

## Two Aspect Reading of Kant's Thing in Itself

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### ABSTRACT

We cannot evaluate Kant's critical project without considering Transcendental Idealism, as it provides his solution to the enduring problem of metaphysics. Kant views transcendental idealism as a means through which metaphysics can follow 'the secure course of a science' (Bxiv), while also 'removing an obstacle that limits' (Bxxv) practical reason. The most contentious element of his proposal is his classification of empirical objects as appearances rather than things in themselves. This distinction restricts our knowledge to things as they appear, leaving their true nature beyond our cognitive grasp. In this article, I will explore Kant's concept of the 'thing in itself' and examine whether Allison's two-aspect interpretation is a valid representation of Kant's theory and if it effectively resolves its issues. The first part of this article will focus on Allison's two-aspect reading of the 'thing in itself' and his solutions to its paradoxes. The second part will address three objections raised by Guyer, who critiques Allison's reading from a two-object perspective, and Kant's main argument in the Aesthetic. Lastly, I will evaluate the internal consistency of Allison's interpretation and its alignment with Kant's texts. I will conclude by demonstrating that, although (1) Allison consistently counters Guyer's objections and (2) his interpretation captures the overall intent of Kant's project, (3) it is not entirely consistent with Kant's writings.

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## **Intruduction**

One cannot assess Kant's critical project without the consideration of the Transcendental Idealism. This is due to the fact that it is precisely the solution he finds for the perennial problem of metaphysics. Moreover, Kant thinks of transcendental idealism as an approach with which not only can metaphysics go through 'the secure course of a science' (Bxiv), but also 'simultaneously removes an obstacle that limits' (Bxxv) practical reason. However, this mission does not leave metaphysics and practical reason as they were in the past. As he puts it in the prominent announcement: 'I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith' (Bxxx). Therefore, his challenging project leads to the restriction of speculative knowledge for securing practical reason. He does so by confining our knowledge to 'objects of experience' and leaving the nonsensible arena— as the domain of practical reason— behind.

Nevertheless, he does not simply limit human knowledge to empirical objects. The most controversial aspect of his proposal is that he counts empirical objects as appearances rather than things in themselves. In other words, he simultaneously limits our knowledge to things as they appear and leaves things as they are in themselves outside our capacity for cognition. Given this approach, we may think of his philosophy as another version of 'Berkeleyan Idealism.' However, some of his assertions exacerbate the situation. According to him, it is not merely that we know objects as they appear to us, but he insists that things in themselves are not as we conceive them, as spatiotemporal.

Two paradoxes have been associated with above controversial claims. First, according to him, things in themselves lie outside the limits of our cognitive capacities, but he at the same time claims that they are not spatiotemporal. Second, his epistemology seems to be a theory of illusion rather than knowledge. This is because knowledge, according to its very nature, is cognition of things as they are in themselves rather than as they appear. But, according to Kant we only know their appearances and that they are not as we conceive them.

In this article, I will consider Kant's conception of the 'thing in itself,' and discuss whether Allison's two-aspect reading can be a legitimate interpretation of Kant's theory and whether it succeeds to unravel its problems. I will devote the first part of this article to Allison's two-aspect reading of thing in itself and his solution to its paradoxes. In the second part, I will mention three objections raised by Guyer (as objections from the two-object point of view) against Allison's reading and Kant's main argument in *Aesthetic*. Finally, I will assess the internal cohesion of Allison's interpretation and its compatibility with Kant's texts. In conclusion, I will show that although (1) Allison can avert Guyer's objections consistently and (2) his reading shows the overall intent of Kant's project, (3) it is not completely compatible with Kant's passages. More precisely, I will conclude that Allison provides an intrinsically consistent reading of Kant's conception of thing in itself; therefore, objections targeted at showing its internal problems fall short of refuting this reading. Moreover, it captures Kant's

radically new (transcendental) approach in considering the nature of human cognition, in a way in which the two-object interpretations cannot. However, according to Allison's reasons, we may only accept that Kant's philosophy is 'aimed at' epistemological idealism, but we cannot concede that Kant achieves it. This is because Allison neglects ontological aspects of some Kantian terms such as 'appearance' which Kant asserts them explicitly. Therefore, Allison's endeavor for showing it as a fully-fledged epistemological idealism cannot do justice to it.

In a nutshell, for refuting the charges of (1) reversing Kant's original argument, (2) neglecting the third alternative, and (3) non-valid inference for lack of predicate to lack of property about Allison's reading, I will show that all of them fall short of rejecting Allison's interpretation. This is mostly because such objections assume the 'two-object' concept of thing in itself and find Allison's arguments flawed according to them. However, Allison grounds his exegesis exactly on the refutation of such conception, so one should not assess his elucidation of Kant's point of view from the two-object standpoint. I elaborate on these points in the second part of this article. Doing so, I will provide another formulation of some of Allison's arguments.

Moreover, about the compatibility of Allison's interpretation with Kant's works, I will show that he overlooks one aspect of them. I think Kant's usage of terms 'appearance' and 'thing in itself' and his firm announcements about the obvious conceptual relation between them show the deposits of a transcendently real standpoint of his successors for considering human cognition in Kant's critical theory. Showing this, in the last part of this article I will concentrate on Kant's passages about the relation between 'thing in itself' and 'appearance' and justify that recognizing the proposition that 'there is an appearance without anything that appears' as an 'absurd proposition' (Bxxvi-xxvii) is just compatible with a transcendently real point of view. Therefore, we may claim that some terms in Kant's critical theory with apparent transcendently real meaning prevents him from reaching a fully-fledged transcendently idealistic philosophy and also prevents Allison's interpretation from doing justice with Kant's texts.

### **1. Two-Aspect Interpretation of Thing in Itself**

Henry E. Allison's elucidation is based on an 'epistemological' or 'meta-epistemological' (Allison, 2004, 4) interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism and is affected by Gerold Prauss' textual inquiries and contemporary anti-realistic philosophies. As he puts it, as far as Kant's transcendental idealism is considered, it should not be regarded as a metaphysical point of view on a division between things due to their real nature. In other words, he refutes Kantian division between appearances and things in themselves as a metaphysical division (Allison, 2004, 16). As a result, he does not interpret Kant's view as a theory for restraining our knowledge to some sort of things named 'appearances.' Rather, he reads Kant's transcendentalism as a 'meta-philosophical' position which separates him from all of his successors fundamentally. According to this meta-philosophical point of view, which is

compatible with ‘Copernican revolution’ metaphor, Kant just tries to distinguish human knowledge from the ideal of divine knowledge and its norms (Allison, 2004, 27-34). In better words, Allison insists that because of this fundamental turn (transcendental turn) we should not interpret Kantian idealism as a kind of idealism that is applicable to his successors' position (Allison, 2004, 21-27). Otherwise, we should read it from an epistemological point of view, and due to this reading, all of the problems regarding the concept of the thing in itself will disappear. In this section, I will delineate his grounds for the interpretation of Kant’s theoretical philosophy and explain how he tries to circumvent the issue of the thing in itself with this reading.

