THE LOGICAL ALIEN

Conant and His Critics

EDITED BY SOFIA MIGUENS

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CONTENTS

James Conant, Replies

THE LOGICAL ALIEN

In memoriam Barry Stroud: the embodiment of *Fiat Lux*

[P]hilosophy is one subject and . . . progress in one place depends on the resolution of issues that lie elsewhere. One is led eventually into almost all other areas and questions. This is certainly true of the work of the great philosophers of the past. Against that high standard, the current professional fixation on distinct "fields" or areas of academic "specialization" and "competence" looks like no more than a bad joke.

<div align="right">—BARRY STROUD</div>

PART I

THE BOUNDS OF JUDGMENT

Basic Necessities (or: The Shape of Thought)

Charles Travis and Sofia Miguens

This book arose out of a project at the University of Porto, The Bounds of Judgement, with a somewhat wider scope and a conference within this project with precisely the present scope.[1] The broader idea was to group together claims of one area of discourse or another that it lies beyond the (presumed) bounds of eligibility for truth or falsehood. The point was to see what common features, if any, might be thought to place a discourse beyond such bounds. Some such claims, for example, might concern ethical or aesthetic discourse, or specific bits of it. Some might concern such things as promising or ordering (or marrying). Some might see bounds to the objectivity of truth which would confine true-false discourse to what is ultimately about the "natural," or, perhaps,

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[1] The project The Bounds of Judgement: Frege, Cognitive Agents and Human Thinkers (PTDC/FIL-FIL/109882/2009) was funded by the Portuguese Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. The Conference *The Logical Alien At 20* took place at the University of Porto in June 2011. Its title referred to the twenty years since the publication of James Conant's 1991 *Philosophical Topics* article "The Search for Logically Alien Thought" (reprinted after this Introduction). The participants in the conference were asked to address the "philosophy of logic" task of the project, named "Emptiness of Demands on the World." The idea, put crudely, would be this: if laws of logic (the most basic laws of being true) frame the very business of being true (or false), and if they limn the structure within which such is possible at all, then they cannot at the same time be within that business themselves. Various models have been given in support of a view of this sort. The view itself is, inter alia, one take on questions of the inexorability, immutability, and uniqueness of laws of logic.

"objects of experience," whatever the relevant claimant might take such to be. Such bounds might touch philosophy itself, as in Richard Montague's dictum, "There are only two branches of philosophy: set theory and aesthetics. Whatever you can't do in set theory is just aesthetics."

And some concern logic. Not that Frege, the author on whom the Bounds of Judgement centered, ever thought of laws of logic as anything other than (eternal) truths. But logic exhibits, or seems to, a sort of inexorability which at least compromises the claim of a law of logic to be either true or false. The idea would be as follows: a thought (that which is liable to be true or false) is a proprietary way of making truth turn on, or be hostage to, how things are. It fixes a determinate way for how things are thus to matter, whereas the inexorability of logic suggests that its laws are hostage, or answerable, to nothing; that there is simply no such thing as things being other than as per them. So these laws do not make truth turn in any way on anything. Which compromises their claim to be in the business of being true or false.

Here one might go a step further. The laws of logic (Frege's laws of truth), one might suppose, simply define what the business of being true (or false) is, as such. So they cannot be in that business itself. They stand outside it. They form the framework within which there may be questions of being true or false—the most general conditions for any such question to have content. They are not themselves such questions: the framework would not itself be such as to have (such) content. The business of the laws of logic is other than that business they define. Such is a view elaborated by Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* (6.34) in terms of a special case: a system for describing patterns of "fly specks" on a wall. His unfortunate example was Newtonian mechanics, about which he wrote this:

> Consider a white surface with irregular black spots on it. We may now say: whatever picture may arise here, I can always come arbitrarily close to its description if I cover the picture with a correspondingly fine square network and then for each square say either that it is white or that it is black. I would thus have brought the description of the surface into a uniform form. This form is arbitrary, for I could have applied a net of a triangular or hexagonal mesh. . . .
>
> That a picture like that presented above permits of being described by a net of a given form says nothing about the picture. (For this holds

for any picture of this sort.) It does characterise the picture, though, that it can be completely described by a given net of given fineness.[2]

A specification of the net fixes the general condition for a description of the surface. It neither describes any such surface itself, nor, plausibly, is it in the business of being true or false at all. It simply fixes how (such) descriptions of a surface are to be reckoned as fitting it (describing it as it is) or not; as to how they are to be applied. Generalizing from such descriptions of a surface to thoughts in general (to all by which, in Frege's words, "truth can come into question at all"), we get that laws of logic stand to all this as rules for descriptions in terms of the net stand towards such descriptions—and hence, like those rules, are neither true nor false. Such is one view of the matter.

A thought on Frege's notion of this is "that by which truth can come into question at all": a determinate question of truth; that is, a determinate way for truth to turn on how things are. It is (accordingly) independent of any thinker (or thinkers); independent even of whether it is thought at all. Like a planet (to use Frege's comparison), it is there anyway to be recognized, or, in a metaphor Frege makes apt, to be grasped. ("The image of grasping is well suited to make the matter clear. . . . [I]t is essential to grasping that there is something to be grasped."[3]) In this same sense, being true or false is something to be recognized, perhaps discovered, about a thought, a condition obtaining independent of being thought. How things are is independent of how they are taken to be. All that might be said about the laws of logic can be applied to, say, the laws of mechanics. The laws of mechanics governed all motion, including ours, long before such laws were discovered. Laws of logic, one might say, governed all thought long before they were discovered.

But the cases differ, or so the thought goes, in what discovery might be. Though showing that the laws of mechanics hold may involve observing those laws at work, showing this is not itself governed by those laws. Rather, it is governed by laws of what shows what: laws of proof. What these laws govern is nothing like marks on paper or arrays of signs on instruments. They govern relations between thoughts. By contrast, the laws of logic form (in part) the framework within which there may be such a thing as proof at all. So insofar as there could be a proof of such

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), 6.341–6.342.

[3] Gottlob Frege, *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (Jena: Herman Pohle, 1893), xxiv.

a law, the law itself would be at work fixing what it would be for such to be proof. That this is proof already presupposes the law. So the present idea would be that discovering a law of logic is not discovering the outcome of some way for truth to turn on how things are; it is, at best, unfolding the law into an object of explicit awareness.

It might be thought that characterizing the laws of logic as the general framework within which there may be such a thing as being proof or not is overly ambitious. For, as Frege remarked early on,

> One justifies a judgement either by tracing it back to already acknowledged judgements, or without making use of other judgements. Only the first case, that of consequence, is the object of logic.[4]

Entering the living room, one is confronted with the red meat on the white rug. There it is, in plain view, proof if anything could be (to one who knows his red meat) that there is red meat on the white rug. Logic's central concern is truth preservation. In this case, there was no truth to preserve in the step from the proof (the meat on the rug) to what was proved (that there was meat on the rug). All the same, for it to be that which was proved, that there is red meat on the white rug, it must be a thought which, inter alia, relates to other thoughts (that there is no meat on the rug, that the insurance covers this, and so on) as that thought would, where it is again the laws of logic which fix what fitting would be (a point Leibniz saw).

Unlike a law of mechanics, we cannot suppose there to be anything on which the truth of a law of logic turns, or at least anything without logic itself. Which, it is suggested, is reason not to regard such a law as itself being in the business of being true or false at all. Frege held the first but not the second of these ideas. The first, at least, is a theme running through much discussion of the "logical must"—the inevitability of logic's laws—in this Introduction, in the content of this book, and elsewhere. It is thus an idea ripe for critical scrutiny, part of which would also concern the second of these ideas. In any event, it is by the second that the first falls within the remit of the project, of which the present essays are one fruit.

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[4] Gottlob Frege, "17 *Kernsätze zur Logik,*" in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed. eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), Kernsatz 13, 190.

1. We thus begin here with the idea (not beyond critical scrutiny) that a law of logic (that is, of being true) is, and can be, answerable, beholden for correctness, to nothing. Such is the inexorability of logic, the "hardness of the logical must."[5] Frege speaks of the inexorability of logic in the following image:

> If being true is thus independent of being acknowledged as true by anyone, then, too, the laws of being true are not psychological laws, but rather boundary stones, eternally and essentially fixed, which, to be sure, our thinking may overflow, but which are immoveable. And because they are this, they are authoritative for our thinking if it aims to achieve truth.[6]

Later Wittgenstein portrays the idea (with perhaps a touch of irony) thus:

> As we think of it, the ideal is fixed inalterably. You cannot step outside it. You must always turn back. There is no outside. Outside there is no air to breath. Where does this idea come from? It is like glasses on our nose and through which we see the things we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off.[7]

This idea (or impression) of inexorability has several sources. One of these lies in logic's claim to universality, and this along two dimensions. The first concerns logic's subject, sc. *topic,* neutrality: what it defines is the very business of being true; inter alia, true-false discourse as such, and not merely discourse about this or that. We have already scouted this idea. The other is its subject, sc. *thinker,* neutrality. The laws of thought, as Frege tells us, govern all thinking, no matter when, where, or by whom. So unlike the principles of those Tractarian nets above, in which one is free to avail himself of or not in describing the world, laws of logic are mandatory, inescapable. One cannot get out from under their sway by opting out of some given topic or way of putting thought about it. There is no topic to change to while remaining engaged in thought at all.

These two dimensions of universality, topic-neutrality and thinker-neutrality, are, of course, related. Let us try to imagine beings who were thinkers (in that demanding Cartesian sense in which we are that—beings

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[5] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), §437.
[6] Frege, *Grundgesetze,* xvi.
[7] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §103.

with a sensitivity as versatile and unbounded as ours to what matters to how their goals might be reached, and to picturing the world aright) but whose thinking was not subject to, or formed by, what for us would be the laws of being true (something along the lines of the laws Frege sets out in *Begriffsschrift*). We are to suppose that these beings do engage in the business of representing (something) as being (something). So there are ways they represent things as being. But their thinking, we are to suppose, is not governed by our laws of being true. Their thought, the idea goes, is not shaped by the most general laws that shape when a thought of ours would be correct (would represent things as a way they are). What answered their questions as to how one must think to pursue the goal true, what transitions from some thoughts to a thought would be truth-preserving, would not answer ours. Their thought would be incommensurable with ours. From our perspective, they would be logical aliens—as, perhaps from their perspective, so would we. For future reference, let us call such (imaginary) beings Martians.

But are we really here imagining anything at all? So far, at least, the fantasy fails to reckon with just how fundamental the notion to be true is to the very notion thought. Frege makes a point parallel to this in his case against the idea of (in effect) private language. In that context he writes,

> I have said that the word "red" would be applicable only in the domain of my consciousness if it did not indicate a property of things, but only characterised one of my sense impressions. So, too, the words "true" and "false," as I understand them, would be applicable only in the domain of my consciousness if they did not concern something whose bearer I am not, but were meant only to characterise some content of my consciousness.[8]

If someone applied the words "true" and "false" to (what purported to be) private thoughts, he could not be using these words to mean what they do; that is, to speak of being true and being false. Such is not what he would be claiming (some of) these putative private thoughts to be. Correspondingly, the laws governing our imagined thinkers' thought, above, would not be laws of being true. The result for our private thinker is that he could not be thinking truly or falsely, thus he could not be thinking thoughts. For a thought is defined by when it would be true. A

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[8] Gottlob Frege, *"Der Gedanke: Eine Logische Untersuchung," Beiträge zur deutschen Idealismus* 1, no. 2 (1918): 68.

parallel point would hold, prima facie, at least, of our above-imagined thinkers. There are to be ways they represent things as being, though their representing is not governed by the laws of being true. But by definition, a way to think things to be is defined by when it would be true that things are that way; to take things to be such a way is to take such to be true. So it cannot be ways for things to be which these imagined thinkers take things to be; it cannot be the truth of anything to which they commit in their thought, ungoverned as it is by our laws of truth. Such, Frege shows us, is the predicament in which a would-be private thinker (or linguist) would find himself. Is it also the predicament of our imagined Martians?

There is a case, anyway, that the laws of truth (*Begriffsschrift*'s laws if we have things right) govern all thought, by any being. Or at least all thought by finite beings, and, in particular, all thought which is articulable into thoughts—discrete ways to be right or wrong as to how things are. This last is a substantive condition. And, in any case, the discussion thus far hardly settles the question definitively. Still, those laws of being true, which, as Frege put it, unfold the notion being true,[9] appear as so fundamental to the relation of thought to the world (to what is thus thought of as being some way or other) as to limit severely just how different the form of thought by any thinking being might be from ours. Some such limitations ground the claim (insofar as it is grounded) of laws of truth to universality along our second dimension.

Stipulating a somewhat more radical form of another thinking thing *(res cogitans)* than we just have, Frege makes such a point when he writes,

> Suppose, though, that there were even beings found whose laws of thought directly contradicted ours, and thus also often led to contradictory results in their applications? The psychological logician could only simply acknowledge them and say: those laws hold for them, these for us. I would say: here we have a previously unrecognised form of insanity. One who understood by a logical law that which prescribes how thinking is to proceed; as laws of being true, not natural laws of holding true, would ask: Who is right?[10]

Frege was setting his face here against the psychologistic logicians of his day. As he saw it, such philosophers substitute for laws of being true laws of holding true, propositions about the nature of a (supposed) specifically human capacity for thought in general, or about human propen-

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[9] Ibid., 59.
[10] Frege, *Grundgesetze,* xvi.

sities to move from given thoughts to given others. (Such a theory-
receptive specifically human capacity, whatever this might come to, would
already construe the idea of a capacity in a way which contrasts with
that idea of a capacity underlying Descartes's idea of a rational being's
capacity for thought.[11]) It is no easy matter to make sense of this fan-
tasy. How could any laws of being true license results in contradiction
with those licensed by ours? But such does not matter to Frege's purpose.
His first point is that such ought to make sense if laws of being true are
really only psychological laws (ones of some species-specific or otherwise
special "capacity" to recognize as true). And his second is that the ques-
tion "Who is right?" is one the psychological logical cannot so much as
ask, because, as Frege points out, "he would thereby recognise laws of
truth which were not psychological laws."[12] Any would-be capacity to
recognize truth (or things being as represented) is subject to an indepen-
dent standard of (getting it) right or wrong. It is this sort of independence
which Frege had in mind when, after his comparison of laws of truth with
boundary stones (above), he continues in remarking,

> [Laws of being true] set the standard for our thinking if it aims to at-
> tain to truth. They do not stand in the relation to thinking that gram-
> matical laws stand to language, as though they would express the es-
> sence of our human thinking, and alter with it.[13]

As will quickly emerge, the independence pointed to here is a two-way
affair: one cannot get logic out of psychology or, equally, psychology out
of logic.

One might think of the issue here as follows. We (ourselves, our
readers, and so on, up to the seventh degree of relationship) are human
beings, a particular species of animal. We are also rational beings *(res
cogitans)* in Frege's sense. (Neither feature need be more fundamental
than the other to our being what we are.) As human beings we are pre-
sumably endowed with capacities for dealing with the world (or engaging
in whatever else we do) which are species- (and topic-) specific. What thus
distinguishes us from other species may be a topic for empirical psy-
chology (or biology). Within this general topic, one may expect to be
able to isolate capacities which are theory-receptive (which exploit, and
are identified by, some determinate specifiable way of achieving the par-

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[11] René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 90–91.
[12] Frege, *Grundgesetze,* xvi.
[13] Ibid.

ticular victories they enable) and, as with any scientific topic, capacities, or phenomena, which are not so receptive. (The scientific importance of asking the right questions.)

In speaking of capacities that a rational being would have as such, we conceive capacities in a new way. For a start, we speak of nothing species-specific. Conceivably, different species might, by different means, each qualify as rational beings. Correlatively, we say nothing per se as to (or explanatory of) how successful exercises of the (or a) capacity for rationality might be achieved or enabled. Those capacities peculiar to and present *eo ipso* in a *res cogitans* are capacities in a different sense: ones identified as the ones they are by what they are capacities to do and not by any proprietary means of enabling this. Such capacities, as Descartes noted in 1637, would be theory-resistant. They would not, that is, consist in any specifiable battery of capacities in our first sense (ones identified by how they enabled what they did). For, as Descartes pointed out, the mark of a rational being is the ability to stand back from whatever he is doing or planning to examine critically whether this is how to do it or whether it ought to be done at all. As Hilary Putnam later put it, reason transcends whatever it can survey. *Mutatis mutandis* for whatever capacities of ours that only a rational being might attain to. Though (as Matthew Boyle notes[14]) rationality infuses and transforms all our more specialized capacities for recognition (considered in full generality), some such may take a specifically human form in us. There may be, for example, a way a human can recognize a pig on sight or a glottal stop when heard, or a way to acquire a human language by exposure to impoverished data. A theory of such a human way of doing things may be theory-receptive as rationality itself is not—if, that is, the theory's ambitions are suitably restricted (e.g., to recognize a pig in "normal" circumstances).

Human capacities are parochial; those peculiar to a rational being are catholic. Laws of truth are catholic. They govern all thought (whether of rational beings or not). The business of logic, if universal in the present sense, is with the object of a capacity which a rational being enjoys as such. Logic is thus catholic. Its laws identify something to be recognized; something as to when a transition from given thought to given thought would stay on course (if started from it) in pursuit of truth. A rational being is, per se, able to govern its thought accordingly, to be sensitive to the constraints thus imposed. Those laws do not speak to anything

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[14] Matthew Boyle, "Additive Theories of Rationality: A Critique," *The European Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (Sept. 2016): 527–555.

species-specific. They do not describe or determine some given, specifiable way of thus maintaining course. They do not presuppose such a thing as "the way in which to carry out such management." Frege's familiar laws are given in terms of particular forms of articulation which the thought of any thinker admits of. They define when one would be on course toward truth. But they are not a theory, or procedure, which enables recognition of when one has done so (or failed to); for one thing, such recognition always rests on collateral information. They also do not ascribe to the rational being, as such, any particular capacity for effecting articulations of that mass, his awareness of how things are (or an illusion thereof), into countables of given forms. Reading "&" as truth-functional, a rational being who holds it true that A&B (for a given A and B) is, *qua* rational, also, *ipso facto,* prepared to acknowledge that A. Because of some skill at inference which any rational being per se possesses? Or, perhaps, because of what, in this case, holding true would be? Frege put the point neatly:

> Neither logic nor mathematics has the task of investigating psyches or contents of the consciousness of individuals. . . . Perhaps their task is better identified as investigating the mind—the mind, not minds.[15]

Frege stressed, as against Benno Erdmann, that the laws of logic are absolutely independent of psychology—of course, species-non-specific as they are. But the point is bidirectional. Those laws identify something a rational being, as such, would be prepared to recognize: as to how the Martian might so manage its pursuit of truth, or how we might. But as to how, if at all, a rational being must, per se, articulate his thought, they are silent. They do not depend on that question being answerable in general at all.

2. Such is a picture of what logic is; one unfolding of the idea of its inexorability, or of, as Wittgenstein put it, "the hardness of the logical must." In one way or another, it figures as a topic of all the present essays, greeted with a degree of enthusiasm, or lack thereof, which varies from case to case. But, like most pictures in philosophy, it is not immune to cavil or even to productive cavil. So let us now append a few critical notes. The first, perhaps most important, note is this. If logic's impression of inexorability arises in one way from immodest ambitions (its claim

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[15] Frege, *"Der Gedanke,"* 74–75.

to double universality), it is also aided and assisted by what, in another way, is the extreme modesty of its ambition—a modesty that leaves its laws little, at best, to be answerable to. Little, but perhaps not quite nothing.

Logic (conceived on the lines of Frege's laws of truth) tells us something about truth-preservation; something as to when a transition from a given body of thought to a given further thought would, if that first body were true, arrive at truth. But it tells us this at least two steps removed from what we actually think or express. That to which laws of truth are sensitive is something abstracted from what we actually think or say. The first step in such abstraction extracts from given discourse, or given thinking, some collection of items of the sort which Frege calls *Gedanken:* just that by which truth can come into question at all; just that which decides how truth is to turn on things being as they are, how things must be to be as this particular discrete bit of thought presents them.[16] With which we enter the business of being true as such.

But the task of logic, as Frege tells us,[17] is to answer the question how to reach the goal truth with the rider: only insofar as such is determined merely by what being true is as such. So, armed with *Gedanken* we enter the business of being true with far more information than is of any concern to logic. If, for example, the thought is that Estrela Algures is a lager, it is of no interest to logic what it might be for something to be lager. To reach what logic speaks to, we need to abstract again: now from thoughts to particular forms for thoughts to take, leaving behind all information of no interest to logic. Where it is only whole thoughts which are of interest, what we are left with is just thought-recurrence (a distribution of places where the same thought occurs again). If predicate logic is to apply, we need first to decompose relevant thoughts in given ways (where, as Frege insists, a given thought admits of many diverse decompositions) and then abstract from this given forms for a decomposition to take. It is such forms to which logic speaks; transitions between which it identifies as preserving truth or not.

Laws of logic thus govern given forms for thoughts to take. To identify a law, one must first identify a form it is to govern. One might, for example, find a form for a thought to take; that is, a way for some such

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[16] Ibid., 60; *"Aufzeichnungen für Ludwig Darmstädter,"* in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed., eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), 273.

[17] Gottlob Frege, *"Logik,"* in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed., eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), 139.

thoughts to decompose such that such a decomposition would have two proper parts, each itself a whole thought, one so relating to the other such that the decomposed thought would be true where, but only where, that first is not true while that second is false. One might call the relation those proper parts are thus represented as standing in, as say, "Horse," or, a phonetically less perspicuous variant, "⊃." For given such proper parts (thoughts), A and B, A so relating to B, one might then express the whole thought, presented as so decomposed, as say, "Horse(A,B)" or "A Horse(s)B," or as "⊃(A,B)." For example, one might express one such thought in the words "Fish fly horse(s) birds swim." The bare form itself, abstracted from any particular content for its whole-thought proper parts to have, might be written, as say, "__Horse__" or "__⊃__." Those places for relata might also be filled by letters from some designated alphabet, say, "x", "y", or "z". Or they might be filled by "indefinite indications of a thought," say, letters from some other set, perhaps "p", "q", or "r". Now, that form as such has certain truth-preserving, or transmitting, properties. For example, for any thought "A Horse B," its truth and that of A jointly guarantee the truth of B. Such is a law of truth. And such illustrates the sort of thing a law of truth (or its expression) commits to. Which, in turn, illustrates how small the commitment of a law of truth is—how spare its content. Given that bare form, once it is made clear just what this form is, it is hard to see how to take exception to the law or what grounds for such exception there might be.

Frege tells us that logic's task, once we have abstracted from particular contents to bare forms, is to guide us with whatever guidance there remains to give in our pursuit of the goal truth. But the application of logic's laws in our actual pursuits of that goal, in our aiming at the truth *in re* the particular matters in which we seek it, are by no means as straightforward as the laws themselves. For when, and where, there are thoughts which take those forms in terms of which logic's laws are to be formulated, just where there are given such forms to be abstracted to, are matters which always depend on considerations which are simply not logic's business. In such matters, we are certainly liable to error. At the least, where laws of logic may have seemed to let us down, it is always rational to look here first, rather than to logic, when it comes to assigning blame. Such is one factor which, in any case, would make laws of logic look absolutely inexorable and immutable—in Frege's words, the eternal, immovable, foundations of all thought as such.

Such is one way in which, at the least, complications begin to accrue to our initial simple picture. There are others. In articulating (our) thought

into countables and decompositions thereof, we draw on capacities which, for all said so far, may still be, even need to be, species-specific, sc. human (or perhaps still more specific), capacities. Insofar as such is possible, it is also possible for there to be Martians who differ from us in these respects. Recall that in our present use, Martians are, by hypothesis, thinkers, *res cogitans*. And if we now speak of Martian thought, the "thought" here should be taken to mean things to think or ways to think things, and not thinking, thought processes, occurrences, or anything of that sort. Martians being thinkers, their thought must be governed by some laws of correctness. If Frege's conception of the laws of logic (of being true) applies to these, then the laws of Martian thought answer the question a Martian might pose as to how to think (notably how to infer) so as to pursue, or to be in pursuit of, that sort of correctness.

Now, one might try supposing that (some) Martians are so different from us that (in part or in whole) we simply cannot grasp Martian ways of articulating (the way things are into ways things are), nor they ours. Laws of correctness would not have the same applications to such Martian countables as to ours. So either the laws of truth (the relevant laws of correctness for humanly possible countables) would not be the laws of correctness to which their countables were subject, or, as it were, the space between the laws of truth and their applications—the nonlogical considerations, or information, on which such applications depended— would allow for such, as it were, incommensurable ranges of application. In neither case do the laws governing Martian countables need to be at odds with ours—as they presumably would not be if either set of laws governed anything at all. Rather, at most, they might pass each other in the dark. Each applying to a different sort of articulation of thought into thoughts (or the way things are into ways for things to be), it may simply not apply at all to those articulations which the other does.

These Martians would not be like Frege's imaginary aliens whose laws are in contradiction with ours. They would come closer to Wittgenstein's fantasy in *Philosophical Investigations* §207:

> Imagine that the people in this country engaged in normal human activities and made use in these, or so it seemed, an articulate language. If one watched their doings these would be understandable, seem "logical." But if we try to learn their language, we find this impossible. In their case there is no regular connection of what they say, the sounds, and what they do; though still these sounds are not superfluous. If we

gag one of them, it has the same effects as with us: without these sounds their doings fall into confusion—as I want to put it.

Should we say that these people have a language: orders, reports and so on? The regularity needed to be what we call "language" is missing.

All of this, perhaps, is just fantasy. In any case, an obvious first question to pose is whether the correctness aimed at in Martian countables is truth; and correlatively, whether Martian countables are thoughts. Here one thing needing due acknowledgement is just how generic the notion *true,* in fact, is. Again a Fregean idea:

> "True" really only makes a failed attempt to identify logic, in that what it really comes to does not at all lie in the word "true," but rather in the assertive force with which a sentence is spoken. . . . That which contains the essence of logic in the clearest way is the assertive force with which a thought is expressed.[18]

To assert something is to offer one's putative authority as to how things are. It is to underwrite something, to vouch for it. It is to underwrite guiding one's navigation of his way through the way things are, his pursuit of goals, wherever relevant, in a certain way. A thought, if such is what is thus expressed, is (in Frege's term) what has applications. Even if, as is usually the case, what these applications are is not intrinsic to its being the thought it is, still, where there is a thought, there is something it would be to be guided by it and thus something for assertive force to underwrite. In such terms, a question of truth arises wherever the way things are may be such as so to bear on how to guide one's career—one's pursuit of whatever goals. So what Martian countables need to share with human ones in order for the notion *true* to apply to them—that is, in order for *being true* to be the sort of correctness at which Martian logic informs as to how to aim—is no more than that they have applications in present sense; that is, that there is such a thing as how the correctness (in the relevant sense) of such a countable would bear on how the way things are is treatable—on how to deal with it. To which one might add that the value in articulating into ways things are, what compensates for the loss of information as to how (the way) things are, lies precisely in what it contributes to seeing what to do, inter alia, in the phenomenon of inference which articulation brings with it.

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[18] Gottlob Frege, *"Meine grundlegenden logischen Einsichten,"* in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* 272.

Little is thus required for the notion *true* to apply to Martian countables as that pursuit in terms of which their relevant correctness or incorrectness is to be understood. Nor is more than this required for Martian countables to count as thoughts, as determinate questions of truth. We could try to conceive of Martians as so apathetic, so estranged from the idea of the pursuit of goals, that, as with a god, no point would be served in articulating their thought into countables at all. But then, too, there would be no point in their having thought at all. So the question raised by our present Martians really is one as to whether there might be different, though not rival, sets of laws of truth, each designed for a different form of articulating the way things are into ways things are. Having raised that, we leave things here.

Throughout our talk of Martians, though, we have been walking a delicate line. It has taken some effort to keep the idea of Martian thought to an idea of a form for thought to take, as opposed to merely a form, or way, in which the thinking done by given thinkers takes place or is enabled ("thought" here always being the (direct) object of the verb "think" and not the activity or circumstance of relating to such an object). If Martian countables and human countables form disjoint corpuses of thinkables, on the present use of terms, this is yet to say nothing about what, if any, processes or episodes take place, or in any other terms, how a Martian or human must relate to some given countable, whether of the human or Martian variety. If psychology can neither explain nor justify a law of logic, logic can neither explain nor justify a law (or fact) of psychology (though, of course, as with a theory of any sort, a psychological theory is governed by the laws of logic, whatever these may be). So nothing said so far about Martian thought should at all suggest that, were we to encounter Martians, we would be unable to attribute to them, truly and literally, standing in such relations to human thoughts as what Frege calls "holding true"; that is, taking things to be the way those thoughts represent them as being. Nor vice versa.

To return once more to our initial image, laws of logic—that is, laws of truth—define (or limn) the most general form of thought in that sense: simply what thought is. They form the framework in which any thought with non-logical content—any thought, that is, whose truth turns, inter alia, on non-logical considerations (e.g., on which shoes are untied) can answer to how things are in some determinate way. They define what a determinate way might be. And just for that reason, they cannot answer or be hostage to anything for their truth—if, indeed,

they are to be held (as Frege holds them) to be true or false at all. Just for that reason, their truth cannot be explained by anything; neither can a claim that they are true be justified by anything (except insofar as some one of them might be explained or justified by some others). That is, they are neither explained nor justified by anything external to logic itself. Whatever psychology might explain, whatever claims it might justify, these cannot be truths of logic (that is, truths about truth as such). It is equally so for physics or chemistry: there is no such thing as a law of truth depending on whether the environment (the topic of the physical sciences) is one way rather than another. In other terms in which this picture is sometimes put, the laws of truth define (in greatest generality) what thought is—"thought" here being what might be thought or not, not the thinking of it. And for just that reason, they cannot be verified as holding or not, or at least not in terms of anything external to themselves.

It might be noted at this point, as Hilary Putnam has put it, that we are familiar with this picture applied at somewhat lower levels of generality, at which, as Putnam has shown so convincingly, it is open to a certain sort of criticism (where it is itself a fundamental feature of thought, or at least thought designed for *res cogitans*). Consider that Tractarian example of a system for describing patterns of flyspecks on a wall, or black marks on a white surface, cited above. In this scheme, one imposes on the wall (or just in thought) a net made up of cells, each of a certain shape and size. For each cell, one then gives a cell-by-cell description of the wall, answering yes or no to the question "Flyspecks?" (In fact, he thinks in terms of a picture consisting of black spots on a white surface). About this Tractarian example Wittgenstein says,

> And now we see how logic and mechanics are positioned in relation to each other. . . . That a picture like the one presented above, can be described with a net of a given form says nothing about the picture. (For this holds of every picture of its kind.) But it does characterise the picture that it can be completely described by a given net of given fineness.
>
> So, too, it says nothing about the world that it can be described by Newtonian mechanics. But it does say something that it is so describable by that (description) which in fact does so.[19]

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[19] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.342.

Now Putnam's point. Newtonian mechanics provides a system of descriptions to be given of mechanical phenomena which occur or might occur. A description in that system is to be given in terms of certain physical quantities (position, momentum, force, velocity), as defined in Newtonian mechanics. The Newtonian laws of those quantities are a framework which fixes to what any given such description is answerable, in most general terms, how it is hostage to the environment for its truth. Newtonian mechanics provides no way for these laws themselves to be hostage to the world. They frame the system and are not descriptions within it; thus the system fixes nothing as to how their truth turns on how things are. They do not come up for justification or explanation within the system. Nevertheless, Putnam points out, if they are (or, less misleadingly, were) true, they would depend on an environment hospitable to them for this. And in this we come to see, in the case at hand, how or why it is that they are not true. What a hospitable environment would do is to make it possible to identify physical quantities and to carve them out of the business of mechanics in general (that mass made up of the mechanical phenomena there are) as they do. Absent the facts as to how they fail (or might fail) to do this, there is no determinate question as to what it would be for these laws to be false, in which case they can just be treated as definitions. But this is not to say that they absolutely could not turn out to be false; that their business is such as to make them, per se, thus external to the business of being true or false.

So it is for any sort of phenomenon less general than that—the phenomenon of thought itself—which logic frames or unfolds. But why not for this most general phenomenon too? At least if not, such now calls for explanation, where that explanation cannot just reside in the fact that, pointing to what are in fact the laws of logic, one can, with right, say, "This is just what thought is." Suppose that the laws of truth simply unfold the phenomenon of being true; fix what thought, in fact, is; are the most general form of a way for the truth of a thought to turn on how things are. It is one thing to say, "And therefore they fix no determinate way for their truth to turn on how things are." It is another to say, "And therefore there is no such thing as their truth turning on how things are; as their relying on a 'hospitable environment' (in the most general sense of environment) for being the laws of truth." Such is one thing we learn from Putnam's point.

In its original version Putnam's point relied on something which he called a "cluster concept." To take the simplest and most trite example, consider being gold. At a given stage of history there was something one

would, with right, have taken it to be for something (some lump, say) to be gold. For the sake of illustration only, suppose this would include being a metal, heavy, yellow, and malleable. And, as Putnam pointed out, it would also, with right, have been supposed to be something with which we (or the then-living) have had a certain truck (e.g., something to die for). Here, then, is a notion with, in the relevant sense, at least five strands. What turned out is that, the environment being as it is, these strands do not all hang together. There is, that is, nothing which corresponds to all of that. There is no metal, for example, which is yellow and with which we have had the requisite truck. Perhaps there might have been. But there is not. And hence nothing can be defined in terms of all those strands. There is no such thing as being something so definable.

Might those laws of truth that Frege unfolded for us be in that same position? A bad use of "might," no doubt—as Putnam has also pointed out. On the other hand, it is a general point, often made by Frege himself, that one cannot just give definitions. As he thought of it, one cannot just define things into existence: an existence claim calls for an existence proof. Too exigent perhaps, at least in the present (most general) case, but we can ask whether for something to be true is a cluster concept. Here, examining Frege's own remarks about truth, or about thoughts—questions of being true—at least strongly indicates that it is, though perhaps an answer hangs on just what you take logic to be telling us. What, for example, is the content of a logical constant; in the simplest case, a truth-functional constant? For Frege, such a constant simply presupposes that there are but two truth values. (From 1879 through the 1880s, for example, he regularly defined his constants—for example, the two-place constant "Bedingheit" (to write in his symbolism, one must venture into the second dimension)—by saying that there are only four cases to consider, corresponding to the four combinations of two values.)

So one might say that the laws of truth for the "Bedingheit" constant (write it "Beding(_,_)") represents a fact about any function from ordered pairs of two objects (in the case of Beding, the set {The True, The False}) into the set of those objects (e.g., if those objects are the numbers 0 and 1, about any function $F: \{0,1\}^2 \rightarrow \{0,1\}$). Suppose that F maps $<0,1>$ into 1 and every other element in $\{0,1\}^2$ into 0. Then $F(a, F(b, a))=0$, no matter what items from the set $\{0,1\}$ "a" and "b" stand in for. Similarly, if Beding maps $<$The True, The False$>$ into The False and everything else into The True, then Beding $(a,(b,a))=$The True, no matter what truth values "a" and "b" stand in for. Suppose that just this and no more is what the laws of the "Bedingheit" constant tell us about Bedingheit—just this is what

Bedingheit is meant to be. It is perhaps an understatement to say that it is hardly imaginable that such should prove false (or senseless, as, in the Putnam case, Newtonian laws did). On the other hand, it seems a bit pompous, to say the least, to call this a law of truth. Is the general case (for any two-member domain) a law of truth? If so, just barely. What of the special case where the domain consists of The True and The False? Again, if at all, just barely. The "law" here is just a partial unfolding of the fact that there are just two truth values. As to how this matters to the pursuit of truth, nearly all details remain to be filled in.

On the other hand, suppose we take the laws of Bedingheit to tell us jointly at least this: that for any two thoughts, P and Q, assuming these to be truth-valued, there is another thought, R, in which P and Q occur as proper subthoughts (and no other whole thought does), such that, whatever the values of P and Q, the truth value of R is always Beding (Value of P, Value of Q). Now we might feel that we've begun to get somewhere or at least to have some information more proprietary to being true. But with this gain, we may also begin to see some content in logic (if this is logic), of which it is at least imaginable that it should rely on a hospitable world. For the idea now is that the truth value of any thought is entirely independent of the context of other thoughts in which it might occur in some train of inference. Can countables be articulated from the way things are so as always to meet this condition? No doubt. But is it just part of what thought is that there is no such thing as such being, or becoming, dubitable? For the moment it will do to end here with a definite maybe.

3. Such, then, is a brief survey of the territory over which the essays in this volume range. They address both the preconditions of making sense and the career of the idea of logical necessity in philosophy's history, from Descartes to Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein. They are as follows.

In "What Descartes Ought to Have Thought About Modality," Adrian Moore is interested in metaphysics and in defending Descartes. He is interested, as well, in what it means to engage in history of philosophy, especially when one is particularly attracted to, and clearly sees, what a powerful author such as Descartes ought to have thought but did not, or when one is upset by what Descartes thought but should not have. Thus Moore's dispute with Conant: granted, in his 1648 letter to Arnauld, Descartes claims that necessary truths should be viewed as only contingently so. Yet according to Moore, this should not be taken as Descartes's fully

considered view but rather as a lapse. If, to ground knowledge, Descartes must rule out an omnipotent being's even possibly making him think he exists while he does not, then even still, Moore argues, there is no comparable cost (if indeed there is any cost at all) in Descartes conceding of any proposition that conflicts with our human concepts that not even God could make it true.

Frege's conception of logic, which we have just gone through, is meant to be a radical departure from Kant, just as the Tractarian view is meant to be a radical departure from Frege. Yet one might investigate just how radical such departures in fact were. Such is what Matthew Boyle sets out to do in "Kant on Logic and the Laws of the Understanding." Boyle identifies points at which Kant and Frege use the same, or very similar, words in separating logic from psychology. Kant, at least sometimes, as Frege always does, holds that psychology (as each understands this) has no role in logic (as each understands this. Such need not mean that each is saying the same thing. One thing that matters here, Boyle points out, is that Kant's conception of "formal" is profoundly different from Frege's, or ours.) For Kant, logic belongs neither to metaphysics nor to empirical psychology. Such *could* be the beginnings of an idea—*perhaps the Tractatus's*—of logical laws as saying nothing. But, Boyle points out, Kant does think logic is concerned with a certain *power* of mind, of which one can be aware—the understanding. This, Boyle stresses, sets Kant apart from familiar post-Fregean views. As Sullivan will also do, Boyle draws attention to resources in Kant himself for a view of logic different from the one Kant actually held.

In "Cartesian Skepticism, Kantian Skepticism, and Two Conceptions of Self-Consciousness," Arata Hamawaki explores a distinction by Conant between Kantian and Cartesian skepticism which proves illuminating to understand Conant's interpretations of the history of philosophy, and in particular, of Descartes and Kant in the 1991 article. It is relevant that it is Kantian skepticism which interests Conant, starting as it does one step back from questions about how we know such and such with prior questions as to the conditions for questions about *whether* "such and such" to make sense. Such questions, posed in an enquiring rather than challenging way, are, in effect, a form of Kantian "How possible questions." Cartesian skepticism bypasses such concerns, taking its skeptical questions for granted. Hamawaki deploys this distinction to examine the nature and workings of transcendental arguments and, in particular, Barry Stroud's understandings of these, ultimately to show that the Cartesian conception of the self as self-standing is unintelligible.

Both Barry Stroud and Peter Sullivan are interested in necessity. Their articles ("Logical Aliens and the 'Ground' of Logical Necessity" and "Varieties of Alien Thought") concern metaphysics and logics. Both challenge Conant's understanding of necessity and the varieties it admits (and does not admit of).

Stroud finds the idea of laws of logic as "contingently necessary" (a view Conant attributes to Descartes and Quine), or indeed the idea of anything being contingently necessary, problematic. Should we indeed seek an *explanation* of logical truths? Should we regard them as dependent on something contingent? Although Stroud acknowledges the "feeling of philosophical mystery about necessity," he has many doubts about the whole project of accounting for, or in some sense explaining, the necessity of necessary truths.

Sullivan endorses Frege's view of logic, thus rejecting Conant's 1991 reading, according to which there are fundamental tensions in it (between a view of laws of logic as constitutive of thought and a view of laws of logic as the most general laws of nature). He believes that only by emphasizing a fundamental difference between Frege and Kant (the fact that, for Frege, logic is no longer an infertile science) can we begin to see, as we should, Frege's conception of logic as genuinely Kantian. A Kantian view of logic (not restricted to Kant's views on "general logic") might then, in fact, accommodate Frege's conception of logic as "substantive and fertile" by capturing logic's transcendental role as an "a priori structure simultaneously determining knowledge and its objects."

In "Wittgenstein on Using Language and Playing Chess—the Breakdown of an Analogy and Its Consequences," Martin Gustafsson concentrates on late Wittgenstein. He aims for a view blocked, as he sees it, by certain readings (such as P. M. S. Hacker's) of Wittgenstein's idea of grammatical rules, or, again, of rules of a language game; one which does not presuppose that the pieces, or the games themselves, are in place in advance of the rules which are to govern them. The point is to underpin a conception of language that leaves it open to use in an indefinite variety of novel ways. The conception of rules he defends makes room, as he argues Wittgenstein does, for philosophical confusions which are not properly read as mere transgressions of one or another "rule of grammar" but rather as a "tacit hovering" between different uses that words admit of.

Charles Travis concentrates on later Wittgenstein. In "Where Words Fail," he takes up two strands in Conant's story: first, the idea that Tractarian Wittgenstein was inspired by Frege's handling of the concept-object

distinction; and second, the idea that for Wittgenstein, Frege's conception of logic goes wrong at precisely this point: it treats logic as a science. On the first point, Travis argues that, while Conant is probably right about what inspired Wittgenstein, Frege goes wrong on the distinction itself, through—unusual for Frege—inattention to detail; and through misconceiving logic in one important respect. On the second, Travis sees Conant as, again, probably right as to the *Tractatus* view of logic but argues that it misses the real problem with Frege's view—which is a crucial difference between the *Tractatus* and the view Wittgenstein later came to hold. Mostly, Travis explores Frege's idea that objects and concepts fall into distinct categories, in the sense that what can be said intelligibly about the one cannot be said about the other. It also explores an idea in current philosophy inspired by that view, which is, as Cora Diamond has put it, that while one can appreciate the logical perspicuousness of a logically perspicuous language in grasping how it is to be used, one cannot describe its features of logical perspicuity in that, or in any, language. The gist of the essay is that there is less there than meets the eye—that, in fact, there are no such limits to what there is to be said.

In "Alien Meaning and Alienated Meaning," Jocelyn Benoist deals with the "elusiveness" of the logical alien. If we cannot actually get any logically alien thought in mind, he asks, is this then mere philosophical fantasy? If so, how are we driven to it? Benoist applies Conant's idea that fantasy calls for therapy to Wittgenstein's wood-sellers example in *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* an example with which Wittgenstein takes up the issues raised by Frege's logical alien. Benoist's focus is on doing things according to rules, whether it be selling wood or reasoning. The question is what the relation is between so doing and the fact that *that* is how *we* do it. Ultimately Benoist explores and endorses Wittgenstein's idea that meaning and applications cannot be taken apart. He also argues against what he calls a metaphysical interpretation of the case of the wood-sellers by Stanley Cavell.

After this Introduction, the reader will find the 1991 article by James Conant for the original Porto Conference, the comments to it, and Conant's replies.

We thank Jim for providing the pretext for a conference, which was an important starting point for much of the philosophical work currently going on at the Mind, Language and Action Group (MLAG) of the Institute of Philosophy of Porto. The project titled The Bounds of Judgement, apart from its focus on Frege, was not a history-of-philosophy

project. Still, the Logical Alien conference was an occasion to intersect the history of philosophy with our agenda, and we welcomed that.

We thank all involved in the Bounds of Judgement: research team members on the Portuguese side (João Alberto Pinto, Mattia Riccardi, Susana Cadilha, Paulo Tunhas, João Santos, Manuela Teles, Tommaso Piazza, and Pedro Borges de Araújo), and on the Spanish side (Juan Vázquez, Luis Villegas, Concha Martínez, José Miguel Sagüillo, José Luis Falguera, and Uxía Rivas). We thank the consultants of the project, Tim Crane, Quassim Cassam, and Jocelyn Benoist. Finally, we thank other participants in the Logical Alien conference who do not have papers appearing here; in particular, the Lisboa mathematician Fernando Ferreira, Juan José Acero and Maria José Frápolli from Granada, and Jean-Philippe Narboux from Bordeaux. We also thank participants in other major conferences of the project, namely Lucy O'Brien, Quassim Cassam, Sebastian Rödl, Naomi Eilan, and António Marques.

We hope this volume gives more lasting form to some of the discussions that have been integral to this project.

The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*

James Conant

[I]n order to draw a limit to thought we should have to be able to think both sides of this limit (we should therefore have to be able to think what cannot be thought).

　　The limit can, therefore, only be drawn in language and what lies on the other side of the limit will be simply nonsense.

—LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN[1]

The only proper way to break an egg is from the inside.

—PARVA GALLINA RUBRA[2]

This essay is about three things: Wittgenstein's ideas concerning the question of the possibility of illogical thought, the sources of those ideas (especially in Kant and Frege), and Putnam's recent interest in both of these matters.

[1] *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* preface.

[2] I owe this quotation to Archibald R. McIntyre, *Curare: Its History, Nature, and Clinical Use* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 209. McIntyre also employs it as an epigraph, though to make a rather different point (that the only proper way to stimulate a muscle is from the inside—by its nerve). There is no indication one way or the other as to whether McIntyre is aware of the following significant clue as to the author's identity: *Parva Gallina Rubra* is Latin for *Little Red Hen.*

Along the way, this paper briefly sketches the broad outlines of two almost parallel traditions of thought about the laws of logic: one rather long and complicated tradition called the History of Modern Philosophy and one rather short and complicated one called Hilary Putnam. Here is a thumbnail version of how these two traditions align: Descartes thought the laws of logic were only contingently necessary; not-so-recent Putnam agreed. St. Thomas Aquinas believed that they were necessarily necessary; relatively recent Putnam agreed (this is only confusing if you think Aquinas should not be a step ahead of Descartes). Kant thought they were simply necessary. Frege wanted to agree—but his manner of doing so raised the worry that there was no way in which to express his agreement that made sense. Wittgenstein agreed with the worry. He concluded that sense had not (yet) been made of the question to which our two traditions sought an answer; very-recent Putnam agreed.

1) Historical Preamble: A Different Kind of Cartesianism

What is the status of the laws of logic, the most basic laws of thought? Wherein does their necessity lie? In what sense does the negation of a basic law of logic represent an impossibility?

The Scholastics were forced to think hard about these questions since they believed in the existence of an omnipotent God for whom *all things are possible*. If God is omnipotent does that mean that He has the power to abrogate the laws of logic? The Scholastics, on the whole, were quite reluctant to draw this conclusion. But does that then mean that God is not all-powerful, that there is a *limit* to his power, that there is something he *cannot* do? That is a conclusion that the Scholastics were, on the whole, at least equally as reluctant to draw. Posed here in a theological guise is a version of a question that has continued to haunt philosophy up until the present: Do the laws of logic impose a *limit* which we run up against in our thinking? If so, what kind of a limit is this? Do their negations represent something that we *cannot* do or that *cannot* be? If so, what sort of "cannot" is this?

Here is Aquinas's attempt to reconcile the omnipotence of the Divine Being with the inexorability of the basic principles of Reason:

> All confess that God is omnipotent; but it seems difficult to explain in what His omnipotence precisely consists. For there may be a doubt as to the precise meaning of the word "all" when we say that God can do

all things. If, however, we consider the matter aright, since power is said in reference to possible things, this phrase, *God can do all things,* is rightly understood to mean that God can do all things that are possible; and for this reason He is said to be omnipotent. Now . . . a thing is said to be possible in two ways. First, in relation to some power. . . . If, however, we were to say that God is omnipotent because He can do all things that are possible to His power, there would be a vicious circle in explaining the nature of His power. For this would be saying nothing else but that God is omnipotent because He can do all that He is able to do.

   It remains, therefore, that God is called omnipotent because He can do all things that are possible absolutely; which is the second way of saying a thing is possible. For a thing is said to be possible or impossible absolutely, according to the relation in which the very terms stand to one another: possible, if the predicate is not incompatible with the subject, as that Socrates sits; and absolutely impossible when the predicate is altogether incompatible with the subject, as, for instance, that a man is an ass.

   . . . Therefore, everything that does not imply a contradiction in terms is numbered among those possibles in respect of which God is called omnipotent; whereas whatever implies contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility. Hence it is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done, than that God cannot do them. Nor is this contrary to the word of the angel, saying: *No word shall be impossible with God* (Luke 1:37). For whatever implies a contradiction cannot be a word, because no intellect can possibly conceive such a thing.[3]

Aquinas is caught here between the Charybdis of asserting a mere tautology (God can do everything within His power) and the Scylla of implicitly ascribing a substantive limit to God's power (by declaring God can do all those sorts of things which fall under a certain general description X, and hence apparently implicitly declaring: He cannot do those things which do not fall under X). One way out—a way out which, as we shall see, is gradually refined in the course of these two traditions of thought about logic—would be for this description (of those things which God cannot do) to turn out not to be a genuine

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[3] *Summa Theologica,* question 25, art. 3.

description at all. Aquinas, indeed, tries to argue that those things which fall under the (apparent) description *things which God cannot do* are not, properly speaking, things which *can* be done at all. These are things which "cannot have the aspect of possibility." Of these, Aquinas says, "it is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done, than that God cannot do them." But the worry arises: Hasn't Aquinas just offered us a redescription of what kind of a thing a logically impossible sort of a thing is? It would seem that we still have here to deal with a certain (albeit remarkable) *kind of a thing*. If so, the question remains: What sort of a thing is this, and is it something not even God can do? Even if we concede to Aquinas that perhaps, strictly speaking, we should not speak of *it* as if it were a doable kind of a thing, nevertheless, there certainly still appears to be an "it" here that our words are straining after and which has formed the subject of our thought throughout the preceding paragraph.

Aquinas appears to be on his strongest ground when he tries to make out that the "it" which falls under these descriptions—"that which is logically impossible," "that which even God cannot do"—is not a kind of a thing at all. What we have here instead is an attempt to conceive of a kind of a thing which "no intellect [i.e., not just a human intellect] can possibly conceive"; it is an attempt to speak a word "which cannot be a word." In order to set up this way of dissolving the appearance of an "it" (which not even God can do), Aquinas invokes Aristotle's distinction between those things which are impossible in relation to some power and those things which are impossible absolutely. It is not clear, however, that this distinction really helps. It threatens to recreate the appearance that we have to do here with two different kinds of things, belonging to two distinct orders of impossibility: the merely impossible and the absolutely impossible. Just as it is natural to picture that which is possible for a finite being (such as man) as contained within the space of that which is possible for God, it can seem natural to take Aristotle's distinction as marking an analogous boundary, only at a higher level. One pictures the distinction in terms of two *degrees* of impossibility: things belonging to the second degree (the absolutely impossible) are situated on the far side of the outer limit, which encompasses things belonging to the first degree (the merely impossible). So now it seems that although God never chafes against anything which lies *within* the circumference of this exterior circle, nonetheless, Great as He is, that is as far as He can go—even He must remain within this circle. This picture of a circle (circumscribing the limits of that which is absolutely possible)

lying within a wider space (the space of the absolutely impossible) inevitably leaves us with the feeling that we have, after all, succeeded in describing a genuine limit to His power. The existence of this outer space of absolute impossibility seems to settle the question in precisely the contrary direction from the one in which Aquinas had hoped to lead us. The apparently innocent step of picturing the space of absolute possibility as bounded by a limit seems to have led us to the opposite conclusion about God's omnipotence.[4]

What sort of a thing lies beyond the limit of God's power? Answer: the sort which is absolutely impossible. And now it becomes irresistible to add: even for Him.

Descartes concluded that Aquinas, along with most of the rest of medieval theology, had wandered into blasphemy.[5] "If men really under-

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[4] One could, quite justly, charge that the complaint developed in the preceding paragraph against Aquinas fails to distinguish between God's omnipotence (His absolute power) and His aseity (the absolute independence of His existence). I have not distinguished these because my purpose here is to prepare the reader for a discussion of Descartes's dissatisfaction with scholastic views. Descartes moves seamlessly between the question of whether there is something God cannot of His own free will bring about and the question of whether the modal status of the propositions of logic is fixed independently of God. Insofar as Thomas is committed to the claim that the necessary truth of the laws of logic is independent of God's will, Descartes would view him as committed to a doctrine which ascribes a limit to God's power.

[5] It seems likely that, in the first instance, Descartes was responding to Suarez, not Aquinas. Suarez explicitly addresses the question of whether the eternal truths are prior to God's will or created by God, and he gives precisely the answer Descartes is most concerned to reject. Suarez's view is that the eternal verities do not derive their truth from God's having chosen to know them; rather, they are known by Him because they are true. Their truth is prior to His knowledge of them and the object of the Divine understanding. If their truth were dependent on God's will, then, contrary to their nature, they would be no more necessary than any other created truth—they would not proceed necessarily but voluntarily. (See *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, Disp. XXXI, sec. 12, no. 40.) In the course of insisting that the eternal truths are independent of God's will, Suarez allows himself to say that the eternal truths would be true even if God did not exist. This formulation of the problem forms the point of departure for many of Descartes's discussions of the status of the eternal truths; as, for example, in the *Sixth Set of Replies:*

> If anyone attends to the immeasurable greatness of God he will find it manifestly clear that there can be nothing whatsoever which does not depend on him. This applies not just to everything that subsists, but to all order, every law, and *every reason for anything's being true* or good. . . . If some reason for something's being good had existed prior to his preordination, this would have determined God to prefer those things which it was best to do [my emphasis]. (*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* trans. Cottingham, Stoothof, and Murdoch, vol. 2 of 3, 1984–1991 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, vol. 2, 293–294]. All subsequent references to Descartes will be to one of these volumes.)

Descartes avoids Suarez's conclusion that there are truths which do not depend upon God's existence by rejecting his (much less controversial) claim that there are truths which

stood the sense of their words,"[6] they would never speak as they do. For their mode of speech clearly implies a limit to God's power. The only way to avoid such blasphemy is to refrain from ascribing any limits to what the Divinity is able to bring about:

> I turn to the difficulty of conceiving how God would have been acting freely and indifferently if he had made it false . . . in general that contradictories could not be true together. It is easy to dispel this difficulty by considering that the power of God cannot have any limits, and that our mind is finite and so created as to be able to conceive as possible the things which God has wished to be in fact possible, but not be able to conceive as possible things which God could have made possible, but which he has nevertheless wished to make impossible. The first consideration shows us that God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore that he could have done the opposite. The second consideration assures us that even if this be true, we should not try to comprehend it, since our nature is incapable of doing so.[7]

Descartes positively asserts here that God could have made contradictories true together.[8] He further asserts that this means that God can bring about things which our minds are incapable of comprehending. If only that which is comprehensible to minds such as ours were possible

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do not proceed from God's will. Descartes concludes: "every reason for anything's being true" depends upon the will of God and was preordained by Him. Descartes, later in this same passage, goes on to identify the question of whether the eternal truths depend upon God with the question of whether He could have brought their negations about (so "that it was not true that twice four make eight"). Thus the question of the status of the most fundamental truths (whether they would be true even if God did not exist) becomes entangled for Descartes (as it never would for Aquinas), with the question of the extent of God's omnipotence (whether it lies within his power to bring about the negation of a fundamental truth).

[6] In context, the passage runs: "As for the eternal truths . . . they are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible. They are not known as true by God in any way that would imply that they are true independently of Him. If men really understood the sense of their words they could never say without blasphemy that the truth of anything is prior to the knowledge which God has of it." The passage goes on to make it explicit that Descartes's concern here is to repudiate Suarez's doctrine: "So we must not say that if God did not exist nevertheless these truths would be true; for the existence of God is the first and most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which alone all others proceed" (vol. 3, 24).

[7] Op. cit., vol. 3, 235.

[8] A great many ingenious exegetical efforts to rescue Descartes's doctrine of the creation of the eternal truths seem to me to depend upon a neglect, on the part of commentators, of Descartes's unabashed willingness to indulge in such positive assertions.

for God—if fundamental truths (for example, that contradictories cannot be true together) were external and prior to God's will—then He would not be omnipotent. For His will would not be free with respect to such truths but rather subject to their determination. But this would be to deny the infinitude and incomprehensibility of God's power.[9] The only way to avoid such an unworthy blasphemy is to acknowledge that such truths *do* depend upon the will of God and that it lies within His power to bring about the negations of such truths.[10] The sense in which they are

[9] Descartes carefully distinguishes between the "infinite" and the "indefinite," reserving the former term for God:

> Our reason for using the term 'indefinite' rather than 'infinite' in these cases [the divisibility of a body, the number of stars] is, in the first place, so as to reserve the term 'infinite' for God alone. For in the case of God alone, not only do we fail to recognize any limits in any respect, but our understanding positively tells us that there are none. Secondly, in the case of other things, our understanding does not in the same way positively tell us that they lack limits in some respect; we merely acknowledge in a negative way that any limits which they may have cannot be discovered by us. (Vol. 1, 202)

Our idea of God is not simply of a being whose limits exceed our grasp but of a being who is *positively without limits.* "[I]t is in the nature of such a being not to be fully grasped by us" (vol. 1, 199). So, for Descartes, the fact that God is infinite entails that He is incomprehensible:

> We should never enter into arguments about the infinite. . . . For since we are finite, it would be absurd for us to determine anything concerning the infinite; for this would be an attempt to limit it and grasp it. (Vol. 1, 201–202)

This insistence upon the infinitude of God introduces a profound tension into the heart of Descartes's philosophy—a tension between the foundational role played by an adequate idea of God and the incomprehensibility of God to our finite minds. On the one hand, the project of furnishing a secure foundation for a system of scientific knowledge depends upon our knowledge of God: "The certainty and truth of all knowledge depends uniquely on my awareness of the true God, to such an extent that I was incapable of perfect knowledge about anything else until I became aware of Him" (vol. 2, 49). On the other hand, the idea of God is the idea of a being whose true nature is beyond the reach of our finite minds: "We cannot comprehend the greatness of God, even though we can know it" (vol. 3, 23). This latter claim also gives rise to a further puzzle (which we will begin to explore in a moment): How can we know what we cannot comprehend?

[10] Such a view of God's omnipotence (which takes even the most fundamental principles of logical consistency to be subject to the Divine will) leads to theological havoc. I'm not going to explore here any of the many absurdities such a view may seem to immediately entangle itself in. For a brief but penetrating general discussion of the problems, see Richard M. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 18–29. For a crisp discussion of the problems with Descartes's view, in particular, see Peter T. Geach, *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), chap. 1. Among the more helpful attempts to sort out Descartes's views on the creation of the eternal truths are A. Boyce Gibson, "The Eternal Verities and the Will of God in the Philosophy of Descartes," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* n.s. 30, 1929–1930; E. Bréhier, "The Creation of the Eternal Truths in Descartes's System," in *Descartes:*

nonetheless necessary or eternal lies in the fact that God has decreed them to be true: hence they are necessary *for us*. But, from a Divine point of view, they are only contingently necessary. For we must allow that there is some sense in which God could have done otherwise:

> [E]ven if God has willed that some truths should be necessary, this does not mean that He has willed them necessarily; for it is one thing to will that they be necessary, and quite another to will this necessarily, or to be necessitated to will it.[11]

If God had not been free to choose such laws as he did, if He were by necessity constrained to will the truth of the laws of logic, then there would be a necessity that binds even Him. God would be inexorably subject to those laws, just as we are subject to His decrees. There would be a *fatum* that binds even the Divinity, making a mockery of his alleged omnipotence. So we must say that God freely willed the laws of logic to be true. Descartes is very careful, however, to insist that, although these laws do not bind God, this does not make them any less binding for us. The hubris lies in our thinking that because we cannot comprehend how the negations of such laws could be true—for example, how it could be true that "He could have made contradictories true together"—we are therefore in a position to conclude that it cannot be done, even by Him. It is hubris to think that the limits of our powers of comprehension enable us to specify something He cannot do:

> In general we can assert that God can do everything that is within our grasp but not that He cannot do what is beyond our grasp. It would be rash to think that our imagination reaches as far as his power.[12]
>
> [S]ince God is a cause whose power surpasses the bounds of human understanding, and since the necessity of these truths does not exceed our knowledge, these truths are something less than, and subject to, the incomprehensible power of God.[13]

A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Doney (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968); E. M. Curley, "Descartes and the Creation of the Eternal Truths" *The Philosophical Review* XCIII, no. 4 (Oct. 1984); H. Frankfurt, "Descartes and the Creation of the Eternal Truths" *Philosophical Review* LXXVI (Jan. 1977); A. Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 179–192; H. Ishiguro, "The Status of Necessity and Impossibility in Descartes" in *Essays on Descartes's Meditations,* ed. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); see also the discussions in Guéroult and Wilson cited below.

[11] Op. cit., vol. 3, 235.
[12] Op. cit., vol. 3, 23.
[13] Op. cit., vol. 3, 25.

Descartes, nonetheless, wants to be able to say: we think rightly when we think in accordance with these laws. We perceive correctly when we clearly and distinctly perceive the truths of logic to be in some sense 'necessary': they are necessary in our world. But Descartes will not follow Aquinas and say that their negations are *absolutely* impossible. They are not, as it were, necessarily necessary: God could have created a very different sort of a world. Of course, since our powers of conception are constrained by the principles of logic, Descartes must say that we cannot make any sense of the possibility of such a world—nonetheless, we should admit the *mere* possibility of its existence:

> [T]here is no need to ask how God could have brought it about from eternity that it was not true that twice four make eight, and so on; for I admit this is unintelligible to us. Yet on the other hand I do understand . . . that it would have been easy for God to ordain certain things such that we men cannot understand the possibility of there being otherwise than they are.[14]

Descartes concedes that any attempt on our part to comprehend such a world must meet with failure. This raises the worry: Doesn't Descartes's position ultimately collapse into Aquinas's? What are we to make of his assertion that we should believe in the possibility of such a world even though he himself freely admits that we cannot hope to comprehend it? How does one undertake to believe in something one cannot understand? Descartes himself feels at least some of the force of this problem. In an attempt to get around it, he helps himself to a fine distinction—a distinction between our being able to conceive of such a world and our being able to conceive that such an inconceivable world could be. The possibility of such a world is not something we can *comprehend,* but it is something we can *apprehend.*[15] Descartes's own way of expressing this slippery distinction is to say that the ultimate contingency of these truths (which we take to be necessary) is not something we can *embrace* in our thought, but we can *touch* it in our thought:

> I know that God is the author of everything and that these [eternal] truths are something and consequently that He is their author. I say that I know this, not that I conceive it or grasp it; because it is possible to know that God is infinite and all-powerful although our mind, being

[14] Op. cit., vol. 2, 294.
[15] I owe this formulation to Geach, op. cit., 10.

finite, cannot grasp or conceive Him. In the same way we can touch a mountain with our hands but we cannot put our arms around it as we could put them around a tree or something else not too large for them. To grasp something is to embrace it in one's thought; to know something, it is sufficient to touch it with one's thought.[16]

We have here what I will call the Cartesian Predicament: we want to frame a thought (about that which cannot be thought), but we run up against the problem that the thought we want to frame lies in its very nature beyond our grasp.[17] We need a way to pick up this thought by the corner without fully taking it into our hands. We need a way to think right up close to the edge of the limit of thought, close enough to get a glimpse of the other side. Descartes's distinction between what we can embrace in thought and what we can only touch in thought is an attempt to characterize what is involved in trying to think both sides of the limit.

In drawing this distinction, Descartes concedes that in order for us to be able to properly grasp an illogical thought, our minds would have to be constituted otherwise. We, with our finite powers of conception, simply cannot grasp what it would be like for the fundamental principles of our thought to be false. Nonetheless, we can make contact in our thought with the mere possibility that they might be. The "evil demon hypothesis" is the way the author of the *Meditations* touches upon such a possibility in his thought. He apprehends what he cannot comprehend: namely, that even his most clear and distinct perceptions of truth might have been implanted in him by a Creator who wished to deceive him. Although the most radical doubts voiced in the *First Meditation* (the evil demon hypothesis and the meditator's doubt about his own sanity) are ultimately to be overcome, it is important for Descartes that these doubts

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[16] Op. cit., vol. 3, 25. Even where Descartes does not explicitly invoke such a distinction (between what we can touch in thought and what we can grasp), he appears to have something of the sort in mind. For example, when he talks of our believing what we cannot grasp, as in *Principles,* §25 (vol. 1, 201).

> We must believe everything which God has revealed, even though it may be beyond our grasp. Hence, if God happens to reveal to us something about himself or others which is beyond the natural reach of our mind . . . we will not refuse to believe it, despite the fact that we do not clearly understand it. And we will not be at all surprised that there is much, both in the immeasurable nature of God and in the things created by him, which is beyond our mental capacity.

[17] More generally, one could formulate the Cartesian Predicament as the tangle of philosophical problems one falls into when one attempts to conceive of reason as merely finite or as having limits.

represent minimally *intelligible* possibilities—possibilities we can sidle up to in our thought, even if we cannot wrap our minds all the way around them. To insist upon the *absolute* impossibility of an Evil Deceiver would be blasphemy; it would be another way of insisting upon a limit to God's power.[18] The reason we should assert that God does not deceive us is not because we are in a position to claim that it is absolutely *beyond His power* to do so, but rather, because (if we have an adequate idea of God) we can clearly and distinctly perceive that He is infinitely benevolent and hence would *choose* not to do so.[19] In His benevolence, He arranged it

[18] Martial Guéroult contests this unqualified way of putting the point and argues that the intelligibility of the hypothesis of the evil genius depends upon an *obscure* knowledge of God. So, although the hypothesis is prima facie intelligible, by the end of our meditations we are able to see clearly that such deception would not be possible for God: "That God exists and is not a deceiver is, in fact, an absolute necessity, an uncreated truth. We must have, or pretend to have, an obscure and confused knowledge of God in order not to perceive this" (*The Soul and the Body* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985], 23). The second paragraph of the *Fourth Meditation,* taken on its own, might appear to bear out such a reading. But the question is whether what is reported there is merely a conclusion that the meditator (following the natural light of reason) is constrained (on pain of contradiction) to "recognize" (vol. 2, 37), or whether it also represents (as Guéroult holds) an absolute constraint on God's power.

