no gap in the world <*in mundo non datur hiatus*>. There is in the world no empty space and no empty time. This proposition belongs under the category of magnitude. There are two kinds of empty space possible.
>
> 1. An empty space outside the world or extramundane vacuum <*vacuum extra mundanum*>, which encloses it. And that is nothing. For the sensible world has no boundaries, at least we cannot determine them by any possible experience. Therefore we also cannot at all comprehend an empty space outside the world, because it is not an object of our experience at all and is nothing real. But here the question is also not of this empty space, but rather
>
> 2. of the empty space in the world or the interrupted or concrete vacuum <*vacuo intermisso vel concreto*>. Experience concerning this is also impossible for us. Further, by a gap <*hiatus*> two things in the world would also be separated from their connection <*nexu*>. Moreover a gap <*hiatus*> would at the same time also be a leap <*saltus*> (…). An empty time in which nothing passed away would be a leap <*saltus*>. An empty space is also a leap <*saltus*>. For if a body merely moved in an empty space then nothing would be altered, neither in itself not outside it. There would thus have happened no alteration at all. Consequently on the previous alteration another would immediately succeed at once, without attaining a degree in the meantime through a gradual increase. But that would be a leap <*saltus*>, e.g., if a body falls *through* a hollow ball, and this has an empty space, then the time which it took in falling through would be an empty time. For neither would it be altered in itself, nor something outside it, because there would then be nothing outside it. But through its motion it would not be altered at all. But the empty time between two states is a leap <*saltus*> (Ak. 29: 922-923).

under itself the oppositional concepts of possibility/ impossibility, existence/ non-existence, and necessity/ contingency. Kant explains the relationship among the predicaments of modality through necessity: "necessity is just the existence which is given through possibility itself" (B 111). The category of modality, then, guides Kant through the combination of necessity, existence and possibility. He, as a result, defines the fourth nothing, *nihil negativum* with a contradiction that is internal to the concept of the object, that is, "empty object without concept":

> The object of a concept which contradicts itself is nothing, because the concept is nothing, is the impossible, e.g. a two-sided rectilinear figure (*nihil negativum*) (A 291/ B 348).

Throughout his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, while commenting on the Ontology subsection of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, Kant treats nothing, makes a connection between the division of the concept of an object as possible and impossible and that of which as something and nothing:

> The highest concept of the whole human cognition is the concept of an object in general, not of a thing and non-thing, or of something possible and impossible, for these are opposites <*opposita*>. Each concept that has an opposite <*oppositum*> always requires a yet a higher concept that contains this division. Two opposites <*opposita*> are divisions of a higher object. Thus the concept *of the possible and impossible*, or of *a thing and non-thing* cannot at all be the highest concept of human cognition (Ak. 28: 544).

The highest concept of ontology, Kant claims, is "the concept of an object in general". Such a supreme concept was customarily treated in terms of its possibility or impossibility. Kant's critique of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, although posits the concept of an object in general as the highest concept of transcendental philosophy, rather begins with

the division of the concept of an object in general into something or nothing for the "completeness of the system" (A 290/ B 346):

> The supreme concept with which it is customary to begin a *transcendental philosophy*[17] is the division into the possible and the impossible. But since all division presupposes a concept to be divided, a still higher one is required, and this is the concept of an object in general, taken problematically without its having been decided whether it is something or nothing (A 290/ B 346).

Kant structures the table of the division of the concept of nothing according to the table of categories, and locates negative nothing under the category of modality. Such a division helps Kant paving the way for distinguishing the ontological determinations from the logical ones and for conceptualizing nothingness in different formations under the guidance of the table of categories:

> ... What contradicts itself is *impossible*. It thus follows from this: what contains no contradiction is *not impossible*. What is not impossible, is possible. Now if my thoughts contain no contradiction, then they are possible. That of which the thought contradicts itself is absolutely impossible, that is the negative nothing <*nihil negativum*>. *Reality* is something; *negation* is nothing, namely a concept of the lack of an object. Imaginary being <*ens imaginarium*> is a non-thing, of which the thought, however, is possible. Such a non-thing is nothing, it is no object that can be intuited. We must indeed not take the possibility of thoughts for the possibility of objects; one must guard oneself very much against this. The principle of contradiction <*principium contradictionis*> is a criterion of truth, with which no cognition can conflict. The sign for distinguishing truth is a criterion of truth <*criterium veritatis*>. The principle of contradiction <*principium contradictionis*> is the highest negative criterion of truth. It is a necessary condition <*condition sine qua non*> of all cognitions; but not the sufficient criterion of all truth (28: 544).

[17] Emphasis is added by myself because I believe that when Kant refers to "a transcendental philosophy" he, here, in fact, means transcendent rational metaphysics, not his own transcendental philosophy.

To understand the nature of nothing as *nihil negativum* we have two main guiding threads: one is the possibility or impossibility and the other is the principle of contradiction. These two are important since nothing as *nihil negativum* is the concept of the impossible (indeed, the only impossible one among the other divisions of nothing) and it contains, or better put, is the result of a *contradictory* opposition.

Kant defines impossibility as "what contradicts itself" (Ak. 29: 811). Indeed, he says that two conditions are to be met for impossibility to arise: a logical contradiction between concepts and the objective impossibility (absence) of the matter. If logical contradiction occurs, it is the concept of the impossible. But it is not the case that there is possibility whenever there is no contradiction since "whether the matter is objectively possible is not yet certain" (Ak. 29: 811). Put another way, even if the matter is objectively absent, the thought of it might be possible. Nothing as *nihil negativum* is impossible not because of the absence of the matter, here even the thought of it is impossible, but because of its containing a logical contradiction. As said above *nihil privativum* also contains an opposition, but a contradictory opposition, as what Kant calls logical opposition, is resulting in a different kind of nothing that contains contradiction and is the impossible. In the *Negative Magnitudes* essay, Kant starts with a separation between logical opposition and real opposition. Logical opposition is contradiction that occurs when two opposites come together in the same subject as one affirming and the other denying the very same thing:

> A body which is in motion is something; a body which is not in motion is also something (*cogitabile*); but a body which is both in motion and also, in the very same sense, not in motion, is nothing at all (Ak. 2: 171).

A body in motion is possible (conceivable), a body not in motion is also possible but a body both in motion and not in motion contains contradiction and therefore impossible. The impossibility here connotes to the idea that when there is logical opposition I cannot

think anything possible, in other words it is of the idea which is impossible to conceive. For Kant:

> [T]his principle of contradiction is the highest logical principle [and] of two opposing predicates a subject must always take one, for if I attribute both to it at the same time, one cancels the other and I think nothing; if I negate both, then I also think nothing (logical), that is where one is A, the other is non-A (Ak. 29: 791).

In the *Critique*, Kant defines *nihil negativum* as the 'empty object without concept'. This phrase is illuminating since it gives the two constitutive threads of the concept. First, it is empty object which means that it is devoid of objective possibility, secondly, it is devoid of concept; in other words, here the conceptual possibility is also lacking. His example now is "a two-sided rectilinear figure (*nihil negativum*)" (A 291/ B 348); a figure even the conception or imagination is impossible.

Kant's expression for this division of nothing is also *absolute* or *negative nothing*. One plausible way to interpret this expression might be that in other divisions nothing is the result of the absence of ontological determinations. *Ens rationis*, for instance, is defined as "empty concept without object". These empty concepts can very well be used regulatively in directing the empirical researches or as moral postulates. Here, on the other hand, what is at stake is the "actions of reason that we perform in thinking" (*The Jäsche Logic*: 16). *Nihil negativum* is the result of attempting a misuse of the analytic "rules of all (formal) truth, apart from which our cognition is untrue in itself, *regardless of its objects* (*The Jäsche Logic*: 16) (Emphasis is mine). Its absoluteness or negativity seems, therefore, to be a consequence of including a double negation i.e., absence of matter (object) on the one hand and a logical contradiction (lack of formal truth) on the other.

# 5 Conclusion: Adumbrating the Main Lines of a Possible Argument of the Transcendental Function of *Nothing* in Kant's Critical System

This chapter has tried to provide an exposition of the division of the concept of nothing in Kant's first *Critique.* Kant divides the concept according to the table of categories, by locating *a* concept of nothing under each category:

1. The category of quantity: nothing as *ens rationis* "empty concept without object", whose possibility is problematic.

2. The category of quality: nothing as *nihil privativum* "empty object of a concept", which is possible as a consequence of real opposition.

3. The category of relation: nothing as *ens imaginarium* "empty intuition without object", space and time which are possible as forms of intuition.

4. The category of modality: nothing as *nihil negativum* "empty object without concept", because the concept is nothing it is the impossible.

Throughout the chapter I have dealt with each category separately and tried to make some preliminary remarks as a preparation of an elaboration and elucidation of the following argument: Although Kant himself treats nothingness as a topic that can be handled in a note within a note to a note, and as something that should be added simply for architectonic neatness, in fact we find that the nothing as treated according to the guiding thread of the system of categories has a rather fundamental transcendental function. In this concluding subsection, I will try to underline the indicators of the transcendental function of the category of nothing in the four divisions of the concept, as exposed above. My endeavour here will

be to outline the constitutive elements of the transcendental function of nothing. In doing so, I also expect to provide the reader with an idea concerning the structure of the dissertation.

1. *Ens rationis* as the first division of the concept of nothing like noumena defines first and foremost the boundaries of phenomena. Its function here is being the guardian of knowledge through separating two realms of reality, namely the realm of *realitas phaenomenon* versus the realm of *realitas noumenon.* By definition the function of guarding is actually guarding knowledge against what Kant calls as the dialectical illusions of the traditional metaphysics. This also means guarding the understanding from itself by keeping its tendency to transcend the limits of sensibility under control.

2. With the first division of nothing as *ens rationis*, and with the second division, as *nihil privatum* we confront with the question of negative determinations of *totum realitatis.* *Totum realitatis* is a pre-critical notion that Kant inherits from the rational theology as *ens realissimum.* In the *Critique* he criticizes the notion first in the appendix to the Transcendental Analytic, On the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection, and then in the Transcendental Ideal. This rationalist notion *totum realitatis* is subjected to a "critical reduction" which is "what the principle of complete determination and the related notion of a whole of reality amount to, once they are disentangled from the rationalist illusion" (Longuenesse, 2005: 214). *Totum realitatis*, after this disentanglement, is the total reality as the sum of all material given in space and time, which is then limited whereby the individual empirical objects are constituted. This limitation is the principle of complete determination; a determination whereby *totum realitatis* is limited and objects are individuated. "Nevertheless, the idea of a *totum realitatis*, a "concept of all reality (*Inbegriff aller Realität*) –a concept of all possible positive determinations thought by concepts, of which every singular thing is a completely specified (completely determined) limitation- is, Kant

maintains, used perfectly legitimately only as long as it is acknowledged for what it is: a mere *ens rationis,* an idea of reason with no more than a regulative use" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 307). *Totum realititas* as an idea, i.e., *ens rationis* is nothing. It is also inevitably and legitimately presupposed as something "which corresponds to sensation", i.e., as something existent: "... reality in the [field of] appearance (that which corresponds to sensation), must be given, since otherwise it could not even be thought, nor its possibility represented" (A 581/ B 609). Illegitimate use is either to suppose a *totum realitatis* to be actually given or to hypostatize this whole as *ens realissimum* as the ground of all possible determinations of finite things (Longuenesse, 2000a: 307). *Totum realitatis*, as expressed through the logical function of infinite judgments, is instaed something like a context, an infinite background within which infinite judgments, corresponding to the category of limitation, are constituted.

3. Third division of nothing as *ens imaginarium* provides us with *a priori* conditions of the possibility of the object of experience, i.e., space and time as pure forms of intuition i.e., as empty. Transcendental function of empty space and empty time as merely ideal entities might be conceived under their function of ordering sensations. As forms of intuition they precede all data of experience, all appearances and for our sensible cognition, *entia imaginaria* are the conditions of representing any reality. Indeed, here a reciprocal relationship between *entia imaginaria* and reality can be observed. Without space and time reality cannot appear as such and without reality space and time are devoid of content; they are concepts of pure intuition only, in other words, nothings at all.

4. *Nihil negativum,* in other words negative nothing refers to a logical opposition which is a contradiction that cancels all possibilities and it is, as the concept of the impossible, the opposite of the absolutely necessary being, God. In the *Only Possible Argument* (1763), Kant asserts that anything self-contradictory is internally impossible, that

is, absolutely impossible. In such a case, an internal contradiction is present as the logical element of impossibility. Yet, the impossibility also arises when there is "no material element, no *datum*, to be thought" (Ak. 2: 78). "Now, if all existence is cancelled, then nothing is posited absolutely, nothing at all is given, there is no material element for anything which can be thought; all possibility completely disappears" (Ak. 2: 78). The possibility of something depends on the existence of something to be thought. Thus, not only the impossibility, but also the possibility arises from the principle of contradiction and an internal contradiction occurs when a concept is posited and cancelled at the same time. It is the concept of the absolutely impossible; it is negative nothing, or absolute nothing.

"That of which the opposite is impossible in itself is absolutely necessary" (Ak. 2: 81) This line is crucial to assert the correlation between the possibility in itself and the absolutely necessary being. Kant's fourth category of nothing, *nihil negativum,* as a category of modality *negatively* grounds the possibility of the absolutely necessary existence and this pre-critical notion of existence, while retained as an idea with a regulative function, is denied in the first *Critique*.

In the following sections, in order to substantiate my argument that 'nothing' has a transcendental function in the Kantian system my strategy will be to structure the whole thesis around the idea that nothing's transcendental function is closely related to the issue of determination. On this ground, in the second chapter I will organize my argument around the notions of the complete determination and *totum realitatis* through the first and fourth divisions of nothing. The chapter will trace the shift in the function and the conception of nothing from the pre-critical to critical periods. In the third chapter, I will focus on the concept of *totum realitatis* as the sum of all appearances through the first, second, and third

divisions of nothing. Here Kant's arguments on negative magnitudes, extensive magnitudes, intensive magnitudes and infinite judgment will be dealt with.

# CHAPTER II: Transcendental Function of Nothing from *Nihil Negativum* to *Ens Rationis*

> Because all negations only serve to prevent errors and to demonstrate ignorance, metaphysics is a very useful science not insofar as it extends knowledge but rather insofar as it prevents errors. One learns what Socrates knew (*Ref*. 3717, 17: 261).

## 1. Introduction

Kant's division of the concept of nothing under the guidance of the table of categories can be interpreted as intrinsically related to his critical turn. It means that his conceptualization provides a basis to reconsider the concept of nothing as the absence of the sensible given, or the deprivation of objective reality, i.e. that of reality as what corresponds to sensation, within the limits of possible experience. The novelty of Kant's concept of nothing lies in his attempt to integrate it into the unity of his critical system, by ascribing to this internally divided concept a transcendental function under the guiding thread of his system of categories. In the *Prolegomena*, Kant, indeed, explains what this transcendental function might be with a reference to the system of categories, and claims that under its guidance "the true signification of the pure concepts of the understanding and the condition of their use could be exactly determined" (Ak. 4: 324):

> The essential thing, however, in this system of categories, by which it is distinguished from that ancient rhapsody (which proceeded without any principle), and in virtue of which it alone deserves to be counted as philosophy, consists in this: that through it the true signification of the pure concepts of the understanding and the condition of their use could be exactly determined. For here it became apparent that the pure concepts of the understanding, of themselves, nothing but logical functions, but that as such they do not constitute the least concept of an object in itself but rather need sensory intuition as a basis, even then they serve only to determine empirical

> judgments, which are otherwise undetermined and indifferent with respect to all the functions of judging, with respect to those functions, so as to procure universal validity for them, and thereby to make *judgments of experience* possible in general (Ak. 4: 324).

Hence, Kant claims the restriction of the pure concepts of understanding merely to experience for them to have any use at all. The nature of categories as explained in the passage that I quoted above, then, is their relation to the sensory object. Kant emphasizes that the categories as the pure concepts of understanding are logical functions that serve to give universal validity to judgments on the basis of sensory intuition. Empirical judgments, in other words, are determined and made possible as *the judgments of experience* only when these pure concepts are applied to sensory intuition.

Kant points out that this is a guiding thread in the system of categories which gives us the direction for any metaphysical contemplation if it is to be complete. That to say, only through such guidance, our inquiry into any object of pure reason itself is made systematic. A complete metaphysical contemplation, then, "exhausts all moments of the understanding" (Ak. 4: 325). In the same page Kant also says that he has made use of this guiding thread to achieve "a rule-governed and necessary table" of "the manifold differentiation of the *concepts of something and nothing*, as one of the most abstract of ontological classifications. It seems therefore that, following the table of four divisions of nothing which is located at the end of the analytic section of the first *Critique*, there is an intermingling relation with the table of categories and of nothing. In his attempt to "examine the object of a pure concept of the understanding or reason philosophically and according to *a priori* principles" it is then inevitable for him to take into consideration the manifold differentiation of the concepts of something and nothing. Only after he has achieved the "rule-governed and necessary" table of the divisions of nothing he believes he has completed the system. This means that only after the inclusion of the table of nothing is the system of categories meaningfully complete

since only then all logical functions become determinate, giving rise to the analytical part of metaphysics. In completeness of all logical functions, the system of categories yields us the logical rules as to how a concept of an object can be subsumed under a category. Therefore, if Kant asserts the necessity of the manifold differentiation of the concepts of something and nothing for the completeness of the system, it indicates that the category of nothing plays a transcendental role in his attempt to construct his philosophical edifice.

Another way to point out the inevitableness and utility of the table of the division of nothing is to consider how the logical functions of something and nothing take place in the determination process. Now categories apply to appearances and appearances contain sensible given, that is, as undetermined objects they are *something*. *Nothing*, on the other hand is defined as the absence of an object or as the concept of the impossible. In that sense it is taken as the opposite of being, i.e. of something.

In his pre-critical writings such as the *Only Possible Argument* (1763) nothing on the one hand is equated with impossibility on the basis of the principle of contradiction in a close affinity with the metaphysical arguments of philosophers like Wolff and Baumgarten. On the other hand, Kant's demonstration of God's existence through a proposed doctrine of possibility provides an account for an absolute nothing whose impossibility is not the result of an internal contradiction, but rather comes from, or is the impossibility of the negation of possibility. As such this nothing and its thought contain no contradiction, yet it *is* the concept of impossibility of positing that nothing exists at all.

Given the centrality of possibility in the first *Critique*, each division of the concept of nothing must be considered through the internal possibility of things. Unexpectedly though, Kant seems to argue for the possibility of *some* divisions of nothing, such as the *nihil privativum* of the category of quality. Kant defines the *nihil privativum* as the concept of "a

non-being (in time)" (A 143/ B 182). It seems to me that when Kant claims the necessity of constructing a table of the divisions of the concept of nothing, it is well probable that he has the negating activity of nothing as a limitation of reality in mind. As his category of quality indicates, limitation is reality thought through negation (nothing). Similarly, in the system of categories, for logical functions of concepts to be determinate, their meaningful application and restriction to the objects of experience should be delineated and this is possible only when the place and function of nothing as the opposite concept of something is determined completely. Only after such a construction "the corresponding division of *something* follows directly from it" (A 291/ B 348). Thus, one can conclude that though very small places were assigned in the works of Kant and, as a result, it may easily remain unnoticed, the concept of nothing plays a crucial and indeed transcendental role in his system.

In the attempt to seek the transcendental role that Kant's division of the concept of nothing has played in his construction of the critical system as a whole, one must consider the place where Kant locates the table of nothing in the First *Critique*: As a note embedded in the Amphiboly section it points out the end of the Transcendental Analytic, and the beginning of the Transcendental Dialectic which comes immediately after it. It is as if it were a bridge between two sections with a threefold function. First, it seems to me that, through the division of the concept of nothing Kant is able to claim that although in the absence of sensory data our concepts lose their objective validity, it is still possible that they may have a practical use for pure reason, and a subjective validity as inevitable and necessary ideas from reason's point of view. Secondly, the location of the table of nothing also enables him to disclose what it means and how it happens that reason falls into fallacies and illusions. Thirdly and as a consequence of the first two he succeeds in clarifying and positing his critical position against rational metaphysics. Considering all three together, it is possible to

claim that the table of nothing becomes a useful tool of the critique of pure reason in Kant's hands to *discipline* reason, by restraining "its tendency towards extension beyond the narrow limits of possible experience and to guard it against extravagance and error" (A711/ B 739). In other words, it can be taken as an inseparable part of the whole of the philosophy of pure reason in its strictly negative utility.

Kant's treatment of nothing under the guidance of the categories of understanding clearly signifies in many ways his attempt to warn rational metaphysics against the transcendental use of pure reason, and to carefully differentiate his position. His recurrent challenge can be traced back to his pre-critical writings. As early as *New Elucidations* of 1755, one dimension of his challenge becomes apparent. There he begins to undermine the central status and role that the Wolffian metaphysics assigned to the principle of contradiction as "the unique, absolutely first, and universal principle of all truth" (1: 388)[18]. He argues that the purely negative principle of contradiction, despite being of the proper logical principles of metaphysical knowledge, cannot be taken as the ultimate and sole basis for this knowledge, for it actually presupposes the principle of identity. His challenge, therefore, is against "the methodological presumptions that generate its improper use as a tool for deducing truths about reality" (Grier, 2004: 20). At this point I claim that the division

[18] In his 1755 Essay of *New Elucidations*, Kant openly states his opposition to the primary status of the principle of contradiction in metaphysics. The first proposition clearly rejects not only the absolute and unique status that was assigned to the principle of contradiction as the universal principle of all truths, but also the idea that there is only one "unique, absolutely first, and universal principle of all truths". Through the second proposition, Kant corrects this idea, and claims that "there are two absolutely first principles of all truths" (1: 389). In his definition, the principle of contradiction, since it is a combination two types of propositions, one is affirmative, and the other is negative, is actually the twin principle of identity, as the combination of affirmative and negative truths. Thus, he modifies the principle accordingly: "*whatever is, is, and whatever is not, is not.* Accordingly, the principle of identity certainly governs every direct method of argumentation; it is, therefore, the first principle" (1: 389). He, then, shows that the very same principle of identity is too the first principle for indirect (inductive) method of inquiry. Kant makes a similar correction in the principle of sufficient reason, by reformulating it as the principle of determining ground, for the term 'determine', far from being as ambiguous as the term 'sufficient,' is, for him, "certainly sufficient to conceive the thing in such and such way, and in no other" (Ak. 1: 393).

of the concept of nothing in its novelty might be considered as indicating the points of difference of Kant's critical project vis-à-vis rational metaphysics as he distances himself from the metaphysical errors, illusions and fallacies that the old metaphysicians fall into. In order to show how those points of difference actually are constructed, I will first focus on the fourth division of nothing as *nihil negativum*. It seems to me that the way it is put forward by Kant even in his early works and also as the fourth division in the table of nothing in the First *Critique* shows us the proper logical use of the principle of contradiction in so far as it is transformed into the twin principle of identity, and restricted to only the absolute impossibility as absolute nothing. It is because only an internally *contradictory* concept might be taken as absolute impossibility, therefore absolute nothing, *nihil negativum*. However, Kant's division of the concept of nothing considers the concept as the unity of a manifold, and we can thereby say that only the *nihil negativum* is impossible as being *empty object without a concept*. The three other divisions are possible if not for cognition as corresponding to sensory data, but at least for reason in its thoroughgoing attempt to construct its unity.

In this framework, thus, it will be my intension to extract and evaluate the concept of nothing, starting with its fourth division as *nihil negativum* in this chapter. I will then extend my inquiry to the concept of nothing as it appears in its first division, as *ens rationis,* for it seems to be Kant's focus throughout the Transcendental Dialectic. Here, I suggest a treatise on these two divisions of nothing firstly by comparing Kant's position in his early works, particularly in the 1763 Essay of the *Only Possible Argument*, both with rational metaphysicians' and his own in the First *Critique,* and secondly by reading the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Dialectic together and against each other. In doing this, I expect to find enough evidence as to Kant's intention of legitimating the practical use of pure reason against its illegitimate use in transcendent metaphysics. First and

foremost this requires considering the role of pure reason in the synthetic unity of knowledge, as the faculty of principles, the highest faculty for "elaborating the matter of intuition and bringing it under the highest unity of thought" (A 298/ B 355). Considering that the pure concepts of reason may "be without any suitable corresponding employment *in concreto*" (A 323/ B 380), and with no corresponding object given in sense-experience" they are *transcendental ideas*, i.e. *entia rationis* (nothing), namely the pure concepts of the world-whole (*totum realitatis*), of the soul, and of God, as transcendentally ideal.

## 2. Kant's Critique of the Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge and Nothing as *Nihil Negativum*

In this section, I will try to develop an account on the fourth division of the table of nothing. I intend to show the shift that occurred in Kant's notion of nothing from his pre-critical to critical period with a special emphasis on his argument on the principle of contradiction and the concepts of possibility and impossibility. My argument is that even in his pre-critical works Kant seems to introduce at least three types of nothing: Firstly, an *absolute nothing* as the complete cancellation of all existence which is non-contradictory yet also unthinkable in itself because of its internal impossibility (Ak. 2: 79); secondly, negative nothing, *nihil negativum*, which is the consequence of a logical contradiction that occurs within the concept itself and cancels it altogether; and thirdly, privative nothing, i.e. *nihil privativum*, like *rest* as the lack of motion that occurs with a *real opposition* between two forces moving towards opposite directions. However, in the absence of the guidance of the understanding that "brings the multiplicity of representation under the unity of thinking in general" in judgment (Ak. 4: 324) the concept of nothing could not be differentiated according to the pure concepts of the understanding, and could not be thought with respect to all the functions of judging, and thus, could not be a part of the determination of the empirical judgments. The Kantian

critical turn, thus, also assigns a novel critical meaning and function to one of the most abstract notions of metaphysics, by internally differentiating its concept. After such an intervention, the concept of nothing serves to explicitly show how both the sensibility and reason in all of their attempts to extend their limits and boundaries result in nothingness. If we consider it within this general context, it becomes clear that the fourth division of the concept of nothing brought under the categories of modality of possibility-impossibility, existence-non-existence, and necessity-contingency is now considered in relation to an object and defined as "an empty object without a concept". In this sense, negative nothing, *nihil negativum,* indicates both a real and a logical impossibility at once. For an internally contradictory object is impossible as such, the understanding fails to construct any concept of such an internally impossible object, thus it is nothing, because both its object and concept are impossible simultaneously. Accordingly, in the following two subsections I will try respectively to reconstruct Kant's account of absolute necessary being in his 1763 essay, *the Only Possible Argument* and to trace the critical turn in the notion of negative nothing in the first *Critique*.

### 2.1. *Nihil Negativum* and the Doctrine of Possibility in Kant's *the Only Possible Argument*

In this sub-section I will discuss the concept of *nihil negativum* by putting it into the context of Kant's essay the *Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (1763). This essay provides us I think with a ground for the clarification of the concepts of possibility, impossibility and existence. In addition to this, it can be used as a basis for a clear distinction between two concepts of nothing i.e. nothing as *nihil negativum* and nothing as the impossibility of cancellation of all existence. These two nothings I will argue may easily be conflated but are in fact mutually exclusive, and Kant bases his

ontological proof not on *nihil negativum* but on nothing as the impossibility of cancellation of all existence. This pre-critical work, which was originally a book devoted to a systematic inquiry into the assumption of God's existence, can be considered as a preliminary step toward a deconstruction of metaphysics which becomes fully discernible in Kant's critical philosophy. His inquiry consists in two distinct demonstrations of God's existence, which, I believe, runs parallel to Kant's pre-critical attempt to reconcile metaphysics and science in general and the virtues of metaphysics' deductive method and those of inductive method of Newtonian science in particular[19]. There is on the one hand the ontological demonstration of a necessary being that proceeds a priori from the notion of possibility, on the other, the physico-theological argument that is a concrete and inductive Newtonian demonstration which proceeds from the mechanical organization of physical nature (Schönfeld, 2000: 193-4). Kant deals with these demonstrations separately, but also tries to reconcile them with a grounding argument, or in Kant's words, the *only possible proof.* As a common basis of the two distinct demonstrations of God's existence the proof-argument relies on the notion of the inner possibility of objects in general. Through the conceptual analysis of "possibility" Kant develops an a priori demonstration of God's existence. Through a notion of purpose applicable to the inner possibility of things Kant develops an a posteriori argument. What is

[19] Both Martin Schönfeld, in his *The Philosophy of the Young Kant: the Precritical Project,* and Michelle Grier, in her *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion,* acknowledge the predominance of such a theme in Kant's earlier work. Schönfeld emphasizes the twofold goal of Kant's pre-critical project, namely "the construction of a comprehensive model of nature containing qualitative and quantitative aspects", and "the reconciliation of metaphysical postulates with Newtonian science" (2000: 194). Grier's account, instead, identifies three principal aims in Kant's precritical writings, and considers them intrinsically related to Kant's more general and ambitious concern "to secure a proper method for metaphysics" (2004: 17). Grier discusses these principal aims in the context of their relation to the long-lasting methodological debate of the time "over the respective virtues of the deductive (mathematical) method employed by the rationalist metaphysicians (Descartes, Leibniz, Wolff) and those of the inductive method advocated by the Newtonians" (18). Three principal aims, as Grier puts them, are as follows: i. the exhibition of the problems arising from the use of the deductive method in metaphysics, ii. the identification of the reasons and the nature of the susceptibility of metaphysics to such errors, iii. the suggestion that "despite their erroneous nature, the faulty judgments of metaphysics are nevertheless compelling". (18) What is more interesting in Grier's argument, though, is her claim that Kant's critical doctrine of transcendental illusion has its basis in these broad concerns of pre-critical Kant. In relation to this she particularly mentions Kant's increasing confidence that the errors of metaphysics have their origins in the very nature of our cognitive faculties (18).

relevant to my intensions in this piece of work is "the grounding and unifying role"[20] that Kant assigns to "possibility". He considers possibility both a priori and a posteriori, and takes it as the starting point of the ontological argument, and as the condition of possibility of the a posteriori demonstration. In the way he structures his general argument on both demonstrations it becomes evident that the physico-theological argument does not constitute a proper proof, but only an illustration of "the conceptual truths of the ontological argument on the level of natural science and observation" (Schönfeld, 2000: 196).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine Kant's attempt to design the only possible argument for the existence of God in his *Only Possible Argument,* and his later deconstructive move in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in its fullness. It is also not my intention to give a full account on his attempt to establish a rational theology in the *Only Possible Argument,* and his later critique of rational theology within the context of the system of transcendental ideas. Thus, I will limit my interest with Kant's attempt to derive the notion of a necessary existence from the conceptual analysis of possibility in so far as this analysis concerns the concept of nothing, and its divisions. As I mentioned above, my intention here is to show how the concept of nothing is differentiated internally into three kinds throughout such a conceptual analysis. Firstly, we encounter nothing as *absolute* in Kant's demonstration of the existence of God through the opposite concepts of absolute possibility and absolute impossibility. Since there is no internal contradiction in thinking the absolute cancellation of all existence, this nothing does not occur out of a logical contradiction; thus,

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[20] I believe Schönfeld is right on this point. His claim that possibility "constitutes the ultimate and unifying ground of both proofs [ontological (a priori) and psycho-theological (a posteriori)] captures the centrality of possibility in the *Only Possible Argument* very well (196). Similarly, F. E. England, in his *Kant's Conception of God,* points out that in the *Only Possible Argument,* Kant actually attempted to develop a doctrine of possibility. England believes that this doctrine later occupied a central place in Kant's metaphysics. He argues that Kant's intention is "that the notion of possibility arises from the presence of (*suppetere*) certain notions given (*dati*) to thought. The question as usually raised was which of all variety of data thus present to mind belong to the realm of the actual or the necessary" (1968: 47-48).

it is not *nihil negativum.* With this we have a second kind of nothingness considered as the consequence of a logical contradiction that occurs in the concept itself and annihilates it. The third kind of nothingness in Kant's conceptual analysis comes into play as a result of a real repugnancy, which occurs as either a deprivation or a lack. Kant here seems to differentiate logical opposition from real opposition by referring to "real repugnancy" that "always occurs when something, as a ground, annihilates by means of a real opposition the consequence of something else" (Ak., 2: 86). The annihilation here is not caused by a contradiction, but by the movement of two opposed forces. Kant thinks that this opposition is possible even in the same body. However, he rejects the possibility of such opposition in the most real being. He maintains that "in the most real being of all there cannot be any real opposition or positive conflict among its own determinations, for the consequence would be deprivation or a lack, and that would contradict its supreme reality" (Ak. 2: 86).