### **I. Epistemic Conditions**

First of all, he defines ‘epistemic conditions’ to use it as the very basis of transcendental idealism. In his opinion, these conditions provide our representations with the possibility of a relation to their objects. Therefore, he sees them as ‘objectivating conditions’ because our representations do not have anything to do with objects without them and do not amount to any objective cognition. He also distinguishes these conditions from psychological and ontological conditions. As he puts it, the similarity between these conditions and epistemic conditions are their subjective and objective status, respectively, but psychological conditions are merely subjective and ontological ones merely objective. Therefore, epistemic conditions are subjective and related to the subjective structure of human cognition, and at the same time, they provide the objectivity of our representations (Allison, 2004, 11-12).

Now, he explains the relation between these conditions and idealism. According to him, ‘an epistemic condition brings with it an idealistic commitment’ (Allison, 2004, 12). This is because it shows a fundamental relation between the concept of an object and the cognitive subject. In better words, it reveals a necessary relation between the conceptual structure of an object for a cognitive subject and the intrinsic cognitive structure of that subject. However, such conditions do not have anything to do with the existence of things beyond our epistemic conditions. For they are not any sort of ontological conditions that determine which thing to exist independent of our cognition of them (Allison, 2004, 12). Here, he concludes that construing Kant’s ‘forms of intuition’ and ‘concepts of understanding’ as epistemic conditions, we cannot interpret the distinction between appearance and thing in itself as an ontological division. In better words, these conditions do not show ‘that *things* transcending the conditions of human cognition cannot exist but merely that such things cannot count as *objects* for us’ (Allison, 2004, 12).

### **II. Discursivity Thesis**

Now, he comes up with another basis for Kant’s idealism. According to him, merely admitting epistemic conditions and the general idealism that such conditions bring with themselves cannot illustrate Kant’s multi-layer idealism. As he proceeds to clarify, one of the crucial premises of

Kant's epistemology is 'discursivity thesis.' According to it, human cognition consists of sensibility and understanding each of which has an independent role in the construction of the cognition. As far as sensibility is concerned, it provides data of cognition. On the other hand, as far as understanding is concerned, it conceptualizes data provided by sensibility. Having this basis, Kant introduces conditions of each of them; therefore, comes up with his complex idealism (Allison, 2004, 12-13).

As he puts it, the discursivity thesis reveals Kant's difference with empiricists and rationalists' epistemology. This is because such theory states spontaneity of understanding in opposition to empiricists and the role of sensible data in opposition to rationalists. According to him, although it seems that such theory is not elaborated enough in Kant's texts, it has a crucial role in grounding his idealism, as Kant says in a prominent remark, 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (A51/B76). Moreover, Allison argues that this theory brings with itself an important point about sensibility. Given the role of understanding in providing the order of sensible data by its concepts, the sensibility should provide its sensible data in a certain way. This is because these data should have the capacity of being ordered and conceptualized by understanding, so sensibility should provide them in a way that they can be ordered by understanding. Therefore, we will have two necessary, independent (due to the independence of their faculty), and related (because of their mutual role) sets of conditions in human cognition. The first set is forms of sensibility which make representation possible and guarantees their orderability. The second one is concepts of understanding that determine objects of our representations and make them understandable (Allison, 2004, 14).

#### **A. Answering the Problem by eliminating its Basis**

Now, having these two independent faculties with their own conditions, we can *consider* things from two aspects. As he proceeds, appearances are things considered as objects for human cognition and under our forms of intuition, and things in themselves are things considered apart from our forms of cognition or 'objects for some pure intelligence' (Allison, 2004, 17). The important point here is that we can consider things this way because these are independent faculties. As a result, understanding can consider itself as a *pure understanding* and thinks about things beyond the border of sensibility. Because of this, we can consider things independent of our forms of sensibility as things as they are in themselves.<sup>1</sup>

How can this interpretation solve the paradox of thing in itself? Reviewing the paradox again, we have something named thing in itself that is beyond our capacity of cognition, but at

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<sup>1</sup>. Here we should pay attention to the importance of the separation of these faculties in the two-aspect reading. Because of this, it is apparent that Beck's suggestion for interpreting concepts of understanding as regulative concepts (similar to ideas of reason) will eliminate Kant's basis for idealism, completely. See beck (beck, 1984, 193).

the same time, we see it as something non-spatial and non-temporal in nature. As Allison sees it, this problem will disappear when we do not see such thing as a numerically distinct thing with an ontological nature. In better words, this is just a consideration rather than a supersensible entity that to which we attribute some properties. Non-spatiotemporality is just a predicate we attribute to it according to its way of consideration. Again, if we attribute anything to an existing entity, which according to its very nature is beyond our cognitive access, we will face a contradiction based on Kant's grounds. However, according to this reading, we just think of a particular consideration (Allison, 2004, 73). Therefore, the contradiction disappears as a result of destroying the basis upon which this contradiction is based. This basis is taking thing in itself as a numerically distinct entity that attributing a property to it is counted as some sort of cognition that we refuted in the other horn of paradox.

### **B. Solutions for Related Problems**

It is worthwhile here to consider another problem related to thing in itself. Many critics argue that on the basis of transcendental idealism we would not have any sort of *real* knowledge.<sup>1</sup> This is because knowledge, according to its very nature, is cognition about the real nature of things rather than their appearances. This contention that can be traceable to Kant's contemporaries finds its best formulation in H. A. Prichard and P. F. Strawson. According to them, in Kant's critical philosophy 'reality is supersensible' and we just cognize how things 'seem to us.' However, by Allison's interpretation, things as they are in themselves are just another consideration of appearances and interpreting appearances as a representation of things in themselves is completely wrong (Allison, 2004, 7). As a result, we can cognize appearances not as cognizing our mental entities, but rather as legitimate objects of human standpoint. Therefore, this is objective knowledge and do not have anything to do with Berkeleyan idealism or skepticism.