[19] This immediately raises interpretive issues which lead well beyond the scope of this paper, but which should at least be indicated. A number of commentators (for example, Guéroult in the preceding endnote) have thought that to allow that God *could* have chosen to deceive us would be going too far: God, after all, cannot do anything which is contrary to His nature, and it is part of His nature that He is benevolent; it would contradict His nature to deceive us. A being that could deceive us would not be infinitely benevolent and hence would not be God. The thought of God deceiving us therefore involves a manifest *contradiction*. Now Descartes definitely agrees that such a thought involves a contradiction. But, if one takes seriously Descartes's view of the infinite (and how we cannot limit it by our finite conceptions), then a claim about what God must do (because it would involve a contradiction for Him to do otherwise) threatens to collapse into the following claim: *We* perceive a contradiction when *we* attempt to conceive of His doing such a thing. The pressure falls in the end on the question of the adequacy of *our idea* of an infinite God. As indicated in the previous endnote, one way out is to say that the appearance of a difficulty here derives from obscurities in our idea of God; as these are resolved, the difficulty vanishes— we come to see clearly and distinctly that God could never be so mischievous. But in our reflections on the infinite, are we not limited by our finite powers of conception? The question is this: Does such a contradiction in *our conception of God* (when we imagine Him as a deceiver) afford us, on Descartes's view, with a sufficient basis for asserting that He *lacks the power* to do such a thing? (For it is equally part of our concept of God that He is absolutely omnipotent.) To put it differently, can we infer from what is absolutely inconceivable to us (given our limited concept of God) to what is absolutely impossible for God (given His infinite power)? Where one comes out on this interpretive issue will depend a great deal upon how much weight one puts on a host of apparently unequivocal passages in Descartes (which it is tempting to ignore) about how we should not ascribe *any* limits to God's power (especially on the basis of our limited powers of conception)—passages such as *Principles,*

so that the principles which bind our thought enable us to think in accordance with the truth. He created our minds so that our clear and distinct ideas would correspond to the necessities of *this* world, the one that He created as our habitat. The principles of thought, implanted in us by our Creator, are so ordered that they are in harmony with the fundamental principles to which the natural world accords.[20]

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§§25–27 (vol. 1, 201–202), the reply to the eighth objection in the *Sixth Set of Replies*, and numerous remarks in the *Correspondence*, such as the following:

> For my part, I know that my intellect is finite and God's power is infinite, and so I set no limits to it. . . . And so I boldly assert that God can do everything which I perceive to be possible, but I am not so bold as to assert the converse, namely that He cannot do what conflicts with my conception of things—I merely say that it involves a contradiction. (Vol. 3, 363)

This suggests that, with respect to the idea that God is a deceiver, we should "merely say that it involves a contradiction," but we should not be so bold as to assert that He cannot do what conflicts with our conception of Him. (I regret that I cannot take up here the issue of how such a passage might bear on the problem of the Cartesian Circle and the related question of what sort of validation it is that our clear and distinct ideas receive within the structure of the *Meditations*.)

[20] This formulation (and that of the previous sentence) sidesteps a central problem: our clearest and most distinct idea, according to Descartes, is our idea of God—it is "the one idea which stands out from all the others" (vol. 1, 197). But, if the necessity of our clear and distinct ideas merely derives from the principles which have been implanted in our finite minds, this opens up the possibility of a gap between God's (actual) nature and even the most clear and distinct idea which we are able to form of His nature. This, in turn, raises the following exceedingly corrosive worry (suppressed in the previous note): our clear and distinct perception of God's omnipotence is merely a reflection of the fact that a certain concept of God has been implanted in our minds. But now it is no longer clear what the basis is for Descartes's claim that we should never say that God cannot do something. It starts to look as if all that this means is that omnipotence is a necessary feature of our concept of God—that, insofar as we wish to think of God, we cannot think of him in any other way than as omnipotent. But why shouldn't we conclude that benevolence is an equally essential feature of our concept of God and hence conclude that the idea that God could be a deceiver is one which is simply unthinkable for us? In order to block this, it looks as if Descartes has to say that (unlike the idea that God could be a deceiver) the idea that God lacks omnipotence is one that we cannot even apprehend. Although it is still God we touch upon in our thought when we apprehend the (incomprehensible) possibility of His deceiving us, it is no longer in any sense an idea of God that we form when we imagine a being who is not supremely powerful. But this won't do. For the attempt to privilege omnipotence and treat it as an absolute feature of God's nature (or of our concept of God) not only runs afoul of the doctrine of God's simplicity, but, in the end, it deprives the idea that God has a nature of its sense. Descartes says we should never say that God cannot do X, even if X involves something which we take to be contrary to God's nature. But one's grip on the idea of a being's having a nature—and hence one's concept of such a being—is tied to one's understanding of the modalities. To say that X is part of God's nature is to say that He wouldn't be God without X. To hold that God can do anything, even something which is contrary to His nature, is to hold that He can make anything compatible with His

This brings us to a crucial tenet of the Cartesian conception of logic: a logical contradiction is something which is *naturally repugnant* to our reason. Just as God has failed to give us the power to genuinely withhold assent from what we clearly and distinctly perceive, so He has failed to give us the power to affirm that which is utterly repugnant to the natural light of reason.[21] The necessity of the laws of logic is to be accounted for by the fact that our minds are so constituted that *we cannot*

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nature—which is to hold that God has no nature. Thus, to assign omnipotence an absolute priority over all of God's other attributes is to completely drain the concept of God of all its content by depriving us of any handle on the notion that God has a nature.

[21] One way to render what one can perceive clearly and distinctly open to doubt is to have it occur to one that God could have given one a flawed nature (such that one is deceived even about that which seems most evident). When one is working *within* one's nature, as it were, and one turns to the things themselves, one is simply unable to withhold assent to that which is clear and distinct or to affirm a manifest contradiction. See, for example, the *Third Meditation:*

> But what about when I was considering something very simple and straightforward . . . , for example that two and three added together make five, and so on? Did I not see at least these things clearly enough to affirm their truth? Indeed, the only reason for my later judgment that they were open to doubt was that it occurred to me that perhaps some God could have given me a nature such that I was deceived even in matters which seemed most evident. And whenever my preconceived belief in the supreme power of God comes to mind, I cannot but admit that it would be easy for him, if he so desired, to bring it about that I go wrong even in those matters which I think I see utterly clearly with my mind's eye. Yet when I turn to the things themselves which I think I perceive very clearly, I am so convinced by them that I spontaneously declare: let whoever can do so deceive me, he will never bring it about that . . . two and three added together are more or less than five, or anything of this kind in which I see a manifest contradiction. (Vol. 3, 25)

The idea that God could have given one a flawed nature renders even our most secure beliefs (those based on clear and distinct perception) doubtful by introducing the supposition that reason (one's faculty of clear and distinct perception) is itself defective. This idea has the power to dislodge our confidence in even the most basic truths of reason—a confidence which is otherwise unshakable. Under ordinary circumstances, we are unable to doubt what we clearly and distinctly perceive. A clear and distinct perception is one which is irrestible. The conception of reason at work here (as comprising those principles in accordance with which we cannot help but think) is thoroughly psychologistic. Just as a contradiction involves something which we are incapable of affirming, a clear and distinct perception, if we attend to it, involves something from which we are unable to withold assent—something which it is psychologically impossible to doubt. Descartes's construal of the goal of rational argument is equally psychologistic: it is to attain a state of unshakable belief—a form of "conviction based on argument so strong that it can never be shaken by any stronger argument" (vol. 3, 147). Descartes's psychologism is evident in a passage such as the following:

> As soon as we think that we correctly perceive something, we are spontaneously convinced that it is true. Now if this conviction is so firm that it is impossible for us ever to have any reason for doubting what we are convinced of, then there are no further questions for us to ask: we have everything that we could reasonably want . . . conviciton so

help but think in accordance with them. The basic principles of human thought articulate, as it were, the mechanics of the human mind—the optics of the natural light of reason. Their appearance of necessity is simply due to a general fact about our mental constitution: namely, that our Creator endowed us with these (rather than some other) fundamental principles of thought. That we find logical contradictions repugnant is a contingent fact about the structure of our thought. Descartes is perfectly aware of this implication of his doctrines:

> I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth . . . depends on his omnipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make a mountain without a valley, or bring it about that 1 and 2 are not 3. *I merely say that He has given me such a mind* that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley, or a sum of 1 and 2 which is not 3; such things involve a contradiction in my conception [my emphasis].[22]

He could have made contradictories true together.[23] We cannot comprehend this, although we can know it. We can acknowledge that God can do this without being able to fathom it. The attempt to fathom such a possibility would involve us in an effort to think a kind of thought which is logically alien to us. That we cannot do this is due to an ultimately contingent fact about our minds; it is due to how God made them. We cannot think in this other way because of the sort of mind He has given us. That which is logically alien to our minds does not therefore

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firm that it is quite incapable of being destroyed; and such a conviction is clearly the same as the most perfect certainty. (Vol. 2, 103)

The extent of Descartes's psychologism and its implications for the interpretation of his philosophy as a whole are helpfully discussed by C. Larmore, "Descartes's Psychologistic Theory of Assent" *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1984); L. Loeb, "The Cartesian Circle" in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes,* ed. by J. Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and R. Rubin, "Descartes's Validation of Clear and Distinct Apprehension" *Philosophical Review* 86, no. 2 (April 1977).

[22] Op. cit., vol. 3, 359.

[23] This is explicit, for example, in the passage from Descartes with which we began (vol. 3, 235). This might appear to contradict his remark in the opening of the *Sixth Meditation* that "I have never judged that something could not be made by Him except on the grounds that there would be a contradiction in my perceiving it distinctly" (vol. 2, 50). But Descartes not only says in the former passage that God could have made a contradiction true but also that "we should not try to comprehend it, since our nature is incapable of doing so." This suggests that what is at issue in the *Sixth Meditation* is a judgment which flows from the naturally repugnant character of a contradiction (to our finite faculty of judgment) and not a judgment which is grounded in a clear and distinct perception of the positive limits of God's power.

represent an absolute impossibility (in Aquinas's sense) but only something which is incomprehensible to us and hence *seems,* to our finite intellects, to be absolutely impossible. This suggests the following Cartesian diagnosis: Aquinas underestimated the power of God by overestimating the power of human reason—he mistook the limits of human comprehension for the limits of absolute possibility.

Given that Descartes usually figures in a story about the history of philosophy as the archetypical Rationalist, there is a certain irony in the fact that, with respect to the philosophy of logic, Cartesianism would appear to represent the position that even the most basic principles of reason are only contingently necessary truths. This is a position most of the classical empiricists would have recoiled from in horror. Consequently, although the label "Cartesian" is often used to name the opponent of the "empiricist," in the philosophy of logic, "Cartesianism" can properly be taken to stand for the view that the laws of logic are only contingently necessary—they are the laws according to which we cannot help but think.[24] Considered in this light, certain forms of radical empiricism can be viewed as species of Cartesianism.

[24] The crucial tenet of Cartesianism—that reason imposes limits on the structure of our thought—therefore cuts across any facile classification of philosophies in terms of the usual pigeonholes, such as empiricism versus rationalism (or naturalism versus a priorism). Viewed from this perspective, Descartes and Mill are staunch Cartesians; Leibniz and Locke staunch anti-Cartesians.

It is instructive to contrast Locke, one of the founding fathers of empiricism, with Descartes in this regard. Locke, like Descartes, will argue that an inability to conceive how God could do something does not, in general, afford a basis for concluding that He could not do it. To conclude thus would be to deny God's omnipotence. Locke's favorite example in this connection is God's ability to superadd the power of thought to matter: "I confess as much as you please that we cannot conceive how a solid . . . substance thinks; but this weakness of our apprehensions reaches not the power of God" (*The Works of John Locke* [London: Rivington, 1824], 468).

To deny that God could endow brute matter with the power to think (on the ground that we cannot conceive of how thought could be produced by matter) is to wander into blasphemy. But what is at issue here, for Locke, is our inability to conceive how a certain sort of cause could give rise to a certain sort of effect. We cannot conceive how such an effect could be produced by such a cause, but this does not mean that God could not ordain it to be so. Yet Locke—for all his humility about the limits of human knowledge and all his piety about God's omnipotence—will not hesitate to declare "that Omnipotency cannot make a substance to be solid and not solid at the same time" (465). Our powers of comprehension are woefully finite and hence inconceivability is, in general, not a measure of impossibility. But our inability to grasp a contradiction is not on par with our inability to conceive certain kinds of causal connection; the former is in no way a symptom of the finitude of our minds. Locke accepts the Cartesian formula "that we cannot conceive something is not a reason to deny that God can do it" only insofar as no contradiction is involved in our description of what God can do. That there is no contradiction involved (in our conception of

Margaret Wilson sums up the historical significance of this region of Descartes's thought by casting him as the forerunner both of Kant's account of necessity (in terms of the "structure and workings of our own minds") and of the most stridently naturalistic current in contemporary philosophy.[25] She cites (not-so-recent) Hilary Putnam as an example of a contemporary Cartesian about logical "necessity." In support, she quotes a passage in which Putnam allows himself to describe the shift from Euclidean to Riemannian cosmology as a case in which "something literally *inconceivable* turned out to be true."[26] Putnam's example here (of something inconceivable which turned out to be true) is the statement "one cannot return to the place from which one started by travelling in a straight line in space in a constant direction." Putnam goes on to describe the moral which he drew from this development in cosmology:

> I was driven to the conclusion that there was such a thing as the overthrow of a proposition that was once a priori (or that once had the status of what we *call* an a priori truth). If it could be rational to give up claims as self-evident as the geometrical proposition just mentioned, then, it seemed to me that there was no basis for maintaining that there

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something) is, for Locke (as for Aquinas), the test of whether something is possible and, hence, whether (we can coherently say) God can do it. Thus, Locke writes:

> I think it cannot be denied that God, having a power to produce ideas in us, can give that power to another; or, to express it otherwise, make any idea the effect of any operation on our bodies. This has no contradiction in it, and *therefore* is possible [my emphasis]. (253)

[25] She writes:

> It is clear enough, in any case, that Descartes did regard the 'necessity' we perceive in mathematical propositions as, in some sense and degree, a function of the constitution of our minds—themselves finite 'creatures'. And even this relatively limited claim has been found extreme by some philosophers (such as Leibniz). It would appear, however, that the history of epistemology and philosophy of mathematics since Descartes has tended very clearly to demonstrate that his position was far from wild, or excessively idiosyncratic. From Hume and Kant onward it has been widely held that alleged perceptions of 'necessity' cannot be taken for granted, and that we must in some sense or other have recourse to the structure and workings of our own minds to give an account of these 'perceptions'. In addition, there have been increasingly extensive doubts about the alleged ineluctable necessity or eternity of the traditional necessary (or eternal) truths. There is even a lively controversy among some leading philosophers of the present century whether logical necessity might not go the same way as the traditional 'necessity' of Euclidean geometry. From this point of view what is really extraordinary is not Descartes's creation doctrine itself, but the fact that he has not been given more credit for arriving at it. (*Descartes* [London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1978], 125–126)

[26] *Mind, Language and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), xv.

are *any absolutely a priori truths,* any truths that a rational man *is forbidden* to even doubt.[27]

After quoting this passage, Wilson comments on the "Cartesian elements" she finds in evidence here: "the generalized suspicion of 'inconceivability' as a basis for claims about what *cannot be,* and a consequent attenuation (at least) of the concept of 'necessary truth.'"[28]

Wilson's narrative about the place of Cartesianism in the history of modern thought about logical necessity, from Descartes through Kant to Putnam, prepares the way for three further ironies which will preoccupy us in the pages to follow: firstly, Kant's views about logical necessity, on Putnam's reading of them, will not turn out to be a way station between Descartes and not-so-recent Putnam; secondly, Kant turns out to be the father of a stridently anti-Cartesian tradition which runs through Frege to Wittgenstein; thirdly, very-recent Putnam's views on logical necessity will turn out to be (roughly) Kantian (and hence stridently anti-Cartesian).

2) A Very-Recent Putnam

There is certainly something to the thought that certain classic papers of Putnam and Quine[29] offer perhaps the closest thing in twentieth-century philosophy to an attempt to rehabilitate Descartes's claim that it would be hubris for us to assert of an omnipotent God that He would be inexorably bound by the laws of logic—those laws which happen to bind our finite minds. In a move which is characteristic of much of contemporary naturalistic thought (both in and out of the academy), science is substituted for God. Cartesianism, in the philosophy of logic, freed

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[27] Ibid., xvi.

[28] Op. cit., 235.

Wilson immediately goes on to observe, however:

> A principal difference between Descartes and Putnam is that Descartes does not link his position to any observation of 'conceptual revolutions' and . . . does not seem to let his creation doctrine ultimately interfere with his own reliance on conceivability as a present guide to certain truth.

> This is connected to a difference I will touch on in a moment: for Descartes, the contrast is between the human and the Divine, for (this) Putnam, it is between a present and a future state of human knowledge.

[29] Putnam, "The Analytic and the Synthetic" in *Mind, Language and Reality;* Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

of its theological trappings, becomes the view that it would be hubris for us to assert of the ongoing activity of scientific inquiry that it will be forever bound by the laws of classical logic—those principles which happen to be most fundamental to our present conceptual scheme. The contrast is now no longer, as in Descartes, between the finite powers of man and the omnipotence of God, but rather between the finite limits of present scientific thought and the infinite possibilities latent in the future of science as such. According to this contemporary accusation of hubris, the laws of logic are merely part (however basic a part) of our best current scientific theory of the world. We should, with proper empiricist humility, hold them to be, at least in principle, revisable in the course of some major theoretical reconstruction that future scientific research may require of us. If Descartes is led by a sense of theological piety to insist that God can do *anything*—no matter how inconceivable it may be to us—the contemporary ultra-empiricist is led by an equally fervent sense of naturalistic piety to insist that the science of the future might require a revision of *any* of our present axioms of thought—no matter how unacceptable such a revision might seem by our present lights. The exploration of the contours of possibility belongs to the business of the physicists. In this regard, we philosophers must issue them a blank check—it would compromise our standing as underlaborers to put a ceiling on how much they can spend. To paraphrase Descartes on God: we must not conclude that there is a positive limit to the power of science on the basis of the limits of our own (present) powers of conception. All of its hostility to theology notwithstanding, this contemporary form of piety is, in a sense, no less religious (in its unconditional deference to a higher authority) than Descartes's—it has simply exchanged one Godhead for another. But, unlike Descartes, precisely because it is overtly hostile to theology, it is able to easily blind itself to the fact that it *is* a form of piety.

In a paper titled "There is at Least One A Priori Truth,"[30] a relatively recent Putnam sheds his piety and argues that there are, after all, a priori

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[30] Collected in *Realism and Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 98–114. Putnam's paper is followed by a note in which Putnam writes that the paper which precedes the note is actually only "a first draft of a paper I never finished." In the note Putnam goes on to complicate, and to some extent retract, the view put forward in the body of the paper. The note is followed by a "Note to supercede (supplement?) the preceding note." This document seems to retract other aspects of the main paper and some of the preceding note's retractions. In short, we have a philosophico-literary structure fully worthy of Kierkegaard in its complexity. I regret that I am unable to do it justice here. What the paper does make clear is that the views of very-recent Putnam do not represent a sudden departure in his thought but form part of a gradual development that has been underway for some time.

truths in exactly the sense that less-recent Putnam and (any vintage of) Quine had famously been concerned to deny that there could be. At least one truth is unrevisable, Putnam now declares, in the sense that it would never be *rational* to give it up. Putnam's candidate for such an a priori truth is the minimal principle of contradiction, the principle that *not every statement is both true and false.* Putnam's strategy is to try to argue that there are no circumstances under which it would be rational to give up this principle, and therefore that it provides us with an example of at least one "absolutely, unconditionally, truly, actually a priori truth."[31] Putnam wishes to quarrel with the claim that a fundamental logical law is merely contingently necessary. This occasionally leads him to assert an opposing claim, to declare that a fundamental logical law must be necessarily necessary. Indeed, one can hear an echo of Aquinas's distinction between the merely and the absolutely impossible in passages such as the following:

> The statement . . . "This sheet of paper is red and this sheet of paper is not red" . . . simply asserts what *cannot possibly* be the case. And the reason that "when I open the box you will see that the sheet of paper is red and the sheet of paper is not red" does not count as a prediction, is that we know—know a priori—that it *can't possibly* turn out to be the case [my emphases].[32]

Putnam adduces in the course of the paper a number of arguments, which I will not rehearse here, that purport to show that the principle of minimal contradiction plays a role in our reasoning which is "prior to anything that might be offered as an explanation of its truth"[33] and hence also prior to anything which might count *against* its truth. Putnam summarizes the conclusion of his paper as follows:

> The idea is that the laws of logic[34] are so central to our thinking that they define what a rational argument is. This may not show that we could never change our mind about the laws of logic, i.e., that no causal process could lead us to vocalize or believe different statements; but it does show that we could not be brought to change our minds *by a rational argument.* . . . [The laws of logic] are presupposed by so much

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[31] Ibid., 101.
[32] Ibid., 105.
[33] Ibid., 107.
[34] Putnam's subsequent arguments suggest that he thinks other logical laws (as well as stronger versions of the principle of non-contradiction) are unrevisable.

of the activity of argument itself that it is no wonder that we cannot envisage their being overthrown . . . by rational argument.[35]

Has Putnam exchanged one form of piety for another: a piety about natural science for a piety about logic? This is the problem that exercises very-recent Putnam: how to avoid one of these forms of piety without falling into the other.

So much, for the moment, for relatively recent Putnam. I will be primarily concerned here with very-recent Putnam. In particular, I want to try to follow up and flesh out some intriguing claims made in a very recent paper: historical claims about how to understand a tradition of thought about logic (one which runs from Kant through Frege to the *Tractatus*) and philosophical claims about what is involved in attempting to think the negation of a logical truth. The locus of these claims is a paper titled "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity."[36] (I will only discuss those aspects of the paper which bear on the topic of *logical* necessity.) Putnam turns his attention here, once again, to the ancient and honorable question: What is the status of the laws of logic—analytic or synthetic, a priori or a posteriori? As one has come to expect of Putnam, he approaches the question afresh, defending a conception of logical necessity which he claims to (now) find in later Wittgenstein. Putnam says at the outset of the paper that he sees contemporary philosophy as faced with two equally unsatisfying alternatives—alternatives he associates with the names of Carnap and Quine respectively: a linguistic conventionalism, on the one hand, according to which the laws of logic are analytic truths, and a naturalized epistemology, on the other, according to which they are synthetic a posteriori and hence not dissimilar in kind from ordinary empirical truths (only—so the mixed metaphor goes—far more deeply entrenched in our web of belief). After canvassing these standing responses to the question, Putnam turns his attention toward what he calls "a very different line of thinking—one which goes back to Kant and Frege." He continues:

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[35] Ibid., 109–110.

[36] The paper will be appearing under this title in a forthcoming collection of Putnam's essays from Harvard University Press (published as *Words and Life,* ed. J. Conant [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994]). The same paper is also forthcoming under the title "On the Slogan 'Epistemology Naturalized'" in *On Quine,* ed. P. Leonardi and M. Santambroggio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). (The paper actually appeared in that volume under the title "Mathematical Necessity Reconsidered.")

This line is one I believe Carnap hoped to detranscendentalize; and in Carnap's hands it turned into linguistic conventionalism. My strategy in this essay will be to suggest that there is a different way of stripping away the transcendental baggage, while retaining what I hope is the insight in Kant's and perhaps Frege's view, a way which has features in common with the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein rather than with Carnap.

The invocation of Kant and Frege here might lead one to presume that very-recent Putnam is simply concerned to uphold the conclusions put forward by relatively recent Putnam in "There is at Least One A Priori Truth." For, as we shall see, there is much in Kant and Frege that rhymes with those conclusions—that the laws of logic are absolutely central to our thought, that they define what rational argument is, and that they are prior to anything which might be offered as an explanation of their truth. Putnam, however, as the above passage indicates, is now after a view he finds in later Wittgenstein: his interest in Kant and Frege is as stepping-stones to that view. Putnam's concern in the paper is, in part, to trace the roots of the later Wittgenstein's views on the nature of "grammatical propositions" through a tradition of thought about logic which begins with Kant and runs through Frege and early Wittgenstein. This is how Putnam tells the story:

> Kant's Lectures on Logic contain one of the earliest—perhaps the earliest—polemic against what we now call 'psychologism' . . . [W]hat interests me here . . . is closely related to [that polemic]. . . . What interests me . . . is to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself, as well as in the Lectures on Logic, and that is the repeated insistence that illogical thought is not, properly speaking, thought at all. . . .
>
> It is this that brought home to me the deep difference between an *ontological* conception of logic, a conception of logic as descriptive of some domain of actual and possible entities, and Kant's (and, I believe, Frege's). Logic is not a description of what holds true in "metaphysically possible worlds," to use Kripke's phrase. It is a doctrine of *the form of coherent thought*. Even if I think of what turns out to be a 'metaphysically impossible world,' my thought would not be a thought at all unless it conformed to logic.
>
> Indeed, logic has no metaphysical presuppositions at all. For to say that thought, in the normal sense of *judgment which is capable of truth,* necessarily conforms to logic is not to say something which a

metaphysics has to *explain*. To explain anything *presupposes* logic; for Kant, logic is simply prior to all rational activity.

While I would not claim that Frege endorses this view of Kant's, it seems to me that his writing reflects a tension between the pull of the Kantian view and the pull of the view that the laws of logic are simply the most general and most justified views we have. If I am right in this, then the frequently heard statement that for Frege the laws of logic are . . . [the] "most general laws of nature" is not the whole story. It is true that as *statements* laws of logic are simply quantifications over "all objects"—and all concepts as well—in *Begriffsschrift*. There is no "metalanguage" in Frege, in which we could say that the laws of logic are "logically true"; one can only assert them in one language, *the* language. But at times it seems that their *status* for Frege, as for Kant, is very different from the status of empirical laws. (It was, I think, his dissatisfaction with Frege's waffling on this issue that led the early Wittgenstein to his own version of the Kantian view.)

It was this line of thinking that helped me to understand how one might think that logical laws are *sinnlos* without being a Carnapian conventionalist. Laws of logic are without content, in the Kant-and-possibly-Frege view, insofar as they do not *describe* the way things are or even the way they (metaphysically) *could* be. The ground of their truth is that they are the formal presuppositions of thought (or better *Judgment*). Carnap's conventionalism . . . was an *explanation* of the origin of logical necessity in human stipulation; but the whole point of the Kantian line is that logical necessity neither requires nor can intelligibly possess any "explanation."

The preceding quotation has a lot packed into it. We are being offered roughly the following capsule history of a tradition of philosophical thought about logic:

1) Kant held that illogical thought is not, properly speaking, thought at all.
2) Frege inherited this view from Kant.
3) Frege held another view of logic as well—one according to which the laws of logic are the most general laws of nature.
4) These two views of logic are in tension with one another.
5) The early Wittgenstein's view (that the propositions of logic are *sinnlos*) should be read as attempting to resolve this fundamental instability in Frege's philosophy.

Later in the paper, Putnam goes on to argue that the crucial idea, with which he himself is in sympathy, is that logical truths do not have negations that we are able to understand. It is not that these propositions represent a content that we grasp and then reject as false; rather, we are simply unable to make *sense* of these propositions in a way which allows the question of their truth or falsity to arise in the first place. As he puts it at one point, "the negation of a theorem of logic violates the conditions for being a thinkable thought or judgment."[37] Putnam argues that it is out of this idea that the later Wittgenstein's view of logical propositions develops, and so Wittgenstein's later view is best understood against the background of this tradition of thought.

Relatively recent Putnam asserts the negation of what not-so-recent Putnam maintained. In particular, he was concerned to argue that at least one logical law (the minimal principle of contradiction) represented an absolutely unrevisable a priori truth. Very-recent Putnam (following what he takes to be Wittgenstein's lead) now wishes to claim that the question of whether such a principle can be revised is one which we are unable to make any clear sense of.[38] In the course of outlining his new position, he offers a suggestive and provocative rough sketch of how to tell the history of an important chapter in the development of contemporary philosophical thought. It is, in part, through his provision of that sketch that Putnam attempts to indicate what his present view is. My aim in the remainder of this paper will be to try to fill in some of the details of this rough sketch—in part, in the hope that it will bring into sharper relief the view Putnam is presently after, but mostly because the story that emerges is one I find myself wanting to tell. I will argue at the end of the paper that this story sheds a helpful light on why the text of the *Tractatus*

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[37] This way of putting the point emphasizes the idea that the negation of a proposition of logic is worse off than the (unnegated) proposition of logic. There is, for very-recent Putnam, a significant asymmetry between a logical proposition and its negation: the question of the truth or falsity of a logical proposition makes sense, whereas the parallel question about its negation (in ordinary circumstances) does not; the former meets the conditions of being a thought and the latter does not. This aspect of Putnam's view, as we shall see, aligns him more closely with Kant and Frege than with the *Tractatus*.

[38] This development is anticipated to some extent by the last sentence of the "Note to supersede (supplement?) the preceding note":

> [I]f it is always dangerous to take on the burden of trying to show that a statement is absolutely a priori, . . . it is not just dangerous but actually wrong to make the quick leap from the fact that it is dangerous to claim that any statement is a priori to the absolute claim that there are no a priori truths. (Op. cit., 114)

assumes *the form* that it does—one of having the reader climb up a ladder which he is then asked to throw away.

3) The Kantian Conception of Logic

Kant's conceptions of reason and freedom—and his conception of the intimacy of these topics—develop, to some extent, out of Leibniz's vigorous critique of Descartes's doctrine concerning the divine creation of the eternal truths.[39] This critique forms the opening topic of Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics:*

> [I]n saying that things are not good by virtue of any rule of goodness but solely by virtue of the will of God, it seems to me that we unknowingly destroy all of God's love and all his glory. For why praise him for what He has done if He would be equally praiseworthy in doing the exact contrary? Where will His justice and wisdom reside if there remains only a certain despotic power, if will holds the place of reason . . . ? Besides, it seems that all acts presuppose a reason for willing and that this reason is naturally prior to the act of will. That is why I also find completely strange the expression of some other philosophers[40] who say that the eternal truths of metaphysics and geometry and consequently also the rules of goodness, justice, and perfection are merely the effects of the will of God; instead, it seems to me, they are only the consequences of His understanding, which, assuredly, does not depend on his will, any more than does His essence.[41]

Descartes deprives us, Leibniz contends, of any basis upon which to assert of God that He is wise or just. More subtly, Leibniz will conclude

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[39] This is perhaps the most opportune moment to clear up an inaccuracy in "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity." Putnam writes that Kant's view of logical necessity

> . . . is in striking contrast to the view expressed in Descartes's correspondence (which Kant, however, could not have known, since this correspondence was not published then) that God could have created a world which violated the laws of logic.

> Descartes's expression of this view is not limited to his correspondence. As some of my quotations above show, the view is fully explicit in the *Sixth Set of Replies* and implicit in *The Principles of Philosophy*. More significantly, Descartes's doctrine of the creation of eternal truths was well known to Leibniz, and it is inconceivable that Kant was not familiar with his criticisms of it.

[40] In an earlier draft there is, at this juncture, an explicit reference to Descartes.

[41] *Philosophical Essays,* trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), 36.

from this that Descartes, in the end, even deprives us of any coherent notion of the one characteristic that Descartes wanted to reserve for God at the expense of all others: his freedom.

God does what is good, Leibniz argues, not because he is constrained by some principle which is external to Him, but because He understands what is good and because He understands that it is good. The nature of the good is prior to, and therefore in one sense external to, His will, but it is not external to His understanding. That which is internal to His understanding does not represent a form of external compulsion. Without the guidance of His understanding, God would have no conception upon which to act. There would no longer be any sense in which He knew what He was doing. His activity would no longer express his wisdom; it would be merely a string of events. It is the rules of logic which articulate the basic principles of understanding. Without these principles, there can be no understanding; without understanding, there can be no freedom.

The broad outline of an account of freedom emerges here, one which is subsequently filled in by Kant's practical philosophy—an account which rests upon the distinction between the Realm of Nature, governed by causes, and the Realm of Freedom, governed by reasons.[42] Freedom of the will, on this account, consists in the capacity to act in accordance with laws which one gives oneself. Absolute freedom does not consist, as Descartes imagines, in a complete absence of constraint from any law. On the contrary, freedom requires constraint, but through rational principles rather than merely through "alien causes"[43]—a form

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[42] Kant's own full-blooded account of freedom obviously requires a great deal more of a free agent than that he merely manifest a capacity for rational thought. All that matters for our present purposes, however, is that practical reason, for Kant, is a species of *reason*. Descartes's confusion (about God's will being constrained by the laws of logic) is tied, for Kant, not only to a confusion about the conditions of rational agency but also to an insufficient appreciation of the *spontaneity* of reason. Descartes's account of rational thought and inference (in terms of the clear and distinct perceptions the natural light of reason affords) fundamentally misconceives the character of our faculty of spontaneity, (mis)taking it for, as it were, an alternative form of receptivity—one that is affected by reasons (rather than intuitions) of a determinate sort. The Kantian break with Cartesianism requires exorcising the sensory model of the mind as an organ which perceives reasons.

[43] The Leibnizian outline of Kant's conception of freedom, and its reliance on a distinction between the Realm of Freedom and the Realm of Nature, is evident in a passage such as the following:

> Will is a kind of causality belonging to living beings so far as they are rational. *Freedom* would then be the property this causality has of being able to work independently of *determination* by alien causes. . . . The concept of causality carries with it that of *laws*. . . . Hence freedom of the will, although it is not the property of conforming to laws of nature, is not for this reason lawless: it must rather be a causality conforming to immutable laws, though of a special kind; for otherwise a free will would be self-contradictory.

of constraint which answers (to put it in terms Frege will echo) to what ought to be rather than to what is. To view a principle which is rationally binding (as Descartes does) as a principle in accordance with which the constitution of our minds constrains us to think is (for Leibniz and Kant) to confuse the causality of rational agency (what Kant calls "the causality of freedom") with the causality of nature. To view rational constraint as a form of determination by natural law is to deprive one's conception of agency of any foothold for a coherent notion of free will. Descartes thinks that, insofar as they represent a constraint on how we must think, the laws of logic comprise a limitation on human freedom. Leibniz rejoins that to view the laws of thought as imposing a limitation on one's freedom is to misunderstand both the character of these laws and the nature of freedom. It is to misconstrue the necessary preconditions for the possibility of freedom as external determinations of the will. Precisely, this is Descartes's mistake, says Leibniz:

> [T]he will of God is not independent of the rules of wisdom, . . . This so-called *fatum,* which binds even the Divinity, is nothing but God's own nature, His own understanding, which furnishes the rules for His wisdom and His goodness; it is a happy necessity, without which He would be neither good nor wise.[44]

God's freedom consists in his ability to freely act in accordance with his understanding, the structure of which is given by the rules of wisdom. The eternal truths do not depend upon God's will but solely on His understanding.[45] Not only is it wrong to see God as constrained because his will must accord with these truths, but rather His freedom precisely consists in the possibility of such accordance. To strip God of His reason is to strip Him of His will.[46] Only a rational being can act in accordance with an understanding of the good. And, just as the possibility of such

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(*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* trans. H. J. Paton, [New York: Harper and Row, 1964], 114)

[44] *Theodicy* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1985), 246–247.

[45] The point is summarized in sect. 46 of the *Monadology:*

However, we must not imagine, as some do, that the eternal truths, being dependent on God, are arbitrary and depend upon his will, as Descartes seems to have held. . . . That is true only of contingent truths. . . . Instead, the necessary truths depend solely on God's understanding, and are its internal object. (*G. W. Leibniz's Monadology,* ed. Nicholas Rescher [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991], 156)

[46] "Only a rational being has the power to act *in accordance with his idea* of laws—that is, in accordance with principles—and only so has he a *will*" (*Groundwork,* 80).

accordance is not only a condition of God's freedom but also a condition of freedom as such (hence, also of human freedom), so, too, the principles of logic articulate not only the basic structure of God's understanding but of understanding as such (hence, also of human understanding). In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant writes:

> Logic contains the absolutely necessary rules of thought without which there can be no employment whatsoever of the understanding. (A52/B76)

The reference here is not just, as Descartes would have it, to the necessary rules of *our* finite thought (as opposed to some other kind of thought, say God's infinite thought) but rather to the necessary rules of thought as such. When Kant speaks of "the understanding," he doesn't just mean "the minds of men," he means *the* understanding (or, as we shall soon see Frege say, *the* mind). These "absolutely necessary rules" of the understanding represent the preconditions of the possibility of *judgment*—not just finite human judgment.[47]

Kant's view is, in this respect, in striking contrast with that of Descartes: the laws of logic are not the laws of *our* thought (as opposed to, say, God's) but of thought *simpliciter.* Kant's anti-psychologism can be seen to be tied to a rejection of Descartes's view that the necessity of the laws of logic is to be understood as a function of the constitution of the human mind. For if one strips this view of its theological aspect (by omitting talk about how the Creator endows us with our mental faculties and restricting oneself to talk about innate propensities), it collapses into a form of psychologism. A conception of thought that explains the apparent necessity of our most basic principles of thought by appeal to what Kant calls ". . . subjective dispositions of thought, implanted in us from the first moment of our existence, and so ordered by our Creator that their employment is in complete harmony with the laws of nature in accordance with which experience proceeds . . . ," leaves us, Kant says, with ". . . exactly what the skeptic most desires . . . namely, an account of their necessity in terms of the brute fact ". . . that I am so constituted that I cannot think . . . otherwise" (B167–168).[48] Kant's concern in this passage is with the necessity of the categories (not the laws of pure general

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[47] "As all acts of the *understanding* can be reduced to judgments, the understanding may be defined as the *faculty of judgment*" (A69/B94).

[48] This is how relatively recent Putnam summarizes the same point:" "To say that our faith in the most fundamental principles of deductive logic, our faith in the principle of contradiction itself, is simply an innate propensity . . . is to obliterate totally the distinction between reason and blind fait" ("There Is At Least One A Priori Truth," 108).

logic), but the point extends equally to a Cartesian account of the character of logical necessity: to explain the binding character of logic by reference to subjective dispositions implanted in us (by our Creator or by the workings of nature) is ultimately to concede to a certain kind of skeptic that which he most desires.[49]

Where Kant breaks sharply with Leibniz's conception of logic is in putting forward the claim that a proper adumbration of the discipline of pure logic must restrict itself to purely *formal* rules, and that the advantages of logic depend entirely upon this limitation:

> That logic should have been thus successful is an advantage which it owes entirely to its limitations, whereby it is justified in abstracting—indeed, it is under the obligation to do so—from all objects of knowledge and their differences, leaving the understanding nothing to deal with save itself and its form. (B ix)

> But, on the other hand, as regards knowledge in respect of its mere form (leaving aside all content), it is evident that logic, in so far as it expounds the universal and necessary rules of the understanding, must in these rules furnish criteria of truth. Whatever contradicts these rules is false. For the understanding would thereby be made to contradict its own general rules of thought, and so to contradict itself. These criteria, however, concern only the form of truth, that is of truth in gen-

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[49] Stephen Engstrom argues compellingly (in "The Transcendental Deduction and Skepticism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 32, no. 3 [July 1994]: 359–380) that this passage (§27 of the Transcendental Deduction) is *not*—as has often been assumed—to be read as directed against the Cartesian skeptic (but rather against a Humean one). But what the Cartesian skeptic Engstrom is concerned to rule out in this context is the more familiar Cartesian *outer-world* skeptic (who doubts the existence of corporeal things outside the mind). Whereas the form of Cartesianism that preoccupies us here—and with which Leibniz contends in the passages quoted above—is of a very different variety; it is one which touches specifically on the question of the character of the necessity of the most fundamental rules of thought. For Kant, an account of rational constraint in terms of psychological necessity misconstrues the status of both the laws of logic and the categories of the understanding. This suggests that Engstrom could be right that (the unmodified reference to "the skeptic" notwithstanding) no form of classic Cartesian (external-world) skepticism is in view in this passage (as it, for example, clearly is in "The Refutation of Idealism"), without our having to deny that certain Cartesian doctrines are nonetheless coming under fire in §27 of the Transcendental Deduction. Indeed, "idealism," not "skepticism," is Kant's favored term of description for skepticism concerning outer objects. What Kant calls "skepticism" largely coincides with what I have been calling "Cartesianism."

My point is not that Kant necessarily has Descartes in mind in the Transcendental Deduction but that he is concerned to respond to a Cartesian problematic which he comes to by way of Leibniz and Crusius (and which closely parallels—as Engstrom's article bears out—a problematic which Kant takes to have been raised by Hume as well).

eral. . . . The purely logical criterion of truth, namely, the agreement of knowledge with the general and formal laws of the understanding and reason, is a *conditio sine qua non,* and is therefore the negative condition of all truth. But further than this logic cannot go. It has no touchstone for the discovery of such error as concerns not the form but the content. (A60/B84)

It is only these purely formal rules, which abstract from all objects of cognition, which properly belong to the science of pure general logic. It is only these that have a claim to being the necessary laws of thinking without which no use of the understanding would be possible.[50] This brings us to the aspect of Kant's conception of logic that Putnam wished to draw our attention to—logic as "the form of coherent thought":

And it also follows from this that the universal and necessary rules of thought in general can concern solely its *form,* and not in any way its *matter.* Accordingly, the science containing the universal and necessary rules is a science of the mere form of our intellectual cognition or of thinking.[51]

We are now at the beginning of the passage from Kant's *Logic* that Putnam identifies as the wellspring of the tradition of thought about logic, which he now aligns himself with. I offer a final long excerpt from Kant's *Logic:*

Now this science of the necessary laws of the understanding and reason in general, or—which is the same—of the mere form of thinking, we call *logic.*

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[50] Kant elaborates this point in the *Logic:*

We cannot think or use our understanding otherwise than according to certain rules . . .
    All rules according to which the understanding proceeds are either *necessary* or *contingent.* The former are those without which no use of the understanding would be possible at all; the latter are those without which a certain use of the understanding would not take place. The contingent rules which depend upon a certain object of cognition are as variegated as these objects themselves. . . .
    If, now, we set aside all cognition that we must borrow from *objects* and reflect solely upon the use of the understanding in itself, we discover those of its rules which are necessary throughout, in every respect and regardless of any special objects, because without them we would not think at all. Insight into these rules can therefore be gained a priori and *independently of any experience,* because they contain, *without discrimination between objects,* merely the conditions of the use of the understanding itself, be it *pure* or *empirical.* (Kant's *Logic,* trans. R. Hartman and W. Schwarz [Mineola, NY: Dover, 1974], 14)

[51] Ibid., 14–15.

As a science concerning all thinking in general, regardless of objects as the matter of thinking, logic is to be considered as:

1) the *basis* of all other sciences and the *propaedeutic* of all use of the understanding. For this very reason, however, because it abstracts entirely from all objects, it can be

2) no *organon* of the sciences.

By *organon* namely we understand an instruction for bringing about a certain cognition. . . . But since logic, as a universal propaedeutic of all use of the understanding and of reason in general, need not go into the sciences and anticipate their subject matter, it is only a *universal art of reason (Canonica Epicuri),* to make cognition in general conform with the form of the understanding; and only to that extent may it be called an organon, which, however, serves not the *expansion* but merely the *judging* and *correctness* of our cognition.

3) as a science of the necessary laws of thinking without which no use of the understanding and of reason takes place at all, which consequently are the conditions under which alone the understanding can and shall agree with itself—the necessary laws and conditions of its right use—logic, however, is a *canon*. And as a canon of the understanding and of reason it need not borrow any principles, either from any science or from any experience; it must contain nothing but laws a priori that are necessary and concern the understanding in general.

Some logicians presuppose *psychological* principles in logic. But to bring such principles into logic is as absurd as taking morality from life. If we took the principles from psychology, i.e. from observations about our understanding, we would merely see *how* thinking occurs and *how* it *is* under manifold hindrances and conditions; this would therefore lead to the cognition of merely *contingent* laws. In logic, however, the question is not one of *contingent* but of *necessary* rules, not how we think, but how we ought to think. The rules of logic, therefore, must be taken not from the *contingent* but from the *necessary* use of the understanding, which one finds, without any psychology, in oneself. In logic we do not want to know how the understanding is and thinks, and how it hitherto has proceeded in thinking, but how it ought to proceed in thinking. Logic shall teach us the right use of the understanding, i.e., the one that agrees with itself.[52]

[52] Ibid., 14–15. See also the *First Critique:*

The following salient features of Kant's conception of logic emerge from the preceding passages:

—"Pure general logic" is concerned with the form of coherent thought.
—It abstracts entirely from all objects.
—It therefore tells us nothing about the world or the nature of reality.
—It is not an organon, an instrument which furnishes positive knowledge of any sort, but rather, a canon, exhibiting those necessary principles and conditions of right use which permit the understanding to remain in agreement with itself.
—In logic, the concern is not with how we think, but with how we ought to think, not one of contingent but of necessary rules.
—Hence the principles of logic must be sharply distinguished from those of psychology.
—The temptation to bring such principles into logic (the error of empiricism) is tied to the impulse to assimilate it to the natural sciences, conceiving of it as propounding contingent truths based on inductive generalizations about how human beings reason.
—This is to miss the special status of the principles of logic as constitutive of the possibility of thought (including thought about how human beings reason).
—The complimentary error (that of speculative metaphysics) is to treat logic as an organon; this gives rise to dialectical illusion.
—This results in the need for a dialectical logic, a prophylactic against such confusions which diagnoses and exhibits the sources of dialectical illusion.

Such illusions, for Kant (which arise from the dogmatic employment of reason), are not comparable to the illusory cogency of something like a logical fallacy which, when pointed out and explained, ceases to exert its attraction on us. In cases of merely logical illusion, Kant says, ". . . as soon as attention is brought to bear on the case before us, the illusion completely disappears." Whereas:

There are therefore two rules which logicians must always bear in mind, in dealing with pure general logic:

   1. As a general logic, it abstracts from all content of the knowledge of understanding and from all differences in its objects, and deals with nothing but the mere form of thought.

   2. As pure logic, it has nothing to do with empirical principles, and does not, as has sometimes been supposed, borrow anything from psychology, which therefore has no influence whatever on the canon of the understanding. (A54/B78)

Transcendental illusion, on the other hand, does not cease even after it has been detected and its validity clearly revealed by transcendental criticism. . . . That the illusion should, like logical illusion, actually disappear and cease to be an illusion, is something which transcendental dialectic can never be in a position to achieve. For here we have to do with a *natural* and inevitable *illusion* . . . one inseparable from human reason, and which, even after its deceptiveness has been exposed, will not cease to play tricks with reason. (A297–298/B353–355)

Dialectical illusion, for Kant, presents us with an *illusion of knowledge:* an attempt to apply the categories beyond the limits of experience.[53] For Wittgenstein, who builds on certain insights of Frege's, philosophical illusion involves an even more peculiar form of muddle: an *illusion of thought*—the manufacturing of an appearance of sense where no sense has been made.[54] For the *Tractatus,* as we shall see, the source of philosophical confusion is to be traced, not (as for Kant) to the existence of a limit which we overstep in our thought but to our falling prey to the illusion that there is a limit which we run up against in thought.[55]

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[53] We have to do here with a transgression not of the limits of thought (the limits, as it were, imposed by the principles of pure general logic), but rather of the limits of the legitimate employment of the categories—the limits not of thought per se, but of *thought about objects.* Pure general logic deals with the conditions of thought in general, transcendental logic with the conditions of thought about objects. Transcendental illusion, for Kant, has to do with the possibility of supersensible knowledge (as opposed to extra-logical thought). Transcendental Dialectic, as a prophylactic against transcendental illusion, is a branch of transcendental logic.

[54] Thus, for Kant (unlike Wittgenstein), the questions which give rise to dialectical illusion—those questions which are prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, which we are unable to ignore and yet also equally unable to answer (A vii)—are themselves *intelligible.* They are not (as they are for Wittgenstein) simply nonsense. For Kant, the problem is not that they simply fail to furnish us with thoughts; rather, the illusion to which they give rise is that they furnish us with thoughts about objects.

[55] The limit Kant wishes to draw, however, is not to be identified with the one Wittgenstein wishes to erase. The Kantian notion of a limit (which we transgress in philosophical speculation)—as the two previous endnotes attempt to make clear—cannot be equated with the Cartesian notion of a limit (which the laws of logic impose on our thought). As we shall see, Kant can be seen as initiating a tradition of thought about logic which holds that the laws of (pure general) logic (which are constitutive of the possibility of thought) should not be represented as imposing a limit on thought. The *Tractatus* is concerned with the Cartesian notion of a limit (with showing that the appearance of such a limit rests upon a form of illusion). A popular recipe for providing a Kantian reading of the *Tractatus* depends upon failing to distinguish these two notions of a limit, identifying the Kantian notion of the limits of theoretical discourse with the Tractarian notion of the limits of logic (or language). This mislocates the Kantian moment of the work. It, on the one hand, leads commentators to ascribe to the *Tractatus* the sort of

4) Frege's Kantianism

Frege inherits the Kantian idea that accord with the laws of logic is constitutive of the possibility of thought. In the introduction to the *Grundgesetze,* he writes: the laws of logic are "the most general laws of thought . . . [which] prescribe universally the way in which one ought to think if one is to think at all."[56] The laws of logic are, for Frege (as for Kant), not only the most fundamental principles of "our" reasoning; they are also constitutive of rationality: they display what is involved in any thinking or reasoning. When Frege recommends his *Begriffsschrift,* it is not merely on the grounds that it is in various respects technically superior to the systems of logic offered by others (from Aristotle to Boole) but also on the grounds that it properly and perspicuously represents the laws of thought—those principles which undergird all rational discourse and inference.[57] Frege therefore inherits (a great deal of) Kant's philo-

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Kantian (as well as Schopenhauerian and Russellian) project the work is precisely out to undermine (one of drawing limits to make room for something: faith, ethics, the omnipotence of God, the logical form of reality), while, on the other hand, completely missing the fundamental (Kantian) insight of the work—the one which is summarized in the epigraph to this paper: what lies on the far side of the limits of logic is *"simply nonsense."*

[56] *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. Montgomery Furth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 12.

[57] This is connected to a point Frege makes when comparing his own system with that of Boole: the *Begriffsschrift* is not merely a *calculus ratiocinator* but also a *lingua characteristica*—not merely a useful calculus but also a universal language. The language it furnishes is *universal* because it is an explicit representation of the (logical) framework within which all rational discourse proceeds. The *Begriffsschrift* offers us not merely a system, but the true system of logic. It provides a perspicuous representation of, as it were, the universal medium of thought. This means that the distinction between a formal system and its interpretation is entirely alien to the *Begriffsschrift.* For Frege, logic is not about the manipulation of mere signs on paper; questions concerning their disinterpretation or reinterpretation do not arise, and logical truth is not defined by way of schemata. For Frege there is no metalogical standpoint from which to interpret or assess the system. The hallucination of the possibility of such a standpoint, for Frege, depends upon a misunderstanding of the status of the laws of logic (as the fundamental presuppositions of thought about anything whatsoever). For Frege, as for Russell, there is no possibility of "alternative logics" in the contemporary sense—there are, at most, competing attempts to faithfully and optimally represent the logical structure of rational thought. On this view, as Wittgenstein puts it: "[L]ogic should be, as one might say, in no way arbitrary. . . . The whole essence of . . . [the] view is that there is only one logic" (*Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics,* ed. Cora Diamond [Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1976], 172). For further discussion of this and related matters, see Jean van Heijenoort, "Logic as Calculus and Logic as Language" in *Selected Essays* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1985); Warren Goldfarb "Logic in the Twenties," *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 44, no. 3 (Sept. 1979); and "Poincaré against the Logicists" in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* XI, eds. W. Aspray and P. Kitcher (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); and the papers by Thomas Ricketts, cited below.

sophical conception of the status of the laws of logic (as constitutive of the possibility of rational thought), but he criticizes Kantian pure general logic for failing to provide (as the *Begriffsschrift* does, for the first time) a proper codification of *the* laws of logic.

The absolute generality of the laws of logic, for Frege, is tied to their ultimate ground in pure thought alone. For Frege, the pair of Kantian distinctions of analytic/synthetic and a priori/a posteriori permit the categorization of propositions according to the kind of ultimate ground that figures in their justification.[58] There are three possible sources of knowledge and hence three sorts of ultimate ground: (1) sense perception (for propositions that are synthetic a posteriori), (2) inner intuition (for propositions that are synthetic a priori), and (3) pure thought (for propositions that are analytic).[59] An analytic truth, for Frege, is one whose *justification* depends on logic and nothing but logic.[60] When Frege says

[58] "When a proposition is called a posteriori or analytic in my sense, this is not a judgment about the conditions, psychological, physiological, and physical, which have made it possible to form the content of the proposition in our consciousness; nor is it a judgment about the way in which some other man has come, perhaps erroneously, to believe it is true; rather, it is a judgment about *the ultimate ground* [my emphasis] upon which rests the justification for holding it to be true" (*The Foundations of Arithmetic* [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1980], 4).

[59] It is an important difference between Kant and Frege that Frege sees logic, taken on its own, as being a distinct source of knowledge. This is explicit, for example, in the following passage:

What I regard as a source of knowledge is what justifies the recognition of truth, the judgment:
    I distinguish the following sources of knowledge:
    1. Sense perception
    2. The logical source of knowledge
    3. The geometrical and temporal sources of knowledge (*Posthumous Writings,* ed. H. Hermes, F. Kambartel, and F. Kaulbach [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979], 128–267)

[60] A number of commentators have thought that the following formulation should be read as an attack on the Kantian formulation of the analytic/synthetic distinction:

Now these distinctions between a priori and a posteriori, synthetic and analytic, concern, as I see it, not the content of the judgment but the justification for making the judgment. (*Foundations of Arithmetic,* 3)

They have therefore wished to dismiss the following footnote, which Frege appends to this passage, as disingenuous:

By this I do not, of course, mean to assign a new sense to these terms, but only to state accurately what earlier writers, Kant in particular, have meant by them. (Ibid.)

Frege remarks in a number of places that he thinks Kant's "true view was made . . . difficult to discover" (ibid., 37n) because his mode of expression sometimes obscures his agreement with Frege about the importance of sharply drawing the distinction between the

that the truths of arithmetic are analytic, he means they are derivable from the laws of logic which, for him (as for Kant), means the laws of thought.[61] For Frege (as for Kant) to identify a proposition as synthetic a priori is not to say that it lies outside the domain of the analytic—that would be tantamount to saying that the most general laws of thought do not apply to it.[62] But these laws "govern everything thinkable."[63] Frege's tripartite division of ultimate grounds constitutes a hierarchy of generality, and the classification of a truth depends upon how far down one must go in this hierarchy in order to supply all of the materials necessary for its justification.[64] The most general truths are those whose justification rests solely on the laws of pure thought.

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psychological and the logical. Frege makes it clear in his discussions of Kant's account of arithmetic that he understands Kant's view (that the truths of arithmetic are synthetic a priori) to amount to the claim that pure intuition must be invoked as "the ultimate ground of our knowledge of such judgments" (ibid., 18). Frege takes Kant's concern here to be, like his own, with the *justification* of the truths of arithmetic. Frege's motive in recasting the analytic/synthetic distinction in terms of justification (rather than content) is, in part, to make it clear that the question at issue is not one that can be illuminated by a psychological investigation. (He views his contemporaries as prone to confuse subjective psychological content with objective logical content.) He is also concerned to head off psychologistic misconstruals of his (and Kant's) talk about tracing an item to its ultimate ground. He is out to draw the distinction (as the full context of the passage on page 3 makes clear), in a manner which marks off as crisply as possible, the question of how we arrive at a proposition from the question of where it derives its justification from.

So Frege's intention is to remain faithful to the spirit, if not the letter, of Kant's philosophy. Nonetheless, his reconstrual of the analytic/synthetic distinction marks more of a shift than Frege would have us believe. Kant defines an analytic judgment as one whose predicate is contained in its subject. Kant's definition of analyticity permits one to inspect an *individual* judgment, taken in isolation, and see whether its internal structure is of the appropriate composition. Frege's definition departs from this conception in three significant respects. First, attention is shifted from the question of the internal logical structure of an individual judgment to the question of the logical relation between an individual judgment and *an entire body* of judgments (from which it may be derivable). Secondly, in determining whether a proposition is analytic, the relevant body of propositions is the basic laws of logic taken collectively (rather than, as for Kant, simply the principle of noncontradiction). Thirdly, the line between the logical and the extra-logical has shifted dramatically, since the scope of (pure general) logic is vastly enriched by Frege's *Begriffsschrift*.

[61] "The basis of arithmetic lies deeper, it seems, than that of any of the empirical sciences, and even than that of geometry. . . . Should not the laws of number, then, be connected very intimately with the laws of thought?" (*The Foundations of Arithmetic,* 21).

[62] "The truths of arithmetic govern all that is numerable. This is the widest domain of all" (ibid., 21).

[63] Ibid., 21.

[64] I owe this way of formulating the point to Joan Weiner. In general, chapter 2 of her book *Frege in Perspective* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) offers an excellent discussion of this aspect of Frege's thought and its relation to Kant.

Frege also refers to the laws of logic as "the laws of truth" and, following Kant, will insist that this locution must not be construed psychologistically: "I understand by 'laws of logic' not psychological laws of takings-to-be-true, but laws of truth."[65] Psychology, as a science, is properly concerned only with the nature and genesis of ideas—the contents of individual consciousnesses. Logic, on the other hand, is concerned with the structure of thought. In a strikingly Kantian passage, Frege writes:

> Not everything is an idea. Otherwise psychology would contain all the sciences within it, or at least it would be supreme judge over all the sciences. Otherwise psychology would rule even over logic and mathematics. . . . Neither logic nor mathematics has the task of investigating minds and the contents of consciousness owned by individual men. Their task could perhaps be represented rather as the investigation of *the* mind; of *the* mind, not of minds.[66]

Psychologism, as a position in the philosophy of logic or mathematics, according to Frege, conflates the question of how (as a matter of psychology) one comes to hold a certain mathematical proposition to be true with the question of whether (as a matter of logic) one is justified in that belief. He declares that "the irruption of psychology into logic" represents what has in our time become "a widespread philosophical disease"[67]—one that he is out to cure his contemporaries of. There is a sense therefore in which "Psychologism," in Frege's terminology, is not so much the name of some particular philosophical *view* as it is the name of a widespread form of *confusion*—one which can assume a variety of guises. Frege's favorite generic description of the disease is "the confusion of the logical with the psychological." Its most characteristic symptom is a confusion of causes with reasons; as, for example, when one confuses the psychological processes which enable one to form a belief with the logical relations which enable one to *justify* the truth of what one believes.[68] (Frege's cri-

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[65] Ibid., 13.

[66] *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy,* ed. Brian McGuinness (London: Blackwell, 1984), 368–369.

[67] Ibid., 209.

[68] Psychologistic philosophers of mathematics, for example (according to Frege), will attempt to ground the most basic concepts and procedures of mathematics by appealing to introspectible contents of consciousness—or to underlying psychological (or even physiological) processes—which transpire while one is doing mathematics. Frege does not deny that such a study of *what goes on* in us while doing mathematics may be interesting for this or that purpose:

> It may, of course, serve some purpose to investigate the ideas and changes of ideas which occur during the course of mathematical thinking; but psychology should not imagine

tique of psychologism is, in this respect, very close to Sellars's central criticism of empiricism; namely, that it runs together the space of reasons and the space of causes.[69] The similarity is due to the fact that both of these thinkers are reformulating, for the benefit of their contemporaries, the upshot of the Kantian critique of empiricism.[70])

An appeal to a distinction between reasons and causes has great argumentative force, however, only if the psychologistic philosopher thinks of what he is doing as a contribution to the justification of knowledge. (Certainly some of Frege's contemporaries who wrote on the philosophy of mathematics were vulnerable to such an objection.) However, as an isolated move, it cuts little ice against a *thoroughgoingly* psychologistic thinker. The distinctively Kantian aspects of Frege's conception of logic (at least those which interest Putnam most) come clearly to the surface in the course of Frege's attempts to rebut thoroughgoing psychologism. We will turn to a closer examination of this region of Frege's thought when we consider his thought experiment concerning the possibility of discovering logically alien life.

Another way to see how much Frege shares of Kant's conception of logic (as constitutive of the possibility of thought)—and hence how much he shares of Kant's view that the idea of illogical thought is inherently problematic—is to begin by considering Frege's conception of *judgment,* arguably the cornerstone of his philosophy.[71]

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that it can contribute anything whatever to the foundation of arithmetic. (*The Foundations of Arithmetic,* vi)

What Frege wants to hammer home is that an appeal to such considerations has no role to play in the mathematical activity of giving and asking for reasons why a proposition is true. "Otherwise," he says, ". . . in proving Pythagoras's theorem we should be reduced to allowing for the phosphorous content of the human brain" (ibid.).

[69] Wilfred Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science,* vol. 1, eds. Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956) (now also published as *Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997]), see especially 298–299 [76]:

In characterizing an episode or a state as that of *knowing,* we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.

[70] In the tradition of Frege and Sellars, John McDowell's John Locke Lectures (now published as *Mind and World* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994]) offer an example of a recent attempt to reformulate—for the benefit of his contemporaries—how aspects of this Kantian critique bear on various currently fashionable forms of psychologism.

[71] To show that Frege's conception of judgment is one of the cornerstones of his philosophy is a central burden of Thomas Ricketts's invaluable article "Objectivity and Objecthood: Frege's

To form a judgment, Frege says (in his post-1893 writings), is to advance from the sense of a thought to its truth-value:

> A propositional question contains the demand that we should either acknowledge the truth of a thought or reject it as false.[72]

This demand—"the demand that we should either acknowledge the truth of a thought or reject it as false"—I shall refer to as "the demand for judgment."[73] For Frege, appreciation of this demand is of a piece with the ability to reason—it is inseparable from our ability to understand language and grasp the thoughts of others. The demand for judgment is made explicit by a propositional (yes/no) question; but it is implicit, Frege thinks, in every genuine proposition. It is a condition of being a genuine thought *(eigentlicher Gedanke)*—as opposed to a mock thought *(Scheingedanke)*—that it be either true or false. As Frege is fond of saying, "[A] real proposition expresses a thought. The latter is either true or false: *tertium non datur.*"[74] (This condition is taken up by the *Tractatus:* "A proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no" (§4.023).)

In grasping the content of a thought, we grasp that either it or its negation is true—this is a constitutive feature of what it *is* to grasp the content of a thought. So, for Frege, to grasp a thought is to be faced with the demand for judgment. It is to be faced, that is, with the question of whether the thought is to be affirmed or denied.[75] The inexorability of the demand for judgment flows from the principle of noncontradiction, which Frege regards as a (Kant as *the*) basic law of logic. To grasp the content of a thought, Frege therefore holds, is to be faced with a *candidate* for judgment. A thought which lacks truth value is not, properly speaking, a kind of thought at all—any more than the simulation of thunder on the stage is a kind of thunder. We would do better here, Frege suggests, to speak instead of "mock thoughts"—as we do stage thunder—in order to avoid the appearance that we have to do in such cases with a

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Metaphysics of Judgment" in *Frege Synthesized,* ed. L. Haaparanta and J. Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1986). The ensuing discussion is enormously indebted to Ricketts; in a number of places I find myself paraphrasing his useful formulations.

[72] *Collected Papers,* 373.

[73] I am following Ricketts here.

[74] *Collected Papers,* 379.

[75] In order to make it clear that affirming and denying do not comprise two different kinds of judging (for example, two distinct sorts of *acts*), Frege will prefer to say that in the demand for judgment, we are faced with the question of whether the thought or its negation is to be recognized as a truth.

species of item that belongs to the genus *thought*.[76] What we encounter in such cases are forms of expression that present the appearance of being "proper thoughts."[77] There is a pressure in Frege's philosophy therefore—one which the *Tractatus* does not resist—to conclude that what mock thoughts present us with is the appearance of intelligible thought, one which seduces us into an illusion of understanding.[78]

Descartes wanted to distinguish between that which we can comprehend in our thought and that which we can merely apprehend. Given the finite structure of our minds, there are certain thoughts (for example, those having to do with the infinite) that exceed our grasp—they transcend the limits of our understanding. It would be a grandiose (not to

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[76] *Posthumous Writings*, 130.

[77] Ibid.

[78] In the preceding discussion, I allow myself to simplify what is in fact a complicated and hotly debated interpretive issue concerning Frege's views on nondenoting singular thoughts. Gareth Evans, in *Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 22–30, argues that Frege's own best view is that mock thoughts "do not *really* have a sense of the kind possessed by ordinary . . . sentences" (30). John McDowell, in "Truth-Value Gaps" in *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science VI: Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1982) 299–313 (now also in McDowell's *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998], 199–213), builds on Evans's interpretation in order to suggest that Frege's better self is after the view that what we achieve in such cases (when we imagine that we grasp the sense of a mock thought) is an *illusion* of understanding. In such cases

> . . . one takes oneself to understand an utterance as expressing a singular thought, but the singular thought which one thinks one understands the utterance to express does not exist. (305)
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>   It would be in the spirit of . . . [Frege's] talk of apparent thoughts to talk of apparent understanding; certainly the belief that one understands one of the problematic utterances as expressing a genuine thought would be an illusion. (312)

McDowell sees Frege's employment of the grab-bag category of "fiction" as a way of trying to render this radical consequence of his own doctrines more palatable:

> Frege's use of the notion of fiction is peculiar: . . . he uses the notion in such a way that it is possible to lapse into fiction without knowing it. Now the idea that one can unknowingly lapse into fiction is so wrongheaded about fiction that we urgently need an account of why it should have attracted so penetrating a thinker . . . Frege writes that in fiction we are concerned with apparent thoughts and apparent assertions, as opposed to genuine thoughts, which are always either true or false. This . . . suggests that what attracted Frege to his peculiar use of the notion of fiction was that it seemed to soften the blow of the implication that there is an illusion of understanding. By the appeal to fiction, Frege equips himself to say that it is not a complete illusion that one understands one of the problematic utterances. . . . (311–312)

Frege shrinks here from a consequence of his own doctrines which the *Tractatus* goes on to unflinchingly embrace.

mention blasphemous) self-deception on our part to imagine that we have the mental capacity to even so much as attempt to raise for ourselves the question of their truth or falsity. Hence, Descartes says, we are unable to grasp such thoughts. Nevertheless, on his view, it is possible for us to make contact with them in our own thought. This distinction (between comprehension and apprehension) requires the possibility of a sharp separation between the content of a thought and the conditions which permit it to be a candidate for judgment. There is a pressure in Frege, as we have just seen, to conclude that, in such cases (where we imagine that we apprehend a thought we cannot comprehend), what we are confronted with is an illusion of thought. However, as we shall now see, there is also a pressure in the opposite direction.

5) The Tension in Frege's Conception of Logic

I turn now to Putnam's suggestion that Frege is pulled in two different directions: toward Kant's view (that illogical thought is not, properly speaking, thought at all) and away from it.

Frege tries to combine the fundamentally Kantian conception of logic outlined above with the following distinctly un-Kantian view: logic is a branch of positive science. Logic differs most significantly from the other sciences (Frege calls them "the special sciences") in this respect; it is the maximally general science. Frege tries to weave this idea into a Kantian story in which the laws of logic prescribe how one *ought* to think:

> It will be granted by all at the outset that the laws of logic ought to be guiding principles for thought in the attainment of truth, yet this is only too easily forgotten, and here what is fatal is the double meaning of the word "law." In one sense a law asserts what is; in the other it prescribes what ought to be. Only in the latter sense can the laws of logic be called "laws of thought": so far as they stipulate the way in which one ought to think. Any law asserting what is, can be conceived as prescribing that one ought to think in conformity with it, and is thus in that sense a law of thought. This holds for laws of geometry and physics no less than for laws of logic. The latter have a special title to the name "laws of thought" only if we mean to assert that they are the most general laws, which prescribe universally the way in which one ought to think if one is to think at all.[79]

[79] *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* 12.

Any law can be considered as a "law" in either of two senses: either as a law which asserts *what is* or as one which asserts *what ought to be.* The laws of physics are laws in the first sense insofar as they assert how matter in motion, in fact, comports itself; they are laws in the second sense insofar as they tell us how one ought to think if one wishes to think correctly about matter in motion. They are laws in a descriptive sense insofar as they represent true statements about the physical world; they are prescriptive insofar as they prescribe how one should think about the physical world (if one wishes to think in accordance with the truth). The laws of logic, Frege holds, can equally be said to be "laws" in each of these two senses. In the second sense, they are, as Kant held, *the* laws of thought—that is, the most *general* laws of thought. In this sense, the laws of logic are laws which prescribe what ought to be—that is, they prescribe how one is to think if one is to think at all. The un-Kantian twist comes with the idea that the laws of logic are laws in the first sense as well—laws which assert what is the case in the world. Conceived in the first way, the laws of logic are hardly "purely formal rules" (in either Kant's sense or Hilbert's): they state (absolutely general) substantial truths. They are laws to which the "behavior" of everything conforms. The laws of logic hold for anything, any sort of subject matter whatsoever. Frege writes:

> How must I think in order to reach the goal, truth? We expect logic to give us the answer to this question, but we do not demand of it that it should go into what is peculiar to each branch of knowledge and its subject-matter. On the contrary, the task we assign logic is only that of saying what holds with the utmost generality for all thinking, whatever its subject-matter.[80]

Tied to this conception of the laws of logic (as possessing an intrinsic positive content) is a feature of Frege's philosophy which he himself recognizes as a departure from the Kantian fold. Indeed, Frege represents it as his one significant quarrel with the master. He objects to Kant's claim that logic is an infertile science, unable to extend our knowledge, along with Kant's related claim that logic cannot afford, on its own, knowledge of objects.[81] What Frege means by saying logic abstracts from "what

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[80] *Posthumous Writings,* 128.
[81] Frege writes,

> Kant . . . underestimated the value of analytic judgments. . . . The conclusions we draw
> from them extend our knowledge, and ought therefore, on Kant's view, to be regarded as

is peculiar to each branch of knowledge and its subject-matter" is that—in contrast to the laws of the special (i.e., the other) sciences, like geometry and physics—the laws of logic do not mention any properties or relations whose investigation is the business of the special sciences.[82] The break with Kant lies in the idea that the laws of logic have a positive subject matter. What the laws of logic do continue to lack, on Frege's view, is a subject matter that is specialized in any way; their subject matter is simply *everything*. For Frege, the laws of logic are, as Putnam puts it, "the most general laws of nature."