Kant's demonstration of the existence of God unfolds in three respective steps: In the first reflection, Kant starts to differentiate his position from the standard conceptual proof of God's existence that rests on two premises, namely the assumption that existence is a predicate, and the premise that the concept of God contains all predicates. His rejection of the existence as a predicate, an idea that is commonly considered revolutionary[21], and his claim that existence is the absolute position of a thing (Ak. 2: 73-74) are set as the grounds of his clarification of the term "existence" (*Dasein*) against the typical conceptual confusions of traditional ontological proofs.

[21] Such appraisal indeed seems common, not always with such strong emphasis that the idea is revolutionary, but certainly recognizing the novelty of Kant's refutation the idea of existence as a property. See Martin Schönfeld (2000), Chapter 8; Allen W. Wood (1978). *Kant's Rational Theology*. Ithaca, and for a comparison between Leibniz and Kant on possibility and existence see Ohad Nachtomy (2012). "Leibniz and Kant on Possibility and Existence." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy.* 20 (5): 953-972. Nachtomy's position here is to illuminate the Leibnizian background of Kant's notion of existence.

In Kant's attempt to clarify its meaning, the term "existence" is defined as "the absolute positing of a thing" (Ak. 2: 73) and the concept of positing is identified with the concept of being in general. Positing can be in two ways: it is either relatively or in and for itself. If one thing is posited in and for itself, "then this being is the same as existence" (Ak. 2: 73). Kant, in the essay, concerns the absolute (in and for itself) existence of God and claims that his existence is not to be found among the predicates but "must belong directly to the manner in which His concept is posited" (Ak. 2: 74). Even in the absurdities such as "'The God of Spinoza is subject to continuous change'" (Ak. 2: 74) being is applied in a correct manner. Existence of God is not posited explicitly in this assertion but he *is taken as already posited* as existent. This idea that the existence is not a predicate is reiterated in the *Critique*:

> '*Being*' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a THING. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgment. The proposition, 'God is omnipotent', contains two concepts, each of which has its object – God and omnipotence. The small word 'is' adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate *in its relation* to the subject. (A 598/ B 626).

To explain the matter, following Kant's example, in more concrete terms is that existence as a predicate adds nothing to the concept but only indicates its actuality. Let us assume that I have the concept of one hundred dollars, but not its actuality. When I have one hundred dollars in reality this does not add anything to my concept. In other words the conceived hundred dollars is not in the least increased by my actually having the hundred dollars. Ohad Nachtomy in his article "Leibniz and Kant on Possibility and Existence" discusses the point very elaborately (2012). There he shows that for Leibniz existence cannot be the predicate of contingently existent individuals, for if it is, then the creation of God would be vacuous. This is because then it comes to that each concept has existence as its

part of essence and then God's creation of the best possible world would be redundant. Leibniz on the other hand limits this claim only for the created beings or contingents; for God existence can be a predicate since only for him existence and essence are inseparable; existence is part of his essence. For Kant, existence cannot be a predicate even for God. In that sense, Kant is clear that one correct expression as to the existence of God is not that 'God exists' but that 'certain predicates attach to certain being, i.e. God' (Nachtomy 2012: 954-955).

After this first step of giving the correct understanding of the concept of existence, Kant passes to the concept of possibility. In the second reflection of the *Only Possible Argument* Kant makes a necessary distinction between the material and the formal elements of possibility. I believe this is a crucial distinction that fits into Kant's precritical ambitions to reconcile metaphysics and science. Accordingly, material elements are data to be thought and formal element is the principle of contradiction:

> The impossible always contains the combination of something posited with something which also cancels it. I call this repugnancy the formal element in inconceivability or impossibility. The material element which is given here as standing in such a conflict is itself something and can be thought. A quadrangular triangle is absolutely impossible. Nonetheless, a triangle is something and so is a quadrangle. (Ak. 2: 77)

The impossible is defined according to the principle of contradiction and possibility as that which can be conceived or thought. What is impossible is that which cannot be thought:

> Now, if all existence is cancelled, then nothing is posited absolutely, nothing at all is given, there is *no material element for anything which can be thought*; all possibility completely disappears (Ak. 2: 78) (emphasis is mine).

Cancellation of all existence involves no internal contradiction, but is impossible in the real sense of the term. Since such a cancellation destroys all possibility and since "that by means of which all possibility whatever is cancelled, is absolutely impossible" (Ak. 2: 79) all possibility can never be cancelled. Hence the result is that "it is absolutely impossible that nothing at all should exist" (Ak. 2: 79).

Now let us reconstruct this argument with a reference to Kant's example of quadrangular triangle. A triangle as a material element can be thought but a quadrangular triangle is the concept of the impossible; it cannot be thought. It is the concept "by means of which all possibility whatsoever is cancelled" (Ak. 2: 79). This impossibility however is not the cancellation of all existence "for … the complete cancellation of all existence whatever involves no internal contradiction" (Ak. 2: 79) though "when all existence is denied, then all possibility is cancelled as well" (Ak. 2: 79). The cancellation of all existence is the cancellation of all possibility and if the opposite of all possibility is impossibility then once again we come to the conclusion that "it is absolutely impossible that nothing at all should exist" (Ak. 2: 79). Therefore there are two impossibilities: one is the concept that cancels itself, such as quadrangular triangle (*nihil negativum*) which cannot be thought, and the other is the cancellation of all existence which involves no internal contradiction.

In the third step Kant tries to demonstrate the existence of God as being the opposite of impossibility. Non-being of God is impossible and hence His being is necessary for His non-being is the non-being of all existence which is itself impossible and "[t]hat of which the opposite is impossible in itself is absolutely necessary" (Ak. 2: 81). As being the determining ground of all existence, therefore, God's non-existence is absolutely impossible. My reading is that Kant's argument proceeding from the impossibility of the existence of

nothing reaches at a point whereby he derives the existence of God as absolutely necessary[22], that is, as if God's existence is derived from its impossible opposite. However and since it can easily be conflated, I will make one point clear: Kant bases his proof on the proposition that "it is absolutely impossible that nothing at all should exist" (Ak. 2: 79). He, by explicitly stating it in the argument, does not base his claim on the principle of contradiction. His claim is that the cancellation of all existence can very well be thought, there is no internal contradiction in thinking of it. In that sense cancellation of all existence as an impossibility is no logical contradiction, it is no *nihil negativum*. However, considering that absolute possibility of the existence of God is based on the opposite of absolute impossibility of his non-existence, and given that *nihil negativum* in the *Lectures On Metaphysics* is, confusingly and echoingly Baumgarten, defined as "absolute nothing as absolutely impossible", one may easily overlook the difference of these two concepts of nothing; the difference of nothings as between the impossibility of the cancellation of all existence – which is logically possible but really impossible- and as logical contradiction as *nihil negativum* –which is logically impossible. Therefore and as Kant warns us against, one can easily come to a conclusion

[22] One point is in need of clarification concerning Kant's notion of "the absolute". Kant's conceptualization is important because it illuminates Kant's break with the rationalist conception of the absolute as the concept of the inner necessity. It also shows us both Kant's own philosophical development and his break with the old metaphysics. In the *Only Possible Argument* the absolute is taken as what Baumgarten defines: "Whatever is considered, but not in a nexus with those things that are posited externally to it, IS CONSIDERED IN ITSELF (intrinsically, simply, absolutely, *per se*)" (*Metaphysics* §15). In the Transcendental Ideas section of the first *Critique*, however, Kant differentiates his position as to the concept of the absolute. There, he points out that the word 'absolute' is used (by rationalists) with reference to inner necessity. His own suggestion is to use the concept as not indicating the sense of '*in itself*' but of '*in every relation*' (A324/ B381).

In their introduction to Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers interpret Kant's use of the term as holistic. They base their conclusion on the structure of Kant's argument concerning absolute health and perfection. On an extract from Kant's *Antropology* they argue for that strength, for Kant, is not to be measured by brute and momentary power, but by measured and constant power in reference to a *holistic goal*" (2013: 32) (Emphasis is mine). Extending his comparison, Kant then remarks that this is true, "since health consists in the balance of all one's bodily forces, while lack of health is a weakening in the system of these forces; and it is only by reference to this *system* that absolute health can be estimated" (Ak. 6: 384) (emphasis is mine). Moreover they also say that something in the 1760s brought Kant to the idea that rationalist usage of the concept absolute has no significance at all. The term does not imply an objective existence as for the rationalists but arises from the reason's need for a terminal point. In other words, for Kant we should not use the term as signifying an object in itself but accept it as a subjective concept just having the function of a terminal point towards which there is a constant struggle.

that Kant bases his proof on the principle of contradiction. I will also try to show below how this conclusion is wrong.

What underlies and organizes the argument of the *Only Possible Argument* of 1763 is the notion that the concept of impossibility is the opposite concept of possibility. It is understood from the text that in the text it is the concept of absolute impossibility *as the cancellation of all existence*, which differs from the concept of *nihil negativum* put into the table of the division of nothing in the first *Critique*. Obviously following Baumgarten[23] Kant in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* defines the negative nothing, i.e. *nihil negativum* as the logical outcome of the principle of contradiction:

> All relation is, as said, a connection of opposites <*nexus oppositorum*>. If we think of a logical opposition <*oppositio*> is of contradictories <*contradictoria*>. An angular circle is a contradiction. Two logical opposites <*opposita*> completely cancel themselves and nothing remains (the negative nothing <*nihil negativum*>). Two real opposites <*opposita*> do not cancel themselves, rather the consequences cancel themselves, and what arises through their connection is zero, null, the privative nothing <*nihil privativum*>… (Ak. 29: 810)

Here he also makes a distinction between logical and real opposition which might be interpreted as a difference in kind. Whereas *nihil negativum* is the concept of nothing as the outcome of a logical *contradiction* (logical opposites), *nihil privativum* is an opposition on the objective level. In other words, *nihil privativum* might be said to be an opposition of concepts only when their sensory content is taken into consideration. For example, quadrangular triangle as of contradictories is impossible to be thought but a state of rest as a

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[23] Baumgarten's definition of nothing identifies it with impossibility according to the principle of contradiction: "*Nothing*—which is negative (cf. § 54), something that cannot be represented, something impossible, something inconsistent, (an absurdity cf. § 13), something involving or implying a contradiction, something contradictory— is *both A and not-A.* Or, there is no subject of contradictory predicates, or, nothing both is and is not. 0 = A + not-A. *This proposition* is called *the principle of contradiction,* and *it is absolutely primary*" (*Metaphysics,* § 7).

result of two opposite forces can very well happen and be thought; it has both real and logical possibilities. The former is a logical contradiction and the latter is an opposition happening at the level of reality (real opposites). Two objects moving in the opposite directions pushing each other have both real and logical possibilities but a concept disobeying the principle of contradiction cannot be thought and is impossible even for logic.

For Kant an absolute impossibility arises in two cases: either when a concept contradicts itself (*nihil negativum*) or when all existence is cancelled. Kant, in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* defines the former as the impossible (Ak. 29: 808) and in the First *Critique* he settles this concept as the fourth division of nothing in which "the concept cancels itself" (A292/ B349). In the *Only Possible Argument* however, when he claims the absolute impossibility of the non-existence of God he uses the term in the latter sense that were all existence to be cancelled, nothing remains, but nothing is impossible to exist and so is, as the ground of all reality, the non-being of God. In this case we can see that the concept of the impossible –as the cancellation of all existence- is the concept of nothing and the concept of nothing is the opposite concept for the possibility of God. In that sense, then, in Kant's ontological argument, nothing, as absolute impossibility, gains a negatively determining function for the absolute possibility (necessity) of God.

One point should be clarified here: Kant states that the possibility vanishes either through the law of contradiction or through the cancellation of all existence (reality). He also claims that what he is proposing here in the demonstration of God is not logical, but absolute real necessity. He thereby can be said to have come to the conclusion that absolutely necessary existence cannot be explained by means of the law of contradiction:

> The final reflection of this work will make all this more plausible; it will do so by clearly explaining the untenability of the view being examined in the case where it has

> been genuinely but mistakenly thought that absolutely necessary existence could be explained by means of the law of contradiction (Ak. 2: 82).

There is no internal contradiction in the cancellation of a thing by its non-being. In other words, there arises no logical contradiction as a consequence of the cancellation of all existence. One, thus, can assert that the real necessity of the existence of God cannot be derived from the principle of contradiction, for if it were, the demonstration of God's necessary existence would have been derived from the impossibility of an internally contradictory concept, i.e. *nihil negativum*. In other words, the actuality of God's necessary being would have been derived from a merely logical (conceptual) contradiction. This Leibnizian version of ontological argument is what Kant undercuts with his distinction between logical and real possibility. According to Leibnizian version, logical possibility is sufficient to yield the real one. Thus, the being of God can be derived from the possibility of the concept alone. For Kant, on the other hand, logical non-contradictoriness is not enough to give real existence. Such an assumption is based on a conflation of logical and real possibility. When this conflation is removed, we see that we cannot base the demonstration of God simply on the non-contradictoriness of His non-existence. Therefore for Kant this is nothing but the conflation of the logical with the ontological, and as being so it is a mistaken thought. Consequently, as Schönfeld concisely puts, Kant's argument is that, "something is possible only if something exists. Because the negation of possibility is impossible, what is presupposed as existing must exist necessarily" (2000: 195). Moreover, Kant denies the possibility that nothing should exist. If possibility cannot be denied in the real sense of the term, then its denial would amount to absolute impossibility and there might be no internal contradiction in conceiving the non-existence of the absolutely necessary existence, but it is absolutely impossible for such a being *not to exist*. If God, as the ground of the matter of all possibility, did not exist, all beings were thereby cancelled and there exists only nothing,

which is impossible. In that sense nothing as the opposite of absolutely necessary being has a negative function of determining the existence of that absolutely necessary being.

Here, indeed, nothing as the concept of absolute impossibility is a problematic concept. One the one hand, it is the concept of absolute impossibility as being the consequence of the cancellation of all existence (reality) but on the other, the concept is the concept of a "concept that cancels itself", mentioned by Kant as *nihil negativum*. In other words, absolute impossibility occurs either when all existence is cancelled or when a concept is contradictory and Kant asserts that he rests his demonstration on the impossibility of the cancellation of all existence, *not* on the logical contradiction. He, however, in the *Lectures on Metaphysics* and the first *Critique*, mentions *nihil negativum* to be the consequence of a logical contradiction as similarly the concept of absolute impossibility. Therefore we have two absolute impossibilities, i.e. nothings: one as resulting from the cancellation of all existence, which I argued as negatively determining the existence of God and the other as the consequence of a logical contradiction. Dealing with the *real* existence of God, Kant claims that he rests his argument on the idea of the impossibility of cancellation of real existence of all things not on a logical contradiction.

### 2.2. *Nihil Negativum* under the Guidance of the System of Categories

In this section I will try to give some remarks on the fourth division of nothing, i.e. *nihil negativum* in its relation to the pure concept of the understanding. For this purpose I will first give some exposition of the object constitution. I think this is necessary since *nihil negativum* is defined as 'empty concept without object'. To understand this phrase, looking at the process of object constitution, I think, might give us a clue as to the nature of *nihil negativum*. In this process there is an immanent relationship between the concept and an object, that is, the object is constituted through the concept. In that sense, in understanding

of the nature of the concept of the *nihil negativum,* looking through the steps in the object constitution (synthesis) will, I think, be helpful. Accordingly therefore, I will first sketch out the main lines of object constitution in Kant and then under the light of this sketch I will try to illuminate what it means to be an 'empty object without concept'.

Longuenesse claims that "the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories is meant to answer the question, How can a priori concepts be applied to objects that are given?" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 17). She, then, extends her claim that Kant differs in two ways in presenting the relation between a representation and its object. In his Letter to Marcus Herz of February 21, 1772 Kant takes the relation between a representation and its object as a causal relation between an immanent representation and an object outside it. In the *Critique,* however, that object is an internalized one and the relation turns out to be "between the representation and the object *within representation*" (2000: 17). Until the *Critique* the relation is taken as the object '*outside* the representations affecting the subject' and moreover the relation at that time between the external thing and representation is not of resemblance but a regular correspondence. In the *Dissertation* Kant writes that:

> [Space and time] is not an outline or any kind of schema of the object, but only a certain law, which is inherent in the mind and by means of which it co-ordinates for itself that which is sensed from the presence of the object (Ak. 2: 293).

If this is the case, then, Longuenesse argues, our spatiotemporal coordinations of sensations are dependent on our "disposition to representation" and thereby do not resemble any outside object. In other words, here the object remains external to our spatiotemporal coordinations which result from a certain law inherent in the mind.

In the *Critique* however Kant makes a fundamental change of point of view regarding the nature of the relation between the representation and the object. He now takes this

relation to be an immanent one: between a representation and a 'representation as object'. In other words, it is now a relation between two internal things:

> There are only two possible cases in which a synthetic representation and its objects can establish connection, relate to one another with necessity and, as it were, meet one another: either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or the representation the object. In the former case, this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible *a priori*. This is true of appearances, as regards that in them which belongs to sensation. In the latter case, representation in itself does not produce its object insofar as *existence* is concerned, for we are not speaking here of its causality by means of the will. Nonetheless the representation is *a priori* determinant of the object, if it be the case that only through the representation is it possible to cognize *anything as an object* (A 92/ B 125-126).

The object in the phrase 'synthetic representations and its objects' is not the object-in-itself, it is the object already internalized into representation, i.e. appearance. It is then no longer a casual relation between the object external to the representation and the representation itself. Now objects are capable of making certain synthetic representations possible but they do not cause them. It does not mean that objects as appearances are making representations but it is to say that they constitute the necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for these representations to be formed. However, there is another case, a second case considered by Longuenesse, in which the representation makes the object possible considering the processing of mental activities. In this second case "representation in itself does not produce its object insofar as *existence* is concerned, for we are not speaking here of its causality by means of the will. Nonetheless the representation is *a priori* determinant of the object, if it be the case that only through the representation is it possible to cognize *anything as an object*" (A 92/ B 125-26). Representation only constitutes the object out of a *given* manifold; it does not make it come into existence. This representation is the act that constitutes object *as* an object. In other words, representation internalizes into representation

the object and makes the latter as the object of representation. In fact, there are two kinds of objects. One is appearance as the 'undetermined object of an empirical intuition'. In this case spatial and temporal characteristics were already imparted to appearances. However, the object in the second kind is the object as *phenomena* and for this object to be constituted another representation is required. Intuition gives the object but only as appearance and for appearance to become a determined object (*phenomena* as corresponding to intuition) 'the logical use of the understanding' is needed:

> Space and time contain a manifold of pure *a priori* intuition, but at the same time are conditions of the receptivity of our mind- conditions under which alone it can receive representations of objects, and which therefore must always affect the concept of these objects. But if this manifold is to be cognized, the spontaneity of our thought requires that it be gone through in a certain way, taken up, and connected. This act I name *synthesis.*
>
> By *synthesis*, in its most general sense, I understand the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one cognition. Such a synthesis is *pure*, if the manifold is not empirical but is given *a priori*, as is the manifold in space and time (A 77/ B 102-3).

Synthesis here is not the synthesis of Leibnizian type of concepts only but it is the combination of a sensible manifold. When it is not empirical, only the manifold of space and time is synthesized and so it becomes pure synthesis, but it (pure synthesis) is still different from the synthesis achieved by concepts alone. This synthesis has three different but closely interrelated acts: the 'synthesis of apprehension in intuition', the 'synthesis of reproduction in imagination and the 'synthesis of recognition in a concept'. There is no temporal or logical priority among these three acts but all three are necessary for the object of experience to be constituted and "this act is that very act of synthesis which Kant, in section 10, attributes to the imagination, in the A deduction more precisely to *transcendental* imagination, and which

in the B deduction he calls *synthesis speciosa*, figurative synthesis" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 36).

Synthesis of apprehension in intuition is the distinguishing of the sensations or impressions whereby they can be considered as manifold. These sensations or impressions are the 'matter' of empirical intuitions. This distinguishing activity in turn takes place in time but it does not mean that temporality is given in itself independent of the apprehending activity. On the contrary it is generated by this very act. Moreover, this distinguishing activity aims at holding together what was distinguished: "In order that unity of intuition may arise out of this manifold it must first be run through and held together" (A 99).

The synthesis of reproduction in a representation of imagination concerns the explanation for phenomenal regularities. In accordance with his transcendental project Kant formulates a different solution to this problem than empiricists. Locke claimed in a realist way that these regularities of ideas reflect real regularities in the things. Hume claimed that they are due to our habits coming from past events which cause in us an expectation for the future ones. Kant's solution is based on *a priori* grounds. "There must then be something which, as the *a priori* ground of a necessary synthetic unity of appearances, makes their reproduction possible" (A 101). What is important here for our discussion is the idea that what guides the reproductive process is 'the *aim to represent a whole*'. It shows us that the idea of *totum*, which is the idea of reason, finds its place as a goal of the reproductive process already in the logical use of the understanding. To give an example; drawing a line in thought is a process whereby I put the points successive to each other in time. My goal, when drawing the line however, is the totality of the line; a representation of a whole. As will be analyzed in detail below in this chapter, the idea of total reality (*totum realitatis*) is a basic element in complete determination of an individual object; it is the idea of totality. Similarly here in

one of the acts of *synthesis speciosa* the idea of *totum* plays a role as an implicit project, that is, as the project of reaching a whole.

Last act of the synthesis is recognition in a concept. This act is in a sense the consciousness that the representations were apprehended and reproduced by the same unity of act. It is "the consciousness of the act of constitution of the complete experience" (2000: 46) and this consciousness is possible only with a concept. Concept has two meanings: on the one hand it connotes to the 'consciousness of the unity of synthesis' on the other hand it is a 'universal and reflected representation' which subsumes several particular representations under itself and only through a concept as a rule the synthesis is completed and complete representations of objects are constituted.

Kant's example for *nihil negativum* in the *Critique* is 'two-sided rectilinear figure' and he there defines *nihil negativum* as that which is "opposed to possibility in that the concept cancels itself. Both [*ens rationis* and *nihil negativum*] are empty concepts" (A292/ B348). The idea of the 'cancellation of the concept by itself' can be understood with reference to logic. In the *Jäsche logic* he writes as follows:

> For the question of whether cognition agrees with its objects must be preceded by the question of whether it agrees with itself (as to form). And this is a matter for logic. The formal criteria of truth in logic are
>
> 1. *the principle of contradiction*
> 2. *the principle of sufficient reason* (VII: 51).

When a concept is canceled by itself it means that it does not agree with itself. In other words, according to the principle of contradiction, it is *not* logically possible and therefore before we ask whether the cognition (concept) agrees with its object, we must ask whether the concept is possible *in the first place*. As said above, objects are constituted only through

*synthesis speciosa*, in the threefold act of which 'recognition in a concept' is but one act. It means then that if the concept is impossible then the object is not constituted. 'Two-sided rectilinear figure' is an empty concept, for no intuition can correspond to it, and that is because the concept is impossible in the first place. The concept is impossible because here in the example of 'two sided rectilinear figure', the two aspects of the concept, 'two-sided' and 'rectilinear', cannot be combined to constitute a 'two-sided rectilinear figure'. If one attempts to such a constitution it represents an attempt to misuse of the analytic "rules of all (formal) truth, apart from which cognition is untrue in itself, *regardless of its objects*" (*Jäsche Logic*: I: 16) (Emphasis is mine). One of these rules of all formal truth is the principle of contradiction which commands that 'two opposing predicates cannot be simultaneously attributed to the same subject'. We cannot, for example, claim that 'the table is brown and not at the same time'. Similarly, one figure can be two-sided or rectilinear but cannot be both at the same time. Concept as a rule is the 'reflected and universal representation' which subsumes several particular representations under itself. Only through a concept the *synthesis* is completed and the object is constituted. If the concept is impossible, in other words, if it is nothing, then the reproductive imagination cannot represent and the understanding cannot recognize what is presented to it as a particular object. In that sense *nihil negativum*, as the concept of the impossible, can be called 'conceptual impossibility'. This impossibility is moreover apodeictic and carries with it the concept of necessity.

### 3. Nothing as *ens rationis* in the Context of the Transcendental Dialectic

The first division of the concept of nothing is defined as "empty concept without an object", i.e. *ens rationis*, or 'thought-entity' as different from 'non-entity' (*Ref.* 5552, 18: 219). Here, in an attempt to identify the place and function of this division of nothingness in the trajectory of Kant's critical project, Kant's treatment of *reason* becomes of special

significance. I suggest that Kant in the Transcendental Dialectic while dealing with reason as the faculty of principles also provides a ground upon which an argument for the transcendental function of *ens rationis* as nothing can be built. From the point of view of pure reason, *entia rationis* are merely *ideas* that have special kind of reality as *realitas noumenon*; however, from the cognitive standpoint they are simply *nothing* in the absence of sensible given and as distinguished from *realitas phenomenon.* They have a "purely negative, or limiting role" (Adams, 1997: 803) which set the boundaries of the faculties of cognition, namely sensibility, understanding, and reason, in an attempt to determine the conditions of possibility of knowledge. My endeavor, thus, will be to show how this function is made clear in Kant's refutation and paradoxical affirmation of the transcendental illusion as the origin of reason's paralogisms and antinomies, and of its transcendental ideal. After sketching out the main concepts and divisions Kant develops concerning "dialectic in general as a *logic of illusion*" (A 293/ B 349) in the Transcendental Dialectic section, I will respectively focus on the problematic nature of ideas, the transcendental ideal in terms of the principle of complete determination, and finally in the concluding part of the chapter Kant's emphasis on the thought-entities (*entia rationis*) "as having the reality of a schema –the schema of the regulative principle" (A674/ B702) "by which reason, so far as lies in its power, extends systematic unity over the whole field of experience" (A 682/ B 710).

### 3.1. The Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion, and the System of Ideas

The whole part that Kant devotes to the Transcendental Dialectic can be thought as his deconstructive effort directed to the traditional philosophy[24]. As Karl Ameriks points out, in

[24] For an interesting comparison between the post-modern philosophy's deconstruction of the kind of grand narratives that claimed the possibility of all-encompassing knowledge and Kant's criticism, namely his "constructive deconstruction" of traditional metaphysics see Otfried Höffe (2010). *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: The Foundation of Modern Philosophy,* in *Studies in German Idealism Volume 10.* Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer, p. 245. Höffe particularly mentions Lyotard's diagnosis of the post-modern

the Dialectic section Kant proposes an unexpected "general pattern for the errors of transcendental metaphysics" (1992: 250) that is different from the pattern he proposes and deconstructs in the Amphiboly section[25]. There, he reflects on a certain kind of metaphysical error that belongs to the transcendental realism of Leibniz, which is the conflation of appearances with things in themselves, in other words, of the objects of sensibility with the intelligible objects, i.e. the objects of the pure understanding. He, by means of the transcendental reflection, corrects the error that confuses the objects of the understanding with that of sensibility. As the consciousness of the relations of given representations to "one or other of the two kinds of knowledge", the transcendental reflection is "the ground of the possibility of objective comparison of representations with each other" (A 262/ B 319) for it makes possible to decide to which cognitive faculty they belong. In the Note to the Amphiboly section Kant, against Leibniz, suggests that the doctrine of transcendental reflection[26] "will provide a sure safeguard against the surreptitious employment of pure understanding and the delusions which arise therefrom" (A 268/ B 324). Kant seems to suggest that in the absence of the transcendental reflection any logical comparison of the given representations with each other would lead us to an *amphiboly,* an error, a delusion, that is nothing but the "confounding of an object of pure understanding with appearance" (A

condition, Nietzsche's genealogy, and Heidegger's destruction as similar deconstructive approaches to Kant's critical thought.

[25] An expected error, for Ameriks would be "the error of simply employing categories apart from their specific spatiotemporal schematization, for example by making claims about substance without considerations of permanence" (1992: 250). However, this error, being accidental by itself, can be avoided by the transcendental reflection and Kant does not include it in the general pattern of the dialectical errors of reason that is the pattern of an illusion both "inevitable and natural" (A298/ B355).

[26] Kant's doctrine of transcendental reflection concerns both the location of a concept, and the transcendental topic. In other words, it assigns a place to a concept either in sensibility or in pure understanding, that Kant calls the *transcendental location*. Moreover, the *transcendental topic* concerns both the decision to locate every concept where it belongs according to the differences in their use (comparison), and the determination of this location according to rules (distinction). This is the transcendental reflection altogether (A 268/ B 324; A 269/ B 325).

270/ B 326). As Grier noted, Kant's verdict against Leibniz points out his two interrelated failures; first one is the failure to distinguish the two distinct kinds of cognitive faculties, namely the sensible and intellectual faculties; and the second one is his failure to "recognize that the subjective conditions of sensibility are at the same time conditions to which thought must be limited if it is to have any objective reference" (2004: 95).

Kant's attack on Leibniz turns on his claim of knowledge of the inner nature of things only through the comparison of formal concepts of the understanding. This generates a twofold error: there is the conflation of logical and material principles. The pure concepts of understanding on their own cannot yield any knowledge, or any material conclusions. Secondly, the conflation of logical objects with real ones, "for in attempting to conclude from these principles as to the nature of existing things, Leibniz takes the object in general (i.e., a merely conceptual or transcendental object) to represent by itself real (spatiotemporal) objects" (Grier, 2004: 95). Kant warns us against another, yet similar error that occurs due to Leibniz's subjection of the concepts of empirical objects to principles "that only hold if the objects are considered independently of the conditions of sensibility" (95). Thus, all errors have their sources in the *misemployments of thought*, their location in the judgments, and their generation in the extension of the concepts and principles of the understanding beyond the limits of our sensible knowledge (Cf. A 270-89/ B 326-46).