Now, with this point of view about the relation between appearances and things in themselves, Kant's firm announcements about the logical nature of propositions about things in themselves would satisfy. These assertions are essential because some Kant scholars accused him of attributing concepts of understanding to nonsensible objects. In these passages, Kant insists that attributing categories to things in themselves is not in a synthetic manner and we only use them in a logical or analytical sense.<sup>2</sup> Now, how can Allison interpretation show the possibility of these analytical propositions? According to his point of view, this is owing to the fact that because of the independent role of understanding from sensibility, it can go beyond the domain of sensible objects and think of them as objects for pure understanding. Doing so, it attributes such predicates in these propositions just state for stating the nature and concept of

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<sup>1</sup>. For example, by Pistorius, Eberhard, and Jacobi. For considering more recent objections see Strawson (Strawson, 1966, 16), and Prichard (Prichard, 1909, 71-100).

<sup>2</sup>. This claim can be found in these passages: A276/B273; A286/B342-43; A433/B461; A609/B663

object and therefore are completely analytical propositions (Allison, 2004, 17). As Allison puts it, 'this content is of a merely logical nature, since it is derived from use of the categories apart from the sensible conditions (schemata) that realize them; and such use for Kant is itself merely logical (rather than real)' (Allison, 2004, 17).

### C. Textual Support for Two-Aspect Reading

After providing grounds for this radically different interpretation, Allison is going to show the compatibility of this reading with Kant's texts. A first, he appeals to Gerold Preuss's textual inquiries. According to Preuss's scrutinizes, Kant uses three different expressions referring to equivalent notion and function. The first and shortened expression is thing in itself (*Ding an sich*) which seems to have a metaphysical notion about a metaphysical status. The second and prevalent expression is *Ding an sich selbst* which, according to Allison, 'is glossed over by the standard English translations, the longer form at least gestures toward the idea of a thing as it is in itself' (Allison, 2004, 52). However, these locutions should be seen as the abbreviated form of thing considered as it is in itself (*Dingan sich selbst betrachtet*). With this scenario, he can turn all of expressions to the longest and show it as the basis of Kant's idealism (Allison, 2004, 52).

His reading is also provided with other textual supports. In this part, Allison first mentions two passages in which Kant accuses 'empirical idealism.' After that, he cites another passage that is mostly interpreted as asserting the claims of empirical idealism. Deciphering this contradiction, Allison attempts to show the legitimacy of his interpretation in accordance with the most controversial texts (Allison, 2004, 21-23). Here we have first passages:

*To this idealism is opposed transcendental realism, which regards space and time as something given in themselves (independent of our sensibility). The transcendental realist therefore interprets outer appearances (if their reality is conceded) as things in themselves, which would exist independently of us and of our sensibility and thus would also be outside us according to pure concepts of the understanding. It is really this transcendental realist who afterwards plays the empirical idealist; and after he has falsely presupposed about objects of the senses that if they are to exist, they must have their existence in themselves even apart from sense, he finds that from this point of view all our representations of sense are insufficient to make their reality certain. [A369]*

*If we let outer objects count as things in themselves, then it is absolutely impossible to comprehend how we are to acquire cognition of their reality outside us [ausser uns], since we base this merely on the representation, which is in us [in uns]. For one cannot have sensation outside oneself, but*

*only in oneself, and the whole of self-consciousness therefore provides nothing other than merely our own determinations. [A378]*

According to Allison's elucidation of the first passage, Kant accuses the empiricists of taking things in space and time as things in themselves. Then he insists that such consideration necessarily amounts to empirical idealism (skepticism about things in space and time and reduction of the domain of knowledge to mental entities). In the second paragraph, he uses the terms *in uns* and *ausser uns* for things in us and outside us. Having these two paragraphs together, Allison interprets Kant as claiming that empiricists take things in space and time as something outside us, but since they suppose that they have only access to their mental entities as something *in uns*, they cannot prove how we can acquire any knowledge about things outside ourselves (Allison, 2004, 24-25).

Now he invites us to consider a new passage:

*All objects of an experience possible for us are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself.' [A490-91/B518-19]*

According to Allison, in this passage, Kant seems to insist on the same claim proposed by empiricists. This is because he similarly reduces spatiotemporal objects to mere representations, and limits our knowledge to them. Nevertheless, Allison refutes this reading by putting forth the idea that having these three passages together, we will have two different meanings of *in uns* and *ausser uns*. As he proceeds to make clear, Kant uses the transcendental meaning of *in uns* and *ausser uns* against empirical use of it. Due to this elucidation, Kant seems to argue that empiricists think of spatiotemporal things as something *ausser uns* in transcendental meaning because it is *ausser uns* in empirical meaning. Therefore, they confuse things that are *ausser uns* in accordance with their location in the space with things which are *ausser uns* in accordance with their relation to our epistemic condition. Confusing these two different meanings of *ausser uns* and *in uns*, they cannot find any way about how we can get them to know (Allison, 2004, 24-25).

Having this difference, Allison tries to establish his reading more powerfully. This is because he considers other interpretations of the matter to be dismissing fundamentally new sense of considering things in transcendental manner. In other words, he contends that such transcendental consideration about the relation of things to us, should be taken as Kant's fundamental contribution to the matter, so we should not construe his *transcendental* idealism as a new version of his successors' (Allison, 2004, 23).

#### D. Answering Problems from Another Aspect

This challenging idea can solve the problem of thing in itself from another aspect of with another wording. According to it, the problem is based on the assumption that things in themselves can be object and therefore in *uns* in transcendental meaning. As a result, the proposition that they cannot be spatial, and temporal is cognition about the real nature of them. However, the proposition simply is that things as they are in themselves are *ausser uns* in transcendental meaning and cannot be counted as objects in any meaningful way. In other words, the fact that things that are beyond our epistemic capacity are supersensible is not about their nature; this a proposition about the norm of human cognition against the traditional point of view and only defines the nature of things which can be objects for us (Allison, 2004, 23).

As for the problem that we just know the appearances of things rather than their reality in Kant's idealism, he appeals to the transcendental difference again. Doing so, he just attracts our attention to the meaning of mere representation in transcendental and empirical sense. According to him, we should not take mere representation in Kant as something in our mind as a mental entity. Appearance is an expression that just shows the epistemological status of objects of human cognition, and Kant, based on Aesthetic, sees them under our forms of sensibility and epistemic condition. Therefore, such passages do not restrict our knowledge to our mental entity; they just insist that the object of our knowledge should be given to us in accordance with and under our epistemic conditions (Allison, 2004, 36).

In conclusion, Allison's interpretation tries to change the meaning of things in themselves from an ontological difference to an epistemological one. Doing so, he interprets Kantian transcendental idealism as a result of an entirely new approach to cognition. According to it, Kant does not entangle with cognition as a mental entity. Otherwise, he thinks of it in the light of epistemic condition and tries to find its trace in the objects of human cognition. In other words, his project is about the nature of objects from a human standpoint and the unavoidable relation between them and our subjective construction. This way, he intends to change the meaning of the two sides of the paradox and avoid contradiction.