The *Tractatus* aims to show that Frege's conception of logic is in conflict with itself: Frege's overarching (Kantian) conception of judgment is in conflict with his conception of logic as the maximally general science. This is part of what is behind the famous remark in the *Tractatus* that the propositions of logic are tautologies:

> The mark of logical propositions is not their general validity (6.123).
>   The propositions of logic are tautologies.
>   The propositions of logic therefore say nothing . . .
>   Theories of logic which make a proposition of logic appear substantial [*gehaltvoll*] are always false (6.1–6.111).

When Wittgenstein calls a proposition a tautology—following Kant's usage (as well as that of Bradley, the early Moore, and the early Russell)—he is availing himself of a way of *impugning* a proposition, declaring it to be vacuous.[83] A tautology is *sinnlos:* it fails to express what Frege would

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synthetic; and yet they can be proved by purely logical means, and are thus analytic. . . . I must . . . protest against the generality of Kant's dictum: without sensibility no object can be given to us.

   . . . I have no wish to incur the reproach of picking petty quarrels with a genius to whom we must all look up with awe; I feel bound therefore to call attention also to the extent of my agreement with him, which far exceeds any disagreement. (*The Foundations of Arithmetic,* 99–101)

[82] I am here, once again, extremely indebted to an article by Ricketts ("Frege, the *Tractatus,* and the Logocentric Predicament," *Nous,* XIX, no. 1 [March 1985]), and once again find myself paraphrasing many of his formulations.

[83] Carnap, appropriating all of the *Tractatus*'s terminology, would later say many of the same things that the *Tractatus* says here: the propositions of logic are tautologies; they are *inhaltsleer*—empty of content. But Carnap completely shifts the sense of such terms, investing them with an explanatory role in a philosophical account of the character of mathematical (and other forms of a priori) necessity. When writing the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein had no reason to anticipate the possibility that someone (like Carnap and generations of philosophers following him) would read into his text the idea that tautologies are a *kind* of meaningful statement—ones that are true by virtue of their meaning. Nonetheless, the ac-

call a "proper thought."[84] Frege's own account of judgment forms the basis of Wittgenstein's critique of Frege's conception of logic as the maximally general science. Whereas for Frege, the propositions of logic are paradigms of genuine thought, the *Tractatus* is out to show that these sentences cannot withstand the demand for judgment, Frege's own litmus test for distinguishing mock thoughts from genuine ones. Wittgenstein distinguishes between that which is *sinnlos* (senseless) and that which is *Unsinn* (nonsense). In saying that a "proposition" of logic is *sinnlos,* he is identifying it as belonging to a degenerate species of the genus proposition—like a genuine proposition, it is syntactically well formed[85]; unlike one, it fails to express a thought (it does not restrict reality to a yes or no)—it says *nothing.*[86] Wittgenstein can be seen here as returning to Kant's thought that, in and of itself, logic is barren: it cannot deliver knowledge. Wittgenstein rejects Frege's claim that the new logic, as codified in the *Begriffsschrift,* furnishes an organon, issuing in a systematic science of maximally general truths. In this sense, the *Tractatus* can be read as a vindication of the warning issued in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that: ". . . general logic, if viewed as an organon, is always a logic of illusion."[87]

Frege takes himself to be laying the foundations of the *science* of logic. The *Tractatus* throws away Frege's conception of logic as a science but

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count the *Tractatus* offers of how one forms a logical proposition and determines its truth value clearly rules out any appeal to meaning: "[W]ithout bothering about sense [*Sinn*] or meaning [*Bedeutung*], we construct logical propositions out of others using only *rules that deal with signs*" (§6.126).

[84] For an excellent discussion of the history of the term "tautology" and Wittgenstein's point in applying it to the propositions of logic, see Burton Dreben and Juliet Floyd, "Tautology: How Not to Use a Word" in *Wittgenstein in Florida,* ed. Jaakko Hintikka (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991).

[85] Rather than saying that for the *Tractatus* a logical proposition is well formed, it would be better to say that it forms (as Wittgenstein puts it) "a part of the symbolism." For the standard notion of a proposition's being logically "'well formed" depends upon a contrasting notion of a proposition's being logically ill-formed (or, as Carnap puts it, "countersyntactically formed")—a notion which the *Tractatus* is, as we shall see, out to undermine.

[86] Thus, for the *Tractatus* (unlike for very-recent Putnam), there is no significant asymmetry between a logical "truth" and its negation. Both tautologies and contradictions are (what the *Tractatus* calls) "logical propositions," and both fail to meet the conditions of being a thought—the truth value of neither results from the fulfillment of truth conditions: neither represents a state of affairs.

[87] The passage continues:

For logic teaches us nothing whatsoever regarding the content of knowledge, but lays down only the formal conditions of agreement with the understanding; and since these conditions can tell us nothing at all as to the objects concerned, any attempt to use this logic as an instrument (organon) that professes to extend and enlarge our knowledge can end in nothing but *mere talk* [my emphasis]. (A61/B86)

retains Kant's thought that logic has an ineliminable role to play in un-
covering and dispelling forms of philosophical illusion. Wittgenstein sees
in Frege's *Begriffsschrift* a tool which can assume what, for Kant, were
the responsibilities of a branch of transcendental logic. Indeed, he imag-
ines himself to have found a far more powerful dialectical tool than Kant
would ever have desired: one which reveals, when properly employed,
cracks in the foundations of both the Kantian and Fregean edifices. The
sign of a crack in the Fregean edifice first comes to light when one presses
the question, What is it to judge a basic law of logic to be true? Or to
put the question more pointedly, Can the axioms of Frege's *Begriffsschrift*
face the demand for judgment?

Ordinarily, when we grasp a thought, we are able to understand it
without knowing whether it is true or not. It is this separation between
understanding and judging, implicit in the demand for judgment, which
enables us, in grasping the sense of a thought, to see that it is either true or
false without yet having determined which. Frege's entire account of judg-
ment depends on the idea that we can distinguish a stage of grasping the
thought which is prior to the judgment and which furnishes the act of
judgment with something to bear upon. But as we shall see, other aspects
of Frege's understanding of logic suggest that, with respect to the basic
laws of logic, such a separation of the stages of understanding (grasping
the sense of a thought) and judgment (advancing to its truth-value) is un-
intelligible. That is, there isn't any sense to be made of the idea of someone
(even God!) entertaining the falsity of a basic logical law. And this, in
turn, would mean that Frege's account of judgment fails to leave room for
anything which could count as judging a basic law of logic to be true. The
demand for judgment, in the case of the axioms of *Begriffsschrift,* would
turn out to be unintelligible.[88] Yet Frege's account of logic as the maxi-
mally general science requires that we be able to judge the axioms of his
system to be true. If we are to conceive of the laws of logic as differing
from those of the other sciences only in their order of generality, then they
must be able to serve as possible candidates for judgment. So Frege's view
that the basic laws of logic possess positive content does not afford any
basis for their inability to face the demand for judgment.

Although Frege never addresses this problem head-on, he is remark-
ably forthright in his discussions of some of its symptoms. He acknowl-
edges a close cousin of this problem in his treatment of rules of infer-

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[88] The subsequent discussion closely follows Ricketts's "Frege, the *Tractatus,* and the Logo-
centric Predicament," op. cit.

ence[89] (rules, such as *modus ponens,* which allow us to assert one judgment on the basis of another). Frege draws his reader's attention to the fact that in his technical writings, the rules of inference are carefully written out in ordinary prose.[90] To attempt to express them in *Begriffsschrift*-notation would represent a fundamental confusion: they form the basis of the system and therefore cannot be expressed in it.[91] Since these rules are presupposed in every act of judgment, they themselves cannot serve as candidates for judgment. Another cousin of our problem can be seen in Frege's treatment of the Kerry paradox, when he insists that the words that he himself must resort to ("the concept horse is not a concept") in order to illuminate what is confused in Kerry's talk about concepts do not themselves express a coherent thought—any more than Kerry's own formulations do. Frege's name for the activity in which he engages in this context—one of self-consciously employing nonsense in order to make manifest what is nonsensical in the formulations of his interlocutors (the kind of nonsense to which one is naturally drawn in philosophizing about logic)—is *elucidation.*[92]

Frege's discussions of these two cousins of our problem are viewed by many contemporary commentators as among the most embarrassing moments in all of his work—sudden signs of an otherwise uncharacteristic softening of the mind. Yet they are precisely the moments in Frege's work from which Wittgenstein takes himself to learn the most. The central source of confusion in Frege's thought about logic is located elsewhere by the *Tractatus*—in the one assumption that it shares with psychologism (that "widespread philosophical disease"): that logic is a science. The *Tractatus* sees Frege as trying to cure the disease by merely treating its symptoms. It is only once one has broken with the idea that logic is a science that one is free of the disease.[93] Part of the aim of the

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[89] See the discussion of Frege's treatment of rules of inference in Ricketts, op. cit.

[90] See, for example, *Posthumous Writings,* 37, 39.

[91] "*Begriffsschrift,*" §13 in *From Frege to Gödel: A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic, 1879–1931,* ed. Jean van Heijenoort (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 28.

[92] I am moving quickly over difficult matters. Considerations of space prevent me from properly exploring the parallels and differences between Frege's and the *Tractatus*'s respective conceptions of elucidation. However, see Weiner, op. cit., chap. 6; and also Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), chaps. 2 and 4.

[93] This, in turn, requires breaking with Frege's idea that there is a logical source of knowledge, which is wholly distinct from (yet in the same line of business as) the sensory source of knowledge:

When it is held that logic is *true,* it is always held at the same time that it is not an experiential science: the propositions of logic are not in agreement or disagreement with particular

Tractatus, in its repudiation of the idea that logic sets forth a body of positive truths about the world, is, firstly, to reject the Russellian ideal of a "scientific philosophy" and, secondly, to clarify the proper uses of logic and hence to clarify the manner in which this technical discipline can fruitfully serve the interests of philosophy.[94] Wittgenstein continues to share with Frege the idea that a well-regimented logical symbolism provides a notation for perspicuously displaying inferential relations, thereby providing a window onto the logical structure of our language and furnishing a dialectical tool for dissolving philosophical confusion. It is, however, this lattermost application of logic—in service of the task, as Frege puts it, of "breaking the domination of the word over the human spirit"[95]—which gains an unprecedented prominence in the *Tractatus.* The *Tractatus* is a work of philosophy, and the work of philosophy, the *Tractatus* says—adapting Frege's own name for the activity of battling nonsense by means of nonsense—is one of elucidation:

> The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. (4.112)

Frege agrees that the activity which he himself calls "elucidation" does not involve putting forward, or arguing against, *theses* (i.e., propositions which correspond to fully intelligible thoughts), but consists rather in a certain kind of activity. However, Frege views elucidation as a *propaedeutic* to the serious business of science. Nonetheless, as we are about to

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experiences. But although everyone agrees that the propositions of logic are not verified in a laboratory, or by the five senses, people say that they are recognized by the intellect to be true. This is the idea that the intellect is some sort of sense; it is the idea that by means of our intellect we look into a certain realm, and there see the propositions of logic to be true. (Frege talked of the realm of reality which does not act on the senses.) This makes logic into the physics of the intellectual realm. (*Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics,* 172)

[94] "The word 'philosophy' must mean something which stands above or below, but not alongside the natural sciences" (*Tractatus,* §4.111). The aspiration to find a perspective on logic which is neither psychologism nor Fregean scientism remains a defining feature of Wittgenstein's later thought:

> Next time I hope to start with the statement: "The laws of logic are the laws of thought." The question is whether we should say we cannot think except according to them, that is, whether they are psychological laws—or, as Frege thought, laws of nature. He compared them with laws of natural science (physics), which we must obey in order to think correctly. I want to say they are neither. (*Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics,* op. cit., 230)

[95] *Begriffsschrift,* preface, op. cit., 7.

see, the ground for the *Tractatus*'s more radical notion of elucidation (and its concomitant critique of Frege's conception of logic as a kind of science) is prepared in Frege's own critique of psychologism.

6) Logical Aliens

Frege's most sustained discussion of psychologism is to be found in the introduction to *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*. Frege's opponent in these pages is the psychologistic philosopher of logic. Frege's thumbnail sketch of this character describes him as someone who conflates the laws of psychology (the laws of takings-to-be-true) with the laws of logic (the laws of truth), and who thus, through this conflation, ends by completely blurring the distinction between the subjective and the objective. In the introduction to *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* Frege proposes a thought experiment which is meant to exhibit the character of this confusion and thereby highlight the fundamental status of the laws of logic as the most general laws of thought. Frege's thought experiment concerns the possibility of our encountering logical aliens.

The psychologistic philosopher of logic is someone who maintains that the laws of logic are empirically established generalizations. His conception of logic would therefore seem to commit him to at least the *intelligibility* of the following scenario: we encounter beings whose thought is governed by laws different from those in accordance with which we judge. Frege's argument against the possibility of such logical aliens, read in its strongest form, amounts to an argument against the very intelligibility of this scenario. This leaves him in the position of arguing that the psychologistic logician is committed to the intelligibility of something which—when properly thought through—turns out to be unintelligible. Frege thus finds himself engaged in a peculiar form of philosophical criticism.[96] The heart of the peculiarity lies in the following consideration: if there is, properly speaking, no intelligible thought expressed by the form of words to which our interlocutor is attracted, how then can we go on to identify *the* thought which—if it were thinkable—would be the one to which his words aspire and to which he would be committed (if only he could be)? The peculiarity Frege finds himself in here is one which the *Tractatus* comes to see as

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[96] At various junctures in his writings (such as his treatment of the Kerry paradox), Frege is quite self-conscious about the peculiarity of the form of philosophical criticism he engages in when he argues against philosophical interlocutors who have failed to grasp the special status of logic. Weiner (op. cit., chap. 6) is very good on this point.

characteristic of philosophy as such. For Wittgenstein, early and late, it becomes the touchstone of successful philosophical criticism that it arrive at a moment in which one's interlocutor comes to see that there simply is no thought of the sort that he imagines himself to be thinking in his attraction to a certain form of words—words which he took to embody an important philosophical insight.[97]

At first blush, Frege's thought experiment appears to be in the service of resolving a *disagreement* between two opposing conceptions of logic. He appears to be concerned to show that a particular view (namely, that of the psychologistic logicians) is *false*. But as we go along, it will emerge that Frege's discussion (of what would be involved in entertaining the falsity of a basic law of logic) has something like the structure of an onion—one layer gives way to the next, and something which begins by looking like it has the logical structure of a straightforward disagreement increasingly comes to resemble something which has the elucidatory structure of the *Tractatus* (the structure, that is, of a ladder which one climbs up and then throws away).

Let's begin with the outermost layer of the onion. Frege invites us to try to imagine what it would be like to encounter beings who do not accept a basic law of logic; in this case, the law of identity. That is, we are invited to try to imagine beings who deny straightforward instances of the law of identity (statements which we unhesitatingly affirm). The psychologistic logician takes it to be a perfectly coherent empirical possibility that there might be such beings. He takes this consideration in turn to reflect something about the character of a law of logic. What Frege takes to be *the* law of identity is, according to the psychologistic logician's view, more properly termed *our* law of identity. It would appear, on this view, that the proper scientific description of our law of identity should be stated as follows:

> It is *impossible for beings like us* (with the relevant population appropriately circumscribed) to acknowledge an object to be different from itself.

The psychologistic logician concludes that the correct psychological theory pertaining to our inferential habits will assert that it is impossible

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[97] Wittgenstein, in his later writing, continued to return to Frege's thought experiment concerning logical aliens. See, for example, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 89–95 and *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics,* op. cit., 201–203. Part of what interests him, in his recurring to these pages, is this question: What sort of activity of philosophical criticism is involved in such a thought experiment? How does it engender illumination?

for us to think otherwise than in accordance with this law. Whereas the correct psychological theory pertaining to the inferential habits of the aliens asserts that this is possible *for them*. One set of laws describes how we think; another how they think. The sense in which it is "impossible" for us to deny a law of logic is construed on this account as a psychological fact about us. If we understand the phrase "laws of thought" in this way (Frege would say in a psychological as opposed to a logical sense), then of course there is no inconsistency in claiming one set of laws to be true of us and another to be true of them. The psychologistic logician—being a hard-nosed empiricist—will not, at this point, wish to invoke a Deity (who endowed our minds with the particular form of thought we happen to have). Otherwise, however, his doctrine is a species of Cartesianism: given the constitution of our minds, we think in accordance with the laws of logic; other beings (with fundamentally different mental endowments) will think in accordance with other laws.

One response to the psychologistic logician is to say that he has simply changed the subject. What he ends up talking about are not the laws of logic but something quite different. Frege can be found frequently making a point of this general sort, as, for example, in the following passages:

> [T]he expression "laws of thought" seduces us into supposing that these laws govern thinking in the same way as laws of nature govern events in the external world. In that case they can be nothing but laws of psychology: for thinking is a mental process. And if logic were concerned with these psychological laws it would be a part of psychology. . . .
>
> How, then, is the Principle of Identity really to be read? Like this, for instance: "It is impossible for people in the year 1893 to acknowledge an object as being different from itself"? Or like this: "Every object is identical with itself"? The former law concerns human beings and contains a temporal reference; in the latter there is no talk either of human beings or of time. The latter is a law of truth, the former a law of people's taking-to-be-true.
>
> All I have to say is this: being true is different from being taken to be true, whether by one or many or everybody, and in no case is to be reduced to it. There is no contradiction in something's being true which everybody takes to be false. I understand by 'laws of logic' not psychological laws of takings-to-be true, but laws of truth.[98]

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[98] *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, 12–14.

However, simply invoking this distinction (between the logical and the psychological) might appear to be without force against the psychologistic logician. To simply assume this distinction would appear to beg the fundamental question against him, insofar as a thoroughgoing psychologistic logician is precisely concerned to deny the notion of a nonpsychological law any fundamental role in his account of logic. It is open to him to respond: all I countenance on my theory—and all I need in order to provide an adequate empirical description of a set of inferential practices—are laws which accurately project *de facto* general agreement in judgments among subjects (from appropriately circumscribed populations).

Frege's point in these passages takes on more force, however, if we do not read him as simply *insisting* upon a distinction (which his interlocutor pointedly wishes to do without), but rather, as offering it as part of a *diagnosis* of his interlocutor's confusion. Without recourse to some distinction of this sort, Frege argues, his interlocutor will be unable to make sense of the terms in which he wishes to recommend his own theory. For once one entertains the possibility of encountering such logical aliens, the following question arises: Whose inferences are correct, ours or theirs (or neither)? This seems to be a perfectly natural and intelligible question. But, if the psychologistic logician admits to being able to understand it, Frege thinks he has wrung a crucial concession from him:

> Anyone who understands laws of logic to be laws that prescribe the way in which one ought to think—to be laws of truth, and not natural laws of human beings' taking a thing to be true—will ask, who is right? Whose laws of taking-to-be-true are in accord with the laws of truth? The psychological logician cannot ask this question; if he did he would be recognizing laws of truth that were not laws of psychology.[99]

The question that arises here (when we ask, "Who's right?"), Frege argues, is not itself a psychological question. The question cannot be addressed if we restrict ourselves to an empirical description of the inferential habits of various populations. The question presupposes the possibility of a standpoint which cannot be identified with any of the vantage points the psychologistic theory restricts itself to: it presupposes the possibility of taking up a critical attitude toward each such vantage point and judging it in comparison with others—assessing each in normative rather than in merely descriptive terms.

[99] Ibid., 14.

Frege thinks that if the psychologistic logician were to admit the legitimacy of the above question, he would thereby concede the existence of a nonpsychological study of inference and hence compromise his commitment to a thoroughgoing psychologism. The psychologistic logician cannot permit any nonrelativized question about the validity of an inference (or the truth of a judgment) to arise—one which does not rely upon (at least an implicit) reference to some particular population of judging subjects. Frege thinks this places the psychologistic logician in the position of not being able to make sense of the question of whether his own theory is true (as opposed to simply being true for us). At this juncture, halfway into the onion, Frege can be seen as rehearsing a gambit familiar to readers of Putnam's *Reason, Truth and History:* arguing that the psychologistic theory is self-refuting insofar as it is unable to account for the conditions under which the theory itself can be said to be true.[100]

When the psychologistic logician first presents his theory, he seems to be suggesting that it represents *the truth* about certain matters. He is telling us what kind of a thing a law of logic is: it is a law which governs the psychological process of reasoning. This account of what kind of a thing a logical law is has the appearance of being perfectly general: it is true of beings who reason as we do, but it will also be true of beings who reason in some other way (such as our friends, the logical aliens). It appears that we are being offered a theory which can encompass our inferential habits and theirs from some broader vantage point. But, according to the psychologistic logician's own account, the fundamental principles in accordance with which we assess his (or any other) theory are merely principles in accordance with which *we cannot help but think.* On his view, all that our talk of "truth" (when we say things like, "These principles enable us to judge in accordance with the truth") comes to in the end is this: our minds force us to think this way (rather than some other way). This means that when the psychologistic logician recommends his theory to us as "true," all he means, according to his own theory, is that we (for some "we") cannot help but find it to be true. So when he says "this theory is true of our thought and of their thought," all he means is that *we* cannot help but find it to be true of us and of them. But *they,* the logical aliens, are not necessarily so constituted that they cannot help but find it to be true of them. Furthermore, from their apparently equally

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[100] Frege's argument here is an application of Putnam's more general argument against criterial conceptions of rationality. See *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 105–113.

legitimate standpoint they are not constrained to find the theory to be true of us.[101] The psychologistic logician wants to be able to say both of the following things: (1) we *can* step back from how we think, compare it with how they think, and come to see that the proposed theory is true of both; and (2) given the constitution of our minds, we *cannot* step back from how we think.[102] The incoherence lies in the psychological logician's saying, at one moment, "We cannot but take these laws to be true," and in the next, disparaging them as true only for us—if we are *compelled* to take them as true, then we take them to be *true*; and hence we *must* (Isn't this what was just claimed?) regard anyone who denies them as in the wrong. The psychologistic logician, Frege says, "presumes to acknowledge and doubt a law in the same breadth."[103] In insisting that he must adhere to the standards of consistency logic provides, whilst refusing to reject the aliens' thought as contradictory, the psychologistic logician is, in Frege's words, attempting to jump out of his own skin.[104]

Can't the psychologistic logician deny Frege the entering wedge of his argument by just refusing to allow Frege's pivotal question: Whose inferences are correct, ours or theirs? He can try to turn all such questions aside by simply refusing to talk about anything other than what kinds of statements are accepted by us and what kinds of statements are accepted by them.[105] It is here, in the inner layers of the onion, in Frege's attempts to get some leverage on this most uncooperative incarnation of the psychologistic logician, that Frege fully slips off the edge and plunges into the Tractarian abyss—argument gives way to elucidation.

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[101] At bottom, therefore, Frege will argue, thoroughgoing psychologism is simply a disguised form of philosophical solipsism—or as Frege prefers to call it: subjective idealism—and Frege's arguments (at this point, halfway into the onion) for why such forms of philosophical solipsism are self-refuting accord with those scattered throughout Putnam's work. See, for example, "Why Reason Can't Be Naturalized" in *Realism and Reason,* 229–247.

[102] Acceptance of the theory depends upon the intelligibility of a claim—namely, that the theory is *true*—which, by the theory's own lights, must be unintelligible for us. Descartes's view is in this respect considerably subtler (though no less elusive) than that of the psychologistic logician. For Descartes concedes that the possibility of logically alien thought must be unintelligible to (beings like) us. (The problem for him comes in explaining how we should go about trying to believe in something which we can make no sense of.)

[103] *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* 15.

[104] Ibid.

[105] This way of putting the point helpfully disguises the fact that, on his view, the statement "what sorts of statements are accepted by them" ultimately comes to nothing more than "what sorts of statements are accepted *by us* in regard to the question 'what sorts of statements are accepted by them.'"

It originally looked as if the psychologistic logician wished to depict our encounter with the logical aliens as one in which we and they *disagree* over a certain fundamental question. Frege wants to show the psychologistic logician that he is not in a position to invoke the concept of disagreement here, for his own account requires that he refrain from availing himself of the materials out of which to construct a judgment as to whether two people genuinely disagree. The possibility of judgment, on Frege's account, is tied to the ability to discern relations of agreement and disagreement between propositions. It is the principles of logic which provide the framework within which such discernment operates.[106] It originally looked as if the psychologistic logician wanted to hold on to the idea that logically alien thought *conflicts* with ours, but his account deprives the notion of one proposition's conflicting with another of the context in which it has its life. The underlying claim which fuels Frege's argument here is that one can recognize only two judgments as being in conflict with one another if the framework of logic is already firmly in place. For the criteria by which we are able to so much as recognize (let alone adjudicate) an instance of disagreement presupposes the availability of this shared framework. Thus, Frege's strategy this far into the onion is to present the psychologistic logician with a dilemma: either (1) he can claim that his account reveals that the judgments of the aliens conflict with ours, in which case his idea of one judgment's conflicting with another can be shown to tacitly rely upon the idea of their logical incompatibility (that is, upon a non-psychological notion of incompatibility), or (2) he can refrain from telling us anything about the logical relation in which their judgments stand to ours, in which case he can tell us nothing about their thought whatsoever. The first horn of the dilemma rests in part on the claim that it is one of the criteria for whether someone affirms a judgment with which we disagree that he means to deny what we assert. If we prescind from (what Kant calls) "these criteria of the form of truth" (A60/B84), then we strip ourselves of any basis for mutual intelligibility. It is a feature of Frege's view (one famously taken up by Quine and then Davidson) that we can only discern a disagreement between our beliefs and those of others against a shared background which determines what counts as disagreement. It is the principles of logic, Frege argues, which make such discernment possible. The

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[106] See Ricketts, "Objectivity and Objecthood" for a much fuller discussion of this point than I am able to offer here.

psychologistic logician, however, wants to arrive at the discovery that our idea of "logical disagreement" and that of the aliens *disagree*. This latter employment of the notion of "disagreement," if it is to be purged of any partiality toward "our" logic, is one in which the ordinary notion must be drained of virtually all its sense. The psychologistic logician (if he does not wish to presuppose "our" notion of "logical disagreement") must restrict himself to a notion of "disagreement" according to which disagreement is simply a form of mere psychological difference; that is, a species of difference which does not in any way involve "our" idea of "logical" conflict. But if the noises we and the aliens make *merely differ* from one another (and nothing further concerning their logical relation to one another can be said), then they are no more in disagreement with one another than the moos of two different cows or the shapes of two different snowflakes. As long as his account labors under this restriction, the psychologistic logician is in no position to tell us anything about the thought of the logical aliens. For he has banished from his account the resources for discerning *any* sort of logical structure in the utterances of the aliens. If he grasps this horn of the dilemma, the most he will be able to show us are creatures who make noises and movements we do not make. (Creatures who moo and eat grass are not manifesting a logically alien form of thought.) Rather than showing us that they think differently, he will be unable to show us that they are so much as capable of thought. Frege's ultimate aim in the thought-experiment, therefore, is to try to get his interlocutor to see the force of the (Kantian) point that there isn't any sense to be made of the idea of undertaking to disagree with a principle of logic—that it is these principles which make both agreement and disagreement possible. What we are left with, if deprived of these principles, is not the possibility of agreement of *another kind,* but rather, simply, the *absence* of the possibility of agreement altogether.[107]

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[107] Despite all of the development it undergoes, a descendant of this Kantian point remains of critical importance for Wittgenstein's later thought. In the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* op. cit., it sounds like this:

> [T]he logical "must" is a component part of the propositions of logic, and these are not propositions of human natural history. If what a proposition of logic said was: Human beings agree with one another in such and such ways (and that would be the form of the natural-historical proposition), then its contradictory would say that there is here a *lack* of agreement. Not, that there is an agreement of another kind.
>
> The agreement of humans that is a presupposition of logic is not an agreement in *opinions,* much less in opinions on questions of logic. (353)

The ultimate point of Frege's thought experiment, therefore, is to highlight the special role that logic has in constituting the possibility of rational discourse.[108] According to Frege, we would not be able to recognize the logical aliens as reasoning differently from us because (if they failed to manifest any partiality for the laws of logic) we would not be able to recognize them as reasoning at all:

> But what if beings were . . . found whose laws of thought flatly contradicted ours and therefore frequently led to contrary results even in practice? The psychological logician could only acknowledge the fact and say simply: those laws hold for them, these laws hold for us. I should say: we have here a hitherto unknown type of madness.[109]

How are we to understand Frege's invocation of the notion of madness here? The notion of madness for Descartes belongs to part of an attempt to give content to the idea of logically alien thought. "Madness" is the notion Descartes reaches for in an attempt to specify a certain possibility about himself, one which he wishes to entertain in the course of an attempt to bring his most fundamental principles of thought into question. It is, he admits, not a possibility he can fully comprehend, but it must be one he can apprehend. Although he cannot really grasp the content of the hypothesis that he might be mad, he must not deny that it is within God's power to have left him in this (incomprehensible) state. Of course, he does not conclude that He did this. Nonetheless, the possibility that He might have done this must remain a minimally intelligible one. Descartes's doubt about his own madness mimics the incoherence of Frege's thought experiment. In supposing that he is mad, the author of the *Meditations* is supposing about himself that he is bereft of a capacity for reliable judgment. Yet, in the same breath, he presupposes that

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In the *Investigations,* it sounds like this:

> "So are you saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"—It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. (§241)

[108] Later Wittgenstein would not put the point this way. But (in commenting on these very pages of Frege's *Basic Laws*) he is willing to talk like this:

> The propositions of logic are "laws of thought," "because they bring out the essence of human thinking"—to put it more correctly: because they bring out, or show, the essence, the technique, of thinking. They show what thinking is. . . .
>   Logic, it may be said, shows us what we understand by "proposition" and by "language." (*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* op. cit., 90)

[109] *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* 14.

very capacity (which he supposes himself not to have) in order to draw conclusions about the reliability of his capacity for judgment.[110] In raising the possibility that he is mad (that his own capacity for judgment is systematically defective), he raises the possibility that sanity (a capacity for reliable judgment) requires a completely different form of thought from his own. What Descartes wants from the notion of "madness" is a way of marking a contrast (between the "madness" of our thought and the "sanity" of a logically alien form of thought)—a contrast which Frege wants to show his interlocutor he has failed to make sense of.

"Madness" is the notion Frege reaches for in an attempt to meet the psychologistic logician halfway. It is a notion one might reach for when confronted by beings whose capacities for rational thought appear deformed—whose processes of thought remain opaque to us. Frege does not reach for this word in the service of an attempt to characterize the Other of reason, but rather in the service of trying to find a sense for his interlocutor's words. Insofar as sense can be made of talk of madness, for Frege, that sense is not conferred through the idea of logically alien thought but rather through some idea of *disturbed* thought.[111] The closest Frege can come to finding a sense for the psychologistic logician's idea of an antithetical form of reason (deeply illogical thought) is the philosophically innocuous idea of a degenerate form of reason (merely lunatic thought).

Frege's thought experiment begins by presenting us with something which has the form of a question: Can there be or can there not be the following sorts of beings? And then we are (apparently) offered a description of these beings: they are, we are told, beings who, on the one hand, are able to reason, and on the other, whose reasoning does not conform to the laws of logic (i.e., those laws which govern our thinking). At first blush, it looks as if Frege is dispensing with this possibility by offering us an argument of the following sort: in order to conceive of such beings, we must conceive of them as able to manifest their rationality (their capacity for reasoning) in some way. But the laws of logic are the touchstones of rationality—they put in place the framework within which it first becomes possible to isolate and adjudicate disagreement. Here, at the penultimate layer of the onion, Frege's objection to psychologism closely parallels rela-

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[110] This criticism is elaborated by Hide Ishiguro in "Skepticism and Sanity" in *Knowledge and Mind,* eds. C. Ginet and S. Shoemaker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[111] For a strikingly parallel discussion of how the idea of the moral alien collapses into that of the moral lunatic, see Isaiah Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?," *Concepts and Categories* (New York: Viking, 1979), 166, §viii.

tively recent Putnam's claim that "the laws of logic are so central to our thinking" that we cannot entertain their falsity. It places the accent on the idea that there is something which we *cannot* do: we cannot think in a certain way; we cannot think against the grain of logic and still be thinking. Thus, in the end, it looks as if we are to arrive at the following conclusion: there cannot be logical aliens. For deep reasons having to do with the nature of logic, beings who fit this description are an impossibility. A priori reflection on the nature of logic seems to have disclosed a (negative) fact about what kinds of beings are possible. This makes it seem as if, in following Frege, what we have done is grasped the content of the thought experiment—what it would be for beings to be able to think in this remarkable way—and subsequently gone on to reject this possibility. We think of ourselves as rejecting the possibility of *something*: illogical thought. So, in considering the thought experiment, we imagine ourselves to pass through the successive stages of judgment—first grasping the sense of a thought and then submitting it to the demand for judgment. We experience something which has the phenomenology of judgment.

Nonetheless, as we have seen, there is a well-developed strain of thought in Frege which is committed to the conclusion that what we undergo in such an experience is an *illusion* of judgment. For, if the laws of logic prescribe how one ought to think if one is to think at all, then Frege must say that what has been proposed here is not a kind of thought: we are simply not, as it stands, able to make any clear sense of the psychologistic logician's proposal. But where does that leave the conclusion of the argument against psychologism? If the proposal does not add up to sense—does not present a thought, a candidate for judgment—then how can we affirm the negation of the content of the proposal? If we take the sentences "illogical thought is impossible" or "we cannot think illogically" to indeed present us with *thoughts* (with senses which we can affirm the truth of), then we concede what a moment ago we wished to deny (namely, that the negation of these sentences present us with a genuine content, one which is able to stand up to the demand for judgment). But if we conclude that these words (which we want to utter in response to the psychologistic logician) do not express a thought with a sense, then aren't *we,* if we judge psychologism to be false, equally victims of an illusion of judgment? This is the problem at the heart of the onion. The attempt to say that illogical thought is something that *cannot* be, to say that it involves a transgression of the limits of thought, requires that we be able to draw the limit. But this lands us back in the Cartesian Predicament: it requires that we be able to sidle up to the limit of thought.

7) The Final Layer of the Onion

The attempt to state a *thesis* about the nature of logic (either of a Kantian or an anti-Kantian variety) seems, by the end of Frege's elucidatory exercise, to undermine itself. It is at this point that one begins to feel a powerful attraction toward what should otherwise seem an evidently desperate gambit. The popularity of the gambit testifies to the depth of the problem. The gambit is to concede that our words don't say anything, but to then try to locate that which they seem to say beyond the limit of what can be said. One tries to pry the (illusory) content of the (mock) thought free from the words that engender it. One wants to hold onto the (illusion of) thought, even if one has to cut it free from any form of words which might express it. One concludes the following: the thought experiment about logical aliens conveys an insight which cannot be put into words. One wants to say: It is true that *there cannot be illogical thought,* but that truth cannot be coherently stated—what our nonsensical words are trying to say is quite true, but it cannot be said, only shown (through a self-defeating attempt to try to say what cannot be said). To mistake this strategy of desperation for the doctrine of the *Tractatus* is to mistake the penultimate rung of the ladder for the final rung, to mistake the final layer of the onion for its center.

This desperate gambit is widely proffered in scholarly works as an account of the *Tractatus*'s solution to the Cartesian Predicament. It is not an exaggeration to say that this has become the standard reading of the book. The proffered solution is to completely abandon the core of the Kantian conception of logic as constitutive of the possibility of thought— usually while parroting most of its rhetoric.[112] Proponents of this solution want to hang on, instead, to the idea that one can have hold of a thought even though the logical structure of language cannot accommodate a thought of this sort. But there's trouble here. If the thought that *there cannot be illogical thought* is an example of a kind of thought which the logical structure of language cannot accommodate, then it turns out

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[112] A particularly splendid example of brandishing the (Kantian) rhetoric while draining it of its content is furnished by the first chapter of Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka's *Investigating Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), titled "Wittgenstein and Language as the Universal Medium." The Hintikkas first attribute to the *Tractatus* a "Fregean thesis" concerning the "inescapability of logic"—logic provides "the universal medium of thought." Then they immediately go on to attribute a second thesis to the work, one concerning "the inexpressibilty of semantics"—we "can have many and sharp ideas" about the relation between language and world, but these "thoughts" cannot be expressed in the (purportedly) "inescapable" and "universal" medium of thought!

to be an example of the very thing it itself declares cannot be: illogical thought. This leads commentators on the *Tractatus* to try to push back the limits of thought: making the space of thought wider than the space afforded by the logical structure of language. There is one obvious problem which now arises for this interpretation, however: the Kantian slogans sprinkled throughout Wittgenstein's text. For example,

> Thought can never be of anything illogical, since, if it were, we should have to think illogically (§3.03).
>
> What makes logic a priori is the *impossibility* of illogical thought (§5.4731).

There are simple ways around this problem. One distinguishes between "thought strictly speaking" and "'thought'" (in quotation marks); or one avoids the word "thought" altogether in this connection and uses other words instead. One uses, that is, a variety of words ("convey," "grasp," "intend," "insight," "meaning," "proposition") for activities and contents which require that the logical framework of judgment be firmly in place, while insisting that the "insight" one "grasps" lies well beyond the limits of logical thought.

On the standard reading, the goal of the *Tractatus* is to lead us to a state of hushed awe in the face of that which lies ineffably beyond these limits. The silence invoked at the end of the book is taken to be a pregnant silence, testifying to the ineffability of certain deep truths concerning the nature of logic (and, standardly, a whole host of other matters as well). These things cannot be said, but they can be shown. This involves us, therefore, in attributing to the *Tractatus* a version of Descartes's distinction between what we can comprehend (i.e., ordinary thoughts which fall within the limits of sense) and what we can only apprehend (i.e., deeply nonsensical thoughts which lie beyond these limits): we cannot grasp (when we attempt to say what cannot be said) what our words *say,* but we can make contact in our thought with what they *show.* But we need a way to make contact with these truths which cannot be expressed in language. We need something which is like language without actually being language. So we arrive at the idea that (some) nonsensical propositions can convey positive insight. P. M. S. Hacker is one of the more lucid proponents of this reading of the *Tractatus:*

> [W]ithin the range of philosophical . . . nonsense we can distinguish . . . between . . . illuminating nonsense and misleading nonsense. Illuminating nonsense will guide the attentive reader to *apprehend what is*

shown by other propositions which do not purport to be philosophical; moreover it will intimate, to those who *grasp what is meant,* its own illegitimacy. . . .

[T]he *Tractatus* does indeed consist largely of pseudopropositions. Of course, what Wittgenstein *meant* by these remarks is, in his view, quite correct, only it cannot be said. Apparently what someone *means* or *intends* by a remark can be *grasped* even though the sentence uttered is *strictly speaking* nonsense [my emphases].[113]

Here we have something very close to Descartes's idea that we can apprehend what we cannot comprehend: we can apprehend what we cannot say by grasping what is *meant* by a piece of nonsense.

If nonsense is nonsense in virtue of its failure to make sense, then how are we to "grasp" its sense? How are we to discern the presence of meaning in the absence of meaning? Well, it's not what the words say that we're after, but what they only *hint at.* But, ordinarily, we grasp what someone's words hint at by first grasping what they say. But how do we grasp what nonsense hints at? The story goes like this: the pieces of nonsense in question are violations of the rules of logical syntax. These violations arise through attempts to try to express fundamental features of the logical structure *of* language *in* language. These attempts, Hacker says, "unavoidably violate the bounds of sense, misuse language, and produce nonsense."[114] We don't grasp what the nonsense says but what it is trying to say. The rules of logic, however, render "it" unsayable. We encounter here once more the idea that logic imposes a limit we run up against. The logical structure of language keeps us from being able to say certain things.

The central feature of the Cartesian picture persists here: because of the logical structure of our thought there is something we *cannot* do. We cannot think against the grain of logic. When we try, we come out with bits of nonsense. But these bits of nonsense are, nonetheless, useful; they can convey the unsayable thing our words were after but could not reach. Here is how Peter Geach puts it:

Wittgenstein holds that various *features of reality* come out . . . in our language, but we cannot use this language to say, assert, that reality has these features: if we try to frame propositions ascribing these features to reality, then it will be possible to show that *strictly speaking*

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[113] *Insight and Illusion,* rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 18–19, 26.
[114] Ibid., 21.

these are not propositions, only sentence-like structures which violate the principles of logical syntax and are thus devoid of any sense, true or false. All the same, these nonsensical . . . structures may be useful; they may serve to *convey* from speaker to hearer *an insight* that cannot be put into proper propositions [my emphases].[115]

We have here a watered-down version of the Cartesian notion of the Infinite: there are certain *features of reality* that cannot be coherently expressed because of the logical structure of our thought. But they can nevertheless be conveyed by language. But not by ordinary language. Ordinarily, language conveys something by using words to say something. In ordinary language, words may convey (by implication) more than they explicitly say—but even this they do by first saying something. Nonsense, however, says nothing. Thus, the standard reading saddles itself with the question: How is nonsense able to convey an insight into ineffable features of reality? In order to solve this problem, one has to attribute to Wittgenstein the idea that one can attempt to think against the grain of logic. It is through an attempt at illogical thought that one can sidle up to the limits of language and peer over them (at those ineffable features of reality which Geach speaks of).[116] One therefore ends up attributing to the *Tractatus* the idea that (although we cannot speak on both sides of the limit) we *can* think both sides of the limit.

According to the standard reading of the *Tractatus,* these features of reality can be *made manifest* by language because they correspond to certain *features of language:* they are reflected in the mirror of the logical structure of language. The relevant features of language taken together make up the logical form of language. We cannot express "it"—the logical form of language—in language; but we can gesture at it. One such feature is the distinction between concept and object. We cannot express this distinction in language. When we attempt to, we try to make a concept play the role of an object. That is something a concept cannot do. Logic won't permit it. The attempt to make this feature of the logical structure of language the subject of our thought results in a violation of logical syntax. If such a proposition could be formed, it would involve

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[115] "Saying and Showing in Frege and Wittgenstein" in *Essays in Honour of G. H. von Wright,* ed. J. Hintikka (*Acta Philosophica Fennica* 28) (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1976), 54.

[116] Wittgenstein writes: "[I]n so far as people think they see 'the limits of human understanding,' they believe of course that they can see beyond these" (*Culture and Value,* trans. Peter Winch [Oxford: Blackwell, 1980], 46).

the combination of logical items from incompatible logical categories. Logic forbids this. Such a proposition would be logically flawed. It would involve, as Hacker puts it, a "misuse" of language. It involves using an expression for a concept where an expression for an object must go. We are trying to give the sign a wrong use. Such counter-syntactically formed propositions are not genuine propositions. They are pseudo-propositions. They are a kind of nonsense. But they are not mere nonsense. Through the manner in which they fail to make sense, they make certain features of the logical structure of reality perspicuous.

This reading of the *Tractatus* relies not only on the distinction Hacker draws (between two kinds of philosophical nonsense) but on another distinction—between counter-syntactic nonsense and mere nonsense. The former is a kind of nonsense in which we can recognize the place in the syntax of a sentence for an item of a certain logical category, but something of the wrong category has been put in that place. Mere nonsense is a kind of nonsense in which we cannot discern sufficient syntactic structure to even identify any part of the string as being the place for an item of a certain logical category. Mere nonsense is not, as it were, even trying to play by the rules of logic.[117] Deep philosophical nonsense involves counter-syntactic formation: it plays by the rules up to a point and then breaks them. By breaking the rules of logic, deep nonsense brings these rules out into open view. By transgressing the limits of the logical structure of language, it makes these limits visible. Here, at the penultimate rung of the ladder, the reader of the *Tractatus* admits that the words he utters—in his attempt to articulate what he takes himself to *see*—are nonsense. Nevertheless, he continues desperately to cling to a fundamentally Cartesian picture of the laws of logic (as representing limits against which we chafe in our philosophizing about the nature of logic)—the very picture the *Tractatus* aims to explode from within.

I have italicized the words "strictly speaking" in the Hacker and Geach quotations above. Geach says pseudo-propositions are like propositions (they convey insight) but, strictly speaking, they're not propositions. Hacker says they're nonsense, strictly speaking, but they're not complete nonsense (indeed, what they mean is quite correct). It is not a coincidence that these two commentators resort to such a device. Every proponent

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[117] I am simply putting aside here, for the purposes of this discussion, the case of what Annette Baier calls 'vocabulary nonsense.' See her helpful typology of different varieties of nonsense in her entry titled "Nonsense" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

of the standard reading of the *Tractatus* resorts to expressions of this sort. Quotation marks are another favorite way around the problem: pseudo-propositions are not propositions but they can convey "insight." What such a piece of nonsense "means" is quite correct. What it expresses is not a fact, of course, but it is a "fact." Here is Eddy Zemach:

> Let us refer to formal features of facts as "facts" in double quotation marks. Such a "fact" is not a fact at all but that which makes facts possible. . . . Now formal "facts" cannot be expressed in language.[118]

You are welcome, in your role as commentator on the *Tractatus,* to utter the words, "It's not a fact, but rather a 'fact.'" Now you have two choices: (1) You can refrain from trying to tell me what a "fact" is—quite properly, on the grounds that it cannot be expressed in language—in which case, by resorting to the device of quotation marks, you have conveyed *nothing* and we might as well dispense with any further references to "facts." Or (2), , you can tell me how much like a fact a "fact" is—you can say, "It's that which makes facts possible"—but then, if these words are able to help me, presumably it is because you have *said* what a "fact" is. Now I can follow what you mean by your neologism "fact" because you've given it a meaning. But then don't go on to tell me that what it means cannot be expressed in language. The standard response to this dilemma is to try (3) "It looks like I've just expressed what cannot be said in language, but I haven't, because what I have said is nonsense." I'm inclined to agree. But if it's nonsense, you've said nothing. We're back to (1).

The device of saying "strictly speaking" is more elegant: it allows one to effectively put quotation marks around the contrast term (the unstrictly spoken version of the item) without its being as conspicuous that the dilemma remains. Either (1) one has neglected to say what the (unstrictly spoken) term means, or (2) one is playing a shell game. Quotation marks and expressions like "strictly speaking" help to disguise the fundamental incoherence which lies at the heart of this way of trying to approach the *Tractatus*.[119] The commentator is constantly finding himself in the position

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[118] Eddy Zemach, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of the Mystical," *Review of Metaphysics* 18, no. 1: 43.

[119] In the service of attempts to circumvent the central exegetical puzzle of the work (namely, how one is to understand a book which consists of nonsense), there is another (far less interesting) way of employing the device of saying "strictly speaking" (and the related device of quotation marks) which is also to be found among commentators on the *Tractatus*. Instead of attributing to the work an ineffable doctrine, according to this strategy, one finds

of doing what he says cannot be done; namely, saying that which cannot be said. He is busily telling you in language what lies beyond the limits of language. His problem is a version of Descartes's; he wants to touch something with his mind that exceeds the grasp of ordinary thought. The commentator wants language to sidle up and get close to what it cannot encompass. He wants to be able to subtract what can be said "strictly speaking" from what can be said *(simpliciter)* and still have a remainder: what can be shown ("said") by means of nonsense. Then he wants to simply *say,* in sentences we can all understand, what it is that Wittgenstein's work is unable to say—and hence only shows. (Though often the commentator will also say that Wittgenstein's book assumes the remarkable form that it does because these things can *only* be shown through a very special structure of deep nonsense.) According to the commentator's theory, you can only encounter the limits of language by running up against them. His practice, however, testifies that he thinks you can refer to them without any trouble by using expressions like "the limits of language" (thereby apparently revealing the elaborate form of the *Tractatus* to be utterly incidental to its purpose).

On the standard reading of the *Tractatus,* a piece of elucidatory nonsense is unable to express a judgment—since it violates the logical conditions of judgment—but it is still able to serve up a candidate for judgment: something which we can affirm as a truth. The aim of the work, on this view, is to take us from a piece of nonsense to a positive insight into the nature of things. This reading depends critically on attributing to the *Tractatus* the following three ideas: (1) we can break the rules of logic,

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in the work a perverse mode of expression. One attributes to the *Tractatus* an idiosyncratic terminology according to which "that which can be said" is much narrower than that which can actually be said. Everything which "cannot be said" (according to this technical notion of that which can be said) is, technically speaking, "nonsense" (according to a purely technical and extraordinarily broad notion of what counts as nonsense). According to this way of employing the device, "what cannot be said" is only unsayable according to a strict notion of what is sayable; unstrictly speaking, it is perfectly expressible in language (although, according to the work's own peculiar strict way of speaking, these instances of language-use count as "nonsense"). So the *Tractatus* actually says lots of things, but those things do not count as instances of "saying" in the work's own narrower sense of this word. Unlike the Geach/Hacker reading (which seeks to distinguish between that which can be expressed in language and that which is ineffable), this exegetical strategy renders the distinction between what can and what cannot be said a mere *façon de parler*—it draws the distinction firmly within language. It is worth distinguishing these two ways of employing the device of saying something is "strictly speaking" nonsense (and related devices) because a number of commentators mask the incoherence of the ineffability interpretation by waffling between these two ways of employing the device.

thereby producing a kind of deep nonsense; (2) nonsense is able to convey (or "convey") thoughts (or "thoughts"); and (3) there are (ineffable) "truths" which the logical structure of language bars us from being able to say. These three ideas are then combined into the following teaching: breaking the (syntactical) rules of logic in the right way allows us to show the unsayable—by running up against the limits of language, we are able to "convey" what lies beyond these limits.

"Running up against the limits of language? Language is, after all, not a cage."[120] The standard reading of the *Tractatus* has the teaching of the work inside out. Throwing away the ladder means throwing away the idea that language is a cage and that the rules of logic form its bars.

8) The Method of the *Tractatus*

In the preface to the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein writes: *"Dieses Buch . . . ist also kein Lehrbuch."* This book is not a catechism, a doctrinal text. It is not a work which propounds a doctrine. Later he says, "Philosophy is not a body of doctrine [*Lehre*] but an activity" (§4.112). He then immediately goes on to say what kind of an activity philosophy is: one of elucidation. Both early and late, Wittgenstein will insist that the difficulty of his work is tied to the fact that he is not putting forward *theses.*[121] But if the work does not culminate in a conclusion about the nature of logic, how then does it effect illumination? What are we supposed to do with the nonsense the *Tractatus* presents us with?

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[120] Wittgenstein, *Conversations with the Vienna Circle,* recorded by Friedrich Waismann (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 117. This remark is often read as repudiating a doctrine (about the limits of logic) which Wittgenstein formerly propounded in the *Tractatus* and the "Lecture on Ethics." Such a construal of this remark misses the transitional character of early Wittgenstein's employment of talk about "the limits of language." I do not take this remark to declare a shift in doctrine but rather an explicit acknowledgment of the way in which the *Tractatus*'s employment of the locution "the limits of language" represents a form of talk that the reader (or listener) is to be brought to recognize as nonsensical; in the end, such talk is to be thrown away.

[121] Here are some representative instances:

> I don't try to make you *believe* something you *don't* believe, but to *do* something you won't do. (Quoted by R. Rhees in *Discussions of Wittgenstein* [London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1970], 43.)
>
> You are inclined to put our difference in one way, as a difference of *opinion*. But I am not trying to persuade you to change your opinion. . . . If there is an opinion involved, my only opinion is that this investigation is immensely important and very much *against the grain*. (*Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 103)

Toward the end of "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity," Putnam writes:

> If it makes no sense to say or think that we have discovered that . . . [logic] is *wrong,* then it also makes no sense to offer a reason for thinking it is not wrong. A reason for thinking . . . [logic] is not wrong is a reason which excludes nothing. Trying to justify . . . [logic] is like trying to say that whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent; in both cases, it only looks as if something is being ruled out or avoided.[122]

Putnam here connects the topic of this paper with the question of how one should interpret the closing line of the *Tractatus.* Putnam suggests that line should not be read as debarring us from being able to say something. The contrapositive of that line is 'whereof one may speak, thereof one can speak.'[123] Putnam's reading of that line suggests that if we are faced with a silence at the end of the book, this is simply because (although there has been a great deal of noise) nothing has been said.[124] But proponents of the standard reading of the *Tractatus* take this silence to be one that guards the ineffable. They hear in this line (which speaks of silence) the declaration of a substantive thesis: there are certain things which *cannot* be said, and concerning them, we *must* remain silent.[125] At one point in the *Investigations*—in the middle of another discussion

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[122] I have excerpted this passage to disguise the fact that Putnam is here (and elsewhere in the paper) concerned both specifically with logical necessity and more generally with *mathematical* necessity. I wish to avoid the latter topic because the focus of this paper would vanish without a trace if it had to juggle the very different stories about arithmetic (not to go any further) that are told by Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*—the first and the third of whom wish to draw a distinction between logic and arithmetic. The later Wittgenstein, in turn, is concerned to distinguish (more carefully than Putnam perhaps suggests) between two different notions of logic: (1) a mathematical notion (logic as a "calculus" in which proofs are carried out) and (2) a successor to the Tractarian notion of "the logic of our language" (for which he increasingly comes to favor the term "grammar"). It is the latter which is at issue in the quotations to be found in the endnotes of this paper. Therefore, insofar as Wittgenstein in his later writing wishes to sharply distinguish (2) from (1), he continues to insist upon a notion of logic which is neither a branch of mathematics nor a quasi-mathematical calculus.

[123] This is obscured by the Pears and McGuinness translation, which introduces the idea that there is something which "we must *pass over* in silence."

[124] This is the topic of my "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" in *The Senses of Stanley Cavell,* ed. R. Fleming and M. Payne (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1989).

[125] The tendency is for commentators to equivocate furiously on just how unsayable the unsayable is. It is not uncommon to find an author of an essay on the *Tractatus* trying to have it both ways. He will alternate between the language of necessity and that of volition, suggesting both (1) that these things are *absolutely* unsayable and (2) that there is room for choice in the matter and the enlightened reader is the one who *remains* silent—he exhibits

about things which cannot be stated in language—Wittgenstein formulates the task of philosophy as follows: "The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do" (§374).

Wittgenstein says in our epigraph that what we wind up with when we try to draw a limit to thought is not deep nonsense but rather *einfach Unsinn—simply nonsense*. Frege's word for a mock thought is a *Scheingedanke*. Both Frege's and Wittgenstein's word for a pseudo-proposition is a *Scheinsatz*—a mock proposition. A mock proposition is not just not "strictly speaking" a proposition; it is not a kind of a proposition any more than stage thunder is a kind of thunder.[126] A philosophical elucidation aims to show us that the "propositions" we come out with in philosophy are not propositions: the nonsense we are attracted to is plain unvarnished nonsense—words that do not express thoughts.

The significance for Wittgenstein of Frege's exercise in elucidation can be put as follows: it enables us to come to see, once we peel off all the layers of the onion, that there is no "it" which has been proposed as the content of the thought experiment. In a sense, we come to see that there is no thought experiment. All that we are left with is the realization that we were subject to an illusion of thought. It becomes the mark of a successful philosophical elucidation for Wittgenstein—as for Kant—that it bring its interlocutor to the point where he can recognize the illusion to which he is subject *as* an illusion. For Wittgenstein, however—unlike for Kant—this means that a philosophical work which is self-conscious about its method will have to abandon the form of the treatise.[127]

To say that a philosophical work consists of elucidations is to say that it must assume the structure of an onion. Frege's thought experiment is an example of a philosophical meditation which exhibits this structure. What happens is not that we succeed in conceiving of an extraordinary possibility (logically alien thought) and then judge "it" to be impossible. Rather, what happens—if the elucidation succeeds in its aim—is that we are drawn into an illusion of occupying a certain sort of perspective; call

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his status (as one who has been enlightened by the text) by *passing over* these things in silence instead of speaking of them.

[126] "We are inclined to say we *can't* . . . think something. . . . To say that something is 'logically impossible' sounds like a proposition. . . . [W]e make the mistake of thinking this is a proposition, though it is not. . . . It is misleading to use the word 'can't'. . . . We should say, 'It has no sense to say. . . .'" (*Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1930–1932*, ed. Desmond Lee [Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980], 98).

[127] See my "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein and Nonsense" in *Pursuits of Reason*, eds. Ted Cohen, Paul Guyer, and Hilary Putnam (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1992) for further discussion of this point.

it the Cartesian perspective. From this perspective, we take ourselves to be able to survey the possibilities which undergird how things are with us, holding our necessities in place.[128] From this perspective, we contemplate the laws of logic as they are, as well as the possibility of their being otherwise. We take ourselves to be occupying a perspective from which we can view the laws of logic from sideways on.[129] The only "insight" the work imparts, therefore, is one about the reader himself: that he is prone to such illusions.

This illusion of perspective is engendered through an illusion of sense. We imagine ourselves to be making sense of the words in which the thought experiment is couched, when no sense (as yet) has been made. The *Tractatus*'s way of putting this (in §5.4733) is to say that if a sentence "has no sense, that can only be because we have failed to give a *meaning* to some of its constituent parts. (Even if we believe that we have done so.)" The problem is that we do believe that we have given a meaning to all of the sentence's constituent parts.[130] We think nonsense is produced not by a failure on our part, but by a failure on the sentence's part. We think the problem lies (when we contemplate "the possibility of logically alien thought") not with the absence of meaning (in our failing to mean anything with these words at all) but with the senses the words already have—senses which the words bring with them into this flawed thought. We think the thought is flawed because the senses of its parts are incompatible ("illogical" and "thought," "private" and "language"): they clash with one another. They fail to add up to a thought. So we feel our words are attempting to think a logically impossible thought—and that this involves a kind of impossibility of a higher order than ordinary impossibility.[131] But Wittgenstein's teaching is that the problem lies not

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[128] The *Tractatus* is standardly read as simply underwriting the view from this perspective. For an incisive criticism of the standard reading, see Diamond, op. cit., chap. 6.

[129] I am borrowing a phrase of John McDowell's here; see his John Locke Lectures, op. cit.; and "Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following" in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule,* eds. S. Holtzman and C. Leich (London: Routledge Keagan Paul, 1981), 150.

[130] To properly discuss why Wittgenstein is committed to thinking that we are confused here (when we think we can identify the logical parts of a piece of nonsense) would take us too far afield. Such a discussion would require establishing the importance for the *Tractatus* of a very strong version of Frege's context principle (a word has meaning only in the context of a meaningful proposition) as it is developed in §§3.3–3.327.

[131] Wittgenstein:

> The difficulty is in using the word "can" in different ways, as "physically possible" and as "making no sense to say. . . ." The logical impossibility of fitting the two pieces seems of the same order as the physical impossibility, only more impossible! (*Wittgenstein's Lec-*

in the words (we could find a use for them), but in our confused relation to the words: in our experiencing ourselves as meaning something definite by them, yet also feeling that what we take ourselves to be meaning with the words makes no sense. We are confused about what it is we want to say, and we project our confusion onto the linguistic string. Then we look at the linguistic string and imagine we discover what *it* is trying to say. We want to say to the string, "We know what you mean, but 'it' cannot be said." The incoherence of our desires with respect to the sentence—wishing to both mean and not mean something with it—is seen by us as an incoherence in what the words want to be saying (if only it were something sayable). We displace our desire onto the words and see them as *aspiring* to say something they never quite succeed in saying (because, we tell ourselves, "it" cannot be said). We account for the confusion these words engender in us by discovering in the words a hopelessly flawed sense.

The heart of the Tractarian conception of logic is to be found in the remark that "we cannot make mistakes in logic" (§5.473). The burden of the *Tractatus*—and much of Wittgenstein's later writing—is to try to show us that the idea that we can violate the logical syntax of language rests upon a confused conception of "the logical structure of thought"[132]— that there is no distinction to be drawn between deep nonsense and mere nonsense.[133] "Everything which is possible in logic is also permitted" (§5.473). If a sentence is nonsense, this is not because *it* is trying but failing to make sense (by breaking a rule of logic), but because *we* have failed to make sense with it.[134] The *Tractatus* puts it like this: "The

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tures: Cambridge, 1932–1935,* ed. Alice Ambrose [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979], 146)

[132] See Diamond, op. cit., chap. 3, for an excellent discussion of this point.

[133] "The task will be to show that there is in fact no difference between these two cases of nonsense, though there is a psychological distinction in that we are inclined to say the one and be puzzled by it and not the other. We constantly hover between regarding it as sense and nonsense, and hence the trouble arises." (From unpublished notes taken by Margaret Macdonald, Michaelmas, 1935; quoted by Diamond, op. cit., 107.)

[134] This is a pervasive theme of the interpretation of Wittgenstein developed in Stanley Cavell's *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979):

"Not saying anything" is one way philosophers do not know what they mean. In this case it is not that they mean something *other* than they say, but that they do not see that they mean *nothing* (that *they* mean nothing, not that their statements mean nothing, are nonsense). (210)

[Wittgenstein] asks us to look again at . . . [a philosophical] utterance, in particular, to be suspicious of its insistence. We are, one might say, asked to step back from our conviction that this *must* be an assertion . . . and incline ourselves to suppose that someone has

sentence is nonsensical because we have failed to make an arbitrary determination of sense, not because the symbol is in itself unpermissible" (§5.473). The idea that there are illegitimately constructed propositions[135] rests upon a misunderstanding of the logic of our language.[136] Indeed, one of the most important continuities between early and late Wittgenstein lies in his attack on the idea of a hopelessly flawed sense[137]—the idea which gives rise to the illusion that we can occupy the Cartesian perspective. In the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein writes, "We cannot give a sign the wrong sense" (5.4732). In the *Investigations:* "When a sentence is called senseless, it is not as it were its sense that is senseless" (§500).[138] This does not mean that we *cannot* give these words a sense but only that we have (as yet) failed to do so.[139]

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here been prompted to insistent emptiness, to mean something incoherently. . . . This is not the same as trying to mean something incoherent. (336)

[135] See §5.4733:

Frege says: Every legitimately constructed proposition must have a sense; and I say: Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and if it has no sense this *can only be* because we have failed to give meaning to its parts [my emphasis].

[136] We can now see how the second paragraph of the preface of the *Tractatus* is tied to the subsequent two paragraphs (which form our epigraph): "the problems of philosophy" which the book deals with depend upon a "misunderstanding of the logic of our language"—one which requires that we be able to break the rules of the logic of our language and thereby draw a limit to logical thought.

[137] This is a particularly pervasive topic of *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics* (for example, see 184: "Don't imagine a sort of logical collision," 243: "There is only one thing that can be wrong with the meaning of a word, and that is that it is unnatural," etc.) as well as of *Cambridge Lectures, 1932–35* (see especially 138–146).

[138] This passage derives from *Philosophical Grammar* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 130:

But it isn't as it were their sense that is senseless; they are excluded from our language like some arbitrary noise, and the reason for their *explicit* exclusion can only be that *we are tempted* to confuse them with a sentence of our language.

A proper understanding of this region of Wittgenstein's thought tells as much against standard readings of his later conception of nonsense (as resulting from violations of grammar) as it does against a standard reading of his early conception (as resulting from violations of logical syntax).

[139] Putnam points to these features of Wittgenstein's conception of nonsense in a late passage in "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity." Citing a passage of Wittgenstein's, he invokes the example of riddles:

Concerning such riddles, Wittgenstein says that we are able to give them a sense only after we know the solution; the solution bestows a sense on the riddle-question. This seems right. . . .

A question may not have a sense . . . until an "answer" gives it a sense, . . . I want to suggest that, in the same way, saying that logic may be "revised" does not have a sense, and will never have a sense, unless some concrete piece of theory building or applying *gives* it a sense.

In the end, however, the snake bites its own tail. Our guiding idea—the idea that "we cannot make mistakes in logic"—turns out itself to be a piece of nonsense. For if the sentence "we *can* make mistakes in logic" turns out to be nonsense, then so does its denial. But in order to make sense of either of these sentences we have to make sense of "the possibility of illogical thought." Each rung of the ladder depends on its predecessors for support. The collapse of one rung triggers the collapse of the next. We are initiated into a structure of thought which is designed to undermine itself. The *Tractatus* takes the (illusory) structure of the problematic of the logical aliens to be paradigmatic of the "structure" of philosophical confusion generally and takes its elucidatory burden to be illustrative of the burden of philosophical work generally. The aim is not to take us from a piece of deep nonsense to a deep insight into the nature of things, but from a piece of apparently deep nonsense to the dissolution of the *appearance* of depth. This brings us to a second important continuity in Wittgenstein's work—his conception of the aim of philosophy. In the *Investigations,* he writes, "My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is undisguised nonsense" (§464). In the *Tractatus:*

> My propositions *serve as elucidations* in the following way: anyone who *understands me* eventually *recognizes them as nonsensical,* when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it) [My emphases] (§6.54).

Wittgenstein does not ask his reader here to "grasp" his "thoughts." He does not call upon the reader to understand his *sentences* but to understand *him;* namely, the author and the kind of activity in which he is engaged—one of elucidation.[140] He also tells us how these sentences serve

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Putnam acknowledges a debt here to Cora Diamond's "Riddles and Anselm's Riddle" (*The Realistic Spirit,* chap. 11) both for drawing the (unpublished) Wittgenstein passage in question to his attention (quoted by Diamond on 267) and for her discussion of it.

[140] Janik and Toulmin (in the German edition of their book *Wittgenstein's Wien* [Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1984], 269) point out that §6.54 is careful to say ". . . he who understands *me . . .*" (rather than ". . . he who understands *them* [i.e., my propositions] . . ."). They explain that this is a clear and scrupulous "terminological hint" on Wittgenstein's part: We cannot understand the sentences of the book since they are nonsense. We can only understand the author. Bravo! But then, in their next sentence, they write: "As soon as the *sense* of these aphorisms has been *grasped* they are no longer necessary" [my emphases]. This renders Wittgenstein's "terminological" scruples completely mysterious. Fortunately, Cora Diamond also notices his scrupulousness. She goes on to explore the implied distinction between understanding a sentence (grasping a sense) and understanding an utterer of nonsense (participating in an illusion of sense). See Cora Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination and the

as elucidations: by enabling us to recognize them *as* nonsense. One does not reach the end by arriving at the last page, but by arriving at a certain point in an activity—the point when the elucidation has served its purpose: when the illusion of sense is exploded from within and one has arrived at the center of the onion.