Although in a complementary fashion, but still distinguished from the error that is inherent in the general claims of the traditional ontology of the Leibnizian system, the Transcendental Dialectic explicates a particular kind of error, namely the *transcendental illusion*, in a rather complex and sometimes ambiguous fashion. Kant's deconstruction of traditional metaphysics traces the operations of dialectical (transcendental) illusion in the three main divisions of metaphysics, i.e. in rational psychology, rational cosmology, and

rational theology. It is not my intention here to provide a thorough and detailed analysis of Kant's characterization of transcendental illusion, and of his system of transcendental ideas. Far from being complete my interpretation here will only focus on the ways in which Kant's doctrine of transcendental illusion makes clear that the ontological concept of nothing, as it is presented in its division under the guidance of the system of categories actually becomes a critical concept with a transcendental function. Within this limits only I will now discuss what Kant meant by *transcendental illusion.* As a start, he compares empirical illusion with transcendental illusion:

> We are not here concerned with empirical (e.g. optical) illusion, which occurs in the empirical employment to rules of understanding that are otherwise correct, and through which the faculty of judgment is misled by the influence of imagination; we are concerned only with *transcendental illusion*, which exerts its influence on principles that are in no wise intended for use in experience, in which case we should at least have had a criterion of their correctness. In defiance of all the warnings of criticism, it carries us altogether beyond the empirical employment of categories and puts us off with a merely deceptive extension of *pure understanding* (A 295/ B 352).

As it is clear in the above quotation, Kant argues for a unique error as the result of the misemployment of the categories of understanding. Dialectical error, in other words *transcendental illusion,* is located in the principles not immanent within the limits of possible experience, but as such *transcendent*; those principles have no legitimate use in experience. The source of this illusion is different from the empirical illusion, since whereas the latter is occurred as a result of the misleading influence of imagination over the faculty of judgment, the former is nothing but the deceptive extension of pure understanding beyond the limits of our experience. Earlier, Kant openly claims that all error comes out of problematic interaction between the two faculties of knowledge, namely sensibility and understanding. He argues that "[s]ince we have no source of knowledge besides these two, it follows that error is brought about solely by the unobserved influence of sensibility on the understanding"

(A 295/ B 351). The expression of the "unobserved influence of sensibility" suggests that in its relations to other faculties sensibility is no doubt the primary source, or better to say, 'ground' of all error. This is explicitly argued in the *Critique* as follows:

> Sensibility, when subordinated to the understanding, as the object upon which the latter exercised its function, is the source of real modes of knowledge. But the same sensibility, insofar as it influences the operations of the understanding, and determines it to make judgments, is the ground of error (B 351n).

As Grier rightly suggests, Kant's theory of error as presented in the above quotations seems confusing (2004: 109). On the one hand, the account that Kant offers in the beginning of the Dialectic is not so much different from his general account on the judgmental error in the Analytic. On the other hand, however, he seems to argue for an entirely different kind of error which he locates in the use of the transcendent, not immanent set of principles. Now, in addition to the two faculties of knowledge, sensibility and understanding, Kant mentions another activity of thought as the source of these unique *transcendent* principles, that is, *pure reason*: "All our knowledge starts with the senses, proceeds from thence to understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is no higher faculty to be found in us for elaborating the matter of intuition and bringing under the highest unity of thought" (A 299/ B 355). Hence, the unique type of error that he calls *transcendental illusion* comes about through this unifying activity of reason. Here Kant's discussion on the difference between a logical illusion and a transcendental illusion is striking. He compares these two errors in terms of their inevitability. In the case of logical illusion, it is "the lack of attention to the logical rule" that leads us in such illusion, and as soon as this is brought to our attention it completely disappears, thus is avoidable. In contrast, transcendental illusion is inevitable:

> Transcendental illusion, on the other hand, does not cease even after it has been detected and its invalidity clearly revealed by transcendental criticism (*e.g.* the illusion in the proposition: the world must have a beginning in time). The cause of this is that

> there are fundamental rules and maxims for the employment of our reason (*subjectively regarded as a faculty of human knowledge*), and that these have all the appearance of being objective principles. We therefore take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts, which is to the advantage of the understanding, for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves. This is an *illusion* which can no more be prevented than we can prevent the sea appearing higher at the horizon than at the shore, since we see it through higher light rays; or to cite a still better example, than astronomer can prevent the moon from appearing larger at its rising, although he is not deceived by this illusion (A 297/ B 353-4).

It is evident in this rather lengthy quotation that this inevitable, and in a sense *natural* illusion consists in the imposition of subjective principles upon us as objective. As such it is inseparable from human reason. Another point must be emphasized. Interestingly, Kant now seems to add to the two previously mentioned faculties of human knowledge, i.e. sensibility and understanding, another one, i.e. *reason.* Then a question arises, since it is distinguished from understanding as the faculty of principles, what kind of knowledge does *reason* provide us? It is knowledge from principles and "quite different from knowledge obtained merely through the understanding" (A 332/ B 358). Only knowledge from principles enables us to "apprehend the particular in the universal through concepts" (A 300/ B 357). Thus, reason as the faculty of principles, unlike the understanding, provides a synthetic knowledge derived from concepts. Kant calls these synthetic modes of knowledge that are derived from concepts "principles".

More importantly, while understanding secures the unity of appearances through the rules, reason takes the understanding as its object and unifies its rules under principles. This implies that reason does not have an immediate relation to experience but rather motivates understanding alone providing an *a priori* unity to by means of concepts. It thereby has a unity itself differing in kind from the unity that the understanding brings about (A 302/ B

359). In fact, reason requires both the multiplicity of rules and the unity of principles in its attempt to harmonize the understanding with itself (A 305/ B 362).

Kant's warning here is crucial: the transcendental principle of pure reason has nothing to do with the knowledge or the determination of objects as such because reason in the syllogisms does not concern itself with intuitions but with concepts and judgments. The transcendental principle is merely a subjective law to which we may not ascribe any objective validity. The unity of reason is different from the unity of understanding in that the latter concerns itself at first hand with the senses and their intuition whereas the former with the unity of the understanding. Reason in the syllogism seeks the universal condition of its judgment which is subsumed under a universal rule (major premise). This universal rule is subject to the same requirement of reason which seeks the condition of condition, therefore the principle peculiar to reason is to reach the unconditioned whereby the unity of the understanding is brought to completion. However, this logical maxim works only under the assumption that if the condition is given, the whole series of conditions (unconditioned) is likewise given. This unconditioned contains all the determination which distinguishes it from whatever is conditioned (A 307-8/ B 364-5).

In the Book I of the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant deals with the concepts of pure reason. What is at stake here is to decide whether the concepts derived from pure reason are possible. Kant, in the Analytic, claims the objective validity of the concepts of pure understanding in the realm of appearance, and proves their possibility as the objects of a possible experience through a transcendental deduction. In the Dialectic, however, while dealing with the concepts of reason only, he raises a claim for the validity of such concepts, namely transcendental ideas, that extends the limits of human experience. Since ideas propose themselves as archetypes, or originative models of the reality of things, or properly

speaking as the model for all experience, the truth of the concepts of reason does not have to have an experiential confirmation. Concepts of reason are derived from the understanding alone through a metaphysical deduction, and then, justified through a kind of transcendental deduction. While the metaphysical deduction of the ideas is offered in the Book I of the Dialectic section, between A 321/ B 378 and A 338/ B 396, the justification of the transcendental (subjective) reality of the pure concepts of reason through a necessary syllogism, in other words a kind of transcendental deduction, is provided in the Book II of the Transcendental Dialectic. For my present purpose, I will give a brief account on the deduction of the pure concepts of reason, namely *transcendental ideas*, as the dialectical inferences of pure reason. Let me start with Kant's deduction of an *idea* solely from the understanding in the Book I of the Transcendental Dialectic:

> The pure concept, in so far as it has its origin in the understanding alone (not in the pure image of sensibility), is called a *notion*. A concept formed from notions and transcending the possibility of experience is an *idea* or concept of reason (A 320/ B 377).

Here the important point for us is that ideas as concepts of pure reason do not derive from experience. They, on the contrary, transcend it. As Grier points out, it seems that Kant in this respect ascribes significance to "the fact that the ideas are held to be a priori modes or sources of knowledge that "so far transcend the bounds of experience that no given empirical object can ever coincide with them" (A 314/ B 371)" (2004: 130). In a similar way that he characterizes the categories of the understanding in terms of thinking possible objects and their synthetic unity, Kant defines the transcendental ideas in terms of the activity of thinking the unconditioned, and thereby connects them with the unconditioned synthetic unity of all conditions in general (A333-4/ B390-1). The term "idea" that Kant assigns to the concepts of pure reason, is inherited from Plato, "for whom the ideas or forms (*eidos*) are often referred to as the "prototypes," "archetypes," or "models" of their corresponding

appearances". Similarly, Kant's ideas are as Plato's forms are originative concepts in the sense of being archetypes for any experiential instance; not susceptible to experiential characteristics such as being mutable. As archetypes they are means of moral judgments as to what is good and what is bad. Moreover, not only in the moral sphere but in nature itself they serve as most perfect of its kind. None of us, however, due to the natural obstacles, can act adequate to the idea. This does not make the idea a mere fiction of the brain. The idea has its own reality but no empirical object of experience can coincide with it.

Another point as to the metaphysical deduction of ideas concerns its aim. As Grier points out, Kant's intention thereby is precisely to show that "the ideas of reason are somehow necessitated by the inherent demand for the unconditioned condition (explanation) of thought" (2004: 295). The theoretical reasons behind his assignment a necessary status to the ideas of reason is inherently related to his very account of the nature of human reason. He claims that the ideas are not fictions, but springs from the nature of reason, and as being the sophistications of pure reason itself they are unavoidable for "even the wisest of men" (A 339/ B 397). Kant's position here seems to be critical to the misemployment of the transcendental ideas as objective realities. However, he insists that as inevitable those ideas are also necessary for the systematic unity of empirical thought.

Kant distinguishes three kinds of dialectical syllogisms the conclusions of which give us the two ideas, and one ideal of pure reason: those are paralogisms, antinomies, and the ideal. Dialectical inferences from these three syllogisms are respectively the soul, the world-whole, and God.

### 3.2. Transcendental Ideal and the Principle of Complete Determination

In this section I will try to elucidate the idea of *totum realitatis* as one idea (*ens rationis*) of pure reason in connection with the principle of complete determination. The principle of complete determination is closely related to the idea of *totum realitatis* since it is a principle that inherently takes *totum* as a reference point. In this context I will also discuss the structure of infinite judgment since "some *Reflexionen* call infinite judgment "judgment of complete determination"" (Longuenesse: 2005, 217). While discussing these three I will try to connect them to the idea of *ens rationis*. I will do so since in its legitimate use *totum realitatis* is simply an idea; an *ens rationis.* My argument will be that *totum realitatis* in defining the complete conceptual sphere of all determination has a perfectly legitimate use. It has a function of being a reference point, as a whole of reality, in the complete determination of objects. As a conceptual background sphere, it has a determinative function in all predication. When this *totum,* however, by transcendental subreption, is hypostatized into an individual object and then made into God of rational metaphysics, it loses all its legitimacy. Instead of being seen as only an idea (*ens rationis*) in the unity of reason, it is now postulated as corresponding to an object (*ens realissimum*) and thereby made into an actually existing being. This inevitable and natural illusion Kant calls transcendental. In the unity of reason ideas have a perfectly legitimate use, i.e. a regulative use. By a "transcendental misemployment of the unschematized categories (existence, for instance) to objects in general, that is, to a mere idea of reason (*ens rationis*), this idea is taken to correspond to an actual object and is thereby "hypostatized; assumed to have a real existence independently of the idea" (Grier, 2010: 280). Kant, with reference to Plato, writes of ideas that "they cannot be borrowed from the senses but far surpasses the concepts of understanding inasmuch as in experience nothing is ever to be met that is coincident with it" (A 313/ B 370). In the following pages he also writes that "the whole of appearances –we might say-

*is only an idea*" (A 327/ B 384). *Ens rationis* is defined in the *Critique* as 'empty concept without object'. Elsewhere it passes as "thought-entity, concept without object, this is nothing". (*Ref*: 5552, 18:219) What characterizes *ens rationis* is that there is no object corresponding to it. The concept is completely empty. Unicorn might be an example. We can think of a unicorn but it does not exist in actuality. It cannot be obtained from experience for it far surpasses it. Therefore, an idea is an *ens rationis* and *totum realitatis*, in so far as it cannot be given in and far surpasses beyond any intuition, is an idea. In its legitimate use this *totum* provides the conceptual sphere (sum of all predicates) in reference to which each and every thing is determined. In its illegitimate use under the transcendental illusion, however, it is "hypostatized", made into an object and becomes God of metaphysics.

Infinite judgment is a category not of general logic (logic) but, as Kant claims, belongs to the transcendental domain. It carries the copula of an affirmative judgment but the predicate is negative such as the example 'Socrates is not-Athenian'. 'Socrates is not-Athenian' is not the negation of 'Socrates is Athenian'. It is not a negative judgment:

> Likewise, in a transcendental logic infinite judgments must also be distinguished from affirmative ones, even though in general logic they are rightly included with the latter and do not constitute a special member of the classification. General logic abstracts from all content of the predicate (even if it is negative), and considers only whether it is attributed to the subject or opposed to it. Transcendental logic, however, also considers the value or content of the logical affirmation made in a judgment by means of a merely negative predicate, and what sort of gain this yields for the whole of cognition. If I had said of the soul that it is not mortal, then I would at least have avoided an error by means of a negative judgment. Now by means of the proposition "The soul is not-mortal" [*nichtsterblich*] I have certainly made an actual affirmation as far as logical form is concerned, for I have placed the soul within the unlimited domain of undying beings (A 72/ B 97).

By negative judgment only an error that 'The soul is mortal' can be avoided but with infinite judgment more is achieved. With it the soul is placed within the unlimited logical

sphere of undying beings. That is because the copula of infinite judgment is positive, which is an actual affirmation, i.e. the affirmation of locating the soul within the unlimited conceptual sphere of undying beings. Nicholas F. Stang formulates the difference in symbolic logical terms (2012: 1126):

(1) (*a* is *F*) V ¬ (*a* is *F*)

(2) (*a* is *F*) V (*a is ~F*)

In the first one the negation is external in the second internal. In the first one all affirmation is negated in the second only the predicate. The first, taken as a whole, therefore does not give us the sphere of complete determination. Only the second does. Complete determination says that affirmation or only its internal negation is true and that is why the infinite judgment is the judgment of complete determination. First one is the instance of excluded middle. It says that either *a,* or *not a* is true. Second one says that either affirmative judgment or its internal negation is true. Moreover and as a result, it can be claimed that infinite judgment entails negative judgment since it first entails negation. The reverse, however, is not true. Negative judgment can stand by itself without entailing an infinite judgment.

As indicated above, infinite judgment gives the complete determination. It is a principle of determination of each and every object only by its being "compared with all the predicates of appearance and is represented through them either affirmatively or negatively" (A 581/ B 690). To give an example; if I want to thoroughly determine the pencil in front of me I must compare it with all available positive and negative predicates and then decide as to what this object determinately is. Kant makes a distinction between logical negation and a transcendental negation. Logical negation, in a judgment, compares concepts alone and

therefore "quite insufficient to determine a concept in respect of its content" (A 574/ B 602). Transcendental negation, on the other hand, deals with being in itself, and therefore is a negation of a thing as to its very thinghood. What Kant is interested is a transcendental negation whereby a thing is completely determined as to its content. This determinability, however, serves only as an ideal "never to be exhibited *in concreto*" (A 573/ B 601). That is because a thing, to be completely determined, has to be compared with all available possible predicates and this we do not and cannot know. It hence is an idea (*omnitudo realitatis*) which has its seat in our reason alone. One point should be added: Kant sees this *totum* to be represented logically by the major premise of disjunctive syllogism. Transcendental major premise of disjunctive syllogism is "no other than the representation of the sum of all reality" (A 577/ B 605). Consequently one can claim that infinite cum disjunctive judgment give us the sphere of sum of all reality. This sphere of sum of all reality is that in reference to which all realities are derived. In other words, limited possible things take their determinations with reference to that sum. In that sense the sum is original and the limited things derivative. For accomplishing this purpose reason employs the idea of *totum* not by presupposing its actuality but only as an ideal. Reason derives the conditioned limited things from this unlimited unconditioned totality. This determination however, only remains incomplete and that is because "this idea of the *sum-total of all possibility,* in so far as it serves as the condition of the complete determination of each and every thing, is itself undeterminate…" (A 573/ B 601). This indefinite or indeterminate nature of the *totum* as a world-whole is well argued in Allen Wood's article. There he claims:

> As so given [things]… they constitute a regressive series of conditions that is in definitely long- but neither finitely nor infinitely long… But these series of conditions are never given to intuition as a whole. Kant thinks that to assume they must exist either as infinite wholes or finite wholes is to assume that they are not merely appearances but things in themselves, whose determinations must exist *independently*

> *of the manner in which they can be given to our intuition* (Wood, 2010: 258) (emphasis is mine).

We cannot decide on the spatiotemporal limits of the whole and that is because it is not a thing in itself subsisting independently but just an appearance given to our intuition and never as a whole. What we can claim about it most is that it is indefinitely long.

Kant speaks of *totum* as it the *primordial being* (*ens originarium*), as the *highest being* (*ens summum*) and also as *being of all beings* (*ens entium*) (A 578/ B 606). He however warns that these terms are not to be used as signifying an objective relation, i.e. the relation of an idea to an actually existing object. This, indeed, is how he explains the origin of transcendental illusion in respect of *ens realissimum*, the object of rational theology. His basic question in that respect is this:

> How does it happen that reason regards all possibility of things as derived from one single fundamental possibility, namely that of the highest reality, and thereupon presupposes this to be contained in an individual primordial being? (A 581/ B 610).

He answers this question again in terms of the elements of possibility of the objects. These elements are first the forms thought *a priori* and then the matter given *a posteriori* which corresponds to sensation. Here the matter is already a conceptualize one, that is, it is the logical matter of thought. Now, there is the principle that for an object to be thought (to be object at all) the matter of possibility should be presupposed as 'given in one whole' This one whole in turn is the 'context of possible experience' in which the sum total of all empirical reality makes the object possible for us. In that sense, it serves as a background sphere making the determination of one object possible. However, due to a natural illusion, when the empirical limitation of this principle is transgressed and it is taken as a transcendental principle applicable to things in general then this sphere becomes and is taken as an object (objectified):

> This ideal of the *ens realissimum*, although it is indeed a mere representation, is first *realized*, that is made into an object, then *hypostatized*, and finally, by the natural progress of reason towards the completion of unity, is as we shall presently show, *personified* (A 582/ B 612n).

By means of a (transcendental) subreption, *totum* which, in its legitimate use, should serve only as a conceptual sphere that gives each and every concept its determinate place now turns out to be objectified and hypostatized. It is now treated as an empirical object and the relation between the idea to concepts now turns into a relation between *totum* and its actual individualized object; *ens realissimum*, that is, the object of rational theology.

### 4. Concluding Remarks: Problematic Nature of Ideas and Unity of Reason

Let us start with Kant's own statement on the problematic nature of *ens rationis* (as nothing), a concept without an object, as it appears in his discussion on the division of the concept of nothing at the end of the Transcendental Analytic:

> To the concepts of all, many, and one there is opposed the concept which cancels everything, that is, *none*. Thus, the object of a concept to which no assignable intuition whatsoever corresponds is = nothing. That is, it is a concept without an object (*ens rationis*), like noumena, which cannot be reckoned among the possibilities, although *they must not for that reason be declared to be also impossible*; or like certain new fundamental forces, which though entertained in thought without self-contradiction are yet also in our thinking unsupported by any example from experience, and *are therefore not to be counted as possible* [emphasis are mine] (A 290-1/ B 347).

In relation to the above quotation two points must be emphasized: firstly, it seems that Kant's treatment of *ens rationis* as nothing due to its deprivation of objective matter as empty concept is at odds with his insistence on the necessary status of ideas for the sake of the systematic unity of empirical knowledge. Secondly, his treatment places within the very nature of *ens rationis* an undecidable and indeterminate element, i.e. a problematic characteristic, in such a way that it made possible for him to declare as to the nature of *ens*

*rationis* as both necessary and empty. This in turn led him to claim that *ens rationis*, as to its nature, can be counted as possible but also impossible. However, it would be quite misleading to take this indeterminacy as a verdict against Kant's dialectic. Instead this indeterminacy is the very fact that makes possible the Kantian critical system as a whole. Susan Neiman has a similar point of view to mine:

> The charge that the ideas are empty is, at bottom, another version of the belief that they are intolerably uncertain. They stem from a particular view about the nature of reality that holds, roughly, that the real is exhausted by the objective. What does not determine an object is not real but fictional. Whether one attempts to develop a theory that stresses the usefulness of fictions or one that restricts them to the province of literature, one who holds this view is profoundly and literally uncritical. For the view ignores the very posing of the problem that Kant listed as primary in the history of philosophy: to determine the status and nature of reality itself. The equation of indeterminacy with emptiness represents an assumption that would preclude rather than examine Kant's central question: What kind of reality do ideas of reason possess? (1997: 99)

If we consider the question that Neiman poses at the end of above quotation, this following argument seems plausible: Nothing, for the understanding, may be the limit of reality as its negation in time when considered through the category of quality, but the question is whether or not the ideas as *ens rationis*, i.e. the empty concepts of pure reason without an object have a reality at all. And if they possess any reality, what it could be. One way to answer this question is to deny their reality therefore validity for the human cognition. In doing so this type of answers reduces Kant's critical project into a kind of empiricist criticism which is radically destructive of the whole of metaphysics. It hence denies the role that transcendental arguments play in his critical system. However, as they are deprived of any real object, ideas are *nothing* for the faculty of understanding, but they are not fictitious and yet have a subjective reality for the reason itself, with a merely regulative function. Let us read the Kantian solution to this problematic together with Susan Neiman:

Because regulative principles are neither substantive claims about nature nor heuristic fictions, Kant offers a new perspective on the disputes about the status of scientific explanation. This perspective, like so much of Kant's work, will be best appreciated when seen in its broadest context. *In science as in other areas*, Kant presents a view of reason's ideas that insists on their *reality* while denying their reification (1997: 99) (emphasis is mine).

# CHAPTER III: Kant's Analysis of Nothing as *Nihil Privativum*: Reality, Negation, and Limitation

## 1. Introduction

At the end of the Amphiboly section, just before the fourfold divisions of the concept of nothing, Kant adds a claim for the 'completeness of the system'. He remarks that the highest concept of ontology is the concept of an object and without, first of all, having been decided whether it is something or nothing, it remains as problematic (A 290/ B 346). Again in the *Lectures on Metaphysics*, he makes a claim that the object is the highest concept in ontology, which has opposing divisions as possible (thing, something) and impossible (nothing), and nothing is a higher concept than something because it is opposed to object itself. (29: 811). These two remarks from different sources seem to give us some important clues as to the position of the concept of nothing in Kant's overall system. First of all, they indicate that the concept of nothing should be taken into consideration. Without it, the system is incomplete. This fact, then, brings us to the question as to the possible role and function of the concept of nothing in Kant's system. As indicated in the first chapter of the thesis, Kant makes a fourfold division of nothing, which are successively *ens rationis*, *nihil privativum*, *ens imaginarium* and *nihil negativum*. These have different roles; all but having a common unifying point: one can easily notice that all these four concepts of nothing serve a function: they all determine a boundary, defining (negatively) what something (positive) is. In other words, they complete the system of knowable versus unknowable, limited versus limitless, formless versus differentiated and logical versus contradictory. In that sense, nothing, in Kant's system, is a necessary (transcendental) category which is intrinsically related to the category of something. It limits, delineates, and guards. Furthermore all the four categories of nothing simply belong to human cognition either by making possible to grasp reality through determination or by showing the boundaries of human knowledge itself. In this

sense, then, nothing shows us the limits of the Kantian Copernican Revolution. This limit is determined by the concept of the thing-in-itself as transcendent being, or nothing as *ens rationis*[27].

The first, second and the third category of nothings are all transcendental in the sense that they all relate to the content of a possible experience. *Ens rationis* is defined as empty concept *without object*, *nihil privativum* as *empty object* of a concept and *ens imaginarium* as empty intuition *without object*. Only the fourth category of nothing as *nihil negativum* is logical negation "in that the concept cancels itself" (A 292/ B 349). It is at the conceptual level whenever there is merely an empty concept and as an empty concept (the absurd) it delineates the rules of logical thinking. Second category of nothing differs from the rest in that in it the limitation (determination) is *within* the phenomenal world as one reality limiting another, opposing reality, through negating it. In other words, here the nothing works among phenomena not between noumena and phenomena as in the case of *ens rationis* or between the forms of intuition and crude matter as in the case of *ens imaginarium.* Therefore we can say that we have three transcendental and one logical nothings. In this chapter I will focus on the second and third divisions of nothing namely *nihil privativum* and *ens imaginarium*.

*Nihil privativum* is either a lack or privation. My reading is that lack, since there is no void to be perceived or experienced, has no real possibility; it can only be thought; it has logical possibility only. Privation, on the other hand, has both real and logical possibilities; it can happen at the level of appearances –as in the case of *rest* as a result of two opposing

[27] An interesting and supportive interpretation comes from George Schrader in his existentialist reading of Kant (See George Schrader (1957), "The Philosophy of Existence," in *The Philosophy of Kant and Our Modern World*, ed. by Charles W. Hendel, New York: The Liberal Arts). There he claims that the "Copernican Revolution" has thrown human subject back upon him/herself, it did not make him/her as the pivotal center of the universe. The category of the thing- in-itself, as "*really* nothing" and as being in itself, is the real center of his philosophy. In Schrader's words, "It is the limit that reveals to us our finiteness and our subjectivity. It is the measure in terms of which all human standards are only relative" (1957: 49-50).

forces on the same object- and it can also be thought. Compared to *nihil privativum*, what underlies *ens imaginarium* is the absence of matter in space and time. In that sense *nihil privativum* as a lack is similar to *ens imaginarium*. Lack is the absence of content i.e. matter, and empty space and empty time is alike. Furthermore, both are impossible in the real sense of the term, for the presence of void is demonstrated by Kant as impossible. The difference then between *nihil privativum* as lack and *ens imaginarium* as empty space and empty time is of nuance; in the former the emphasis is on the reality side – as the absence of content- in the latter it is on the forms of intuition as empty; without content.

One more point to get clarified in an ongoing discussion of the category of nothing in Kant's system is, I believe, that he has four divisions of nothing but only two of them are named as *nihil.* The other two are called *entia* instead. My reason to such a difference would be that in *nihil negativum* where 'the concept cancels itself' there remains an empty concept, in other words no concept at all. Moreover this emptiness is not lack of objective validity but logical impossibility. *Nihil negativum* is the concept of the logically impossible. In *nihil privativum* it is, as we will see, either lack or absence of any determination as a result of two opposing forces. When it is lack, it is empty object of a concept. In other words, there is no object at all. When is privation, on the other hand, as a result of two opposing forces, then the result of this opposition is zero=0. It is now the absence of any determination. In either case however the result is emptiness and that is why, I interpret, Kant calls this category of nothing as *nihil.* As for the other two categories named as *ens*, one of them, which is *ens imaginarium*, might be said to have been labelled as *ens* for the forms of intuition, though empty, have their own independent contents. On this point Allison is explicit:

> Kant insists that the representations of space and time have a content that is logically independent of and thus irreducible to, the representations of the things in them. This is the meaning of the claim that we can think space and time as empty of

> objects…extension and figure of body is the primary content of the representation of space (1983: 88-89).

These contents have their own beings and that is why empty space and empty time is labelled as *ens*. Moreover, these contents, as empty and though impossible in the real sense of the term, can be thought, that is, they are beings for the imagination. The last one is *ens rationis* and though here the concept is empty as well, it has its own reality as *realitas noumenon*. This reality is not an objective one but results from the concept's function as the concept of pure reason (idea). It operates, Kant claims in the Dialectic, regulatively, governing the theoretical as well as moral sphere.

This chapter will concern first of all how forms of intuition as empty forms (nothings) relate to crude matter –as in the case of *ens imaginarium*- and secondly how this transformed matter as realities relate with each other (limitation) -as in the case of *nihil privativum*. My argument in this chapter is that these two divisions of nothing have a transcendental function which manifests itself within two differing levels of limitation: first at the intuitive level where empty forms turn matter into manifold realities and secondly at the discursive level where realities are conceptually determined under the background of one infinite concept. Accordingly I will divide the chapter into two main parts. In the first part I will focus on how intuitive determination becomes possible through the negative operation of empty forms on crude matter. The main idea of this part is to show the real impossibility of empty space and time as a result of matter as a necessary category for the unity of experience. The part will be gathered under three subsections which will focus on firstly the concept of substance, secondly the law of continuity argument and lastly the Ether-Deduction.

In the second part of the chapter I will deal with the problem of how realities determine (limit) each other through the concept of negation. In this attempt I will structure the part following divisions Kant made in the *Critique* under the category of Quality. First of all I

will discuss the category of reality "the concept of which in itself points to being (in time)" (A 143/ B 182) with its possible quantitative determination, i.e., intensive magnitude, degree. Reality can be represented as a quantum, which is reality's production in time either from a given degree to the vanishing point (negation) or from its negation to a specific magnitude. Discussing reality as intensive magnitude, since it shows us different dimensions such that the reality in question as an appearance has both intensive and extensive magnitudes, might help us to clarify the role of negation in *nihil privativum*. Kant claims that while intensive magnitude might diminish, extensive magnitude might remain, leaving thereby space and time in the least empty. This might clarify the point that *nihil privativum*, while as a consequence of two opposed determinations, is the concept of the possible, and on the other hand it is, because of the impossibility of empty space and empty time, the concept of the impossible. Throughout my discussion on *nihil privativum* I will particularly focus on the Anticipations of Perception. Secondly, I will discuss the category of negation as privation (*privatio*) and as lack (*defectus*) of real determination. "Reality is *something*, negation is *nothing*, a concept of the lack of an object, as shadow, cold (*nihil privativum*)" (A 291/ B 347). Here privation and lack do not have the same meaning. Lack is the complete absence of an object. Whereas privation is getting deprived of a determination as a result of two opposing determinations, lack is absolute negation. Moreover, I will suggest a reading that because there is no empty space and empty time really possible, absolute negation is the concept of the impossible. Thirdly and as the last subsection of this part, I will elaborate the category of limitation within the context of Kant's 1763 *Negative Magnitudes* essay. Negative magnitudes are real oppositions between two forces whereby one is limited by the other. Here what is limited is reality signified as positive as opposed to another reality signified as negative and the result is deprivation. All appearances are determined in this

reciprocal way the logical (discursive) expression of which finds its form in infinite judgments.