#### 2. Assessment of Allison's Interpretation

I will examine Allison's interpretation in this section, which is outlined as follows; in the first part, Guyer's objections will be delineated, followed by the second part where I will try to answer these objections in accordance with Allison's point of view, and the third part includes my discussion on whether or not these answers and overall position are plausible and compatible with Kant's texts.

##### A. Guyer's Objections

P. Guyer elaborates on his objections toward the first edition of Allison's book in his prominent book, *Kant and the claims of knowledge* (1987). The fifth part of his book is concerned with Allison's 'anodyne recommendation of epistemological modesty' (Guyer, 1987, 336). This part

consists of five chapters. After the first chapter, which involves his general objections, the next three parts are devoted to three approaches provided by Kant for grounding his transcendental idealism. In the second part, he brings up his objections about the Aesthetics as a ground for idealism. The third part is devoted to his objections about Analytic as another basis for idealism and the final part to the criticism of transcendental idealism as Kant's resolution for reason's Dialectic. In this article, I will concentrate on the first two parts. This is owing to the fact that this article is concerned with the problem of thing in itself which is given birth to by Aesthetic (Guyer, 1987, 333-369).

Guyer accepts two horns of the paradox of thing in itself as compatible with Kant's firm announcements. He also thinks of Kantian idealism as a 'harshly dogmatic' position. For him, this is because Kantian idealism cannot be counted as a sort of skepticism which contends that 'we cannot be sure that things as they are in themselves are also as we represent them to be' (Guyer, 1987, 333). Otherwise, it is a dogmatic position which asserts 'we *can be quite sure* that things as they are in themselves *cannot be* as we represent them to be' (Guyer, 1987, 333).

Therefore, it is apparent that he not only sees Kantian idealism as contradictory due to the intrinsic contradiction of thing in itself but also counts it as groundless because of its harshly dogmatic nature. This is because according to him, 'none of Kant's arguments for the non-spatiality and non-temporality of things in themselves, certainly none of his arguments from legitimate claims of the transcendental theory of experience, succeeds' (Guyer, 1987, 335). So, we shall see both his objections about Kant's reasons and Allison's interpretation in this part.

### **I. Objection: New Set of Things in Themselves**

His first objection targets Allison's overall position. As we saw in the previous part, Allison criticizes Kant's critics to take thing in itself as something ontologically separate from us which Kant assumes for grounding his idealism. Nevertheless, Guyer insists that he, in opposition to traditional interpreters, does not think that Kant assumes a new, separate set of mysterious things. As Guyer puts it, this is because Kant reduces our representation of ordinary things to mere representation, and for introducing thing in itself 'all he has to do is transfer spatiality and temporality from objects to our *representations* of them or *confine* assertions of spatiality and temporality to the latter' (Guyer, 1987, 335). Therefore, he thinks that Allison's defense of Kant's theory of knowledge as an objective approach by rejecting a separate set of things in themselves in addition to ordinary objects is failed because Kant 'does something just as unpleasant — namely, *degrade* ordinary objects to mere representations of themselves, or *identify* objects possessing spatial and temporal properties with mere mental entities' (Guyer, 1987, 335).

### **II. Objection Two: Non-valid Argument**

His second objection is concentrated on the gap between Allison's definition of thing in itself and his consequence about its properties. As Guyer proceeds to make clear, Allison defines the

concept of thing in itself as a '*conception* of a thing which excludes any epistemic conditions necessary for the representation of objects,' (Guyer, 1987, 337) and simply concludes that things in themselves cannot be spatial. However, as Guyer puts it truly, there is no way to draw a conclusion from the *absence of a predicate* to the *absence of a property*. In better words, such inference 'simply confuses claims about a *concept* with claims about *things*' (Guyer, 1987, 337).

He completes this objection by an additional point. His objection is that: given Kant's arguments about the restriction of our cognition to spatiotemporal objects, what can we conclude as a property of things beyond this restriction? What is the problem of the possibility that we can only conceive things that are spatiotemporal and at the same time things in themselves conform to these conditions? In other words, how can we proceed from a matter of epistemology about the nature of things that we can recognize to the fact that they cannot have such nature in themselves? More surprisingly, Allison defines the concept of things in themselves according to these conditions. This is puzzling because we may ignore some features of things that we concede their existence; we ignore them for some reason. However, the procedure that is suggested by Allison is the reverse of it. According to Allison, we introduce a concept and ignore some concepts at first, and only then do we conclude the absence of ignored features (Guyer, 1987, 336).

According to Guyer, Allison introduces a new premise contriving the above-mentioned problem. As he tries to make clear, owing to the fact that the last argument could not answer why we should attribute lack of some features that are our forms of intuition to things in themselves, Allison appeals to the premise that epistemic conditions 'must reflect the cognitive structure of the mind (its manner of representing) rather than the nature of the object as it is in itself' (Guyer, 1987, 336).

Moreover, Guyer finds many flaws in this new formulation. The first problem is that it 'begs the question' of transcendental idealism because it assumes the conclusion that these forms cannot be properties of things in themselves as a part of this new premise. Supporting this premise, Allison argues that refutation of this claim suggests that the mind somehow has access to things in themselves and this is an apparent contradictory. However, according to Guyer, here emerges the second flaw. This is because such a conclusion is based on the same premise, not the rejection of it. In other words, it seems contradictory because it is assumed that things cannot conform to our forms of intuition in themselves, and just being outside the domain of our cognition results in their non-spatiotemporality (Guyer, 1987, 339).

### **III. Objection Three: Revers Interpretation**

However, his main objection is about the order of Kant's argument for non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves and Allison's reading of it. According to Guyer, Allison reverses the Kant's arguments which is from the necessity of space and time for representation and necessity

of some propositions about them to non-spatiotemporal nature of things in themselves (Guyer, 1987, 342). He explains this problem in a dense passage:

*[Kant] derive[s] the nonspatiality and nontemporality of things in themselves ... most prominently from the absolute necessity of both intuitions of and certain judgments about space and time in our experience. Allison represents Kant as arguing, either from the definition of the concept of a thing in itself or from the alleged principle about epistemic conditions which we have been examining, that space and time cannot be properties of things in themselves because they are subjective forms of representation. But what Kant argues is exactly the opposite of this: namely, that space and time can only be mere forms of representation because they cannot be properties of things as they are in themselves. And in so arguing, Kant is far from simply assuming that anything which is shown to be a necessary condition for representations is thereby automatically shown to reflect the structure of the mind rather than of the object represented. Instead, his primary concern is to argue that what is a necessary form of representation, and which for that reason may have to be at least a structure or subjective condition of the mind, is at most such a condition or is a merely subjective condition of representation (Guyer, 1987, 342).*