The preface and the concluding sections of the *Tractatus* form the *frame* of the text. It is there that Wittgenstein provides us with instructions for how to read what we find in the *body* of the text. In the preface, Wittgenstein tells us that the idea that we can form thoughts about the limits of thought is *simply nonsense*. The book starts with a *warning* to the effect that a certain kind of enterprise—one of attempting to draw a limit to thought—leads to plain nonsense. In the body of the text, we are offered (what appears to be) a doctrine about "the limits of thought." With the aid of this doctrine, we imagine ourselves to be able to both draw these limits and see beyond them. At the conclusion of the book, we are told that the author's elucidations have succeeded only if we recognize what we find in the body of the text to be (simply) nonsense. The sign that we have understood *the author* (as opposed to the body) of the work is that we can throw the ladder up which we have climbed away. That is to say, we have finished the work, and the work is finished with us, when we are able to simply *throw* the sentences in the body of the work—sentences about "the limits of language" and the unsayable things which lie beyond them—*away*.[141]

To read the work correctly we need to hold onto something and throw something away. What we hold onto is the frame of the text—the text's instructions for how to read it and when to throw it away. What we "eventually" throw away is the body of the text—its mock doctrine. The proponents of the standard interpretation opt for the opposite procedure: they cling firmly to what they find in the body of the text and throw away the warnings and instructions offered in the frame. They peel far enough down into the onion to see that the sentences they are attracted to *are* nonsense, but they still want to hold onto what (they imagine) the nonsense is trying to say. They conclude that the Tractarian onion must have a pit in the middle: an "insight" into the *truth* of certain deep matters—even

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Method of the *Tractatus*" in *Wiener Reihe: Themen der Philosophie,* Band 5, eds. R. Heinrich and H. Vetter (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1990). Also included in *The New Wittgenstein,* eds. A. Crary and R. Read (New York: Routledge, 2000), 149–173.

[141] I explore what this involves in more detail in my "Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder" in *The Yale Review,* 79, no. 3.

though, strictly speaking, this truth cannot be put into language. Wittgenstein's aim is to enable us to recognize that there is no ineffable "it"—the onion has no pit. One is simply left with what one is left with after one has peeled away all the layers of an onion.

9) A Parable

Certain general features of the *Tractatus*'s mode of elucidation are reflected in the following Jewish tale which dates from the beginning of this century.[142] The parable, like the *Tractatus,* has an ethical point.

A Pole and a Jew are sitting in a train, facing each other. The Pole shifts nervously, watching the Jew all the time; something is irritating him. Finally, unable to restrain himself any longer, he addresses the Jew: "Tell me if you would, please, sir, how do you Jews carry it off? It's not that I'm anti-Semitic; but, I must confess, I find you Jews terribly perplexing. I mean, I simply cannot understand how you do it. I simply want to know: How do you succeed in extracting from people everything they have down to their last coin and thereby accumulating your vast wealth? What is your secret?"

The Jew pauses for a moment and then responds, "Very well. I will tell you." A second pause. "But it would not be right for me to divulge such a secret for nothing. First, you must give me five zloty." After receiving the required amount, the Jew begins, "First, you take a dead fish; you cut off its head and put its entrails in a glass of water. Then, around midnight, when the moon is full, you must bury the glass in a churchyard. . . ."

"And," interrupts the Pole, "if I do all this, will I become rich?"

"Not so quickly," replies the Jew, "this is not all you must do; but, if you wish me to continue, you must first pay me another five zloty." After receiving more money, the Jew continues in a similar vein.

Soon afterwards, the Pole again interrupts, and before continuing, the Jew again demands more money. And so on and so on, until all of a sudden the Pole explodes in fury: "You rascal, I see what it is you are aiming at; there is no secret at the bottom of this at all."

"That," replies the Jew, as he returns the Pole his money, "*is* the secret."

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[142] My attention was first drawn to this parable by Slavoj Žižek. His interpretation of it is presented in the context of a discussion of Hegel and Lacan; see his *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 64–65.

10) A Tractarian Midrash

The Pole has a problem. He is perplexed about Jews. He desires to possess the Jew's secret. His perplexity will be relieved, he imagines, only if the Jew will disclose his secret. The Pole has a clear picture of the form which the solution to his problem must assume: the Jew must provide him with *knowledge*. The Pole pictures this knowledge as both precious and hidden. Beyond this, the Pole has no clear conception of what such knowledge is like, other than that it is something he does not understand. All he knows for sure about this knowledge is that he wants it. The Jew engages the Pole's desire by entering into his picture of the form which he imagines his satisfaction must assume. The Jew, therefore, begins by charging the Pole money and urging him to look in the direction he already wishes to attend. But the Jew's delivery on his promise to relieve the Pole of his craving for knowledge lies not *in* any of the bits of secret doctrine which the Jew imparts to his listener but rather *through* the activity by which he succeeds in capturing the listener's desire for such doctrine. The Pole is relieved of his craving (for the Jew's secret doctrine) when he recognizes that this doctrine (to which he is so powerfully attracted) cannot satisfy him. It cannot satisfy him because there is no such doctrine: the secret is that there is no secret.

The parable ends by recording the Jew's final gesture and final words. We are told nothing concerning the Pole's response to them. His perplexities about Jews may persist and continue to kindle his craving for knowledge. The Pole will find relief from this craving only when he is relieved of the illusion that he will be satisfied by (Jewish) knowledge. He will be relieved of his perplexity about Jews—and the lesson will be complete—when he recognizes that the source of his attraction to Jewish doctrine has nothing to do with Jews and everything to do with himself.

What Descartes Ought to Have Thought about Modality

A. W. Moore

Jonathan Bennett wrote two commentaries on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason: Kant's Analytic* and *Kant's Dialectic.* In the preface to the latter he referred back to a review of the former: "I continue to be," he wrote, "in the words of an unhappy reviewer of my earlier work, 'one of those commentators who are more interested in what Kant ought to have thought than in what he actually did think.'"[1] Probably you, like me, find it hard not to sympathize both with Bennett and with his unhappy reviewer. What an author ought to have thought must surely be of interest to any historian of philosophy (especially if we accede to Bernard Williams's distinction between a historian of philosophy and a historian of ideas[2]). In particular, what an author ought to have thought is of critical interest when the author was involved in some fundamental error that we now want to avoid. This is quite apart from the fact, famously noted by Kant himself, that "it is not at all unusual to find that we understand [an author] even better than he understood himself, since he may not have determined his concept sufficiently and hence sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention."[3] To that extent our sympathy must lie with Bennett. But of course, determining what an author ought to

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[1] Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), vii.

[2] See Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry* (London: Harmondsworth, 1992), 9, where he writes, "the history of ideas is history before it is philosophy, while with the history of philosophy it is the other way round."

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* eds. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A314/B370.

have thought about some matter, insofar as it is a historical exercise, had better be constrained in some significant way by determining what the author actually did think about the matter: the former had better be consonant with the crux of the latter, or serviceable in making sense of the latter, or something along those lines. Otherwise determining what the author ought to have thought about this matter simply reduces to determining what it is right to think about it, and the author himself is liable to drop out as irrelevant. So the unhappy reviewer can at least be said to have signaled the correct starting point. And *this* is quite apart from the fact that subordinating what an author actually did think to what he ought to have thought runs the very real risk of producing history that is anachronistic and complacent, far less of a challenge to contemporary presuppositions than any worthwhile history of philosophy should be.

I think these issues are brought into particularly sharp relief by the main focus of the first section of James Conant's magnificent and endlessly thought-provoking essay.[4] I have in mind Descartes's treatment of necessity and possibility. It seems to me that, given various things that Descartes thinks about necessity and possibility, there are various other things that he ought to think about them but does not or ought not to think about them but does. My aim is to disentangle these.

Descartes understands by the possible what, in his view, everyone commonly understands by the possible, "namely 'whatever does not conflict with our human concepts.'"[5] There are various things that might be intended here. Even given some particular way of construing what sort of conflict is involved, and of identifying our human concepts, there is an issue about whether "is possible" is to be understood as *synonymous* with "does not conflict with our human concepts." An alternative would be a quasi-realist view, of the sort championed by Simon Blackburn, whereby a statement of possibility would express, rather than report, some lack of conflict between a given proposition and our human concepts.[6] And even if some kind of synonymy is intended, there is an addi-

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[4] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*," this volume, 27–100.

[5] René Descartes, "Second Set of Replies," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* vol. 2, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 107. Strictly speaking, Descartes commits himself only to a hypothetical: *if* this is how the possible is understood, then such and such consequences accrue. The context, however, makes clear that he has no stake in understanding the possible in any other way.

[6] See Simon Blackburn, "Morals and Modals," in *Essays in Quasi-Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 52–74.

tional issue about whether the kind of synonymy in question is weak enough to allow the two expressions to be subject to different semantic behavior in certain semantic contexts.[7] On any interpretation, however, it seems that the impossibility of one plus two's being anything other than three (say) ensures that not even God could make one plus two anything other than three. For if it conflicts with our human concepts that one plus two should *be* anything other than three, then surely it conflicts with our human concepts that God should *make* it anything other than three. And indeed we do find Descartes saying, in line with this, "I have never judged that something could not be made by [God] *except* on the grounds that there would be a contradiction in my perceiving it distinctly."[8]

So far, you might think, so straightforward. Not so. We also find Descartes conveying the very opposite idea in some correspondence. Most notably we find him saying the following, in a letter to Arnauld:

> I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth . . . depends on his omnipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make [it] . . . that one and two should not be three. I merely say that he has given me such a mind that I cannot conceive . . . an aggregate of one and two which is not three, and that such [a thing involves] a contradiction in my conception.[9]

My suggestion, bluntly, is that this is a lapse.[10] It seems to me that Descartes has actually thought something here which, in his own terms, he ought not to think: in Kant's words, he has thought "contrary to his own

[7] *Cf.* the stipulation whereby the name "Julius" refers to whoever invented the zip. This confers a kind of synonymy on the name "Julius" and the description "the inventor of the zip." Even so, these two expressions make a very different semantic contribution when inserted into the following context: "If Julius's grandfather had anticipated his grandchild's celebrated invention, then he would have been . . ." (See further, Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference,* ed. John McDowell [Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982], 50ff.)

[8] Descartes, "Sixth Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings,* vol. 2, 50, emphasis added.

[9] René Descartes, "Letter to Arnauld," in *The Correspondence,* vol. 3 of *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 359.

[10] Am I being too precipitate? Notice that Descartes is merely declining to say what I claim he should say; he is not denying it. Can this perhaps be attributed to a scholastic scruple of some kind? (I am indebted to Matthew Boyle for this suggestion.) I shall ignore this possibility: I shall presuppose the reading that is least conducive to my exegesis, the reading whereby Descartes's reason for declining to say what I claim he should say is that he takes it to be false. If this reading is not correct, then so much the better for my exegesis. If it *is* correct, then I have no choice but to see Descartes as involved in a lapse.

intention." Given Descartes's conception of necessity and possibility, I think that he should treat the claim that not even God can make one plus two anything other than three as being entirely of a piece with the claim that one plus two cannot be anything other than three.[11]

In saying this, I am in a kind of exegetical disagreement with Conant. This is not, *au fond*, a disagreement about how to interpret anything that Descartes says. It is rather a disagreement about how to apportion significance to various things that he says. Conant sees the quotation from the letter to Arnauld not as an aberration but as Descartes's fully considered view. He refers at one point to "Descartes's unabashed willingness to indulge in such . . . assertions [as that God could have made contradictories true together]."[12] And he suggests that Descartes's claim about the grounds on which he has judged things to be uncreatable by God, noted above, is a claim merely about his own repugnance at what he finds impossible; not a claim about some conclusion that he takes himself to have reached on the strength of "a clear and distinct perception of the positive limits of God's power."[13]

I disagree.[14] I see Descartes as acknowledging the existence of that which is absolutely impossible—"even," as Conant nicely says we cannot help adding, "for [God]."[15] What Descartes says in the letter to Arnauld is in conflict with this, and he should not, in my view, have said it.

There are two points that I need to make straightaway in mitigation of this seemingly cavalier stance. First, the letter to Arnauld is a comparatively isolated case. It is not unique (see, for example, the passage from the letter to Mesland that Conant cites[16]). But the aberrations are few. They are also, to the best of my knowledge, confined to correspondence. Furthermore, there is one exceedingly important case, to which I shall return at the end of the essay, in which Descartes not only says precisely what I think he should say, in contradistinction to these aberrations, but makes crucial capital out of his entitlement to do so.

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[11] In arriving at this view, I have been influenced by Jonathan Bennett's superb essay, to which I am much indebted. (Jonathan Bennett, "Descartes' Theory of Modality," *The Philosophical Review* 103, no. 4 [October 1994]: 639–667.) I am nevertheless less charitable to Descartes than Bennett is. In §VII of Bennett's essay, he tries but fails, in my view, to justify the circumspection.

[12] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 32n8.

[13] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 40n23.

[14] Or at least I disagree provided that "limits" is not understood in the sense of "limitations": see further below.

[15] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 31.

[16] Ibid.

The second point concerns a *de re/de dicto* contrast that is pivotal to this discussion. I have in mind the contrast between the two following claims.

(1) Given any proposition that conflicts with our human concepts, Descartes should say that not even God could make it true.
(2) Descartes should say that, given any proposition that conflicts with our human concepts, not even God could make it true.

These are rough formulations of the two claims, designed precisely to highlight the *de re/de dicto* contrast between them. The formulations blur some important details which a full exploration of these matters would need to take into account, and I shall say something both about these details and about their importance in the Appendix. For current purposes, however, these formulations of the two claims will suffice.

It is (1) that I want to defend.[17] I am *not* committed to (2). I see no harm in Descartes's denying that the sheer fact that a proposition conflicts with our human concepts is a bar to God's being able to make it true. For I see no harm in Descartes's denying that it conflicts with our human concepts that God should be able to do such a thing. But it is a different matter where God's making one plus two something other than three is concerned. Descartes cannot deny that it conflicts with our human concepts that God should do *that*. My claim, in line with (1), is that Descartes should be unabashed in saying that God could not do it.[18]

What then leads him astray? Well, no doubt one thing that leads him astray is this very contrast. The denial that a proposition's conflicting with our human concepts is itself a bar to God's being able to make the proposition true can readily issue in the denial, of a particular conflict between a particular proposition and our human concepts, that that conflict is a bar to God's making that proposition true. It is hard to separate these. There is something structurally analogous, and intimately related, in some of Descartes's thinking about indubitability. This too is something to which I shall return at the end of the essay, where I hope, at the same time, to cast light on how the separation is best effected.

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[17] Here already it is worth flagging a detail that has been blurred. I am construing the "should" in such a way that it is impervious to what grasp, if any, Descartes has of the conflict in question. There are alternative natural interpretations of the "should" whereby (1) is true only with respect to propositions whose conflict with our human concepts Descartes recognizes.

[18] See René Descartes, "Third Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings,* vol. 2, 25, for material that is highly pertinent to this *de re/de dicto* contrast.

Another factor in Descartes's being led astray is presumably a reluctance to declare anything to be beyond the power of God. But as far as this is concerned, he could and should have taken the same line as Aquinas in the lengthy passage from *Summa Theologia* that Conant quotes at the beginning of his essay.[19] He could and should have said that, even though it is impossible for God to make one plus two anything other than three, there remains a clear, reasonable, and substantive sense in which nothing at all is beyond the power of God; for there is a clear, reasonable, and substantive sense in which there is no such *thing* as one plus two's being anything other than three, the sense, namely, in which the domain of quantification consists of absolute possibilities. This is an appropriate domain of quantification in this context because the question of what is possible for a given being, granted its power, is appropriately restricted to what is possible in the first place. As Aquinas himself puts it, "power is said in reference to possible things."[20] When we say that God could not make one plus two anything other than three, we do not describe any limitation on the part of God then.[21] We make an *anthropocentric* claim. We advert to our own human concepts. We say that these concepts would be contradicted by God's making one plus two anything other than three.

Such, at any rate, seems to me the most robust and compelling account of these matters that is in accord with Descartes's core conception of necessity and possibility. But there are some natural concerns that arise about this. These concerns are in part exegetical and in part philosophical. I shall proceed to explore them.

The First Concern: This is a concern that will occur to anyone with even a moderate knowledge of Descartes's philosophy. In fact it is liable to occur to anyone who looks at the quotation from the letter to Arnauld. There we saw Descartes proclaim that "every basis of truth . . . depends on [God's] omnipotence." Does Descartes not famously insist that both the truth and the necessity of any necessary truth depend on God's free choice? In fact, is this not the non-negotiable premise of everything else that he has to say about necessity and possibility? How then can it be right to suggest that, on the most natural and coherent

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[19] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 28–29.

[20] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Cincinnati: Benzinger Brothers), pt. 1, question 25, art. 3.

[21] This is what I had in mind in n. 14.

development of his view, not even God could make one plus two un-equal to three? Surely we relinquish any entitlement to the claim still to be talking about "his" view if we say that.

Reply to the First Concern: Descartes does indeed insist that both the truth and the necessity of any necessary truth depend on God's free choice.[22] But this can readily be reconciled with the claim that not even God could make one plus two unequal to three—the point being that dependence here need not be understood in terms of the exclusion of possibilities. That one plus two is three, and that it is necessary that one plus two is three—in other words, that our human concepts conflict with one plus two's being anything other than three—can be regarded, for current purposes, as two data. Descartes's view is that, like every-thing else, they depend on God's free choice. The first holds because of how God has made the natural numbers; the second holds because of how God has made our human concepts. But we should not say that, in making the natural numbers thus, God has excluded other possibili-ties; nor that, in making our human concepts thus, God has prevented us from grasping other possibilities. *For there are no other possibilities.* To suggest that there are would simply be to violate the second datum: that it is necessary that one plus two is three.

Admittedly, in saying that x depends on y, one is committed to saying that, had y been different in certain critical respects, x would have been different too. But the first of these is not a simple reformulation of the second. And the second is irrelevant if y could not in fact have been dif-ferent in those critical respects (which would follow if x itself could not have been different). Thus the non-existence of a male barber who shaves all and only the men in his village who do not shave themselves depends on there being no man who both shaves himself and does not shave him-self; but this is not to say that, because there is no man who both shaves himself and does not shave himself, the possibility of a male barber who shaves all and only the non-self-shaving men in his village is unrealized. Or at least it is not to say this except insofar as the possibility in ques-tion is a harmlessly irrelevant epistemic possibility that has purchase only insofar as, and only for as long as, we have an imperfect grasp of the matter. (This is a possibility of a sort that has no less purchase, and no

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[22] René Descartes, "Sixth Set of Replies," in *Philosophical Writings,* vol. 2, 291.

more purchase, where God's decreeing the value of one plus two is concerned.)[23]

It is all a question of explanatory priority.[24] On Descartes's view, one plus two's being equal to three is explained by, but does not explain, God's decreeing that one plus two is equal to three—which is in fact no different from God's understanding that one plus two is equal to three.[25] Descartes takes the former to depend on the latter in just this sense.[26]

The Second Concern: In drawing the *de re*/*de dicto* contrast, I said that Descartes can allow for the possibility of God's making a proposition true even though that proposition conflicts with our human concepts.

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[23] Is the following an even better analogy: the reason why mermaids have fishes' tails is that we have decreed that this is what mermaids are like; but there is, even so, a sense in which we could not have decreed otherwise, because our decree would not then have concerned *mermaids?* I think not. This is because I do not think that this is the right account of how we relate to mermaids. Granted that it is necessary that mermaids have fishes' tails, then all that is explained by our decreeing that this is what mermaids are like is, not that this *is* what mermaids are like, but rather that we make use of the concept of a mermaid, or have introduced the concept of a mermaid, or some such. The difference between our decree, on my preferred conception of this matter, and God's decree, on a Cartesian conception of this matter, is that, in the former case, the decree and its content are answerable to the necessity concerned, at least insofar as there is an answerability in either direction; whereas in the latter case, it is the other way around.

[24] Some people would put this in terms of *grounding:* see Kit Fine, "The Question of Realism," *Philosophers' Imprint* 1 (2001): 1–30.

[25] See René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pt. 1, §23, 201.

[26] Descartes's view is in direct opposition to that of Suarez, which Conant discusses in nn. 6 and 7 of his essay. Suarez holds that God's understanding that one plus two is equal to three is explained by one plus two's being equal to three. A very interesting intermediate case, which Conant discusses in the third main section of his essay is that of Leibniz. Conant represents Leibniz as a fierce opponent of Descartes; and so he is, as the passage from Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics* that Conant quotes on page 50 makes clear. Leibniz denies, *contra* Descartes, that necessary truths depend on God's will. Why then do I describe Leibniz's case as an intermediate one? Well, as Conant notes (51), although Leibniz denies that necessary truths depend on God's will, he does not deny that they depend on God's understanding. (Descartes, as I intimated in the main text, rejects the very distinction between God's will and God's understanding.) And because Leibniz holds that necessary truths depend on God's understanding, it is Descartes rather than Suarez whom he follows on the issue of whether necessary truths would be true even if, *per impossibile,* God did not exist. He denies that they would: see, for example, G. W. Leibniz, "Monadology," in *Philosophical Writings,* ed. G. H. R. Parkinson and trans. Mary Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1973), §43, cf. §§44–46. Part of what makes this especially interesting in the present context is that it furnishes another example of how x can be said to depend on y even though x could not have been different in relevant critical respects.

Now this need not involve us in any error. God could change our human concepts so as to remove the conflict. But presumably He could also allow the conflict to remain. He *would* not do so, in Descartes's view. To do so would be contrary to His benevolence.[27] But He could. And if He did, then there would be a proposition which, though impossible—or rather, though impossible *for us*—was nevertheless true. But how can Descartes accede to this possibility without compromising what I have said he should say *de re*? How, for example, can he deny that there is such a thing as one plus two's being anything other three, if, as he now seems forced to concede, the impossibility of one plus two's being anything other than three is at most an impossibility *for us*—an impossibility that does not even preclude its truth?

Reply to the Second Concern: The first thing to note is that Descartes need not agree, and would not agree, that God could make a proposition true while allowing a conflict between that proposition and our human concepts to remain. For Descartes would deny that God could—not just that God would—do anything that was contrary to His benevolence.[28] But in any case, even if Descartes were to accede to such a possibility, this would not prevent his being resolute *de re*. The fact remains that it is *not* possible, in Cartesian terms, for one plus two to be anything other than three; and therefore it is not possible for God to make one plus two anything other than three. And "not possible" here does not need to be relativized. Descartes can say, as I have suggested he should say, that there is no such thing as one plus two's being anything other than three. This is nothing but a graphic way of adverting to the impossibilities in question, a way that removes whatever apparent threat they pose to God's omnipotence.[29]

The Third Concern: This is a concern that arises in connection with a family of views that are structurally similar to that which I am now attributing to Descartes. I have in mind meta-ethical views whereby unde-

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[27] See Descartes, "Fourth Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 2.

[28] Descartes, "Fourth Meditation," 37. On Conant's view, God's (necessary) benevolence creates untold difficulties for Descartes; see n. 21 of his essay. I take it to be another advantage of my exegesis that I see Descartes as more or less immune to such difficulties.

[29] It follows from this reply to the second concern that Descartes is at liberty to acknowledge an absolute impossibility. It does not follow that he is not at liberty to acknowledge relative impossibilities as well. In resisting (2) he would be acceding to just such relativity (as the second concern itself makes clear). That is fine. The situation here is not unlike the situation in which someone acknowledges both unrestricted and restricted quantification.

sirability stands to our "pro"-attitudes in a relation of conflict akin to that in which, on the Cartesian view, impossibility stands to our human concepts. The concern is this: any view of *this* kind does seem to entail a sort of relativism. For instance, it seems to entail that, had we not set such store by truthfulness, say, then we would not have had to deplore lying in the way in which, in fact—and quite rightly—we do. If it does entail this, what makes the ethical case different from the modal case?

Reply to the Third Concern: There are two contrasting points that might be made straightaway in response to this third concern. First, it is not clear, on reflection, that such meta-ethical views do entail any such relativism. Secondly, and conversely, I do not in fact need to deny that Descartes's view does.

As far as the first of these points is concerned, we can turn to the work of Simon Blackburn, who defends a meta-ethical view of just the kind in question.[30] Blackburn strenuously denies that what he defends is in any relevant sense relativistic.[31]

The second point involves a distinction of levels. I have denied that Descartes's view compromises the necessity of the proposition that one plus two is three. I have not denied that it compromises the necessity of the necessity of that proposition. For Descartes's view to entail relativism of the relevant sort would be for it to do the latter. There seems to be no obstacle to my conceding that it does indeed do the latter. There seems to be no obstacle, in other words, to my conceding that, on Descartes's view, had our human concepts been relevantly different, then we would have had to deny what we in fact rightly proclaim, the absolute impossibility of one plus two's being anything other than three.

I therefore appear to have an embarrassment of riches at this point: a choice between two quite distinct ways of sidestepping the third concern. Unfortunately, I am uncomfortable with both. Though Blackburn attempts to dissociate his own view from any relativism of the sort envisaged, I believe that he fails in his attempt: this is something that I have argued elsewhere.[32] Conversely, though I have not yet denied that Descartes's view entails relativism of the relevant sort, I do in fact want to deny it. For if a given proposition conflicts with our human concepts,

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[30] Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[31] Ibid., chap. 9 passim and 314.

[32] A. W. Moore, "Quasi-Realism and Relativism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65, no. 1 (July 2002): 150–156.

then so does the proposition that this proposition should *not* conflict with our human concepts: our human concepts give us no more of a grip on our human concepts' giving us a grip on one plus two's being anything other than three than they do on one plus two's being anything other than three. So I do, after all, need to confront the question of what pertinent difference there could be between the ethical case and the modal case. The third concern remains a live concern for me.

I have a response which echoes my response to the first concern. Descartes can simply deny that our human concepts could have been relevantly different. Thus let us grant that it is not only necessary that one plus two is three, but also necessarily necessary. Then, just as the natural numbers could not have been fashioned in such a way that one plus two was anything other than three, so too our human concepts could not have been fashioned in such a way that we had to reckon with the *possibility* of one plus two's being anything other than three. It seems hard to deny, on the other hand, that we could have had a different attitude toward truthfulness—or rather, more cautiously, it seems hard for a quasi-realist such as Blackburn to deny this. Anyone who sees the sort of connection between what is undesirable and our "pro"-attitudes that is envisaged here must, I would contend, acknowledge correspondingly different possibilities for what we should deplore.

The Fourth Concern: This harks back to the two previous concerns and my replies to them. There seems to be a tension within those two replies. Consider first my reply to the second concern and, in particular, my stance on the *de dicto* issue. I said that Descartes can allow for the possibility of God's making a proposition true even though that proposition conflicts with our human concepts. But I also said that Descartes cannot allow for the possibility of God's doing such a thing without removing the conflict, since that would be contrary to God's essential benevolence. How is this to be reconciled with my reply to the third concern? For in order to remove the conflict God would have to change our human concepts. But in my reply to the third concern, did I not have Descartes denying that our human concepts could be relevantly different?

Reply to the Fourth Concern: There is a very crude point that deserves to be made straightaway: it is simply not true that in order to remove the conflict in question, God would have to change our human concepts; for God could remove the conflict in question by banishing us

from the scene altogether. That said, I think there is an altogether more telling response that is available to the fourth concern, a response that would still be available even if our own presence on the scene were taken to be non-negotiable. This requires us once again to invoke a *de re/de dicto* contrast. The cardinal point in my reply to the third concern was essentially this: given any proposition that conflicts with our human concepts, Descartes should say that not even a change in those concepts could indicate how it might be true. The point that is relevant to my reply to the second concern is essentially this: Descartes should not say that, given any proposition that conflicts with our human concepts, not even a change in those concepts could indicate how it might be true. These two points are compatible.[33]

I retain my stance on (2) then. I agree with Conant when he insists that, for Descartes, God's power had better not be limited to "that which is comprehensible to minds such as ours,"[34]—provided that this is understood in a suitably *de dicto* way.[35] Claim (1) remains another matter. Descartes can still say, and in my view should say, that, given the incomprehensibility to minds such as ours of God's making one plus two anything other than three, it is impossible for Him to do such a thing. This is not to say that God's power of creation is somehow reined in by our power of comprehension. The point is simply that our power of comprehension indicates what the possibilities are: the possibilities, that is, "even for God."

I made two promises earlier about issues to which I would return. I said that I would discuss a case in which Descartes not only says precisely what I think he should say but does so in a way that is crucial for his own purposes. I also said that I would discuss something in his thinking about indubitability that is structurally analogous, and intimately related, to what I claim to find in his thinking about necessity. I can fulfill these two promises in tandem.

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[33] There is a third point that is worth noting here. There is a sense that ought to be acknowledged by everyone, even by the most resolute anti-Cartesian, in which differences in our concepts could certainly have involved our acknowledging necessities and possibilities other than those which we actually acknowledge. They could have involved our recognizing as necessary or as possible, not propositions which we actually recognize as unnecessary or impossible, but propositions which, given our actual conceptual repertoire, we cannot so much as entertain. Cf. in this connection the material from Locke that Conant discusses in his n. 25.

[34] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 32.

[35] The material in n. 33 indicates another, quite innocuous sense in which Conant is right to insist on this.

I begin with the analogy. There are many propositions that Descartes cannot doubt.[36] But this does not preclude his taking a critical step back and raising the following skeptical question: "Why should the sheer fact that I cannot doubt a proposition mean that it is true?"[37] So there is a contrast that is operative here that is not unlike the contrast between (1) and (2). Given any proposition that he cannot doubt, Descartes is impelled to say that it is true. But he is not impelled to say that, given any proposition that he cannot doubt, it is true—not *yet,* anyway. (Part of the project is to find something that *will* impel him to say this and thereby entitle him to say it.) As for the intimate relation to which I have referred, this resides in the fact that what makes certain propositions indubitable for Descartes is precisely that their falsity would conflict with our human concepts.

Descartes famously addresses his own skeptical question by invoking God's benevolence. But he cannot do this without availing himself of some of the indubitability that is at issue.[38] In particular, he needs to pass, in indubitable steps, from an assurance that he himself is thinking, to an assurance that he himself exists, to an assurance that God exists, to an assurance that nothing can occur except what God, in His benevolence, would allow to occur. It is when he takes the very first of these steps that he supplies the example to which I have been referring of his properly adhering to his own core conception of impossibility.

He does this near the beginning of the *Second Meditation*, when he is still toying with the skeptical possibility that there is, as he says, "a deceiver of supreme power" who is constantly deceiving him. "Let [the deceiver] deceive me as much as he can," writes Descartes, "he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something."[39] That seems to me to be just what Descartes should say. And it is vital to his project that he should be able to say it. On Conant's view, however, it appears to be an aberration. For if the deceiver really is "of supreme power," then why, for Conant's Descartes, should he *not* bring it about that Descartes is nothing even though he thinks that he is something? Surely, on Conant's view, Descartes is not entitled to rule out the possibility of an omnipotent being's bringing about an absurdity even as gross as this.

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[36] See Descartes, "Second Set of Replies," in *Philosophical Writings,* vol. 3, 103–104.

[37] See Descartes, "Third Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings,* vol. 3, 25.

[38] This is the so-called Cartesian Circle. I shall not pause to consider the extent to which it is a problem for Descartes. For an excellent discussion, see Williams, *Descartes,* 189–204.

[39] Descartes, "Second Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings,* vol. 2, 17.

Both Conant and I therefore seem forced to concede that Descartes sometimes speaks "contrary to his own intention." The difference is that what Conant is forced to treat as aberrant is a cornerstone of Descartes's entire edifice. If Descartes cannot even rule out the possibility of an omnipotent being's making him think that he is something while in fact he is nothing, then his project is in ruins. By contrast, there is no comparable cost, if indeed there is any cost at all, in Descartes's conceding, of any proposition that conflicts with our human concepts, that not even God could make it true.[40]

Appendix

I said that my formulations of (1) and (2) blur some important details. The purpose of this Appendix is to provide (partial) rectification.

The first thing to note is that the "could" in (2) does a kind of double duty. There is really a nested modality here. Claim (2) is to be understood as follows:

> (2*) Descartes should say that, necessarily, for any proposition p, if p conflicts with our human concepts, then necessarily, God does not make p true.

Claim (2) is a claim about how Descartes should say things *must* be. If it were not—if the first occurrence of "necessarily" in (2*) were omitted—then (2) would be too close to (1) for my purposes. The distinction between them would remain, but there would be no good reason for accepting either that could not be converted into a good reason for accepting the other.

But why does the first occurrence of "necessarily" not suffice? This is because of complications concerning God's benevolence. Descartes *should* say that, necessarily, for any proposition p, if p conflicts with our human concepts, then God does not make p true: it would be contrary to God's benevolence for Him to do otherwise. So if the second occurrence of "necessarily" were omitted, (2) would not capture the falsehood—as I take it to be—that, for Descartes, had there been differences in what conflicts with our human concepts, then there would have been corre-

sponding differences in God's power. Neither can the need for the second occurrence of "necessarily" be circumvented by inserting "actually" before "conflicts with our human concepts." That would once again leave (2) too close to (1) for my purposes.

These remarks signal the second important detail that needs to be noted. Since both "conflicts with our human concepts" and "necessarily" occur within the scope of "necessarily" in (2*), there is a question about the semantic behavior of such expressions in such contexts. In particular, do they behave "flexibly"—that is, in such a way as to be sensitive to what *would* conflict with our human concepts if we and our human concepts were different in various ways? Or do they behave "rigidly"—that is, in such a way as to be sensitive only to what *does* conflict with our human concepts, given how we and our human concepts actually are? (This was the sort of issue that I had in mind toward the beginning of this essay when I suggested that, even if "does not conflict with our human concepts" and "is possible" enjoy a kind of synonymy, there may nevertheless be semantic contexts in which the semantic behavior of one differs from the semantic behavior of the other.) Throughout this essay I have been presupposing that "conflicts with our human concepts" and its like behave flexibly, while "necessarily," "possibly," and their like behave rigidly. If there were no such difference in the semantic behavior of these expressions, then (2) would once again fail to capture the falsehood—as I take it to be—that, for Descartes, had there been differences in what conflicts with our human concepts, there would have been differences in the propositions that God can *actually* make true; that is to say there would have been differences in the propositions whose being made true by God does not *actually* conflict with our human concepts.

Note also that, given this difference in semantic behavior between the expressions in question, there is scope both to deny that (1) is necessary, which is a prerequisite (or something close to a prerequisite) of denying that (2) is true, and to maintain that (1) is nevertheless a priori.[41] This blocks another possible concern about my exegesis; namely, that I have no way of explaining how Descartes himself could join me in affirming (1), which my exegesis is presumably intended to allow, without thereby violating my denial of (2). I do have a way of explaining this. Inasmuch

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[41] Cf. the claim that Julius invented the zip, where "Julius" is understood in accord with the stipulation mentioned in n. 7. There is scope both to deny that this is necessary—Julius's parents might never have met—and to maintain that it is nevertheless a priori—no empirical evidence is required to assent to it.

as (1) is a priori, Descartes could have what in his own terms would count as a clear and distinct perception of its truth. This would not violate my denial of (2), because it would not require (1) to be necessary.

But let us now return to the idea that there is a nested modality in (2). If this is so, then has it not been misleading for me to insist all along that the contrast between (1) and (2) is a *de re*/*de dicto* contrast? Is it not rather, despite my response to the third concern, something more like the contrast between a necessity and a necessary necessity? No. For there is a nested modality in (1) too. The full import of (1) and (2), and the contrast between them, are perhaps clearest when they are formulated as follows:

> (1**) For any proposition *p*, if *p* conflicts with our human concepts, then Descartes should regard the following as a necessary truth: necessarily, God does not make *p* true.
>
> (2**) Descartes should regard the following as a necessary truth: for any proposition *p*, if *p* conflicts with our human concepts, then necessarily, God does not make *p* true.

Kant on Logic and the Laws of
the Understanding

Matthew Boyle

Like all of our powers [*Kräfte*], *the understanding* in particular is bound
in its acts [*Handlungen*] to rules we can investigate. . . . [T]he science that
contains these universal and necessary rules is a science merely of the
form of our understanding's cognition or of thinking. . . . Now this
science of the necessary laws of the understanding and of reason in
general, or, which is the same, of the mere form of thinking, we call *logic.*

—KANT, *JÄSCHE LOGIK,* §1 (9:11–13)[1]

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[1] Citations to Kant's works are to the volume and page number of the *Akademie Ausgabe*
(1902—), except in the case of the first *Critique,* where I follow the usual practice of giving
pagination as in the first ("A") and second ("B") editions. I use the following abbreviations
for other works by Kant:

DWL = *Dohna-Wundlacken Logik*
FS = *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren*
GS = *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*
JL = *Jäsche Logik*
KpV = *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*
MN = *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*
PM = *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*
R = *Reflexionen*
VM = *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik*
WL = *Wiener Logik*

I take the *Jäsche Logic* (compiled at Kant's request by Benjamin Jäsche from Kant's notes
for his logic lectures and possibly also from transcripts of those lectures) to be a generally
reliable indicator of Kant's views about logic, and I will treat it as such throughout this
essay; but I will also seek to show that the main elements of my interpretation are con-
firmed in Kant's published works or in other available transcripts of Kant's logic lectures
from the Critical period. Translations are my own but made with close consultation of the
translations listed in the bibliography. I have, however, sought to bring out, in a way that
contemporary translations often do not, the pervasiveness of the language of faculty psy-
chology in Kant's writing. Thus, I translate *Vermögen* as "faculty" rather than (more
blandly) as "capacity," *Kraft* as "power" rather than as "force," *Handlung* (when it is the

1. Conant on the "Kantian Conception of Logic"

One of the many thought-provoking ideas in Jim Conant's important paper "The Search for Logically Alien Thought" is a suggestion about how to understand Kant's contribution to the philosophy of logic.[2] On Conant's reading, Kant's conception of logic is innovative in that he holds that the science of logic must be sharply distinguished both from a metaphysical inquiry into the underlying structure of all real existence and from a psychological investigation of the laws that govern how our minds work.[3] It tells us neither about "the nature of reality" nor about "how human beings reason."[4] Rather, it articulates principles that are "constitutive of the possibility of thought,"[5] principles whose violation is impossible in a special and interesting sense. For these principles are not merely laws that *we human beings* cannot help but follow in our thinking; it is also not correct to say that *the world* is so constituted that these laws are never violated. They are inviolable in the deeper and more interesting sense that the ostensible idea of their failing to hold in fact represents no intelligible possibility whatsoever, but the mere illusion of a thought. This, Conant suggests, is what is at stake in Kant's characterization of logic as the science of "the mere form of thinking": this discipline is neither an empirical science of human thinking nor a non-empirical science concerned with a realm of supersensible truths that all sound thinking must respect. It is not a substantive body of cognition at all but merely a perspicuous articulation of what coherent thought itself must be, regardless of its content. Conant goes on to argue that this Kantian conception of logic persists as an important strand in Frege's thinking about logic and that this strand in Frege's thought is developed further by Wittgenstein.

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exercise of a *Kraft*) as "act" rather than as "action," etc. My grounds for these choices will become apparent below.

[2] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*," this volume, 27–100.

[3] Following Conant, I will use the phrase "Kant's conception of logic" to refer specifically to Kant's conception of what he calls "pure general logic," the part of logic that is said to be concerned with "the merely necessary rules of thought" and consequently to "abstract from all content of the understanding's cognition" (A54/B78). I will set aside the even more problematic topic of "transcendental logic," which does *not* abstract from all content of cognition but rather takes account of those features of this content that are themselves knowable a priori (cf. A55–7/B79–82). Much of what I say does, I believe, bear on the interpretation of this latter sort of logic, but I cannot explore its bearing here.

[4] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 57.

[5] Ibid., this volume, 57.

The Kantian claims about logic on which Conant focuses are well known. Indeed, they are so familiar that our sense of their distinctiveness has faded, and we are prone to follow Kant in speaking of logic as a "formal" discipline without considering what is at stake in this characterization. One of the great merits of Conant's paper, I think, is that it restores our sense of the profundity of the philosophical stakes here. Conant makes vivid how difficult it is to clarify what a genuinely "formal" science could be and how easy it is, while paying lip service to the idea that logic is concerned with the very form of coherent thought, to lapse into modes of thinking that treat logic as a substantive science concerned either with certain describable limits of human thinking or with the maximally general character of the world with which our thinking seeks to come to grips. I think Conant is exactly right to see Kant's reflections on logic as aiming to articulate an alternative to these two options, and I think he is right to identify Kant's characterization of logic as a formal science as the heart of his distinctive view.

There are, however, aspects of Kant's view of logic that I believe Conant's discussion understates, aspects that prompt questions about how near Kant's conception stands to the Fregean and Wittgensteinian conceptions of logic with which Conant compares it. My aim in this essay is to highlight some features of Kant's conception on logic that are *not* foregrounded in Conant's discussion, with a view to sharpening our sense of where more recent thinking about the nature of logic has followed Kant and where it has departed from him. My purpose in doing this, I should emphasize, is neither primarily to "set the record straight" about Kant nor to oppose the conception of logic that Conant calls "Kantian." It is rather to point out some resources in Kant's thinking for answering a question that naturally arises if we *accept* that logic is neither a study of the metaphysical nature of reality nor a branch of empirical psychology: the question "Well then, what *is* logic about?" Kant's answer, I believe, is that logic is concerned with a certain *power* of mind, the understanding—that it is in fact the *self-cognition* of this power. I want to say something about what these claims mean and how they set Kant's conception of logic apart from certain familiar post-Fregean views.

2. Two Puzzling Features of Kant's Conception of Logic

Conant draws attention to several features of Kant's conception of logic that look remarkably modern: his insistence on a distinction between

logic and psychology, his reliance on the notion of form in characterizing logic's special subject matter, his rejection of the idea that logic constitutes an "organon" of substantive cognition, and so on. There are, however, two other, equally prominent features of Kant's conception of logic that are liable to seem puzzling and alien to contemporary readers.

2.1. In the first place, there seems to be a curious ambivalence in Kant's view of the relation between logic and psychology. On the one hand, he famously complains that

> [s]ome logicians presuppose *psychological* principles in logic. But to bring these sorts of principles into logic is just as confused as drawing morality from life. If we were to draw our principles from psychology—that is, from observations of our understanding—we would merely see *how* thinking occurs and how it *is* under various subjective hindrances and conditions. This would lead to the cognition of merely *contingent* laws. But in logic it is not a question of *contingent* but of *necessary* rules; not of how we do think, but of how we should think. (JL 9:14)

Yet even as Kant insists that logic differs fundamentally from psychology, he persists in characterizing its subject matter by appeal to seemingly psychological notions. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for instance, he defines general logic as the "science of the rules of understanding in general" (A52/B76), where "the understanding" names a certain cognitive faculty, one of the two fundamental "stems" of our human cognitive power (A15/B29). This suggests that, although Kant takes the *mode* of logical inquiry to differ in important ways from that of psychology, he remains committed to the idea that the *topic* of logic is in some sense psychological: it is concerned, in its own characteristic way, with an aspect of our mind.

The link between Kant's conception of logic and his faculty psychology is even more explicit in the opening of the *Jäsche Logik,* a textbook compiled from Kant's logic lectures, with Kant's approval, by Benjamin Jäsche:

> Like all our powers [*Kräfte*], *the understanding* in particular is bound in its acts [*Handlungen*] by rules we can investigate. . . . For as sensibility is the faculty [*Vermögen*] of intuitions, so the understanding is the faculty for thinking, i.e., for bringing the representations of the senses under rules. . . . Now th[e] science of the necessary laws of the under-

standing and of reason in general, or, which is the same, of the mere form of thinking, we call *logic*. (JL §I, 9:11–12)

Readers familiar with the terminology of scholastic faculty psychology will recognize German-language versions of faculty-psychological notions strewn throughout this passage: logic is concerned with a certain "power" or "faculty" of our mind, a power that makes possible a specific kind of "act." Indeed, the very idea that thought has a "form" that can be distinguished from its "matter" is arguably an inheritance from scholastic philosophy.[6] Nor is the presence of this terminology due to Jäsche: similar language appears in Kant's own notes on logic and in student notes on Kant's logic lectures from the Critical period (cf. R1579 16:17, WL 24:790, DWL 24:693).

The central role that faculty-psychological concepts play in Kant's Critical philosophy is hardly news.[7] But the role of these concepts in Kant's characterization of logic presents a prima facie difficulty for any simple assimilation of his view of logic to the kind of radically non-psychological conception that has dominated post-Fregean philosophy. Influenced by Frege's famous polemic against psychologism in logic, modern writers have tended to assume that, although the laws of logic may have implications for how we should think, the subject matter of these laws is not fundamentally the mind but an abstract order of implication and exclusion holding among propositions. Kant's view, by contrast, seems to be that logic *is* fundamentally concerned with the mind, or at least with certain cognitive faculties: it is, fundamentally, a "a self-cognition [*Selbsterkenntniß*] of the understanding and of reason" (JL 9:14). He offers this characterization on the very same page on which he voices his scruples

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[6] Kant's appeal to faculty psychological notions in characterizing the subject matter of logic is not unusual for his time: early modern philosophers commonly characterized logic in such terms. Nevertheless, Kant's characterization is unusually systematic in two respects. First, whereas many early modern philosophers describe logic as a discipline that studies how to employ our faculty of reason *well,* Kant emphasizes that this science studies laws which are not merely advantageous for reason to follow in the pursuit of knowledge but grounded in the nature of the faculty of reason itself. Secondly—as will emerge in the rest of this essay—Kant makes unusually systematic use of faculty-psychological concepts such as *power, act, matter,* and *form* in his discussion of logic.

[7] It has, however, been a central aim of much recent Kant interpretation to detach Kant's philosophical insights from this framework. This, famously, was the project of P. F. Strawson, who set the agenda for a generation of scholarship when he declared Kant's a priori faculty psychology to be an "imaginary subject" from which the genuine insights of the first *Critique* must be disentangled. See P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1966).

about the introduction of psychological material into logic. So this is our first puzzle: How can Kant reject the introduction of psychological material into logic and yet characterize the subject matter of logic in this way?

2.2.   A second feature of Kant's view of logic that is liable to puzzle modern readers emerges when we consider the actual logical theory he accepted. This was of course traditional syllogistic logic, the logic that descended largely unchanged from Aristotle and that stood largely unchallenged for two millennia, until Frege revolutionized the subject. Kant famously remarked that nothing essential needs to be added to this logical theory, so that the task of logic "seems to all appearances to have been finished and completed" by Aristotle (Bviii).

Today, it is hard for us to read such remarks without feeling a little amused. The logic with which Kant was satisfied seems to us profoundly limited, a description of a mere fragment of the territory that logic should treat.[8] Moreover, its treatment of even this fragment seems strange and awkward. To mention just a few of the features that make it seem peculiar:

(1) *It focuses almost entirely on inferences involving "categorical" judgments of the form "All (some, no) As are (not) Bs."* Kant gives an account of inferences involving hypothetical and disjunctive judgments as well (A73–74/B98–99, JL 9:105–108), and he criticizes logicians who overlook these forms (B141), but his discussion of these topics is brief, and he does not treat such judgments as prompting a general study of logical connectives and their role in generating complex propositions from simple propositions. Almost all of his theoretical attention is given to the act of mind involved in a categorical judgment—an act in which a "subject concept" is supposed to be "determined" by some "predicate concept" (cf. A68–9/B93–4).

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[8] Objections to Kant's logic from a modern mathematical-logical standpoint date back to Gottlob Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (Breslau: W. Koebner, 1884), esp. §88; and Bertrand Russell, *The Philosophy of Leibniz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), esp. 15; and *The Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), esp. §434. For more recent presentations of the standard objections, see William Kneale and Martha Kneale, *The Development of Logic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 354–358; J. Michael Young, "Functions of Thought and the Synthesis of Intuitions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant,* ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 106; and Robert Hanna, "Kant's Theory of Judgment," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Winter 2010, ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/kant-judgment/.

(2) *It treats such categorical judgments as logically simple,* whereas we standardly treat them as complex propositions involving both truth-functional compounding and quantification (e.g., we regard *All As are Bs* as really of the form $(x)(Ax \rightarrow Bx)$). Kant's logical theory offers no treatment of propositions involving polyadic predication, multiple quantifiers, etc. He thus offers no systematic account of kinds of logical structure whose analysis has been central to the achievement of modern logic.[9]

(3) *It gives scant attention to singular judgments,* the sort we would schematize as *Fa* and which *we* regard as logically simple. Following a long tradition, Kant treats these as equivalent, for syllogistic purposes, to universal judgments, so that "Socrates is a man," for instance, is read in effect as "All Socrateses are men." He seems to hold that the difference between a universal and a singular judgment becomes significant only when we turn to "transcendental logic," which considers the understanding in its relation to sensibility (cf. A71/B96).

(4) *It takes a quite restrictive view of what counts as a proof.* Although Kant recognizes a category of "inferences of the understanding" which depend on only one premise, his view seems to be that these do not involve a substantive cognitive step but merely alter the "form" of an existing cognition (A303/B360, JL 9:115). The kind of inference that constitutes a proper "inference of reason" *(Vernunftschluß)* is syllogistic inference, in which there are exactly two premises, and the conclusion drawn from them is a third distinct judgment. Moreover, the judgments involved in a syllogism must be connected in a quite specific way: Kant holds that every genuine syllogism must be a "cognition of the necessity of a proposition through the subsumption of its condition under a given general rule" (JL 9:120). Consequently every genuine syllogism should be expressible in the form of a universal major premise plus some minor premise which states the fulfillment of a condition for that rule's application (A304/B360–361, JL 9:126).[10]

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[9] Michael Friedman has forcefully argued, however, that Kant does implicitly suggest a view of some aspects of this structure, not in his discussion of logic but in his comments on the nature of mathematical proof. See Michael Friedman, *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), esp. chap. 1.

[10] This leads Kant to suggest at one point that hypothetical syllogisms are not genuine proofs and hence not proper syllogisms at all (JL 9:129). His reason seems to be that their hypothetical premise does not present the *rule* according to which its consequent follows from

This is hardly a complete list of the ways in which Kant's logic looks odd from our standpoint, but it should be enough to bring out why his approach can feel cramped and unnatural to people versed in post-Fregean logic. Moreover, many of Kant's reasons for accepting these strictures on his logical theory will not strike a modern reader as properly "logical" in character. Why, for instance, should we draw a distinction of principle between one-premise inferences and multi-premise inferences? Why should we regard the distinction between categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive judgments as giving a complete specification of the forms of "relations of thinking in judgment" (A73/B98) when other forms of truth-functional combination are clearly possible? Kant's reasons for these claims, to the extent that his gives any, seem to trace not to considerations about how best to capture general patterns of inference that lead from truth to truth but to certain psychological or epistemological views he holds about the nature of our cognitive power and the character of its basic activities.

This confronts us with a second puzzle: What exactly are the principles that govern the structure and content of Kant's logical theory, and how can the apparent role that epistemological or psychological considerations play here be consistent with his characterization of logic as a purely "formal" science? If we find ourselves assenting to Kant's abstract characterization of logic, while largely rejecting the details of the logical theory that he took to answer to this characterization, we should wonder how well we have understood his conception of form. And we should wonder, too, at the common assumption that Kant's satisfaction with syllogistic logic merely reflects his failure to recognize the existence and importance of other kinds of significant logical structure and other sorts of valid inference. After all, he was not just blind to the existence of valid non-syllogistic patterns of argument: his view, it seems, was not that syllogisms are the only arguments which carry us from truth to truth, but that they are the only ones that reflect basic operations of our power of reason. Until we grasp Kant's reasons for imposing this restriction, we should be cautious about claiming that our logical theory does more ad-

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its antecedent; it simply asserts that it *does* follow and thus "carries only the *ground* of proof with it." In the first *Critique,* however, Kant does classify hypothetical syllogisms as genuine inferences of reason (A304/B361–361). For an illuminating discussion of how Kant can think of hypothetical judgments as also embodying rules, but rules that relate differently to their "condition" than do categorical rules, see Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), chap. 4.

equately the very thing that he expected logic to do and took syllogistic logic to do quite satisfactorily.

2.3.   The logic Kant took for granted is undoubtedly superseded for many purposes, but before judging it to be superseded for the purposes relative to which he judged it to be finished and complete, we should inquire more carefully into what those purposes were. In particular, I will argue that we should reflect more carefully on what he meant by claiming that logic describes "the necessary laws of the understanding." Like many of Kant's characterizations of logic, this is a formula which, when understood in a certain way, seems acceptable enough to us; but I want to suggest that this verbal agreement disguises a shift in our conception of logic, a shift so basic that it makes it difficult for us even to hear these words in the sense Kant intended them. To grasp their intended meaning, I will argue, we need to hear this formula in the context of a set of views about what a cognitive *faculty* is, on the one hand, and about what it is to *understand* something, on the other. These views were familiar in the period in which Kant wrote, but I believe our own rejection of them encourages us to underestimate their importance in Kant's thinking. Recalling them will help us to appreciate Kant's reasons for endorsing central elements of syllogistic logical theory, and it will suggest an answer to the question "What is logic about?" that is seldom considered in contemporary discussions.

3. Logic, Psychology, and the Power of Understanding

3.1.   To bring out the crucial role played by faculty-psychological concepts in Kant's thinking about logic, it will help to consider a natural response to our first puzzle. The puzzle was this: How can Kant reject the assimilation of logic to psychology and yet characterize the subject matter of logic in what seem to be psychological terms? The response I have in mind is that when Kant claims that logic is concerned with "the laws of understanding," he means that it is concerned with the laws that describe how our power of understanding *ought* to proceed, and this topic is entirely distinct from the psychological question of how our understanding actually functions.

I think this response seeks to resolve the puzzle too quickly. The first part of the response is true enough: when Kant speaks of the laws of understanding, he does mean principles that govern how we *ought* to think, as the earlier quoted passage makes clear. But our willingness to move from this observation to the conclusion that such principles do *not*

concern our actual psychology reflects our acceptance of an opposition between a normative characterization of the laws that the understanding ought to follow and a descriptive characterization of the laws that actually govern this power. I want to suggest that our willingness to accept such an opposition is a mark of the distance between Kant's standpoint and our own.

To bring this out, it will help to compare Kant's view with Frege's. Frege, too, says that logic can be regarded as a "normative science," whose laws prescribe how we ought to think.[11] But on his view, this can be said of the laws of any science and has no tendency to show that the power to think is the *topic* of logic, any more than it would show that it is the topic of physics or geometry:

> Any law that states what is can be conceived as prescribing that one should think in accordance with it and is therefore in that sense a law of thought. This holds for geometrical and physical laws no less than for logical laws.[12]

What logic studies, according to Frege, is not thinking but truth, and the laws it uncovers have normative implications for thinking just insofar as thinking aims at truth. For Kant, by contrast, logic does not merely state principles that bear on what we should think; it has thinking for its topic ("the understanding" being a "faculty of thinking": see A69/B94, A126).[13] In this sense, it is concerned with a certain mental power or faculty and so is in *some* sense concerned with psychology.

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[11] See Gottlob Frege, "Logic," trans. Peter Long and Roger White, in *The Frege Reader,* ed. Michael Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 228.

[12] Gottlob Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. Montgomery Furth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 202. Compare also the following passage from "Thought":

> [I]t falls to logic to discern the laws of truth. The word "law" is used in two senses. When we speak of moral or civil laws we mean prescriptions, which ought to be obeyed but with which actual occurrences are not always in conformity. Laws of nature are general features of what happens in nature, and occurrences in nature are always in accordance with them. *It is rather in this sense that I speak of laws of truth. . . . From the laws of truth there follow prescriptions about asserting, thinking, judging, inferring.* (Gottlob Frege, "Thought," trans. Peter Geach and R. H. Stoothoff, in *The Frege Reader,* ed. Michael Beaney [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 325)

Thus, Frege holds that the laws of logic are fundamentally *about* what is true: their content is not prescriptive and does not mention thinking. Nevertheless, they *imply* prescriptions about how to think inasmuch as thinking (when it consists of judging or inferring) aims at truth.

[13] In fact, I think Kant *could not* explain the bearing of logic on thought in Frege's way by saying that logic is fundamentally concerned with laws of truth and that these imply prescriptions for thinking inasmuch as it aims at truth. For Kant holds that the very idea of

Closer scrutiny of Kant's account of the subject matter of logic supports this reading. In the very section of the *Jäsche Logic* in which he denies that logic can draw its principles from psychology, for instance, Kant begins by stating that "[e]verything in nature . . . takes place according to rules" and that "the exercise of our powers [*Kräfte*]"—including, he goes on to say, our power of understanding—"also takes place [*geschieht*] according to certain rules" (JL 9:11). It is in this context that he says that the understanding is "bound in its acts to rules [*bei seinen Handlungen an Regeln gebunden*]," which logic studies. This strongly suggests that the rules described by logic are not intended to be *merely* normative for the understanding, but rather are rules that in some sense actually "determine" how the understanding proceeds in its particular acts.

The comparison Kant draws between the rules of logic and the rules of morality also points toward this conclusion. To draw logical principles from psychology, Kant says, would be "just as confused as drawing morality from life." Taking this comparison seriously requires that we also consider what Kant says about the prescriptive character of moral laws; and what he says, famously, is this:

> All imperatives are expressed using an *ought* [*ein Sollen*], and thereby indicate the relation of an objective law of reason to a will which, in virtue of its subjective constitution, is not necessarily determined by this law. (GS 4:413)

What Kant says here is that a law is expressible as a prescription when the faculty it characterizes is constituted in such a way that the law in question does not *necessarily* determine how it acts. That is consistent with the claim that the relevant law *does* determine how the faculty acts—not invariably, but when nothing interferes with its operation. And this, in fact, is clearly Kant's view, both about the laws of the will and the laws of the understanding. Thus he holds that our will is not *necessarily* determined by moral laws only because it is affected by another power, sensible inclination, which is capable of inclining it to deviate from what its own law prescribes. Insofar as our will is not swayed by this other power, it will in fact act morally.[14] And similarly, he holds that

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truth is to be explained in terms of a certain conformity of thought to its own laws. This is one aspect of his famous "Copernican turn" in philosophy: see JL 9:49–50 and A58/B82, A104–105, B136–142. To explore this point, however, would require another essay.

[14] Thus Kant says that a will which was not sensibly conditioned would be one for which moral laws did not hold as imperatives but rather simply as descriptions of how it necessarily *does* operate (cf. GS 4:414).

our understanding is not necessarily determined by its own laws only because it is affected by another power, sensibility, which is capable of exerting an "unnoticed influence" on it, leading it to mistake subjective grounds for objective ones—but that insofar as it is not thus influenced, it will in fact judge rightly:

> No natural power [*Kraft der Natur*] can of itself depart from its own laws. Thus neither the understanding by itself (without the influence of another cause), nor the senses by themselves, can err. (A294/B350, cf. JL 9:53–54)

When Kant says that logic is the science of the laws of the understanding, he thus means not merely that it is concerned with the laws that the understanding *should* follow, but that it studies the laws the understanding is *actually disposed to follow* in virtue of its own nature.

What then are we to make of his insistence that logic cannot draw its principles from psychology? If we look closely at the passages in which he makes this point, it is clear that his objection is not fundamentally to the idea that logic is concerned with the actual nature of our power to think but to the idea that the nature of this power can be studied *empirically,* "from observations [*Beobachtungen*] of our understanding."[15] What he objects to is the idea that, to determine the laws of the understanding, we should study how it acts "under various subjective hindrances and conditions." This is how an empirical psychological investigation would inevitably present the understanding: as it functions under the conditions that actually obtain. And if we generalized from observation of how the understanding acts under such conditions, we would not uncover laws that hold of it simply as such, but, at best, laws that describe how it behaves under particular empirical conditions. Such laws, Kant maintains, would be no concern of logic; for its concern is to study "the right use of understanding, i.e., the use in which it agrees with itself [*den mit sich selbst übereinstimmenden Gebrauch des Verstandes*]" (JL 9:14).[16]

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[15] Thus, when Kant summarizes his view a few pages later, he expresses the lesson of this discussion by saying that logic does not study the understanding "according to empirical (psychological) principles" (JL 9:16; cf. A54/B78, GS 4:387).

[16] Note the gloss here: the right use of the understanding is the one in which it follows its own law. Indeed, Kant holds that what *makes* logic a canon for the understanding is that it studies the understanding's own constitutive law: "as a science of the necessary laws of thinking, without which no use of the understanding and reason takes place, which are *consequently* [*folglich*] the conditions under which it can and should be in agreement with itself, . . . logic is a *canon*" (JL 9:13; first emphasis added).

When Kant denies that logic can draw principles from psychology, then, his objection is not to the idea that it studies the actual nature of the understanding but to the idea that it can discover this nature in a certain way, by examining it as it is empirically given. This clarifies how Kant can consistently hold that logic is concerned with the laws of the understanding and yet that its topic is not a psychological one. In saying this, he uses "psychology" in a restricted way, to name the *empirical* study of the mind.[17] He holds, however, that there is another kind of study of our power of understanding, one that proceeds not through observation but through an exercise of reflective self-consciousness, in which the understanding grasps the form of its own characteristic activity. Logic studies the understanding in this way—through "a self-cognition [*Selbsterkenntniß*] of the understanding and of reason" (JL 9:14).

3.2. The point I want to emphasize about Kant's view of these matters is that it does not oppose prescriptive laws to laws that govern the actual functioning of a power. On the contrary, the very laws that describe the *proper* functioning of a power are the laws that determine its *actual* functioning if nothing interferes: they are laws that describe how, as we might put it, that power is, in itself, disposed to act. Thus if logic is the science concerned with the laws of the understanding, it is concerned with laws that do not merely prescribe *to* the understanding but flow *from* the nature of this faculty.

This makes for a deep contrast between Kant's understanding of the subject matter of logic and a typical contemporary understanding. When contemporary philosophers characterize logic as a "formal" discipline, they tend to mean that it is concerned with the forms of propositions and of the patterns of argument in which they can figure. We may be willing to say that logic studies "the laws of valid reasoning," but our emphasis here is really entirely on the word "valid," and this points us toward a standard that is supposed to be independent of any determinate view of how "reasoning" actually works. The laws of valid reasoning, for us, are

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[17] Kant's willingness to speak as if empirical psychology were the only possible psychology reflects his reserving the term "rational psychology" for a purported nonempirical science that supplies us with substantive cognition of the nature of the soul in itself. He, of course, denies that there can be such a science in the Paralogisms chapter of the first Critique. The science of logic escapes these strictures because, according to Kant, it does not supply us with *cognition of an object*: it merely describes the form of our cognitive power itself (cf. Bix, A54/B78, A60–61/B85–86). The error of rational psychology is precisely to mistake "the logical exposition of thinking in general" for "a metaphysical determination of the object" (B409).

simply the laws that describe how *propositions* with certain describable shapes are related. When Kant uses similar language, he means something quite different: that logic is concerned with the general form of the activity of *cognition,* which he explains as "the condition without which a cognition would not be a cognition at all" (JL 9:50). Cognition is here conceived as the *act* of a certain mental power, the understanding, so that to study the form of cognition is to study the nature of this act, in abstraction from whatever object it may be directed upon.

If I am right that these faculty-psychological concepts structure Kant's thinking about logic, then in order to understand his conception of logic, we first need to consider the general relation of powers to their acts. This is not a relation to which Kant devoted extensive discussion; it is one he largely took for granted, because it was part of the stock-in-trade of the philosophical tradition in which he was writing. He does, however, remark on its importance and its familiarity:

> This [concept of] causality leads to the concept of act, this to the concept of power, and thereby to the concept of substance. Since I do not wish to clutter my critical project . . . with divisions which merely concern the elucidation (not the amplification) of concepts, I leave aside the detailed exposition of these [concepts] for a future system of pure reason—especially since one can already find such an analysis in rich measure in well-known textbooks of this kind. (A204/B249)[18]

This remark occurs in the midst of Kant's discussion of the schematized categories in the Principles chapter of the first Critique, and I think this has led many readers to focus exclusively on the application of these concepts to objects presented in experience.[19] But Kant clearly invokes this set of interconnected concepts—*Substanz, Kraft, Handlung*—also in connection with the mind. Indeed, in his lectures on metaphysics, having

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[18] Kant seems to have had in mind, above all, Alexander Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1739), which was the textbook he used in his own lectures on metaphysics. Baumgarten's text includes a section on substances, powers, and acts, which Kant regularly discussed in his lectures.

[19] This reading is encouraged by the usual translation of *Kraft* in this context as "force," whereas when used in connection with the mind, it is usually translated as "power." I think this choice of variation in translation, though intelligible, is a mistake. It is certainly true that Kant means his remarks about *Kräfte* to have a bearing on Newtonian natural science, but translating *Kraft* differently in different contexts disguises the unity that Kant sees in this topic: his thought, I take it, is that *the very same metaphysical concept* has a role to play both in a sound analysis of mind and in an adequate natural science. Moreover, this choice of inconsistent translations obscures a connection, which Kant clearly intends, with scholastic metaphysical discussions of substances and their powers.

defined a power as "the relation of the substance to its accidents, insofar as it contains the ground of their actuality," Kant takes the "faculty of thinking" (i.e., the understanding) as his first illustration of such a power: this is "the relation of the soul to thought insofar as it contains the ground of its actuality."[20]

Kant's general remarks about substance, power, and act bring out two points that we should notice. First, in virtue of having a certain power, a subject is "the ground of the actuality" of certain other properties it pos-

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[20] VM 29:771: the passage is from the *Metaphysik Mrongovius,* which contains notes on Kant's metaphysics lectures from the academic year 1782–1783, the year after the publication of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* Longuenesse notes the parallel between Kant's general remarks on substances, powers, and acts and his talk of mental acts and mental powers, but she suggests that "one should approach this parallel with caution" since "the *Critique* warns us [in the Paralogisms chapter] not to consider the *Gemüt* or mind, the whole of our representational capacities, as a substance" (Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge,* 7–8). The passage from Kant quoted above suggests that, although caution is certainly in order, we should not be dissuaded by the Paralogisms from reading his remarks about mental powers in the light of his general views about substances, powers, and acts. For Kant himself—according to the lecture notes of one of his students, anyway—mentions the power of thinking in a general discussion of the relation between substance, power, and act. These lectures were given shortly after the publication of the first edition of the first Critique, and in them he repeats essentially the same criticisms of rational psychology that he makes in the Paralogisms chapter. It seems, then, that he must not think there is a tension between bringing the framework of substances, powers, and acts to bear on the mind in this way and rejecting the fallacious conclusions of the rational psychologists. Closer examination of the Paralogisms bears this out. What Kant denies in the Paralogisms is that we can *know* that the "I" that thinks is *really* a substance in itself (which would entail its permanence, immutability, etc.). He does not deny that we must *conceive* of our mind through the *logical* categories characteristic of substances and thus of our mental powers as having the kind of unity which the powers of a substance have. On the contrary, he affirms this, although he denies that it entitles us to draw the conclusions of the rational psychologists:

> [E]veryone must necessarily regard Himself as substance, but his thinking only as accidents of his existence and determinations of his state . . . [O]ne can quite well allow that the proposition *The soul is substance* holds, if only one admits that this concept . . . cannot teach us any of the usual conclusions of the doctrine of rational psychology, such as the everlasting duration of the soul through all alterations, even the person's death—[if only one admits, in other words] that it signifies a substance only in idea but not in reality. (A349–351)

The connection I am drawing between Kant's remarks about our power of understanding and his thinking about the categories of substance, power, and act does not require any claim about the real nature of the subject to whom these powers belong; it simply brings out the consequences of regarding the mind as a substance "in idea," as Kant says we must (cf. also A672/B700). The kind of unity our mental powers possess is, *logically speaking,* the kind of unity that the powers of a substance possess, even if we cannot conclude that this logical unity corresponds to the sort of real unity that rationalist metaphysicians sought to infer from it.

sesses.[21] To ascribe a power to a subject is thus to make a nontrivial commitment about how that subject will be or what that subject will do if suitable conditions present themselves. The things it then does are its *acts:* an act is what comes to be when a power meets the conditions suitable for it to express itself. These need not consist of "actions" in the usual contemporary sense of the term: a subject's knowing something, for instance, though not an event or process, would, in this tradition, be regarded as an "act" of its power to know. To call something an "act" of a subject is simply to represent it as a way of being or becoming whose primary explanation is to be sought in the *nature* of that subject, rather than in the effect of some *other* thing on the subject in question.