### 2. Space and Time as *Ens Imaginarium*

In this section, I will discuss empty space and empty time (empty intuition without object) as the concept of *ens imaginarium.* It is the third division of nothing in the fourfold divided table of nothing at the end of the Amphiboly section. I will try to show why for Kant, empty space and empty time are beings only for imagination. His epistemological point is that we can never experience empty space (time) while we can very well think (imagine) of it. This means that space (time), once separated from the things in it, still have a content of its own which is logically independent of the things in it. That is why empty space (time), while it can never be perceived, has a being (*ens*) that can be thought. In two different places Kant states this point; one in the *Prolegomena* and one in the *Critique*:

> If we omit from the empirical intuition of bodies and their alterations (motion) everything empirical, that is, belonging to sensation, space and time still remain.
>
> Thus, if I take away from the representation of a body that which the understanding thinks in regard to it, substance, force, divisibility, etc., and likewise what belongs to sensation, impenetrability, hardness, color, etc., something still remains over from this empirical intuition, namely extension and figure. These belong to pure intuition, which, even without any object of the senses or of sensation, exists in the mind *a priori* as a mere form of intuition. (A 21/ B 35).

It can be seen from the above passage that, once all other properties are abstracted, a body still has an extension and a figure. These latter, as contents of pure intuition, belong to pure intuition and as independently of other things in it.

For the sake of our discussion, two questions might be appropriate at this point: First, why does Kant put space (time) under the table of the divisions of nothing? In other words, how is space (time) is nothing? Second, what function does space (time) be having as *ens*

*imaginarium*? I will try to give a brief answer to the second question now. The answer for the first question, I think, might be given from three different but somewhat overlapping angles. So I will deal with it under three sections (substance, law of continuity and ether-deduction) separately. First, then, the answer to the second question:

Kant claims that space and time as intuitions presuppose a synthesis by means of which they are first given:

> Space, represented as *object* (as we are required to do in geometry), contains more than mere form of intuition; it also contains *combination* of the manifold, given according to the form of sensibility, in an *intuitive* representation, so that the *form of intuition* gives only the manifold, the *formal intuition* gives unity of representation. In the Aesthetic I have treated this unity as belonging merely to sensibility, simply in order to emphasize that it precedes any concept, although, as a matter of fact, it presupposes a synthesis which does not belong to the senses but through which all concepts of space and time first become possible. For since by its means (in that the understanding determines sensibility) space and time are first *given* as intuitions, the unity of this *a priori* intuition belongs to space and time, and not to the concept of the understanding (cf. § 24) (B 160-61n).

He explicitly claims that the unity of space and time does not belong merely to sensibility but presupposes a synthesis. This synthesis makes possible the concepts of space and time and only through it are they first given as intuitions. Synthesis being mentioned here is the *synthesis speciosa* mentioned in a detailed way in the second chapter. If space and time are the products of a synthesis then this means that they are not 'ready-made forms' waiting to be discovered as they are. Instead they are generated and thereby successively. Consider the following quotation:

> Thus *unity of the synthesis* of the manifold, without or within us, and consequently also a *combination* to which everything that is to be represented as determined in space or time must conform, is given *a priori* as the condition of the synthesis of all *apprehension* –not indeed in but with these intuitions. This synthetic unity can be no other than the unity of original consciousness… (B 161).

The assertion is that the unity of the synthesis is given *a priori* with the intuitions not *in* them. This suggests the point that before any unity of the synthesis, there are no intuitions -in which the combination would take place- at all. Intuitions are produced with the unity of the synthesis. It means that the synthesis is indeed the 'effect of understanding upon the sensibility'. In fact, the effect is two-sided: one comes from outside, and the one from inside. Outside effect is created, as sensation, by the given material. Inside effect is the effect of the *synthesis speciosa* which comes from within as the effect of the understanding upon the sensibility. It "transforms the outer affection (sensation) into an intuition of object" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 220). Only through the unity of both outside and inside affection can an intuition be generated. Outer affection as sense experience is only an occasion which occasions the generation of space and time as the products of the *synthesis speciosa.* One consequence to be drawn from this is that if nothing stimulates sensibility from outside, space and time are nothing in themselves. They are merely the *entia imaginaria*: "[t]he mere form of intuition, without substance, is in itself no object, but merely formal condition of an object (as appearance), as pure space and pure time (*ens imaginarium*) (A 291/ B 347).

So far I claimed that space and time are generated by a synthesis. But Kant claims as the third space argument of the Aesthetic that "[s]pace is not a discursive or, as we say, general concept of relations of things in general, but a pure intuition" (A 24/ B 39). He bases his argument on the idea that diverse spaces are only the parts of one all-embracing space. They are not, as in a concept, constituents out of which one single space can be constructed. In other words, as intuition, in space the whole precedes the parts, not the reverse. Allison's comparison is illustrating this Kantian point:

> A totum syntheticum is a whole composed of parts that are given separately" and "not only does the concept of such a whole presuppose its distinct, pregiven parts, it also is conceived as the product of the collection(in Kantian term "synthesis") of these parts. A totum analyticum

> by contrast, is a whole, the parts of which are only possible or conceivable, with reference to that whole (1983: 43).

Kant is clear that in space parts cannot precede the one all-embracing space; space is an intuition not a discursive concept. One question here seems to be appropriate: If space and time are intuitions and not concepts, how can the synthetic activity of mind be said to produce space and time?

Now a synthesis is always successive. Space and time on the other hand is "represented as an infinite *given* magnitude" (A 25/ B 39). Here seems to be a contradiction in Kant and Christopher Browne Garnett JR. concludes that "[t]here is no assurance, therefore, that space is not conceptual rather than intuitive. Both the second and third … arguments of the *Aesthetic* are threatened by his doctrine of synthesis beginning with the parts" (1939: 224). If we take what Allison points out into consideration a solution to this problem, I think, might be provided: the issue of the 'givenness' of space. Space, Allison claims, is given as indeterminate. This indeterminate space is the infinite, single and all-inclusive space which is pregiven as a preconceptual framework. All specific space determinations, such as in geometry, presuppose this space as already given. Related to *synthesis speciosa*, this synthesis that generates determinate spaces presupposes "the givenness of the single, all-inclusive space, of which they [the determinate spaces] are the parts" (Allison, 1983: 95-6). That the '[t]hus *unity of the synthesis* of the manifold … is given *a priori* as the condition of the synthesis' is Kant's own sentence in B edition of the Transcendental Deduction, which comes to mean that space and time become possible only through a synthesis, but for this synthesis to occur, a unity must be given as *a priori* condition in the first place. Synthesis of apprehension, as the first step of the threefold *synthesis speciosa*, is "more than an act of *distinguishing*; from the outset it aims at *unifying what is distinguished*" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 38). It unifies time and space as forms of intuition but only under the condition of the

*a priori* given "unity of the combination of the manifold of a given *intuition in general*…" (B 161). Hence, the act of synthesis generates spaces successively, but only under the condition of one single given space:

> If I should draw a line from one point to another, I must already have a space in which I can draw it. And if I am to be able to continue drawing it as long as I wish, without end, then this space must already be given to me as an unlimited one [*als ein uneingeschrankter*], that is as an infinite one. Correlatively, I cannot successively generate any cylinder or body except in space, that is to say, I can only do so because this space is already given, together with its quality which allows me to suppose that points are everywhere, and which enables to generate, without end, three dimensions of extension. (Schulze, quoted by Allison, 1983: 95)

It seems that when Kant claims that space is 'represented as an infinite given magnitude', he means the all-inclusive pregiven space. This space is always already there for the generation of every *determinate* intuition (spaces). Kant claims in the Axioms that:

> I cannot represent to myself a line, however small, without drawing it in thought, that is, generating from a point all its parts one after another. Only in this way can the intuition be obtained. Similarly with all times, however small. In these I think to myself only that successive advance from one moment to another, whereby through the parts of time and their addition a determinate time-magnitude is generated (A 162-3/ B 203).

I think Kant wants to say that determinate time-magnitude is generated through successive addition of one moment to another. He gives an exemplary demonstration of generating time through a successive synthesis. The idea is based on the premise that the parts precede the whole in space and time as *extensive magnitudes.* But we already said above that space and time are intuitions not concepts, that is, in them the whole is presupposed by the parts, not just the reverse. Were we to make a distinction between actual representation of space and time -their determination as a magnitude- and space and time as the pregiven unlimited wholes, harmonizing these two seemingly contradictory views becomes possible. This actual representation of space and time as determinate magnitudes

determines the one unlimited space and time which are pregiven.[28] It specifies them. This pregiven space and time, one other hand, determine the determinate time and space magnitudes in the sense that it serves as the ground, or rather, as the guideline by reference to which the determinate time and space are determined (unified) through the synthesis of apprehension.

This pregiven space and time one might call *entia imaginaria*. They function as the invisible presupposition in all space and time determination as determinate magnitudes. While I am advancing, for instance, from one moment to another in establishing a determinate time-magnitude, the unlimited and all-inclusive time is always already there as a pregiven element. That is why Kant, in describing the *ens imaginarium* in the fourfold table of the divisions of nothing, makes the claim that "…pure space and pure time (*ens imaginarium*). These are indeed something, as forms of intuition, but are not themselves objects which are intuited" (A 291/ B 347). Pure space and pure time have functions, as nothing, they are pregiven grounds or conditions for all space and time determination as determinate magnitudes. Forms of intuition are therefore generated through *synthesis speciosa* and in that sense they are determinate. For this generation to occur, however, pure space and pure time (*ens imaginarium*) must be pregiven in the very first place as unlimited and infinite ones.

The substance discussion on the First Analogy might provide an answer to the question of the nothingness of empty space (time). Kant there puts forward the *sempiternality* and the *omnipresence* of substance through which the possibility of empty space (time) is precluded

[28] Longuenesse makes a distinction between pure time and time as the form of intuition. I suggest reading pure time as 'transcendentally ideal time' which is always already given as an unlimited and infinite one. Empirical time determination (empirically real time) however, generated through the synthesis of apprehension, presupposes this 'transcendentally ideal time' as its *a priori* given condition.

as an object of possible experience. The same point –exclusion of void as the object of possible experience- might be asserted through a second discussion on the Law of Continuity in *Lectures on Metaphysics*. I will particularly use the Pölitz Metaphysics, the older notes i.e. *Metaphysik* $L_1$ (28: 201-6) and the Chapter Two of *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (29: 862-4; 29: 921-3). There Kant tries to show that there is no leap in the world -of appearances- because there is no void. He claims that all magnitude and all change is continuous. A third approach to the same question might be from the point of view of Ether-Deduction. This deduction is indirect in the sense that the opposite of ether is empty space, which is claimed by Kant as experientially impossible. Common point of substance discussion in the First Analogy and Ether-Deduction of *Opus Postumum* is that both establish the argument from the unity of *spatiotemporal* experience. Experience as the sum of all perceptions has a unity and substance (in the First Analogy) and ether (matter) (in the Ether-Deduction) is taken as what supplies this unity. Argument from the law of continuity, on the other hand, seems to be giving an illuminating information as to why "a radiation which fills a space, as for instance heat, and similarly every other reality in the [field of] appearance, can diminish in its degree *in infinitum*, without leaving the smallest part of this space in the least empty" (A 174/ B 216). If there is nothing simple=zero in appearances (since they are continuous magnitudes, alike in their extensive and intensive aspects), as Kant claims, then it means that an appearance can be divided to infinity. If an appearance can be divided to infinity, this precludes the gap and therefore the empty space (time) in the world as the object of a possible experience. As the radiation (heat) example above shows, it means that while the intensity of the real of radiation gradually diminishes in its specific degree *in infinitum*, there still remains appearance 'without leaving the smallest part of this space in the least empty.' In what follows I will try to elucidate these three approaches respectively.

### 2.1. Substance

Right at the beginning of the First Analogy, Kant indicates that time is that in which all succession and coexistence can be represented. But determination (empirical) of time is possible only in case there is something abiding and permanent which represents time. Therefore, "the permanent is the *substratum* of the empirical representation of time itself… " (A 183/ B 226). Now, succession and coexistence are two determinations of time. Appearances as accidents either come one after another or they coexist simultaneously. In other words, they either succeed one another or exist at the same time. This successive relation to occur, however, there must be a permanent "only through which does existence in different parts of time-series acquire a magnitude… " (A 183/ B 226). This magnitude is temporal in that it signifies one state coming after another. Without a permanent however this magnitude is impossible to be determined. And without an empirically determined time magnitude, it is impossible to experience any succession at all. Consider this passage:

> Alteration can therefore be perceived only in substances. A coming to be or ceasing to be that is not simply a determination of the permanent but is absolute, can never be a possible perception. For this permanent is what alone makes possible the transition from one state to another, and from not-being to being (A 188/ B 231).

There must be an underlying backdrop for any change (*Wechsel*) in determinations to occur. Only the determinations change, backdrop persists. This backdrop is the perceivable time itself, "it is an enduring, perceivable object (or objects) which is required to provide the background or frame of reference by means of which the succession, coexistence, and duration, of appearances in a common time can be determined" (Allison, 1983: 203). This backdrop is substance[29] and it is the "substrata of all determinations of time" (A 188/ B 231).

[29] This substance is matter as *substantia phenomenon*. It is not the matter-in-itself as the underlying last subject of all external determinations. In that sense it is the real of appearances of the Law of Continuity of *Lectures* and matter of the Ether-Deduction of *Opus Postumum*. In Kant-Hegel debate of the next and last chapter, we will see that Hegel charges Kant by having an external matter and thereby making the complete determination

Allison uses the term *Wechsel* (change) as indicating replacement of one state with another in a common substantial framework (1983: 201, 204). If y is taken as substance and x as the state at $t_1$, x is replaced by non-x at $t_2$. Hence y remains as the same before, only its determinations change. Consider the following quotation:

> [A]ll appearances of succession in time are one and all only *alterations*, that is a successive being and not-being of the determinations of substance which abides … in other words, that there is no coming into being or passing away of substance itself (A189/ B 232-3).

This clearly shows that substance for Kant is sempiternal that is, it *is* at every moment in time. Not new substances come into being and the others pass away. Substance as the bearer of properties is one and all enduring. One question at this point, I think, might be clarifying: Why does Kant think that substance should be sempiternal? In other words, why is substance supposed be at every moment in time? Here Allison suggests an epistemic reading (1983: 200-206). He claims that for Kant sempiternality of substance provides unity in time. This unity, in turn, is necessary for the unity of experience. If we assume that the substance is absolutely ceasing to be at one point in time and then, after an interval, coming into being again at another point in time, then time as unity becomes divided into two separate times. This means that "existence would flow in two parallel streams" (A 188/ B 231-2). Consequently, the unity of experience would never be possible. I agree with Allison on that this is a real impossibility not a logical one. That is to say, one can very well think of empty time interval devoid of substance. As such it is *ens imaginarium* and has logical possibility. But because our human nature is constituted in a specific way, absence of substance in time is a real impossibility for creatures like us.

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of object and knowledge impossible. Kantian would respond to the charge of externality of matter by claiming that matter is indeed not as external as a Hegelian might think. And Hegelian might respond in turn that it is matter-in-itself (thing-in-itself) not matter as *substantia phenomenon* that constitutes Hegel's attack on externality.

Sempiternality issue can also be clarified from another point. That is, the impossibility of absolute coming to be of substance at first time. Kant is clear that:

> Alteration can therefore be perceived only in substances. A coming to be or ceasing to be that is not simply a determination of the permanent but is absolute, can never be a possible perception (A 188/ B 231).

The reason for the impossibility of perceiving first coming to be of substance after an empty time interval might be due to fact that, for Kant, any object to be perceivable, in other words, for any object to be a possible determined object of experience, it requires a background of *totum realitatis*. This whole is and must be taken as the logical sphere of the 'sum of all empirical reality' in reference to which an object is an object of possible experience. Now, if we suppose a thing coming to be at first time, that is, after an empty time period, this would preclude the possibility of our contrasting present state of the thing with its earlier one. And unless we are able make such a contrast, we can never conceive the change of its states and when we are unable to conceive the change of its states, the thing remains undifferentiated. In other words, there is no thing perceivable at all. Therefore, first thing at the first time with a preceding empty time is out of question. Similarly also with ceasing to be; "it presupposes the empirical representation of a time in which an appearance no longer exists" (A 188/ B 231). As shown above, for Kant reality is first. Only thorough mediation of reality can I cognize negation. This means here in this context that only against a backdrop of reality (empirical representation of time, substance) can I perceive the absence of an appearance as a negative determination of the permanent substratum.

As for the empty space as not an object of possible experience, Kant makes the same claim but from a different approach. In the Third Analogy, he, while explaining the coexistence as one of the time determinations, claims that for coexistence to occur each substance must contain the 'causality of certain determinations' in the other. It also must

contain the ‘effects of the causality of other’ for the relation to be of community. Now, “[O]nly thus by means of their reciprocal influence can parts of matter establish their simultaneous existence…” (A 213/ B 260). That is to say, only by means of continuous reciprocal influence can coexistence as community becomes possible. Community as reciprocal influence is a time determination. In it two objects stand together simultaneously. What differentiates community from succession is that in succession the path of perception is only one way (from A to B only). In community, in contrast, we can begin the apprehension from either side. As being a time determination, coexistence includes two representations standing to each other in a relation of time i.e. simultaneity. For this simultaneity to occur, however, the space in between must be full of substance. Without substance (void), there occurs no reciprocal influence between two representations and as a result no coexistence. If coexistence does not occur, in turn, so neither the time determination as coexistence. Kant is clear that wherever there is coexistence there is no empty space. Consequently, substance, in addition to its being sempiternal, is omnipresent. This shows us, on the other hand, the relation between time and space. Empirical determination of time, as for instance coexistence, seems to be dependent on there being an omnipresent substance. This is that the time determination seems to be dependent on spatial determination.

In conclusion, in case there is an intervening spatial void between two representations, there is no time unity either and this is against one Kantian basic principle: the unity of experience. We can therefore say that wherever there is unity of experience, there is no empty time and empty space.

### 2.2. The Law of Continuity

Kant elaborates an argument on the Law of continuity in the *Lectures* in order to refute the possibility of the concept of a leap in the world. He thereby establishes the categories of

empty time and space as *entia imaginaria*. His key sentence is that "the law of continuity rests on the continuity of space and time" (Ak. 28: 205). In the Aesthetic, Kant mentions, as one of its attributes, space "as an infinite *given* magnitude" (A 25/ B 39). No mention of continuity is made there. When connected with the sentence in the *Lectures* however, it can be claimed that 'space is a continuous given magnitude'. In fact the word 'infinite' that is mentioned in the Aesthetic gives us the clue as to the space's continuous nature. Space is infinite in the sense that it can be divided to infinity which, in turn, comes to the conclusion that it is continuous. This means that there is no smallest or maximum in space. The same is true for time.

The law of continuity argument deals with the continuity of appearances. In other words, it takes space as well as the matter in space into consideration. One claim is that "nothing is simple in appearances" (Ak. 28: 204). Here the 'simple' means 'an indivisible unit'. In this argument Kant sets as his opponent the ancient atomists for whom the matter is of small, indivisible units or atoms. For atomism, matter is composed of small, indivisible units. Wherever there is atom, there is no vacuum, but wherever there is no atom there is vacuity. Therefore atomism accepts the existence of empty space. Consider the following quotation:

> Now since … nothing is simple in space, every body and every matter is infinitely divisible, for every part of the body stands between two boundaries of space, thus always occupies a space. But that which is infinitely divisible is a continuous quantum<*quantum continuum*>; every appearance is thus a continuous quantum< *quantum continuum*> (Ak. 28: 204).

Nothing is simple (indivisible, as for instance monads) in space and, consequently, every body and every matter is infinitely divisible because every body and every matter stands between two boundaries of space. Nothing is simple in an appearance because it is an object of empirical intuition and as such it is always already in space and time: "[A]s the [elements] of pure intuition in all appearances is either space or time, every appearance is as

intuition an extensive magnitude" (A 163/ B 203-4). Kant adds that "all appearances are continuous magnitudes, alike in their intuition, as extensive, and in their mere perception (sensation, with it reality) as intensive" (A 170/ B 212). That is to say, both space and time as forms of intuition and matter as the real of appearance have magnitudes. Space and time has extensive magnitude and as such continuously divisible. Similarly, the sensation and with it the real in appearance is continuous in that the degree of it is never the smallest. One thing is to be mentioned: In the *Lectures* it seems clear that Kant rests the continuity of an appearance in the continuity of space and time. It is, therefore, as if the infinite divisibility of an appearance depends on the infinite divisibility of space and time. In the Anticipations, however, Kant claims the continuity of both space and time and of the real –alike in their intuition, as extensive, and in their mere perception (sensation and with it reality) as intensive. He there does not directly say anything as to the relation between the continuity of space and time and of the real. One has to make an extraction: At the end of the Anticipations Kant writes: "

> It is remarkable that of magnitudes in general we can know *a priori* only a single *quality*, namely, that of continuity, and that in all quality (the real in appearances) we can know *a priori* nothing save [in regard to] their intensive *quantity* , namely that they have a degree. Everything else has to be left to experience (A 176/ B 218).

Now the whole argument might established as follows: The unity of experience rests on the unity of time. But this unity of time is in turn possible only if time (whether pure or empirical) is continuous. As shown above, if time is divided into two separate times by an interval, then experience loses its unity as well. Moreover it is the continuity of empirical time which is possible through the continuity of substance in it. Therefore comes the *a priori* knowledge of only single quality, namely, that of continuity of the real. And to claim that the real is continuous is automatically to claim that it has a certain quantity (quantum), that

is, a magnitude. Continuity of the real is thereby proven *a priori* from the necessity of the unity of experience.

Longuenesse links the continuous magnitude of the matter to its being taken up into the forms of intuition. Matter has a magnitude, indeed continuous magnitude, because it is intuited in time. She claims that "reality itself … has properties imparted to it by the form of intuition" (2000a: 315-316). This idea is supported by Allison's claim that "their [objects'] temporality is constitutive of their very objectivity" (1983: 60). This is the argument that form, as against rationalist amphiboly, precedes and determines matter. Only through the form is matter differentiated into the spatiotemporal objects. This argument, however, should not make one to be content with the idea that forms are sufficient for the unity of experience. As I will deal in a detailed way in the next section below, Bryan Hall, in his article "A Reconstruction of Kant's Ether Deduction in *Übergang 11*", makes the claim that Kant in the *Critique* attempts to elucidate only the *a priori* formal transcendental conditions of experience, whereas in *Opus Postumum* he is attempting to prove the existence of a material which serves as the *material* transcendental condition of experience. Taken this fact into account, forms of intuition are necessary for the continuous magnitudes of objects. Kant argues for that "the law of continuity rests on the continuity of space and time" (Ak. 28: 205). They are, on the other hand, not sufficient for the continuity and then the unity of experience. As I discussed above in the Substance section, there must be one unified substance for the unity of time and thereby the unity of experience to follow. Not only time and space but ether as matter also contributes to the law of continuity and as a result to the unity of experience as a whole.

To return our discussion of the law of continuity, Kant begins his argument by giving a definition of leap:

> A leap is a transition to a determination from more distant ground in a connection of many members, without going through the intermediate members <*membra intermedia*>. The concept of a leap <*saltu*> concerns not merely events, but rather also things, and is opposed to continuity (Ak. 28: 200).

When the intermediate members, in a transition, are jumped over, then there is a leap. Kant continues the argument by defining continuum as that in which the smallest is possible but indeterminable. In other words, continuum is that the quantity of parts of a whole cannot be determined and because of this indeterminability, the smallest is no possible: "[t]hus where no smallest is possible, there is continuity…" (Ak. 28: 200). Elsewhere in the same work he claims that "[t]hus no appearance can consist of the simple, because from simple to matter there would be a sudden transition something which is distinguished from it genetically" (Ak. 29: 863). Simple is zero and it therefore means that from zero to being as matter, no transition is possible. If it would be possible, then it were a mere leap. Leap, however, is excluded as a possible experience: "nothing happens in the world through a leap <*nihil fit mundo per saltum*>" (Ak. 29: 920). In the discussion of substance above, I claimed that for Kant only the determinations change, substance abides. Now Kant claims that the change of determinations, however, occurs only through the intermediate stages, never as a *saltus*. Because void as empty space and empty time is excluded as an object of possible experience, *saltus* as a species of transition from one state to another is *ex hypothesi* excluded. Between two moments in time and two points in space there is always another time and space. If this is the case then, there is always a smaller appearance; never the smallest, and this comes to the conclusion that according to the law of continuity, empty space and empty time is no object of possible experience. And this conclusion, one can say, is consistent with the one reached with the substance argument of the First Analogy.

### 2.3. Ether-Deduction

In the *Critique*, Kant attempts to provide transcendental *formal* conditions of experience. They are the forms of intuition, categories and the unity of apperception. The overall aim there is to establish the notion that only with these forms is experience is possible. In *Opus Postumum*, however, Kant indicates another condition for experience to be complete. In contrast with the internal formal conditions, now the condition is external and *material*. In *Übergang* 1-14 Kant wants to prove the existence of matter (Ether) as the external condition for the unity of the whole of experience[30]. The proof is at the same time the disclamation of empty space and empty time as the object of a possible experience.

The proof begins with the premise of the existence of the unity of the whole of possible experience. He does not begin from the *concept* of the unity of the whole of possible experience and then proceeds to show the existence of Ether. For him, existence cannot be deduced from the mere concepts alone. It is the absolute positing of the subject term, always synthetically attached. Ether-Deduction is analytic in the sense that, in it, the concept of Ether is shown to be contained in the concept of the unity of the whole of possible experience. In a similarly structured way to the substance argument, here the unity of experience is like the major premise of a deductive syllogism. The unity of the whole of experience is taken as a matter of fact, indeed, as a premise. Ether, in its turn, is taken as a necessary unifier; a necessary condition for this unity:

[30] Michael Friedman, in his work titled *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (1992), mentions Kant's post-critical transition project (51-52). He points out that Kant believed there occured "a gap in the critical system" which is constituted by contrary movements of the regulative procedure of reflective judgement and the constitutive procedure of the understanding. The question for him was how these contrary directions would converge. Kant, therefore, undertakes the new project of "the transition from the metaphysical foundations of natural science to physics". In this project, Kant is led to reconsider space-matter relation for a central part of this transition project is a priori proof of matter or ether existing and distributed everywhere in space. This fundamental problem is dealt with in the Ether-Deduction argument in the *Opus postumum* (1796-1803).

> As a continuum (that is, regarded as without empty spaces between its parts), we will call it for now (provisionally) caloric. This would be a self-subsistent matter, penetrating all bodies, and unceasingly and uniformly agitating all their parts (Ak. 21: 215-6).

As a continuum, Ether is a continuous (everywhere) unifier for the whole of possible experience. If Ether is continuous, then, it means that "every space in relation to our outer senses is filled with matter…" (Ak. 21: 219). That is to say, without 'matter everywhere', there would occur empty space, which, according to Kant, can but never be an object of perception. This empty space, however, is impossible to be an object of possible experience just because it cannot be sensed. This empty space is just an *ens imaginarium* i.e. nothing, of which it is impossible to have an experience. For experience to occur on the other hand, matter as a *continuum* must "be postulated prior to experience (i.e. *a priori*) *for the sake of* possible experience" (Ak. 21: 219) (emphasis mine). Since it is for the sake of the possibility of experience and therefore must be *a priori*, matter cannot be deduced by/from experience. Its actuality can be only be deduced from the actuality of space as a sense object. Space as a sense object exists, therefore a material that permeates and penetrates all spaces must also exist. The proof is said to be indirect in the sense that the actuality of the empty space is claimed to be never an object of possible experience. Kant claims that:

> The basis of all possible perceptions of the moving forces of matter in space and time is the concept of an elementary material, distributed everywhere in cosmic space … Its concept is made into the sole principle for the possibility of experience of an absolute whole of all internally moving forces of matter, and is known according to rule of identity (Ak. 21: 225).

The concept of Ether is demonstrated *a priori* as the sole principle for the possibility of experience. It is *a priori* in the sense that in the demonstration not the experience (as would be in physics) but the formal rules of understanding are applied. In other words, it is deduced analytically as a necessary principle for the possibility of experience as a whole.

Kant is strict in that empty space and empty time can never be an object of possible experience. In this sense *Opus Postumum* is consistent with the First Analogy. In the First Analogy, sempiternal and omnipresent substance[31] is necessitated for the sake of the unity of experience, and here in *Opus Postumum* he claims that "[e]xperience … is (just like matter) only one. Not (as in atomism's account of the object) … in space from the full to the void; nor [one experience] separated from another by blind chance (*casus purus*) in an empty time; for, in that case, nothingness would be an object of possible experience" (Ak. 22: 463).

One thing to be mentioned before passing onto the next chapter is that matter is entirely made up of the forces of attraction and repulsion. These forces are real relations that provide matter for space as merely a form of intuition. This matter for which space provides the form, however, is not the thing-in-itself as substance with its intrinsic properties. Kant is clear in the *Physical Monadology* that:

> In addition to external presence, that is to say, in addition to the relational determinations of substance, there are other, internal determinations, if the latter did not exist, the former would have no subject in which to inhere. But the internal determinations are not in space, precisely because they are internal. (Ak. 1: 481).

Substance has internal and external determinations and only the external ones are in space. These external ones are the relational forces of attraction and repulsion of which the matter is entirely made up of. Only the matter can be legitimately sought in space. Substance with its internal determinations is the thing as it is in-itself and as such is completely

[31] Rae Langton (2007) in her *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* asks the question of 'what is this 'matter' for which space provides the 'form'? and tries to answer it by saying that space consists of relations some of which are abiding. This abiding appearance is 'impenetrable extension' (A 285/ B 341), it is the 'real in appearance (*realitas phaenomenon*)', it is '*substantia phaenomenon* in space', which is ... entirely made up, that is to say, of the forces of attraction and repulsion (A 265/ B 339). What is important for our discussion is that Kant claims that matter is dynamic, that is, it is made up of attractive and repulsive forces. If *substantia phenomenon* can be said to consist of attraction and repulsion, then the term "matter" can be used as *substantia phenomenon*; 'the real in appearance (*realitas phenomenon*)'.

unknowable. It is not the matter but the matter-in-itself. Matter is 'the real in space'; it is the *substantia phaenomenon* of the First Analogy, whereas the matter-in-itself is the pure concept of a substance as the *subject* of external determinations. Matter is divisible and it is the 'perceptible space', whereas substance cannot be divided and perceived. Matter, as composed of external determinations, cannot exist separated and isolated, whereas substance is completely independent and can stand so. Matter, so as to exist, needs the matter-in-itself as the substratum and not the reverse is true. This matter-in-itself as substance is the famous thing-in-itself of Kant, which is criticized by Hegel as an incoherent external element of Kantian philosophy; an externality, Hegel claims, that makes all epistemological endeavors result in the failure of skepticism.