Based on this passage, Allison derives nonspatiotemporality of things in themselves from the concept of them or from the fact that space and time are forms of our intuition (because according to the second formulation, it consists of the contradiction that the mind has somehow access to them). However, Guyer insists that Kant argues exactly the reverse of it. He figures Kant's reasons as starting from the fact that space and time cannot be properties of things in themselves, so they are forms of our intuition. In other words, he claims that Kant's arguments do not simply proceed from being the form to impossibility of being property (as Allison sees it). Conversely, Guyer finds Kant arguing from necessity to the fact that they should be at least, and second at most, merely forms of our intuition (Guyer, 1987, 342). Here we may find these disagreements more easily:

*Allison: space and time are forms of intuition, so things in themselves cannot be spatiotemporal.*

*Allison's premise: If something is a form of intuition, it cannot be a property of things in themselves.*

*Guyer: things in themselves are not spatiotemporal; therefore, space and time are forms of intuition.*

*Guyer's premise: If something is necessary, it cannot be the property of things in themselves, and space and time are necessary (a priori) intuitions.*

Now by this analysis, it is apparent that for Guyer, necessity is the basis of Kant's arguments, but as far as Allison is interpreted from Guyer's standpoint, he posits the relation of being the form of intuition and being subjective as the basis of Kant's idealism.

Elaborating on his interpretation of Kant's argument, Guyer divides his project namely showing that for Kant necessity is the main premise of Kantian idealism to two separate projects. The first is to show that 'Kant's key inference is from the nonspatiality of things in themselves to the merely subjective status of space as a form of representation, and not vice versa' and the second is that Kant concludes nonspatiotemporality of things in themselves from necessary truth of the contents of our knowledge about space to the nonspatiality of things in themselves' (Guyer, 1987, 354-55).

For the first part, he mentions Kant's conclusions from expositions of the concept of space. According to Guyer, the order of the conclusions noticeably shows the way Kant argues. Considering these conclusions again,

*a) Space represents no property at all of any things in themselves nor any relation of them to each other, i.e., no determination of them that attaches to objects themselves and that would remain even if one were to abstract from all subjective conditions of intuition. For neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited a priori.*

*b) Space is nothing other than merely the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e., the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us. [A26/B42]*

As Guyer puts it, Kant first derives nonspatiality of thing in itself from his expositions and only then does he conclude that space is merely the form of our intuition. Again, he thinks of this order as exactly the reverse of the order posited by Allison in which Kant starts from space as the form of intuition to the merely subjective nature of that.

Then Guyer argues for the second part of his project again by these passages. According to him, Kant explicitly states the reason for nonspatiality in the first conclusion. Due to the first conclusion, space is not in any meaning in itself because 'For neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited *a priori*.' Therefore, Kant thinks of a priority as the reason for nonspatiality, not as Allison considers it that Kant derives nonspatiality from the premise that space and time are forms of our intuition. Elaborating on this part, Guyer mentions the exact premise of this move in the Kant's argument for nonspatiality of thing in itself. According to Guyer, Kant supposes that 'whatever is known *a priori* cannot be a property of things in themselves. The basis for this, in turn, is his supposition that properties of things in themselves could not be known *a*

*priori* because they could not be known to be necessary' (Guyer, 1987, 362). In other words, Guyer figures out Kantian reason as returning to the concept of a priority and ultimately to necessity. For Guyer, Kant's description of Copernican revolution is a good sign of this:

*If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter a priori, but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility as this. [B xvii]*

But how does Kant proceed from necessity to apriority? As Guyer construes it, for proving something as necessary, we should know that it is universal and exists independent of our experience. Because of this it should be *a priori*. But for Kant, what is *a priori* cannot exist independent of us as thing in itself, and he, therefore, concludes that what is necessary unavoidably is merely subjective (Guyer, 1987, 362).

#### **IV. Final Four: Neglected Alternative**

Here this is the exact point of which Guyer thinks as the main flaw of Kantian argument for idealism. This is because he thinks that Kant ignored one important alternative. The neglected alternative is the possibility that 'space and time may be [...] *both* necessary constraints on our perception of objects *and* genuine features of the objects we do succeed in perceiving' (Guyer, 1987, 363). However, for Guyer Kant cannot base the exclusion of this option on his concept of necessity, and therefore, his arguments fall short of providing a convincing ground for his transcendental idealism (Guyer, 1987, 363-69).

In conclusion, as we have seen, Guyer's objections are mainly concentrated on this neglected alternative. Although he criticizes Allison's position for reversing the order of Kant's arguments, he does so because he finds this as a way for circumventing this alternative.

#### **B. Evaluation of Guyer's Objections**

##### **I. An Answer to the Objection One**

In this part, I will examine whether or not Guyer's critical remarks are answerable from Allison's standpoint. His first objection was about sets of objects that Kant assumes. He asserts that one cannot use the fact that Kant does not assume a *new* set of non-spatiotemporal objects for the rejection of two-object reading of Kantian idealism (and so its harshly dogmatic nature). However, I think Allison can provide a plausible answer to this objection. Using Allison's grounds, the main two-aspect interpreters' appeal to the rejection of this set of objects does not have anything to do with the place from which Kant draws them. The main problem is that whether Kant introduces things in themselves as an ontological set of objects or just as a consideration of empirical things. Such interpreters' refutation of things in themselves as a new set is the refutation of them as a set of objects with certain ontological status (Allison, 2004, 7-8). Therefore, for them, showing that Kant does not assume such set, is a conspicuous sign of

to the fact that thing in itself is just a logical concept and sort of a consideration that shows the domain of our synthetic cognition.