Secondly, the concept of an act is related not only to the concept of a power but also "thereby to the concept of substance" (A204/B249; cf. VM 29:773, 29:822–823). For a power must have a *bearer,* which is the underlying subject to which the acts of the power are ascribed; and just as Kant, in general, takes reason to be driven to seek the condition of everything conditioned, so, in this context, he takes it to be driven to seek an ultimate subject whose activity is not itself the product of some more

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[21] A word about Kant's use of the terms *Vermögen* ("faculty") and *Kraft* ("power"). In his lectures on metaphysics, Kant explains *Vermögen* as "the ground of the possibility of an act," whereas *Kraft* designates "the ground of the actuality of an act" (VM 29:823–824, and cf. 28:565). This corresponds to the distinction between *facultas* and *vis* drawn in Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (§§197, 216, 220), from which Kant lectured. Baumgarten characterizes *facultas* as "the possibility of acting" (§216), whereas *vis* is "the complement to the faculty to act, that is, what is added to the faculty so that the act comes to be" (§220). These characterizations are cryptic, but the intention seems to be to distinguish between a mere faculty considered in itself, whose presence in a subject makes a certain sort of act *possible* for that subject, and a faculty complemented by whatever further conditions are needed to enable it to perform its proper operation successfully (and thus to be the "ground of the actuality" of the relevant act). Kant speaks sometimes of the understanding as a *Vermögen* (e.g., A51/B75, A81/B106, B137) and sometimes as a *Kraft* (e.g., B130, A130–131/B169, JL 9:11). If the preceding interpretation of the faculty/power distinction is sound, this makes sense. Since the power of understanding is simply the faculty of understanding in the presence of those further conditions necessary for it to act successfully, a subject whose *faculty* of understanding is placed in favorable circumstances (perhaps, in the presence of an adequate education, a proper cultivation of the power of judgment, etc.) will possess the *power* of understanding. So it is equally correct to speak of the understanding as a faculty of persons and as a power to which they characteristically attain. (This account of the faculty/power distinction differs from the one proposed by Longuenesse. She suggests that the *Urteilskraft*—the power to judge—is "the actualization of the *Vermögen zu urteilen* under sensory stimulation" [*Kant and the Capacity to Judge,* 7]. I think this conflates the faculty/power distinction with the power/act distinction. The power to judge is the faculty to judge complemented by those general conditions that *enable* it to act successfully, whereas the judgments made by this power "under sensory stimulation" are its acts.)

basic power. To represent a certain way of being or becoming as the act of a power is thus to commit oneself to a certain framework of inquiry, so to speak: one that seeks so far as possible to trace such acts to some underlying subject whose powers they express. Such a thing would be a *substance,* something that "must be considered always as subject, never as mere predicate" (B129, cf. A147/B186). Moreover, Kant holds that a "logical maxim" requires reason to seek to explain the various appearances connected with a certain substance, which may initially appear to be the manifestations of many different powers, by appeal to some single "fundamental power" (A648/B676–A651/B679).[22] His thought here seems to be that, insofar as various powers all belong to a single substance, there must be something that explains why they constitute powers of *one* substance—a single principle of activity. The framework of substances, powers, and acts thus brings with it a demand that we seek, so far as we can, to understand the diversity of powers belonging to a substance as grounded in an underlying unity.

Indeed, in the case of the powers of cognition, Kant holds that a more specific demand applies: we must not merely seek to understand our various cognitive powers as aspects or expressions of a single fundamental power; we are entitled to assume that these powers form a unity of a quite special kind, one in which "[e]verything that is grounded in the nature of our powers must be purposive and in agreement with the correct employment of those powers" (A642/B670). That is, we are entitled to regard our cognitive powers as forming a sort of *functional* unity, in which each particular cognitive power performs a specific and essential role in making the fundamental act of the cognitive power as a whole (namely, cognition itself) possible. Kant's commitment to this idea is made explicit in a remark he makes in the preface to the first Critique:

> [Pure reason], as regards the principles of its cognition, is a quite separate, self-subsistent unity, in which each part exists for every other, and all for the sake of each, as in an organized body. (Bxxiii; and cf. Axiii, Bxxxvii–xxxviii)

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[22] Kant holds that we are required to *seek* a fundamental power underlying an apparent diversity of powers—not that we can know that there is such a fundamental power. Nevertheless, he holds this demand to be a regulative principle of reason with a transcendental ground: see A651/B679. He is also explicit about applying this principle to the powers of the mind. Thus, in lectures on metaphysics thought to be from the years 1790–1791, he remarks that "all physics, of bodies as well as spirits, the latter of which is called psychology, amounts to this: deriving diverse powers, which we know only through observations, as much as possible from basic powers" (VM 28:564).

The various powers of reason are distinguished precisely by their different contributions to making the existence of a self-sustaining system of rational cognition possible, much as the organs of the body are distinguished by their different contributions to making our bodily existence possible.

This general excursus on substances, powers, and acts has taken us some way from the topic of the laws of understanding in particular. The digression will have been worthwhile, however, if it leads us to ask the right questions when we return to the power of understanding and its act of judgment. If Kant thinks of judgment as the act of a power belonging to a functionally organized system of powers, then the first question to ask about it is: What is the *function* of this act, and how does that function contribute to the functional unity of our system of cognition as a whole?[23]

4. Logic and the Act of Judgment

4.1.   This orientation toward function puts us in a position to perceive a deeper significance in Kant's claim that logic studies the laws of the understanding. We post-Fregeans are inclined to hear this merely as the claim that logic charts the laws from which our thinking must not depart in its search for truths: laws that *constrain* cognition. For Kant, I want to suggest, it meant something more positive: that logic studies the laws which describe what it is to understand something, laws whose ever-more-systematic application in our thinking constitutes its increasing *perfection as cognition* (cf. JL 9:49–57, B114). A major reason why Kant's logical theory looks peculiar to us, I think, is that we fail to see it from this standpoint. My aim in the remainder of this essay will be to bring out how the peculiar features of his logical theory that we noted earlier (§2.2) become more intelligible when seen in context of his con-

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[23] This is not to suggest that Kant regards the metaphysical concepts of act, power, and substance as *more basic* than the logical concepts of concept, judgment, and inference. Kant's view, famously, is quite the reverse: he holds that the concepts which have traditionally preoccupied metaphysicians, including the concepts *substance, power,* and *act,* are in an important sense traceable to forms of judgment studied by logicians. But this is consistent with the interpretative maxim that, in seeking to understand why Kant thinks logic should take the shape that it does, we must understand this science as seeking to give a formal description of a certain power, the understanding, and the acts by which it pursues the end of ordering given cognitions into a unified and systematic body of knowledge. My claim is not that these notions of function, unity, and system are more basic *than* the central ideas of Kant's logic, but they are basic *to* an appreciation of how he understands these logical ideas. (This note responds to a question pressed on me by Lanier Anderson, to whose comments I am indebted.)

ception of the specific cognitive functions of the acts of judgment and inference. In this section, I'll consider Kant's characterization of *judgment* as the basic act of our cognitive power and how this characterization influences his views about the most basic form of judgment. In the following section, I'll turn to Kant's general conception of the aims of cognition and the way these aims are reflected in the patterns of *inference* he treats as basic.

4.2.   In a crucial section of the first Critique titled "On the logical use of the understanding in general," Kant argues that we can "trace all acts of the understanding back to judgments" (A69/B94). He then proceeds to argue that "the logical function of the understanding in judgment" can take various forms, which he presents in a famous table (A70/B95). A large body of literature has grown up around the question of where the divisions of this table come from and whether Kant is entitled to claim that they represent an exhaustive inventory of the basic forms that judgment can take.[24] I will not take up this question here, but will simply make an observation about the principle from which the divisions are supposed to follow: namely, that it is a conception of the fundamental *act* of understanding, judgment.[25] This makes the description of the general nature of the act of judgment, which Kant gives in the preceding paragraph, crucial for understanding his view of what these forms characterize, and why they are basic.

When Kant characterizes the act of judgment in the paragraph that precedes the table of forms of judgment, he does so precisely by describing its role in making cognition possible. The task of any power of understanding, he holds, is to cognize a manifold of representations by combining them in such a way that they "determine an object" (cf. A50/B74, B137, B166n); but our power of understanding, being finite, cannot supply this manifold

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[24] Influential discussions include Klaus Reich, *The Completeness of Kant's Table of Judgments,* trans. Jane Kneller and Michael Losonsky (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Reinhard Brandt, *Die Urteilstafel. Kritik der reinen Vernunft A67–76/B92–101* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1991); Michael Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1995); and Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge.*

[25] This point has been emphasized by several recent authors: see Wolff, *Die Vollständigkeit,* 19–24; Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge,* 76; and Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 146–147. I am indebted to these discussions, though I think my reading brings out, more fully than those of these interpreters, how this idea is reflected in Kant's conception of the form of our most basic judgments.

itself. Rather, it must receive a manifold of representations from another power, sensibility, and its distinctive task is to "synthesize" this manifold into the sort of unity whereby it has a "certain content" (A77–78/B103). It does this by "ordering different representations under a common one"; that is, by bringing *concepts* to bear (A68/B93). Indeed, Kant explains what sort of representation a concept is by appeal to this role in cognition: a concept is a representation which does not by itself determine an object but is related to an object only "mediately," by subsuming other already given representations. By contrast, intuitions are representations given to us by sensibility, and these do "relate immediately" to objects (A19/B33, A320/B376). Nevertheless, Kant holds that these immediate, given representations do not by themselves supply us with cognition. Intuitions without concepts are, he famously says, "blind" (A51/B75).

Kant seems to regard the fact that judgment is the basic act of our power of understanding as a direct consequence of these facts about the nature of this power. Since our understanding can produce only representations which relate mediately to objects, the act by which it cognizes an object can only be one in which it brings to bear such a representation on an already given representation, thereby "determining" that given representation in such a way that new cognition results. Judgment is precisely this act of determining (applying a predicate to) a given representation (the subject) in a way that enlarges our cognition:

> Judgment is thus the mediate cognition of an object, that is, the representation of a representation of it . . . So for example in the judgment: *All bodies are divisible,* the concept of the divisible relates to various other concepts; among these, however, it is here particularly related to the concept of body, and this in turn is related to certain appearances that come before us. These objects are thus mediately represented by the concept of divisibility. (A68–69/B93–94)

But on the other hand, since intuitions by themselves are blind, the subject-representation which judgment further determines must already involve a concept of the object. Kant says words to this effect in many places, but he says it most explicitly in an important *Reflexion:*

> We are acquainted with [*kennen*] any object only through predicates we say or think of it. In advance of this, any representations to be met with in us count only as materials, not as the cognition. . . . In every judgment, accordingly, there are two predicates that we compare with each other. The first of these, which constitutes the given cognition of the

object, is called the logical subject; the second, which is compared with it, the logical predicate. (R4634 7:616–617; cf. R3921 7:345–346)

4.3.   This account of judgment and its role in enlarging cognition has many suggestive features, not all of which can be considered here. What is important for our purposes is the palpable connection between this account and Kant's focus on categorical judgments in his logical theory.[26] A categorical judgment relates two *concepts,* a subject-concept and a predicate-concept. The manner of their relation—whether it pertains only to certain objects or to all; whether the assertion is of agreement or disagreement of the predicate with the subject; whether the relation is regarded as merely possible, actual, or necessary—depends on the form in which these materials are placed. But in any case, the basic act of judgment is the act of determining one concept by relating it to another, an act whose general form we could represent as

$S - P$

where S and P are the concepts combined in judgment and the dash marks the need for a specification of the particular functions of unity which are applied to these concepts (whether the subject is considered universally, particularly, or singularly; whether the predicate is applied affirmatively, negatively, or infinitely; etc.). This contrasts with the Fregean view, which takes the simplest sort of judgment to be the assertion that a certain *object* falls under a concept, a mode of composition which is standardly symbolized as

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If this latter analysis of the primitive form of judgment is read—no doubt contrary to Frege's intention—as an account of the basic act by which we cognize, the story it tells is of our classifying already-apprehended individuals whose availability to our thought presupposes no precedent classification. For if our apprehension of the object a itself

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[26] I will focus on Kant's conception of the species of judgment he takes to be most basic: categorical judgment. I believe, however, that several of the points I make here can be extended, *mutatis mutandis,* to hypothetical and disjunctive judgments. Béatrice Longuenesse has emphasized that Kant thinks not only of categorical judgments, but also of hypothetical and disjunctive judgments, as involving a kind of determination of a subject by a predicate (see Longuenesse, *Kant and the Capacity to Judge,* chap. 4), and this is reflected in his willingness to speak of judgment in general as "mediate cognition of an object." I hope to consider Kant's views about the cognitive role of hypothetical and disjunctive judgments in future work.

presupposed some sort of classification, and if our aim in constructing our logical symbolism were to represent the basic structure of the act of mind through which cognition is possible, then we could not allow the term *a* to appear primitively in our analysis. Given Kant's views about the nature of cognition and the task of logic, then, the Fregean approach cannot count as a satisfactory analysis of the fundamental form of a judgable content. The syllogistic approach, by contrast, is at least along the right lines: it represents our basic cognitive act as one of *further determining* an extant concept of an object. Kant's general view of cognition thus sheds light on the first two puzzling features of his logical theory: (1) its focus on categorical judgments, and (2) its treatments of such judgments as logically simple rather than logically composite.

I think it also sheds light on feature (3): the scant attention paid to singular judgments. For on the view of cognition sketched above, reference to particulars enters our judging, not as a distinct element, as in the Fregean analysis, but rather as a manner in which a relation between concepts is presented. A judgment is singular in *form* just if it presents the subject-concept as determined by a certain predicate-concept simply in respect of its instantiation in one particular object: *this S is P*. But now Kant holds that the possibility of this sort of relation to an object—the sort that funds the concept of a particular individual, *this S*—depends on the possibility of the presentation of the relevant object in sensible intuition. Singular judgment is thus possible for us—in the fundamental case, at least—only in virtue of sensible intuition, for only intuition supplies us with representations which are singular. But general logic, on Kant's view, is concerned with the laws of thought in abstraction from all relation to sensibility—laws which pertain to the understanding simply as such. So general logic can be concerned only with general relationships between subject and predicate concepts. And such fundamental relationships are plausibly just those distinguished in syllogistic logic: that the predicate concept determines (affirmatively or negatively) all instances of the subject concept (universal judging) or only some of them (particular judging).

5. Logic and the Aim of Cognition

5.1.   Much more could be said about the first three puzzling features of Kant's logic, but in closing I want to turn to feature (4): his restrictive view of what counts as a proper "inference of reason." This too, I believe, has its source in his general conception of cognition. Exploring this connection will return us to the idea that our intellectual powers belong

to a sort of functional system, in which each part contributes to sustaining a unified "body" of cognition.

5.2.   We should first note a few points about how Kant thinks of the pattern of argument that he privileges. I have mentioned that he thinks of all syllogistic inferences as presenting a "cognition of the necessity of a proposition through the subsumption of its condition under a given general rule" (JL 9:120). That is, the combination of subject and predicate in the conclusion is exhibited as deriving from a rule which states that a certain predicate applies, or does not apply, to anything that meets a given condition, and from another premise which states that a certain subject meets the condition in question.[27] Thus, to take an example from the first *Critique*, I may know as a general rule that all humans are mortal, and then recognizing that all scholars meet the condition of being human, I infer that all scholars are mortal (A304/B360–361).

Like other syllogistic logicians, Kant sometimes speaks of such an inference as primarily relating not propositions but *concepts* (or "terms"): our bringing the concept *scholar* universally under the concept *mortal* is "mediated" by a "middle term," *human,* our cognition of which enables us to see the necessity of judging all scholars to be mortal (see, for example, A322/B378, VM 29:888–889). It is this relation of "mediation" that Kant demands in any proper syllogism: the connection of subject and predicate made in the conclusion must be presented as depending on a middle term, our cognition of which shows us the need to connect the two extremes in the relevant way. Unless our knowledge of a conclusion can be represented as required in this way by a more general cognition, Kant holds that we are not dealing with a genuine "inference of reason" [*Vernunftschluß*], even if the transition we have made exhibits a form that always leads from truth to truth.

If we ask why Kant imposes this restriction on what he counts as a basic form of proof, the outlines of his answer are clear enough: he holds that only this form of argument exhibits the necessity of combining this subject with this predicate, and he regards the comprehension of such necessities as the fundamental task of reason. Thus, having noted that in a syllogistic deduction, one "cognizes the conclusion *a priori . . .* as

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[27] Relatedly, Kant holds that all sound syllogistic proofs must be reducible to one of the moods in the first syllogistic figure, in which the major premise is universal (affirmative or negative) and the minor is affirmative (JL 9:126, and cf. FS 2:45–61). Such a reduction would exhibit in every sound syllogism a rule-and-application structure.

contained in the universal and as necessary under a certain condition," Kant remarks that "that everything stands under the universal and may be determined by universal rules is the very principle of *rationality* or of *necessity*" (JL 9:120). But these associations—of rationality with necessity and of necessity with universality—may seem puzzling. For in the first place, we can surely prove propositions that do not hold necessarily; and indeed Kant himself gives numerous examples of syllogistic arguments whose conclusion is in the assertoric, not the apodictic, mode. What then can he mean by claiming that a proof must involve "the cognition of the necessity" of a judgment? And at any rate, why should only arguments that exhibit a conclusion as the application of a general rule supply us with cognition? If I know that my premises are true and that I am drawing an inference from them in accordance with an argument form that always leads from true premises to true conclusions, then why should I not count as knowing that my conclusion is true, whether or not my argument has the form of a syllogism?

5.3.   To answer these questions, we must turn once again to Kant's general conception of the role of judgment in cognition.

Consider first the question about the kind of necessity presented by a syllogistic deduction. The necessity with which I am presented when I am confronted with a valid syllogism from known premises is the necessity of *judging* that a certain predicate applies to a certain subject. A syllogistic deduction may or may not show that a certain predicate *necessarily* applies to a certain subject, but at any rate it aims to show that any right-thinking power of understanding *must judge* it to apply (whether necessarily or merely actually or possibly). Now, Kant holds that every objectively significant judgment lays claim to *this* sort of necessity: not every judgment presents a certain predicate as belonging to a certain subject necessarily, but every judgment presents the combination of a certain predicate with a certain subject (be it problematic, assertoric, or apodictic) as holding not contingently for my individual consciousness but necessarily for any consciousness judging correctly about this matter. This kind of claim to necessity is an inevitable feature of any judgment that purports to determine an object, since

> when a judgment agrees with an object, all judgments concerning the same object must likewise agree among themselves, and thus the objective validity of the judgment of experience signifies nothing other than its necessary universal application. (PM IV.298)

By its very nature, then, a judgment lays claim to being a nonarbitrary combination of representations—one that holds not just for my consciousness but for "consciousness in general" (PM IV.304–5; cp. A104, B142). A syllogistic deduction from known premises exhibits the necessity of its conclusion in this sense: it presents the act of determining-this-subject-with-this-predicate as an act that any sound power of understanding must perform. Such a deduction thus fulfills a promise that any judgment implicitly makes.

Turn now to Kant's idea that such a deduction must exhibit the combination of a certain subject with a certain predicate as "determined" by a general rule. Why must a proper deduction take this form? Well, we have seen that a syllogism exhibits its conclusion as determined by a certain rule by showing how the combination of concepts involved in the conclusion is required by the application of some more-embracing concept. Thus *scholar* is shown to be universally determined by *mortal* because it is universally determined by *human,* and *mortal* belongs universally to our cognition of *human.* Now, the first thing to notice about this derivation is that, in recognizing it, I perform exactly the sort of act in which cognition generally consists: I grasp the unity in which a manifold of given representations stands and thereby comprehend the source of the objectivity of a certain combination of that manifold. The manifold, in this case, consists of the concepts *scholar* and *mortal;* I grasp the unity of these elements by seeing their relation to the condition embodied in the concept *human.* A proof thus traces the rightness of a certain combination of elements to a rule under which they stand. But precisely this is the basic act of cognition as Kant conceives it. For, as we have seen, cognition in general is "the determinate relation of given representations to an object" by the bringing to bear of concepts, which are representations whose function is precisely to serve as *rules* for combining manifolds (B137, cf. A97, A106). The pattern of argument Kant privileges is thus a pattern by the application of which we make our body of cognitions more fully what all cognition, by its very nature, aims to be.[28]

Admittedly, not every argument that is syllogistic in form grounds cognition of its conclusion in this sense. In order for a syllogistic argument to do this, the major premise on which it depends must be *cognitively more fundamental* than the fact it serves to prove. There is an ancient

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[28] Compare A305/B361: "[R]eason, in inferring, seeks to bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (general conditions), and thereby to effect the highest unity of this manifold."

objection to syllogistic reasoning, apparently due to Sextus Empiricus, which maintains that no syllogism can ever be a genuine proof, since any argument that proceeds by applying a general rule to a particular case must involve a *petitio principii*.[29] For, the objection runs, we must know the general rule somehow; but how can we know it without already knowing how things stand with respect to the cases to which it applies? A rule holds generally only if it holds in all cases, so to know that it holds generally, we must know that it holds in every case. So, it seems, knowledge of the rule presupposes knowledge of the cases and cannot supply an independent ground for the latter knowledge.

If this objection is sound, then the syllogistic conception of cognition from fundamental principles makes an impossible demand. But the objection really just brings out what must be the case if such an argument *is* to capture the grounds of our cognition: namely, there must be rules whose truth is knowable independently of knowing how things stand in the cases that fall under them. The rules in question must, that is, be what Kant—following a long philosophical tradition—calls "principles": synthetic, general judgments whose truth is knowable "from concepts," rather than from the intuitive presentation of subordinate cases (cf. A301/B357–358).[30] Kant himself observes that not every general proposition which can stand as the major premise of a syllogism has this character:

> Any general proposition, even if it is taken from experience (by induction), can serve as the major premise in a syllogism; but it is not therefore itself a principle. (A300/B356)

Hence, not every valid syllogism exhibits the cognitive ground of its concluding judgment. Nevertheless, the syllogistic *form* of argument is the form that genuine proofs must take, for an argument must have this form if it is to present a particular combination of concepts as *determined* by a

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[29] *Sextus Empiricus. Outlines of Skepticism,* trans. and ed. Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), II, §163.

[30] Compare KpV V.26, MN IV.467–469. Note that Kant holds that even the pure principles of the understanding discussed in the Analytic of Principles of the first Critique are not "principles absolutely," since our cognition of them depends on pure intuition. Absolute principles would be synthetic general judgments which were knowable by pure reason; other synthetic general judgments may be called principles *relative to* certain cases just insofar as they articulate an explanatorily more fundamental rule that determines how things stand in those cases (cf. A300–301/B356–358). Although our understanding is not capable of attaining to cognition of absolute principles, Kant maintains that the drive of our cognition is always toward a more relatively principled understanding of what we know. Thus the notion of an absolute principle represents an ideal that our cognition approaches asymptotically but never attains.

more general law and thus as necessary. And this, if my reading is correct, is exactly why Kant's logic privileges this form of argument: because it captures the fundamental form in which inference *can* contribute to cognition.

We should note, finally, a connection between this general conception of cognition and the idea that the function of acts of cognition is to contribute to a unified, self-sustaining body of cognition. Inasmuch as the understanding always seeks to find the source of the particular and contingent in the general and necessary, its drive is always toward systematizing our cognition by bringing diverse particular cognitions under ever-more-general principles and thus representing our total view of the world, to the greatest extent possible, as consistent, nonarbitrary, and noncontingent. But to the extent that the understanding accomplishes this, it also represents its body of cognitions as ever more *self*-determined, for insofar as it finds necessary grounds for apparently contingent combinations of representations, it represents these combinations as required of it as such, in virtue of its own laws.[31] The drive of the understanding, then, is always toward seeing its postures as ever more fully self-determined—and, by the same token, as having an ever greater share of necessity. The finitude of our cognition makes *complete* cognitive self-determination an unreachable ideal for us, but it is nevertheless an ideal that constantly regulates our thinking; and seeing this is, I believe, crucial to seeing what Kant means when he characterizes logic as the science of "the necessary laws of the understanding."

5.4.   Where does our discussion leave Conant's account of Kant's conception of logic? It should, I think, lead us to regard Conant's account not as objectionable, but as in need of supplementation. Conant is right to insist that Kant sees logic as concerned with principles "constitutive of the possibility of thought"—or, as I would prefer to say, of the understanding, the power of thought in the service of cognition. He is right to emphasize how this sets the subject matter of logic apart from those of empirical psychology on the one hand and speculative metaphysics on the other. And he is right, finally, to connect these points with Kant's claim that logic is concerned with the "mere form" of thinking. The significance of these formulations depends crucially, however, on what is meant by "thought"

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[31] Thus, Kant says that in representing a proposition as apodictic, we "think [it] as determined through the laws of the understanding itself" and thus "incorporate [it] into the understanding" (A76/B101).

or "understanding" and on what is involved in grasping its "form." My aim has been to bring out how Kant's answers to these questions depend on a specific way of thinking about our cognitive faculties and the ends they serve, a way that has a powerful coherence in its own right, however far it may stand from contemporary ways of thinking about the subject matter of logic.[32]

Cartesian Skepticism, Kantian Skepticism, and Two Conceptions of Self-Consciousness

Arata Hamawaki

In his paper "Two Varieties of Skepticism,"[1] James Conant lays out a helpful distinction between two types of philosophical problems, both of which could be called forms of skepticism: Cartesian skepticism and Kantian skepticism. Although both types constitute threats to the possibility of knowledge and so raise the question of how knowledge is possible, they do so in different ways. Cartesian skepticism about the external world, to take probably the most familiar example, rests on the possibility that at any given moment in one's experience of the world, it is possible that one is dreaming. While the possibility itself may seem remote, and even outrageous if raised in ordinary contexts, the skeptic makes what appears to him to be a striking discovery. As Descartes puts it, "as I consider these matters more carefully I see so plainly that there are no definitive signs by which to distinguish being awake from being asleep. As a result, I am becoming quite dizzy, and this dizziness nearly convinces me that I am asleep."[2] The discovery here is that a dream can perfectly and undetectably mimic waking experience. Once this is pointed out, there would seem to be no way of ruling out the possibility that I am dreaming right now, for any attempt to do so would seem to be condemned to crippling circularity, since any such attempt would need to

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[1] "Two Varieties of Skepticism" in *Rethinking Epistemology,* vol. 2, eds. Günther Abel and James Conant (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 1–73.

[2] René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," in *Meditations, Objections and Replies,* trans. and eds. Roger Ariew and Donald Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2006), 10, ATVII 19.

appeal to an experience whose veridicality has already been put in question. Thus I seem to be trapped in the circle of my own experiences, unable to reach beyond them to the things themselves.

As Conant mentions, skepticism about other minds seems to have a similar shape. In that case, what is analogous to the dreaming possibility is the possibility that someone is, say, mimicking being in pain—for example, writhing on the ground, groaning, wincing—even though he in fact feels no pain. Here, too, it strikes us that our access to the other's pain is at best indirect, and we feel that the other's pain behavior seems to separate us from what we seek to know—from the feeling of pain itself. Here, it might be said that instead of feeling *sealed in* by one's experiences, as in the external world case, one feels *sealed out* by the other's behavior, forever incapable of knowing what the other feels. Conant points out that the Cartesian form of skepticism characterizes a wide range of philosophical problems, problems that rest on a thesis of epistemic indistinguishability: veridical experience has no distinguishing marks from non-veridical, sentient behavior has no distinguishing marks from non-sentient, actions have no distinguishing marks from mere bodily movements, aesthetic objects have no distinguishing marks from non-aesthetic objects, and so on.[3] Once this is admitted, what we want to know—the external world, other minds, actions, works of art—seems unreachable, unknowable. And if we seek to overcome skepticism by conceiving of what we seek to know as unproblematically available to us, we run the danger of adopting a reductionist account of the object we seek to know: in the external world case, idealism, and in the other minds case, behaviorism. There is, in this sense, an internal connection between the threat of Cartesian forms of skepticism and the temptation toward forms of reductionism, such as idealism and behaviorism.[4]

Kantian skepticism, according to Conant, begins one step back from a question about whether one has knowledge.[5] It can be said to be concerned with the very conditions of the possibility of knowledge. Indeed, the question it poses is about the possibility of thought, judgment, or experience, the presentation of something *to* know, something that could so much as be a candidate for knowledge. It is, in short, about the possibility of appearance. For example, how could sensory experience so much as

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[3] "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 8–14.

[4] This connection is explored in Barry Stroud, "The Allure of Idealism," in *Understanding Human Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 83–98.

[5] "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 5–6.

be *of* objects at all; how could it *purport* to offer glimpses of the world? How could behavior so much as *purport* to be expressive of mind, never mind whether there is any subjectivity there to express? It isn't a question of establishing *truths* about the world or about other minds but about the *possibility* of truth, the *possibility* of veridicality—the possibility, in short, not just of being right but of being right or wrong. Conant casts this as a problem of purport, or broadly speaking, meaning. In the case of perception, it is objective purport; in the case of other minds, it is psychological purport.[6] As Conant points out, the threat is not that our experience might be a dream but that it may be, in Kant's words, "without an object, merely a blind play of representations, less even than a dream."[7] Wittgenstein's query in the *Blue Book*—"What has to be added to dead signs to give them life?"[8]—could stand in as an emblem for the Kantian skeptical question in general. The question is, How can something which from one perspective—an "external," "detached," or third person perspective—has no meaning at all, for example, sensory impacts, bodily movements, and acoustic blasts, be imbued from another perspective—an "engaged," "participant," or first person perspective—with meaning?

Both forms of skepticism are experienced in terms of a certain kind of "distancing" or "separation": from the world, from the other person, from actions, from aesthetic objects. In ordinary life all of these things seem "closer" to us than it seems possible for us to admit after philosophical reflection. Prior to philosophical reflection, there seems hardly a gap between our sensory experience and the world, between behavior and mindedness, and so on. Sensory experiences and behaviors seem to exhibit, put before our minds, the very objects we seek to know on their basis. In the Cartesian problematic, we treat our sensory experience as evidence of the world's existence and behavior as evidence of mindedness, and we discover that the evidence falls woefully short of giving us knowledge. In a familiar figure used to describe the Cartesian skeptical predicament, our own sensory experiences seem to form a barrier between us and the external world, and others' behavior seems to form a barrier between us and what others feel. But in the Kantian problematic,

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[6] Conant writes, "The Kantian problematic is concerned, in the first instance, not with truth but with what it is to stick your neck out in thinking, with what Kant calls the *objective validity* of judgment (the possibility of something's being a candidate for truth or falsehood), with what I will henceforth call the *objective purport* of judgment" (ibid., 6).

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), A112.

[8] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 4.

the "distancing" or "separateness" is not formulated in terms of a failure of knowledge, in terms of an epistemic barrier we seem incapable of surmounting. The difficulty there is that under certain "objectifying" ways of conceiving of our sensory experience—for example, conceiving of it as mere "sensory affection"—sensory experience seems devoid of the significance that is constitutive of it, that is, it seems not to be the sort of state in which an object is brought before the mind. And in certain "objectifying" ways of conceiving of behavior—for example, conceiving of it as mere bodily movement—it seems not to be the sort of event which is expressive of mindedness.[9] The threat here is a kind of self-alienation or a fracture of self-understanding: I lose my grip on the concepts of sensory experience and human behavior. I become unintelligible to myself.[10] The threat here is not just to the possibility of knowing the external world or others but to understanding oneself as making claims about the external world or others at all. In order for it to be possible for us to make claims about the external world, sensory experience must at least *purport* to give us knowledge of objects, and in order for it to be possible for us to make claims about other minds, their behavior must at least *purport* to be expressive of their minds.

This suggests the possibility of a transcendental argument against Cartesian skepticism. It suggests that Cartesian skepticism might well rest on a conception of our relation to our sensory experience and to others' behavior that already contains the seeds of Kantian skepticism. Might the constitutive conditions of our own sensory experience, such that it at least purports to give us knowledge of objects, be incompatible somehow with how the Cartesian skeptic thinks of the relation between our sensory experience and their objects? Might the constitutive conditions of human behavior, such that it at least purports to be expressive of mindedness, be incompatible somehow with how the Cartesian skeptic thinks of the relation between others' behavior and their internal life? The question to which Cartesian skepticism is an answer conceives of our relation to the world as *mediated* in a certain way by our own sensory

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[9] The point of the qualification "as a whole" is to register that in specific circumstances, one might be in a position of needing to establish that one's sensory experience or one's observation of another's behavior demonstrates the obtaining of the relevant fact. But it doesn't follow from this that that is the relation that one has toward one's experience or behavior in general or as a whole.

[10] Conant writes, "This sort of skeptic becomes perplexed as to what it is to be experiencing or thinking or meaning things in ways that he cannot help but take himself to be doing in and through the asking of the skeptical question. And yet he is unable to dismiss the question. It has come to seem intellectually compulsory. So his mind *boggles*." "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 32.

experiences and of our relation to others as *mediated* in a certain way by their behavior; that is, sensory experience is supposed to give us *evidence* of the world's existence, and others' behavior is supposed to give us *evidence* of the existence of others.[11] However, in conceiving of the relation between them in terms of evidence, what we seek to know is already conceived of as lying on the "other side" of our experience or of the others' behavior rather than as present in our experience or in others' behavior. Conant writes of the "Kantian way with skepticism" that it "is a radical following through of the implicit assumptions of a skeptical position up the point at which the position founders in incoherence."[12] What are the "implicit assumptions" and how does radically following through on them lead Cartesian skepticism to founder in incoherence? My aim in this paper is to attempt to sketch out a way to understand this intriguing but somewhat elusive idea.

Both forms of skepticism are responses to a threat that would be experienced as a failure of some kind. What are the threats and what is the risk of failure that is characteristic of these two forms of skepticism? This question is easily answered with regard to the Cartesian variety. Cartesian skepticism begins from an understanding of the difference between waking and dreaming, an understanding of what it is to be awake and what it is to dream, and what implications our being in one state rather than the other has with respect to our capacity to know. What is at issue is whether we are ever in a position to tell which one of these states we are in at any given time. By contrast, Kantian skepticism raises the question of what it is for an experience to be, in Kant's words, a "representation": what it is for it to represent something for me, for it to constitute a thought of an object. Now it seems that that is not something that we could ever be in the position of being mistaken about. It seems that I can't, that is, hold that my experience represents something for me—say, an object's redness—and be wrong about that; and even if I could be

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[11] Thinking of our own sensory experiences as a whole, or others' behavior as a whole, in this way—that is, as mediating our relation to the world, or to others, by giving us *evidence* for their existence—can seem to cast our relation to the external world and to others in such a way that we would already be "separated" from them.

[12] Conant, "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 63. The promise here is that although by resolving the Kantian skeptical question, the Cartesian skeptic's question will not be answered, it won't need to, since an engagement with Kantian skepticism will show that the Cartesian question will not be fully intelligible in the way that the Cartesian skeptic must intend. I take the argument I sketch to be broadly similar in form to that given by John McDowell in "The Disjunctive Conception of Experience as Material for a Transcendental Argument," in *The Engaged Intellect* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 225–240.

wrong about the representational content of a particular experience, it is hard to conceive of the possibility of my being wrong about my experiences representing anything for me at all. That all "this"—that is, my typing these words onto my computer, my desk, my lamp, my room, my house, the town I am familiar with, my neighbors, and so on—is part of a dream or part of reality is something I could find out, or so it would seem prior to philosophical reflection. I can mistake reality for a dream or mistake a dream for reality, and I can conceive of a situation in which I could discover either of these errors—or again, it would seem so prior to philosophical reflection. But it doesn't seem that I could, in the same sense, find out that I am mistaken about what my experience represents for me—whether, say, my experience brings before me something that I conceive of as red, as triangular, as fuzzy, as malodorous, and so on. I can, of course, wonder whether what I see as red, triangular, and fuzzy really is red, triangular, and fuzzy, or whether it is really a red or orange object I seem to see. But if what I see strikes me as not clearly red or clearly orange, then just that characterizes the aspect in which the object is present before my mind, for what is before my mind would then be something that I conceive of as neither clearly red nor clearly orange, but reddish-orange. And whether I come through subsequent examination of the object to make a discovery that resolves the question of whether the object is red or orange, that would not correct how I conceived of the object present before my mind but simply the question of what the object is actually like. Thus Kantian skepticism is not something that could issue in error. I could be in error about whether what my experience brings before my mind is an actual object, as opposed to something that is merely the product of my imagination, such as a dream, but I could not be in error about whether my experience brings something before my mind, gives me something to think about, to judge, to desire, to regret, to reflect upon.

A similar point can be made in connection with the topic of other minds. While it is possible for me to be mistaken with regard to any third-person psychological attribution on the basis of behavior, perhaps even the attribution of consciousness or self-consciousness at all, it is more difficult to imagine being mistaken about whether certain behavior is expressive of pain or of other specific modes of mindedness, such as sadness, dejection, or worry. If, for example, I am witnessing a dance performance on stage, it is hard for me not to see what is happening as an expression of the mindedness of the performers, the characters they are performing, or both. Someone could mimic being in pain on the stage, but that presupposes, after all, that we are able to recognize the behavior as expressive of

someone in pain: that is a condition of our being taken in, just as it is a condition of my being taken in by a lifelike experience, that the experience brings something, so to speak, with the trappings of reality before my mind. It seems that only behavior that is expressive of mindedness could mimic being actually minded, just as only experience that is of objects could mimic being of actual objects. Here, it seems hard to imagine what it would be to be deceived about the expressiveness of behavior, to be deceived about whether groaning, wincing, or writhing on the ground are forms of pain behavior. The idea that these are exhibitions of pain, misleading or not, does not seem to be a matter of establishing some connection between the behavior and the inner state the behavior is supposed to give us "access" to. Rather, it seems to be a matter of seeing the behavior as expressive of pain, seeing the behavior *as* pain behavior, whether it is a reliable indication of pain or not. Further, seeing behavior as expressive of a given mode of mindedness, such as being in pain, seems to be a precondition of judging correctly or incorrectly that the creature before one is in pain. Thus, seeing behavior as expressive of mindedness seems not to be something that it is easy to conceive of one's being in error about. And to the extent that it is conceivable that one could be in error about that, it wouldn't be a matter of being deceived about whether someone is in fact feeling or thinking what his behavior seems to suggest he is feeling or thinking; it would be a matter of being confused about the application of the concept of a fellow human being at all, being confused about how to read human mindedness into the behavior of a physically embodied subject.[13] One can imagine a dispute with someone about whether a person is really sad or just behaving as if she were sad, but it would be hard to know how to get started disputing with someone who simply didn't see what one regarded as the paradigmatic expression of sadness as an expression of sadness at all. Such a person would strike us as disturbingly alien.[14]

How then does one fall into Kantian skepticism at all? In what sense is this a form of skepticism if there is no possibility of error, or if the error is not really a deficiency of knowledge? In the case of other minds, one might distance oneself, either deliberately or non-deliberately, from one's tendency to read the expression of mindedness into familiar forms of behavior by "dehumanizing" someone whom one full well knows to be a fellow human being. Thus, one might pass by a homeless person asking for assistance and barely register it as anything more than an "acoustic

[13] Is it, for example, conceivable that the pot on the stove could feel pain?
[14] Is this situation comparable with that of being in the presence of a "logical alien"?

blast" coming out of his mouth. Admittedly, it may be hard to hear any speech, even speech one doesn't understand, as anything other than the linguistic act of a creature aiming to draw one's attention to his condition. Christine Korsgaard writes, "philosophers have been concerned for a long time about how we understand the meanings of words, but we have not paid enough attention to the fact that it is so hard not to. It is nearly impossible to hear the words of a language you know as mere noise. And this has implications for the supposed privacy of human consciousness. For it means that I can always intrude myself into your consciousness. All I have to do is to talk to you in the words of a language you know, and in that way I can force you to think."[15]

Nonetheless, there are more subtle forms of dehumanization. This could be manifest not just in what one does in response to another's cry of pain but in how one does what one does. For example, one might give the homeless person money, and so to that extent recognize his standing as a person, but fail to look him in the eye when one does so and so fail in that way to appropriately acknowledge his existence and situation. Without filling in more context, this will not be a convincing example, but the general point is that there is such a thing as failing to respond appropriately to the plight of another, and there is no saying in advance what it would be fully to acknowledge another's existence and situation. Such a failure of acknowledgement is not properly classified as an error, a mistake of judgment, or a mistaken belief but as a failure to be responsive to a person as a person—a failure, you might say, of seeing an aspect, to see a creature *as* a human person, *as* a fellow being. One could call such failure "skepticism," but it is not a form of skepticism that is driven by a threat to one's knowledge, since the failure in question cannot be remedied by knowledge. After all, the person described above knows perfectly well that the homeless person is a person but fails to respond in a manner that is befitting of, or expressive of, that knowledge. Stanley Cavell puts what is missing here as a failure of acknowledgement rather than of knowledge. He writes, "a 'failure to know' might just mean a piece of ignorance, an absence of something, a blank. A 'failure to acknowledge' is a presence of something, a confusion, an indifference, a callousness, an exhaustion, a coldness. Spiritual emptiness is not a blank."[16]

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[15] Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 139.

[16] Stanley Cavell, "Knowing and Acknowledging," in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 264.

One can become "distanced" from another here in a way that cannot be captured in terms of the Cartesian idea of a failure of knowledge. In making a claim of knowledge, one stakes oneself to the obtaining of some mind-independent fact. This feature of any knowledge claim underlies the specific form of vulnerability that can pose a threat to knowledge, for it implies that the evidence that one has—sensory experience, the grasping of a proof, an intuition—counts as evidence only insofar as it is appropriately connected to the truth of one's claim. And whether evidence and truth are connected is importantly, though also obviously, not something over which one has any control—if it were within one's control, one's claim would not concern a mind-independent fact. Thus the very idea that a knowledge claim stakes one to the obtaining of a mind-independent fact opens up the threat of a gap between one's evidence and truth, and it is, of course, the threat of such a gap that the skeptic exploits. But the failure to acknowledge another is a failure of a different sort. It is a failure to incorporate in one's response to another one's bond with and one's separateness from another fellow creature, a failure to recognize another creature as another fellow creature, and a failure to recognize what forms of response to such a creature are appropriate in a particular situation. Where knowledge is at issue, we seek to secure a claim against the threat of falsity. That is why the search for knowledge can seem inseparable from the search for certainty, and it is also why the very business of making knowledge claims is inevitably dogged by the threat of (Cartesian) skepticism. But a failure of recognition of the sort described above is not something that one can be protected against by the achievement of certainty. If there is a threat of skepticism here, a threat of failure or distancing, it is one's own doing. One's exposure to the risk of failure here, one's vulnerability, is a matter not of sticking one's neck out by making a claim about a mind-independent object but a matter of exposing oneself to claims that one must recognize another as making on oneself.

I have described a possible manifestation of Kantian skepticism in the case of other minds—a sort of distancing that is a failure of acknowledgement—but what about with respect to oneself, with respect to the contents of one's own mind, with respect to one's own thoughts? To answer this question we need to go into how Kant conceived of the problem of explaining what he called the "conditions of the possibility of experience." As is well known, Kant regarded knowledge as requiring the cooperation of two distinct faculties of cognition, sensibility and understanding. Sensibility is the faculty whose states are produced by the affection of objects on it. It is "the capacity of receiving representations," the faculty through

which "objects are first given to us."[17] It is such a faculty that is assumed by empiricist philosophers, like Locke or Hume, when they speak of perceptions or impressions, or in more current jargon, of "sensations." These are inner states of consciousness in relation to which we are wholly passive, states of consciousness that we are caused to be in by the action of objects on us. The understanding, according to Kant, is the faculty of thought or concepts. He calls it "the power of knowing an object through these representations," the faculty through which "the object is thought in relation to that representation."[18] It is that faculty through the exercise of which I am able to think of an object, to have an object before my mind, to represent an object, and so to reflect on an object—for example, to make a judgment about its properties, to doubt whether the object is actual, to compare it with other objects, and so on. It is through this faculty that we have, as it might be put, an "idea" of an object.

A central doctrinal and methodological principle of empiricism was the thesis that all of our ideas, or at least all of our simple ideas, are derived from corresponding (simple) impressions. This view implicitly denied the distinctness of the faculties that Kant thought it so important to keep distinct, for the empiricists held in effect that the inner states of sensibility were already ideas and hence that sensibility was already the faculty of understanding. That is, they held that all it takes for there to be an idea of an object, for there to be before my mind, an object to reflect upon, is for one's sensibility to be in a particular state. Of course, that way of putting it is open to the criticism that philosophers such as Locke and Hume regard ideas as derived from sensory impressions; they didn't hold that sensory impressions are already ideas. However, the process of derivation was understood in terms of "reflection" on one's sensory impressions, where reflection was a matter of subjecting the impressions to mental operations of comparison and abstraction. And such a process would seem at best to be a matter of clarifying and focusing something that would already have to count as a representation, as bringing an object before the mind. As an account of concept formation, the abstractionist view seems hopelessly circular: it is hard to see how such operations performed on something that is not already conceptual in its form could result in the formation of a concept. Thus, from Kant's point of view, the empiricist's view of concept formation conflated what he insisted on holding apart

[17] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A50/B74.
[18] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A50/B74.

from one another.[19] Kant's oft-quoted remark "intuitions without concepts are blind" gives expression to his criticism of the empiricist conception of "idea" or thought, the view that all it takes to have an idea or a thought is to have a sensation, in the Lockean or Humean sense. It is, he says, true that "without sensibility no object would be given to us." But it is also true that "without understanding no object would be thought." Thus, Kant writes, "it is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing. The senses can think nothing."[20]

I think that we can put Kant's point here in terms of a distinction between two different conceptions of consciousness. On one conception, consciousness is pictured in perceptual terms, in terms of having an object present to one's gaze. And the function that consciousness plays is conceived of as epistemic: by having the object before my consciousness, I am thereby able to know certain things about it. My watch is currently before my consciousness in this sense: it is an object that I am immediately acquainted with, and on the basis of this immediate acquaintance, I am able to know all kinds of things about it, to know certain of its sensory properties—its size, its color, its shape, and so on—and on that basis, to know certain of its non-sensory properties—its make, its age, its functionality, and so on. Similarly, internal states are often conceived of as objects of consciousness in this sense. Ryle called this "the dogma of the mind as a second theatre,"[21] drawing on Hume's metaphor to describe our relation to the contents of reflection: "[T]he mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations."[22] What empiricists like Hume called impressions and ideas were conceived of as internal objects of consciousness so understood, objects of a perception-like immediate acquaintance. But as Hume and others in this tradition held, unlike consciousness of objects outside the mind, which is liable to error of various kinds and from various sources, the mind enjoys constant

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[19] Of course, we need to distinguish between what is before the mind—an object, whether real or unreal—and the idea or representation. To have an object before the mind doesn't require having an idea or representation before the mind. If it did, we would be launched on an infinite regress.

[20] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A51/B75.

[21] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1949), 155.

[22] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), 253.

and error-free apprehension of its own states. Nonetheless, the model for inner consciousness is borrowed from that of outer consciousness, and so the notion of consciousness here is conceived of in the same way, whether the objects are external or internal: as a form of immediate acquaintance that functions to give us knowledge about the object.[23]

On the other conception of consciousness, consciousness is conceived of in terms of activity rather than in terms of perceptual acquaintance; in terms, that is, of being up to something—even if it is being up to nothing in particular. Stuart Hampshire writes, "at any time, when a man is awake and conscious, there is at least one, and generally more than one, answer that he would give to the question—'What are you doing?'"[24] He goes on to qualify this remark so as to preempt an obvious rejoinder. He writes, "I am not suggesting that it is a necessary truth that a man is always doing something active and purposeful, or that it is necessarily senseless for him to answer idiomatically 'I am doing nothing' or 'I am not doing anything in particular,' when he is vacantly musing or resting. But it is a necessary truth—and one of the most important truisms about human beings—that, if a man has been fully conscious for some time, there must be some verbs of action that truthfully summarize what he has been doing during that time."[25]

Hampshire conceives of consciousness not as a state of passive awareness but as having an agential relation to the contents of one's mind and to one's actions in the world; that is, as bearing a relation to one's states and activities such that one is accountable for them.

Hampshire and others, notably Elizabeth Anscombe, have argued that an understanding of what one is up to is constitutive of one's intentionally doing a particular action. Although the thesis itself needs both sharper formulation and defense, the intuitive appeal of the view is easily displayed. I can speak with authority about what I am intentionally doing or what I intend to do. Such authority doesn't seem to be based on evidence from perception or testimony, or even from a quasi-perceptual form of "introspection." Someone can admit to uncertainty about what to do, but this is not theoretical uncertainty, uncertainty that could, at least in

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[23] For a detailing of the disanalogies between introspective awareness and perceptual awareness, see Sydney Shoemaker, "Introspection and the Self," in *The First Person Perspective and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1–25. The existence of all the disanalogies taken together renders suspect the idea that introspective awareness is a species of perception.

[24] Stuart Hampshire, *Thought and Action* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), 93.

[25] Ibid.

principle, be removed by the gathering of evidence. "I don't know what I'm doing" doesn't express a state of mind in which I suppose that there is something definite that I am doing but don't know what it is. Rather, it expresses confusion about what *to* do, what is to be done. Uncertainty of this "practical" sort is removed not by getting more evidence but by making up one's mind about what to do, about what should be done in the particular situation. The reasons one needs here are reasons for *acting* rather than reasons for one's *beliefs* about what one is doing. Thus, consciousness of what one is up to—say, going to withdraw money from the bank—is not a matter of being perceptually acquainted with anything—for example, with my bodily movements—but a matter of understanding what one is aiming to do and resolving to do that action. And further, the point of consciousness here isn't to give us access to some object we seek to know so that we can come to know things about the object. The function of consciousness isn't, in a sense, epistemic at all. Consciousness of this sort is constitutive of its object; in this case, constitutive of it being the case that I am (intentionally) going to withdraw money from the bank. Consciousness is a mark of an action being an intentional action at all, something that I am accountable for. Similarly, it is consciousness of this sort, rather than consciousness of the first sort, that is constitutive of my sensory experience representing an object for me, of my sensory experience bringing an object before my mind. I don't find out what my sensory experience represents by being acquainted with an inner object or by being conscious of an inner object, such as a sensation, leaving aside the question of whether there are any such entities.

The point here is familiar to one made by Wittgenstein, who asked, "How do I know that I am imagining King's College on fire, and not another one just like it?"[26] His point was that, as I remarked earlier, the idea that I need to inspect or to be aware of some inner object in order to know what my experience represents is absurd and miscasts the nature of my relation to my representations. My relation to the intentional object of my representations—the way the object is before my mind, for example, as red, as triangular, as fuzzy—is not itself to be understood in terms of the awareness of something "inner," an object of my "inner gaze." As Hubert Schwyzer nicely puts it, "we are not given an understanding of what it is for someone to perceive, or conceive, what is before his eyes

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[26] Wittgentstein, *Blue Book,* 39. This passage was brought to my attention by its appearance in Richard Moran, *Authority and Estrangement: An Essay on Self-Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 15.

to be red (or be anything) by being told in detail how he is visually affected. No description in terms solely of his sensory states can make manifest what is meant by saying that he has the *thought:* 'this is red (or whatever),' that (its being) red is the (intentional) *object of his mind,* not merely the *content of his state.*"[27]

Now, of course, human sensibility is such that whenever it is affected in a certain way, an object comes before consciousness, something comes before the mind which is thereby available for reflection—this is true even in the case of purely inner awareness, such as in the awareness of pain. But that is a feature of human sensibility in particular, and the question is still left open in virtue of what does sensible affection manage to give me consciousness of an object, to give me an idea or a thought of an object. Is it in virtue simply of being affected by the object, given the sort of capacity for affection I possess? Or is it in virtue of my understanding being drawn into operation by affection, whatever that involves? Kant, of course, argues that it is the latter. Thus Kant is committed to the view that it is possible for sensibility to be affected, and so for a creature to be in the condition of an inner conscious state, without thereby having a representation of an object at all—such would be a creature without thought. We humans, however, do not have such a sensibility—ours is such that when we are affected by sensibility we cannot help but have an idea of the object that affects us, even if it is of something vague and indistinct, such as an indistinct figure that we can't quite make out in the fog.

According to Kant, my relation to the content of my representation is essentially first-personal, not as in the case of a supposed content of inner-sense third-personal. We can see this as the point that is expressed by the oft-quoted passage from §16 of *Transcendental Deduction* in the Second Edition: "[I]t must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me."[28] Kant isn't saying here that a representation is such that I must be conscious of it in the first sense of consciousness described above; that is, in the sense that the representation can be the object of a distinct "higher-order" state of awareness. Rather, he is explaining what constitutes the difference between a state that is representational and a state that doesn't represent anything for me at all. This is, I take it, the point of his adding

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[27] Hubert Schwyzer, *The Unity of Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 72.
[28] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B131.

the clause, "for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me."[29] My sense experience constitutes a representation of an object as F only if I am aware of its doing so. Of course, this claim would need to be properly qualified to be rendered plausible. The point isn't that one must already possess a description that expresses what one's sensory experience represents. One might lack the words to describe exactly what it is that is before one's mind, but one's lack here wouldn't be properly characterized as ignorance about some inner object. Rather, formulating an adequate description would be a matter of clarifying or articulating something that one grasps in only an inchoate or vague way and not a matter of becoming aware of something that had escaped one's notice. The success of any attempt to render what is before one's mind into words would have to be measured against the standard of an understanding of what is before one's mind that such an attempt would necessarily presuppose.

For comparison, we might think here of a speaker's relation to the meaning of her words or an artist's relation to what she draws. It would be absurd not only to suppose that a speaker knows what she means by finding out which words she used, and in which combinations, but to suppose that there is something in her mind she needs to consult to determine what she means. Rather, what a speaker is saying or what an artist is drawing is constituted by the speaker's knowledge of what she is saying or the artist's knowledge of what she is drawing. Thinking—and speaking and drawing—are, in this sense, inherently self-reflexive. Such self-reflexivity is the mark of a rational activity or state. Any act of speech is such that the speaker can put what she is doing in first-person terms; for example, if by saying "open the window," I am asking you to open the window, I must be in a position to formulate what I am doing in first-person terms: "I am asking you to open window." Similarly, any act of thought is something that the thinker could put in first-person terms. For example, if I doubt that p, I must be able to report that that is my state with respect to p; I must, so to speak, be able to say to myself, "I doubt that p," even if I needn't always formulate my doubts and other psychological

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[29] For the reading of this passage presented here, I follow the account in Schwyzer, *Unity of Understanding,* 61–86. More generally, I am indebted to Schwyzer for the understanding of the significance of Kant's notion of the transcendental unity of apperception that guides the way of conceiving of "Kantian skepticism" presented here.

attitudes in the first person.[30] The latter is not a higher-order thought about my lower-order state of thinking—that would be to confuse the two senses of consciousness I described above. Rather, it is just an expression of what I must already understand in having the lower-order thought itself.

Carrying this point over to one's sensory experiences is more controversial, but to the extent that it can, my sensory experiences would be, in the relevant sense, rational states, even though they are not arrived at through reasoning or inference.[31] In a creature that possesses language, a sensory experience is such that it is constituted by how the creature would describe what his sensory experience represents. The description that would be given is an articulation of something that the subject must already conceive or grasp and is not a description of an object to which the subject has some supposed special (perceptual) access. The subject's own description of the content that she experiences is privileged not because she has some privileged access to an inner object but because a representation is such that the subject of the representation grasps what the representation represents—grasps its intentional content—and it follows from this that a representation has a constitutive relation to self-consciousness.[32] Self-reflexivity is built into understanding, since to understand something is to be able to articulate how one understands it. It is in this sense that it must be possible for the "I think" to accompany all my representations.[33,34]

[30] Perhaps it is possible for one to doubt or to believe something without knowing that one does, but in that case one's relation to one's doubt or belief would be third personal: the state would not express what one takes the balance of reasons to support. Thus, it wouldn't be a rational state. For a defense of this view, see Moran, *Authority and Estrangement.*

[31] In any case, many of my rational states are not actually arrived at through rational deliberation or reflection—for example, standing beliefs that I have never reflected upon and perceptual beliefs. Of course, again, what I am speaking of are the sensory experiences of human subjects. The sensory experiences of other animals would not be rational states in the same sense, because they are not constituted by self-consciousness.

[32] Schwyzer puts it thus: "Thinking something to be so, unlike mere sentience, has that intrinsic reflexivity about it. Another way of putting this is to say that whenever one thinks 'p' one's thought *can* take the form 'I think p.' If something could not take that form, it would not be my *thought* (or *my* thought), it would not be a case of my portraying how things are for me" (Schwyzer, *Unity of Understanding,* 81).

[33] Kant describes the understanding itself as the "faculty of apperception." He writes, "The synthetic unity of apperception is therefore that highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding, even the whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy. Indeed this faculty of apperception is the understanding itself"(Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B134).

[34] Of course, what my sensory experiences represent is dependent on how my senses are affected. I wouldn't be representing an indistinct figure in the fog were it not the case that my senses are affected as they are, but my representing what I do through the affection of my

Consciousness of an intentional object, the consciousness that is involved in having a thought or sensory experience that brings an object before my mind so that I can reflect on it, is not a matter of inner consciousness of a perceptual kind. It is, I have suggested, the consciousness that is a necessary feature of the active mind. According to Kant, spontaneity is the mark of the understanding, as receptivity is the mark of sensibility. This distinction corresponds to the two ways I have described of marking the distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness, say, between waking and sleeping. The difference isn't between a subject who is sentient or self-conscious in the empiricist's sense of having higher-order states of awareness directed onto his lower states of awareness; rather, it is between someone who, while asleep, is snoring, tugging on his blanket, and squirming around in his bed, and someone who is actively doing something—performing actions in the world for which he is accountable.

What, then, is the relevant form of mental activity in connection with which there is self-consciousness of the intentional object of a sensory experience? Kant's answer is that it is the activity of applying concepts to the object, or what he calls "judgment."[35] It is through the act, or state, of judgment that my sensory experiences provide my mind with material for thought. This can seem to get the relation between judgment and sensory experience backwards. Sensory experience is what is supposed to give me acquaintance with an object, and it is on the basis of such acquaintance that I am then in a position to ascribe certain properties to an object. Sensory experience provides one with potential evidence that could serve as the basis for making this or that claim about its objects, and judgment is a matter of weighing the evidence and making up one's mind on the matter. Something like that may well be true when it comes to the epistemic function of sensory experience (although I will go on to explain what is wrong with this way of describing one's relation

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sensibility isn't, so to speak, a further act of knowledge performed on the inner state of my sensibility. If it were, it would be the inner state of my sensibility that would be the object of my knowledge or consciousness rather than the content that is represented by my experience; say, an indistinct figure in the fog. The self-consciousness of the representation is not a separate higher-order conscious state that takes a given conscious state as its object; rather, it is constitutive of a representation—in Aristotelian terms, self-consciousness is the form or the formal cause of the representation, and sensible affection is the material cause.

[35] Kant writes, "The manifold given in sensible intuition is necessarily subject to the original synthetic unity of apperception, because in no other way is the unity of intuition possible (§17). But that act of understanding by which the manifold of given representations (be they intuitions or concepts) is brought under one apperception, is the logical function of judgment" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B143).

to one's sensory experience), but what is at issue here is what explains what Conant calls "the objective purport" of experience. And in connection with the Kantian rather than the Cartesian question, it is the empiricists who get things exactly backward. Sensory experience has an intentional object, brings an object before my mind, only because I can give voice to it in a judgment. Sensory experience has intentional content because it plays a necessary role in the activity of bringing the objects of experience to judgment. For example, my sensory experience represents for me its object as red, triangular, and fuzzy, just in case I am aware of it as giving me a ground—a reason—for judging that the object is red, triangular, and fuzzy. My sensory experience brings something before my mind because it is the vehicle by which I actualize my power to judge, for example, a judgment of the form 'S is F'.

According to Kant, the content of even a passive state such as sensory experience has a share in spontaneity, since its content is constituted by the self-consciousness of the power of judgment. It is worth explaining the notions of passivity and activity that are in play here, since they are easily confused. In one sense of passivity, we have a passive relation to our sensory experiences in that we don't exercise any control over what sensory experiences we have. They come about in us; we don't bring them about. However, passivity so conceived doesn't seem to distinguish our relation to our sensory experiences from, say, our relation to our judgments, theoretical or practical. And these are often regarded as paradigmatic examples of spontaneity, of the active character of the mind. We don't have any control over what we believe. Our beliefs also come about in us; we don't bring them about. For one thing, coming to believe isn't itself an action or an event. Judging, whether it's forming a belief or forming an intention, doesn't take time: it's not that it has an instantaneous duration; it has no duration at all. It is not of the logical category of events, entities that have a duration.[36] Nor are they states that are the products of actions, say, the action of deliberation. First, even if judgments are beliefs formed on the basis of reflection, many, perhaps the vast majority, of our beliefs and intentions are not products of prior reflection. Second, even if a belief is a product of deliberation, it would still need to explained what it is that maintains a belief once it is generated. A rock painted red stays red over time because of the physical properties of the rock, but what, so to speak, keeps a belief in place once formed? Why doesn't it

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[36] This point is forcefully defended by P. T. Geach, "What Do We Think With?" in *God and the Soul* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 30–41.

just, so to speak, fade away? Both of these points suggest that if we have an "active" relation to our beliefs and intentions, it must be a relation that is independent of questions about how they come to be formed.

In what sense, then, is my relation to my sensory experiences an active one, given that the notion of activity here is not one of bringing something about? I have an active, first-person relation to my judgments in that I am aware of the reasons that support the judgment. The idea is that to judge that p is to be aware of p as something that is to be believed, something that one takes oneself to have reason to believe. This implies that the subject has an "active" relation to her judgment, not in the sense that the subject brings it about that she judges or believes, but in the sense that she is accountable for her judgment or belief. Her judgment or belief is answerable to the request for reasons that support it, and that is because it is constituted in the first place by the subject's normative awareness, her awareness that what she judges or believes is *to be* judged or *to be* believed. This is why, at least in the normal case, one knows what one believes by considering what *to* believe.[37] And if one doesn't know what one believes, the failure here is not just epistemic in character, for what the subject lacks here cannot be supplied by some other way of knowing what one believes; for example, knowing what one believes on the basis of testimony or on the basis of behavioral evidence. As Richard Moran argues, even if one does come to have well-grounded confidence on such a basis that one has a particular belief, that could not by itself restore the ordinary first-person relation that one has to what one believes, for in that case there would be a gap between what one takes oneself to have reason to believe and what one does in fact believe, a gap that cannot be removed by knowledge, either of what one has reason to believe or of what one in fact believes. The failure here is not an epistemic one, but, broadly speaking, a failure of "agency" or self-determination, a failure of constituting oneself as a knowing subject at all. Thus one's awareness of what one believes is misconstrued by thinking of it in terms of "access," privileged or otherwise. Self-consciousness here

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[37] This is, of course, a description of what is commonly called the "transparency condition" on self-knowledge of one's psychological states. For elaboration and defense of this idea, see Moran, *Authority and Estrangement*. It would be of interest to compare this idea with the following remark by Kant: "But if I investigate more precisely the relation of the given modes of knowledge in any judgment, from the relation according to laws of reproductive imagination, which has only subjective validity, I find that a judgment is nothing but the manner in which given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of apperception" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B141).

is constitutive of the rationality of one's states and not something that serves simply as a vehicle of critically revising one's beliefs according to norms of belief revision.

It follows from the self-determining or active character of judgment and belief that it is constitutive of these states that there is self-consciousness of their grounds, for it would be inconsistent with the self-determining nature of these states if they were based on grounds that one is not aware of as a ground. Suppose, then, that my sensory experience purports to present a particular object to me and to acquaint me with its properties, such as its size, shape, color, and so on. Ordinarily, unless I have some reason for suspecting that in the particular circumstance there is reason to take my experience at less than face value, I would judge that the object before me indeed has the size, shape, color, and so on that my experience purports to acquaint me with. And I would make such a judgment, or come to have such a belief, on the basis of my sensory experience, in the sense that I would take my sensory experience to give me a good reason for so judging or believing. An ordinary person would put this by saying something like: "I believe (know) that the object has such and such a size, shape, or color on the basis of seeing that it does." My "taking" my sensory experience to constitute a reason is not a further belief that I bring to bear on the situation. If it were, then it would be an open question whether what my sensory experience presents me with is indeed a reason for forming the corresponding judgment or belief. I would not grasp what my sensory experience presents as even a possible reason for forming the corresponding judgment or belief. In this sense, my sensory experience belongs to my self-consciousness as a rational subject. This could not be so if it were never the case that sensory experience furnished sufficient grounds for judgment or belief. Of course, it is possible for one to be mistaken: one's sensory experience may not be veridical, and as a result one's belief would not constitute knowledge, even if through some lucky accident it happened to be true. But if even in the veridical situations, what one's sensory experience presented did not give one sufficient reason for forming the corresponding belief, that would conflict with the idea that perceptual judgment is judgment formed on the self-conscious apprehension of one's perceptions as giving one reasons for judgment.[38]

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[38] An argument similar to the above can be found in John McDowell, *Perception as a Capacity for Knowledge* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011).

Thomas Nagel points out that it is nearly impossible to incorporate skeptical possibilities into one's thinking in ordinary life. He writes, "it is clear that our beliefs arise from certain dispositions and experiences which, so far as we know, don't guarantee their truth and are compatible with radical error. The trouble is that we can't fully take on the skepticism that this entails, because we can't cure our appetite for belief, and we can't take on this attitude toward our own beliefs while we're having them. . . . The thought 'I'm a professor at New York University, unless of course I'm a brain in a vat' is not one that can represent my general integrated state of mind."[39] The problem with incorporating skeptical reflections into my ordinary thought is that it places me at such a distance from my own sensory experiences that it becomes unintelligible what it could be to know something on the basis of it. Knowing, for example, what time it is on the basis of consulting a clock is, of course, vulnerable to the malfunctioning of a clock. This cannot, however, form the beginning of posing a skeptical problem. This isn't just because there are other clocks I could consult but because, even if any clock I consulted were in error, the consultation of clocks is not the only way I have of finding out the time. It is no part of my very conception of myself as a knower, at least potentially, of the time. Clocks are objects that I, as a matter of fact, employ to tell the time because I have reason to believe that the features that it displays over time correlate in a reliable way to whatever the present time is. Clocks are not part of the self-consciousness of a knowing subject, the consciousness one has of oneself as a knower. And in fact none of the instruments that I employ in obtaining knowledge of the world belong to my self-consciousness as a knower. It could well be that the only way that I could know certain matters of fact is with the aid of such instruments; for example, with the aid of a telescope, a microscope, or computer modeling. But even in cases where the use of an instrument of knowledge is indispensable, I would still conceive of the instrument as precisely that—as external to myself and as no part of my conception of myself as a knower.

A similar point can be made about the testimony of others. It seems difficult to construct a skeptical argument that begins from noting the unreliability of the testimony of others, even while granting that a great deal of what we know, we know only through testimony. One could acknowledge that every person is an unreliable source of knowledge about the world one shares with them, without thereby admitting that one's

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[39] Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 88.

fundamental epistemic position in relation to the world is threatened, since, arguably, that particular way of knowing what we do is not fundamental to our very consciousness of ourselves as knowers. It is tempting to model our relation to our senses as a basis of knowledge about the world outside us on the relation to such external vehicles of knowledge. And in fact I think that the Cartesian skeptical framework I described earlier does precisely that. The reason that I cannot treat my sensory experience as merely an external instrument of knowing is that I must, insofar as I conceive of myself as making knowledge claims at all, conceive of my sensory experience as giving the ground of judgment. But I cannot be aware of sensory experience as the ground of my judgment unless sensory experiences could immediately reveal objects and their properties. Our relation to our sensory experience is not to be modeled on our relation to external instruments of knowing. Rather, our relation to our sensory experiences is internal to the possibility of making a knowledge claim at all. Our senses are not just vehicles of judgment to which we just so happen to be yoked but are, rather, the necessary vehicle by which our power of knowing is self-determined. Earlier, I presented Kant's argument that a condition of sensory experience representing an object "for me," for my reflective consideration, is that it present material for forming the relevant judgments. Here, we encounter a dependence that goes in the other direction.[40]

What I have sketched could be called a "transcendental argument," one that moves from the idea that sensory experience brings a representational content before the mind, to the claim that my relation to my sensory experience must be such that my sensory experiences give me reason to form the corresponding beliefs or judgments. Insofar as this is incompatible with the conception of one's relation to one's sensory experiences that is implicit in the formulation of the question to which Cartesian skepticism is a (negative) answer, this line of argument, if successfully carried through, would show that Cartesian skepticism about the external world "founders in incoherence," as Conant put it.