To return to the above discussion in sum, Ether is deduced indirectly from the real impossibility of the space and time as *ens imaginarium*. The deduction is analytic in that the concept of Ether is shown to be contained in the concept of the unity and possibility of the whole of possible experience. In *Übergang* 1-14 Ether is shown to be a necessary idea as an external and material condition of the possibility of experience. United with formal conditions of experience, then, Ether is shown to be the complementary additional principle that is expected to provide a picture of one universal experience.

## 3. *Nihil Privativum*: Reality, Negation, Limitation

### 3.1. Reality as Intensive Magnitude

Kant gives in one sentence the principle of the anticipations of perception right at the beginning of the Anticipations of Perception section: "[I]n all appearances, the real that is an object of sensation has intensive magnitude, that is, a degree" (A 166/ B 207). Here two terms must be clarified; the real and intensive magnitude, and for this purpose the concept of 'appearance' can be taken for analysis. In the Aesthetic Kant defines appearance "as the undetermined object of an empirical intuition" (A 20/ B 34). He goes on his definition as

claiming that "in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*" (A 20/ B 34). His definition in the Schematism section is that "reality … is that which corresponds to a sensation in general; it is that, therefore, the concept of which in itself points to a being (in time)" (A 143/ B 182). Sensation is subjective representation and what corresponds to it in the object is the reality (transcendental matter). In Kant reality is more akin to a qualitative determination that contains being in itself and in that sense it is what makes something as something. It is the being of a thing that makes it as a determinate something. Determination here is not a specific determination of a specific object. This is what forms and concepts do. It is a general determination of 'somethingness' (*Etwasheit)* in general. In other words, forms and concepts specify but what provides 'somethingness in general' is the reality as given transcendental matter. Marco Giovanelli claims that for Kant reality "does not indicate the existence of a thing" (2011: 20) but only its qualitative determination. However, in the *Only Possible Argument* Kant identifies the concept of positing or setting with the concept of being in general and then claims that "this being is the same as existence" (Ak. 2: 73). If in everyday German usage the term reality is synonym with existence (*Existenz*) and also with being (*Sein*), then the best way to interpret Kant's usage of the term seems to be as that indicating the 'existence and being of something' in general.

Kant asserts that the real in sensation has intensive magnitude or degree and in the Axioms of Intuition he states the principle as "all intuitions are extensive magnitudes" (A162/ B 202). This shows that he has in mind two kinds of magnitude; one extensive and one intensive. To grasp what intensive and extensive magnitudes come to mean, I think, his one example might be illustrating:

> If I take a kettle and a thimble full of warm water then the former is extensively greater than the latter, but the water in the kettle is only lukewarm and that in the thimble boiling, then the latter is in this case intensively greater than the first (Ak. 28: 425).

A kettle is larger than a thimble in volume. Water in it therefore is extensively larger than in a thimble. But the water in a thimble is boiling whereas the water in the kettle is only lukewarm. Therefore the water in the thimble is intensively greater than in the kettle. One more example might be given. Suppose there is a certain size of red colored plate. Its density of color might increase (being more saturated) whereas its size and shape, its extension, might remain the same. So one can say that it is intensively increasing while extensively remaining the same. Since in fact space and time are defined in the Axioms as extensive magnitudes, extensive magnitudes are related with space and time. The temporal duration of a sound is extensive magnitude but its volume is intensive. Both magnitudes are numerical measures but only the unit of extensive magnitude "represent actual parts of the whole being measured" (Guyer, 1987: 198). It is the measurement of spatiotemporal parts. Intensive magnitude, on the other hand, represents the possible measured quality's density, i.e. intensity (heat, for instance). Intensity, in contradistinction to extension, does not consist of divisible parts; it can be taken only as a unity. What is more, both can be measured mathematically since both are *quanta continua*. Intensive magnitudes are measured, however, not as successive parts but only as a degree *in* time. According to Wolff, who calls this mathematical representation as 'mathematical cognition of qualities', in the measurement extensive magnitudes are the ground of intensive magnitudes such that the latter might be measured geometrically by the former. I quote below a related passage from Wolff's *Philosophia Prima,* as it was translated and cited by Longuenesse:

> Degrees may be represented by lines, and their mutual relations can be drawn and are distinctly conceived as the relations of lines, determining curved lines; the relation of the one to the other is given by rational or irrational numbers. It is therefore obvious that mathematical cognition of qualities is possible. (Wolff, *Philosophia Prima* § 746-47 quoted by Longuenesse, 2000a: 312).

Intensity is measured by drawing lines (the relation of which is given by numbers) making both extension and intensity as mathematically measurable and this means that both extension and intensity are quanta to which mathematics can be applied. It is because the schema of quantity is number and number can be applied to space and time as *continua*. It can also be applied to 'reality that corresponds to sensation' because "sensation can be reflected under the concept of a *unit*" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 313). This reality as a quantum, says Kant, has the *capacity* to diminish from a certain degree to nothing=zero and to increase from nothing to a certain degree. In other words, it is capable of variation. What he asserts more is that this capability of variation is what can be known *a priori*. Thus, it can be maintained that, as to the quality of reality, we can know two things *a priori*: One is that it has a degree and second it has a capacity to change its given degree. Kant writes at the end of Anticipations that:

> It is remarkable that of magnitudes in general we can know *a priori* only a single *quality*, namely that of continuity, and that in all quality (the real in appearances) we can know *a priori* nothing save [in regard to] their intensive *quality*, namely that they have degree. Everything else has to be left to experience (A 176/ B 218).

A plausible interpretation of this passage, taking the whole of Anticipations into consideration, might be that Kant here asserts the possibility of *a priori* knowledge as one of the synthetic principles of understanding. Only the knowledge that 'the real of appearances has degree and whereby it can diminish up to the point of negation and can increase from negation up to a certain point' is *a priori*. Everything else has to be left to experience, that is, everything else is empirical knowledge. Real has a degree and *can* diminish or increase but whether it *does* so vary is a matter of experience. In other words, we can never say that the real has indeed changed before empirically observing it. We can only anticipate that it will change just because we know *a priori* that it has a susceptibility of continuous variation. The rest is matter of experience because "the question as to whether

*a cause* capable of altering the state of a thing, that is of determining it to the opposite of a certain given state, *may be possible*, the *a priori* understanding casts no light…" (A 171-72/ B 212-13) (Emphasis is mine).

I think a clarification should be made for the sake of the argument of the anticipations of perception. Here Kant claims that only one quality of the real can be known *a priori*: it has a degree and it can be represented as susceptible of continuous variation, the rest is dependent on experience. The rest here means basically the change of the real, which is asserted by Kant as unknowable *a priori*. Put another way, we can know, it is maintained, that the real is capable of variation *a priori* but the knowledge of whether it in fact does change is gained only *a posteriori*. At this point, however, one can ask a question: if the knowledge of change (therefore the possibility of a cause) is *a posteriori*, how can the knowledge of degree and its variability be *a priori*? Or similarly put, how can one claim the transcendentality of degree and its variability without first gaining an empirical cognition of a change in the world? I believe Guyer's argument on Kant's premise of variability and his principle of degree well identifies the gap in Kant's presentation of his theory of transcendentality of degree and its variability. Guyer argues that Kant in the *Critique* while rejecting a derivation of continuous nature of change from the principle of intensive magnitude, bases his transcendentality argument on an empirical claim. I agree with Guyer that Kant by presupposing empirical principles as causality of an alteration, rests the continuity of alteration in general on an empirical principle. Guyer argues that if this is so, the continuous variability must rest on an empirical principle as well (1987: 204). As a result, the principle of intensive magnitude is lacking any *a priori* basis. However, on at least one occasion during the composition of the *Critique*, Guyer continues, Kant derived "the principle of intensive magnitude from the continuity of change in time itself, with the latter

clearly assumed as an *a priori* rather than empirical principle" (Guyer, 1987: 204). He bases his argument on the following passage from Kant:

> *Principium* of the mathematical cognition of appearances: All appearance has as intuition its extensive magnitude and as sensation its degree. For (as far as the latter is concerned) every sensation arises from non-being, since it is modification. Thus through alteration. All alteration, however, proceeds from 0 to *a* through infinitely many small steps (*Refl*. 5585, 18: 241).

Kant, in this passage, seems to iterate the principle of intensive magnitude but with the continuity of change in time itself. The phrase 'alteration proceeds' takes the place of "reality" of the *Critique* and thereby seems to transform the *a posteriori* status of the continuity of change into a transcendentally knowable modification. Therefore, the real passes through some stages through alteration which can be known *a priori.* Sensation arises and increases, but only through alteration. Now alteration takes place in time only.

### 3.2. Negation

As indicated above, according to Kant there are four divisions of nothing. Each corresponds to a category and each has its specific function. In this section, however, I will try to concentrate on the category of nothing as negation under the category of quality. It is *nihil privativum*, the second division of nothing. This nothing is the one that limits reality as the absence of any positive determination. In the *Critique* reality is defined as being "something, negation is *nothing*, a concept of the lack of an object, as shadow, cold (*nihil privativum*)" (A 291/ B 347). Here 'lack' means as the absence of any positive determination or reality. One initial warning is that negation should be understood as the absence of sensuous content. In other words, it should be taken as the absence of the *real*. Were it tried to be understood without taking into consideration this limitation, it comes to signify only an empty logical form. In other words, it cannot be understood at all. Reality should be tried

to be comprehended in a similar manner as well since, in fact, it is what signifies matter, the content of sensibility. Taken in this way then negation comes to be a category as the absence of reality and a category the concept of which requires a concept of opposed presence. Kant says that only through reality one can cognize negation. To give a particular example; only through its first presence in front of me can I cognize the absence of a glass. I cannot represent the negation of reality unless I first have a representation of reality. According to Kant, however, reality, though logically first to negation, is ontologically second:

> If I represent the understanding that thinks reality as light and, insofar as it negates reality, as darkness, then I can think of complete determination either as a bringing of light here and there into the gloom, or I can think of the gloom as the mere restriction of the universal light, and thus I distinguish things only through the shadows, the reality lies at their basis and indeed only a single universal one. In the opposite case I distinguish all things only through their light as if they had originally been lifted out of the gloom. I can very well think of a negation if I have a reality, but not if no reality is given. Thus reality is the first *logice*, and from this it is inferred that it is also *metaphysice* and *objective* the first and the gloom out of which the light of experience elaborates shapes. Thus, appearances are originally manifold, and unity arises if one abstracts from the manifold (*Refl*. 5270, Ak. 18: 138-9).

What Kant means here can be interpreted as such: for rationalist metaphysicians light is reality and forms are negations as mere restriction of this universal light. Whereas for Kant forms are lights with the function of distinguishing (bringing of light into) crude matter which is the gloom. The gloom has logical, metaphysical and objective priority and it is reality; it is the gloom out of which the light of experience elaborates shapes. Formative negation is the light of understanding that gives reality (gloom) the elaborated shapes. These elaborated shapes are appearances and are always originally manifold, and undistinguished unity either in the form of crude matter or in universal simple light arises only if one abstracts from the manifold.

Longuenesse relates this negation to the third category of nothing i.e. *ens imaginarium*. Only through space and time can the crude matter of sensation turn into a spatiotemporal manifold. Therefore, in Kant forms (as light and as nothings) precedes matter (as the gloom and the Real). Rationalist metaphysicians took unlimited reality (unlimited whole of possible essences) as preceding its specific limitations (negations). According to Kant, however, reality is always given through sensible intuitions and therefore as always individuated and particular. Before limitation of its possible sphere through the forms, one thing cannot be represented as an appearance. Therefore negation inheres in the very possibility of reality as its determination[32].

The issue of negation can be approached by taking Kant's view on magnitudes in the 1763 *Negative Magnitudes* essay. There Kant begins the essay by making a distinction between logical contradiction and real opposition. Logical opposition (contradiction) occurs as a result of two contradictory predicates attached to the same subject. Real opposition, on the other hand, results from again two opposing predicates "but not through the law of contradiction" (Ak. 2: 171). Both result in zero but only the latter can be representable (*repraesentabile*). The former cannot be representable because it is even against the basic rules of understanding (*nihil negativum irrepraesentabile*). It is therefore called as absolute nothing, the concept of which is impossible even for thought. Real opposition is also an opposition between the predicates but the result is still something; it is therefore *cogitable* and possible for thought. I cannot think a square circle since these two predicates contradict each other and implies a contradictory nothing. I can very well, however, think of two motive

[32] Here I totally agree with Henry Allison in his defence of Kant's position in the First and Second Antinomies, by emphasizing that one should take into account the issue of infinitude and finitude of the First Antinomy together with the distinction drawn between a *compositum* as a collection (synthesis) and a *totum* as a whole that comes prior to its parts in the Second Antinomy (1983: 42-43). In other words, *totum syntheticum* and *totum analyticum*. Space and time in themselves are tota analytica (the gloom) whereas the material universe in space and time is conceived as totum syntheticum (*totum realitatis phaenomenon*).

forces opposing each other in one body because it is what indeed happens among appearances. Thus one can conclude that the logical opposition is at the level of concepts of pure understanding whereas real opposition is at the level of appearances and when concepts are taken as pure concepts of understanding without taking sensibility into consideration, all we have at hand are logical inferences devoid of meaning.

As indicated above, *nihil privativum* is either a lack (*defectus*) or privation (*privatio*). As a lack it signifies the absence of any determination and as a privation the absence of any determination resulting from the "conflict of *opposed* determinations" (Longuenesse, 2000a: 304). Longuenesse suggests reading *nihil privativum* as in the latter meaning since then, she claims, it is related to the category of limitation. Since in that case there are two opposed determinations, one negating (limiting) the other, her claim seems to be true. My suggestion is that the former is to be taken as the concept of the impossible. In the *Negative Magnitudes*, Kant says of lack as a "negation absolutely" (Ak. 2: 183) or elsewhere as "mere lack" (Ak. 2: 180) or again as "true negation" (Ak. 2: 183) and in that kind of negation there is no positive ground at all. Such negations, since they do not result as a conflict of mutual opposed forces, do not have positive and negative polarities, both of which, as in the cases of privation, can be said to have positive grounds. Kant makes the claim with regards to privation that "the cancellation of the consequence of a positive ground always demands a positive ground as well" (Ak. 2: 177). His example is 'falling is negative rising', and as such it is something positive. In fact, Kant writes as to the categories of reality and negation in the *Critique* as that "[r]eality … points to being (in time). Negation is that the concept of which represents not-being (in time)" (A 143/ B 182). In the *Lectures*, he defines 'leap' as "a transition to a determination from a more distant ground in a connection of many members, without going through the intermediate members <*membra intermedia*>. The concept of a leap <*saltu*> ... is opposed to continuity" (Ak. 28: 200). Kant continues firmly

that every magnitude can be considered as continuous magnitude and "the transition from one point to another cannot happen suddenly but rather continuously … through infinitely many intermediate spaces…" (Ak. 28: 201). In the text, Kant wants to argue for the impossibility of leap in nature by expounding the Leibniz's law of continuity. Even our minds work through infinitely many steps in clearing the obscure representations in time. These two passages bring us to a conclusion that if there is no leap in the world, then there is no gap and if there is no gap, this means that there is no void (empty time and empty space). Indeed Kant writes, at the end of Amphiboly, of empty space and time as *ens imaginarium.* As empty, they are metaphysical nothings, having beings only for the imagination. In the Anticipations, Kant makes the same point. He there purports to show that there are two kinds of magnitude (extensive and intensive). Intensive magnitude varies but this variation leaves space and time in the least empty:

> For we then recognize that although two equal spaces can be completely filled with different kinds of matter, so that there is no point in either where matter is not present, nevertheless every reality has, while keeping its quality unchanged, some specific degree (of resistance or weight) which can, without diminution of its extensive magnitude or amount, become smaller and smaller *in infinitum*, before it passes into the void and [so] vanishes [out of existence]. Thus a radiation which fills a space, as for instance heat, and similarly every other reality in the [field of] appearance, can diminish in its degree *in infinitum*, without leaving the smallest part of this space in the least empty. It may fill the space just as completely with these smaller degrees as another appearance does with greater degrees. (A 174/ B 216).

The error of natural philosophers (physicists) is that they take only one kind of magnitude into consideration. Omitting the distinction that Kant draws, those 'natural philosophers' concluded that once quantity of various kinds of matter in the bodies differs the volume of the body must be empty in different degrees. They took magnitude as uniform everywhere and changing extensively only.

If void is impossible then *nihil privativum* as lack is also impossible . Kant defines 'negation as not-being in time' and if time and space, without being at all, is only a matter of imagination, then it comes to saying that lack is impossible indeed. It has no real possibility at all. In the *Negative Magnitudes* Kant's main concern is mainly with privation. My interpretation is that there he does not claim explicitly that there is no lack but he appears as writing on it as an illuminating contrast only, with the aim of clarifying the concept of privation. When the text is surveyed with a careful eye, one can recognize that his examples for absolute negation (lack) are drawn from psychology and morality. From psychology he claims that "[t]he lack of both pleasure and displeasure, in so far as it arises form from the absence of their respective grounds, is called *indifference* (*indifferentia*)" (Ak. 2: 181). Indifference is a mere lack since it is not a matter of two opposed feelings. It is simply lack of any determination. As for evils his claim is that:

> One finds that they [many philosophers] generally treat evils as if they were mere negations, even though it is obvious from our explanations that there are evils of lack (*mala defectus*) and evils of deprivation (*mala privationis*) (Ak. 2: 182).

His example for the differentiation of evil as mere negation and as deprivation is that if someone does not help someone who is in need, this is evil as mere negation and if someone takes from someone who is in need, this is deprivation. Kant asserts that evils of deprivation are greater evils. What is interesting for our discussion is that he, in these texts, seems explicitly to accept the presence of mere negations. This, on the other hand, seems to contradict with his notion of the impossibility of void (not-being in time). If lack is absolute absence, then, taking the impossibility of leap and thereby the impossibility of void into consideration, how can Kant claim its presence in psychology and in morality? One possible interpretation, solving this problem, seems to be that if not helping someone who is in need is a real possibility, it appears that it can be so only in morals, which Kant takes as belonging to the noumenal sphere, and similarly with psychology. Otherwise, it comes to be impossible

to harmonize his rejection of void in the world with his acceptance of absolute negation as mere lack.

### 3.3. Limitation

In the Table of Categories Kant asserts that "the third category in each class always arises from the combination of the second category with the first" and he continues writing that "*limitation* is simply reality combined with negation". (A 83/ B 110-11). But how can negation carry such a function? In the negation section above I expressed that *nihil privativum* can be distinguished into two kinds; one as mere lack and the other as deprivation. It is then that limitation is either due to mere lack or deprivation. In other words, for limitation to occur reality is combined either with lack (not-being) or with still another reality which stands as opposed to the first.

Kant claims that "we can never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can quite well think of it as empty of objects". (A 22/ B 38). Allison makes interpretation on this claim as that "we can think space and time as empty of objects" but "it does not follow from this that we can experience or perceive empty space and time". (Allison, 1983: 88). Space and time, he writes, have their independent logical contents, which make their thought as empty possible. Since I will deal with this point in the *ens imaginarium* part of the chapter in a detailed way, here I will only indicate that, for Kant, empty space and time, though existing "in the mind *a priori* as a mere form of sensibility" (A 21/ B 35) cannot be met in the natural world. In other words, there is no void, devoid of matter, that can be experienced or perceived in nature. Therefore, only another reality which is opposed to the first can make the limitation. Better to say, the category of negation can limit reality but only as another reality and, this is to say that negation involves reality in order for limitation to take place. Here one can have a brief look at the Kant's theory of matter for somewhat elucidation. Kant, as opposed to the atomists who propose the existence of empty space, proposes two powers

lying inherent in the matter itself. One is repulsive and the other is attractive force. These two forces constitute the essence of matter, and they diverse in that they operate against each other. Only with the combination of the two, a body's maintenance is possible. Moreover, they are, unlike logical contradictions, real oppositions which constitute the essence of *nihil privativum* as *privation*. A quotation from Kant's 1786 work of *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* might help:

> First, the *real* in space (otherwise called solid), in the filling of space through repulsive force; second, that which in relation to the first, as the proper object of outer perception, is *negative*, namely attractive force … third, the *limitation* of the first force by the second, and the determination of the degree of filling of a space that rests on this. Hence, the quality of matter, under the headings of reality, negation, and limitation, has been treated completely, so far as pertains to a metaphysical dynamics (Ak. 4: 523).

These three categories determine the degree of matter in space without leaving the space in the least empty. If negation had been a mere lack rather than privation, the space, at least one part of it, would have remained empty. But Kant rejects this possibility by rejecting the existence of empty space and empty time. Thus, I suggest reading limitation as combination of reality with an opposed reality. In this case, there is still a lack; a lack of determination, but resulting not from the absence of being in time but from the conflict of two opposing forces.

In fact, limitation occurs at two different levels; *intuitive* and *discursive*. Intuitive level limitation is reality's coming under the sensible forms and thereby their getting differentiated. In other words, through intuitive limitation forms (space and time) encloses reality and turns the crude matter into manifold appearances. Here negation is the form as nothing (time and space as *entia imaginaria*), and without combination of this nothing with matter, matter cannot be represented as reality. Therefore, formation of space and time is needed for empirical objects to be represented, though, without any reality which is ordered

under them, space and time remain as mere *entia imaginaria.* In addition to this intuitive level limitation, there is a discursive level, which puts these intuitively limited (determined) appearances under conceptual determination. In other words, appearances are thereby determined as to their possible conceptual spheres within the sphere of the infinite concept. This infinite concept, the 'object given in space and time', is *totum realitatis*, the whole of reality, by reference to which every individual object is conceptually determined. It is an indeterminate whole, which by itself and as *indefinitely long*, can never be conceptually defined wholly. It works, however, as a conceptual background in the very attempt of concept generation. Hence, discursive limitation is conceptual limitation by which an intuitively determined appearance is located within the infinite sphere of *totum realitatis*. Intuitive limitation puts matter within spatiotemporal limits, and it, while turning reality into a manifold appearance, defines the qualitative magnitude of it. In this limitation one reality is positioned against the other where each gains its own degree (intensive magnitude). Discursive limitation locates empirical object within the sphere of 'object in space and time' and thereby makes possible its conceptual thought.

In sum, limitation is that whereby each appearance gets its identity as appearance by first being limited by the forms of intuition, and thereafter, by being located (having a specific place) within the context of *totum realitatis.* Only after these two limitative processes have taken place (and there is no temporal priority between them) can an object becomes the object of experience. Limitation, therefore, as the combination of two categories of reality and negation, is what supplies the possibility of experience.

The consequence of two opposing forces is in fact limiting of one force the other. *Entia imaginaria* as forms of space and time limit matter as crude material and turns it into differentiated and individuated appearances. Moreover, as I will argue below, *entia imaginaria* are infinite wholes of space and time that are pregiven in the *synthesis speciosa,*

and thereby make determinate times and spaces in the first place possible. The result is then that both *nihil privativum and entia imaginaria* can be maintained to have limiting functions for the occurrence of the limited objects in the world. Moreover, all three nothings as *ens rationis*, *nihil privativum* and *ens imaginarium* are transcendental in the sense that they all relate to the content of experience. Only *nihil negativum* is logical nothing, for it merely operates on the level of reason and its logical rules.

# Chapter IV: Hegel's Critique of Externality and the Possible Kantian Responses

## 1. Introduction

After clarifying the fourfold division of nothing of Kant in the first three chapters, this chapter aims at elucidating one main difference between Kant's concept of nothing and Hegel's concept of negativity. Hegel criticises Kant in a variety of ways, in a spectrum of his formalistic philosophy in general and his moral philosophy. In the scope of this dissertation, however, I will focus on only Hegel's critique of Kant's concept of the thing-in-itself. The main idea of this critique is based on a claim of that Kant, having a negative conception of thing-in-itself, actually contradicts with his own transcendental idealism in the sense that by positing the thing-in-itself with a function of negative indication of the limits of knowledge, but leaving it empty as unknowable-for-the understanding-and-yet thinkable for reason, he falls into a complete subjectivization of experience, which means, for Hegel, that he loses the transcendental footage of his critical philosophy. In the chapter, I suggest a reading of this criticism against the backdrop of Hegel's dialectical analysis of the categories of being and nothing. Such a reading; I believe, will provide me with a substantial basis for taking Hegel's critique of the concept of the thing in itself in Kant as a critique of the category of nothing as external to mind (being). For Hegel the category of nothing should be internal to being and only as such it permits of complete determination of the object and scientific knowledge *per se*. From Hegel's point of view, thus, I conclude, Kant's transcendental function of nothing as an opposite determination is external determination which causes substantial dichotomies, and which is no determination at all. Determination is mediation and mediation requires the internality of the opposite concept. This cannot be

explained through the logic of identity but is in need of a higher logic. In other words, substance as nothing and as the thing-in-itself should be an immanent category both for change to be explained and for the proper use of a proper method that would overcome the metaphysical dichotomies which are in the first place responsible for human servitude.

However, I maintain that Hegel while criticizing Kant does not provide us with a detailed account. As John McCumber claims that "Hegel's Kant … is painted with a broad brush". I agree with him on that, because of Hegel's show of a lack of zealous pursuit, "if there is an inference somewhere in Kant's corpus that, understood with proper subtlety, can save Kant from one of Hegel's criticisms, Hegel either is not going to search it out or, finding it, will not appreciate it" (2014: 44). Thus, I claim that there is not one category of nothing in Kant but four and Hegel's criticism appears to make a reduction of these four into one, i.e. matter-in-itself as nothing. As I have exposed and discussed in the previous chapters, Kant has four kinds of nothing and only one of them -matter-in-itself as substance- can be claimed to be entirely external to human mind. Ideas are *entia rationis* and they are transitive only to the faculties of sensibility and understanding. They are but immanent to reason. *Nihil privativum* is either the absence of any determination or lack of reality but *within* the phenomenal world. In that sense, it is immanent as well. In the sense of being the opposed determination of a transcendental affirmation however it is external to the category of something for as negation it is the opposite of reality. Empty space and empty time are *entia imaginaria* and as such they are subjective forms of intuition. Though they are never to be perceived or experienced as empty, they "have a content that is logically independent of, and thus irreducible to, the representations of the things in them" (Allison, 1983: 88). We can represent to ourselves things but only because we first have a prior and independent representations of space and time. As empty representations therefore they are immanent forms of sensibility. With things in them they are immanent both to things and the faculty of

sensibility. As empty representations, however, they are immanent still to the faculty of sensibility. As for the fourth category *nihil negativum*, it can be maintained that it is the opposite of logical thinking and since logical thinking is the work of reason, *nihil negativum* as the representative of the absurd can be said to be immanent to reason as well. Furthermore, the first three can be labelled as transcendental nothings for they "represent a mere not-being" (A 574/ B 602). The fourth one does not properly refer to an objective content but only to the absence of the rules of logical thinking. It is the nothing of the absurd and is not "opposed to transcendental affirmation, which is a something the very concept of which in itself expresses a being" (A 574/ B 602). Only matter-in-itself as substance is entirely external to mind. It is the category of the unknowable and I thought it, in that sense, can be counted under the category of *ens rationis*. However, since it is the element that is given, it has a special status of its own and in this chapter, unless otherwise explicated, it is this category that will be treated as external nothing to mind.

In this framework, throughout this chapter I will argue that all categories of nothingness as divided by Kant are immanent to mind, either as a product of understanding, or of reason. However, while only nothing as *nihil privativum* is immanent to experience and phenomena, the rest three divisions are external to them. Only matter-in-itself as the external source of the given element of the experience –that I suggest taking it as noumenon in the *negative sense* as nothing (*CPR*, B 307, 309)- might be claimed in an absolute externality to mind. As opposed to Hegel's broadly pictured Kant therefore, I maintain an alternative one who could propose sufficiently strong arguments against the Hegelian charge of externality of nothing to mind (being). Furthermore, one of the consequences of Hegel's limited focus is the seeming cancellation of the transcendental function of nothing in the Kantian system, which I have argued in the previous three chapters. My aim is to show how the debate between Kant and Hegel on the transcendental function of the thing-in-itself can allow us to

reinstate the plausibility of the Kantian responses as to the externality of the thing-in-itself as a warrant of his transcendental system.

Following this line of argumentation I will divide this chapter into two main parts. In the first part, under three subtitles, my aim will be first to show how and where Hegel's critique of Kant appears as well as how this critique has been appropriated by Hegel scholars. In doing so, I also intend to make explicit what is implicit in Hegel's critique of Kant on the significance of nothing. For this purpose, I will devote the first section to sketching out and locating Hegel's critique of the Kantian thing-in-itself. Under the second section, I will discuss Hegel's concepts of being and nothing as indicated in the *Science of Logic*. The aim here is to show the contrast between Kant's and Hegel's logical approaches to the concept of nothing. In the *Logic* Hegel claims the impossibility of pure being and nothing. Only intermingled or 'internally mixed' can both be. Otherwise they are just abstractions. This part of the chapter can also be seen as a preliminary to the following one which aims to be an introduction to the real workings and processes of consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The third section will be an analysis of the Introduction of the *Phenomenology*. There Hegel appears to be explaining the structure of the 'serial progression' of consciousness in terms of the concepts of the 'in-itself' and the 'being-for consciousness of this in-itself'. In the Preface he had already made the claim that "some of the ancients conceived the *void* as the principle of motion, for they rightly saw the moving principle as the *negative*…" (*Phen.* 37). Consciousness moves towards a more adequate level of itself only because negation is inherent in it.

The second main part of this chapter will concern with the externality of nothing to mind in Kant. Here, I will display the possible answers of Kant together with the main

Hegelian charge of externality. There will be three subdivisions of this part which will successively deal with the externality of matter-in-itself to mind; the ideas and complete determination; and finally Kant's affirmation of externality together with his critique of immanency.

## 2. Immanence of Nothing and Hegel's Critique of Kant

### 2.1. Hegel versus Kant on the Limits of Knowledge: Hegel's Critique of the Thing-in-itself

As I said earlier at the beginning of this chapter Hegel criticizes Kant in a variety of ways in his various texts. Hegel's criticism in some of his works takes an explicit form, whereas in other places his references to Kant remain implicit and those passages require to be deciphered carefully. In my analysis of his critique of the Kantian thing-in-itself, I will take into consideration both of those. The Hegelian texts that I will be going through are the ones published in his lifetime, namely the *Phenomenology of Spirit, Science of Logic,* and *Logic*, as part one of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences.* My reading strategy is twofold: Firstly, I will try to give a rather preliminary sketch of Hegel's critique of Kant with a special focus on his concept of the thing-in-itself. Secondly, I will use some fundamental dichotomies such as essence/ appearance, subject/ object, and externality/ immanency Hegel detects in metaphysics in general and in Kant's critical philosophy in particular as tools for clarifying his critique of externality of nothing found in Kant.