Also, Kant asserts these points about thing in itself explicitly. As an instance, in the following passage Kant defines thing in itself only as a thought we can use as a 'touchstone' for finding our contribution in intuited objects:

*As for objects insofar as they are thought merely through reason, and necessarily at that, but that (at least as reason thinks them) cannot be given in experience at all - the attempt to think them (for they must be capable of being thought) will provide a splendid touchstone of what we assume as the altered method of our way of thinking, namely that we can cognize of things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them. [Bxviii]*

Moreover, Kant scholars who appeal to the rejection of the second set of objects, do so by citing some passages in which Kant firmly says that things in themselves are sorts of consideration. Therefore, discussion about whether in Kant's assumption such a set is the third set or the second one has nothing to do with whether he assumes it as an ontological set or as a way of consideration. One of such passages can be found below. In this passage, Kant explicitly defines things in themselves as a consideration.<sup>1</sup>

*Objects can be considered from two different sides, on the one side as objects of the senses and the understanding for experience, and on the other side as objects that are merely thought at most for isolated reason striving beyond the bounds of experience. [Bxix]*

## **II. An Answer to The Objection Two**

In the second objection, Guyer accuses Allison for nonlegitimate conclusion from the *rejection of predicates* to the *rejection of properties* in things in themselves. However, this objection seems to be based upon a misunderstanding of Allison's point of view. As we have seen, Allison interprets thing in itself exactly as a *consideration*. He definitely refutes the option of seeing thing in itself as a real thing with certain properties. This is simply because for him it is a 'transcendental misemployment of the categories' (Allison, 2004, 11). Having this ground, he only finds thing in itself a consideration, and it is noticeable that we cannot say anything about properties of this consideration. Although Allison himself does not say explicitly that thing in itself becomes a concept in his interpretation, there is not any sharp difference between consideration and concept in this issue. This is because for him thing in itself and related concepts are just logical terms for describing the limits of our knowledge. As he says:

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<sup>1</sup>. It is noteworthy to say that the above-mentioned passage and similar ones do not reject Guyer's position entirely. This is because there may be a contradiction between Kant's different passages. I will elaborate on this point in the last part of this article.

*In Wittgensteinian terms, Kant was not trying to say what is unsayable, but merely to define the boundaries of what can be said or asked. In order to do so, however, he had to introduce the 'metalanguage' of transcendental philosophy. Thus, such expressions as 'things as they are in themselves,' 'noumena,' the 'transcendental object,' and their correlates are to be understood as technical terms within this metalanguage rather than as terms referring to transcendently real entities (Allison, 2004, 73).*

Guyer maybe points out here that such conception of thing in itself and its non-spatiotemporality makes Kantian idealism a trivial position that simply asserts an analytical position about the concept of thing in itself. However, Allison is unperturbed by such objection because for him it is Kant's reasons for concluding human epistemic condition that makes such a simple inference possible (Allison, 2004, 19).

### III. Considering Another Answer to The Objection Two

Here N. F. Stang posits another solution to the objection of deriving lack of properties from lack of predicates. According to him, we should not interpret Allison as asserting that thing in itself is not spatial. Otherwise, we should read it as saying, 'it is not the case that things in themselves are spatial' (Stang, 2018, 24). Due to this, he formulates it as:

*~ (things in themselves are spatial)*

Rather than,

*Things in themselves are non-spatial*

Stang finds this as a solution for Guyer's objection because it is a qualified position than attributing to such objects non-spatiality as a property. Having this interpretation, he finds Allison as asserting 'it is false to say that they are spatial,' and understands it different from the position that 'we cannot know, or justifiably assert that things in themselves are spatial' (Stang, 2018, 24).

However, there are some problems with this reading. First, it does not explicitly determine what can be the exact meaning of this new position other than attributing to things in themselves non-spatiality or seeing it as unwarranted assertion. Moreover, not only is there any trace of such position in Allison's book, but also, he firmly asserts two positions which Stang rejected. About the position that things in themselves are non-spatial, Allison concedes it when citing Guyer as elucidating Kantian Idealism as a 'harshly dogmatic' position. Allison here explicitly asserts that 'we shall see that Guyer is correct to insist that Kant affirmed the **strong** [my emphasis] thesis of the non-spatiotemporality of things as they are in themselves' (Allison, 2004, 7).

About the second position, Allison explicitly construes synthetic propositions about thing in itself as unwarranted propositions in passages such as, 'on this reading, then, transcendental idealism may be characterized as a doctrine of warranted assertibility relativized to a point of

view' (Allison, 2004, 48).<sup>1</sup> He similarly refutes such objects as objects for us as he says, 'the claim is not that *things* transcending the conditions of human cognition cannot exist (this would make these conditions ontological rather than epistemic) but merely that such things cannot count as *objects* for us' (Allison, 2004, 12) which is sort of the rejection of justifiable or warranted assertion.

#### IV. An Answer to The Objections Three and Four

Turning again to Guyer's objections, we should consider the rest of his objections as falling under two categories. The first one is about Allison's reverse interpretation of order of Kantian reasons, and the second one is about the neglected alternative in Kant's arguments for idealism. For the first one, Ameriks noticeably shows that Allison's interpretation and Guyer's one, are not exactly reverse, and one can accept both of them at the same time. As he reconciles them, Guyer reconstructs Kant's argument proceeding from non-spatiality of things in themselves to be *merely* form of intuition. However, Allison proceeds from being form of intuition to non-spatiality of things in themselves. As it is apparent, the conclusion of Guyer's reason is being *merely* form of intuition, but Allison premise is simply being form of intuition (Ameriks, 1992, 335).

As a result, one may interpret Kant as arguing from necessity to being form of intuition, from form of intuition to non-spatiality of things in themselves and eventually to be *merely* form of intuition. I think this is a reconciliation that can satisfy both of them for formulating Kant's reasons, but the problem of neglected alternative would remain.

About this problem, we should consider Allison's standpoint more closely. This is because it seems that Guyer is criticizing Allison's (two-aspect) interpretation from his (two-object) point of view and dismisses Allison's grounds for such reading. As Allison himself finds this,

*This idealism is not an ontological thesis about how things 'really are' (non-spatial and non-temporal), when seen from a God's-eye view. It is rather a critical thesis about the conditions of the cognition of things viewed from the 'human standpoint,' which is the only standpoint available to us. One can, of course, quarrel with Kant's claims that space and time are such conditions. What one cannot do is claim that it is possible both for space and time to be such forms and for things as they are in themselves to be spatial or temporal*

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<sup>1</sup>. Allison uses this expression (warranted assertibility) for explaining the difference between propositions from practical and theoretical point of view. However, it is applicable to discussion about synthetic propositions about thing in itself. This is because the objection that compelled Allison for using such expression is about the usage of understanding's categories in synthetic propositions about God and freedom and the same problem exists when we consider non-spatiality of thing in itself as a synthetic proposition. Therefore, the main problem with Stang's interpretation is that he construes such propositions as synthetic and tries to circumvent its problems by qualifying Allison's position.