There are many questions that would need to be answered in order fully to defend the line of argument I have sketched. For example, it would need to be shown that judgment or belief is constituted by self-consciousness, and if so, whether it is best explained in terms of a kind

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[40] Kant writes of the pure concepts of the understanding, the categories, "only our sensible and empirical intuition can give to them body and meaning" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B149).

of normative awareness that is constitutive of belief or judgment; it would also need to be shown that sensory experience is constituted by self-consciousness, and if it is, whether this is best explained by the idea that sensory experience, at least in rational subjects, is essentially a vehicle for the self-determination of the capacity to judge. Hopefully, I have sketched the argument in enough detail and with enough intuitive plausibility so as to encourage further consideration.

Before concluding, it may be helpful to compare the structure of the line of argument I have presented with Barry Stroud's conception of a transcendental argument in his well-known paper of that title.[41] According to Stroud, transcendental arguments seek to show that the skeptic occupies an incoherent position. And they seek to do so by showing that the beliefs that the skeptic subjects to global doubt—for example, beliefs about the external world—are actually a condition of having beliefs about that which the skeptic not only does not, but must not, bring into doubt if he is so much as to formulate his skeptical doctrine—for example, beliefs about his own sensory experiences and thoughts. Stroud famously objected that transcendental arguments, so understood, establish, at best, a psychological claim, a claim about what I must *believe*, given that I have certain other beliefs. Interesting as such an argument might be as a statement about a kind of necessary interdependence between my beliefs that is not merely logical or inferential in nature, what it shows is a kind of subjective necessity rather than an objective necessity: a necessity concerning what I must *believe* rather than a necessity concerning what must be the case outside of my mind. Thus, Stroud argued that in order for a transcendental argument to do any anti-skeptical work, it would have to be combined with idealism or verificationism, which would need to be brought in to bridge the gap between what I must believe and what the world must be like.

The transcendental argument I have presented here has a different structure. The argument isn't just that in order to have beliefs with a certain content, namely an inner content—beliefs that are directed to my own psychological states—I must have beliefs that have a different content, an outer content—beliefs that are directed to objects in the world. Rather, the argument I have sketched begins from the claim that my relation to my own experiences is not one in which it is merely an object of "internal consciousness"; rather, my experience is constituted by the "I

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[41] Barry Stroud, "Transcendental Arguments," in *Understanding Human Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9–26.

think," which figures as a condition of my sensory experience representing anything "for me" at all. The argument moves from there to the claim that it is a condition of my sensory experience having representational content that I conceive of myself as making judgments about the objects of experience on its basis. And then it moves to the conclusion that I must regard my sensory experience as a whole as a source of reasons for such judgments. That I so conceive of my sensory experiences isn't just a belief I have about them—for then it would stand in need of justification—but is constitutive of my making claims about the world at all. And this is because a claim about the world is constituted by the normative awareness that one ought to make the claim. And, as I argued, this normative awareness is not a separate, higher-order state of consciousness but is implicit in the first-order state of believing or judging that p. To make a judgment at all, or to have a belief at all, is to assume accountability for the judgment or belief—and, it could be added, to do so is to constitute oneself as a self.

At the beginning of this chapter, I raised the question of why answering the Kantian skeptical question might hold out the prospect of showing what is wrong with the familiar Cartesian model of our relation to the world, a model on which I am separated from the object I seek to know by the screen of my own sensory experiences. What both forms of skepticism have in common is the failure to distinguish the two senses of consciousness described in this chapter. Consequently, both forms of skeptical question arise from thinking of one's relation to one's sensory experiences in third-person terms. But conceiving of one's relation to one's sensory experience in this way has a consequence that is worse than that which is represented by Cartesian skepticism. It has the consequence of our not being able to understand how our sensory experiences could represent anything at all, could bring an object before the mind. I tried to sketch an argument, based loosely on Kant, that shows that once it is seen that a first-person relation to one's sensory experiences is necessary if they are to bring anything before the mind at all, the resources for combatting Cartesian skepticism are ready at hand. The point can be put using the language I employed at the beginning of the paper—the idea of "distancing" or "separation." Cartesian skepticism is a manifestation not of distancing from the world but of distancing from one's sensory experience. Cartesian skepticism figures the world as lying behind the screen of my experience because it implicitly conceives of my "relation" to my own experience, my "relation" to myself, on the model of my relation to another's experience. Cartesian skepticism rests on a failure to grasp the

implications of the first person nature of human experience. So understood, Cartesian skepticism questions what we cannot fail to know and treats it as a piece with that, with regard to which a failure of knowledge at least makes sense. In this sense, it treats one's relation to oneself on the model of a third person relation to an object. Cartesian skepticism rests on a failure to acknowledge fully the conditions of being minded at all, of being a self. One constitutes oneself as a self, one might say, by assuming accountability *for* one's judgments. And one constitutes oneself as a particular self distinct from other selves, by assuming accountability *to* others for one's actions. It is by assuming accountability for oneself in the first sense that one has a world to know. It is by assuming accountability for oneself in the second sense that others exist for one as other selves to be known. This would be a way of putting what Stanley Cavell calls "the truth of skepticism," the idea that neither our relation to the world nor our relation to others is one of knowing. I have a relation to the world and to others by constituting myself as a responsible subject.[42,43]

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[42] See Stanley Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of King Lear," in *Must We Mean What We Say?,* 324.

Logical Aliens and the "Ground" of Logical Necessity

Barry Stroud

At the beginning of "The Search for Alien Thought," James Conant tells us that Descartes thought the laws of logic were only contingently necessary, Aquinas thought they were necessarily necessary, Kant thought they were simply necessary, Frege "wanted to agree" with Kant but this "raised the worry that there was no way in which to express his agreement that made sense," and Wittgenstein agreed with that "worry."[1] This is where the paper began, and now, twenty years later, how are we to respond to this battle of the giants?

What I find most problematic in this array of views is the idea of the laws of logic as "contingently necessary"—or indeed, the idea of *anything's* being "contingently necessary." It could be said for that option that at least it leaves room for the kind of question many philosophers have asked or wanted to ask about necessary truth. And it is the question from which Conant begins.

He asks first, "What is the status of the laws of logic?" That could be asking simply whether they are necessary or contingent, or perhaps how they are known—their "epistemic" status. But he also asks, "Wherein does their necessity lie?" That seems to be a different question. Something different also seems to be at stake in his asking, pointedly, "*In what sense* does the negation of a basic law of logic represent an impossibility?"[2] I say he asks "pointedly" because his question seems to ask for some-

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[1] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus,*" this volume, 27–100.
[2] Ibid., this volume, 28.

thing more than the flat-footed answer "the negation of a basic law of logic represents an impossibility in the sense that it represents something that is necessarily false, or could not possibly have been true."

What Conant's question apparently seeks is some *explanation* of the necessity of necessary truths, or of the impossibility of their being false. What seems to be wanted is some account of "the ground" or "source" of their necessity.[3] This is what the idea of necessary truths as only "contingently necessary" seems to leave room for. It appears to countenance the possibility of explaining *how* or *why* something is necessary, or holds necessarily, even though what explains it is something that *could* have been otherwise or *could* have failed to be so. But can we understand the necessity of truths we now regard as necessary as due to something contingent? To do so, it looks as if we would have to regard those truths as necessary while at the same time thinking, no doubt from an appropriately detached viewpoint, that although they are necessary, they are only "contingently necessary." That seems to imply that they would have failed to hold, or failed to hold necessarily, under certain conditions. This is what I find problematic.

Thinking that some necessary truths are only contingently necessary would not mean that we have to agree with what Descartes thought accounted for the necessity of necessary truths. But we would have to accept something we see *could* have been otherwise, which nonetheless explains "wherein lies the necessity" of the necessary truths we accept or what the "ground" or "source" of that necessity is. That explanation, whatever it might be, would presumably be offered as an answer to a certain question about the source or basis or explanation of necessary truth. But is there such a question we can envisage having a satisfactory answer to? What would an illuminating *explanation* of the necessity of necessary truths look like? And how, exactly, would it explain the necessity? If we can make no sense of having such an explanation, can anything be intelligibly said about the "source" or "ground" of the necessity of the necessary truths we accept?

I don't mean to deny that we can come to understand and in that sense explain to ourselves and others why a certain truth holds necessarily. We can come to understand why a certain thing *must* be so, even if we had not seen or understood that necessity at first. We can understand that it must be so, given that certain other things we know are so. When the college reunion is finally over, for instance, the number of graduates who

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[3] Ibid., this volume, 48.

have shaken hands at the party an odd number of times must be an even number. Given how many people it takes to make a handshake, we can see why the number in question must be even, and we can explain it to anyone who considers taking a survey or starts counting each person's handshakes.

But that kind of explanation does not seem possible in trying to explain the necessity of *all* necessary truths. A completely general explanation would presumably require that there be no unexplained or independent appeal to something already accepted as holding necessarily as part of the explanation of all necessities. The complete generality of the philosophical task appears to rule that out. It rules it out necessarily, one is tempted to add. It is that completely general question about the explanation or source of *all* necessity that I cannot envisage having a satisfactory answer to.

Coming now to Kant and Frege, I have some doubts about what Conant calls the "worry" he thinks Frege faces in expressing what he "wants to agree" with in Kant. I think I see what the difficulty is, and I think I see how Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* hopes to avoid it. But I don't think I see how or why Frege faces that difficulty or has to fall into it. That is a question about the interpretation of Frege. Leaving Frege aside for the moment, I don't see why such a "worry" must arise for anyone who wants to agree with what Conant says Kant believes. What Kant is said to believe is that the laws of logic are necessary (or "simply necessary"). It is difficult to tell whether Frege agrees or "wanted to agree" with that, because Frege never speaks about the *modality* of the laws of logic at all. They are, he says, "the most general laws of truth." ("Laws of truth," not "laws of nature" as Hilary Putnam puts it in a passage Conant quotes twice.[4]) So what is it that Frege "wanted to agree" with in Kant?

Kant is said to believe that the laws of logic are necessary (or "simply necessary"). That could mean that the laws of logic hold necessarily, or it could mean only that the laws of logic are necessary in the sense of being necessary or indispensable for something—for thought, say, or rational thought (if that is different). To say only that the laws are necessary or required for thought is not, strictly speaking, to say anything one way or the other about the modal status of those laws themselves. Even to say that they are necessary or required for the possibility of thought seems to leave open the question of whether they themselves hold neces-

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[4] Ibid., this volume, 48, 68.

sarily. That is not because I think there is any doubt about whether the laws hold necessarily, but because I think the laws' holding necessarily does not follow from their being necessary for thought. Kant, in his pervasive use of "necessary" and "necessity," is not always careful about the difference between these two readings. And I think the difference is relevant to the difficulty or "worry" Conant thinks Frege is confronted with in his wish to agree with Kant. Whether there is a difficulty, and if so, what it is, depends on which of the two readings of Kant it is that Frege is said to "want to agree" with.

Conant says, "Frege inherits the Kantian idea that accord with the laws of logic is constitutive of the possibility of thought" and "therefore inherits (a great deal of) Kant's philosophical conception of the status of the laws of logic (as constitutive of the possibility of rational thought)."[5] This is the source of the difficulty he thinks Frege falls into because Conant thinks it leads Frege eventually to the conclusion that "there cannot be logical aliens. . . . beings who fit this description are an impossibility."[6] The difficulty is that

> [t]his makes it seem as if, following Frege, what we have done is grasped . . . what it would be for beings to be able to think in this remarkable way—and subsequently gone on to reject this possibility. We think of ourselves as rejecting the possibility of *something*: illogical thought . . . we take the sentences "illogical thought is impossible" or "we cannot think illogically" to indeed present us with *thoughts* . . . The attempt to say that illogical thought is something that *cannot* be, to say that it involves a transgression of the limits of thought, requires that we be able to draw the limit.[7]

If what leads into this quandary is the view that logic is "constitutive of the possibility of thought," or "the possibility of rational discourse,"[8] what reasons are there for attributing that view to Frege? Conant appeals to Frege's remark that the laws of logic are "the most general laws of thought . . . [which] prescribe universally the way in which one ought to think if one is to think at all."[9] But I don't see that passage as making a claim about something's being "constitutive of the possibility of thought." Frege says this about the laws of logic in the course of explaining the

[5] Ibid., this volume, 60.
[6] Ibid., this volume, 83.
[7] Ibid., this volume, 83–84.
[8] Ibid., this volume, 83.
[9] Ibid., this volume, 59.

sense in which those laws can be described as laws of thought. They prescribe or stipulate "the way in which one ought to think," he says, but he adds:

> Any law asserting what is, can be conceived as prescribing that one ought to think in conformity with it, and is thus in that sense a law of thought. This holds for laws of geometry and physics no less than for laws of logic. The latter have a special title to the name "laws of thought" only if we mean to assert that they are the most general laws, which prescribe universally the way in which one ought to think if one is to think at all.[10]

So what is special about laws of logic among all other laws that assert what is so is only that they "prescribe universally"; they are laws of truth or laws of thought that prescribe how one ought to think about any subject matter whatsoever. Only in that sense are they "laws of thought" in any distinctive way, different from other laws that assert what is so. I don't think this supports the idea that the laws of logic are in any other sense "constitutive of the possibility of thought."

In further support of attributing this "Kantian" view to Frege, Conant says, "The absolute generality of the laws of logic, for Frege, is tied to their ultimate ground in pure thought alone."[11] This raises the question of what such a "ground" or "ultimate ground" of the laws of logic would be. Is it something that would explain or account for the distinctive character or special modality of the laws of logic? And what would it be for that "ultimate ground" to be revealed as lying in "pure thought alone"? Is Frege concerned with these difficult, obscure questions?

Frege does speak of the "ground," or even the "ultimate ground," of certain truths. A truth counts as analytic, he says, if "the ultimate ground upon which rests the justification for holding it to be true" is only laws of logic (and perhaps definitions).[12] Laws of logic alone are the "ultimate ground" of analytic truths, but that says nothing about the "ground" or justification of laws of logic themselves, or even about our "ground" for holding them to be true. "The question why and with what right we acknowledge a law of logic to be true," Frege says, "logic can answer

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[10] Gottlob Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. Montgomery Furth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 12.

[11] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 60.

[12] Gottlob Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic,* trans. J. L. Austin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 3.

only by reducing it to another law of logic."[13] That leaves the "ground" or justification of those laws themselves so far unexplained. It says nothing to suggest that there even could be such an explanation. Nor does it suggest that the "ultimate ground" of the laws of logic, if there is one, lies in "pure thought alone."

The idea that their "ultimate ground" lies in "pure thought alone," or that they are "constitutive of the possibility of thought," is what seems to lead into the quandary about the laws of logic. It can perhaps make it seem simply impossible to think (or think rationally) without accepting or abiding by those laws, that genuine thought could not possibly violate them. This is the way I think Conant understands Frege's opposition to the so-called psychologistic logicians. Those "logicians" hold that some men or other beings could be capable of judgments contradicting our laws of logic. And I think Conant sees Frege as wanting to argue in opposition that such beings are simply impossible; there could be no such logical aliens. Conant calls this "the conclusion of [Frege's] argument against psychologism."[14] And the "worry" or difficulty he sees is that in reaching that conclusion and "affirming the negation"[15] of the psychologistic thesis, Frege would have had to entertain that rejected doctrine as at least a judgable content of thought. He would have to have had a thought that the conclusion of his own argument says is not a possible thought. He would have had to transcend what his view holds to be the limits of thought in order to think and assert that those limits lie where they do.

Frege certainly opposes any such psychologistic conception of logic. But there is a question whether his opposition takes the form of an attempted demonstration of the impossibility of anyone's having thoughts that contradict our laws of logic. Frege makes it clear that the real focus of his dispute with psychologism is the proper understanding of the idea of truth.[16] The psychologistic logician appears to hold that the sense of the word "true" includes a reference to the subjects who judge; but for Frege, "one could scarcely falsify the sense of the word "true" more mischievously."[17] That "falsification" of the idea of truth is presumably extended by the psychologistic logician to *all* judgments about anything whatever, not just to laws of logic. But then there would appear to be no

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[13] Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* 13.

[14] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 83.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* 15.

[17] Ibid., 14.

judging at all of anything objective or independent of the judging subject. Frege goes into this matter at considerable length in his attack on the views of Herr B. Erdmann in the introduction to the *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*.[18]

I do not see Frege's opposition to psychologism as an attempt to demonstrate the negation of the psychologistic logician's doctrine. Far from claiming that thought would be simply impossible without acceptance of our laws of logic, Frege appears to remain noncommittal on that question. He admits,

> If we step away from logic, we may say: we are compelled to make judgments by our own nature and by external circumstances; and if we do so, we cannot reject this law—of Identity, for example; we must acknowledge it unless we wish to reduce our thought to confusion and finally renounce all judgment whatever. I shall neither dispute nor support this view; I shall merely remark that what we have here is not a logical consequence.[19]

He goes further. He points out that even if it is impossible for us to reject the law of identity, for instance,

> this impossibility of our rejecting the law in question hinders us not at all in supposing beings who do reject it; where it hinders us is in supposing that these beings are right in so doing, it hinders us in having doubts whether we or they are right.[20]

This appears to grant the possibility of beings who do not accept the law of identity, for instance. We can suppose that there could be such people, or at least we are not in a position to deny it. But the question is what we could make of such beings, whether we could understand what they think and do.

In response to the alleged discovery of beings "whose laws of thought flatly contradicted ours and therefore led to contrary results even in practice," Frege tells us he would say that "we have here a hitherto unknown type of madness."[21] I take Frege to say that he could make no sense of those beings or of what they are doing. We are familiar with certain kinds of madness, and we think we sometimes have some idea of what those

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[18] Ibid., 12–25.
[19] Ibid., 15.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 14.

afflicted with it are up to. But to speak of a new and hitherto unknown type of madness suggests that in this case we are simply baffled and can make no real or lasting sense of its victims. Conant sees Frege's invocation of "madness" as his reaching for a positive description of those who violate the laws of logic—something about them that might explain the "source" of the distinctive character or authority of those laws, or perhaps even reveal the "ultimate ground" of those laws in "pure thought alone." But Frege's use of the term "madness" does not seem to offer any positive explanation along those lines. In the end it is nothing more than what Conant calls a "philosophically innocuous idea" of "merely lunatic thought"[22]—as if we knew what *that* is.

In his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* Wittgenstein presents many examples of what appear to be deviant ways of inferring, calculating, weighing things, or even selling wood. He quotes Frege's remark about the apparent madness we encounter in such examples and observes that "Frege never said what this 'madness' would really be like."[23] I think there is good reason for that. When we press the descriptions of those apparently deviant ways of proceeding far enough and try to get a consistent picture of them, I think we cannot really make full sense of such people. Up to a point, we can give them the benefit of the doubt, as we say. Or better, we can give them the benefit of humanity. But beyond a certain point in trying to conceive of such beings, they become more and more impenetrable to us. As Wittgenstein puts it in another connection, "We cannot find our feet with them" [Or perhaps, "We cannot find ourselves in them"].[24] If this is right, it could explain Frege's finding nothing more than a "hitherto unknown type of madness" in beings said to think in accord with laws of logic that flatly contradict our own.

Even if we find the possibility of people like that more and more mysterious as the description of their practices is expanded, it does not mean we can make no sense at all of "illogical thought." That is something we can recognize from time to time, in particular isolated invalid inferences, or in someone's accepting the falsity of a logical law. Even the idea that the laws of logic are "constitutive of the possibility of thought" must

[22] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 82.

[23] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics,* eds. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), I §152.

[24] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Philosophy of Psychology: A Fragment, §325.

presumably allow for occasional deviance. So I don't think Frege's atti-
tude to "illogical thought" forces him into the difficulty or "worry"
Conant describes. That difficulty is said to arise because if "there isn't
any sense to be made of the idea of someone (even God!) entertaining
the falsity of a basic logical law," Frege's "account of judgment fails to
leave room for anything which could count as judging a basic logical
law to be true."[25] But is that really a difficulty for Frege?

Surely Frege could recognize cases of logically fallacious reasoning
when he saw them. He could see that the thinker had violated a general
law of truth, and so could not be right in what he was thinking. Frege
himself at one time accepted something as a law of logic that is not true.
He committed himself to the truth of his Basic Law V in the course of
deducing the truths of arithmetic from truths of logic alone. He certainly
acknowledged, and so made sense of, his having judged or put that law
forward as true, even though it is false and he came to see that it is. So I
don't see a difficulty for Frege in making sense of someone's judging a
law of logic to be true when it *is* true. Someone who deduces "Socrates
is mortal" from "All men are mortal" and "Socrates is a man" could be
understood to be doing just that.

What Frege cannot grant is that someone whom he recognizes to be
engaging in "illogical thought" or accepting the falsity of a law of logic
is *right* in thinking as he does. In that sense, Frege could be said to ac-
cept the idea that the laws of logic are "constitutive of the possibility of
rational (or *correct*) thought." But that is just to say that the laws of logic
are laws of truth. And what the "illogical" thinker accepts is in violation
of the truth. That is something we can say about anyone to whom we
attribute false beliefs, whatever the subject matter of those beliefs hap-
pens to be. In general, the more falsity we have to attribute to thinkers'
beliefs in making sense of them, the more "deviant," or difficult to un-
derstand, they become. But because the laws of logic are universal laws
of truth for all thinking about anything, attributing falsity to the logical
beliefs of others threatens more quickly to render them more completely
mysterious and impenetrable than attributing falsity to their other less
general beliefs. With laws of logic, the most general truths of all, there is
less room for tolerable, but still intelligible, deviance.

We must attribute truth as much as possible to those whose thinking
we are trying to make sense of because we are, perforce, trying to under-
stand those others as part of the very world we also inhabit and under-

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[25] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 70.

stand. We cannot do that without accepting a great many things as true; that is what it is for us to have a world within which we can understand anything, including the thoughts of others. And given the complete generality of the laws of logic, the range of intelligibly deviant attribution is smallest with them. Does this show or suggest that the "ultimate ground" of the laws of logic lies "in pure thought alone"? I can't see that it does. Does it even show or suggest that there *is* such a thing as the "ultimate ground" of the truths of logic?

Not having an answer to that question does not seem to prevent us from agreeing that the laws of logic are necessary in the sense of holding necessarily, with no possibility of their being or having been false. That is one way of taking what Kant is said to have believed. I mentioned that Frege appears to take no stand on the question of whether the laws of logic are necessary in that sense. But I assume (perhaps rashly) that if Frege accepted a law of logic to the effect that if something *P* is true then something *Q* is true, he would not be reluctant to say that if *P* is true then *Q* must be true.

I think we have to grant that some truths are necessary in this sense. But that idea of necessity, for those who accept it, does not seem to me to offer much promise of a satisfactory *explanation* of that distinctive modal status. I return to the question of what such an explanation would be. I take it that modal terms like "necessary" and "possible" are irreducible to others. There is no prospect of simply defining the idea of necessity or reducing it to some equivalent but fully non-modal terms. That is not to be expected.

If the laws of logic are thought of as holding necessarily, is there some prospect of understanding the nature or source of that necessity in the thought that the laws of logic are "constitutive of the possibility of thought"? To say they are "constitutive of the possibility of *rational* or *correct* thought" would be to say only that they are laws of truth; they prescribe that one ought to think in conformity with them. But *all* truths are in that sense "constitutive of the possibility of *correct* thought." Only those thoughts that are in accord with truths are true or correct thoughts.

Saying that the laws of logic are "constitutive of the possibility of thought" could mean that the laws of logic state what must be so if thought is to be possible—there could be no thought, or no possibility of thought, if those laws were not true. One obstacle to explaining necessity in this way is that this is itself a claim of necessity: that the truths stated by the laws of logic are themselves necessary conditions of the possibility of thought. Even if that is true, it does not seem to help explain

or account for the necessity of all necessary truths. It makes use of the very idea of necessity that is meant to be explained. This raises again the question of what sort of explanation we are looking for or what a fully satisfactory explanation of necessity is expected to do.

Even leaving aside for the moment the issue of the scope of the desired explanation of necessity, there is a question whether the truth of the laws of logic being a necessary condition of thought would really help explain the *necessity* of those laws, if they do indeed hold necessarily. Some of the necessary conditions of thought or of the possibility of thought, it seems, hold only contingently. That there are thinkers is, I suppose, a necessary condition of there being thought or the possibility of thought. But that there are any thinkers at all is something that could have been otherwise. Certainly each thinker can recognize that "I think" is a necessary condition of his or her thinking anything, but that is not to recognize that what the thinker thereby sees to be true of himself is something that holds necessarily. The same is true for "I exist," which is a necessary condition of "I think" and, therefore, of "There are thinkers" for each thinker. But that does not hold necessarily either.

It also seems necessary for the possibility of thought that thinkers, or potential thinkers, have certain capacities and abilities. But whether there are or even could be creatures with such capacities seems, again, to be something contingent. In any case, the general point is that whether a truth is a necessary condition of thought or the possibility of thought is not the same as the question of whether that truth itself holds necessarily. One truth can be a necessary condition of another truth while both hold only contingently. That there is any thought at all seems to me to be something contingent; things could have been otherwise. Since there is thought, it must be possible for there to be thought. But is even that possibility of thought also something contingent; something that could have failed to be so? These are heady matters. I think it is safe to say, more modestly, that something's being a necessary condition of the possibility of thought does not in itself explain or account for its holding necessarily, if it does.

This distinction is obscured in the richly developed Kantian reasoning to the effect that, for instance, there being thinking subjects with certain capacities and enduring objects with causal powers in space and time is a necessary condition of the possibility of thought and experience of an independent world, and is thereby a condition of the possibility of thought itself. If that means that that complex necessary condition is something that holds necessarily, it would imply that it is true with necessity, with

no possibility of its being or having been otherwise, that the universe contains thinking subjects and enduring objects with causal powers in space and time. There are indeed such thinkers and such objects in the universe as things actually are. Could things possibly have been different in some or all of those respects? If you think so, you must agree that something Kant thought is a necessary condition of the possibility of thought and experience, even if it is such a necessary condition, is not itself something that holds necessarily. So its having the privileged status of being a necessary condition of the possibility of thought is not the same as, and does not explain, its holding necessarily.

It was a conclusion of Kantian metaphysics that there being a world of thinking subjects and enduring objects with causal powers in space and time (and so on) is not only the way things actually are but is also the way the world must be. That conclusion seemed to involve a step from its being necessary for the possibility of thought and experience that thinkers *think of* and *experience* the world in certain ways to the apparently stronger modal conclusion that that is the way the world must be. And to reach that stronger conclusion from the necessity of thinkers' thinking of and experiencing the world in certain ways, Kant relied on his transcendental idealism. That doctrine would presumably explain or make intelligible to us how what we must think in order to think or experience anything at all must therefore also be true and must hold necessarily. If we could understand and accept this transcendental idealism, perhaps we could then understand and explain to ourselves the "ground" or "source" of the necessity we ascribe to the necessary truths we accept. Perhaps we could even come to see the "ultimate ground" of that necessity to lie in "pure thought alone."

I always find myself at least one step short of the illumination promised by that Kantian idealist doctrine. But I think all of us can appreciate the great force of the Kantian considerations that seem to reveal certain ways we must *think* or *believe* the world to be in order to think of a world at all, or even in order to think. We can perhaps see that our *acceptance* of certain things is a necessary condition of the possibility of thought. But if the laws of logic that we regard as holding necessarily are shown to be conditions of the possibility of thought in this sense, it would mean only that we must *think* certain truths hold necessarily if we are to think at all. That seems plausible to me; it is hard to see how we could move securely from one thought or belief to another without at least implicitly thinking of the two as necessarily connected. But even if the acceptance of some truths as necessary plays an essential role in all thinking, that

would not explain the necessity of those truths we regard as necessary. Nor would it explain the "ground" or "source" of that necessity.

This is what lies behind my doubts about the project of accounting for, or in some sense explaining, the necessity of necessary truths. Either we take the notion of necessity for granted in attempting to explain it in general, and so are left dissatisfied, or we try to avoid using it in explaining the "source" of necessity, and so fail to explain it at all. Or worse, we try to explain the necessity of necessary truths by appeal only to something contingent. The "psychologistic logicians" Frege has in mind grant that we cannot help taking certain laws of logic to be true, but they hold that they are only something we *take* to be true. Of this doctrine, Frege observes that those "logicians" thereby "presume to acknowledge and doubt a law in the same breath," and this, he says, "seems to me an attempt to jump out of one's own skin against which I can do no more than urgently warn them."[26] That same metaphor seems applicable to those who would account for the necessity of the truths we regard as necessary by appeal to something that could have been otherwise. They would appear both to acknowledge and to deny a necessity in the same breath. They could not consistently accept both that the truths hold necessarily and that if certain things had been otherwise they would not have held necessarily and perhaps would not even have been true.

It is no doubt disappointing to leave the matter here. We find necessity philosophically puzzling or suspect. We think there must be some way to understand it or explain it or "ground" it in something more intelligible. It seems deeply unsatisfying simply to acquiesce in it as a basic part of our repertoire or as just part of the way things are. Necessity appears problematic or suspicious to us in comparison with other apparently simpler, more basic ways of thinking. I understand the feeling and the dissatisfaction. But I think that very puzzlement or suspicion is what we should now focus on and try to get to the bottom of. What *is* that feeling of philosophical mystery about necessity? And where does it come from? Even if we cannot satisfy the desire or demand for a more satisfying philosophical understanding of it, we should not be led to deny or distort the idea of necessity that we actually have or the ways we think in modal terms.

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[26] Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, 15.

Varieties of Alien Thought

Peter Sullivan

1. Introduction

There is an awful lot going on in James Conant's paper about the alien.[1] The ultimate aim of the paper is to recommend a way of reading the *Tractatus,* an understanding of Wittgenstein's aims and methods in that book. Conant pursues this aim through an exposition and evaluation of Frege's thought about the status of the laws of logic. The general thought motivating this approach is that Wittgenstein is usefully seen as responding to, developing, and generalizing what is most insightful in Frege's account of the authority that logical laws have for thought, while discarding other aspects of Frege's view which are believed to be in tension with these insights. Conant's discussion of Frege is itself supported, first, by the delineation of a three-step dialectic, shortly to be described, about the necessity of basic logical laws, and secondly by outline "sketches" of two histories which more or less closely instantiate the pattern of the dialectic.[2] In the first of these, a selective "History of Modern Philosophy,"[3] the three steps are represented by Descartes, Leibniz (with support from Aquinas), and Kant. In the second, much shorter and more recent history they are represented by early, middle, and late Putnam. The paper also includes a third historical narrative, which actually gets more column inches than anything else, and which runs

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[1] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus,*" this volume, 27–100.
[2] Ibid., 28.
[3] Ibid.

from Kant, through Frege and the *Tractatus,* to Wittgenstein's later view of "grammatical propositions." Its initial role is to provide an explanatory linkage between the two headline histories: we learn that it was through reflection on this third bit of history that Putnam reached his distinctive instantiation of the dialectical pattern.[4] But it would be a mistake to think that the third narrative has only this kind of subsidiary role. Indeed, it would be nearer the truth to say that it is in Conant's re-telling and elaboration of what Putnam supposed himself to see in this third piece of history that we find the paper's most characteristic and important contentions.

Necessarily, a response to a paper with such ambitions must be highly selective. I will have nothing to say here about the reading of the *Tractatus* Conant recommends. My focus, instead, is on his account of Frege's thought about the standing of logical laws. I will say no more about the three supporting historical narratives than is needed to locate points of agreement and disagreement about this focal topic. In the case of the two headline narratives, about the "History of Modern Philosophy" and changes in Putnam's views, this means that I can discard virtually all of their details, retaining only a generalized view of the dialectical pattern they are held to instantiate. In the case of the third, it means that I can shorten the story to include only points of comparison between Kant and Frege, referring to Wittgenstein's Tractarian views only where it helps to illuminate those points, and to his later philosophy not at all.

It will be easier to motivate the route I intend to take as we go along, so at this point I will just describe in a nutshell the intended destination. Conant holds that Frege is pulled two ways in his thinking about logic: there is in him a Kantian strand, which holds logic to be constitutive of thought, but there is also an anti-Kantian strand, which holds that logic is a substantive positive science.[5] I hold, in contrast, that these two strands are parts of one coherent view and that Conant thinks otherwise because of two mistaken presumptions. The first of these presumptions is that any "substantive science" must be answerable to the world in the way that natural science is. The second is that a "Kantian" view of logic should be modeled on the view that Kant himself took of the meagre logic at his disposal, rather than drawing on the more distinctively *Kantian* aspects of his epistemology.

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4 Ibid., 47.
5 Ibid., 47–48, 66.

2. The Dialectical Pattern

Running right through Conant's paper is a high-level reflection on a dialectical three-step concerning the status of the laws of logic. In this dialectic, the thesis holds that laws of logic are "only contingently necessary." The antithesis holds, oppositely, that logical laws are "necessarily necessary." The third step will seek to overcome the opposition between these two to hold that logical laws are "simply necessary."[6]

The thesis comes in different versions with different motivations. The version that Conant discusses most thoroughly is Descartes's doctrine that eternal truths, including even the basic laws of logic, fall within the scope of God's creative will. According to this doctrine, God has "willed that certain truths should be necessary," but this does not mean that "He has willed them necessarily."[7] Given what God has willed, two and three cannot but make five. But no principle, not even the principle of non-contradiction, antecedently constrains His will. So the necessity that attaches to such principles attaches to them only contingently. To *us* they will appear absolutely necessary, but this is not a reason to hold them to be so. It shows only that we cannot conceive their falsity, and we cannot do that because God has benevolently attuned our minds to the world He has chosen to create.[8]

As well as this seventeenth-century theological version of the thesis Conant discusses a nineteenth-century naturalistic version, represented by the psychologism that Frege combated. Psychologism picks up only on the second part of Descartes's account, holding that the basic principles we acknowledge reflect the kinds of minds we contingently have; as Frege shows, it has little to say about the first part of the Cartesian account, about what, if anything, might make any set of such principles true. Conant also discusses, more fleetingly, a twentieth-century scientistic version of the thesis.[9]

What all these three have in common, and what makes it reasonable when reflecting on the general shape of the dialectic to count them as different versions of a single view, is the presumption that the laws of

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[6] Ibid., 28.

[7] René Descartes, *The Correspondence,* vol. 3 of *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 235; quoted at 119.

[8] Cf. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* vol. 2, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 294, and commentary on it at 120–122.

[9] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 43–45.

logic have some explanatory grounding. Whether the grounding facts
have to do with God's creative will, or with the basic structure and op-
erations of the human mind, or with those of the natural world described
by physics, the shared idea is that the laws of logic are what they are
because of the way those grounding facts are. This "because" seems not
to amount to anything unless it implies that, if the grounding facts had
been different, so too would be the laws grounded in them. In this way
the presumption adds to the ordinary or first-level range of possibilities
allowed *by* logical laws a second-level dimension of possibilities *for* log-
ical laws, possibilities as to what the laws might be. A natural way of
picturing this conception might be as a series of bubbles strung out along
a line, each bubble representing the space of first-level possibilities al-
lowed by a particular set of logical laws. The picture prompts the ques-
tion whether any principle holds good all along the line that represents
this second dimension of possibilities. The thesis, in the extreme Carte-
sian version Conant first discusses, says no. Even the principle of non-
contradiction is confined to some locations on it.

Of course, Frege's rejection of the thesis is completely clear in his in-
sistence that the most general laws of truth are authoritative "for *all*
thinking."[10] The only question is what form this rejection takes.

The picture of bubbles on a line, offered as a model of the thesis, ac-
commodates equally well the antithesis that at least some logical laws
are "necessarily necessary." The Putnamian version of this, which Conant
discusses last, claims only that a minimal principle of noncontradiction,
to the effect that not every statement is both true and false, spans the
whole of the second dimension.[11] Aside from its neatness, it is not clear
what might recommend this minimal version of the antithesis. Versions
maintained by Aquinas and Leibniz, discussed earlier in the paper, rea-
sonably hope for rather more.

The picture allows for the truth of these various versions of the an-
tithesis in that it provides a simple model for them. What it seems not to
allow for is the possibility of establishing their truth. The aim here would
be to show that some principle holds good along the entire second di-
mension of possibility. And, possibility being what it is, the only way of
spanning it is by reasoning. To achieve its aim this reasoning, and the
principles invoked in it, must reach across the entire dimension. So, to

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[10] Gottlob Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, trans. Peter Long and Roger White (Oxford: Black-
    well, 1979), 128; emphasis added.
[11] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 45.

be persuaded that the reasoning achieves its aim, we must presume that it does so. But what we are thus bound to presume is exactly what we were trying to establish: that some principle is valid in all second-level possibilities. So it seems that, while the antithesis is coherent, belief in it is destined to remain dogmatic.

Again, Frege clearly understood this issue of circularity. It is reflected in his view that, if a question arises about our right to affirm a fundamental logical law, logic itself can provide no answer;[12] at that point, he says, "epistemology comes in."[13] Those who suggest that Frege's epistemology enters with the kind of assurance offered by traditional rationalism, that basic laws are self-evident, or clear to rational intuition, threaten to confine him to the second stage of the dialectic. "Dogmatic" was, after all, Kant's word for the stance of pre-critical rationalism.[14]

The third step in the dialectic aims not to be a synthesis but an overcoming of the first two. It wants to hold that logical laws are "simply necessary"—or better, it wants to hold simply that logical laws are necessary—and to have no truck with the alleged second dimension of possibilities *for* logical laws. To reach this goal it sets out to undermine the picture shared by the thesis and antithesis. In terms of that picture the problem encountered by the antithesis was that the bubbles strung along the line are supposed to represent all the possible modes of valid reasoning. So, when some reasoning was presented in favor of the antithesis, this reasoning must have issued from within one of the bubbles. And then it seems obvious that there could be no non-circular vindication of the reasoning's claim to break out of its own particular bubble. The first critical move toward the third step is to observe that no attention was paid to these thoughts in conceiving the task that the reasoning was to accomplish. The portrayal of the model for both thesis and antithesis was throughout from a point outside the line. And there seems to be something suspect in ignoring our own location when conceiving of the task, but emphasizing it when considering our prospects of completing it.

3. *Simply* Necessary

How is this suspicion to be developed? Conant assigns a central role in this development to the Kantian thesis that the laws of logic are "constitutive

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[12] Gottlob Frege, *Die Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (Jena: H. Pohle, 1893), xvii.
[13] Gottlob Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, 3.
[14] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781/87), Bxxxv.

of the possibility of thought."[15] But it is a delicate matter to characterize the work that this thesis can do. The difficulty is illustrated by the fact that the detached, side-on portrayal of the second dimension of possibility that we just complained about seems to be no more than the perspective characteristic of various kinds of realism, and that realism will construe the shift of viewpoints just noted as merely an indication that the reach of conception is greater than that of demonstration. There are of course various doctrines, going under the family name of verificationism, that will insist on essential linkages between these powers and might, thereby, begin to make the shift of viewpoints genuinely problematic. For a realist, though, the Kantian thesis is simply the general form of such doctrines, "thought" being just another word for the power of conception and "logic" the framework of demonstration. And if further moves toward overcoming the thesis-antithesis pair have to rely on such doctrines, it seems unlikely that the ensuing acknowledgement, that logical laws are simply necessary, will be the simple acknowledgement that Conant wants it to be.

For Conant, I think, the real importance of his third historical narrative—the one running from Kant to the later Wittgenstein—lies in its showing us how to avoid the familiar problem just outlined,[16] that the third step in the dialectic threatens to be no less burdened with questionable theoretical commitments than the two it seeks to overcome. In Putnam's reflections, and in Conant's retelling of them, Frege and the *Tractatus* represent "stepping stones"[17] on a route from Kant to the later Wittgenstein. The aim in following this route will be to retain the insight in Kant's constitutivity thesis while "stripping away the transcendental baggage."[18] As the baggage is shed we are meant to see how the third stage of the dialectic can be the simple acknowledgement of the force of logic that Conant wants it to be—not a theoretical competitor to the earlier stages, but all that is left when the impulse to theorize has dissipated.

This conception of the task is clear in Conant's opening summary of the third historical narrative:

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[15] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 57.

[16] In recent times the problem is most familiar from Barry Stroud's classical formulation. See Barry Stroud, "Transcendental Arguments," *Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 9 (1968): 241–256.

[17] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 27.

[18] Putnam quoted at ibid., 47.

Kant thought that [laws of logic] were simply necessary. Frege wanted to agree—but his manner of doing so raised the worry that there was no way to express his agreement that made sense. Wittgenstein agreed with the worry. He concluded that sense had not (yet) been made of the question to which [the thesis and antithesis propose] an answer: very-recent Putnam agreed.[19]

And this conception requires him to adopt in the paper what I will conveniently (if tendentiously) call a "negative" methodology. To parody the moral it imposes: to reach the third stage of the dialectic, we shouldn't ask to be shown that the thesis and antithesis share commitment to *something* that there demonstrably cannot be—alternative systems of thought represented by bubbles other than our own—but only that we cannot make sense of what they suppose there to be.

Other aspects of Conant's approach in the essay are, in turn, determined by this negative method. This applies most obviously to the pervasive role assigned to what he calls the Cartesian Predicament.[20] The predicament is labeled "Cartesian" because it first emerges as a problem for Descartes, who holds that "we should believe in the possibility of . . . a [contra-logical] world, even though he himself freely admits that we cannot hope to comprehend it."[21] "How," Conant asks, "does one undertake to believe in something one cannot understand?"[22] He observes that Descartes's defense of the thesis commits him to such "fine" distinctions—promptly relabeled as "slippery" distinctions—as that between thoughts we can "apprehend" and those we can "comprehend," or between possibilities our thought can "touch" and those it can "embrace."[23] But having introduced the predicament as a problem for the thesis, Conant immediately generalizes it to become a problem for the antithesis too: even to reject Descartes's thought, he says, "we need a way to pick up this thought by the corner without fully taking it into our hands."[24] The comparison—which Conant surely intends—is with an unsavory piece of rubbish: even to discard the thought of a contralogical world an advocate of the antithesis is obliged, however squeamishly and reluctantly, to *touch* it; in some sense he has to know what it is he

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[19] Ibid., 28.
[20] Ibid., 36.
[21] Ibid., 35.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 36.

is throwing away. Thus, even as Aquinas insists that a contra-logical world cannot be described, and so "cannot have [even] the aspect of possibility," Conant asks, "[H]asn't Aquinas just offered us a redescription of what kind of thing a logically impossible sort of thing is?"[25] Any positive conception of a space of possibilities is, according to this generalization of the predicament, a conception of a complementary space of impossibilities.[26] So, to reach the third step of the dialectic, and accept that logical laws are *simply* necessary, one had better avoid any positive conception of what this necessity consists in.

Whatever its general merits—I'll indicate shortly that they are few—this maxim yields, I think, a particularly insightful account of Frege's encounter with the psychologician in the foreword to *Grundgesetze*.[27] Construed as contributing to a demonstration, the contentions that Frege presents against Erdmann there can easily appear as dogmatic pronouncements that will fail to reach the differently grounded alternative schemes of thought that psychologism envisages. In Conant's fruitful dialogical reconstruction of the episode the psychologician is instead invited to give sense, in his own terms, to his hypothesis that differently constituted beings might *disagree* over basic logical laws: the upshot is not that such disagreement is proved to be impossible, but that psychologism has not thought its way through to an understanding of what could distinguish disagreement here from mere difference. It is because this particular passage responds so well to his quasi-therapeutic reconstruction that Conant gives it prominence as representing (what he takes to be) the better stand in Frege's thought and recommends it as a model for Wittgenstein's later reflections.

To discern the most general effect of Conant's negative methodology, though, we should ask—perhaps belatedly—what this three-step dialectic, and Conant's reflections on it, are actually about. So far I have spoken as if the concern of the paper is with laws of logic in the narrow sense of laws of valid inference—the kinds of laws one finds detailed in a logic book, such as the laws of identity, of non-contradiction, *modus ponens*, and so on. This understanding is adequate to large and important parts of Conant's discussion, including those that most directly concern Frege's views. In other parts of the paper, though, the concern is clearly much broader. This is true, for instance, of the opening exchange,

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[25] Ibid., 30.
[26] Cf. ibid., 30–31.
[27] Frege, *Grundgesetze,* xiv–xix. Discussed at 142–150.

where Aquinas and Descartes differ over such matters as that "a man is not an ass,"[28] or whether God might have so ordered things that two fours should not make eight.[29] Here the concern is with eternal truths generally, and for Descartes at least that is inseparable from a concern with the standing of the "natures," or fundamental concepts, that those principles articulate—extension, time, number, and so on. It is also true of the last sections of the paper, on Wittgenstein. In the foreground in these sections are supposed rules of logical syntax requiring categorial appropriateness in anything that is to count as a genuine proposition. Perhaps a concern with the laws of valid inference remains in the background of this discussion; but, if so, it is at any rate so far back as to be hardly visible.

One might suppose that this broadening of the topic simply reflects the breadth of the paper's historical reference. I suggest, instead, that it is a consequence of the paper's guiding thought. What will see us through to the end of the dialectic, Conant suggests, is the realization that we have failed to give any sense to the questions answered oppositely by the thesis and its antithesis, and it is essential to the intended resolution that this failure be *simply* that: it must not be conceived as a violation or breach of one or another positive conception of what making sense involves. It may of course emerge that, in the case of supposed alternatives to basic logical laws, our failure to make sense of the supposition is particularly apparent. But it is no accident that Conant offers for this case no special or clearly circumscribed diagnosis. In his view, as we saw, to admit *any* "positive" conception of the logical is immediately to admit a complementary conception of the contra-logical. Hence the unspecificity of his topic is the necessary price of his squeamishness—his conscious and consistently motivated refusal even to *touch* the rubbish he intends to discard.

Thus, to capture the aim as well as the scope of his essay, we might say that Conant's concern is with principles, or supposed principles, whose contravention, or supposed contravention, would lead to an "impossible thought." He is fully aware that, on the face of it, this impossibility comes in different varieties. A thought might be impossible in being inconsistent and thereby having a negation that is logically true. It might be impossible in that a malevolent God, or just an uncooperative world, allows no "objective reality" to the basic concepts it involves, or

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[28] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 29.
[29] Ibid., 35.

in other words, because some basic mismatch between the shape of those concepts and the shape of the world prevents them from properly engaging with things. Or it might be impossible in that, while its constituent concepts are severally meaningful and in good order, there is an attempt to jam them together in incoherent ways, ways in which they will not cohere. It is nonetheless a presumption of Conant's method in this paper that these different varieties are usefully presented as species of a nonexistent genus; and further, that a generic Tractarian moral, namely that "An *impossible* thought is an impossible *thought,*"[30] is the one that must see us through to a proper understanding of the final stage of the dialectic.

Although I am in agreement with many parts of Conant's discussion, it is the convention in commentary to emphasize points of difference, and perhaps my most basic difference is over the generic approach dictated by Conant's negative method. I do not think there is much that can usefully be said at the level of the genus. I think instead that different things have to be said about the broad varieties of "impossible thought" just distinguished. About the laws of logic narrowly understood I completely agree that the challenge is to find a way of accepting them as simply necessary. But about some other aspects of the "logical shape" of our thought I think the right answer is the thesis, that they are only contingently necessary (§4). This means that I cannot have confidence in those aspects of Conant's approach that emphasize the generalized "Cartesian Predicament," because these do not discriminate between varieties as I need to do (§5). And that in turn means that I have to endorse some more "positive" account than Conant will admit, even of the cases where we are otherwise in agreement. Happily, the positive account is already to hand, in Frege (§6). To endorse it, though, I have to resist Conant's suggestion of a basic tension in Frege's account, supposedly identified and corrected by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*. There will be no space in this paper to develop this resistance, but to summarize the line it must take is straightforward: the supposed tension is no more than a misreading, and the things in Wittgenstein that are said to correct it are simply wrong (§7).

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[30] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), 5.61.

4. Some Things That Are Only Contingently Necessary

Conant at one point mentions aspects of Frege's thinking that commentators tend to glide by as likely sources of embarrassment.[31] Some have responded with the same averted eyes to themes in the *Tractatus* that point to a status intermediate between the logical and the empirical. Logic, as an articulation of the essence of representation and thereby of the essence of the world,[32] settles that any situation consists in the immediate combination of objects. But what those objects are, and how many there are, is settled only by what Wittgenstein calls "the application of logic."[33] What objects there are is not an empirical matter.[34] Nor is it in any ordinary sense contingent: objects, we are told, contain all possibilities,[35] in that any thinkable or representable possibility is a possible configuration of them; they constitute a fixed form shared by the actual world and any conceivable alternative to it.[36] Nonetheless, the notion persists that it is in some sense a contingent matter what objects there are, and so in some sense a contingent matter what possibilities there are.

Someone might claim that this supposed sense of contingency is an external imposition on the *Tractatus,* but Wittgenstein's criticisms of Russell on identity show how hard it is to maintain this line. Russell's definition won't do, Wittgenstein says, because it is a possibility, a significant proposition, that two objects should share all their properties.[37] Nonetheless, this is a possibility that we can know, in some quasi-a priori way, does not obtain, since our ability to formulate the relevant proposition shows that it is false.[38] Conversely, if that possibility had obtained, then the actual situation, in which the two objects are differentiated, could not have been envisaged or represented. If modal accessibility amounts to representability,[39] it is non-symmetric, and odd-shaped accessibility relations are what give point to iterated or second-level modalities. It seems that according to the *Tractatus* the actual world is possibly impossible, or only contingently a possibility. But so far, of course, that is

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[31] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 71.

[32] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus,* 5.471–5.4711.

[33] Ibid., 5.557.

[34] Ibid., 5.5561.

[35] Ibid., 2.015.

[36] Ibid., 2.022–2.023.

[37] Ibid., 5.5302.

[38] Ibid., 2.02331.

[39] Ibid., 3.001.

only "according to the *Tractatus*," and perhaps no more than an exegetical curiosity.

Turning to Ramsey's "Universals" we step onto firmer ground. Starting from the Tractarian distinction between what is settled by logic itself or only by its application, Ramsey argued that it is contingent whether there are, in Russell's and Frege's senses, particulars and universals, or objects and properties. He meant, apparently, that it is epistemically contingent: that for all we know there are not.[40] But what Ramsey actually argued for, and what I will take his claim to mean, is that it is not settled by logic that there must be. Logic does not settle what forms basic things take, or what categories would be needed in an inventory of basic facts.

Ramsey's argument for this conclusion targets explicitly a Russellian version of Frege's notion of unsaturatedness or incompleteness.[41] He observes that this notion is put to work in two quite distinct ways. On the one hand it is given a role in dissolving worries over the special unity of propositions, where it gives a specific shape to the idea that expressions combine immediately, without the need for any logical cement, because they are "made for each other"—which is to say, because the potential for so combining is written into their being the expressions they are and having the meaning they do. Its other role is captured in the equation of incomplete expressions with (propositional) functions, in the sense in which that notion is used to explain how the truth or falsity of a quantification depends on that of its instances. The two roles come together in the Fregean doctrine, to which Russell had by 1918 been converted, that logical combination into a whole is always the completion of something incomplete,[42] which, since incompleteness gives the essence of a function,[43] amounts to the claim that it consists always in supplying a function with (an) appropriate argument(s).

The notion of a universal, or Fregean concept, Ramsey contends, is the illusory upshot of the assimilation of these two distinct roles. Conceived as something "specially incomplete" or "connective,"[44] and re-

[40] F. P. Ramsey, "Universals," in *The Foundations of Mathematics and Other Logical Essays,* ed. R. B. Braithwaite (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1931), 133.

[41] Ibid., 114, referring to Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (1918), in *Logic and Knowledge, Essays 1901–1950,* ed. R. C. Marsh (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 205–206.

[42] Gottlob Frege, *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic and Philosophy,* ed. Brian F. McGuiness (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 281.

[43] Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, 99.

[44] Ramsey, "Universals," 121.

sponsible for the unity of a fact in which it figures,[45] it is what a simple quality or relation becomes when it is pressed into the distorting mold of the combined theory and "[made into] a propositional function."[46] The supposed "completeness" of particulars, or Fregean objects, is then simply the obverse of this illusion, a confused transposition of the merely relative role of argument-to-a-function into an absolute ontological status. Neither notion has any ground of application independent of the theoretical assimilation that creates it.

The central observation in Ramsey's argument for these contentions derives from Wittgenstein[47] and holds that *logic* does not require that the two distinct roles of incompleteness be brought together in this way. All that quantificational logic requires of propositions is that they *can be conceived as* function and argument, that is, as the values of propositional functions for given arguments.[48] This is assured provided only that propositions display the kind of complexity Wittgenstein intended to capture in saying, "The proposition is articulate."[49] For wherever we find this complexity, and in whatever more specific form it is manifest, there too we can find function and argument, and all the operations of logic need no other foothold than that.[50]

At any rate, that is what Ramsey argued, and a very simple reflection shows that he was right. The two roles that are combined in the Fregean notion of incompleteness both involve a kind of dependency, but the two dependencies need not take the same shape. In the role of explaining propositional unity the dependence is essentially that of one grammatical category on whichever other category or categories would need to be mentioned in characterizing it. There is no reason to insist that this dependence must be asymmetric, and pretty good reason to think that it is not. In the role of explaining quantificational validity the dependence is that of a function on its values. This dependence is essentially asymmetric: it is the ground of the hierarchy of types. In a word, logic is well founded; grammar (apparently) is not.[51]

Ramsey thus proved that it is contingent what specific forms our thoughts take. To make this point graphic he observed that nothing rules

[45] Ibid., 129.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus,* 5.55ff.
[48] Ibid., 3.318.
[49] Ibid., 3.141.
[50] Cf. ibid., 5.47.
[51] Cf. ibid., 5.556.

out propositions consisting entirely of several expressions of the same type.[52] Now Ramsey was not stupid. He was not suggesting that we could make sense of non-sentences like "Socrates Plato" or "mortality senility wisdom." Any type or category that did self-combine as those familiar ones fail to would be very different from those we employ. It would be employed in thought of a very different logical shape, and altogether alien to us. In some sense of "impossible," one that I'm sure is strong enough to put it within the broad region of Conant's concern, thought like that is "impossible" for us. But only contingently so.

5. The Cartesian Predicament

I have just claimed that we can apprehend the possibility of thoughts we cannot comprehend. Conant says that a distinction between "apprehending" and "comprehending," or between things that our thought can "touch" and those it can "embrace," is a "slippery" one,[53] and that Descartes's appeal to such a distinction shows him to be in a predicament. This predicament afflicts anyone who wants to insist on the existence of possibilities that he cannot recognize *as* possibilities; and then, Conant curiously suggests, it equally afflicts anyone else who wants to contradict that insistence.

This is one point where I think that Conant's discussion is clearly too generic. The Cartesian Predicament, in the very general form it would have to take to impugn the appeals that Descartes actually makes to his distinction, simply does not exist. If it did, too many ordinary and clearly coherent distinctions would be caught up in it.

One of these ordinary distinctions—and one that is blithely overridden in the sentence by which Conant initially defines the so-called Predicament[54]— is between "thinking something that cannot be thought," which I for one never do, and "thinking *about* something that cannot be thought," which I do every time I think about a beer—which is quite often. A second distinction is between "conceiving something unconceived, or inconceivable" and "conceiving *that* something unconceived, or inconceivable, exists." This is no more slippery than the difference between

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[52] Ramsey, "Universals," 133.
[53] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 35.
[54] "We have here what I will call 'the Cartesian Predicament:' We want to frame a thought (about that which cannot be thought) but we run up against the problem that the thought we want to frame lies in its nature beyond our grasp" (ibid., 36).

"knowing someone you don't know," which is impossible, and "knowing that there are people you don't know," which one hopes is common. Or again, to illustrate a third, my own meager intellect "touches" the complexities of category theory, in that I "know *that* category theory is complicated"; it does not "embrace" those complexities, since I do not know, and probably could not know, "exactly how complicated it is."

Ordinary distinctions like these are enough to defend Ramseyan possibilities. Ramsey establishes the general conclusion *that* thoughts manifesting forms different from ours are possible, but he of course doesn't invite us to think one of them. He goes somewhat further, in allowing us to "touch" the possibility of a thought "consisting of two terms of the same type,"[55] by providing that description of it and showing that the description is coherent. But we stop short of "embracing" the thought described, which would amount to thinking *it* rather than merely thinking *about* it. Aside from the esoteric subject matter, these are all perfectly ordinary things to do.

6. Frege's Positive Account

The Ramseyan thoughts we've been considering might be alien to us, but they are not, in the narrower sense, *logically* impossible. Precisely not. Ramsey's approach assigns to the laws of logic the role of limiting the variety in what a thought might be like. The unsuspected possibilities he introduces us to are not alternative possibilities *for* the laws of logic, but further possibilities allowed *by* the laws of logic. But Ramsey's recognizing this depended on his penetrating analysis of what the laws of logic are and of how they govern what they govern. This, I suggest, points to a second respect in which we cannot hope to rely only on Conant's "negative" methodology.

The presumption of Ramsey's approach is that a thought is something to which the laws of logic apply. More specifically, it is something manifesting a structure with which the laws of logic will engage. As a criterion, though, this is missing something: What *kind* of structure, and *how* is it that displaying this structure brings something under logic's authority? An answer is implicit in Ramsey's argument, in the central importance it assigns to the kind of complexity that can ground a semantic explanation of quantificational validity. This same answer is more explicit

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[55] Ramsey, "Universals," 133.

in two equations of Frege's. First, the laws of logic are the laws of truth.[56] And second, a thought is something that gives rise to a question of whether it is true or untrue.[57] In a Kantian phrase very aptly cited by Conant here, logical laws engage with thoughts in virtue of their displaying "the form of truth."[58] More prosaically, logical laws engage with the compositional structure though which a thought is determined as true or as false. If the laws are to be formalized, then this structure must achieve a perspicuous realization in syntax. This is what a Begriffsschrift aims to provide.

It follows immediately from Frege's equations, just as it does from the presumptions of Ramsey's approach, that the idea of "unlogical" thought is obviously, though not uninterestingly, empty. Indeed, while I introduced Ramsey into the discussion as identifying a mistake in Frege—concerning the misguided double-use of the notion of incompleteness—that point of disagreement might well be judged to be peripheral in comparison with the agreement just mentioned. Everything said in this section about Ramsey's approach could just as well have been said about Frege.

This also brings me to a central area of agreement with Conant. Frege's equations imply that the laws of logic are constitutive of thought: they define what thought is. Conant opens his discussion of "Frege's Kantianism" by remarking similarly: "Frege inherits the Kantian idea that accord with the laws of logic is constitutive of *the possibility of* thought."[59] I think there is a significant difference between these formulations—that the extra words I just emphasized are indicative of a weaker view—and, given the aim to emphasize disagreements, I will turn shortly to explain how. But agreement plainly predominates. Conant is right to hold in this section, and in his earlier description of late-Putnam's arrival at a similar view, that Frege's is not an "ontological" conception of logic; that it is instead "a doctrine of the form of coherent thought"; and that it is a presupposed framework in all explanation, so itself neither needs nor admits of any metaphysical explanation.[60] I agree that these are the points needed to dislodge the picture shared between the thesis and antithesis that we started with; and I also agree that a com-

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[56] Frege, *Posthumous Writings,* 179.

[57] Ibid., 174.

[58] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A59/B84. Cited by Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 54–55.

[59] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 59. My emphasis.

[60] Ibid., 47–48.

parison with Kant is the best way of discovering what, in Frege, these points amount to.

But now for the difference. With just occasional exceptions,[61] the "Kantian" view Conant describes is the view that Kant himself actually took of what he called "pure general logic."[62] What Kant meant by this was a much less powerful instrument than Fregean logic, and its formal weakness partly explains Kant's view of it. He held it to provide only a necessary, never a sufficient, condition of truth; to be empty of content; and to be incapable itself of yielding knowledge. In Conant's summary, "it abstracts entirely from objects" and "tells us nothing about the world."[63] Above I quoted from a passage in Kant that speaks of "the form of truth," but I should now admit to having cheated slightly in giving it a meaning different from Kant's: in the passage it derives from, Kant limits logic to a concern *merely* with the form of truth.[64] Here the emphasized "merely" has the same effect as the emphasized "possibility of" in Conant's formulation of the constitutivity thesis: it distances logic from a constitutive relation to thought in Frege's sense, of something that *is* (and not merely could be) true or false.

Part III of Frege's *Begriffsschrift* is devoted to proving Kant wrong on all of the points just mentioned,[65] and the upshot of that proof is given pride of place in the Conclusion of his *Grundlagen*.[66] Conant of course knows this. He mentions Frege's contrasting view, that the laws of logic have "an intrinsic positive content," so that logic is no longer an "infertile science," as Frege's "one significant quarrel with the master."[67] He remarks that this view of logic, as a substantive, epistemically ampliative science, "is a feature of Frege's philosophy that he himself recognizes as a departure from the Kantian fold."[68] Now this remark is, I suppose, true. But one cannot help but be struck by its extreme oddity: it compares the central project of Frege's intellectual life to the wanderings of a lost sheep. One senses that Conant radically underestimates the significance of this "one significant quarrel."

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[61] For example, this volume, 53.

[62] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A53/B87.

[63] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 57.

[64] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A59/B84.

[65] Gottlob Frege, *Begriffsschrift: Eine der Arithmetischen Nachgebildete Formelsprache des Reinen Denkens* (Halle: Louis Nebert, 1879), §23.

[66] Gottlob Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (Breslau: Wilhelm Koebner, 1884), §§87–89.

[67] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 67.

[68] Ibid.

To begin to understand Frege's thought about logic we need to give this significant difference its due. But I hope that the upshot would not disappoint Conant. To express matters slightly perversely, it is only by emphasizing this fundamental difference with Kant that we can begin to see Frege's conception of logic as genuinely *Kantian*. For, after all, it is not in what Kant has to say about "pure general logic," with its fairly traditional and sometimes stale assessment of the barrenness of the syllogism, that we find what is most important and distinctive in Kant's philosophy.

A Kantian view of logic, in contrast to Kant's own view of the meager logic at his disposal, should capture logic's transcendental role, representing it as an a priori structure simultaneously determining knowledge and its objects. As I understand it, the absolute priority that Frege assigns to the notion of truth, and thus to the laws of logic as "unfolding" this notion,[69] is intended to do this. Logic, in Frege's conception, is prior to any notion of the world, which emerges from it as the totality of facts, of thoughts that are true. It is likewise prior to any notion of mind, since it defines what it is for mind to be answerable to the world it represents. Given this priority, logic can be answerable to nothing at all.

This is, of course, only the barest sketch of a view,[70] but the view sketched is the more positive conception I think we need if we are genuinely to dislodge the ontological picture shared by the thesis and antithesis we started with.

7. The Alleged Tension

I said at the start that to endorse Frege's view, I would have to resist the suggestion of fundamental tensions in it. I have no space here to develop this resistance, but I hope the sketch just given might indicate how I would try to do it.

Conant, Putnam, and others have said that Frege is pulled two ways in his thinking about logic: on the one hand, toward a Kantian view, according to which logic abstracts from objects and deals with the mere form of thought; on the other, toward viewing logic as a substantive sci-

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[69] Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, 3.

[70] The sketch is developed somewhat in my "Frege's Logic," in *Handbook of the History of Logic, Vol. 3* eds. Dov M. Gabbay, John Woods, and Akihiro Kanamori (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2004), §4.1 and in my "Is Logic Transcendental?" in *Transcendental Philosophy and Naturalism,* eds. Joel Smith and Peter Sullivan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), §8.

ence whose laws would then be simply "the most general laws of nature."[71] Now Frege could not have said more clearly or explicitly than he did that the laws of logic "are *not* laws of nature"[72] (1884, §87; emphasis added). So something fairly powerful must be influencing commentators who take Frege to have meant the opposite of what he said. My suggestion is that this something is a prejudice about what a Kantian view of logic might be. These commentators cannot accommodate within the "Kantian" alternative they envisage Frege's evident commitment that logic is a substantive and fertile science. And given the "Kantian" view they envisage—a view that the actual Kant rightly held about a science that was in fact neither substantive nor fertile—they are right. But the right response to this is not to retreat—as Conant, enlisting the spurious authority of the *Tractatus,* urges we should—to the pre-Fregean consensus that "logic is barren."[73] Instead, we should consider what a properly Kantian view of *Frege's* logic might be.

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[71] Putnam, quoted by Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 68.

[72] Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik,* §87; emphasis added.

[73] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 69.

Wittgenstein on Using Language and Playing Chess: The Breakdown of an Analogy and Its Consequences

Martin Gustafsson

1. Introduction

Analogies involving chess are common in central texts of Western philosophy of mathematics, logic, and language. We find such analogies in the works of Leibniz, Frege, Saussure, and many others. In Wittgenstein's writings too, reflections on chess appear at crucial junctures in his discussions. In *Philosophical Investigations,* the chess analogy makes its first appearance, among many, in section 31. This is in connection with the discussion of ostensive definitions. Here is the first paragraph of that long section:

> When one shews someone the king in chess and says: "This is the king," this does not tell him the use of this piece—unless he already knows the rules of the game up to this last point: the shape of the king. You could imagine his having learnt the rules of the game without ever having been shewn an actual piece. The shape of the chessman corresponds here to the sound or shape of a word.[1]

As the final sentence suggests, a central aspect of Wittgenstein's use of the chess analogy is his comparison between linguistic expressions and chess pieces. In section 108, the emphasis is precisely on this aspect:

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), §31.

The philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words in exactly the sense in which we speak of them in ordinary life when we say e.g., "Here is a Chinese sentence," or "No, that only looks like writing; it is actually just an ornament" and so on.

We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm. [Note in margin: Only it is possible to be interested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways]. But we talk about it as we do about pieces in chess when we are stating the rules of the game, not describing their physical properties.

The question "What is a word really?" is analogous to "What is a piece in chess?"[2]

This comparison between words and chess pieces played an important role for Wittgenstein already back in 1929–1930. In *Philosophical Remarks*, we find one of the precursors of the just quoted paragraph. There Wittgenstein claims, unreservedly, that "The question 'What is a word?' is *completely* analogous with the question 'What is a chessman?'"[3] And in December 1929, Waismann recorded Wittgenstein as making the following statement:

[I]t is highly important that I can't tell from looking at the pieces of wood whether they are pawns, bishops, rooks, etc. I can't say: that is a pawn *and* such and such rules hold for this piece. No, it is the rules which *define* this piece: a pawn *is* the sum of rules for its moves (a square is a piece too), just as in the case of language the rules define the logic of a word.[4]

My aim in what follows is to explore Wittgenstein's comparison between words and chess pieces. First, I will try to get a hold of the precise sense in which the rules of chess can be said to define the pieces of chess. Then I will consider the extent to which what Wittgenstein calls rules of grammar can play a similar role. As Wittgenstein's deletion of the word "complete" in the *Philosophical Investigations* version of the *Philosophical Remarks* precursor of §108 may be taken to indicate, I shall argue that there is a point at which the analogy between words and chess pieces breaks down. Moreover, I shall argue that this point of breakdown is

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[2] Ibid., §108.

[3] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks,* ed. Rush Rhees and trans. Raymond Hargreaves and Roger White (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 2–18.