Before going further in my analysis, however, I think a clarification on the nature of the relationship between Kant and Hegel is necessary. For almost two centuries the position Hegel took as opposed to Kant's philosophical enterprise has been subject to interpretive attempts of understanding its nature. In a broad reading provided by John McCumber in his recent work *Understanding Hegel's Mature Critique of Kant,* three interpretive attitudes are

identified (2014: 18-35). For the sake of clarification of my position I will follow his own classification. However, a point as to the nature of such classification is in need of explication. The binding principle of each class is not an essential likeness or homogeneity. What constitutes the unity of each interpretative tradition are the *family resemblances* as a good Wittgensteinean would accept.

First of all these Hegel interpretations consists of an approach that sees in his system a rejection or revocation of transcendental idealism, and as a result of this Hegel becomes a philosopher who represents either a culmination of old metaphysics preceding Kant in the form of, for instance, as Beiser (1993) suggests, an "inverted Spinozism", or who falls into a more radical skepticism as for instance, Bowman (2013) claims. In McCumber's words, the interpretations of this first family commonly see in Hegel a legacy of the pre-Kantian metaphysics. Like his pre-Kantian predecessors Hegel "informs us about fundamental things which we cannot experience, such as God, the soul, and freedom of the will—what Kant called "things in themselves" or noumena" (McCumber, 2014: 18).

In the second family of approaches is it the commonplace that Hegel's speculative philosophy represents a continuation with Kant's transcendental project. This group of interpretations takes the significance of Hegel's reception of the transcendental philosophy in the development of his philosophy seriously, and suggests a positive relationship between these two philosophers. However, I must emphasize that neither of the representatives of this approach accepts Hegel as a mere follower of Kant. Klaus Hartmann, Dieter Henrich, Béatrice Longuenesse, Terry Pinkard and Robert Pippin, while tracing the elements of the impact of the Kantian legacy in Hegel's writings, also put a stress upon the tension inherent in Hegel's critical reception of Kant: Hegel, while retaining some Kantian categories and ideas, rejects some other elements of Kant's idealism.

A third and alternative reading is suggested by McCumber himself. He names this approach as definitionalist. Let us read his own words as to this reading strategy:

> Defining terms is a systematically constructive enterprise, for when I provide a definition for a term, I link it to a set of other terms—its definiens. The immanence that Hegel claims for his system means, on this basis, that each of the terms in the definiens is similarly linked to a set of terms which define it, all of which have in their turn been defined within the system—all the way back to the first term, "being," whose systematic "definition" is, unsurprisingly, "nothing." In this way, what Hegel constructs is a "definitional system," and I will refer to this as the "definitionalist" reading of Hegel (McCumber, 2014: 30).

Hence according to the definitional reading, what Hegel tries to construct is nothing but a definitional system. Each term of this system is taken immanent in the sense that each is internally linked with the other set of terms, and given a full definition. What such definitional reading is based on is the claim that the problem of understanding the nature of Hegel's philosophy can be provided a solution within the context of his "linguistic turn". McCumber emphasizes here that it is only with an approach sensible to the status and growing significance of language in Hegel's mature work we would be able to render the Hegelian project plausible for the contemporary concerns of philosophy. It is also through such reading it would become possible to understand and illuminate the nature of Hegel's critique of the transcendental philosophy.

At this point I turn to my own position. My first point is related to the scope and goal of this dissertation and the status of this chapter in the whole thesis. It should be asserted that this is not a dissertation on Hegel, nor is it a study that aims at providing a meticulously detailed comparison between Hegel and Kant. A fully developed, methodical account of Hegel's critique of the Kantian enterprise also remains beyond the scope of this dissertation. Given all these limitations, this chapter will be structured around the Hegelian critique of the Kantian concept of the thing-in-itself only. The main goal of the thesis is to show that the concept of nothing as a purely limiting concept has a transcendental function in the Kantian

system. Keeping this in mind, I will scrutinize Hegel's critique of thing-in-itself by focusing only on the points that cancel out the transcendental function of the thing-in-itself as nothing as *ens rationis*. Hegel's point here is that this mind-independent and non-sensible object creates a contradiction within Kant's transcendental system insofar as it remains beyond the scope of determinate experience as the unknowable, indeterminate noumenon in the negative sense. It turns to be nothing in its externality to experience. Hence, I will keep my interest limited to the relevant aspects of Hegel's externality critique.

Secondly, I will make some remarks on the strategy that I will follow throughout the chapter. It is not my intention in the thesis to save Kant from Hegel's attacks, or vice versa. Such an attempt would attribute a *truer* status to the philosopher of the choice. In other words, it would mean to choose one over the other as the bearer of the truth as such. Instead my strategy consists of the acknowledgement of the incommensurable truths of each philosophy, and of the employment of Hegel's critique as a stress-test against Kant's transcendental philosophy in order to show that although Hegel's criticisms seem strong and justifiable at certain points Kant might offer solutions and answers equally strong and plausible.

The basic axis of Hegel's critique to the Kantian thing-in-itself is that Kant assigns abstract identity to the thing-in-itself which "enables it to be thought of as the external correlate of a sensory manifold for which an (empirical) object can be determined" (McCumber, 2014: 55). This means that the thing-in-itself in Kant is given a status of external thinghood which is external to experience. This abstract identity is an empty object arrived "when we leave out of sight all that consciousness makes of it, all its emotional aspects, and all the specific thoughts of it" (*Enc*. §44). In that sense it is the negative itself; an empty abstraction. In fact assigning abstract self-identity to the thing-in-itself is a result

of a need to find a correlate of our experience from outside. In other words, when the correlate is searched outside experience, once discovered, it gains an identity of its own. This identity of its own is its externality, that is, it is its having no stamp of the ego upon itself. In contrast, Hegel maintains that "this *caput mortuum* is still only a product of thought, such as accrues when thought is carried on to abstraction unalloyed: that it is the work of the empty 'Ego' which makes an object out of this empty self-identity of its own" (*Enc.* §44).

As a product of thought, the thing-in-itself of Hegel leaves its thinghood character and becomes a mere *in itself*. It is now immanent to experience and therefore has a temporal aspect. *In-itself* of the first stage turns into *for itself* of the second one and with this it identifies itself *in time*, in a temporal process. An adult is an in itself of a child that determines and actualizes itself only in time. This gives us an important aspect of the *in-itself* of Hegel: it can be known, for it has no strict and abstract self-identity from the very beginning. It is immanent or put another way, it can be internalized. Right at the beginning it is mind independent (we can never know for certain that the child will grow older) but as the process goes on it is internalized and get known. This means that the *in-itself* as the essence can be determined and actualized. The disparity between the *in-itself* as *telos* and actually existent determinations creates contradiction and this contradiction has the tendency of being abolished. Only when the ego has put its complete stamp on the object, in other words, only when the *in-itself* is fully turned into *in and for itself* will the progressive development come to an end and the dialectical process be completed. As Hegel puts it concisely in the *Phenomenology* "The true is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development" (*Phen*. 20).

One aspect of Hegel's critique is related to the complete subjectivization of experience. For him at the root of the problem is where we place the all determinate

experience. If we locate it *within* the subject, we have then dogmatic idealism which is refuted by Kant himself. If we locate the determinate experience *outside* the subject, then we admit that our experiences put us in direct or immediate relation with things-in-themselves, and as such the result will be transcendental realism. This solution too is denied and refuted by Kant. Hegel's criticism and solution to the latter can be traced in his sense-certainty argument as a stage in the development of consciousness. The argument itself makes clear that at the root of the problem is there the externality of pure nothing, and for consciousness it is this externality has to be overcome.

Hegel questions the claims of object as essence in the Sense-Certainty part of the *Phenomenology* and I argue that his questioning places him indirectly against the Kantian position of the externality of the thing-in-itself. It is not to say that Kant's critical philosophy exemplifies sense-certainty. In fact, he wants to transcend it. Admitting the concept of the thing-in-itself into his system, however, he contradicts himself.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel, in line with the beginning of his *Logic*, tries to display the impossibility of sense-certainty's attempt to grasp its object in its pure immediacy; in its sheer *isness*. Pure being is the most abstracted category and in that sense immediately vanishes in the category of nothing. Pure being is never an existent being and thereby has never a real possibility. Sense-certainty likewise, in trying to reach out to things in their immediate pure beings, turns out be a knowledge that does not have a realistic and a sustainable paradigm. In the end, by turning out to be the very opposite of its own assertion, this paradigm refutes itself and gives away to another.

Hegel first draws our attention to the existence of a difference -asserted by the sense-certainty not to exist but in fact available in the paradigm of sense-certainty- that 'crops up' in sense-knowledge. He claims that pure being "at once splits up into what we have called

two ‘Thises’, one ‘This’ as ‘I’, and the other ‘This’ as object” (*Phen*. 92). Neither of them is unmediated but each is present through the mediation of the other: ‘I’ through the object and the object through the ‘I’. This is the first mediation that Hegel presents as present in the certainty (certain of the absence of any mediation) of sense-knowledge.

Sense-certainty appears as a subject-object dualism but its essence is their mediation. There is then, one can claim, a contradiction between essence and appearance and this contradiction is the propelling force of negativity in sense-certainty. Sense-certainty posits the object “in the form of a simple, immediate being or as the essence…the object is: it is what is true, or it is the essence” (*Phen*. 92). The subject is unessential or it is mediated, for even in the absence of the subject the object remains. The object is an external object that subsists without the presence of the subject.

Hegel’s rejection of the reality of purely external sense-objects is grounded on the impossibility of utterance:

> If they [those who assert the truth and certainty of the reality of sense-objects] actually wanted to say it, then this is impossible, because the sensuous This that is meant cannot be reached by language, which belongs to consciousness, i.e. to that which is universal (*Phen*. 110).

In other words, language grasps things as always mediated through universals and as such a thing that is “unutterable is nothing else than the untrue, the irrational, what is merely meant [but is not actually expressed]” (*Phen*. 110). The Kantian thing-in-itself, as escaping from all conceptual determinations, is in fact nothing at all; it is an externality speaking about which would cause it to ‘crumble away’ and speaking about which would cause the speakers finally to admit that they are speaking indeed on a ‘not’ .

Sense-certainty was after the intuitive direct knowledge of the object without any mediation through a concept. It turns out however that its truth is a mediated universal.

Sense-certainty was after the indeterminate immediate pure being of the object but it turns out that this pure being is "something to which negation and mediation are essential" (*Phen*. 99). The certainty of being able to mean (*meinen*) the pure being in its empty immediacy then leaves its place to an utterance of a universality as a 'mediated simplicity'. What sense-certainty asserts is the immediate knowledge of the external object in its individuality. What the truth is however the impossibility of attaining the knowledge of the individual without the mediated universality. Individual is the unity of the universal (identity) and the particular (difference). Only when the universal is contained in the particular one can speak of individuality. The truth of sense-knowledge is indeed the individual, it is the category of Hegel, but it is not possible without the universals. The universal of sense-knowledge is not an abstract universal but a concrete one. It includes its opposite within itself; "it is also identical with itself in its opposite" (Stace, 1955: 227). The contradiction between this universal and the knowledge claim of sense-certainty creates an antagonism between these two moments and this antagonism makes sense-certainty to be prone to alteration and change. Therefore it can be said that sense-certainty carries its other within itself. It is the other itself which is to say that it is 'external to itself'.

The truth of sense-certainty is the universal, and sense-certainty's confidence that it can know the object in its truest form through apprehension only turns out to be a baseless one. Hegel declares, somewhat in a pejorative sense for the ones 'who assert the truth and certainty of the reality of sense-objects', that:

> Even the animals are not shut out from this wisdom but, on the contrary, show themselves to be most profoundly initiated into it; for they do not just stand idly in front of sensuous things as if they possessed intrinsic being, but, despairing of their reality, and completely assured of their nothingness, they fall to without ceremony and eat them up (*Phen*. 109).

Those, who profess the reality of sense-objects, try to *mean* things. This meaning, however, is unutterable and since the truth is in utterance alone, what they mean is no truth at all.

In fact, sense certainty is exemplary of the representative realism of Locke with a nuance that sense-certainty claims to make use of no concepts at all. According to representative realism, our concepts represent what stands beyond them as a self-subsistent substance. Hegel criticizes the Kantian concept of the thing-in-itself as the reiteration of such a representational thinking. I agree with Longuenesse that Hegel's Kant, by accepting the thing-in-itself as a separate given element into his system makes the concept dependent on the receptivity (2007: 23). His own claim that 'objects conform to concepts not vice versa" is then made problematic. If matter as thing-in-itself is given externally, then conceptual thought is made in one sense or another dependent on a sensuous element and this dependency is what Kant had criticized in his Copernican revolution. Therefore, the maintenance of the concept of the thing-in-itself in Kant's system of philosophy for Hegel throws that philosophy into hopeless contradictions.

Sense-certainty as a merely a stage in the full development of consciousness does not represent the truth that is attainable only in the final consciousness. Its so-called external matter is in truth internal. This matter-in-itself is the concept of nothing in Kant. If the external matter is internal in truth, this means that the concept of nothing is internal in truth. This in turn shows the internality of the concept of negation because negation, in Hegel, is a moment which is based upon the concept of nothing itself. Now, there occurs a contradiction between sense-certainty's and Kant's proposal of externality as actually existing determinations and the essence as the *telos*. This contradiction between these two differing forces constitute the void which is accepted by Hegel as the propelling force inherent within the consciousness. This force of negativity will in the end achieve the result of identity of

existence with the essence and overcome the separation of knowing and truth. As a result, what Hegel claims as his final goal is an improvement over the Kantian thing-in-itself by completely eliminating that concept and reaching a system that is able to lift the boundaries set upon human freedom as a result of the taken for granted metaphysical dualisms. When substantial content as object becomes the property of the 'I' and the 'I' is seen as in the substance, then being will become self-like in its absolute mediation. This is the final aim, the telos and only with this will the *Phenomenology of Spirit* be concluded and only with this will the antithesis of being and knowing be abolished.

### 2.2. Being and Nothing: Dialectic

Hegel starts his logic with the category of being. Being is the pure category without any determination; neither within itself nor outside of it. Since it is pure, it has no determination within itself and since it is immediate it has no reference outwards:

> *Being, pure being,* without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself. It is also not unequal relatively to an other; it has no diversity within itself nor any with a reference outwards. It would not be held fast in its purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in it or by which it could be distinguished from an other (*L*. 82).

Being is indeterminate immediacy in that nothing other mediates it. It has no other to be distinguished from and thereby no other that would bring mediation into the scene. It is simple and pure, having no specific content; it is empty. In its emptiness then it is equal to nothing, the second category of logic. As being, "[*n*]*othing, pure nothing:* it is simply equality with itself, complete emptiness, absence of all determination and content – undifferentiatedness in itself" (*L*. 82). Being, as pure, comes to be the same as nothing itself. It does not contain anything in it but only itself. It is complete emptiness and as such comes to be the same as nothing. As being the same, then, both pure being and pure nothing, each immediately "*vanishes in its opposite*" (*L*. 83). In their purity they cannot subsist in

themselves but pass over into each other. Their truth is "neither being nor nothing but that being –does not pass over but has passed over- into nothing…" (*L*. 82-3). Their truth is not purity but 'movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other'. Only in abstraction are they indeterminately immediate, that is, only in abstraction can they subsist in their indeterminate simplicity. Otherwise:

> [N]othing stands in *relationship* to a being; but in the relation, even though it contains the difference, there is present a unity with being. In whatever way nothing is enunciated or indicated, it shows itself connected with, or if you like in contact with a being, unseparated from a being, that is to say in a *determinate* being (*L*. 101).

Pure being and pure nothing are impossibilities in that they do not have any real existences. Purity is just abstraction and what is true, instead, consists in the unity of being and nothing. Difference is already contained by being and therefore its claim to pure simplicity is cancelled out from the very beginning. Parmenides had claimed the possibility of absolute pure being by affirming that nothing *absolutely* is not. His being was absolute and therefore had no relation and difference to any other. Hegel claims that "from this (such a) beginning no further *progress* can be made" (*L. 94*). No further progress can be made because in its absoluteness Parmenides' being has no differentiation immanent within it. All progress to be made then is possible only through an extraneous linkage of this being to an outsider.

One question might be this: Parmenides had started his philosophy with indeterminate being and Hegel begins his logic with the category of pure being which is indeterminate as well. What is the difference then? Parmenides, in contrast to Hegel, had claimed the possibility of absolute being. He had said 'being *is* and nothing absolutely is not'. His being was independently self-subsistent and absolute. Hegel's being, in contrast, is not the truth by itself, the truth is its passing over into nothing. Only becoming as a movement of both being

and nothing is their truth. In its purity, being is just an abstraction, ‘a valid principle’ of the ‘system of identity’; an “abstract identity [which] is the essence of pantheism” (*L*. 84).

Hegel seeks the first principle that explains both the whole world and itself and for him this is reason. Reason is a self-explanatory principle that does not have any presuppositions other than itself, and as such it constitutes a suitable beginning of the system. The first principle should not be explained by something other than itself. Otherwise, it is not the first principle for the other which explains it would be a prior and more ultimate principle. In Hegel’s philosophy, pure being suits such an aim since it is complete emptiness abstracting from everything that might be a possible candidate for explanation or presupposition. Nothing is contained in pure being and therefore pure being comes to be the same category as nothing. Moreover, it is suitable for an absolute beginning in that in its complete emptiness being passes over into nothing which is to say that it *is* but only in its unity with its opposite. It is not the absolute being of Parmenides that denies the being of its opposite i.e. nothing. Being and nothing are not isolated, instead each is taken within the sphere of the other, and as a consequence transition of each into the other is accepted. There is no progress from being of Parmenides to the finite. If, on the other hand, there is finite existing, this shows us the truth that being is of such a nature that an other is connected with it. It means that there is always an oscillation between being and nothing. This oscillation is becoming which implies that being and nothing do not remain as such but pass into their opposites. Hegel praises the Christian metaphysics for its rejecting the proposition that out of nothing comes nothing. For the Christian metaphysics, creation of the world comes from nothing so that being can arise out of nothing.

Hegel mentions that although ordinary common sense, that is “an understanding educated up to abstractions and to a belief, or rather a superstitious belief, in abstractions” (*L*. 84) takes the determinations of being and nothing in their absolute separateness, “it would

not be difficult to demonstrate this unity of being and nothing in every example in *every* actual thing or thought" (*L*. 84). Kant takes one of his fourfold nothings as the *absence* of any determination; a *lack* of reality. For him "reality is something; negation is *nothing*, namely a concept of the absence of an object, such as shadow, cold (*nihil privativum*)" (A 291/ B 347). This nothing, as said above, is immanent to phenomenal world, that is, it operates at the phenomenal level, but on the other hand as the opposite of something it is external to reality itself. By contrast Hegel defines darkness as an active reality on its own account which "does in fact show itself active in light, determining it to colour and thereby imparting visibility to it…"(*L*. 102). In absolute pure light as little can be seen as in absolute pure darkness. Light and darkness therefore exist as always intermingled and interconnected. They are always in a unity. Parmenides had to reckon with illusion and opinion, says Hegel, meaning that he, instead of purely relative being, had to reckon with false abstractions, that is, with the independently self-subsistent and absolute being. Kant takes the concept of nothing as a simple lack or absentia.[33] For him nothing simply is 'not'. For Hegel it is active, having a presence of its own. For Kant, nothing is the opposite of objective reality, for Hegel it has its own objective reality such that "cold makes its presence known in cold water, in our sensations etc." (*L*. 102). Logically speaking, for Hegel reality and negation are two different qualities in determinate being. Reality is the positive moment, negation is the

[33] When he talks of nothing, Hegel has in mind the absolute 'lack' or 'absentia' of anything at all as well. Nothing, pure nothing is "complete emptiness, absence of all determination and content..." (*L*. 82). However, he criticizes all metaphysics including that of Kant by claiming the empirical impossibility of abstract nothingness: "Now wherever and in whatever form being and nothing are in question...for the two terms have no separate subsistence of their own but *are* only in becoming, in this third. But this third has many empirical shapes, which are set aside or ignored by abstraction in order to hold fast, each by itself, these its products, being and nothing, and to show them protected against transition. Such simple procedure of abstraction can be countered, equally simply, by calling to mind the empirical existence in which that abstraction is itself something having a determinate being" (*L*. 93). For Kant, abstract nothing has no objective reality; it is what cancels out all objective reality necessary for knowledge. Moreover, for Kant, nothing is a self-standing, a self-subsistent category. By contrast, for Hegel, nothing is a category that is active and effective in that it makes its *presence* felt in sensuous experience. It is independent and substantial. For Hegel, nothing has no self-subsistence of its own; it has its subsistence in becoming only. It becomes only and thereby passes over into its opposite as soon as it is tried to be thought.

negative one. Both take their bases respectively from abstract being and nothing. In determinate being negation is itself determinate nothing. It is the nothing *of* reality such that darkness is the nothing *of* light and cold the nothing *of* heat etc. As determinate, nothing contains reality within itself. In *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* Houlgate puts the point as that:

> Reality is itself negative because it is *not* mere negation, and negation is in turn affirmative and real because it *is* the quality it is. The difference between reality and negation is thus not absolute but is a difference between two qualities that inhabit one another and *together* they constitute all determinate being. Determinate being consists, therefore not just being real *or* negative but in being real *as* negative and being negative *as* real (Houlgate, 2006: 313).

Reality as being *not* negative is itself negative and negation, as being the quality it is, is itself reality. Darkness and cold are negative nothings[34] and so affirmative somethings. They affirm the reality of their opposites while at the same time affirm their own objective presence as the qualities they are. Hegel writes that "Reality contains negation, is affirmative being…negation is determinate being…posited as affirmatively present [*als seiend*]… (*L*. 115). Rationalist metaphysics and Christian metaphysics alike, take the category of reality as one-sided with the consequence that they define God, as sum total of all realities, as containing no negation at all. When reality is defined as surviving after all negative is excluded, then God as sum total of all realities is bound to be thought as totally positive. Any negation is considered as a deficiency that does not suit to the absolute perfectness of God. Hegel criticizes this view for the very reason that for him, reality, when taken in abstraction, is pure being only and pure being is the same as nothing. When taken abstracted from all its determinations (negation), God becomes an absolute nothing in which 'all is one'. Limitless

[34] A negative nothing is a positive something in the sense that it is, as merely negative, is nothing but while affirming reality as its opposite, it affirms the negative quality of its own and in this respect it is positive.

reality is no reality at all.[35] Only a limit can determine reality and makes it the reality it is. God as absolute power, the being in all beings, can be real only in being confronted with negation. Exclusion of negation from God turns God into the empty absolute, not a determined and efficacious power at all. Hegel's God is not abstractly universal that excludes the particular from itself. His is universal that contains distinction (negative) within itself, and by containing distinction within itself, his God is able to move, never inert and motionless but Subject as well as substance; constantly negating Himself for the attainment of a more adequate grasp of truth. Hence, Hegel's God is not unity alone but unity in difference; an identity-*in*-difference.

So far in the text the unity of the categories of being and nothing was emphasized that we seem to be ignoring the difference between being and nothing. To counteract such an impression, a short mention on the side of difference, therefore, might be made. Now it is very true to say that Hegel accepts the difference between being and nothing and explicitly makes the claim that "there is a difference between them". (*L*. 92). However, since each has no self-subsistence but merely in a Third (becoming), this difference is a sublated one; a simple 'not'. Only in becoming are they distinct moments, that is to say, only as vanishing in its other has each subsistence of its own. Their difference is "*unsayable*" that [*l*]*et those who insist that being and nothing are different tackle the problem of stating in what the difference consists*" (*L*. 92). Because each is indeterminate immediacy in itself, their difference is indeterminable. There is a difference between them but it is an immediate

[35] Kant criticizes the rationalist metaphysicians' conception of God as well, but for a different reason. His criticism turns around the point that rationalist metaphysicians take the concept of God as hypostatized and personified (see A 582-3/ B 610-1). In line with his conception of nothing, he could not have directed his criticism from the Hegelian point of view. Hegel, in accordance with his dialectic, criticizes the one-sidedness of the concept of reality in old metaphysics and thereby its postulation of God as absolutely positive.

indeterminate difference. As Michael Rosen puts it in his *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism*, they are "non-identical indiscernibles" (Rosen, 1982: 152).

Such words as 'non-identical indiscernibles" may seem to a reader somewhat perplexing and in fact contradictory. If two things are non-identical, the reader thinks, they must be discernible or if only the opposite is true, they are indiscernible. This seeming inconsistency in the phrase 'non-identical indiscernibles' is in fact the starting point or better to say, the backbone of all dialectic. Hegel writes that in the proposition 'being and nothing are the same' identity of the determinations is asserted while the difference of them is denied. In the proposition there are actually two determinations which are indeed different. If emphasis is laid chiefly on the unity alone this is an abstraction and such an abstraction makes the statement one-sided and untrue. Both identity and difference are present in the proposition and such duality is what causes the statement to cancel itself out and move to a higher level of truth i.e. becoming. To express this truth another equally true statement is taken in to consideration: 'being and nothing are not the same'. This is equally true and both statements therefore constitute a logical contradiction. There is but also a union between these two statements for every one of them refers to one and the same thing i.e. being and nothing. In other words, the determinations that are expressed in two statements are the same. Hegel calls this union as the "*unrest* of *incompatibles*, as a *movement*" and says that "the whole result which we have here before us is *becoming*, which is not merely the one-sided or abstract unity of being and nothing. It consists rather in this movement…" (*L*. 91-2). More concretely speaking, as in oriental proverbs, "all that exists has the germ of death in its very birth, that death, on the other hand, is the entrance into new life…" (*L*. 83) and it is this movement, this immediate vanishing of being in nothing as its other, this becoming, that is the abstract base of all movement of more concrete categories of *Logic*. As will be elaborated in the following paragraphs, the alteration (otheration) in the category of something takes its

impetus from the self-relation of negation, and negation, which is a quality in determinate being, is now the "determinate element of determinateness" (*L*.111), it is nothing, now differentiated, reflected and determinate.

Houlgate writes that Kant famously maintains that "something" is the most abstract concept we can entertain" (2006: 312). It is the most abstract in that it has nothing in common with what is distinct from itself. The concept of nothing, therefore, for Kant, is completely *excluded* from the concept of something. Nothing is external to something; it can never count as one of its moments. Being is the positing –actual setting- of something whereas nothing can count as the absence of something's objective reality. Nothing is an absentia, not inherent in something but a determination (lack of being) taken as separated from and external to something. It is only nothing; not contained in and contains being. Such a nothing, Hegel claims, exists in ordinary reflective thought, of which Kant, with his logic of identity, might be claimed to be a consistent follower[36].

In his dialectic Hegel takes the concept of nothing as merely a moment in the category of determinate being. As a moment, nothing is within the determinate being with another moment i.e. being. Now being is the positive moment and as such it is reality. Nothing is the negative one and as such negation. Reality and negation constitute two moments of determinate being which is determinate just because it contains negation within itself. Both reality and negation are determinate beings and consequently the difference between these two qualities is an internal one. Determinate being relates with itself for the different qualities within itself (reality and negation) are different but can sublate themselves as being

[36] It must be emphasized that the above interpretation of Kant is binding only for one of the four categories of nothing and in that sense it seems to present an oversimplified picture of Kant. My argument is that Kant has four kinds of nothing and is that they vary according to different contexts. Only one of them is entirely external. Moreover, as I will show in the second part of the chapter, Kant has very effective answers to this Hegelian charge of externality. Externality might be not as detrimental to theoretical and practical philosophy as a Hegelian suppose it to be.

the qualities of the same one determinate being. Therefore determinate being is real and negative at the same time: "it is a single, simple quality that is equally real and negative". (Houlgate, 2006: 314). Determinate being is being because it is determinate. Here being is not the pure being which is the first category of *Logic*. As Stace in his *The Philosophy of Hegel* argues, "determinate being is a being which definitely is *i.e*. does not at once disappear into nothing" (1955: 140). As such it can and only *it* can be distinguished from pure nothing. Moreover, determinate being's being comes from its determinateness, that is, "destroy the determinateness and the being itself is destroyed (disappears into nothing). In fact the determination *is* the being" (Stace, 1955: 140). This determination of the determinate being arises directly from the fact that determinate being, in addition to its containing reality, contains negation. Here now reality is not pure absolute being. It is after all reality; something determinate. And negation is not pure nothingness that negates everything. At that stage it is now determinate negation that negates something definite: "sea is the negation of the land. But sea is not nothing" (Stace, 1955: 142). Therefore reality and negation constitute the two moments of determinate being as such. Both reality and negation are determinate and as a result both are mediated by each other. In other words, there is now a relationship of mediation (which was absent in the transition of pure being and pure nothing)[37] between the two and it is this relation that logically produces the category of something out of the category of determinate being. Reality is being but being that contains negation: "Reality itself contains negation, is determinate being" (*L*: 115). Reality is reality but at the same time is determined as being *not* negation itself. This 'not' is the negative inherent in reality. So negation when relating with reality, a relationship of mediation, relates

[37] In fact Hegel claims in page 116 of *Logic* that self-mediation is present even in becoming, though in a quite abstract manner. In page 103 he makes the claim that although being is *essentially* nothing, and *vice versa*, more developed forms of mediation and holding of being and nothing in any kind of relationship is inadmissible to employ here.

itself simultaneously with itself. Negation relates with negation and this is self-relation and "something is the *first negation of negation*, as simple self-relation in the form of being" (*L*. 115). Something as a category, hence, is possible only through the inherent and active nature of negation within the determinate being. This activity, in turn, takes its base from the transition of pure being into pure nothing and of pure nothing into pure being. Thus, a Hegelian might claim that Kant, taking the category of reality as independent, automatically takes the category of nothing as external and extraneous. He thereby omits the power of the negative in the establishment of the categories. Hegel claims just the contrary, writing that "[a]t the base of all these determinations (determinate being, life, thought, subject and so on) lies the negative unity with itself"(*L*. 115).

"*Something* is the negation of the negation in the form of *being*" (*L*. 116). It is the negation's self-relation, "restoring of the simple relation to self" (*L*. 116). Something, therefore, is self-mediation and as such is "simple oneness which is *being*" (*L*. 116). Both reality and negation as the moments of determinate being now collapses into oneness constituting the self-mediating and simple category of something. Something contains the first two moments in itself. One of them is being; now determinate being and further *a* determinate being. The other is nothing; now equally *a* determinate being but in the form of the negative of something –an *other*. Both something and other are somethings but at the same time both are others. Something is other but the other is something as well. There are then two somethings and two others at the same time. However; Hegel mentions that:

> At the same time, as has been remarked, every determinate being, even for ordinary thinking, determines itself as an other, so that there is no determinate being which is determined only as such, which is not outside a determinate being and therefore is not itself an other (*L*. 118).