*in any meaningful sense. Not only do we have no warrant for this, we could not conceivably get one* (Allison, 2004, 132)

According to Allison, we should take into consideration that the problem of things in themselves is not about something ontologically outside us with some intrinsic properties. Again, he thinks that Kant's idealism is not asserting that there are some things that are beyond our capacity for cognition. If it were the case, we could ask why we should assume that these objects lack our forms of intuition. Otherwise, according to him, Kantian idealism is to leave the option that there is one standpoint from which we can talk meaningfully about what is in our domain of cognition and what is outside it. We should concede that human standpoint is the only standpoint available for us, and from this point of view, we should not think about finding a way from appearances (as objects for us from one consideration) to thing in itself (as object for us from another consideration). This is simply because we lack a point of view to consider them at the same time.

In better words, rejecting the human standpoint and thinking about simply coincidence between our forms of intuition and the things in themselves (in two object view) will draw us either to phenomenalism or pre-established harmony which itself will lead to dogmatism or skepticism (Allison, 2004, 16). Therefore, we have one choice to have 'transcendental turn' and accept human standpoint to save the possibility of knowledge and avoid dogmatism and skepticism (see Gardner, 2015, 2).

#### **V. Another Answer to These Objections**

To put this reason in a more detailed manner, let us assume that we have something named SPACE as a space for things in themselves. The claim is that we cannot recognize SPACE as space in any meaningful way; therefore, for saving the possibility of knowledge we should revise our thought about objects. To start, we should consider the fact that we have necessary propositions about the nature of space. For example, it is 3D *necessarily*. Having the fact that our space is so in nature, we cannot warrant this for SPACE because we cannot know how it may have some properties necessarily with a *posteriori* cognition. As a result, we cannot warrant this, and this new space, named SPACE, may not be 3D. Considering the fact that some properties are intrinsic properties of the concept of space leads us to the fact that SPACE cannot be space in any meaningful sense because it *may* not have such intrinsic properties and, in better words, does not have any intrinsic property.<sup>1</sup>

Noticeably, it is the expanded version if the reason that Kant brings for his transcendental turn (Copernican revolution) and is objected by Guyer. However, the essential point here is that this argument is not a flawed reason from conditional necessity to absolute necessity. It is rather a reason for leaving transcendently real point of view (which is the ground of that objection)

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<sup>1</sup>. Because intrinsic property is necessary one.

and establishing transcendental turn. In other words, Kant comes up with this argument for showing in what situation can we talk about necessary facts. This argument shows that with a transcendently real point of view about objects, we cannot say anything about them necessarily, and we should change or point of view about them. Therefore, for saving the possibility of synthetic *a priori* cognition, he excludes transcendently real point of view and therefore the third alternative at first in Preface, and then he states his argument for non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves without anxiety for this alternative in Aesthetic.

In sum, we found that Allison's point of view can answer Guyer's textual and logical objections. This is mostly because Guyer's objections could not criticize Allison's position from his two-aspect position, and due to this fact, such objections fall short of rejecting Allison's radically different interpretation.

### **C. A New Objection about Allison's interpretation**

As we witnessed, Allison tries to use epistemic conditions to introduce an entirely new level of thought, named transcendental by Kant. As far as the paradox of thing in itself is considered, Allison's interpretation is aimed at eliminating its ground. Doing so, he changes the concept of thing in itself as a metaphysical entity to things *considered* as they are in themselves. This consideration which is possible for him because of our epistemic conditions, helps him change the meaning of non-spatiotemporality of thing in itself from a proposition about its ontological status to a proposition about its way of consideration as independent of our epistemic condition. As a result, he attributes non-spatiotemporality to them analytically, and it does not have any contradiction with the second horn of the paradox about thing in itself because this horn refutes synthetic propositions about them.

Simultaneously, this conception of thing in itself changes the way it relates to the appearance. In this new conception, they are objects for different faculties rather than a thing in itself that has a particular appearance. In other words, with this reading we do not have the ordinary relation between terms 'appearance' and 'thing in itself' because such relation supposes the possibility of seeing this relation from a single, God's-eyes point of view. However, according to two-aspect interpretation, the claim is simply that there is not any single point of view for considering both of them at the same time. As it is mentioned in our report of Allison's position, this new point, that things in themselves do not appear to us as appearances, helps him answer objections about the problem of knowledge. This is because, in this new interpretation, appearance is not the way we represent things in themselves; therefore, Kantian idealism cannot be served as a theory for limiting our knowledge to the appearances of things in themselves rather than the real nature of things.

However, although having Allison's interpretation as Kant's point of view, we can provide plausible answers to famous objections about thing in itself, it has a problem with Kant's passages about the relation of things in themselves and appearances. As we saw, Allison's

reading finds their relation just as two ways of consideration and rejects their relation as an ordinary relation between thing in itself and *its* appearance. As he puts it, ‘since Kant explicitly denies that we *represent* things as they are in themselves as spatial or temporal, Guyer's claim that for Kant things as they are in themselves are not as we represent them to be is somewhat puzzling’ (Allison, 2004, 7). It should be noticed that in this passage the expression ‘represent’ refers to appearance because it is about Guyer’s position, and as we saw, Guyer's problem was the Kantian reduction of appearances to mere representations. Delineating this point of view better, Allison is attempting to provide a reading that erases ordinary relation between the concepts of appearance and thing in itself. Doing so, he interprets them as objects or things of different faculties that they can be considered because of the independence of understanding from sensibility. This reading is very similar to Kantian concepts of *phenomena* as ‘beings of sense’ (B306) and *noumena* as ‘beings of understanding’ (B306). But it is not applicable to every usage of thing in itself and appearance in Kant's passages.

For considering the problem of the relation between appearance and thing in itself, it is better to consider Kant’s passages about the *relation* between them:

*(1) This was the result of the entire Transcendental Aesthetic, and it also follows naturally from the concept of an appearance in general that something must correspond to it which is not in itself appearance, for appearance can be nothing for itself and outside our kind of representation; thus, if there is not to be a constant circle, the word ‘appearance’ must already indicate a relation to something the immediate representation of which is, to be sure, sensible, but which in itself, without this constitution of our sensibility (on which the form of our intuition is grounded), must be something, i.e., an object independent of sensibility. [A251-52]*

*(2) In fact, if we view the objects of senses as mere appearances, as is fitting, then we thereby admit at the very same time that a thing in itself underlies them, although we are not acquainted with this thing as it may be constituted in itself, but only with its appearance, i.e., with the way in which our senses are affected by this unknown something. Therefore, the understanding, just by the fact that it accepts appearances, also admits to the existence of things in themselves, and to that extent we can say that the representation of such beings as underlie the appearances, hence of mere intelligible beings, is not merely permitted but also unavoidable. [Pro 4: 314-15; 107-8]*

*(3) Yet the reservation must also be well noted, that even if we cannot cognize these same objects as things in themselves, we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves. For otherwise there would follow the absurd*

*proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears.*  
[Bxxvi-xxvii]