[4] Ibid., 327–328.

quite important to identify if one wants to understand the nature of Witt-genstein grammar. Indeed, the breakdown of the analogy puts the Wittgenstein interpreter at a crossroads where she must choose between two quite different conceptions of what rules of grammar are and what kind of philosophical significance they might have. One of these conceptions is in line with a sort of reading according to which rules of grammar draw the bounds of sense and thereby enable us, as philosophers, to prove the nonsensicality of utterances that transgress those boundaries. The other conception is in line with a quite opposite sort of reading, according to which grammatical rules do not draw the bounds of sense and thus function quite differently in philosophical investigations. I will argue that what Wittgenstein says about chess and language supports the second interpretation.

This opposition between two conceptions of grammatical rules is parallel to a much discussed controversy over the notion of logical syntax in the *Tractatus*—a controversy in which so-called "resolute" readers propose a conception of syntax that is similar to the second view of grammar just sketched. Such resolute readers also tend to think that there is continuity in precisely this respect between the Tractarian notion of syntax and Wittgenstein's later notion of grammar. As James Conant puts it, "[a] proper understanding of this region of Wittgenstein's thought tells as much against standard readings of his later conception of nonsense (as resulting from violations of grammar) as it does against a standard reading of his early conception (as resulting from violations of logical syntax)."[5] Even if my focus is on later Wittgenstein, what I say will be congenial to a resolute reading of the *Tractatus*. To clarify this connection, I will relate my discussion to an exchange between Conant, Peter Hacker, and Cora Diamond on the notion of logical syntax—an exchange in which Hacker uses the chess analogy to an effect diametrically opposed to Wittgenstein's own. Or, so I shall argue.

2. Chess Rules and Chess Pieces

At first, the passages from Wittgenstein that I have quoted may appear to make only the commonplace point that, as Newton Garver puts it, Wittgensteinian rules of grammar "are constitutive rather than regulative, in that without them the [rule-governed] acts or actions are not even

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[5] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*," this volume, 96n138.

thinkable."[6] Or, as Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker put it, rules of grammar have a "definitory aspect," in that "they generate forms of description and determine the applicability and inapplicability of corresponding (normative) characterizations of behaviour."[7]

This commonplace observation is all right, as far as it goes. I shall argue, however, that the analogy between chess pieces and words should make us think harder about what, exactly, the "constitutive" character of grammatical rules amount to. For Wittgenstein's way of drawing the analogy suggests that what the rules constitute are not just the acts or behavior that they govern but also, somehow, the very units that we employ in linguistic behavior—the words or expressions. Wittgenstein's suggestion seems to be that in philosophy, it will be useful to treat words not just as sounds and shapes externally related to their use, but as units the very identity of which is determined by how they are to be employed. Just as a pawn is a pawn in virtue of its being subject to rules that lay down its permissible moves, so, Wittgenstein seems to be arguing, we can fruitfully treat expressions as owing their very identity to their grammar.

It may seem difficult to understand what would be gained by such a principle of individuation. We may argue, with Hacker, that Wittgenstein's emphasis on the constitutive nature of grammatical rules is primarily directed against a "meaning-body" conception of language use, according to which the rules for the use of an expression are somehow answerable to independently existent meanings. Against such a meaning-body conception, Wittgenstein is said by Hacker to hold that "rules for the use of an expression are *constitutive* of its meaning."[8] According to Hacker's Wittgenstein, and against the meaning-body conception, meanings do not exist independently of grammatical rules, and, hence, the rules are not answerable to any such pre-existent meanings. However, like in the meaning-body conception, Hacker's Wittgenstein still thinks of the expressions as conceptually separable from their use or meaning: the meaning or use, as laid down by the relevant rules, is conceived as something that gets coupled with separately identifiable expressions. Whereas, on the view I am going to recommend, Wittgenstein is

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[6] Newton Garver, "Philosophy as Grammar," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein,* eds. Hans Sluga and David Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 170n23.

[7] Gordon P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *An Analytical Commentary to Philosophical Investigations, Vol 2: Rules, Grammar, and Necessity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 45.

[8] P. M. S. Hacker, "Wittgenstein, Carnap, and the New American Wittgensteinians," *Philosophical Quarterly* 53, no. 210 (Jan. 2003): 8; original italics.

even further removed from the meaning-body conception: he thinks rules of grammar are fruitfully seen as constitutive of the expressions themselves. He is suggesting that there is a philosophically relevant notion of linguistic expression such that expressions *qua* expressions are not identifiable independently of their meaning or use. My aim in what follows is to try to understand what this suggestion amounts to.

I shall approach this issue by looking in some detail into the precise sense in which the rules of chess are constitutive of the chess pieces. Note, to begin with, that the rules of chess involve a peculiar sort of circularity. Consider the rule "The bishop moves only diagonally." We cannot give a full explanation of what it is to be a bishop without making reference to this rule. There is no such thing as knowing what a bishop in chess is without knowing the rule. Someone who tries to deny that a bishop moves only diagonally simply shows that he does not know what he is talking about.

Now consider a puzzle that arises from reflection on this circularity. How can rules that are circular in this sense tell us anything at all about what moves are legal for a particular piece at a particular moment in a particular game of chess? How, at a given moment in a game, can it be settled that *this* particular wooden figurine is to be moved only diagonally? Suppose I move the piece from, say, f4 to e4. Now if bishops are identified in terms of their legal moves, it may seem difficult to understand how the rule could determine that this particular move is illegal. For that seems to require an *independent* identification of the piece as a bishop. Without such independent identification, it seems we could as well conclude that the piece is a rook that is being moved legally.

The worry is that the circularity of the rule makes such independent identification impossible. The very distinction between legal and illegal moves threatens to breaks down and, with it, the distinctions we make between different sorts of pieces.[9] The very possibility that a particular object is subject to the rule "The bishop moves only diagonally" suddenly seems mysterious.

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[9] It may be argued that some moves would still be identifiable as illegal; namely, moves that are not permissible for chess pieces of *any* kind. Thus, suppose you move the piece from c1 to d7. That is an illegal move, no matter what kind of chess piece the piece is. But this argument is flawed. In fact, what is at stake is the very possibility of being a chess piece of any sort. If chess piece identities are determined solely in terms of the range of permissible movements, then it is not just left undecided whether a concrete object is a bishop rather than a knight, pawn, rook, etc.; it is left undecided whether the object is a chess piece at all. Nothing would decide that the move is a move *in chess* (rather than a merely physical move of an object from one square on a wooden board to another).

To be sure, this puzzle involves a confusion. But it is not so easy to get clear on precisely where the confusion consists. Consider, for example, the following attempt to get out of the trouble. It may be argued that there is an independent way of determining that a particular object is going to function as a bishop; namely, by straightforward ostensive stipulation. We simply point at a particular physical object and decide that this object is going to function as bishop. Thus, it may be argued, we do not need to somehow *discover* that a particular wooden figurine is a bishop in order to identify its legal range of moves. Rather, the reason a particular object is a bishop is simply that we have ascribed to it that role. The rules prescribe how concrete objects are to be moved *given* that we have assigned chess-piece identities to those concrete objects, and such arbitrary assignment does not itself involve following the rules.

To clarify this idea, consider a situation in which we want to play a game of chess but do not have access to an ordinary set of chess pieces. Instead, we draw a chess board in the sand and collect various objects to be used as pieces: an old shoe, a hat, some bricks, a phonebook, a very heavy golden figurine, and so on and so forth. Before we start playing, we need to assign chess-piece identities to these different objects. Clearly, there are no rules telling us which assignments to make. Perhaps we simply point at the hat and utter the words, "Let's use this hat as a white bishop." Our choice is arbitrary. If there are constraints, they are due to factors external to the game itself, such as our personal whims (perhaps we are fanatic royalists who find it repulsive to use an old shoe as a king) or considerations of a practical nature (perhaps the very heavy golden figurine is most conveniently used as a king or a pawn, since those pieces make short and thus not very strenuous moves). Once our stipulations have been made, it seems as if rules such as "The bishop moves only diagonally" are straightforwardly applicable to the relevant individual pieces.

On further thought, however, it becomes clear that this response does not suffice to get rid of our puzzle. To begin with, note that the sort of ostensive preparation just described is, in principle, superfluous. A piece does not have to be identified in that sort of way before a game starts. This becomes very clear if we imagine a case in which we want to play a game of chess but have only thirty-one objects available that are suitable to use as pieces. This need not stop us from playing with thirty-two pieces. Before we start playing, we may simply agree that there is a bishop on square c1, even if there is no physical object there. That bishop can be moved according to the rules, it can attack other pieces, and so on, even

if moving it does not involve moving any physical object. This of course requires that the players have a good memory, so that they can remember where the bishop is even if he is (as one might somewhat misleadingly put it) without physical incarnation. However, such practical difficulties do not in any way undermine the point I am making: it is quite possible to play chess without assigning chess-piece identities to concrete physical objects.

Indeed, there is such a thing as playing chess without *any* physical pieces or a physical board; this is equivalent to both players playing blindfolded. In such a game, there is no ostensive preparation of the sort described earlier, and yet the game involves all the usual pieces: bishops, knights, pawns, and so on. This shows the function of physical pieces in chess: they are essentially aids to memory. A wooden figurine being a wooden figurine is inessential to its role in the game. Chess rules are applied to chess pieces, and chess pieces *qua* chess pieces are only accidentally physical. The same is true of the physical chessboard. Its squares, *qua* physical squares, serve only as aids to memory. So, the whole physical setup—the physical board and the physical pieces—is, one might say, of purely psychological importance. Everything that is essential to the game can, in principle, be retained even in the absence of such aids.

It is of course true that a game where both players are blindfolded requires an exchange of physical symbols. The players will have to utter or write down *words*. So, my point is not to deny that playing chess requires some sort of physical medium. It is important, however, that the words used by such chess players do not constitute pieces, in the way a wooden figurine may constitute a particular bishop at a particular point in a game.

So, we are discussing a puzzle about how a "circular" rule such as "The bishop moves only diagonally" can ever be applied to a concrete thing that we might want to use as a piece in a game. Our first answer was that an ostensive preparatory step, where we stipulate that the object is to function as a bishop, would solve this problem. But now we realize that this cannot be the fundamental truth about how a chess rule does its work. As the example of blindfold chess shows, playing chess does not require such ostensive preparation.

In fact—and this is a central point—ostensive preparation is superfluous even in a case where we use physical objects as pieces. In such a case, it is enough simply *to place the objects at their starting positions on the board*. By placing a wooden figurine at the square c1, we thereby stipulate that it is the white c1 bishop; by placing an old shoe at e8, we

stipulate that it is the black king; by placing a pebble at g2, we stipulate that it is the white g2 pawn; and so on and so forth.

Indeed, this provides the central clue to how a rule such as "The bishop moves only diagonally" can be applied despite its "circular" character. What the applicability of the rule requires is some way of determining, other than in terms of its range of permissible movements, that a particular piece is a bishop. If there were no such other means of determination, then the distinction between legal and illegal moves in chess would make no sense. Thus, suppose that the piece whose initial position is c1 has not yet been moved. Now you move it to b3. As was pointed out above, if chess-piece identities were determined only in terms of legal movements, there would not be such a thing as that move's being illegal rather than legal. There would be no difference between saying that the piece is a bishop that is being moved illegally and saying that it is a knight that is being moved legally.

What my discussion shows is that, in a game of chess, we determine the identity of a concrete piece by reference to *its career in the particular game* we are playing. The initial position of the piece is crucial. If the career started at c1, f1, c8, or f8, the piece is a bishop; if it started at d1 or d8, the piece is a queen; if it started at a1, h1, a8, or h8, the piece is a rook; and so on and so forth. This is why we can say of the piece whose initial position is c1 that it is a bishop rather than, say, a knight. *Hence* we can apply the rule, "A bishop moves only diagonally," and thereby determine that the move from c1 to b3 is illegal.

But notice that a piece's career in a game does not just involve the piece's starting position. What is required in order to apply rules such as "A bishop moves only diagonally" is not just the principle that bishops start at c1, f1, c8, or f8. After all, the rule is meant to apply also to pieces that have been moved from their initial positions. Suppose we decide that a particular brick-stone is going to be used as white bishop by placing it on the square c1. The game begins, and we make a number of moves with the piece in accordance with the rule "A bishop moves only diagonally." But wait a minute! In applying that rule again, it has to be the case that the piece is *still* a bishop. So, the applicability of the rule requires not only that there are principles which tie chess-piece identity to initial position, but also that there are principles for what makes a piece *retain* its chess-piece identity throughout the game. What are the relevant criteria of identity here?

Physical continuity is not what matters. I noted earlier that the physical characteristics of chess pieces are arbitrary. Anything might be used as a

bishop: a shoe, an old hat, an aspirin. One aspect of this arbitrariness is the possibility of arbitrary mid-game replacements of the physical objects we happen to be using as pieces. For example, suppose an eggshell is used as the white king, but, through careless handling, it eventually breaks into pieces. We wipe the fragments off the board and replace them with another object of our liking, say, a silver dollar. So, the eggshell is taken away from the game—but the white king is not. Rather, the coin becomes the white king. The coin takes over the eggshell's former chess-piece identity. After the replacement, *that* king is still the particular king whose starting point was e1, even if the coin has never been on that square.

Similarly, suppose we use a very heavy golden figurine as the white queen and a hat as the white king. After a while, we realize that using the heavy figurine in this way is very inconvenient, since it makes it cumbersome to perform the queen's characteristically long, sweeping moves. In such a case, we are free to make a simple exchange: the golden figurine is moved to the square where the hat is placed, and then the hat is moved to the figurine's former location. This does not mean that the white queen and the white king change places. Rather, the golden figurine takes over the hat's former identity as the white king, and the hat takes over the figurine's former identity as the white queen. Despite the fact that the figurine and the hat change places, the white queen and the white king remain where they are. The physical moves involved in the exchange are not moves in the game.

This possibility of arbitrary replacement also indicates a sense in which the identity of a chess piece is *not* arbitrary. We are not free to change the identity of a particular chess piece *qua that particular chess piece* at will. We cannot arbitrarily decide that *this* knight is hereafter a rook, or that this queen *qua* queen (and not just *qua* this golden figurine) and this king *qua* king (and not just *qua* this hat) are to exchange their identities. There is one exception; namely, when a pawn reaches the rank furthest from its starting position. It is then to be exchanged for a queen, a rook, a bishop, or a knight, at the player's own free choice. But it is of crucial importance to the whole game that this is a special case. If we were free to change the identity of the pieces on the board at any point in a game, the whole game would immediately collapse.

In fact, such lack of arbitrariness is what is really fundamental and allows us to sometimes identify a bishop (say) without having to determine whether it actually got to the square on which it is currently standing from an original position at c1, f1, c8, or f8. In fact, an ordinary chess-problem diagram illustrates this possibility: such a diagram determines

the identity of the pieces involved by means of conventional symbols, without saying anything about their previous careers. And it is quite possible to imagine a variant of chess where the bishops start where the knights start in standard chess, and vice versa. The rule "A bishop moves only diagonally" would be just as applicable in this game as in standard chess. Similarly, the game Chess960 (or "Shuffle Chess"), in which the pieces' starting positions in each particular game are randomized, makes perfectly good sense. The pieces' identities—and, in particular, the applicability of rules such as "A bishop moves only diagonally"—are not threatened by such initial shuffling. So, the really essential thing is not that chess has a rule to the effect that a bishop starts at precisely c1, f1, c8, or f8, but that *some* position of the piece is fixed—and, that *once* this position is fixed, there is no possibility of arbitrary replacement of the piece *qua* the sort of piece it is.

3. The Breakdown of the Analogy between Chess Pieces and Words, and Two Possible Conclusions

Now let us return to the issue of linguistic expressions and grammatical rules. I shall argue that there is an important difference between the linguistic case and the case of chess. Whereas the applicability of "circular" chess rules such as "A bishop moves only diagonally" relies essentially on a prior nailing-down of the chess-piece identity of particular pieces—in standard chess by way of initial starting position, or in chess diagrams by way of using conventional symbols to determine which pieces stand on which squares—in the linguistic case, there is nothing that corresponds to such a nailing-down of a piece's identity. Let me try to explain what I mean.

Suppose Maya, Tim, and Paula are discussing the length of some particular waterway—the Nile River, say. Maya says, "The Nile is sixty-seven hundred miles long"; Tim objects, "No, the Nile is only five thousand miles long"; and Paula argues, "The Nile is at least eight thousand miles long." In all these utterances, the same expression—"The Nile is . . . long"—is employed. Arguably, however, this only means that the same expression gets *repeated*. Tim's and Paula's utterances involve *new instances* of an expression that Maya also used. By contrast, if I first move my bishop from c1 to e3, and then from e3 to g1, and then from g1 to h2, then the second and third moves do not involve any new instance of a bishop. It is the very same instance of a bishop that is being moved all three times.

One may object that I am presupposing some debatable conception of word identity and that it is perfectly possible to classify the repeated occurrences of "The Nile is . . . long" as moves of one and the same particular linguistic expression—just as the same bishop is being moved around in the chess game just imagined. However, the point I am making does not depend on any such debatable conception of word identity. Determine the identity of linguistic expressions any way you like: still, there just is no such thing as *first* nailing down the identity of an expression that is going to be used and *then* applying to occurrences of that expression a grammatical rule that involves a form of circularity analogous to the one involved in a rule such as "A bishop moves only diagonally." *Either* the nailing-down of the identity of the expression will already make reference to the rule, in which case identifying the expression is not prior in the relevant sense; *or,* the nailing-down of the identity of the expression will indeed be prior, but then the rule will not be circular.

Consider the various possibilities in more detail. Suppose we decide to individuate linguistic expressions according to their orthographic properties. Given such a principle of individuation, it would seem that Wittgensteinian grammatical rules—conceived as rules that govern the use of expressions thus individuated—do not have the sort of circularity that characterizes a rule such as "A bishop moves only diagonally." Rather, grammatical rules, thus conceived, regulate the use of expressions understood as entities that are individuated independently of the rules. According to this sort of conception, grammatical rules are not constitutive of the expressions whose use they govern but are constitutive only of their meaning, to the extent that meaning and legitimate use are identified. This is essentially Hacker's view.

An apparent advantage of this sort of conception is that it makes grammatical rules retain a normative philosophical potency. Like chess rules, grammatical rules, understood in this sort of way, seem able to decide whether a given linguistic move—a given utterance—is legal or not. In the case of chess rules, their circularity at first made this sort of normative potency seem puzzling, but we resolved the puzzle by pointing out that particular pieces owe their chess-piece identity to their career in a particular chess game. According to the conception of grammatical rules currently under consideration, no similar puzzle arises with respect to grammar—for grammatical rules are not circular to begin with.

But now we must ask: Is it really an advantage that grammatical rules are conceived as normatively potent? Well, it depends on what the normativity in question is taken to consist in. That is, it all depends on how

the distinction between correct and incorrect utterances is spelled out. Now, what Wittgenstein is primarily concerned with in relation to grammatical rules is the distinction between meaningfulness and nonsensicality. So, if what we are trying to understand is Wittgenstein's conception of grammatical rules, the natural way of spelling out the distinction between correctness and incorrectness would seem to be in terms of the distinction between meaningful and nonsensical utterances. If so, the putative normative potency of grammatical rules will be a matter of their ability to distinguish the meaningful from the nonsensical. In other words, the idea would be this: following the rules is to speak meaningfully, whereas breaking the rules leads to nonsense. And this is indeed the conception we find in Hacker:

> Wittgenstein's "rules of grammar" serve only to *distinguish sense from nonsense*. . . . They *settle what makes sense,* experience settles what is the case. . . . Grammar is a free-floating array of rules for the use of language. It *determines what is a correct use of language,* but is not itself correct or incorrect.[10]

The supposed advantage of grammatical rules conceived in this way is, of course, that they seem to provide the philosopher with a very powerful tool. Once he has achieved a perspicuous overview of the grammar of philosophically controversial words, it would seem as if he could assume a position similar to a chess referee and decide when people use words meaningfully and when they do not. He could do this with respect to the utterances of philosophers, but also with respect to utterances made outside of philosophy, deciding from case to case when the bounds of sense have been transgressed.

The trouble is there are considerable problems with this sort of conception. One is the phenomenon of unprecedented, irregular, yet immediately intelligible uses of language. For example, consider again the three sentences about the length of the Nile River. We could say that these three sentences are all moves in a "game" which is characterized by a rule to the effect that the slot in the expression "The Nile River is . . . long" is to be filled by a *spatial* length-specification. But now consider the following:

The Nile River is a fortnight long.

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[10] Baker and Hacker, *Analytical Commentary,* 43 and 44; original italics.

Obviously, an utterance of this sentence is not a move in the game just described. It is not in accordance with the rule that I stated. Does this by itself mean that it is nonsensical? No. In fact, it is quite easy to imagine a normal context in which such an utterance would be fully and immediately intelligible. For example, suppose a group of adventurers are planning a trip by speedboat along various waterways in Africa. If one of them uttered the above sentence, he would make himself understood without further ado.

There are countless examples of this sort. Even if I would not try to prove it here, it seems quite plausible to think that *any* grammatical rule proposed to draw a boundary between sense and nonsense can be given counterexamples of this sort. However, at this point, a defender of the sort of Hackerian conception I am discussing is likely to object that my criticism here is widely off-target. For isn't the upshot of my example just the trivial one that alternative language-games with the expression "The Nile is . . . long" are possible? And no one is denying the possibility of such alternative uses. Indeed, doesn't this point in fact *support* the position I have identified with Hacker's, by showing, precisely, that one and the same expression can be used to play different games, and that it is the rules of the games rather than the identity of the expressions that serve to constitute those games and demarcate them from each other?

Such a defender of Hacker could spell out this point by arguing that even if there is no such thing as *the* language game of (say) English as a whole, it is essential to intelligible conversations that the rules are kept stable and that sudden deviances from the games we are currently playing are out of place. Thus, if in the middle of Maya's, Tim's, and Paula's conversation about the (spatial) length of the Nile River, John suddenly invoked by saying, "I disagree with all of you; in fact, the Nile is a fortnight long," they would rightly find his utterance absurd. For that utterance belongs precisely to a different conversation, a different game (such as the one played by a group of adventurers who are planning a trip by speedboat along various waterways in Africa); and thus we still *can* say that grammatical rules set the limits of sense, though perhaps often only relative to local conversational contexts.

The problem is that it is exceedingly hard to draw the limits between conversational contexts here, or to see how those limits can be drawn in any noncircular fashion. It is easy to imagine a context such that John's intrusion in Maya's, Tim's, and Paula's conversation is perfectly intelligible to them all—perhaps they all know that John is a speedboat driver and that he cannot go longer than three to four thousand miles in a fort-

night, even if the conditions are very good. Of course we can say that grammatical rules draw the limits of sense only in contexts where it *would* be unintelligible to act in contravention of the rules; but then it is unclear why these rules are needed to account for those limits to begin with.

There are in fact countless examples of language uses which seem to transgress any limits set by pre-established rules and are nonetheless fully and immediately intelligible. What Stanley Cavell calls "projections" constitute particularly powerful examples—cases where established usage gets extended in ways that elude any attempt to draw the limits of sense by means of rules, without our having any trouble understanding them. Cavell famously uses the example of "feed," where we go from "feed the baby" and "feed the kitty" to cases such as "feed the meter," "feed wire," and "feed his pride" without any need for prior stipulation.[11] The possibility and real-life prevalence of such cases cast doubt on the idea that it would be any real advantage to retain the conception of grammatical rules as having what I have called "normative potency" when it comes to distinguishing between meaningful and nonsensical employments of words. Further doubt arises if one reflects on the notion of the philosophical method encouraged by such a conception of grammatical rules. It seems that a philosopher who thinks there are rules by reference to which he can decide whether people speak meaningfully or nonsensically will make himself vulnerable to a sort of charge that has been frequently leveled against putatively Wittgensteinian philosophers for many decades now; a sort of charge which is of considerable force. What I mean is the sort of charge that Paul Churchland has made against Hacker's most recent attempt to apply allegedly Wittgensteinian methods to reveal nonsense within recent science. In his review of Hacker's and Maxwell Bennett's 2003 book *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*,[12] Churchland argues that Hacker's and Bennett's criticisms of recent neurological theory

> do no more than highlight the independently obvious fact that the new theory violates some of the default conceptions of the average ten-year-old. But where is the crime in this? Why should we make those

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[11] Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); for further discussion and more examples, cf. Martin Gustafsson, "Familiar Words in Unfamiliar Surroundings: Davidson's Malapropisms, Cavell's Projections," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19, no. 5 (2011): 643–668.

[12] M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, *The Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

baseline expectations permanently criterial for the meaningful use of the terms at issue? Were we permanently to cleave to the standards of "conceptual hygiene" thus imposed by [Bennett and Hacker], we would be doomed to only the most trivial of scientific advances. For our conceptual innovations would then be confined to what is currently taken, by the average ten-year-old, to define "the bounds of sense."[13]

Churchland's charge is that Hacker and Bennett are simply imposing standards of conceptual hygiene that, if actually implemented, would hinder a sort of spontaneous linguistic imagination that is essential to scientific progress—and, I would add, to our everyday life with language as well. In fact, it seems to me that the vulnerability to this sort of charge is one important explanation of the fact that the sort of putatively Wittgensteinian criticism exemplified by Hacker's and Bennett's book is not taken very seriously by most philosophers and scientists. It is, I think, fair to say that Hacker's and Bennett's approach is one which fails to enter into genuine dialogue with the people whose language it aims to criticize. And this is no coincidence. For their conception of grammatical rules is such that they think the relevant expressions, the "pieces" whose use is being investigated, can be identified in disregard to the possibility that that use involve a sort of irregular, spontaneous sense-making similar to what I imagined in the case of "The Nile is a fortnight long."

The interrelated difficulties with such a conception of grammatical rules—the difficulty of accommodating deviant yet immediately intelligible uses of language and the failure to enter into genuine dialogue with people whose language one claims to be able to classify as meaningful or nonsensical—are quite serious. Someone may object, however, that my worries have so far failed to address the *exegetical* question of whether Wittgenstein himself had such a conception of grammatical rules. And that is perfectly true, of course. I am inclined to say that *if* this is Wittgenstein's own conception, then so much the worse for Wittgenstein. However, I do think there are reasons not to ascribe this conception to him. Clearly, the exegetical situation is very complicated, and I cannot even begin to address this complexity here. It is, however, a striking fact that in none of the passages I have found where Wittgenstein uses the analogy between language and chess does he show any sign of wanting to say that grammatical rules do not have the sort of circularity that characterizes chess rules. On the contrary, his way of developing the analogy

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[13] Paul Churchland, "Cleansing Science," *Inquiry* 48, no. 5 (Oct. 2005): 473.

between expressions and chess pieces indicates quite clearly that one thing he does *not* want to abandon is this idea of circularity. His emphasis is always on the importance of seeing the constitutive role of the rules for the very pieces whose use they capture. Such an emphasis would be hard to understand if his aim with the analogy was instead to argue that grammatical rules are like chess rules in that they allow the philosopher to act as a referee in relation to players of the language game. In fact it seems clear that Wittgenstein's interest in the analogy is along the former line: grammatical rules are constitutive not just of linguistic behavior but also of the pieces that get employed in such behavior.

Now this is precisely the second choice one can opt for once one has realized how the analogy between linguistic expressions and chess pieces breaks down. To get clearer about what this second alternative involves, consider again Maya's, Tim's, and Paula's statements about the length of the Nile River. Given this second conception of grammatical rules, it is perfectly all right to say that the three utterances are all moves in a "game" characterized by a rule to the effect that the slot in the expression "The Nile River is . . . long" is to be filled by a spatial length specification. So far, there is no difference from the first Hackerian conception. The difference makes its appearance when we are confronted with the sentence "The Nile River is a fortnight long." Unless "fortnight" has been given some new, spatial sense, uttering this sentence is obviously not to act in accordance with the rule just stated. The Hackerian conception of grammatical rules seems to imply that, in the absence of a properly introduced new rule for the use of the expression "The Nile River is . . . long," such deviance amounts to a transgression of the "bounds of sense." By contrast, according to the other conception of grammatical rules that I am now trying to explain, the deviant character of the utterance does not by itself justify any such conclusion. An utterance of (4) may fail to make sense; but it may also be immediately intelligible, as when we know that the speaker is an adventurer who travels along African waterways by speedboat.

So, according to this alternative conception of grammatical rules, what a grammatical rule does is (not to prescribe but merely) to *register* one pattern of use among other possible patterns. Such a rule is not something upon which we are allowed to base the conclusion that an utterance that fails to conform to the pattern is nonsensical—even if the utterance involves similarly sounding expressions and is not preceded by any explicit change of rules. The deviant character of the utterance does not show that the utterance is nonsensical. All it shows is that the utterance

does not constitute a move in the game specified by the rule. Even if the words that figure in the deviant utterance look or sound the same as the expressions that figure in utterances that do constitute moves within the game, the words used in the deviant utterances constitute different "pieces"—pieces for which the rule is not in force.

According to this alternative non-Hackerian conception of grammatical rules, such rules are, in this respect, similar to the rules of logical syntax in the *Tractatus*—as rules of logical syntax are conceived by so-called resolute readers of early Wittgenstein. Employing the Tractarian distinction between sign and symbol—where the identity of a sign is a matter of its orthography, whereas the identity of a symbol is matter of its meaningful use—Conant writes that

> logical syntax is concerned neither with the proscription of combinations of signs nor with the proscription of combinations of symbols. It is not concerned with the proscription of combinations of signs, because Tractarian logical syntax does not treat of (mere) signs; it treats of symbols—and a symbol only has life in the context of a significant proposition. It is not concerned with the proscription of combinations of symbols because there is nothing to proscribe—"Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed."(§5.4733)[14]

The notion of symbol here is tied to the specifically Tractarian conception that the underlying logic of any meaningful language must have the simple truth-functional form encapsulated in his truth-table notation; hence that notion should not be employed in descriptions of his post-Tractarian views. But the similarity I am interested in is still there: like rules of logical syntax, grammatical rules are not in the business of proscribing anything, since they are constitutive of the very entities whose employment they capture. If what we are interested in is the line between meaningfulness and nonsensicality, breaking a grammatical rule should not be conceived as a transgression of that line. "Breaking" a grammatical rule just means no longer playing the game defined by it.

Hacker tries to ridicule this conception, by arguing that it is

> akin to claiming that the pawn in chess cannot be moved three squares at a time, since if one were to move a piece thus, it would not be a pawn—a transcendental argument to prove that one cannot cheat in

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[14] James Conant, "The Method of the *Tractatus*," in *From Frege to Wittgenstein. Perspectives on Early Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Erich Reck (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 414.

chess. One *could* speak thus, but would it make any difference? Is it any clearer than the way we ordinarily speak?[15]

As my discussion of the identity of chess pieces has shown, Hacker is here using the analogy in a way that simply does not work. He is ignoring precisely how the analogy must break down. This is somewhat ironic, since Hacker's own conception of grammatical rules can be construed precisely as a response to that breakdown. His response is to retain the normative potency of grammatical rules at the expense of their capacity to constitute the pieces whose use they govern. The opposite, resolute response is to retain constitutivity at the expense of normative potency.

Now, importantly, to recommend the non-Hackerian, "resolute" conception of grammatical rules is not to recommend a theory to the effect that linguistic meaning has no elements that can be appropriately characterized as "normative." The notion of normativity can be given many different senses, and it seems quite plausible that one or more such senses will be important if one wants to understand what is involved in the incredibly complex phenomenon of linguistic meaning. As Cora Diamond pointed out in a comment on Hacker's criticism of Conant, what resolute readers reject is just what she calls a "strong" notion of correctness—a notion which justifies "an inference from the fact that a sign was used in a way which departs from its hitherto sole 'correct use' (with no stipulations having been made about any other uses) to its having been used incorrectly or in such a way as to give rise to nonsense."[16] We may well find use for some other notion of correctness which allows for a multitude of deviant yet perfectly correct uses of words.

In this connection, it is perhaps also worth pointing out that the conception of grammatical rules that I am recommending does not amount to a Humpty Dumpty, or "anything goes," theory of linguistic meaning. All it amounts to, as far as the theory of meaning is concerned, is the purely negative claim that the domain of the meaningful is not delimited by pre-established rules of usage. This point in no way excludes that other useful things can be said about the conditions of meaningful linguistic communication or about the ways in which new and immediately intelligible uses of old words depend on our earlier commerce with those words. In fact, I take it to be a great advantage of this conception that it can comfortably accommodate those parts of Wittgenstein's works where

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[15] Hacker, "Wittgenstein, Carnap, and the New American Wittgensteinians," 16.

[16] Cora Diamond, "Logical Syntax in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," *Philosophical Quarterly* 55, no. 218 (Jan. 2005): 83.

he seems engaged *both* in exploring such conditions and dependencies *and* in highlighting the *absence* of rule-governedness. I have in mind parts of Wittgenstein's work that are explored in different ways by interpreters such as Stanley Cavell and Charles Travis.[17]

5. Concluding Remarks

A final worry: At the beginning of this paper, when I started talking about how chess rules are related to the pieces whose use they govern, I noted the "circular" character of the rules, and I said that this circular character was puzzling, since it seemed to make it inexplicable how the rules could play any role at all in actual chess-playing. I solved the puzzle by pointing out that individual chess pieces owe their identity to their career in the particular game in which they are used. But now, in arguing for the "non-Hackerian" response to the breakdown of the analogy between words and chess pieces, I seem to cheerfully accept precisely the same puzzle but *without* having anything like the above solution to offer. Indeed, the breakdown of the analogy consisted precisely in the fact that no such solution to the circularity puzzle is available. So, how on earth are grammatical rules, as I conceive them, supposed to play any role at all? How can they be of any use as philosophical tools? Hacker at least has an explanation of how such rules can be important in philosophy. The conception I am advocating seems to make them utterly impotent, since any invocation of such a circular rule can be met simply with the response that, in the particular case at hand, the rule is just not in force.

I think this worry takes it for granted that if grammatical rules are to be of any use in philosophy, that use must be of the sort Hacker takes them to have. But what if their function is quite different? What if the philosophical significance of such rules does not lie in their capacity to track a "boundary of sense" that is supposed to be somehow already laid down in everyday linguistic practice? What if their function is instead to be responsive to the structure of *philosophical problems?* As Wittgenstein puts it in *The Blue Book,* the reason why it is philosophically useful to talk of language use in terms of rules is not that real-life linguistic practice is in fact circumscribed by such rules but that "the puzzles which we try to remove always spring from [an] attitude towards language [as a

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[17] Cavell, *The Claim of Reason* and Charles Travis, *The Uses of Sense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

symbolism used in an exact calculus]."[18] According to Wittgenstein, philosophers tend, as it were, to harden certain features of everyday usage into strict patterns and then to waver between these aspects in ways that create seemingly irresolvable contradictions. As he puts it in the *Investigations,* we "lay down rules . . . then when we follow the rules, things do not turn out as we had assumed. . . . we are therefore as it were entangled in our own rules. This entanglement in our rules is what we want to understand."[19]

Philosophical confusions of the sort Wittgenstein is talking about here are not due to the mere transgression of some grammatical rule. Rather, they are due to the tacit hovering between different forms of use—uses that by themselves are perfectly all right. Now in order to treat such confusions, grammatical rules can be quite useful, despite—or even precisely because of—their circular character. For the use of these rules in such cases is not to prescribe particular uses and proscribe others. Indeed, such attempts at prescription and proscription would be counterproductive: for the problem is not that there are correct and incorrect ways of using the relevant words. Rather, the trouble is that two different uses are being conflated—so what we need is to get clear about the differences between them. What we need the rules for is to capture the relevant patterns of use, describe them, and thereby make it clear that the confusion is due to an attempt to play two different games at the same time. This requires entering precisely into the sort of dialogue that Hacker's conception of grammatical rules seems to prevent, or at least make unnecessary—a dialogue that does not presuppose that the relevant "pieces" and "games" have already been identified but is genuinely open to the possibility of using language in a multitude of meaningful ways.[20]

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[18] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 26.
[19] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §125.

Where Words Fail

Charles Travis

> But if someone were to say "So logic too is an empirical science" he
> would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same proposition may get treated
> at one time as something to be tested by experience, at another as a
> rule governing such testing. (*On Certainty,* §98)[1]

A thought makes truth turn on how things are; a given thought on
whether things are a given way *for* them to be. A (singly) singular thought,
such as that Sid smokes, is decomposable into two elements: one making
truth turn on how some object is; the other making it turn on which ob-
jects are some particular way for an object to be. From 1891 on, Frege
speaks of thoughts and thought-elements as having what he calls *Bedeu-
tung*. The *Bedeutung* of a predicative element, he writes, is what, from
1891 on, he calls a *concept*; of an element which names (makes truth
turn on how some given object is) an object. Concepts and objects (he
seems to say) are fundamentally different: a concept depends for its ex-
istence on objects to fall under it or not; an object is in no such need of
completion. No object is a concept; hence no concept is an object. So he
seems to say. But he also (sometimes) finds that something prevents our
saying so.

Sometimes Frege sees language as the obstacle:

> Granted, a peculiar obstacle stands in the way of communication with
> the reader, namely, that, with a peculiar necessity of language, my ex-
> pression, taken strictly literally, sometimes misses the thought, in that
> where a concept is meant an object is named. I am fully aware of being

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), §98.

222

directed in such cases to the accommodating good will of the reader who will not be sparing with a pinch of salt.[2] (1892: 204)

Sometimes the obstacle appears as "the nature of a concept" itself:

> The nature of a concept is now a great obstacle for proper expression, and for communication. Where I want to speak of a concept, language forces me with nearly inescapable force to use an unfitting expression, by which the thought is obscured—I could almost say falsified. If I say, "the concept *equilateral triangle*," one would assume, following the linguistic analogy, that I thereby designate a concept, just as, without doubt, I name a planet if I say "the planet Neptune." But this is not the case; for predicative nature is missing. Accordingly, the *Bedeutung* of the expression "The concept *equilateral triangle*" (insofar as there is one) is an object. We cannot avoid words such as "the concept," but must then always be conscious of their unsuitability.[3]

The *Bedeutung* of "The concept *equilateral triangle*" is an object, and *hence* it is not a concept. A concept could *only* be *bedeutet* by a certain sort of expression ("unsaturated") which, in turn, could *only* function to predicate of something being what that concept was a concept *of* being (e.g., equilateral). Such an expression would yield no predication of a concept. Nor would any other which might predicate things of objects. So goes the idea. It *looks* as if we can say what the *Bedeutung* of a predicative expression is. We would like to say that it is *such and such* a concept. If Frege is right, there is no saying this. Is this insight or confusion?

Some, such as James Conant, answer 'insight'—on behalf both of himself and young Wittgenstein (henceforth YW). YW, he observes, was inspired by the idea. He writes,

> Another cousin of our problem can be seen in Frege's treatment of the Kerry paradox, when he insists that the words he himself must resort to ("the concept horse is not a concept") in order to illuminate what is confused in Kerry's talk about concepts do not themselves express coherent thoughts—any more than Kerry's own formulations do. . . .

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[2] Gottlob Frege, *"Ueber Begriff und Gegenstand," Vierteljahrschrift fur wissenschsftliche Philosophie* 16 (1892): 204.

[3] Gottlob Frege, *"Ausführungen über Sinn und Bedeutung"* [1892–95], in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed., eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), 130.

Frege's discussion of these two cousins of our problem are viewed by many contemporary commentators as among the most embarrassing moments in all of his work—sudden signs of an otherwise uncharacteristic softening of the mind. Yet they are precisely the moments in Frege's work from which Wittgenstein takes himself to learn the most.[4]

In that same paragraph, Conant also observes that YW was inspired, too, by another idea of Frege's, this time to a negative response. This other idea concerns the nature of logic. Conant expresses it as the idea that logic is a science. YW expresses his rejection of it in the idea that laws of logic "say nothing."

Here is the plan of the present essay. I will argue that YW's reactions are off-target both times. They are, I will suggest, among what mature Wittgenstein (henceforth MW) came to see as the *Tractatus's* "grave mistakes." Further, to see how YW's critique of Frege's view of logic misses the mark is also to see what is wrong with Frege's "insight" about concepts and objects. It is the same thing that goes wrong in each. The essay is divided into three parts. Part I scouts some notions which will be needed for discussing Frege's obstacle, and Part II then discusses it. Part III takes up Frege's and YW's conceptions of logic and ends with MW's replacement for these.

If Frege is right about the obstacle, I may, from time to time, try to say the unsayable (or to say something about concepts that is not really about them). But I am betting on his being wrong. *Pro tem* a case that I have succumbed to some such fate should not just *assume* that he is not.

I

1.1.   Thoughts first: *What* blocks saying what it *seems* there is to say about concepts (and objects)? And *how*? To answer these questions, some distinctions need to be observed. Part I aims to draw those distinctions. To begin, I follow Frege's strategy: whole thoughts come first. In 1919 he put this thus:

What is distinctive in my view of logic is made recognisable, first of all, by the fact that I put the content of the word "true" at the fore-front, and then by the fact that I let thoughts follow immediately as that by which truth can come into question at all. Thus I do not begin

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[4] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the Tractatus," this volume, 71.

with concepts and build thoughts, or judgements, out of them, but I arrive at thought-elements by the decomposition of thoughts.[5]

In the same vein, in 1882 he wrote,

I do not believe that the formation of concepts could precede judgments, because that presupposes an autonomous existence of concepts, but I think that concepts arise through the decomposition *(Zerfallen)* of a judgeable content.[6]

"Judgable content" is Frege's early term for that by which truth can come into question at all. His first try at capturing *just* this, he came to see, built more into it than really belonged there. So, by 1891, he split off what did no work in bringing truth into question, leaving behind *Sinn,* and dubbing what was split off *Bedeutung. Sinn* is a species with two genera: *whole* thoughts (ways for truth to come into question) and thought-elements.

A whole thought decomposes (not *verotten,* but *zerfallen*), or is decomposable *(zerlegbar),* into elements. An element (*on* a decomposition) is whatever one thus comes to. To decompose a thought is to decompose a given way for truth to come into question; a given question of truth. A whole thought represents *things* as some given way there is for things to be. "Things," so used, blocks the question, "Which ones?" It is the way things are, full stop, which is, or is not, as represented.

A general point about decomposition: a *Zerfallung,* so a *Zerlegung,* of something is just that thing, decomposed; the whole thing, presented as divided into given parts. So one *has* a decomposition only, but also just, where the elements on it are, jointly, the whole being decomposed.

A thought as conceived here has a defining mission, or a task: to make truth turn in such and such a way on how things are. Decomposing a thought can be thought of as decomposing its mission into subtasks. An element of a thought on a decomposition is such a subtask, or, if one wishes to reify, precisely that which performs it. Any task can be decomposed into subtasks. *So* far, there is nothing special about thoughts. The task might be whitewashing a *casita* in a *Pueblo Blanco.*

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[5] Gottlob Frege, *"Aufzeichnungen für Ludwig Darmstädter"* (1919), in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed., eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), 273.

[6] Frege to A. Marty, August 29, 1882, in *Gottlob Freges Briefwechsel mit D. Hilbert, E. Husserl, B. Russell, sowie ausgewählte Einzelbriefe Freges,* eds. Gottfried Gabriel, Friedrich Kambartel, and Christian Thiel (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1980), 118.

One might decompose this (in one of countless ways) into whitewashing the front façade, whitewashing the rear *façade,* or whitewashing the sidewall. A thought's task is making truth turn in a particular way on how things are. So an element in it (on a decomposition) would be making truth turn, in part, in such and such a way on how things are; or, more fully, making the thought's way of making truth turn on how things are, in part, its turning in such and such a way on how things are. Making truth turn on whether Sid smokes might, for example, be making truth turn, in part, on who smokes, or, more fully, on whether relevant things smoke (those made so relevant, that is, by other elements in the thought).

"Whole thoughts first" thus loses philosophy a problem. Where a thought is decomposed into elements, no intelligible question remains as to what might join those elements into "the unity" of a whole thought. Similarly, if whitewashing a *casita* has been decomposed into white-washing its parts, there is no intelligible question as to what makes whitewashing those parts whitewashing the *casita.* For a thought's ele-ments to constitute a decomposition just *is* for them, jointly, to be the whole; for those subtasks, each performed in performing the others, to be that thought's identifying task. Losing a problem, though, has a price. It is essential for thought-elements to be what *do* add up to the whole thought. Where a thought makes truth turn on whether Sid smokes, making truth turn on whether *things which matter* smoke might be an element in it—where there is another which makes truth turn on whether Sid is *ways which matter.* Such elements are in the same business as the whole: making truth turn on how things are. They are also in the thought's same business, representing-as. One represents relevant things *as* smokers, the other Sid *as* the one who is *relevant ways.* By contrast (a familiar point) a way for a thing to be—say, such as to smoke—is not in any of these lines of work. It makes truth turn, even in part, on nothing; it rep-resents nothing as any given way. On this conception of a decomposi-tion, it is thus ineligible to be a thought-element.

Thus Frege's insistence that *Sid*, for example, can be no thought-element. A thought's truth might turn on how Sid is. But *Sid* cannot make himself, or anything else, that on which the truth of any given thought turns; nor can he make truth turn on whether anything is any given way. Sid, as opposed to whether *things that matter* smoke, is not even a partial question of truth. (Similarly for Mont Blanc and The True.) Sid and being such as to smoke are equally, and for the same reasons, ineligible to be thought-elements.

The second point about thought-elements is that the same thought may be decomposed in many ways, where what is an element on one decomposition may be absent from another. What a thought's elements are is thus relative to how it is decomposed. To *be* such an element is, more properly, to be an element of some decomposition(s) of the thought.[7] *Casitas* follow suit here too. There are many ways of decomposing a *casita*'s outer surface into surface-parts; correspondingly, there are many (at least) ways of dividing up a task of whitewashing it. None can claim serious priority per se. So it is, too, Frege tells us, for different decompositions of the same thought.[8] Where a thought is decomposed into, inter alia, an element which makes truth turn (somehow) on which things are some given way, or on which way relevant objects must be, I will call the element *predicative*. Where an element makes such and such an object the one which must be *relevant ways*, I will call it a *naming* element.

A third point: a thought has a mission, decomposable into subtasks, just as whitewashing a *casita* is decomposable into subtasks. But there is a difference. A subtask in whitewashing might be done on its own. Pia whitewashes the front façade. Sid, charged with the rear, instead sneaks off for a nap. The *casita* has not been whitewashed. But at least something has been done. It has been *partially* whitewashed. There is no parallel in a task of making truth turn on how things are. Subtasks in doing so cannot be parceled out. More crucially, there is no such thing as doing just *one* such subtask (and then, as it were, stopping). There is no making truth turn in part on how Sid is independent of making truth turn on how things are; no such thing as taking satisfaction in a job part-done. Here, to stop short of the whole job would be to do nothing. Such is one form of Frege's context principle.

1.2. *Bedeutung:*

1891 marks a watershed in Frege's thought. It is the point by which he had abandoned the notion *judgable content* as unfit for purpose. He broke off from this what had no role in identifying questions of truth. What remained was *Sinn*, in the varieties *whole thought* and *thought-element*. What was broken off, he called *Bedeutung*. What was left behind retained this feature: the whole comes first; parts of it are arrived at by decomposition. A key question: Does the same apply to what was broken off?

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[7] See, for example, Frege, "*Ueber Begriff und Gegenstand,*" 199–200.
[8] Frege to A. Marty, *Freges Briefwechsel,* 118.

Frege describes the breakup as follows:

> When I wrote my *Foundations of Arithmetic* I had not yet made the distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung,* and thus still brought together in the notion *judgable content* what I now designate differentially with the words "thought" and "truth value."[9]

Truth value appears here as the prime case of what needed breaking off. It thus appears that what is most central to Frege's notion of *Bedeutung* is that a truth-value is the *Bedeutung* of a whole thought. The problem of what the *Bedeutungen* of *Sinn* of various kinds are is often approached as follows: we *know* that the *Bedeutung* of a naming thought-element is an object. In that case, what should the *Bedeutungen* of other sorts of *Sinn* be? This makes for particular problems when it comes to the *Bedeutung* of a whole thought. Frege himself sometimes encourages this way of thinking. One *might* be further encouraged if he reads "bedeuten" in Frege's mouth as roughly "denote," or "refer," and then consults his own intuitions about denoting to see what, if anything, one might say is a whole thought to name. But the problems thus raised are needless, or idle. To see what *Frege's* notion of *Bedeutung* is, we ought to proceed the other way around. For *this* notion, it is a given that the *Bedeutung* of a whole thought is a truth-value. What, then, ought the *Bedeutungen* of other elements be?

To begin with, *why* does truth-value need to be excised from *judgable content?* A simple answer: there are no two thoughts which are distinguished from each other precisely in the one being true and the other false. There are not, for example, two thoughts, the true one that Sid smokes and the false one that he does. Being true, or false, is thus not part of precisely that by which truth can come into question at all.

A more complicated answer: having the truth-value it does *cannot* be part of what identifies a thought (or its question of truth) as the one it is. Truth cannot belong to what brings itself into question. Otherwise it would not be fixed what thought was at issue until it was fixed whether what was in question was a *true* thought or a false one. In a thought, something is represented *as* being something: the way things are as being some way there *is* for things to be (e.g., such that Sid smokes). Truth now enters the picture with the question of whether things *are* as thus represented. A thought is identified by what is thus variable: the second factor. Where truth belonged to bringing itself into question,

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[9] Frege, *"Ueber Begriff und Gegenstand,"* 198.

how a thought represented things as being would not be fixed until it was fixed whether such was representing truly. But *such* reduces the behavior of a thought, and of representing-as, to the behavior of something else entirely: *factive* meaning, or (where falsity plays the identifying role) factive counter-meaning. Factive meaning leaves no room for the question of whether things are as represented: if not, then they simply were not so represented. Representing-as, so truth, would thus be abolished.

Still, truth matters. "Laws of logic," Frege tells us, "are in the first place laws in the realm of *Bedeutung,* and only mediately pertain to *Sinn.*"[10] At the least, logic's central concern is truth-preservation. But there is talk of truth *being* preserved, or not only where whatever it is that would fix a truth-value can be supposed to have done its work. For a thought to fix what it is meant to, some determinate question of truth, is for it to make truth turn in some determinate way on how things are (normally, *perhaps* not necessarily, a way which makes how things are *matter*). To assign a thought a truth-value is to suppose *the way things are* to have delivered an answer to the question thus posed; for truth *to have* turned in that way, *how things are* then delivering a given outcome. So, we might say, for a given thought to have a given truth-value is for *the way things are* to have delivered *that* answer to the question posed. So, substituting "the world" for "how things are," for the truth-value to be the *Bedeutung* of the thought, is for it to be the world's answer to the question posed.

One *might* thus think of the *Bedeutung* of a thought as being "The True," or "The False" in the same way one thinks of "Yes" as being an answer to a yes-no question. As Frege points out, the content of such a "Yes" is really the content of the question: both express, or contain, the same thought. We *could* thus think of the *Bedeutung* of the thought that Sid smokes as the answer to that question being "True."

From this starting point, we now approach the question of what the *Bedeutungen* of thought-elements would be. The obvious answer: a thought-element makes the thought's truth turn *in part* in such and such a way on how things are; the *Bedeutung* of such an element should then be the answer to the thought's question of truth, insofar as this is settled by that element (so by that partial way of turning) and things being as they are. Suppose, for example, that a predicative element in the thought that Sid smokes makes truth turn on whether relevant

10 Frege, "*Ausführungen über Sinn und Bedeutung,*" 133.

things smoke. Speaking loosely, objects divide into those which smoke and those which do not. *How* the objects there are thus divided depends, of course, on how things are. It is part of the world's answer to a question which makes truth turn in the way just mentioned on how things are. This partial answer can be registered as follows: consider that function which (as it happens) maps an object onto The True just in case that object is a smoker; onto The False otherwise. Then the answer to the thought's question is thus: the truth-value of the whole are the values of that function for relevant arguments. The relevant *Bedeutung*-element would thus be: (the answer) being those values of that function. Similarly, a naming element in that thought which made truth turn on how *Sid* is would have as its *Bedeutung* (the answer) being the value of the relevant function (as determined by other elements) for the argument *Sid*.

We thus arrive at a notion *Bedeutung*-element. For each thought-element (on a decomposition), there is a corresponding *Bedeutung*-element. The sort of element this is is determined by the sort of thought-element to which it corresponds. A whole *Bedeutung* (a truth-value, considered as an answer) decomposes into *Bedeutung*-elements. For each decomposition of the whole thought, it does this in a corresponding way. So, as with thoughts, the basic notion is decomposing *on a decomposition*.

Our general principle about decompositions (of whitewashings, of pecan pies, of whatever)—that principle which lost us the problem of forming "unities" out of elements—now applies: one has a decomposition of a whole *Bedeutung* just where the *Bedeutung*-elements are, jointly, the whole answer to the question posed. Because of this, a function from objects to truth-values is ineligible for being a *Bedeutung*-element of (or fixed by) a predicative thought-element (and the world). Such functions, and some object they map into a truth value, simply form a list. The problem of unity arises.

We can, though, introduce a new notion: that of what I call an *ingredient* (of an element). An ingredient of a thought-element is that on which it makes truth turn and by which it is distinguished from other elements of its type as the particular element of that type which it is. For example, a predicative element makes truth turn on which things are some particular way for a thing to be. It is identified as the *predicative* element it is by the way in question for a thing to be (e.g., that that way is being such as to smoke). That way for things to be is thus an ingredient in that element. Similarly, a naming element makes truth turn, say, on how *Sid* is,

thus distinguishing itself from other naming elements (though, if there are many ways of making truth turn on how Sid is, then not from *all* such). Sid might thus count as an ingredient of that naming element. Similarly, a predicative *Bedeutung*-element makes it a particular function from objects to truth-values, which is the one whose value for relevant arguments is the answer to the whole thought's question. So such a function might be counted as an ingredient of this *Bedeutung*-element. (Here, too, different predicative elements might each fix a *Bedeutung*-element with the same ingredient.)

This notion of *ingredient* does not fix a *unique* ingredient for every element. Choices between candidates, where such arise, are to be made as is then convenient. The immediate point is just to point to something it might mean to call a function from objects to truth-values the *Bedeutung* of a predicative element. *Bedeutung*-elements need not be what Frege meant by *Bedeutungen*. Nor, given the choices now on the table, need Frege have been perfectly clear as to what he did mean by *Bedeutung*. The primary object of the present exercise is to identify various different things for which Frege's obstacle might or might not arise. We are now halfway.

1.3. Concepts (First Notion):   What Frege's obstacle concerns, he tells us, is "concepts," or talk thereof. What, though, might a concept be? Two notions of a concept emerge from the roles to which Frege puts the term in identifying those structures to which logic must be sensitive. This section develops one of these. The need to be served is this: there must be a way for a thought to make truth turn on how relevant objects are other than by specifying *which* objects these are to be. Frege illustrates this need and its being served as follows:

> One must not think that I say something about an inner-African chieftain, entirely unknown to me, if I say, "All men are mortal." I speak neither of this one, or of that one; but I subordinate the concept *man* to the concept *mortal*. . . . Nor must one think that the *Sinn* of the sentence "Cato is mortal" is contained in the sentence "All men are mortal," so that should I utter [this last] I will have, in the same stroke, expressed the thought content of [this first]. The matter is much more as follows. In the sentence "All men are mortal," I say, "If something is a man, it is mortal." By an inferential move from the general to the particular, I get from this the sentence "If Cato is a man, then Cato is mortal." Now I still need a

second premise, namely, "Cato is a man." From these two premises I conclude, "Cato is mortal."[11]

Suppose that "All men," or "men" in it, functioned as a name (albeit, perhaps, a highly polysemous one): it specified on the mortality or not of which objects the truth of the thought expressed depended. Then it would name, inter alia, Cato. That is, it would make truth turn, inter alia, on how Cato was, specifically, whether he was mortal. The truth of the whole thought would thus require Cato so to be. Suppose, then, that we assume (or assert) its truth. It follows immediately from our assumption that Cato is mortal. So the inference from "All men are mortal" to "Cato is" should be immediate. It should depend on no further premise. No more is required than the truth of our assumption for *Cato is mortal* to be true too. Such is obviously not the case. For it to follow that Cato is mortal, something else must be so: that Cato is a man. Such demonstrates the need for a different way for a thought's truth to depend on who is mortal.

Frege also sketches what this other way would have to be. It would have to be a way of involving all objects meeting a certain condition. A concept, on our first notion, is what plays a certain role in achieving this. The crucial things about a concept so conceived are expressed by Frege thus:

> What I see as the essential thing for a concept is that the question whether something falls under it has a sense.[12]

As one might think of a concept, the core of the notion is a way for a thing to be. (Such is the simplest case. The core generalizes to a way for an n-tuple of objects to be, $n \geq 1$. It also generalizes to a way for things (read catholically): a way which, indifferently, any n-tuple of objects is as much as any other (e.g., such that Sid smokes). One might think of this as the case $n = 0$. For any way for a thing to be, let there be the concept of a thing so being. For an object to fall under such a concept can just be for it to be the relevant way. Such gives a sense to the question of whether an object falls under it, asked of a concept in present sense.

Such a concept figures as follows in the envisioned non-naming way of making truth turn on how relevant objects are. It (or, equally, that

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[11] Gottlob Frege, *"Logik in der Mathematik"* (1914), in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed., eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), 231.

[12] Frege to A. Marty, *Freges Briefwechsel,* 118.

which it is of) may be put to work as an ingredient in a predicative thought-element. But, in the context of the whole thought, that predicative element would be working in a special way: not such that for things to be as represented would be for the right things to be that way; but rather such that *whatever* was that way was also relevant other ways (ingredients in *other* predicative elements playing different roles in the whole thought so decomposed).

This notion of a concept allows concepts a certain object-independence. What fell under a concept could be other than what does. No given object must fall under a concept for the concept to exist or be the one it is. *Nothing* need fall under a concept for there to be one. If just one thing does so, the concept might still be object-independent in all the above ways. Not all concepts have all these features. There is the concept of being that very philosopher Frege. But for Frege's existence, there would have been no such concept. Since there is, nothing other than what falls under it could have done so, no matter what. Similarly, being a whale is a way for a thing to be. But it might not have, had there been no whales. What is built into this notion of a concept is just that such forms of object-independence are provided for.

A concept$_1$ may be called true *of* what falls under it, but not true outright. Nor does it represent what falls under it *as* that which it is a concept of. The concept$_1$ of being a smoker is what *requires* something for Sid to fall under it. It is indifferent to whether he meets that requirement. It is subject to no standard of correctness, or accuracy, which it may meet or fail according to whether Sid smokes. It is in no business for which there might be such a standard of success—no business such as representing-as would be. Its indifference to whether Sid falls under it is part of its indifference to whether Sid exists.

This is to say that a concept$_1$ is not a predicative thought-element. It does not *make* truth turn, even in part, on anything. It might be counted as an ingredient of such an element; that which the element puts to work as what relevant things need to be (or fall under). Or, again, one might rather count that which the concept is a concept of (in the unary case, a way for a thing to be) as the ingredient. Such is a matter of indifference just where one does not distinguish—as Frege sometimes does not—between a thought of something *being* thus and one of its falling under the concept of things so being. In any case, being an ingredient does not make something *Sinn*. Sid can be counted as an ingredient of a naming thought-element. *He* is put to work there as what truth turns on in the relevant way (what must be relevant ways). But Sid is certainly not a

Sinn. One *might* equally see the ingredient in the naming element as a concept of a special kind: a concept of being that very thing Sid. Such a concept, of course, requires Sid for its existence, and allows nothing but Sid to fall under it. Whether such a concept or Sid is an ingredient may cease to be a matter of indifference, notably, where one is concerned with the possibility of many concepts with the above two mentioned features—where one recognizes many ways of making Sid the one on whom truth turns. If neither objects nor concepts$_1$ are *Sinn,* they are also not *Bedeutung*-elements; though objects, at least, may be ingredients thereof. Whether this would make an object a *Bedeutung* rests on a decision as to how to use that term. (Frege's *usage* suggests the answer yes; though whether it requires this depends on how that usage is to be explained.)

1.4. Concepts (Second Notion):   Our second conception of a concept (a concept$_2$) also derives from Frege's perception of the needs of logic (or, this time, of a logical notation). To introduce the notion I will begin, as Frege does, with language. Frege suggests[13] that for logic's purposes, the grammatical distinction of subject and predicate should be eschewed in favor of a distinction parallel to that in mathematics, between function and argument. There is a *grammatical* notion of subject and predicate; and there is a *logical* notion of naming and predication. The logical notion of predication is already in play here in the idea of a predicative thought-element: predication (in the unary case) is making truth turn on a way for a thing to be. The idea is thus: these two notions come apart.

In the simplest cases—words such as "Sid smokes"—grammar and logic coincide. Here "_ smokes" is the grammatical predicate: it forms a sentence with what is grammatically a name (or, more properly, a noun phrase); and in the expression of a thought, it is responsible for identifying a predicative thought-element in the thought thus presented as decomposed—a thought-element which makes truth turn on whether the right people *smoke.*

The logical notion, predicative element, though, generalizes from this simple case to something which corresponds to *nothing* a grammar of a language need recognize. The linguistic correlate of this generalized no-

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[13] For example, Frege, *"Ausführungen über Sinn und Bedeutung,"* 130, and Frege, *"Logik"* (1897), in *Nachgelassene Schriften,* vol. 1, 2nd ed., eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983), 154.

tion is an open sentence. An open sentence is what is derived from a complete one by erasing one or more noun phrases (grammatically, naming elements) from it, leaving blank spaces behind. In an expression of a thought, an open sentence with n blanks would identify an n-ary predicative thought-element (to be found in the thought expressed suitably decomposed). This would make truth turn on whether relevant n-tuples were a given way for an n-tuple to be. Where the whole thought-expressing sentence results from the open one by filling each blank with a (grammatical) name, the relevant n-tuple for the truth of the whole would be formed of the objects named in those fillings.

Our second notion of a concept enters the picture here as the answer to the question of what an open sentence denotes. The idea will be that a concept$_2$ is what an open sentence, in the context of a whole one, in the context of its use to express a thought, denotes. But this answer is meant to derive from a more general answer to the question of what an open sentence denotes as such. The answer to this further question is as follows: a function (where a function is what relates one domain of objects, its arguments, to another, its values, such that for each argument there is exactly one value). In 1904, TK Frege tells the following story about this (for double-open sentences). Consider the open sentence "__ = sin __." We can understand this sentence as identifying, or denoting, a certain function (here, the sine function). So to understand it is to understand it as telling us, for any filling of the last blank (by a number), what is to go in the left blank: understanding this last filling as presenting an argument of the sine function, what value to put into the first blank. So, for example, 0 on the right would call for 1 on the left, $\pi/2$ would call for 0. The fillings 0, 1, etc., denote numbers. Similarly, the open sentence should, here, denote a function. To find that function, ask what remains constant as the fillings vary. What remains constant is what so relates all the fillings: just that mapping which maps 0 onto 1, $\pi/2$ onto 0, and so on. Such, then, is what the open sentence, so understood, denotes.

Suppose, now, that we consider the open sentence "__ smokes." If we fill the blank with "Sid" we get a truth. If we fill it with "Di" we get a falsehood, and so on. Frege's notion of *Bedeutung* begins from the idea that the *Bedeutung* of a whole thought is a truth-value. We *can*, then, understand "__ smokes" (at least in the context of the expression of a thought) as denoting a function. For a given filling of the blank as that function's argument, its value would be the *Bedeutung* of the whole thus formed: a truth-value. The *function* would be what remained constant

as <filling, whole-*Bedeutung*> pairs remained constant. On the model of "__ = sin __," this constant would be that mapping which mapped just those arguments into just those values.

There are the obvious differences between the two cases. Where "__ = sin __" is understood as denoting the sine function, the value of the function denoted is to be understood to be the filling of the first blank. If we view "__ smokes" as denoting a function, there is no place in the open sentence for a value. What would denote the relevant function on the understanding on which "__ = sin __" denotes the sine function, one would need an expression like "__ = __ smokes" (in another style, "y = smokes (x)." Conversely, "__ = sin __," blanks filled, may also be understood as the expression of a thought, as in the expression of the false thought, "17 = sin 2." The function thus denoted would be one from pairs of numbers to truth values, with no place in the open sentence for the value this function takes. To denote *this* function in the style of "__ = sin __," one would need something like "z = sin (x,y)." Perhaps the best approach here is to suppose that there are two relevant understandings of an open sentence, on each of which it denotes a function (though different ones on each). There is an understanding on which the value of the function is supposed to be mentioned in some blank in the open sentence, and an understanding where it is to be understood as the denotation (or *Bedeutung*) of a filled whole. Typically (but not necessarily) it is on the second understanding that an open sentence denotes a concept$_2$. For a concept$_2$ just is to be a mapping from (n-tuples of) objects to truth-values.

A concept$_2$ is a mapping. Though Frege tells us that we cannot really speak of being *identical* with some given concept, if we keep that in mind, we can say this:

> What two concept-words *bedeuten* is the same if, and only if, the concept-extensions belonging to them coincide.[14]

So if we *were* to speak of concepts$_2$ as identical to, or distinct from, one another—if we were permitted to engage in such talk—we would know exactly how to go about it. A mapping is what a mapping does. For each mapping, there is what it maps into what. Whatever maps that into that is that mapping; whatever does not is not. Concepts$_2$ are mappings. Thus, so it is with concepts$_2$.

One might argue as to whether the sine function "ought to be" a mapping in the above sense or whether it is, rather, that "law" which deter-

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[14] Frege, *"Ausführungen über Sinn und Bedeutung,"* 133.

mines what *is to be* mapped into what. One might similarly argue as to whether a concept "ought to be" a mapping in this sense, or, again, ought to be that which fixes which mapping is to bear some given title. The present position is that "concept" lacks determinate enough content to give such questions an answer outright. They are not sensible questions until it has been decided what role a concept is to be assigned. As it happens, concepts$_2$, conceived as mappings, are perfectly suited to serve as ingredients in predicative *Bedeutung*-elements. A mapping from objects to truth-values which takes on the value *true* precisely for the smokers registers *precisely* the world's answer to the question of whether Sid smokes—what in fact happens when truth so turns—insofar as what that answer is is determined by the fact that the thought in question is as to some given thing being *this* way: such as to smoke. Its answer to that whole question is precisely the value into which *this* mapping maps the argument *Sid*.

Concepts$_2$ are intrinsically object-dependent in precisely the way in which concepts$_1$ are not. For a concept$_2$ (a mapping) to exist, and for it to be the one it is, is for it to map just *these* arguments into *these* values. Its existence depends on there being just *these* pairs of objects. Whereas a concept$_1$ may exist, or be what it is, entirely independently of what objects (if any) fall under it. (Some concepts$_1$ do; some do not.) We *might* think of a concept$_1$ as denoting a concept$_2$: where a concept$_1$ is of some given way for a thing to be, it denotes that concept$_2$ which maps just those things into *true* which are that way. But such denotation would not be rigid. A bit less irony in the parent-child communication mix, and Sid might have grown up a non-smoker. The concept$_1$ *being a smoker* (the same for all that) would then have denoted a different concept$_2$. Object-independence—the very *point* of concepts$_1$—would defeat the whole point of concepts$_2$. These would no longer register the world's answers to those questions that thoughts pose.

In 1882 Frege speaks of a concept as what cannot have an independent existence but as what "arises only through the decomposition of judgable contents."[15] There, and from thenceforth, he also speaks of concepts as *unsaturated*:

> A concept is unsaturated, in that it requires something of what falls under it; thus it cannot exist on its own.[16]

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[15] Frege to A. Marty, *Freges Briefwechsel,* 118.
[16] Ibid.

The first remark suggests that the existence of a concept is dependent on (in post-1891 terms) whole thoughts. The second suggests that its existence is somehow or other dependent on objects.