Every something, then, has its other and thereby is an other itself. There is no something alone. This is because something contains two differing moments; one is reality

and the other is negation. Each must have equal weight in the constitution of something. Reality is the positive side constituting something as self-equal to itself. Negation is the negative side constituting the other of something as a category "which is absolutely dissimilar within itself, that which negates itself, *alters* itself" (*L*. 118). The other is other relatively but also an other in its own self. Its nature is determined as other like the nature of physical nature is determined as the other of spirit. Its otherness on its own is its being "*external to itself*" (*L*. 118), and it is that it constantly alters itself; its nature consists of being always an other; an otheration, i.e., alteration.

A possible critique drawn from Hegel's dialectic against Kant may follow Kant's argument on substance as *substantia phaenomena*. For Kant, substance is permanent, never increasing or diminishing. All change and coexistence are of appearances only as determinations of the abiding substance. In that sense substance is taken as an abstractly universal category which is immobile and which excludes all determinations from itself. It is the self-same category which is needed in order us to perceive the simultaneity and succession of empirical representations. In other words, substance, by Kant, is taken as external; accidents are assigned to it contingently and it serves only for the perception of the alteration of the object that alters. Hegel claims he puts the negative into the very heart of something. Negation is a moment *of and in* the determinate being so what changes is not only an externally attached accident but the very something itself. The other is in the something and when the other others, it means something others. There is no unchangeable substratum that resists change, but something, as the simple oneness with itself, changes itself in its very being. This difference between Kant and Hegel on change and alteration seems to be the direct outcome of their metaphysical understanding of the category of nothing. When nothing is taken externally, then "the real in appearance and as the substrate of all change remains ever the same" (A 182/ B 225).

It is lack of any attributable predicates that makes matter-in-itself empty, therefore nothing: "[b]ut since we can apply to it [noumenon] none of the concepts of our understanding the representation remains for us empty" (A 288/ B 345). What we have here as the sole knowledge is the existence of it as substance and the rest is unknowable. Stace points out the difference between the unknown and the unknowable (1955: 45-49). If we apply his differentiation to the context here, matter-in-itself is not the concept of unknown today but might be known tomorrow. It is the concept of 'the unknowable', today or tomorrow. In this sense it is different from other things that has not yet been an object of a possible experience. The square root of two is not an object of possible experience either but it is not beyond the powers of human capacity of knowledge. It is just unknown. The unknowable is affirmed from the very beginning as that which is destined to remain as such. It is the lack of possible predicates makes it to be labelled as nothing. Matter-in-itself is substance, the knowledge of which is forever beyond reach and it is this unknowability of it that makes it possible to be classified under *entia rationis*; the first division of nothing.

The real in appearance is matter, now taken in the Axioms as the substrate of all change that remains ever the same. This substrate, this matter is claimed to be an external element. It is the thing-in-itself and as such an *ens rationis*. It is not very surprising then that Kant writes that the substrate abides in the face of the change of all other determinations. This line of argument can be radicalized by a Hegelian as that Kant takes nothing (as a basic logical category) as excluded from the category of being and when being and nothing are so separated with ignoring any mediating relationship between two, all further categories of the system are bound to be taken in their exclusive immediacy only; never in a mutually reinforcing and active relationship. It is the immanent activity of the negative, which is explicated in *Phenomenology* that propels all movement of consciousness towards a legitimate satisfaction. Hegel writes that "[t]hus consciousness suffers this violence at its

own hands: it spoils its own limited satisfaction" (*Phen*. 80). This suffering is the situation of finding no possibility of "remaining in a state of unthinking inertia" (*Phen*. 80) and next section will try to explain the basic structure of this movement of consciousness, under the power of the negative, as indicated in Preface and Introduction.

### 2.3. In-itself and Being for consciousness of this in-itself

The consciousness is a "formative process" and "[t]he goal is Spirit's insight into what knowing is" (*Phen*. 29). It is coming-to-be of knowledge which in its first phase is non-spiritual and a mere being acted upon. Hegel's supposition of consciousness as a process is opposed to more conventional opinions:

> The more conventional opinion gets fixated on the antithesis of truth and falsity…and hence it finds only acceptance or rejection. It does not comprehend the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive unfolding of truth but rather sees in it simple disagreements (*Phen*. 2).

The final aim in this progressive unfolding is genuine knowing which can be attained only after knowledge travels a long way and works its passage. Kant just declares the impossibility of reaching such a standpoint, claiming that the thing-in-itself is forever unknowable, that is, it is forever out of our grasp, it is entirely external. Hegel opposes this separation of knowledge from the thing-in-itself, saying that such a distinction can be drawn *within* the consciousness only; not between consciousness and an external object. In other words, for Hegel, the object, even before being conceptualized and subjected to universals, is always already internal and conceptual. There is no matter as thing-in-itself as completely separate from the concept but object as other but *not* foreign to consciousness. The object as other is the other of the self and not external to it. It is, in that sense, "the essential self-othering whereby the object of consciousness becomes what it really is" (Lauer, 2002: 40). This but can be achieved just because the object as matter is always already implicitly

conceptual. Only then can the identity between subject and object is accomplished, for only then can subject and object be said to be homogeneous. Identity for Hegel is desirable for only then will the object's externality be overcome and only then will the subject be dependent merely on his own total self. Lauer explains this as the process of becoming more spiritual than natural. Natural implies "essential repetitiveness and predictability" whereas spiritual is "creativity and novelty" (Lauer, 2002: 5). So, identity is adequate consciousness which is free from external determinations; it is thereby creative consciousness. The dialectic inherent in consciousness, which moves without a halt towards the absolute, has its own immanent standard by which it measures whether the object corresponds to its Notion (concept) or *vice versa*. Hegel writes that:

> Consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself, so that the investigation becomes a comparison of consciousness with itself; for the distinction made above [between being for another, that is, knowing and being-in-itself] falls within it (*Phen*. 84). (Parenthesis is mine)

The distinction between the knowledge and the in-itself of the object is set up by the consciousness within itself so that consciousness makes an immanent examination whether the Notion corresponds to the object. We can designate either *knowledge* or the *in-itself of the object* as Notion. "It is evident, of course, that the two procedures are the same" (*Phen*. 84). Therefore consciousness has for it two moments: one is the in-itself of the object and the other is the being of this object for consciousness. If two moments corresponds to one another, then dialectic comes to an end. If not, that is, if there is still a disparity between the two, then consciousness moves forward to create a conformity between what it takes as 'consciousness of its knowledge of the truth' (knowledge of the object) and 'consciousness of what for it is the True' (in-itself of the object). The disparity is the negative:

> It is the process of distinguishing…out of this distinguishing, of course, comes their [of knowledge and substance] identity, and the resultant identity is the truth…disparity, rather, as the negative, the self, is still directly present in the True as such (*Phen*. 39).

Negative, as the propelling force immanent in consciousness, propels consciousness towards a unity, an identity in which negativity is still present. That is why the last phase in Hegel's system is identity-*in*-difference, not an abstract universal identity. Negativity results when consciousness faces the disparity between its two moments. Then its knowledge of the object alters, but with it the object alters as well. The object alters for it is the object *of* the knowledge that changes. It comes to consciousness that what it took as the in-itself or the true is not the in-itself but "it was only an in-itself *for consciousness*" (*Phen*. 85). Consciousness had taken the object as the true but now what it had taken as the truth turns out to be not adequately true. Its more truth consists in its being an in-itself *for consciousness* only: "[T]his then is the True: the being-for consciousness of this in-itself. Or, in other words, this is the *essence*, or the *object* of consciousness" (*Phen*. 86). The first object as in-itself now turns into nothingness contained in the aroused one. This nothingness, however, is not complete annihilation of it. It is negation and as negated, the first object is still contained in the new one. "This nothingness is specifically the nothingness from which it [the new object] emerges… and "the new object is the "*determinate* negation" (*Phen*. 79), which has arisen upon the specific previous object. The point to be remembered is, I think, that when consciousness is at a particular form, in other words, when it has a particular object as in-itself, it also already establishes the beyond as an implicit goal. The truer object or the more truth of the object is already contained in the particular present object. At first sight the present object appears as the truth but what truer is emerges as the consciousness progresses and becomes aware of this new object. Here negation is not a general negation of pure nothingness. It is specific in that it has a content (the true of the preceding object) and in that sense it has a form, a specification. Otherwise it is the nothingness of scepticism that throws everything untrue into an empty nihilism.

This comparison of knowledge with the object has its own standard. The standard is "accepted as the *essence* or as the *in-itself*" (*Phen*. 81). Before progression to a new object, the in-itself of the previous object is taken as the truth. In what is affirmed by consciousness as *being-in-itself* consciousness sets up the standard to measure whether what it knows (knowledge) corresponds to its object. Once consciousness finds out that its knowledge does not correspond to its object; then the object, as well as and along with the knowledge of it, changes and this means that the criterion as the in-itself alters itself and becomes a being-in-itself *for consciousness*. This new object is now the essence; it is now the new in-itself which would serve as a new standard for further progression.

The Absolute, for Hegel, is the subject matter of philosophy and philosophy and religion share one and the same purpose i.e. knowing the Absolute. Absolute, therefore is a synonym of God; a more religious expression of the same object. Hegel does not provide a precise definition of the term Absolute but his usage of the concept gives us some clue to its exact position in the history of philosophy. Hegel criticizes Spinoza's definition of the concept of substance but some effects of this definition on him can be traced. For Hegel Absolute is substance and substance is defined by Spinoza as that "what is in itself, and is conceived through itself; that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed" (*Ethics*, Part I, D3). This means that substance is absolutely independent in that it has no mediation by any other outside of it. This notion, Hegel shares with Spinoza in taking his concept of Absolute as 'all-inclusive', that is, including all relations within itself. It has no specific determinations that relates it to something else. It is the totality; all independent and it can be conceived purely and merely by itself alone. It is the pure being of *Logic* that Hegel claims explicitly to be the proper characterization of Spinoza's substance. However and in spite of all this, Hegel's Absolute differs in an important manner from Spinoza' substance. For Hegel, the Absolute is "the

living substance" (*Phen.* 18) which is actual only in the movement of positing itself. It is self-mediation always othering itself. Hence, for Spinoza, substance is inert and static, for Hegel, it is moving. For Spinoza it is an abstract universality that has no difference within itself, for Hegel, it is "the bifurcation of the simple…doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its anti-thesis…" (*Phen.* 18). It is therefore to be grasped and expressed" not only as *Substance* but equally as *Subject*"[38] (*Phen.* 17). The Absolute is self-revealing and not an objective category alone. Substance is static but subject is dynamic, and substantial and subjective sides of the Absolute coincide. Being and thought coincide in that static being "(substantiality) must be conceived as including within itself the dynamic universality proper to *knowing*" (Lauer, 2002: 308).

Hegel's argument on the category of substance bears a similarity at one point with that of *totum realitatis* of the rationalist metaphysicians and of Kant. Both represent a *totum* but *totum realitatis* includes only the positive determinations (realities) within itself. Negation is an external category as a simple 'not'. For them, being is being and nothing is nothing. In line with this logic of identity, *totum realitatis* is an unchanging whole; its identity is positivity, all excluding the concept of the negative. The Hegelian Absolute might be taken as similar to the Kantian thing-in-itself and as such it can be said that it is nothing. However, it is the matter-in-itself of Kant that Hegel attacks as being externally given and therefore has the potential of impeding any union between subject and object: since it is absolute nothing, there is no dynamical relationship between the thing-in-itself and positive *totum*

[38] The Absolute as Subject corresponds to the Kantian 'I think'. Both are constitutive of their objects and both have the unifying activity as their projects. There is, however, one crucial difference between the two: for Kant the 'I think' have the concepts (categories) as external determinations only. 'I think' is the formal unity standing over and above the categories. Categories are reduced to its properties. For Hegel, the subject *is* the concept and as such subjectivity is the movement of the concept. Moreover, in Hegel the subject as 'I' is universal in its 'unlimited equality with itself'. It is not merely individual and personal as of Kant's 'I think', but both individual and universal at the same time; it is singular. In that sense, one can claim that Kantian subject is solipsistic in that it can exist apart from all other subjects. Hegelian subject is individuality, absolute determinateness as well but only *in* its abstract universality. For a detailed information see *Logic* p. 583; and Longuenesse, 1981: 27-29.

*realitatis*. Each sphere is taken as self-standing and separate. Hegel, on the other hand, takes negation as inhering in the Absolute and that is why for him the Absolute is in constant, unhalting movement. He says that:

> For mediation is nothing beyond self-moving sameness, or is reflection into self, the moment of the 'I' which is for itself pure negativity or, when reduced to its pure abstraction, *simple becoming*. The 'I', or becoming in general, this mediation, on account of its simple nature, is just immediacy in the process of becoming and is the immediate itself. Reason is, therefore, misunderstood when reflection is excluded from the True, and is not grasped as a positive moment of the Absolute (*Phen*. 21).

Reflection is the work of the 'I'. This reflection is mediation and mediation supposes negation. 'I' therefore is pure negativity in that it constantly determines itself anew through the activity of negativity. If reflection and thereby mediation as a positive moment is excluded from the Absolute, then the Absolute becomes one-sided substance only; which is not subject and as such inert, static and dead. Negativity then should be grasped as itself a positive moment. It means that it should be grasped as present; having a being of its own. In that sense then negativity in Hegel is a category which is not excluded from substance and thereby which is present and active in that substance.

The Absolute is a process and "such a process cannot stop until there are no more dimensions of the object to be revealed –until it is "absolute," and until there are no more inadequacies in the awareness of the object- when consciousness itself is "absolute." (Lauer, 2002: 5) This is subject-object identity where the object has no hidden crannies to be revealed anymore and where the subject is dependent no more to what is outside of itself. Spirit will comprehend totally only its own total self. Moreover, this subject-object identity is the working *telos* of the whole process of progressive development of consciousness. In fact, the *telos* is the identity of identity and non-identity (identity-*in*-difference). Non-identity of the subject and object is but one phase in the development of consciousness. In

the ordinary experience subject is distinct from the object and philosophy cannot dismiss this appearance as a mere illusion but should take it into consideration. What is at the top is genuine knowing and short of it are "mere appearances" (*Schein*). In the appearance however lies the germ of truth, albeit implicitly. The process is the realization of the in-itself (essence) hidden in the appearing. For this to occur but, consciousness must turn against what is merely apparent in it. In other words, it must negate what is merely apparent by carrying solely what is true to the further stage. *Telos* is the identity of identity and non-identity which is scientific knowing. Short of that stage there is always subject-object dualism of ordinary consciousness which consciousness is always trying to surmount and overcome. "Reason is *purposive activity*" (*Phen*.22) in that it has a *telos* to be realized. This *telos*, however is not externally set up and fixed once and for all but is the immanent, 'self-moving' activity of the subject. It is the "*being-for-self* or pure negativity" (*Phen*. 22). Since "the *beginning* is the *purpose*" (*Phen*. 22) the realized purpose is the movement of the subject itself, not external to it. The result and the beginning have the same immediacy and simplicity for the result is contained in the beginning as its truth, though implicitly only. The result as existent actuality realizes itself *in* the constant process of its becoming. Therefore, the result does not remain as the antithesis of the process of becoming. The antithesis is overcome reflectively, that is, both the result and the process of becoming is simple; the becoming is no different from the result as the True. In other words, both the becoming and the result are the self, returning into itself as identifying itself with itself, and therefore both have the same simplicity and immediacy of the Absolute. In that sense, *telos* is not set up externally by the philosopher. It is immanent within the subject matter (the Absolute) of philosophy and as such the question of when and how it will be realized cannot be answered beforehand in the system. Hegel is explicit that:

> But the *goal* is as necessarily fixed as the serial progression; it is the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, where knowledge finds itself, where Notion corresponds to object and object to Notion (*Phen*. 80).

The goal is fixed but it is the progression of the Absolute as the subject matter of philosophy which will show when Notion corresponds to object and *vice versa.* It is the Absolute itself that will come to a halt by itself. The result is not an external criterion put forward by the philosopher at the beginning of the serial progression. It is true that Hegel, whiling investigating and examining the reality of cognition sets up a presupposition that could serve as a standard:

> It would seem that it cannot take place without some presupposition which can serve as its underlying *criterion*. For an examination consists in a applying an accepted standard…thus the standard as such (and Science likewise if it were the criterion) is accepted as the *essence* or as the *in-itself* (*Phen*. 81).

The criterion is the essence or the in-itself but this criterion, Hegel claims is set up by and within the consciousness itself. The Absolute is bifurcation and consciousness distinguishes itself from something as the object of the Absolute. Short of the final identity of identity and non-identity of the subject and object, there is always a gap between this final identity *as* the *essence* and the *appearance* of the particular form of consciousness. Put another way, there is a gap between essentiality and actuality. Essentiality is the truth, whereas actuality is the appearing, a *Schein* and the gap between them is a contradiction. It is in fact self-contradiction of the Absolute and contradiction is that:

> *[E]verthing is inherently contradictory*…contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within itself that it moves, has an urge and activity. (*L*. 439).

For Hegel contradiction is necessary in the way that only containing it within itself is something impelled to resolve that contradiction. Its internal self-movement is contradiction:

> Similarly, internal self-movement proper, *instinctive urge* in general, (the appetite or *nisus* of the monad, the entelechy of absolutely simple essence), is nothing else but the fact that something is, in one and the same respect, *self-contained and* deficient, *the negative of itself* (*L.* 440*).*

Negativity causes internal self-movement because of the gap of opposition between two moments. In essentiality the ultimate principle is the identity-*in*-difference. In appearance however, this principle is not yet realized. In appearance the subject is still opposed to the object; they are not yet in a mutual dependency relationship. The truth, however, is their mutual dependency as a unity. And wherever there is a gaping void between essence and appearance, then there is a contradiction which forces consciousness to move forward in the aim of transcending that contradiction. As Findlay analyses in *Phenomenology*, "[t]he disparity between the self and the objective Substance is the void which inspires their movement towards one another" (*Phen.* Analysis, 37). None the less, such a disparity between the self and the objective substance works as a principle of motion only if there is a contradictory ultimate principle, i.e. a *telos.*

Hegel maintains that Kant, like the dogmatic metaphysicians, has no proper tool for resolving the opposition of contrary determinations. For his Kant, the antinomies are the reason's inexorable products, resulting from the reason's incapacity to differentiate adequately between the phenomena and noumena. Kant, therefore Hegel says did not take the antinomies in their positive, true result. He, as such then, might be said to have remained within the boundaries of ordinary thinking:

> Therefore though ordinary thinking everywhere has contradiction for its content, it does not become aware of it, but remains an external reflection which passes from likeness to unlikeness, or from the negative relation to the reflection-into-self, of distinct sides. It holds these determinations over against one another and has in mind *only them,* but not their *transition*, which is essential point and which contains the contradiction…Thinking reason, however, sharpens, so to say, the blunt difference of diverse terms, the mere manifoldness of

> pictorial thinking, into *essential* difference, into *opposition.* Only when the manifold terms have been driven to the point of contradiction do they become active and lively towards one another, receiving in contradiction the negativity which is the indwelling pulsation of self-movement and spontaneous activity [*Lebendigkeit*] (*L*. 441-2).

External reflection holds identity as abstract identity and difference as abstract difference. Identity therefore is hold over against difference; not containing but completely excluding it. This is not opposition and wherever there is no opposition there is no contradiction, and wherever there is no contradiction there is no negativity. Kant, Hegel would argue, had the concept of nothing but as an abstract category only. In this sense his concept (or concepts for he has four) of nothing is not a negativity. Negativity is active negation; active in the sense that it produces movement and activity. It pulsates and from the perspective of dialectic Kant's nothing is static; unable to create a force for the dynamism of the phenomenal being. Since for him the category of nothing stands over against the category of being, the determination of the object remains as an inexhaustible project. To him, complete determination is 'set *merely* as a task' and because complete determination is never complete, God remains as a transcendent idea only. This means that phenomenal world is in complete inertia, never explained in its dynamism and vitality. In his system then, the fact of change, explained as the alteration only, is insufficiently explained or, at worst, not considered at all. For Hegel, in contrast, pure being vanishes into its opposite and such vanishing of one category into the other is the abstract base of the movement of all further categories. The change is explained through the moment of negation which takes its base from the category of abstract nothing. Kant, by putting abstract being as an actual possibility, excludes all noumena as abstract nothing and for Hegel such an abstraction makes the category of nothing as an external dead category. External to the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding then the matter-in-itself as the thing-in-itself becomes a reality completely separated from the forms and categories themselves. As a result, Hegel

would insist, categories themselves become impotent and passive; not capable of the unification of an external reality. Hegel, by deriving the categories from each other dialectically, claims to be surmounting this problem of his predecessors and bringing into philosophy a new and startling outlook.

## 3. Kantian Nothing as External

### 3.1. Matter-in-itself and Externality

In the opening lines of Aesthetic Kant writes as follows:

> The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is entitled *appearance*. That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*; but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the *form* of appearance… while the matter of all appearance is given to us *a posteriori* only, its form must lie ready for sensations *a priori* in the mind... (A 20/ B 34).

Only the form lies ready in the mind; the matter being *a posteriori* is external to mind. It is given from outside the mind and thereby it is an *external* condition of all experience. In *Opus Postumum* Kant puts that "there must first be a matter filling space, ceaselessly self-moving by agitating forces…This is the basis for any matter as object of possible experience… The all-penetrating caloric is the first condition of the possibility of all outer experience" (21: 550). As an external condition of the possibility of experience, matter, compared to internal forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding, comes then to be an alien element that has no identity with the internal forms and the categories. This alienation is not because matter is structurally different (agitating forces) from the forms of intuition and categories but merely because 'it is given to us *a posteriori*' from outside the mind. Kant claims in the *Critique* that "the nominal definition of truth, that is the agreement of knowledge with its object, is assumed as granted" (A 58/ B 82) but in the same section he goes on saying that general logic cannot give us adequate criterion of truth since it yields

only the formal and logical demands not the objective one. Only the analytic part of transcendental logic isolates understanding from the sensibility and proposes that "in the absence of intuition all our knowledge is without objects, therefore remains entirely empty" (A62/ B 87). Kant thereby accepts the criterion of truth as objectivity and this is bounded to intuition. But intuition is sensibility which receives data from outside. Therefore for him there must be some kind of conformity between the internal forms and categories and the external content (matter). On the one hand it is true that if *a priori* principles are contradicted, the content is got lost but on the other if the categories remain without objects, they remain empty. Knowledge therefore rests, in a sense, on the empirical given.

Hegel sees the definition of truth "as the agreement of cognition with its object –a definition of great, indeed of supreme value" (*L.* 593). He but criticizes Kant by taking the "material of sense, the manifold of intuition too strong and thereby unable to get away from it to the consideration of the Notion and the categories *in and for themselves*…" (*L.* 594). What Hegel has in mind is that if the material element is simply given as alien, then a possible agreement of cognition (Notion) with its object becomes *ipso facto* impossible. If appearance is the undetermined object of intuition and if it contains matter in addition to forms, how can cognition (concept) and appearance, that is, two heterogeneous elements can agree? A Kantian might give an answer to this question by claiming that though matter-in-itself as substance is external and thereby alien, matter as Ether is already conceptualized and subjective. In that sense matter can agree with the transcendental forms and the categories. It is that we can form true judgements *within* the phenomenal world. Now Kant says that the concept is the unifying activity. It unifies what comes to it as a manifold object. *Synthesis speciosa* is the recognition in a concept of what comes to it as an apprehended manifold. Even in apprehension unification is present as an aim:

> The manifold of representation would therefore never form a whole, since it would lack that unity which only consciousness can impart to it. If, in counting, I forget that the units which now present to my senses have been successively added to another by me, I would not cognize the production of the multiplicity through this successive addition of unit to unit, and so would not cognize a number. For the concept of a number is nothing but the consciousness of this unity of synthesis. The word 'concept' might of itself suggest this remark. For this unitary consciousness is what combines the manifold, successively intuited, and thereupon also reproduced, into one representation. (A 103).

The unification of the manifold is, in one sense, the gathering in a concept. However, for this to be possible there must be some likeness from the very beginning between the manifold and the unitary concept. We said that for Kant the matter-in-itself is the alien, external element of appearance. And if so, from the perspective of Hegelian immanency, the determination of the object as appearance through the unitary concept is bound to be very incomplete from the very beginning. Moreover, the external element is noumenon and noumenon is claimed to be nothing (*ens rationis*) and this in turn brings us to the idea that matter-in-itself as noumenon is external nothing, and nothing in Kant *is external*[39].

One might say that this comes to the conclusion that this externality of matter-in-itself as noumenon is what makes the complete determination of the object through the concept a futile attempt never to be achieved. Matter, as in-itself, is the content of knowledge as to which one cannot pass any meaningful judgment. As long as no possible intuition of it is available to us, it is in-itself an empty concept. In-itself matter is unknowable and therefore is no possible intuition. As such it is a noumenon "that lies without its [understanding's] own proper sphere" (A 238/ B 297). Kant makes the claim that:

[39] Externality of matter-in-itself is its external position to the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding. These are counted as internal conditions of the unity of the whole of experience whereas the matter is counted as external. I think that is why Kant uses the adjectival term 'transcendental' when he speaks of matter. Transcendental is what transcends the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding. In this sense, matter is transcendental; it is external to the subject's mind.

> Now the object cannot be given to a concept otherwise than in intuition; for though a pure intuition can indeed precede object *a priori*, even this intuition can acquire its object, and therefore objective validity, only through the empirical intuition of which it is the mere form. Therefore all concepts, and with them all principles, even such as are possible *a priori*, relate to empirical intuitions, that is to the data for a possible experience (A 239/ B 298).

This passage provides us with the information that concepts without empirical intuitions are empty concepts lacking objective validity. Kant calls such empty concepts "a concept without an object (*ens rationis*), like noumena" (A 290/ B 347) and counts them under his table of fourfold divisions of nothing in a note under the heading of the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection at the end of the Analytic. Thing-in-itself is an empty concept without object because no direct experience of the matter-in-itself is possible for us. This is why the Ether -Deduction is "a basis in *idea* … [It] does not prove the existence of such a material, however, (for example, that which is called the all-penetrating and permanently moving caloric); to this extent, [i]t is a *hypothetical* material" (21: 553) (Emphasis is mine). In the Deduction, one begins from the existence of the unity of the whole of experience to its concept and then moves forward from this concept to the concept of Ether contained within the concept of the former, and lastly from that latter concept to the existence of it. In other words, one makes an analytic deduction based on the concepts alone. This is why matter can be counted among noumena, the direct experiential proof of which is impossible. It is true that Kant makes the claim that "the whole [a certain material] is knowable, hence that the possibility of the existence of such a whole can be demonstrated *a priori* (as necessary)" (22: 553). However this demonstration is not an experience of sensibility as to whether a certain material exists or not. As it was said above it is just a hypothetical postulate derived from the necessity of the existence of matter for the unity of the whole of experience.

If the thing-in-itself as *ens rationis* is a type of nothing according to Kant's table of nothingness, and if it is an external condition of the unity of the whole of experience, then

nothing might be considered as an external condition of the unity of the whole of experience. As I claimed in the dissertation, nothing plays a transcendental role in Kant's system. As *ens rationis*, nothing as a limiting concept makes the phenomenal world possible. However, the efficacy of this role, Hegel would say, is cancelled out just because nothing is external to phenomena. Moreover and speaking in Hegel's terms, in Kant nothing is not immanent but is other than being. Such an externality, instead of making the progressive development of phenomena feasible, creates a hindrance to it. The complete determination of the object is never complete and the display of the object itself to the subject creates an infinite strife for the subject, never coming to an end. In line with his logic of identity, as the Hegelian critique suggests, Kant strictly separates phenomena (being) from noumena (nothing) by rendering impossible any interaction, or a dialectic between these two realms. However, it is in fact this very gap between phenomena and noumena that Kant insistently keeps in his system to mark the limits of human knowledge. His critique of pure understanding necessarily draws on the separation between these two realms, even attributing a transcendental function to *nothing*. His following words in the first *Critique* provides a ground for this claim: "[noumenon] is of no service except to mark the limits of our sensible knowledge and to leave open a space which can fill neither through possible experience nor through pure understanding" (A 288-9/ B 345). It can also be claimed that Kant's emphasis on this very gap is constitutive for his critique of pure understanding. Consider the following quotation:

> The critique of this pure understanding, accordingly, does not permit us to create a new field of objects beyond those which may be presented to it as appearances, and so to stray into intelligible worlds; nay, it does not allow of our entertaining even the concept of them. The error … lies in employing the understanding, contrary to its vocation, transcendentally, and in making objects, that is, possible intuitions, conform the concepts, not concepts to possible intuitions, on which alone their objective validity rests (A 289/ B 345).

The concept is the synthesis of the whole. It aims at totalization from the very beginning and recognition in a concept of the apprehended manifold is just this unitary determination. The problem for Kant is that once the matter as in-itself is other than (abstractly different from) the unitary concept, how can such an edificatory process can reach to an end or one can ask, how can it ever begin? This point can also be put as follows: On the one hand, Kant claims in *Opus Postumum* that "[t]here exists a matter, distributed in the whole universe as a continuum, uniformly penetrating all bodies…" (21: 218) and on the other hand the synthesis of apprehension is defined in the *Critique* as being the running through of the manifold and its being held together: "In order that unity of intuition may arise out of this manifold it must first be run through, and held together" (A 99). Longuenesse interprets this passage as such: "[w]hat Kant considers as immediately given is not a manifold of sensory atoms, but *indeterminate empirical intuitions*; the sensations or impressions constituting its "matter" are perceived "as" manifold only if they are actively *distinguished*" (2000a: 37).

The point here is that matter, if it is a continuum constituting a uniformity, is then not a manifold by itself. Only after being actively differentiated by the forms of sensibility becomes matter a manifold. Before such a differentiation, it is just a crude indeterminate and undistinguished whole. The question here is that how can such a whole be differentiated by the forms of sensibility? The forces constituting matter are said to be external elements. They are given from outside the thought. Moreover matter is said to be indeterminate and undifferentiated as taken by itself. Then how can thought create a difference (manifold) out of this *simple* external element?[40] This problem is discussed under the Remark 3 of Being section of *Science of Logic* by Hegel. There he quotes Jacobi's "polemic against Kantian *a*

[40] The question can be clarified in more Hegelian terms: If matter in-itself as nothing is abstractly external to forms of intuition (differentiating forms), then how can these forms reach out to matter and makes a manifold out of it?

*priori* synthesis of self-consciousness in his *Treatise on the Understanding of the Critical philosophy to Bring Reason to Understanding*" (*L*. 95)[41]. Jacobi had written that:

> Let space be one, time be one, consciousness be one… Now tell me how does any one of these three ones *purely* make itself into a manifold within itself … each is only a *one* and *no other*; a one and the same sort, a self-sameness without any distinction of one from the other; for these distinctions still slumber in the empty infinitude of the indeterminate from which each and every determinate has yet to proceed! What brings *finitude* into those three infinities? What impregnates space and time *a priori* with number and measure and transforms them into a *pure manifold*?