(4) *Nevertheless, if we call certain objects, as appearances, beings of sense (phaenomena), because we distinguish the way in which we intuit them from their constitution in itself, then it already follows from our concept that to these we as it were oppose, as objects thought merely through the understanding, either the very same objects [eben dieselben] conceived in accordance with the latter constitution, even though we do not intuit it in them, or else other possible things, which are not objects of our senses at all, and call these beings of understanding (noumena). [B306]*

(5) *Now the doctrine of sensibility is at the same time the doctrine of the noumenon in the negative sense, i.e., of things that the understanding must think without this relation to our kind of intuition, thus not merely as appearances but as things in themselves. [B307]*

Perusing the above passages, we can find two kinds of relation between appearance (or its correlate *phaenomena*) and thing in itself (or its correlate *noumena*). The first one is causal relation (the second passage), and the second one is kind of semantic relation. The causal relation between them needs separate consideration, and we will concentrate on their conceptual relation which Kant finds a necessary relation. For example, according to the third passage, having appearance without thing in itself that appears is an 'absurd proposition.' Therefore, for Kant, there is a fundamental relation between the term's 'appearance' and 'thing in itself' so that he cannot accept one of them without the other. Now, we should consider how Allison reads this necessary relation due to his epistemological interpretation:

*Accordingly, the 'absurdity' to which Kant alludes may be more appropriately characterized as considering something as it appears, or as appearing (in the transcendental sense), without, at the same time, contrasting this with the thought of how it may be in itself (in the same sense). In fact, these contrasting ways of considering an object are simply two sides of the same act of transcendental reflection, an act that Kant describes as 'a duty from which no one can escape if he would judge anything about things a priori' (A263 / B319) (Allison, 2004, 56).*

According to this passage, Allison interprets such necessary relation between these two concepts as necessary relation between 'two sides of the same act of transcendental reflection' as parts of a logical division by regarding their relation to forms of sensibility. Due to this, transcendental standpoint provides us with an important factor (epistemic condition) that we

can consider things under and, therefore *necessarily*, independent of it (Allison, 2004, 56). This way, Allison interprets Kant's opinion about conceptual or semantic relation between them. And we can find that there is an intention in this interpretation that is trying to avoid seeing this relating as accepting 'things in themselves appear through appearances' in an ordinary meaning because it will produce the problem of knowledge.

However, this elucidation falls short of doing justice to Kant's intent. As it is apparent in passages such as the third one, Kant does not explain such necessary conceptual relation *only* as necessary contradictory relation as we have in every logical division. He is noticeably talking about a mutual, conceptual relation between them such as the relation of concepts we have in the category of 'relative' in Aristotle, and exactly because of this he finds rejecting one of them is an *absurd* idea. In better words, Kant finds this relation as a relative conceptual relation between thing in itself and its appearance, namely ordinary conception that when we have appearance, it should be the appearance of a thing that *appears* through it. It is this recent relation that Allison tries to avoid and suggests a transcendental meaning for avoiding that. However, we cannot find exactly how Kant can see the refutation of such transcendental relation an *absurd* idea.

It should be noticed that I am not in favor of the position that Kant does interpret thing in itself just in ordinary meaning. There are many passages that Kant explains their difference just from a transcendental point of view (e. g. B306). But we cannot interpret all the passages about them in such a manner. Therefore, I think although Allison's reading can grasp a new perspective that Kant provides to these terms because of his transcendental approach, it should not ignore Kant's ordinary (or according to Allison, transcendently real) use of these terms.

Therefore, I think we can, and should, appreciate Kant's endeavor for providing a new approach for analyzing human cognition. And Allison succeeds in finding and developing this fundamental thrust in Kant's critical philosophy. However, we cannot ignore the fact that Kant borrows and uses terms with their transcendently real meaning from the works of his successors and, therefore, sometimes suffers from the problems that he himself finds in them.

## **Conclusion**

We started this article with considering the paradox of thing in itself in Kantian transcendental idealism. We found that this paradox cannot be answered by avoiding attributing one of its horns to Kant. Thereafter, we concentrated on Allison's two-aspect interpretation of Kantian idealism as a possible way to unraveling the problem. Then, we mentioned and assessed Guyer's objections as objections from two-object point of view about Allison's interpretation. As a result of the comparison between their reasons, we found these conclusions:

1. Allison's interpretation can plausibly solve the paradox of thing in itself and its related problems. In better words, assuming his interpretation of Kant as a true reading, we can accept the concept of thing in itself, without any contradiction.
2. We also recognized that Guyer's objection that Allison reverses the order of Kant's arguments falls short of showing that. This is because his interpretation about the matter and Allison's one is not exactly reverse to each other, and one can attribute the order (not the exact content) of both of them to Kant.
3. About Guyer's objection's regarding the problem of 'neglected alternative', we noticed that this objection is not legitimate because it ignores the new meaning that terms such as thing in itself find due to Allison's interpretation. It is conspicuous that Guyer uses the two-object conception of thing in itself in his objections; therefore, we cannot expect this objection to be able to show any justifiable flaws in Allison's construction of Kant's argument for nonspatiotemporality of thing in itself.
4. We also explained that Kant excludes this alternative before coming into his argument for nonspatiotemporality things in themselves, by excluding traditional thought that our cognition should conform to objects. In other words, it is an alternative that is excluded by his Copernican revolution for saving the possibility of *a priori* cognition.
5. As a result of these comparisons, we found that Allison's interpretation (independent of its exact compatibility) can provide plausible textual support and solve the problem of thing in itself with consistency.

Then, we considered a new objection and concluded that:

6. The relation that Kant uses in the passages about the necessary relation between 'appearance' and 'thing in itself' noticeably consists of transcendently real aspects and reveals that Kant could not take apart himself from transcendently real epistemology of his successors, which according to Kant's position they use these terms in such a meaning.

Therefore, as the main conclusions of this article, we can say that epistemological two-aspect reading has two achievements, and one problem regarding the concept of thing in itself:

1. Recognizes Kant's main contribution to the history of philosophy by introducing transcendental point of view. On the contrary, it shows the disadvantages of two-object view that overlooks such legitimate contribution because of some textual vagueness and contradictions that are acceptable for every philosopher who introduces a philosophical idea for the first time.
2. Justifiably accepting the Allison's reading as compatible with Kant's revolutionary view of thing in itself, we can answer the problem of thing in itself and reject accusations about its contradictory nature.

3. However, we cannot overlook deposits of transcendently real concepts in Kant's philosophy, namely 'appearance,' 'thing in itself,' and the relation of them; These are concepts and usages that draw many critics to read and judge his position as contradictory.

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