This passage is cited by Hegel from Jacobi as a support of the necessary union of being and nothing and makes the claim that if being is taken as abstract immediate outside the concept of nothing, it remains unable to produce any difference out of itself. The difference to arise from within, nothing must have always already been immanent in being itself. The passage asks the question of, to Kant, the possibility of determination (of being a manifold) within space and time unless they already contain the moment of nothing within themselves. Kant says that 'reality is what corresponds the sensation' and in that sense it is transcendental matter. He also claims that categories have no objective validity apart from sensation. It is then the material element that provides categories with objective reality.

[41] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, an outspoken critic of Kant's transcendental idealism, put an appendix in his book published in 1787 *David Hume on Faith, or Idealism and Realism, a Dialogue* which became "a *locus classicus* of anti-Kantianism". Jacobi's main criticism goes on like this: 'Without the presupposition [of the "thing in itself,"] I was unable to enter into [Kant's] system, but with it I was unable to stay within it' (Jacobi, 1787: 223). George di Giovanni summarizes Jacobi's point as that Kant, for him, "in presupposing the allegedly unknown 'thing in itself', yet by assigning to it the many functions that it played in his system, was in fact demonstrating knowledge of it, thereby contradicting his assumption of critical ignorance". The reference that is made by Hegel to Jacobi that I have cited here represents Jacopi's sharper attack on Kant's Transcendental Idealism. This piece, '*Treatise on the Understanding of the Critical philosophy to Bring Reason to Understanding*', was completed by Jacobi's disciple Köppen and published in 1802. Jacobi was influential on some young philosophers of the nineteenth century, including Fichte and Schleiermacher. His philosophical enterprise brought Spinoza to the center of philosophical discussion. Spinoza's pantheism reached to them through Jacobi's intermediary. George di Giovanni interprets that Jacobi's formulation of Kantian idealism is based on the claim that Spinoza's philosophy of substance is repeated by Kant in subjective terms, and Kant also subverted it by changing its meaning. For more information on Jacobi's life and works see, di Giovanni, George, "Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi",*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/friedrich-jacobi/>.

Material element is the *Real* element that supplies the content for the objective validity of the categories and which is necessary for knowledge to occur. However, this real element, just because it is unknowable in-itself, is taken as the negative element (as noumenon) and put under the table of nothing by Kant. In contrast to Hegel Kant does not permit any union between this negative element and positive phenomena, by claiming that, as I quoted above, any attempt at supposing a union is itself an error. Despite that, the Hegelian critique goes on emphasizing that Kant separated this negative element abstractly and made no explanation as to how categories of the understanding and forms of intuition will be able to work on such an abstract negative. Accordingly, he claimed the uniformity and continuity of matter on the one hand and differentiation of it by the forms of intuition on the other, but he made no elucidatory claim as to how these two abstractly different elements would touch each other[42]. Matter, as abstract nothing without relation to any other, therefore for this Hegelian critique, can make no claim for differentiation and is bound up to stand still in its infinite simple identity.

### 3.2. Ideas and Complete Determination

Only the concepts of pure reason or the transcendental ideas are completely determined. In this sense Kant claims in the Dialectic that:

> A plant, an animal, the orderly arrangement of the cosmos –presumably therefore the entire natural world- clearly show that they are possible only according to ideas, and that though no single creature in the conditions of its individual existence coincides with the idea of what is most perfect in its kind…these ideas are none the less completely determined in the Supreme Understanding, each as an individual and each as unchangeable… (A317-18/ B 374).

[42] If the relation between elements is exclusion only, then according to Hegel these elements cannot touch and affect each other. Only if there is unity, as in the case of the union of being and nothing, then one can speak of difference arising out of simplicity. Being differentiates just because nothing is immanent in it from the very beginning. Indeterminate immediate being is just a one-sided abstraction from which "no further *progress* can be made" (see *L.* 94).

No object in nature can be completely adequate to the idea which is completely individualized and determined in the understanding of the Supreme Being. In this way, "the concepts of reason contain the unconditioned" (A 311/ B 367) which is never the object of experience itself and with which no actual experience can coincide. They are like Leibniz's 'essences' which reside in God's mind and which serve as archetypes in the act of God's creating the actual world. According to Leibniz, only the divine intellect can grasp these concepts in their utmost totality. Human minds are finite and therefore unable to grasp them in their infinites. Kant, unlike Leibniz, does not connect the finitude of human mind to its sensibility (confused representations) but he insists on the unknowability of the concepts of reason as objects of experience. Since no objects can correspond to them they are noumena on which no synthetic *a priori* judgments can be passed. They serve as patterns of comparison to which we try to approach, through which we try to pass actual judgments and by which we order and arrange our actual experiential deeds and works. Total contentment, for instance is an idea to which we try to approximate our actual happiness. Perfect virtue is another instance of an original idea with which we "compare the alleged pattern and by which alone we judge of its value", and it is "to be found only in our minds". (A 315/ B 372). What is important for our discussion is the notion of Kant that ideas are always unattainable and beyond total actualization. The actual world always falls short of them; they are never to be completely materialized. This means that there is always an unbridgeable gulf between actual object of experience and mind's totally determined ideas.

Moreover, if ideas are the 'empty concepts without objects', by definition of Kant, they come to be nothings after all. If ideas are transcendental concepts and they are nothings, then nothing is a transcendental concept in Kant.[43] It transcends the limits of actual

[43] Though it does matter which idea is chosen in different contexts and so there must be a variation among them, Kant at the end of Amphiboly chapter defines nothing as that "to which no assignable intuition corresponds...that is, it is a concept without an object (*ens rationis*), like noumena..." (A 290/ B 347). In this

experience and in that sense is transitive to sensibility and understanding, i.e. it is external. As external or transcendental then, nothing as idea creates a 'quenchless thirst' after itself. As shown above, since matter as an element of knowledge is *given* and thereby external in Kant, this thirst after the idea is what Kantian epistemology is destined to result in; it is a hopeless attempt at the complete determination of the natural and actual object. It results in at most 'a striving towards completion' but never completion itself and Hegel would claim that this is in fact the direct outcome of the alien and external character of matter. When matter is taken as *given*, the complete determination of the object by the thought remains incomplete. The object remains always evasive and always more to open up. Because matter and thought are heterogeneous elements from the very beginning, truth, which is the 'conformity of concept to object', can never be fully attained. Hegel just criticizes this point of Kantian epistemology insisting upon the impossibility of the correspondence between two alien elements. If matter, by contrast, was taken to be immanently conceptual, then subject-object identity, instead of being an impossible possibility, became an attainable goal, attained at the very end of the consciousness's process of apprehending the object in its absolute truth. When matter is taken as external nothing, the possibility of any union of being and nothing is cut off from the very start and such an abstract separation of being and nothing, according to Hegel, cancels all forward movement out and keeps being in inertia. If nothing (difference) is taken as the other (outsider), no progress in being can be made and this is the impossibility of attaining the ideas, the completely determined structures which remain forever 'as a *task*'; never to be adequately materialized in the actual world. However, Kant finds necessary that the complete determination should in fact remain as a *task*. Otherwise

definition all ideas seem to be taken as nothings in spite of any possible variation among them. I therefore used the term 'ideas' as uniformly nothings.

the result would be detrimental to theoretical and moral endeavours. I will elaborate on this point in the following section in detail.

Kant, while discussing how the concept of *ens realissimum* of rationalist metaphysics is derived, discusses, under the Ideal of Pure Reason section of the *Critique*, the "material condition of the possibility of all that exists" (A 576/ B 604). He claims that God "as the transcendental ideal of pure reason serves as the basis for the complete determination that necessarily belongs to all that exists" (A 576/ B 604). As such, this ideal is a concept of a thing that is 'completely determined in and through itself'. All things (objects) in the actual world are subject to complete determination and thereby take this transcendental ideal (an idea of *omnitudo realitatis*) as their basis. This transcendental ideal signifies "the All", the unlimited upon which all limitation of the things are based. Now Kant claims that this ideal is the concept of all reality (totality of all appearances) and suggests that it should not be taken as a thing that is objectively given. This is the mistake into which rationalist metaphysicians have done before. They have taken *totum realitatis* not as a logical sphere only, supplying the background for the complete determination of things, but as an individual being who is assumed to have a separate existence on its own. Such an act, Kant titles, an illusion of reason. It is transcendental subreption in that reason takes the idea of the sum of reality and hypostatizes it: "we substitute dialectically for the *distributive* unity of the empirical employment of the understanding, the *collective* unity of experience as a whole" (A 582/ B 610). In Kant, this *totum* is to be taken as a logical sphere only, upon which all possibility of things –their derivation upon limitation- is based. One then can claim that Kant differs from rationalist metaphysicians in that God for him is to be taken as a *transcendental* idea only, never to be hypostatized. The objective employment of God as a pure concept of

reason "is always transcendent"[44] (A 327) and "no corresponding object can be given to [it] in sense-experience" (A 327). Moreover, the complete determination belongs only to God as the object of transcendental theology, and it is for the very reason that an object such as an appearance –undetermined object of empirical intuition- always contains matter as given. As having a given element then, the object is bound to be in constant disparity with the ideas of reason; a disparity never to be completely eliminated. Synthesis of apprehension makes manifold out of uniform matter, to be unified by the understanding. However, understanding cannot make a uniform object out of this manifold for this manifold is *given* and thereby alien. Speaking in terms of the language of faculties, Longuenesse writes that:

> [S]eeking "the unconditioned for the series of conditions" of an appearance, reason runs up against the fact that it cannot attain the ultimate ground of the series of conditions. The series can be known only by element by element, according to forms of sensibility that are fundamentally heterogeneous to reason and understanding (1981: 22).

The passage indicates that the ultimate ground of the series is the idea and as such it belongs to reason. Series on the other hand is the job of the forms of sensibility and because sensibility is not homogeneous to reason and understanding, series can never attain the ultimate ground of itself. If it had attained that ultimate ground, it would have been completed and so the complete determination would have been successful. The manifold is given, so the understanding cannot attain the complete determination of this manifold. The manifold of the synthesis of apprehension is given because matter is given. This given element is what constitutes the alienation and this alienation is the concepts' ineffectiveness in their attempt at the complete determination of the object.

Therefore a different –a higher level- logic, Hegel maintains, is required to resolve the problem. This logic comes with Hegel's own dialectic. Instead of putting nothing as

[44] For a brief and distinctive definitions of the terms 'transcendental' and 'transcendent', see Guyer, 2006: 378.

external to being, Hegel says that he would claim their inseparability. For him, they are intermingled that once abstracted from its opposite one of them becomes a one-sided abstract concept. None the less, Kant, Hegel would argue, was unable to produce the necessary logical structure for any possible determinative function to work. His logic of identity was unable –and he was unable to see that- to effect the needed tie for the epistemology to bring the wanted result. This result is knowledge and if knowledge is the 'agreement of cognition to its object' then the so called inevitable disparity between the two must be turned into an evitable one (in-itself as temporal aspect). This, therefore could be done only by seeing the negative (thing-in-itself) at work (as an efficacious concept) within the being and this necessitates putting being and nothing not as external immediate concepts but as immanently mediating each other. In overcoming the Kantian impasse, this is what Hegel says he is trying to do.

### 3.3. Kant's Affirmation of Externality over against Immanency

Now some possible Kantian responses to this charge of externality of matter and its resultant alienation, I think, should be mentioned. I will take three of them which I believe would constitute a sufficient defence on the Kantian side.

The first response I think might be the Kantian claim that the matter as Ether and not as matter-in-itself (substance) is the product of the subject in such a way that it is produced by the subject upon the subject's original affection by the moving forces of matter. In *Opus Postumum* Kant maintains that:

> For the moving forces of matter can only come together into a *collectively universal* unity of perceptions in a possible experience insofar as the subject, [affected] by them, unites them externally and internally in one concept, [and] affects itself by means of its perceptions. (Ak. 22: 550).

The subject, affected by the moving forces of matter, unites them in one concept (Ether), and then get the perceptions of them. Moreover, this same subject is self-affected by these self-produced perceptions. This means, in a sense, that the matter as Ether is the subject's own product. Consider the following quotation:

> Positing and perception, spontaneity and receptivity, the objective and subjective relation, are simultaneous; because they are identical as to time, as appearances of how the subject is *affected*- thus are given in the same *actus*… (22: 466).

The subject, as soon as it is affected by the moving forces of matter unites them externally and internally in one concept and in this unification it is also self-posited. This simultaneity has an indication that in Kant the matter as Ether is not as external and alien to the subject as a Hegelian might claim. Moreover, such a temporal coexistence between construction of the subject and of the Ether depends in turn on a spatial reciprocal influence and this reciprocity implies the absence of any gap in space between the internal subject and so-called external matter. In the Third Analogy Kant claims that "[i]t is therefore necessary that all substances in the [field of] appearance, so far as they coexist, should stand in thoroughgoing community of mutual interaction" and he continuous his claim that "[f]or only thus by means of their reciprocal influence can the parts of matter establish their simultaneous existence…" (A 213/ B 260). If coexistence can be observed, this indicates the presence of spatial unity and this shows that the matter as Ether is not external to the subject as is usually claimed. In the previous chapter, the distinction between the matter and the matter-in-itself was mentioned. Matter is made up of the forces of attraction and repulsion and these forces are external determinations of substance. In that sense matter is not substance with its internal properties. Therefore a Hegelian might challenge the above response in such a way that the matter might be the product of the subject and in that sense it might be internal. The pure concept of substance, however, is external in the sense that it

is unknowable with regards to its intrinsic properties. Hegel criticizes, so as the Hegelian goes on, not the externality of matter but of the matter-in-itself as substance. Indeed Kant says that "matter is mere outer appearance, the substratum of which cannot be known through any predicate that we can assign to it". (A 359). This unknowability, this externality of substance is according to the Hegelian a hindrance to the complete determination of the object and it is indeed what makes Kant suggest presupposing – not a hypostatization of- God. God's being an idea of reason only, as transcending the world of experience, then can be said to owe its own reality to this idea of the externality of substance.

To this Hegelian challenge of externality, Kant might respond by maintaining the necessity of externality and thereby unknowability of substance as the thing-in-itself. Substance *should* be unknowable and thereby the ideas be unattainable and unknowable for were the ideas to be used as an object of knowledge, certain detrimental consequences follow. Kant's possible responses to the Hegelian accusation of the externality and the unknowability of substance can be gathered in two respects; one theoretical and one practical.

In the Natural Dialectic of Human Reason under the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic Kant draws attention to two possible errors arising from the misuse of ideas. These errors arise because of our attempt at using the ideas constitutively not regulatively, which is their proper use. Kant writes as follows:

> The dogmatic spiritualist explains the abiding and unchanging unity of a person throughout all change of state, by the unity of the thinking substance, of which, as he believes, he has immediate perception in the 'I'; or he explains the interest which we take in what can happen only after our death, by means of our consciousness of the immaterial nature of the thinking subject; and so forth. He thus dispenses with all empirical investigation of the cause of these inner appearances, so far as that cause is to be found in physical grounds of explanation; and to his own great convenience, though at the sacrifice of real insight, he professes, in reliance

> upon the assumed authority of a transcendent reason, to have the right to ignore those sources of knowledge which are immanent in experience. (A 690/ B 718).

The constitutive use of an idea consists of taking it as an object of knowledge. The dogmatic spiritualist takes the idea of soul and believes in the immediate perception of it. He as a result bases all her explanations upon the transcendent authority of reason, sacrificing all real insight by ignoring the sources of knowledge immanent in experience. This means that if an idea is used constitutively this has detrimental consequences for empirical research. If the idea of soul becomes an object of knowledge, then all explanations as to the nature of inner appearances are based on a transcendent authority and this is dogmatism, not free empirical research with the expectation of enlarging our knowledge. A similar argument is proposed by Kant as to the idea of teleology. In its regulative use, the principle of teleology directs us in our investigation of the order of nature and its series of alterations and "in accordance with the universal laws which they are found to exhibit" (A 691/ B 719). We should have the purpose of proving the existence of a supreme intelligent cause *from* nature and its discovered unity. If we use the principle of teleology constitutively, this means that we have already hypostatized God and accepted the unity of nature as God's decree and as always under His watch. Such a procedure is fatalism; it seems to simplify the task of reason but in fact "it interferes with, and entirely ruins, our use of reason in dealing with nature under the *guidance of experience*" (A 690/ B 718). (Emphasis is mine).

The other respect of Kant's response to a Hegelian is practical. Kant maintains that God as object of knowledge would be disastrous for morality. Faith should be rational in the sense that it should be 'free assertoric faith' which needs no obtainable knowledge. Knowledge of God is no necessary for a belief in God to hold and moreover, objective God is not beneficial but instead harmful to morality. Kant in his essay "*What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?*" makes the claim that "[a]ll believing is a holding true which is

subjectively sufficient, but *consciously* regarded as objectively insufficient; thus it is contrasted with *knowing*" (Ak. 8: 141). Further he claims that "pure *rational faith* can never be transformed into knowledge by any natural data of reason and experience, because here the ground of holding true is merely subjective, namely a necessary need of reason…to *presuppose* the existence of a highest being, but not to demonstrate it"(Ak. 8: 141). These passages show us that for faith in God to occur, no knowledge of Him is needed. What is required is just a problematic assumption of Him. What is more, a God, which has objective sufficiency, transforms the rational faith into a mechanical tutelage. What is needed is a free holding-to-be-true based on the problematic assumption of the existence of God. A priori demonstrations of or the historical facts about the existence of God contribute not to the rationality of faith but to dogmatism. In that sense certain unknowability and unascertainable character of the existence of God –in the sense of the impossibility of His being the object of knowledge-is necessary. The externality of substance and with it the unknowability of God, as merely an idea of reason, is compulsory for the dignity of the moral law. If God can be known, then the moral worth of actions disappears; and instead, in the world, a mere puppet obedience through hope for reward and fear of punishment reigns. Kant writes in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as follows:

> But instead of the conflict that the moral attitude now has to carry on with the inclinations, in which -after some defeats- moral fortitude of soul is yet gradually to be acquired, *God* and *eternity* with their *dreadful majesty* would lie unceasingly *before our eyes* (for, as regards certainty, what we can perfectly prove counts as much for us as what we assure ourselves of as manifest to the eye). Transgression of the law would indeed be avoided; what is commanded would be done. However, the *attitude* from which actions ought to be done cannot likewise be instilled by any command, and the spur to activity is in this [case] immediately at hand and *external,* and thus reason does not first need to work itself up in order to gather strength to resist inclinations by vividly presenting the dignity of the law. Therefore most lawful actions would be done from fear, only a few from hope, and none at all from duty; and a moral worth of

> actions -on which alone, after all, the worth of the person and even that of the world hinges in the eyes of the highest wisdom- would not exist at all. The conduct of human beings, as long as their nature remained as it is, would thus be converted into a mere mechanism, where, as in a puppet show, everything would *gesticulate* well but there would still be *no life* in the figures (5: 147).

Were we to attain the scientific *knowledge* of God, then the situation would be like 'you will obey! commands God, I am here, as you see' whereas in rational faith it is like 'I will have faith in You but I might not, because Your existence is problematic only'. This problematic character of rational faith is what protects human freedom and it is in turn based on the externality and thereby unknowability of the thing-in-itself as substance. In the end, Kant might respond to a Hegelian by saying that the substance as matter-in-itself should have certain externality and unknowability, since otherwise all our scientific inquiries and all our moral wisdom would break down.

The crucial point to be remembered is that the presence of externality in Kant is not an accidental occurring as is implied in Hegel's critique of it. It is established and protected well intentionally from the early phase of his philosophical career. Kant can be said to have a strong position against the idea of immanency and this is clear in his struggle with idealism, starting in the 1750s and continuing well into the 1770s. In *German Idealism the Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* Beiser writes that "there are refutations of idealism in the 1755 *Nova dilucidatio* and in the 1770 Inaugural dissertation" (2002: 27) and "of all these forms of idealism, Beiser continues, the most important for Kant was the dogmatic idealism of Leibniz and Platonic tradition" (29). For Leibniz, monads are 'grounds' or 'foundations' upon which external relations are based. These external relations are appearances and taken by themselves they are nothing; easily reducible to the monadic realm. Monads are substances which "must have some *internal* nature, which is therefore free from all outer relations…" (A 274/ B 330). If appearances are reducible to monads then everything is

reducible to the internal and that is why monads, according to Leibniz, are windowless. Moreover, the monads are souls and they are substantial. Physical world with external relations are bodies and are insubstantial. In this picture then external relations (externalities) are merely ideal and as such can be reducible to the internal. In other words, all real is inner and the outer is the deficient only. Kant in *New Elucidation* is trying to overcome such a picture. Proposition XII of the Principle of Succession is that "[n]o change can happen to substances except in so far as they are connected with other substances; their reciprocal dependency on each other determines their reciprocal change of state" (Ak. 1: 410). Succession and time is a fact and this proves the connection among substances for "if a change occur it must be the case that it arises from an external connection" (Ak. 1: 411). In §11 and §12 of Inaugural dissertation Kant tries to demonstrate the importance of sensory knowledge by first maintaining the presence of an object and then maintaining the presence of the *originary intuitions* which are the objects of pure mathematics. The quotations below seem to be illuminating. In §11:

> For, first of all, in so far as they are sensory concepts or apprehensions, they [phenomena] are, as things caused, witnesses to the presence of an object and this is opposed to idealism. (Ak. 2: 397).

And then in §12:

> Thus, pure mathematics…since its objects themselves are not only the formal principles of every intuition, but *originary intuitions*; it provides us with a cognition which is in the highest degree true…*thus there is a science of sensory thing*… (Ak. 2: 397-8).

In these sections, one underlying idea can be extracted: the sensory objects as material and external things are accepted as present and true. Moreover, their science is affirmed as pure mathematics which "is the organon of each and every intuitive and distinct cognition" (Ak. 2: 397-8). These sensory objects are phenomena and phenomena are relational. When they are themselves accepted as true, it means they cannot now be reduced to the monadic

realm. They have their own realities as *external* to the substances (monads) with inner determinations. This idea then is the affirmation of the idea of externality irreducible to the internal.

Kant likewise rejects the idea of immanence of Spinoza's ontology. For Spinoza; "God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things" (*Ethics*, P18, 16). There is only one substance and this substance is God. God has –among the infinitely much- two infinite attributes, namely extension and thinking. All extended bodies and thinking minds and ideas are epistemologically and ontologically dependent on God: "[w]hatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God" (*Ethics*, P15, 10). It means that God is *in* each and every one of its modes. God is the cause and modes are the effects and God causes these modes to come into beings. Particular finite modes therefore are the expressions of the underlying infinite substance. Such a picture Kant claims is dangerous for natural theology. If my ideas and my body is *in* God, or if they are the expressions of God, God's infinity may easily be forgotten and the statement that 'I am only one finite mode in infinitely many' may easily turn into the statement that 'God is in me and therefore I am God'. Since in Spinoza a transitive existence of substance and the unknowability of God were denied from the very beginning, this transformation of the statement might easily occur. Therefore both Leibnizian idealism and Spinozism, though differently, pave the way for the same result: egoism; and this is, says Kant, disastrous to morality.

As for the fact of change, Kant might argue against the Hegelian claim that a possible explanation of change needs an immanent category of nothing. In the First Analogy the change is submitted as merely the alteration of appearances and "[i]n all change of appearances substance is permanent; its quantum in nature is neither increased nor diminished" (A 182). An abiding and permanent substance is needed for through it alone we can determine whether the manifold of appearance is coexistent or successive. When

nothing, as substance, is taken into being then change permeates all existence, that is, nothing permanent remains. In such a case, however, existence in different parts of the time-series can never acquire a magnitude and this means the absence of duration and it is in turn the absence of a possible experience. In *New Elucidation* the argument is somewhat different: "[s]uppose that some simple substance…were to exist in isolation. I maintain that it could go no change of its inner state (Ak. 1: 410). Substance does not change in virtue of an inner principle of activity and certain externality is needed for a satisfactory explanation of change. Kant continues as such:

> For the soul is subject (in virtue of the inner sense) to inner changes. Since, as we have proved, these changes cannot arise from its nature considered in isolation and as disconnected from other things, it follows that there must be a number of things present outside the soul with which it stands in reciprocal connection. It is likewise apparent from the same considerations that the change of perceptions also take place in conformity with external motion. It follows from this that we could not have a representation, which was a representation of a body…unless there was a real thing present at hand, and unless its interaction with the soul induced in it a representation corresponding to that thing. For this reason, it can easily be inferred that the compound, which we call our body, exists. (Ak. 1: 411-2).

This is certain materialism accepted into the philosophical system to avoid falling into dogmatic idealism. Here in this system substance as matter-in-itself is confirmed as external and put into the explanation of change. If everything is inner, Kant would claim, this is either Leibnizism or Spinozism, and both result in the arrogance of egoism. Hegelianism likewise, with its equation of being and nothing, is a version of internality and hence subject to the same fate.

One more thing to be said as to the possible Kant-Hegel debate is that the Hegelian might put forward the idea that Kantian transcendental determination through the concept of nothing-the main argument of the first three chapters of the thesis- is in fact an 'external determination' that separates the categories of being and nothing. Such a separation, he

might well continue, is disparity and disparity is alienation. The ‘other’ should be *within* the ‘something’, not external to it. Kant might respond to such a charge of externality again by claiming that the true determination includes certain externality; otherwise it is ‘immanent difference’ and it easily collapses into the elimination of all difference. This, in turn, carries either the risk of reducing everything material to a spiritual God or everything bodily to a mere state of representation. In the last resort both carries the risk of creating an enthusiastic fanaticism of the individual mind and therefore should be avoided. A certain and clear humility, instead, should always be reiterated.

# CONCLUSION

In the work just completed I have tried to show that nothing has a transcendental function in Kant's system. I have intended to offer an alternative reading of the Kantian critical project with a special focus on his division of the concept of nothing at the end of the Amphiboly section of the first Critique. In offering such an alternative reading then, I have put emphasis on numerous settings which I have believed would have the transcendental function of nothing emerged as a kind of crucial underlining concept. I wanted to present the fact that nothing has a function in Kant's system and this function can best be attested by letting that concept arise in particular discussion frameworks. These frameworks were taken into consideration in the hope of proving the ineluctable being of nothing throughout the entire system of Kant. In each context a different nothing has surfaced – or a nothing surfacing differently- but still in each backdrop a common function, which has been found to be truly detectable, can be maintained to be working all over the Kantian project. My belief is that, despite nothing's occupying such an important place, there is a gap in the Kantian scholarship in the sense that the whole literature has only very few references to Kant's treatment of the concept of nothing and there is no substantial discussion about the notion's place and status in the critical system. From the very beginning, I find such an absence curious, since the concept of nothing, however limited, still had a place in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which I believe is sufficiently strategical: Kant's table of nothingness ends the Analytic and starts the Dialectic. It is located as if it were a mediating concept between the two main parts of the book.

It seems to me that there can be two reasons behind this neglect. The first might be related to Kant's own treatment of the concept since he mentions it very briefly and seemingly merely for architectonic reasons, as I already underlined in the first chapter of the dissertation, in "a note to a note which is already a note to the Appendix to the

Transcendental Analytic, and which comes under the heading of The Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection". The second might be due to Kant's main critical attitude towards old metaphysics. The duality of being and nothing is the main conceptualization of the old metaphysics and commentators, because Kant criticizes metaphysics, might have felt no need of taking the concept of nothing into consideration.

Throughout the dissertation I have endeavoured to display the transcendental function that Kant's division of the concept of nothing has played in his construction of the critical system as a whole. For this purpose, I started with the idea that the place where Kant located the table of nothing in the First *Critique* should be taken significant. Its location signified that the table of nothingness played a role of a bridge between two sections with a threefold function. First, it seemed to me that, through the division of the concept of nothing Kant was able to claim that although in the absence of sensory data our concepts lost their objective validity, it was still possible that they might have a practical use for pure reason, and a subjective validity as inevitable and necessary ideas from reason's point of view. Secondly, the location of the table of nothing also enabled him to disclose what it meant and how it happened that reason fell into fallacies and illusions. Thirdly and as a consequence of the first two he succeeded in clarifying and positing his critical position against rational metaphysics. Considering all three together, it is possible to claim that the table of nothing becomes a useful tool of the critique of pure reason in Kant's hands to *discipline* reason, by restraining "its tendency towards extension beyond the narrow limits of possible experience and to guard it against extravagance and error" (A 711/ B 739). In other words, it can be taken as an inseparable part of the whole of the philosophy of pure reason in its strictly negative utility.

In addition to this, I believed, there is another benefit of reading Kant under the light of the concept of nothing. The concept of nothing can be said to constitute a limit, and limit is constitutive of knowledge and thereby of human subjectivity. Nothing as the thing-in-itself in that sense is a concept upon which the whole critical project is built and when this nothing is taken into consideration, his critical project appears to be better illuminated. For this illumination I used a method of using the core aspects of Kantian philosophy as diverse settings for displaying how different concepts of nothing come to the surface. In other words, these diverse settings are said both to owe their structures on the various concepts of nothing and in turn these concepts of nothing become what they are as a result of their functioning meaningful only in these individual settings.

It is to say that my reading of Kant's critical project under the guidance of his table of nothingness also took into consideration the main critique of the Kantian concept of the thing-in-itself by Hegel. It is well appreciated that Hegel's critique is the most rigorous attack against the concept of the thing-in-itself. In that sense, I have used the Hegelian critique as a kind of stress-test to Kant's own position. I expected that testing Kant with Hegel and explicating the latter's dialectical attack on the concept of the thing-in-itself would enable me to display its significance and centrality as nothing as *ens rationis* in Kant's critical system.

The concept is central in various ways but most importantly it is the limit as the constitutive opposite. This is in a way reading the whole Kantian enterprise through its 'not'. Such a reading in the end might help any reader to consider the positive facts in a reciprocal duality with the negative. This in turn paves the way for a dialectical understanding of the world and for a certain kind of perspectival outlook. In the thesis I have claimed that Kant has a challenging responses to Hegel and this I believe sufficiently breaks the Hegelian monopoly over the Kantian thing-in-itself. Hegel too has his own crucial notion of

nothingness and his main target is the concept's externality in Kant's philosophy. Any displaying of a discussion in the context of a possible antagonism between the two philosophers would therefore, I suggest, in addition to highlighting the meaning of the concept of nothing, differentiate and clarify each philosophy together with their distinctions from the previous metaphysics.

In sum, in the context of this study there has been found sufficient ground to claim a transcendental function for the nothing. The study has shown that under the guidance of Kant's table of categories of pure understanding nothing has a fourfold opposing, constituting and limiting function, which I believe, works as a transcendental apparatus.

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