The first idea might be developed along these lines. For a concept to exist is for it to play a certain role (so for there to be precisely that role to be played) in whole thoughts; thus, for there to be a certain contribution to be made to making truth turn on how things are, as given thoughts make truth thus turn. For there to be such a thing as a concept of being a smoker, there must be such a thing as making truth turn on who smokes—a thing which can only be done in the context of making truth *turn,* full stop, in some way or other on how things are. So there is no concept of being a smoker unless there are whole thoughts whose truth turns in one way or another on who smokes. One might also put this as follows: for there to be a concept of being a smoker, there must be such a thing as its being true, or false, of things. But this presupposes there being such a thing as truth outright. Thus, whole *thoughts* first.

As for the second idea, what is intrinsic to a concept for Frege is precisely *not* that things must fall under it, but certainly that it requires things of what does. One might understand this as it requiring things which either fall under it or do not. For a concept$_1$ this idea might be developed along these lines. It is intrinsic to a way for a thing to be (so to a concept$_1$ thereof) to be general: being that way is something which, if possible at all, would be shared in common in indefinitely many cases of an object's being as it was. And equally for *not* being that way. But there cannot be something in common to ranges of cases unless there are cases for it to be common to— here, at the least, present in *or* absent from. In the case of a unary concept, such would be cases of an *object*'s being as it is. So the existence of a concept$_1$ would be dependent on the existence of objects in this way: for there to be such a thing as the concept$_1$ of being a smoker, there must be objects which, in being as they are, either exemplify a thing's so being or exemplify a thing's not. (Of course, in this sense of dependence, there is no reason to expect the existence of an object not to be equally dependent on the existence of concepts$_1$. The thing about an object is that it is *one* item which, inevitably, will fall under countless concepts$_1$. Take away the concepts, and there is nothing left of the objects either.)

In the event, later (e.g., 1904) Frege inclines toward introducing the notion of unsaturation in the first instance as a notion applying to open sentences. Derivatively, it is also to be a feature of what open sentences denote. Which means, first, that it is a notion which applies to functions and equally to *all* functions, not just ones which are concepts$_2$; but second,

in whatever way it applies to functions, it *eo ipso* applies in just that way to concepts$_2$, which, among concepts, are the most immediate candidates for its application. An open sentence differs from the noun phrases eligible to fill its blanks, first, in that it need not belong to any grammatically significant category at all—it need not be any (grammatically) proper part of a sentence; second, in that, while, grammatically speaking, its blanks may be filled by noun phrases (or names), *it* is not eligible to fill the blanks in anything (construing filling blanks as restoring what is incomplete as an open sentence is to complete status); third, that, through its blank spaces, it determines just where completion would be needed to restore wholeness.

These three features identify a notion of *grammatical* unsaturation. An open sentence can *predicate* (express a predicative thought-element) only where occurring as completed: there *is* a predicative thought-element only where a whole thought has been expressed. Equally, and for just the same reason, a noun phrase can name (express a naming thought-element) only where a whole thought has been expressed. But a noun phrase (a potential name) contains nothing in it to fix just how it may be completed (grammatically). It might be completed by any open sentence, whether belonging to a grammatical category or not, and, if this is *n* times open, then by it, together with from 0 to *n*-1 other names, distributed in whatever pattern into its blank spaces. (This brackets issues of categorial restrictions on predication; for example, predicating being blue of the score of the United-Sporting game.) As one might put this, an open sentence is, as a noun phrase is not, quite specific about its *Ergänzungsbedürftigkeit*.

Frege extends the notion of unsaturation to denotata of unsaturated expressions:

> That peculiarity of the function-sign which we have called unsaturation naturally corresponds to something in functions themselves. This too we can call unsaturation, and thus distinguish them as fundamentally different from numbers.[17]

But he is at best frugal with his explanation of how the extension goes. If the denotata are just functions, one *might* see unsaturation in their very object-dependence. A function (mapping) is what remains constant (in denotation) across all variations in what fills the blank spaces (on that

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[17] Gottlob Frege, *"Was ist eine Funktion,"* in *Festschrift Ludwig Boltzmann zum sechzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet,* ed. S. Meyer (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1904), 665.

understanding of an open sentence, above, on which it identifies a function). It is that very same thing which, in each case, maps that argument into that value; the same thing for each pair of arguments and values. Of course, there is no such thing without the arguments and values which get mapped. In that sense, what Frege said of concepts in 1882 is so of functions in general: they cannot exist independently of objects. Concepts$_2$ are unsaturated in this sense.

II

2.1.   Predicative Nature: Part I developed a set of different things there may be an obstacle to speaking of. Each of these develops a different strand in Frege's thought. It was claimed of none that it is what Frege meant by such and such term. Nor is it claimed that our two notions of *concept* are necessarily of different things. For all it matters here, Frege may just not have seen these different things to choose between. In any event, insofar as Frege tries to explain why there should be an obstacle, he offers two suggestions. One is as follows: that for which there is an obstacle has something called a "predicative nature"; predicating things of it as though it were an object is inconsistent with this nature. The other is this: the obstacle arises for what it does because this is unsaturated. These diagnoses are clearly different. All functions are unsaturated. So, if this is the source of the obstacle, then it arises for functions in general, and not just ones from objects to truth-values. There are various things that "predicative nature" might mean. But in any case it seems clear that this is something not all functions have. There is, it seems, nothing intrinsically predicative about the sine function. In fact, I will suggest, neither diagnosis is very promising. This section takes up the first.

Having a predicative nature needs different understandings for our different candidates for the obstacle's object. A predicative thought-element has such a nature in that for it to be is for it to make truth turn (somehow) on what is, or what is not, some given way for things to be (in some particular decomposition of some given thought); for its contribution to represent things (catholically read) as some given way to be representing the relevant things (plural of "thing") as some given way—to *predicate* such and such of these things. A predicative *Bedeutung*-element is predicative in that it registers the world's answer to a given thought's question of truth insofar as this question is fixed by the predicative thought-

element to which it corresponds. A concept$_1$ has a predicative nature in that it is something fit for service as an ingredient in predicative thought-elements—it provides something for such elements to make truth turn on. A concept$_2$ has predicative nature in that it registers the outcome of truth turning as some predicative thought-element makes it turn on how things are.

So, it seems, in having a predicative nature, there is something fundamental about predicative thought-elements. Let us start with them. To be a predicative element is, per se, to be doing a certain sort of work: to make the truth of some thought, on some decomposition of it, turn in part on which things are some given way for things to be. For any given such element, there is no such thing as being that element without doing that work, or being that element while doing other work for a thought-element to do. A predicative element could not, for example, take the place of a naming element in any decomposition of any thought. There is no such thing as that.

This is so on two understandings of being a predicative element. It is trivially so if a thought-element is just an element of a particular decomposition of a particular thought. Then any element in any other decomposition, or any decomposition of any thought, is not it. Nor is any other element in the decomposition it belongs to. But instead of understanding an element as the *doing* of such and such in a particular thought's making truth to turn as that thought makes it do, we can also think of an element as something there is to be done in *a* thought in its making truth turn as it does. To decompose a thought into, inter alia, a given predicative element is to bring it under a certain generality; to represent its way of making truth turn on things as a way of a certain kind; if there is such a kind, then there is, per se, a range of thoughts, each of which, in its own way, is of that kind. A predicative element, on this second understanding, is what is in common to all of these. On this understanding, too, to be a given an element is to be the doing of the given work (here understood just as something to be done). For no other thought-element can the doing of this work be the doing of that other's. It thus remains so that no predicative element can replace ("*vertreten*") a naming element in any thought whatever.

Such corresponds to something Frege says about the fundamental difference he sees between "concepts" and "objects"—that difference which makes for the obstacle: that objects and concepts cannot take each other's place. If this were to mean that predicative and naming thought-elements cannot take each other's place, then indeed not. This,

though, is irrelevant to the question of whether there could be a thought *about* a predicative thought-element in which that element played the role of an object—one of being, or not, various ways there are for an object to be. For if there were such a thought about a predicative thought-element, that element need be *no* element in that thought. Neither a predicative element, since the point is not to predicate of *that element* what it predicates of something, nor a naming element. A naming element in such a thought would make truth turn on how that predicative thought-element was. Of course that predicative element, in the nature of the case, would not make truth turn on *itself* as truth might turn on some object.

The question, though, is rather whether there could be a naming element in *some* thought which made truth turn on which ways that predicative element was—otherwise put, whether a predicative thought-element in one thought might be an *ingredient* in a naming thought-element in another. The core fact here is that the doing of one thing cannot be the doing of another, so that no predicative thought-element is any naming thought-element or vice versa. *Such* does not answer this question. No reason is yet in evidence for why truth cannot be made to turn on what is so of, for example, making truth turn on who smokes. That a predicative thought-element can never be exchanged for an element of another sort (in any decomposition of anything) is not, so far as it goes, a route to, or source of, the obstacle.

Such is not the end of the story. For Frege suggests another reason why no concept could ever be an ingredient of a naming element. It is this:

> Objects and concepts are fundamentally different, and cannot take each other's place. . . . Concepts cannot stand in the same relations as objects. To think them so to stand would be, not false, but impossible.[18]

The suggestion is that one simply *cannot* predicate the same thing of a concept and an object. Objects, the idea is, form a category. There is what is essential for membership: that the question of whether something is that very thing (is identical with it) makes sense. There is then what is predicable of what satisfies this condition. What is predicable of this is predicable of *just* this. Concepts, too, by the idea, form a category. There is, again, what is essential for membership: that the question that falls

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[18] Frege, *"Ausführungen über Sinn und Bedeutung,"* 130.

under it (a member) makes sense. There is what is predicable of what falls in this category. Again, what is predicable of this is predicable of *only* this.

Suppose, now, that what Frege suggests about concepts here were so of predicative thought-elements. Now suppose that A is an ingredient of some naming element in a decomposition of some thought. It is thus treatable as an object. So what is predicable of it is what is predicable of objects. So the question of what is identical with it makes sense. But on the present suggestion about predicative thought-elements, the question for any thought-element, of whether A is identical with it, makes no sense. For predicative thought-elements, on present assumption, belong to a different category. So there is nothing it would be for any predicative thought-element and for any ingredient in a naming thought-element to be one; in which case, there would be an obstacle of the sort Frege sees, in regard to treating concepts as objects.

Similarly for our other obstacle candidates. Many objects are unfit for service as an ingredient in a predicative thought-element. My friend Guy is. So is the apple in his hand. So are all his kin. So is the smoke point of peanut oil or the divorce rate in Brazil. Guy is not a way for truth to turn on how an object is. Nor, equally, is an apple. Nor that smoke point. *Being* Guy, or *being* an apple, is another story. These are (as Guy himself is not) ways for a thing to be. Truth may then turn on which things *are* those ways. So there is what is fit for predicative service and what is not. Where there is what *is* so fit, there is also the concept$_1$ of it. One may ask of these whether anything is thus fit for predicative service, or whether any concept$_1$ thereof might also be fit for service as an ingredient in a naming thought-element. That ever so many things fit for such a "naming" service are unfit for predicative service simply fails to answer the question. What *might* force a negative answer on us? Frege's idea would, if what he says about concepts applied to ways for things to be or to concepts$_1$. It is hard to see what else might.

Similarly again for concepts$_2$. Can it really be that a mapping from objects to truth-values could not be an ingredient in a naming element in any thought whatever? What, for example, of the thought expressed in "The mapping which maps Pia and Sid into *true,* all other objects into *false,* is the denotation of any concept$_1$ under which precisely and only the present author's favorite couple fall"? It is hard to see what might force a negative answer on us here unless, of course, what Frege says about concepts above holds of mappings from objects to truth-values, in which case the above argument repeats itself for concepts$_s$.

All this gives us so far, though, is the following: if what Frege says about concepts and objects were true of any of our candidates, then we would face the obstacle he sees to speaking of that candidate. But *is* what Frege says right of any of our candidates, or of anything else with a "predicative nature"? Nothing in what predicative nature is, or might be, seems to show this. Though our search for what would show it is not yet over, we might now note two counter-indications.

The first is this: if Frege is right, then concepts (whatever these are) *cannot* serve as ingredients in naming elements. Suppose we overlooked this and tried to speak so as to put them in such service. What would happen? How would our attempt founder? The crucial fact is that we would not be able to say of anything that it was identical with any concept. Such would, indeed, lead to grief. But it is not as if the trouble would be that, if we could make such statements, we would not know when to count what was said in them as true. Suppose, for example, that concepts are concepts$_2$. We know exactly when to say (if only it could be said) when anything is a given concept$_2$. It is so when it maps just those things the concept does into just those truth-values it does. As for concepts$_1$, we are in no more difficulty about when to say something is a given concept$_1$ than we are as to when to say something is a given way for a thing to be; and there is no more difficulty to that than there is to ever identifying what it is that was said where something was. *Mutatis mutandis* for predicative thought-elements and for predicative *Bedeutung*-elements.

If we follow later Wittgenstein, then what has just been said *demonstrates* that Frege was wrong about the obstacle. For, on Wittgenstein's view, there is nothing it might be for a would-be identity statement to fail to be truth-evaluable, so to fail to make sense, except for us to find it "too stupid, or complicated, or something of the sort" so to regard it.[19] What we are *able* to treat as truth-evaluable, the idea is, is so.

For Wittgenstein, the story ends there. But not for us. There is, though, a second point to keep in mind. If the distinction between objects and concepts is categorial in the way described, then, though one cannot predicate of a concept what one can predicate of an object, all the same, there *is* what one can predicate of a concept. But there is no predicating anything of anything unless the subject of the predication participates in a relation which satisfies something of the form of Leibniz's law, applied

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[19] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), §136.

to things of the category to which this subject belongs. The point about objects and identity is that there is no making sense of an object's having any property without supposing it to be re-encounterable: the very thing which is F also being that thing which is G, fails to be H, and so on; (as Frege insists) its being F (if so it is) being subject to joint investigation and the object of stances by different thinkers. Such a demand would apply equally, and for the same reasons, to concepts, if, like objects, they have properties, whether or not of categorially different types. One *could* refuse to call the requisite "Lebniz' law" relation between concepts "identity." Call it "shmidentity" if you like and insist that this is *not* identity. There is surely an air of whimsy in all this. Such, though, does not end the story.

2.2. Unsaturation: Unsaturation is a property of *all* functions, not just those special ones, from objects to truth-values, which Frege (post-1891) calls concepts. The question is whether some unsaturated things might sometimes serve as objects. "Serve as," here, means to serve as ingredients in naming elements—ones which make truth turn, somehow, on how such and such an object is. It is assumed here that nothing can *ever* serve as an object unless questions over whether such and such is *identical with* it (that very thing) make sense, or, further (often enough), have answers. As we have seen, if *this* were the only hurdle to be passed, then nothing would bar functions from such service. *If,* however, unsaturation bars something from such service, then *no* function can so serve. So, for example, if a mathematician were to say, "Let F be that function which maps each integer from 1 to 500 into its double, each integer from 501 to 1,000 into its quadruple, and all other integers into themselves," he would not actually have specified a *function*—a bit of an embarrassment.

It is perhaps for this reason that Frege *sometimes* modifies his stand on just *what* obstacle is posed when speaking of a concept. In 1914, for example, when speaking of the role of logic in mathematics, he says,

> We say, "The function," and "the concept," expressions which are hardly avoidable, and yet are unfit for purpose. The definite article gives these expressions the form of a proper name in the logical sense, as though they designated objects; precisely what they are not supposed to be doing here. The very essence of concepts, and of functions, unsaturation, is thereby concealed. Language presses us into an unsuitable expression. It is difficult to avoid this evil; but one

can render it harmless by remaining conscious of this unsuitability. In which case one would also not confuse the value of a function with the function.[20]

Here, thus, it is not that the above mathematician cannot have *spoken* of a concept; it is just that one must keep in mind that such *is* what he has done.

In any case, being a function, hence being unsaturated, is something very different from having a predicative nature. Correspondingly, for it to be unsaturation which generated Frege's obstacle (if such were so) would be a very different matter than for it to be predicative nature which did so. Functions do not, in general, have any predicative nature. The sine function, for example, has none. One can no more predicate the sine function of something than one can predicate *Sid* of it. Of course, as Frege notes, one can predicate of something being that very object *Sid*. Similarly, so one would have thought—barring any unexpected obstacle—one can predicate being that very function, the sine function, of something. Moreover, one can predicate being the *value* of the sine function for such and such an argument of something. Starting with the sine function—a function from reals to reals—one can, in a way described above, construct a function from objects to truth-values. Such a function might, for example, map pairs of numbers onto The True just in case the second was the sine of the first. Similarly, starting with Sid, one can construct functions—one which maps an object into The True just in case that object is Sid, one which maps an object into The True just in case it is an ancestor of Sid's, and so on. That there are such constructs confers predicative nature neither on Sid nor on the sine function. So far, there is no more reason to think one cannot treat the sine function as an object—that it is unfit for duty as an ingredient in a naming element—than there is to think one cannot treat Sid as an object.

Nor is it true that a concept cannot be put to work other than as an ingredient in a predicative thought-element. As Frege also notes, a concept, while for all that a *concept,* can be, even necessarily, one under which exactly one object, such and such, falls—a concept of being that very object, such and such. Now, as noted already, an object cannot itself be a thought-element. A naming thought-element does a piece of work which an object such as Sid, or the boiling point of water, or

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[20] Frege, *"Logik in der Mathematik,"* 257.

Venus—or, one would have thought, the sine function—cannot do. The work is *making* truth (the truth of some representations) turn, in part, on how such and such an object is. Such is work which a concept (of the special sort just mentioned) is eminently suited to aid in. A naming thought-element can be thought of as making truth turn, in part, on how that thing which (alone) falls under such and such a singular concept is. (Truth would then turn on how what falls under it is; this last remaining the *ingredient* in present sense.) It is, in fact, pointful to think in this way about naming elements if, or insofar as, one thinks there can be different ways for a naming element to bind a thought, in the above way, to just one individual—different ways, for example, for a *thought* to make truth turn on how Venus is. Of course, it is contentious whether this is so—a discussion lying without the present discussion. The point, though, is that there is nothing about a concept, in either of our two senses, which makes its involvement in a thought *intrinsically* involvement in predicative work.

It is hard to see what there is about the sine function which makes it intrinsically unfit for work as an ingredient in a naming element. On the other hand, there is something distinctive about those special sorts of functions, ones from objects to truth-values. When we decompose a whole thought-*expression,* not into its grammatical parts, but rather into an open sentence with fillings (of one sort or another) for its blanks; and if we then think of that open sentence as in some sense designating, or speaking of, a function from objects (or n-tuples thereof) to truth-values, then there is no blank space in it whose function is to be filled with *values* of that function for fillings of the other blanks as arguments. Thus, the open sentence, "__ smokes," as it occurs in "Sid smokes," contrasts with the open sentence, "__ = sin __" construed, as Frege sometimes does, as simply denoting the sine function. Perhaps the special way in which "__ smokes," as above, refers to a function corresponds to its expressing what has a predicative nature: the (canonical) contribution of such an expression to the thought expressed is to make this a thought with a certain predicative thought-element (when decomposed in the way this expression of it suggests). Similarly, if we begin with a whole expression of a thought, such as "17 = sin 3," and abstract to the open sentence "__ = sin __" as there occurring, we can view this as denoting a function from pairs of numbers to truth-values—here according to whether the first number is, or is not, the sine of the second. The open sentence so construed would then express, in the above sense, a (binary) predicative thought-element, predicating being the sine of a pair of numbers, as above.

What lesson is there here? If "__ = sin __" is a way of designating the sine function—if such is an understanding that it would sometimes bear—then, by parallel, "__ = __ smokes," understood in the same way, is a way of designating that function which maps an object into the value *true* just in case that object smokes. Similarly, where "__ = sin __" is abstracted from its role in the sentence "17 = sin 3," thus understood as designating a function without providing any place for its values but providing only places for its arguments, then that same function can also be designated, leaving a place for its values, by "__ = (__ = sin __)." What this shows is that, even by Frege's own lights, there is not just one (canonical) way of denoting a given function. Frege sometimes seems to suppose that if an unsaturated expression of a certain sort denotes a function where predicative work is done, then it is only an expression of *that* sort which can ever denote that function. But, as we have seen, taking Frege at his word where he discusses what a function is, such is simply not so. A function denoted in one way in engaging in predicative work (that is, a function from objects to truth-values, denoted by a predicative part of some expression of a thought) may also be denoted in a different way where it is only a question of identifying *what* function it is. If, as appears so far, the sine function can be put to an object's work in some naming element—say, in an expression of the thought that the sine function is cyclical, with period π—then, so, too, for functions from truth-values, at least on some ways of denoting *them*. And such will be so unless it is unsaturation per se and not just predicative nature per se—which generates Frege's obstacle.

Once again, then, we end at a now-familiar place. *If* functions and objects (that is, things fit for object-duty as ingredients in naming elements) are fundamentally different, so much so that they *cannot* stand in the same relations *if* such is just intrinsic to being a function—then, of course, there is no such thing as a function occurring as an ingredient in a naming element; simply nothing it would be for such a thing to be so. If not, though, then not. So the question is why we should believe Frege that there is such a categorial gulf between concepts and objects, now understanding "concept" as just *function*. As per usual, we are still in search of any reason to believe this. Whatever such reason might be, unsaturation begins to appear as *not* the root of the evil. So, it now seems, neither unsaturation nor predicative nature is.

To sum up, thought-elements do not recommend themselves for hosting Frege's obstacle. Nor do *Bedeutung*-elements. What an element cannot ever do is be an element of another type. But if there *were* a thought in

which an element was *named,* that named element would not be an element of *that* thought at all. It would be an *ingredient* of a naming element. Like Sid, it would be not making truth turn on such and such, but rather just some such and such. So it must be ingredients, specifically concepts, which are the host. But the features Frege mentions as peculiar to concepts do not generate the obstacle. For that, we need an extra assumption which, while equivalent to the obstacle, seems, *so far,* equally gratuitous. We must look further.

2.3. Stratifying: As noted, neither Guy nor any kinsman is fit for predicative duty. Nor are Venus, the current housing shortage, the pH-level of Sid's pool, or, as we have just seen, the sine function. One could go on. *Many* objects are unfit for predicative service: they are not ways for a thing, or for things, to be. What is wanted, though, is a converse point: nothing *ever* fit for service as predicative *ingredient* is *ever* fit for service as a naming *ingredient*—and thus a stronger point, that *no* object can ever do predicative duty. We would thus have an ontological result: there are two absolutely distinct classes of things, "objects" and "concepts"; the distinction between these is categorial. Frege's route to this result appears to be through representation. In representing things as being some way or other, different sorts of work are done. There is naming; there is predicating. Doing the one is never doing the other. In each of these, something is put to a distinctive sort of work. Each has its distinctive way of representing that which is thus put to work. What is represented in the one way can never be represented in the other. There is no such thing as that. Does the ontology follow? A suspicion arises at this point that, as later Wittgenstein once put it, "We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it."[21] Perhaps mere suspicion.

Here, then, is how Frege makes the point:

We have here a word, "Venus," which can never really be a predicate, although it can form a part of a predicate. The *Bedeutung* of this word can thus never occur as a concept, but only as an object. Kerry, too, would surely not wish to contest that there is something of this sort. But thus a distinction would be allowed between that which can only occur as an object and everything else, the recognition of which is most important. Nor would this distinction be erased if it were

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[21] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §104.

true, as Kerry thinks, that there are concepts which can also be objects.[22]

Two things we can agree on here. First, the word "Venus" is not a predicate—not even if we could make sense of calling someone "*a* Venus." Second, Venus (the planet) is, like my friend Guy, *absolutely* unfit for duty as a predicative ingredient. So, third, as Frege says, there is indeed a distinction between that which can *only* occur as (in the role of) an object and everything else.

The mystery here lies in the word "thus" in the second sentence. Frege admits that there would still be that just-mentioned important distinction even if there were also things which, while fit for predicative duty, were also fit for duty as objects. Why, then, suggest that it is *because* "Venus" can never occur as a predicate that what it denotes, the planet, can never "occur as a concept"? Let us say that for "Venus" to occur as a predicate would be for it to put what it denotes, or speaks of, to predicative work—as "smokes" puts *being a smoker* to predicative work (where it does). What "Venus" denotes cannot be put to predicative work. This we know anyway. But why should we not suppose that, while "Venus" cannot put what it denotes to predicative work, something else, while denoting an object, denotes, for all that, what *could* be put to such work? Venus, the planet, cannot. But it is not yet (thus or otherwise) ruled out that there should be items fit for both sorts of work.

Frege also writes this:

> Not infrequently in logical investigation one needs to say something about a concept, and then to express this in the usual form for such predications, namely such that what is predicated is contained in the grammatical predicate. Accordingly one would expect the *Bedeutung* of the grammatical subject to be the concept; but due to its predicative nature this cannot without further ado appear as such, but must first be transformed into an object, or, more exactly, an object must stand in for it, which we designate by means of the prefix "the concept," as in "The concept man is not empty."[23]

One claim here is that, due to the "predicative nature" of a "concept," anything which is a name (that is, which expresses a naming element in a thought) cannot be naming a concept. Again, this would make

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[22] Frege, *"Ueber Begriff und Gegenstand,"* 194–195.
[23] Ibid., 197.

Frege's case for whatever concepts are thus to be understood to be. Once again, we are on familiar ground. There is neither one thing "predicative nature" obviously must mean, nor, equally, any one thing "concept" must mean. But suppose that to predicate something of something is to make truth turn on what things are some given way that there is for things to be. Then nothing in the nature of predicating, or nothing we have yet in view, prevents either what makes truth so turn (a predicative thought-element) or what it thus turns on (a way for a thing to be) ineligible for itself serving as a subject of (of course, different) predications—ways of making truth turn on which things are given ways where predicative thought-elements, and/or ways for a thing to be, are among the things eligible for being (or not) those ways. If *bedeutet* is to be a technical term, one could, of course, stipulate that for anything with "predicative nature," in one of the above senses, it has not been *bedeutet* unless thereby put to predicative work. One cannot, though, rule out by stipulation the truth of some thought turning (on some decomposition of it) on which ways that some way for a thing to be, or some given predicative thought-element, is.

Frege does not deny, however, that things may be predicated of concepts. Concepts may be represented as falling under higher-order concepts. *One* can bring a concept under another higher one. What one cannot do, he thinks, is to predicate of a concept what might also be predicated of an *object,* say, of Guy and his kin. *Thus,* the idea is, one cannot predicate something of a concept in, or by, putting it to an object's work. Perhaps, there is a clue here to exactly *what* is blocked by the obstacle to saying what we *seem* to want to say; hence, *why* it is.

Thomas Ricketts suggests something along these lines when, in a recent discussion, he remarks,

> Kerry's objection rests on a failure . . . to appreciate how the difference . . . between complete and incomplete parts of sentences and the thoughts they express evinces the striation of quantificational generality into levels. For Frege, the debate stops here.[24]

Ricketts speaks here of syntax: types of sub-sentential well-formed expressions. But the starting point for that on which Kerry's idea is meant here to founder is the idea of a hierarchy of *thought*-elements, that is,

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[24] Thomas Ricketts, "Concepts, Objects and the Context Principle," *The Cambridge Companion to Frege,* eds. Michael Potter and Thomas Ricketts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 198.

elements liable to occur in a decomposition of a thought, such as an element which makes a given object the one the thought represents as, say, a smoker, or an element which predicates being a smoker of something. So far we seem on safe ground. By definition, such an element is *intrinsically* of the type it is. Trivially (on this way of speaking), it can occur as element in any decomposition only as the element it is, hence only as of the type it intrinsically is; in our sample case, only in the role of first-order predicating. Thus, for each type of element, and hence each element, it is fixed *tout court* with what other element types/elements it may combine, and how, so as to form a (pleonastically, well-formed) decomposition. So far we have an hierarchy of *elements* of thought-decompositions, based on the work each element would do within a decomposition. A hierarchy being what it is, levels within this are, to be sure, disjoint. So far, we may suppose, so good

But questions as to a categorical divide between concepts and objects are, in large part, question, not about thought-*elements*. They are rather about what are here being called *ingredients* of such. Notably, what plays the role of object for a given thought is what some predicative thought-element is true or false *of*. *So* engaged, it does none of the thought's representing-as. It appears rather in the role of represented. Two central questions thus arise. First, can a first-order (proper) predicative thought-*element* play the role of object for *some* thought or other—in present terms, function as an ingredient in a naming element? Second, can a concept$_1$, or what it is of—something for a first-order predicative element to predicate of an object—play this role of object (for some thought or other)?

A first-order predicative element can never take the place of a naming element within a thought (or any corpus of thoughts). It cannot combine with another such predicative element as a naming element can. But *such*, on its face, is irrelevant to the two questions just raised. For them, the predicative element is not meant to replace (or displace) some naming element, but rather just to be what some naming element makes the truth of the thought it appears in turn on in part. As for the concept, or what it is of (a way for a thing to be), it cannot take the place of any thought-element, since it is not one. The question is rather one of whether a thought's truth can be made to turn on how that concept is, rather than merely on whether things specified elsewhere in the thought fall under that concept.

There are objects which could never do a concept's work. These form a category. The divide between *these* and concepts is categorical. But as Frege tells us above, one can comfortably recognise *such* a distinction without thereby rejecting that idea that a concept may be fit for an ob-

ject's work as thought-ingredient. As he also tells us, the same thought can be decomposed in many ways. What is expressible as the thought that the number 4 has square roots, he tells us, is also expressible as the thought that the concept *square root of 4* is satisfied (*Vide* Frege, "Über Begriff und Gegenstand," 199). No reason has appeared not to take each of these thought-expressions at suggested face value, the second as speaking at zero-order of a concept and, at first order, predicating of it something true or false.

Perhaps, faced with decomposing some given corpus of thoughts for some given purpose, we may need to organize the ingredients we choose with which to do this so as for the order of things thus far to mirror the order of representation. Within a given thought, it may well be, the same item cannot be cast, here in an object's role, there in a concept's. So too, perhaps, for any determinate corpus of decomposed thoughts to which one might apply the laws of being true; within which to identify the phenomenon of truth-preservation. Relative to the corpus, there would then be disjoint stocks of items to be deal with, these sorted according to their role within that corpus. But what thus holds of one corpus need not hold of another. Nor need there be, *tout court*, some fixed stock of corpuses to which the laws of truth may be applied.

Over what, then, on this view, does quantification quantify? Here is one way to look at this. A (one-place) predicative thought-element, Frege tells us, "calls for completion," is "object-hungry." For the element to perform its role of being true/false-of, it needs an object (or its designation) to join with it to form what is in the business of being true/false outright. Quantification (universal) is means for cancelling, rather than satisfying, such object-hunger. ("Which object? Pick what ever you like.") Quantification within a corpus can just be over whatever might fill the places in it where there is such hunger to be stilled. Identifying these items in a given case is anyway an extra-logical task.

III

3.1. Without Sense: I turn now to the second remark in that pregnant paragraph of Conant's essay. It concerns the nature and status of logic—*chez* young Wittgenstein (henceforth YW), and full stop. It is this:

> The central source of confusion in Frege's thought about logic is located . . . by the *Tractatus* in the one assumption that it shares with psychologism (that "widespread philosophical disease"): that

logic is a science. . . . It is only once one has broken with the idea that logic is a science that one is free of the disease.[25]

I do not disagree with Conant as to what YW *thought* was Frege's crucial mistake. Rather, what follows is a case that what YW *saw* as Frege's crucial misconception about logic and what (if Frege held it) *was* the crucial point are two very different things. There is a good idea of Frege's (set out below) which YW, if not blind to it, simply rejected. The absence of that good idea (in its entirety) inevitably blinds one to what is crucial here. The trajectory from YW to mature Wittgenstein (henceforth MW), seen one way, was one of his *slowly* coming to see the value of this crucial point. One might, not for this alone, see the path that Wittgenstein followed from 1929 onward as a return to Frege.

We must start, though, with what Frege's point was meant to be. A not implausible reading of him on this might begin with the idea that logic is even-handed. It is about any thought only insofar as it is about all. So the features of a thought to which it is sensitive—those by which a *logical* relation holds or fails to—are features one might find in a thought regardless of its subject matter. *Hence,* on the conception, *logic* has no special subject matter. So decompose a *truth* of logic (which, the conception tells us, would be, like any truth, a *thought*), and you will find no predicative element in it which makes truth turn on what is, or what is not, some given way there is *for* things (or at least things proprietary to some proper subpart of thought) to be: in the first-order case, objects of some special kind (e.g., sublunary); in the second-order case, ways of some special kind for an object to be, and so on. *Such* thoughts, the idea is, would have nothing but their structure to make them true; something by which their structure would oblige in the case of truths of logic.

Such structural truths, the idea continues, would reflect a structure intrinsic to a domain of things structured (or structurable) by those features which, combined as they do in a truth of logic, make for truth per se. The relevant features are ones on which the *truth* of thoughts depends—on which it *alone* depends in logical truths and falsehoods. So they are, too, ones on which the holding of relations such as logical entailment depends. So the structure these features impose on the domain in question, or that reflected in logical truths, is the most general intrinsic structure of truth-preserving paths. The nodes on such paths are, then, truth-

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[25] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 71.

bearers—those which bring truth into question—*thoughts,* on Frege's notion of this. So the domain is a domain of thoughts.

So logic contains, inter alia, logical truths. But logical truths, on conception, are thoughts stripped of all but their structure. Such thoughts would belong to a special region of the domain: that of the most general thoughts. Or so the conception has things. For, on it, starting from any thought without this region, one can, through a series of *thought-preserving* transformations, derive a member of the region. (By "thought-preserving" here, I mean transforming thoughts into *thoughts.*) Those operations are quantifications. Where there is a thought-element with some topic-specific content, replace it with a quantification over thought-elements of its type. Conversely, one can apply logical truths in inference by reversing the procedure: instantiating at enough points where there is a quantifier. Call all of this Frege-inspired conception F*.

One might well doubt at least one bit of this. The worry would be this: if you strip all particular content out of a thought, what you are left with is not a thought. Making truth turn in part on who smokes *exemplifies* a particular *type* of contribution to a thought: that made by (or in) first-order predication. Making truth turn on what waddles, or what just fell on the rug, do so too. By contrast, if you strip away all particular content from an exemplar, what is left, it seems, is no exemplar at all. Such *seems to* clash with the also-plausible idea that quantification is an operation preserving thought-hood. Nonetheless, there is something right in this idea.

YW was suspicious of the idea that thoughts with all particular content stripped away were still, for all that, (fully) thoughts. His suspicion, though, took the wrong form. It is expressed in the idea that laws, or propositions, of logic *say nothing.* YW does not deny that quantifications are thought-hood-preserving operations. They yield well-formed structurings of legitimate contributions to a thought. Nor does he refrain from calling propositions of logic both propositions and true (nor contradictions *false*). Still, as Conant puts it, such things are degenerate cases of thoughts. They pose no *genuine* question of truth. To fail at this, one *might* think, is just to fail to be a thought. To bracket this issue, I will henceforth call such things, in logic and beyond, as *dicta.*

For logic not to be a science might be any of several things, depending on just what explanatory, or predictive, ambitions one thinks intrinsic to a science. ("Predictive" in the sense in which a theory of English syntax predicts what is, and what is not, a sentence.) At the very least, though, one expects that there is a science only where there is some set of facts

for the science to state: the science would consist (at least) in stating (or predicting) them. Logic, if its dicta say nothing, fails this minimum requirement. So, for the moment, it will do to take this as a reading of the idea that logic is not a science. YW may ask more. MW, as we will see, has a more subtle reading of the idea.

Here is one set of expressions, by YW, of the idea that logic's dicta say nothing:[26]

> The propositions of logic are tautologies. (6.1)
> The propositions of logic therefore say nothing. . . . (6.11)
> Theories which make a proposition of logic appear substantial are always false. . . . (6.111)
> The propositions of logic demonstrate the logical properties of propositions by combining these into propositions which say nothing. (6.121)
> It is the characteristic mark of logical propositions that one can recognise in the symbol alone that they are true. . . . (6.113)
> Tautology and contradiction are not pictures of reality. They represent no possible state of affairs. For the one allows *every* state of affairs, the other none.
> In the tautology the conditions of agreement with the world . . . cancel one another, so that it stand in no presenting relation to reality. (4.462)
> A tautology has no truth conditions, since it is unconditionally true; and the contradiction is true under no conditions.
> Tautology and contradiction are without sense. (4.461)

And here is a rather different one:

> Not only must a proposition of logic be incapable of being refuted by any possible experience, but it must also be incapable of being confirmed by any such. (6.1222)

There are different notions here which will soon prove to come apart. The first set and this last correspond naturally to different intuitive ideas.

Corresponding to the first set is an idea about representing-as (representing something as [being] something). There are two terms of a relation here: what is represented as (being) something, and what it is represented as. It is with just this relation that truth can come into question. Now the idea is this: where there is a genuine case of this relation, neither of these

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[26] All subsequent quotations on this page from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922).

two parties is allowed to idle. Truth is the yield of a genuine cooperative enterprise between them. The party of the first part poses a question of truth; makes truth turn on the party of the second. The party of the second then, in being as it is, yields an answer to the question thus posed. In a logical dictum, as YW puts it, one can recognize "in the symbol itself" that there is truth. The party of the first, so to speak, bars the party of the second from any participation in the joint enterprise. It matters not at all how the party of the second is. But, the thought would be, such is simply not representing-as; it is not the genuine holding of a relation between two parties. (*Anything* would do as well in that first position as *anything* else.) Such is one intuitive idea.

The last idea of saying nothing connects in a special way with an idea of logic not being a science. A thought might be: "If experience *could* bear on whether some logical dicta was true, then if it is true, there is room for explaining why." But if there is such room, then there is room for a science whose task would be to explain this. Frege writes against the idea of such room in saying,

> The question why, and with what right, we take a law of logic to be true, logic can answer only by reducing it to another law of logic. Where that is not possible, logic can give no answer.[27]

He goes on to suggest that where logic has nothing to say as to *why* a law of logic is true, neither can anything else. This idea that nothing extralogical can bear on whether logic's dicta are true (read as with YW above) suggests that, necessarily, logic is "immutable"; that is, logic would be as it is no matter what—an idea Frege puts picturesquely in describing logic's dicta "like boundary stones set in an eternal foundation, which our thought can overflow, but never displace." Thus, Frege tells us, their "authority for our thought."[28] Whether the intuition is rightly read either thus or as per YW is for later consideration.

What YW sees, or seems to, then, is that the rest of Frege's conception of logic, as per above, clashes with the idea that laws of logic say something—are full-fledged thoughts. Logic's dicta reflect the structure of a system. What is thus structured—what composes this system—are those things between which logical relations hold; thus, thoughts (though Frege and YW use that term in different ways). The clash is to be resolved by removing the idea that logic's dicta *say* something; that they

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[27] Gottlob Frege, *Die Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (Jena: H. Pohle, 1893), xvii.
[28] Ibid., xvi.

are themselves fully members of the system; hence that logic is a science. The next step is to examine YW's general notion of a system.

3.2. Systems: The *Tractatus* explains its use of "system" through examples. What is in question in the examples are systems of "descriptions": unquestionably things by which truth can come into question; ways of making truth turn substantially on how things are. These will be systems whose ambitions are much more limited than those of any Grand System, one *all*-encompassing. Such a special system does not aim to provide representations of things as *all* the ways there are for one to think things, but only for (some of) how things stand on some particular topic that one might engage with. Each such system, the idea is, has a most general structure, which is proprietary to it. This structure is reflected in some set of dicta the system generates. Many—perhaps not all—of these are generated from the system's vocabulary, but they are put together in such a way as *not* to belong to the descriptions of things the system generates.

A limited system, like a language, generates some stock of descriptions from some given vocabulary and syntax. *A* structure is thereby imposed on each. A description's place within the structure is fixed both by elements it shares with others and by ways it contrasts with others, thus by the vocabulary (and/or structuring) that others have and that it lacks. To be a given member of the system is just to be something the system generates. It is thus, per se, to be structured as the system structures this. If I want to represent Sid, say, as I take him to be, it is to a considerable extent at my discretion just which way to represent him as being. The role of a special system is to exhaust such discretion. Once Sid is described as fitting some description chosen from a special system, all further discretion as to how *thus* represent him as being is used up.

6.341 offers two illustrations. The first is a system for describing patterns of black dots (or lines) made on a white, flat surface. The system's descriptions are defined in terms of a net, thought of as placed in a given orientation of the surface to be described. The net consists of cells at given addresses in the net, each of a given size and shape. A description in the system consists of a sequence of ordered pairs. The first item in a pair is a cell's address. The second is either the description "black" or the description "white," according to whether the surface underneath the cell is predominantly black or predominantly white.

Examples of dicta of the system would be (if its cells are hexagonal) that each ordered pair in a sequence describes a hexagonal portion of

such and such a size of the surface being described, or that a (well-formed) sequence of such and such a length is a grammatically full description within the system. These, the point is, say *nothing* about the surface being described. Such illustrates the notion of saying nothing, which is what dicta do. On the other hand, that the pattern on a given surface can be *completely* described by some description in the system (where "complete" means that it is fully determined what the pattern is) does say something about the surface (given the system), and vice versa.

Newtonian mechanics provides the second illustration. Here the system is to generate descriptions of mechanical states and interactions of rigid bodies—for example, of that six-pack flying toward that windshield. The laws (and definitions) of Newtonian mechanics are (among) what fixes relations between such descriptions. So they are among the system's dicta. These are meant to be dicta and hence to say nothing (about the world), in the same way that the dictum that says that no area beneath a cell can count both as white and as black says nothing.[29] (6.342) They merely say how those terms spelled "velocity," "mass," etc. are to be used. By contrast, "The six-pack has a momentum of 76 kgm/sec" does say something about the world.

So, it seems, there is a contrast here between two sorts of representations. The one, if in order, reflects the structure of the system and *hence* says nothing about the world. The other describes the structure of the world. So, presumably, *it* does not identify the structure of the system. For a dictum to be correct (in the only sense in which it might be) is simply for the system to have the structure it reflects; which is just the same as for it to *be* a dictum. A dictum, the idea is, *merely* reflects the system's workings. It thus in no way chances its hand. The structure its dicta reflect is *intrinsic* to a system. Such is intrinsic to being a dictum. For a dictum to be is for it to be so structured. Nor, we are to suppose, is the system's existence in any way hostage to how things are. A system in this sense is not something there might have failed to be.

Special systems differ from a Grand System in several ways. Here are two: First, one can choose to describe the mechanical states of rigid bodies or not; whereas, for a thinker, there is no choice as to whether to engage in representing-as. Second, there may be many systems of descriptions of the *same* thing—for example, mechanical phenomena. A special system's dicta apply to all representing which exploits it, but not thereby

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[29] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.342.

to all representing, or even to all representing on a given topic; whereas there is no representing other than within the Grand System, thus none not subject to its dicta. Newtonian dicta reflect the *conferring* of content (the using up of the discretionary). The structure that logic's dicta reflect (on our present conception of logic) is a structure intrinsic to *all* representing. There is no such thing as evading it. Which *seems* to mean: no such thing as representing being structured otherwise.

The dicta of a special system select between choices of how to represent things (as being). Those of the Grand System do not. Accordingly, while there might be a project of saying which choices a special system made, and there might be reasons for making these, there is no such project for the Grand System, so nothing parallel in it for which reasons might be given. Such adds content to the idea that logic is not a science. It is a way in which a special system, and its dicta, *contrast* with the Grand System. Are there interesting ways in which special dicta and logic's are the same?

3.3. *Gedanken* and *Sätze:*   Concluding its illustrations of special systems, the *Tractatus* remarks:

And now we see how logic and mechanics relate to one another.[30]

The discussion thus begun concludes:

Although the spots in our picture are geometrical figures, obviously geometry can say nothing at all as to their actual form and position. But the net is *purely* geometrical; all its properties can be given a priori.

Laws, like the principle of causation, etc., treat of the network, not of that which the network describes.[31]

One comparison: so, too, for logic's dicta. They, too, speak only of that most general network of truth-preserving paths which structure that system (a Grand One) to which any thought belongs. How, though, *do* special systems compare with Grand Ones?

As background to comparison, I now introduce two central and closely linked ideas of Frege's. The first is that thoughts are multiply decomposable: there is no such thing as "*the* set of elements which compose a given thought," much less "*the* way a thought is structured." Such is reflected in the fact that the same thought can be expressed in syntactically and

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[30] Wittgenstein, 6.342.
[31] Ibid., 6.35.

semantically diverse sentences. Such is corollary to what he claims as most distinctive in his approach to logic:[32] putting truth first; next, whole questions of it. (One crucial application for Frege is in showing how the thought expressed in "Sid smokes," where "__ smokes" *bedeutet* a certain concept, can also be expressed without *bedeutende* that concept at all—as in "The concept *smokes* is satisfied by Sid."[33] A thought may be carved, as a goose may, into any of many diverse sets of parts. Like a goose, it is not generated out of some particular set of independently existing parts. (Such is integral to Frege's anti-psychologism: nothing but a role in a thought makes anything the right sort of thing to play it.) Here, too, the idea that a thought is an object of intellectual, and, necessarily, not sensory, awareness. A thought abstracts from representing-as a *pure* question of truth; distinguished from others *only* by its way of making truth turn on how things are. *Thus* it is that Mont Blanc, like Sid and The True, cannot be a thought-element.

Russell, missing the notion's rationale, had an aversion to Frege's notion *thought,* more generally, *Sinn.* YW seems to have inherited it. But, as with Russell, such is to miss the point—one which will now prove crucial for evaluating F*. A thought is a *pure* way of making truth turn on how things are. What it does can be broken up into subtasks. But, stripped of features, such as sensible ones, identifiable independently of it, no particular way of thus decomposing it can claim objective priority—or can claim to be *that* way by which it is intrinsically identified as the one it is.

How, then, *is* a thought identifiable? The question brings us to Frege's second idea. It is that it is intrinsic to a thought to be that which "can be grasped as the same by different thinkers."[34] A thought needs no "bearer"—no one to whom it relates in some special way. A thought need not be thought; *a fortiori,* not by anyone in particular. A thought marks (or just is) a point at which (indefinitely many) different thinkers may agree, dispute, jointly investigate, or jointly find proof or refutation. It identifies something *one* can get right or wrong.

What, then, is intrinsic to a thought? One can say the following: when (in what cases) things would be as that thought represents them. Now, Frege also stresses, two thinkers *are* disputing or agreeing only where they agree well enough as to what it is they are agreeing to or disputing. If we

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[32] Gottlob Frege, "*Die Verneinung,*" *Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus* 1, no. 3/4 (1919): 143–157.

[33] Cf. Frege, "*Ueber Begriff und Gegenstand,*" 199–200.

[34] Cf. Frege, "*Die Verneinung,*" 146.

think of a thought as identified by when things would be as represented, then there, accordingly, agreeing as to what there *is* to recognize as to when it is that thought which is in question. Parties to a dispute over *its* truth would need to agree to enough of this. But suppose I now express a thought. Fictionalizing slightly, I might do so in saying that that six-pack will break the windshield. Maintaining the fiction (e.g., waving the question of which windshield), it hardly strains credulity to suppose that there are those among us who understand me—that is, know what I said. Those who do are, accordingly, equipped to recognize when things will have been as I said. They enjoy such capacity. We (them and us) thereby agree on that which identifies something that there is to dispute or agree to. What we are equipped, or prepared, to agree to thus identifies a certain thought.

Now identify a thought however else you like. Is it the one we had in mind above? Such is a substantial question. Its answer depends, for one thing, on what is to count as *same thought*. But again it is no strain on credulity to suppose this is a question we understand. If we do, then again we are capable of recognizing when a thought would, or when it would not, count as that one we had in mind. (The point stands no matter how occasion-sensitive the operation of such a capacity may be.) We are thus equipped to recognize when, and how, that substantial question has been answered.

With which we return to the *Tractatus's* special systems. These reverse Frege's priorities. For Frege, whole thoughts come *first*. In decomposing, elements are carved out of these, *ad lib* so long as parts are in the same business as the whole, and jointly just *are* it. Whereas for YW it is some stock of elements and syntax which come first. In a special system, what plays the role of thoughts for him—significant propositions—are generated from this basis. So while Frege's thoughts are multiply decomposable, what plays that role for YW—that by which truth can come into question—is precisely what is generated from the basis; to be which is to be structured in just that way thus imposed on it. To exhaust the discretionary in representing is thus to be so structured. And, as opposed to Frege, to represent in, or via, a member of some such system is to produce representing intrinsically so structured.

The representations of a special system are thus *not* multiply decomposable as it is intrinsic to a Fregean thought to be. They correspond, at best, to a decomposition of a thought. A thought in Frege's sense could not belong to a special system. At best it could be represented, or presented, in the system as decomposed in a particular way. Of course, a

special system structures its elements in proprietary ways, reflected in its proprietary dicta. So *its* decompositions would be not just into given logical forms, but into logical forms in which content to which logic is indifferent is also structured in particular ways.

Suppose, now, we choose a given thought—say, that the six-pack is flying toward the windshield with a momentum of 76 kg/m-sec. Then we select a special system—say, the *Tractatus's* Newtonian-mechanical one. *Is* that thought representable in that system? If, but only if, it is structurable as some description of the system is. Seeing whether that is so is extra-systematic work. The system itself contains no resources for approaching the question. The point generalizes to the question in what systems the thought just mentioned is representable. What might answer such a question? Here we may refer to Frege's second idea. Above I mentioned a thought: that the six-pack is flying toward the windshield. I spoke understandably. There *are* those who understand what thought was mentioned. They are thus able to recognize (well enough) when *that* thought has been mentioned. Now structure some representing as some given special system—for example, the *Tractatus's* Newtonian system— does. Would those who thus grasp what thought is now in question be prepared to recognize it as so structurable—that member of the system as saying things to be as that thought represents them? Thus are such questions answered.

Unlike that Grand System which logic is meant to structure, a special system is made up not of thoughts, but rather of structurings for a thought to admit of. To find a point in a special system at which some given thought is *represented* (decomposed in a particular way) is to engage in extra-systematic work. Relations between decompositions and thoughts are not a special system's concern. By nature, a thought is what *might* be represented (or expressed) in any of many different special systems. What had no place in a Grand System would not *be* a thought. Not so what had no place (expression) within some special system. For all that, it might find expression in another. Similarly, a decomposition of a thought might, for all of its so being, find no place in some special system in which that thought was expressible. But it could not be a structure by which the thought was *not* related to others within a Grand System.

A Grand System, by F*, is composed of *thoughts*. If Frege is right in putting whole thoughts first, then it would be made up of precisely what a special system, for YW, is not. In any case, a Grand System differs from a special one in this: to represent, even about a given subject matter, one need not represent in any given special systems (there might be many,

for example, for representing the mechanics of rigid bodies); whereas, if there is Grand System, there is no representing at all except within it.

3.4. Two Kinds of Saying Nothing:

YW uses special systems to illustrate something. But one might now wonder whether what they do illustrate is quite what he meant them to. For a start, they exhibit *something* about the notion *saying nothing*. YW's own ideas of saying nothing, as cited above, divide in two (or three). There is, for a start, the simple idea of saying nothing as opposed to saying *something,* where this means: to say *such and such* for some such and such. YW elaborates this idea along these lines: thought-elements which may be combined with others so as to say something in the present sense may also be combined with others, depending on the others, so as to "cancel out," thus saying nothing. "All bachelors drink" says something. "All bachelors are single" does not: being single is already contained in being a bachelor. Where elements cancel each other out in some such sense, one can recognize from "the symbol itself"—from the thought or its expression—that it is true (*casu quo* false).

This first simple idea is well displayed in the idea of a special system. The system combines elements into "descriptions"—genuine representations of things as being thus and so. But these same elements can also be combined so as to cancel each other out. For example, in the system for describing patterns on walls, elements in a description of a cell as white, and those in a description of a cell as black can be combined into a proposition, "If a cell is white, then it is not black." But such combinations do not belong to the system of wall descriptions generated. Rather, their failure at this marks them as being in another role: they reflect the most general proprietary structure of the system. They are thus dicta. (It is implausible that all dicta of a special system can be so regarded. But such worries do not touch the present point.)

Such is an idea of a dictum of a special system saying nothing. The dictum belongs to the system. But it does not belong to the stock of *descriptions*—representations of *things* as being thus and so—that the system generates. The system assigns it nothing as that which it says to be so. Hence, in our first sense, it says nothing. *This* notion of saying nothing is a system-relative notion. So, in light of the last section, it has no, or no immediate, application to thoughts (on Frege's conception of what thoughts are). A thought has (or lacks) a *representation* in a system ("represent" here not meaning *represent-as* but rather *stand in for, ver-*

treten.) A thought which lacks a representative in the stock of descriptions some given special system generates might yet have one in another. Further, for all we know so far, a thought might have the status of a dictum in one special system and that of a description in another. A simple example: Sid arrives at Vesuvio (for one of those upper-Douro weekends among the *familias-boas*) to be told by his hostess that his room is on the first floor, at the end, on the left. He is thus *assigned* a room. There is no sense to the idea that the hostess has spoken *falsely* (though ineptly if there are no rooms on the first floor). Later that evening, after his last Porto and *bagaço do mesmo,* Sid wanders, bewildered, looking for his room. His hostess tells him, "It's on the first floor, last door on the left." Here is a genuine description which she relies on memory to get right.

What special systems illustrate here is thus that saying nothing in our present sense is relative to something. At first pass, it is relative to what special system we locate a thought in. But locating a thought in a special system—finding a description in the system which is a representative for the thought—is extra-systematic work, to be performed in conformity with Frege's two ideas. It is Hilary Putnam's point that where there is such extra-systematic work to be done, there is relativity to the world or to the circumstances there obtaining. In what special systems a thought is represented, and indeed in what special systems there *are* to represent thoughts, depends, or is liable to depend, on how things are. How a thought is decomposable, and, correlatively, where the notion *same thought* applies, is, by Putnam's point, occasion-sensitive, and, notably, *world*-sensitive. The key here is the point that where we succeed in expressing or in mentioning a thought, or, relatedly, that way it represents things as being, there are then, potentially, those who understand our mention. At which point Frege's second idea, as elaborated above, applies. To which Putnam adds the idea that what is to be understood as to what was mentioned in such a case—how the mention was to be understood—is a complex made up of many, potentially independent strands.

There is a parallel to Putnam's idea in a simple point about understanding thought-expressions; that is, about recognizing *what* thought was thus expressed (just *how,* if any way, things were said to be). Sid says to Pia, "That blonde woman in the sequin dress is singing 'My Way.'" *Who,* if anyone, did he say to be singing "My Way"? Suppose there is a conspicuous item (person, Martian, robot) who/which, in the

circumstances, one would have taken Sid to be speaking of (and no other relevant alternative items). But that item is no woman. That garment is no dress (but a jumpsuit). Those are no sequins (but rhinestones)—and the song is not "My Way" but "As Time Goes By" (moreover, the singer is lip-synching). Sid purported to be speaking of something of which all those things that (in fact not so) were so. All this forms one strand, or packet of them, in how Sid's words were to be understood. The first-mentioned fact about the conspicuous item forms another. At most, one of these strands in what was to be *supposed* can, in fact, *be* to be supposed as to what, if anything, Sid spoke of. If the second strand has this status—if we insist on the sequins, the dress, and so on—then Sid spoke of no one, so expressed no thought. Then, what was *then* to be supposed—that Sid spoke of such and such conspicuous thing—is false. If this last is still to be supposed, then Sid said something false of, as it happens, (say) a Martian in a wig. Applying Putnam at this point, the idea would be that things *could* be such that the second strand, and not the first, remains what *is* to be supposed.

The parallel is, for example, with the predicative element, *having momentum M,* in, say, that thought about the flying six-pack, and the question of whether that thought has a representative in YW's Newtonian system (or whether there even is, or could be, such a system). It is a dictum of YW's system, as presented, that, in it, momentum is mass times velocity. Depending on time and place, that thought about the flying six-pack may have been to be supposed to be, inter alia, about a certain physical quantity, identified precisely and essentially by that dictum. As the world turned out to be, though, there is, and could be, no physical quantity so identifiable. Once again we can identify two distinct strands in what the thought in question would have been supposed to be. On the one hand, it would have been (to be) supposed to be a thought about a certain physical quantity which all solid bodies have (at a time) in some definite degree. On the other, it would have been (to be) supposed that the quantity in question was the one identified by conformity to the dictum. The world as it is, insist on this last item and there is no such thought as that the flying six-pack had such and such momentum. So the first strand proves not so. Insist on the first, and there is such a thought, but it is not governed by the dictum. So the second strand proves not so. Putnam's brief here is that the world's being as it is means, first, that the first strand *is to be* insisted on, and second, that there is, in fact, no such system of descriptions as the one YW proposes.

Computing mechanical quantities in a Newtonian way remains, for most practical purposes, a good way of representing most near-enough, slow-enough mechanical phenomena. Such representations might be generated by a system much like the *Tractatus's* Newtonian one. This system would use the term "momentum" in a proprietary way much as that system for describing patterns of dots on walls uses "black" in a proprietary way (when it applies to cells which are *predominately* black). On this use of "momentum," a six-pack would have momentum *M* just in case, for all practical purposes, it might as well have. The dicta of this system would not be those of the *Tractatus's* Newtonian system. They would not reflect a structure in which *momentum* was mass times velocity.

A second notion of saying nothing is contained in YW's remark that no possible experience could bear (so the world could not bear) on the truth or falsity of a *logical* dictum.[35] For (the idea is) *such* dicta lack conditions on agreement with the world. If this *is* so, we now see, it would be an important point of contrast between special systems and a Grand One. A dictum of a special system is, per se, assigned nothing *by that system* as the such and such which is what it says. So, *so far,* it says nothing in our first sense. But this is compatible with the same thought which is represented by that dictum in that system being represented by a description in some other.

Putnam's idea strengthens this point. *If* Newtonian physics had been correct, it would have been just what it *was* for a physical quantity to be momentum that it equaled mass times velocity. So there would have been *no* special system which contained a representative for a thought which represented *momentum* as precisely this, where within that system that representative was a genuine description of the way things are (with, thus, a definite condition on agreement with the world). We would have had no idea what the such and such might be which one said to be so (other than just that momentum just is, by definition, that quantity) in expressing the thought that momentum is mass times velocity. So, as we see, whether *this* thought could be represented in a system by a genuine description of how things are (on present understandings of what this would be) depends on how the world is.

In the unstrengthened point above, one might simply see a dissimilarity between special systems and a Grand one. What has one status in a given special system might have another status in another. But if a thought (and,

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[35] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus,* 6.1222.

so far, it is a thought, and not a representative) has a given status conferred on it by the Grand System (given such a thing), there simply *is* no other system in which it might enjoy any other. So, one would think, what is a dictum of the Grand System—that is, a logical dictum—could not be anything other than a dictum in any other system. There is simply no other system in which for it to enjoy such a status. Which suggests that idea about logic's immutability contained in Frege's remark about boundary stones. Which suggests, in turn, that *here* our two notions of saying nothing converge.

But if a logical dictum could not but have been a dictum—if there is no such thing as anything in how things were, having borne on whether it was a dictum or not—should this not also be true of more of what is necessarily so? Suppose Newtonian mechanics had been correct. Then momentum (what it spoke of as such) would simply have been mass times velocity, as there stipulated. So there would have been *no* system in which that thought was represented by what had a genuine truth-condition— by what engaged in a genuinely cooperative enterprise of representing-as. There would have been no way to provide a such and such to make good on the idea of that thought saying something on our first simple notion of that. But *this* would have been a world-dependent fact: the world would have provided no way of identifying such a such and such. For logic's dicta, it is in fact so that the world provides no such ways; so that there is in fact literally no saying, or even imagining, just *how* their dictum-hood might be world-dependent. *Thus* far they line up with stipulations about momentum as things might have gone. Is there any stronger sense in which there is no such thing as logic's dicta having been other than they are?

If there *is* a Grand System, there is no alternative to it. So what is a dictum in *it* cannot fail to be a dictum elsewhere. So there *is* no way that a dictum's truth (or truth-inaptness) could turn on how things are—as one might expect if logic's dicta are conceived as per F*. If a dictum is a thought stripped of all but its most general structure, it would be, one would expect, identified (exceptionally) only by some given structure, and hence *not* be multiply decomposable. Whereas different representatives for a thought in special systems *ipso facto* decompose it differently. On the other hand, the point remains that decomposing a thought is extra-systematic work; in the case at hand, extra-logical work. Nothing said so far entails that how such extra-logical work was to be done, even where it comes to dicta, could not have been otherwise were things different enough from the way they are. It seems, then, that we are not yet

positioned to say how our two notions of saying nothing connect, or fail to, in the special case of logic's dicta. All we can claim so far is to have distinguished these two notions.

3.5. Comparisons:
His special systems introduced, YW comments, "And now we see the relative positions of logic and mechanics." Just what *do* we see? Most strikingly, a number of glaring *dissimilarities* between special systems and a Grand One. Below are three that bear on what logic is.

First comparison. The dicta of a special system fix the way its elements exhaust the discretionary in how to represent: choose one and such choice is over. Logic's dicta cannot be understood as using up discretion: there is nothing discretionary about whether representing-as is governed by the structure they reflect. They do not merely lay down how some special form of representing is to proceed. They cannot be understood as in any way stipulative. They are nothing like the hostess's dictum, announcing upon your arrival that your room is *(to be)* on the first floor, last door on the left. In this respect they assimilate to your hostess's late-night reminder. There is a special system in which the content of what the hostess says is a dictum and another in which that same content is a description. What is not at one's discretion is (to add pleonasm) *in fact* not. Which would seem to make for something for logic to be a science of.

Second comparison. A Grand System, as presently conceived, is made up of thoughts, where a special system is not. A special system is composed of *decompositions,* or things intrinsically decomposing in just one way—decompositions, of course, structuring proprietary subject matter in proprietary ways. Its dicta reflect structure proprietary to it (and, given multiple decompositions of thoughts, not, per se, to its subject matter). Its intrinsic structure is imposed by relations sensitive to more than just logical form; that is, non-logical relations. Its members are items, to *be* which is to be generated as *it* generates them, to be structured accordingly. Just so that a *thought,* as *multiply* decomposable, is not a member of any special system (though a decomposition of it might be). By contrast, the dicta of a Grand System would reflect the structure of the most general form of truth-preservation. Truth-preservation is a feature of transitions between *truths.* And it is *thoughts* which *are* truths (or falsehoods); thoughts which entail and are entailed, thus which might lie along truth-preserving paths. Hence, the idea is, thoughts compose the System.

Third comparison. What is a dictum of one special system may be a description within another. The hostess, working in one system, by *assigning* rooms to guests, sets up a new system for describing them, then uses this to tell Sid how to find his bed. If a Grand System contains its dicta, or if these are *thoughts,* then a logical dictum could not be contained in, *a fortiori* be a description in, any *alternative* system. There is none such. Which seems to make a law of logic *unlike* a principle of mechanics. Which, as we have seen, might inspire the idea that logic *could not have been* other than it is. But care is needed here. No matter how things were, there would not have been any alternative to what was then the Grand System (if the idea of such a system makes sense). So logic's dicta would *not* have been represented in any alternative system. It is another matter whether what *are* logic's dicta *would* have been logic's dicta no matter how things might have been.

Logic's dicta (if those of a Grand System) do not say *something* (namely, that such and such) in the following sense. Just as a special system assigns its dicta nothing as that which they say, so it is, too, for a Grand System. The function of *its* dicta, like that of a special system, is not for them to engage in full-fledged (cooperative) representing-as. (Though, on the other hand, by contrast with dicta of special systems, nor are they in any way stipulative.) But this, even if admitted, need not mean that there could have been nothing which what, in fact, are logic's dicta would have said (in a different enough world). (There *might have been* no system for describing the world's mechanics which assigned the thought that momentum is mass times velocity, something which is what it said [again, in genuine representing-as.])

The second comparison is what raises the crucial problem for F*. Logic is concerned with truth-preservation. It is thoughts which entail and are entailed and hence transitions between which preserve truth or not. Thus the idea was, it is thoughts which compose the Grand System. In this, a Grand System would contrast with special ones, which are composed, not of *thoughts,* but of (what amounts to) thought-decompositions. The problem, in brief, is this: given all else a Grand System is supposed to be, *can* it contrast with special systems in this way? Or might this, perhaps, be one respect in which a Grand System and special ones *are* parallel?

For a Grand System to be composed of thoughts is for that structure of it which its dicta reflect to be a structuring of thoughts. What its dicta reflect is, in first instance, a certain structuring of a domain with thoughts as elements: a structuring imposed by those relations between thoughts to which logic is sensitive—the logical relations, such as (logical) entail-

ment. But what structures a domain thereby structures each of its members. Here each member must be structured according to those features of it to which the holding of the just-mentioned relations (the logical ones) is sensitive. So, *if* the Grand System is composed of thoughts, its dicta would reflect, for each thought, a structure which is thereby imposed on it. It would be a structuring of just those features in each thought to which its participation with other thoughts in logical relations (e.g., its logically entailing or being entailed) depends.

But if thoughts are multiply decomposable, and if, as Frege understands this, this means that, for a given thought there is no set of "basic" elements which are *the* ones of which the thought is composed, then the idea of the last paragraph will not do. Given attempts in the literature to bagatellize the idea of multiple decomposability, an example will help. A thought decomposable into, inter alia, an element which *bedeutet* a concept (in predicating being a smoker of Sid) is also decomposable, on Frege's view, in a way which includes no such element.[36] For the whole point of decomposing thoughts is to identify in them those features shared with other thoughts on which inferential relations depend—most notably, in the case of such things as predicative and naming elements, those on which the holding of logical relations depends. Conversely, a structure structured by logical relations (and the features to which they are sensitive simply would not be (given multiple decomposability) a structure of a domain of thoughts as such. A structure generated by those elements (or features) to which logical relations are sensitive do not structure a domain whose members are simply thoughts. What logical relations are sensitive to is something abstracted from a decomposition, to wit, logical form.

Suppose one forms a domain of thoughts (grand or not, but, say, closed under logical inference). Now, for each member of the domain, assign it some decomposition of which it admits. For each such assignment of decompositions to the whole domain there is *one* structure which logic's dicta reflect—a structure of relations between thoughts holding by virtue of those features assigned them on the relevant decompositions. No such structure is, as it stands, the structure of logical relations between thoughts per se. (No decomposition of a thought may, for Frege, claim objective priority.)

Perhaps, then, the structure of logical relations between thoughts as such is a superimposition of all of the structurings corresponding to all possible such assignments. But this idea will not do. It presupposes, for

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[36] Frege, *"Ueber Begriff und Gegenstand,"* 199–200.

a start, that for each thought, there is a fixed determinate set which consists of all the decompositions the thought admits of. We already have reason to doubt this. One set of reasons comes from Putnam's point: what decompositions a thought admits of is liable to depend on how the world is. But the general point here is just that assigning decompositions to thoughts is extra-logical work; whereas when one conceives of logic as identifying the structure of a superimposition, as above, one turns what is extra-logical into logic's responsibility. In what ways *can* one decompose the thought that Sid smokes? Such depends on what else, besides that mention of it, would count as a mention, or expression, of that very thought. Would "The concept *smokes* is satisfied by Sid" do the job? Frege thought so. Here I only pose the question. What about "One of Sid's vices is inhaling tobacco"? Or "Anyone identical with that very person, Sid, smokes"? And so on. Again I only pose the question. A route to an answer is in Frege's second idea above, applied in whatever occasion-sensitive way may be required for capturing what we are, in fact, prepared to recognize.

Assuming logic's dicta to reflect some structure of *some* system made up of some particular sort of member, that structure would have to be invariant across any assignment of decompositions to any set of thoughts. So it could not be a structure of a system of thoughts per se. The domain (or domains) it would structure would be made up of items, each structured intrinsically by a structuring of some set of features which are those to which logical relations are sensitive. Such items *might* be decompositions for thoughts to have. But then again, if it is none of logic's business which thoughts there are (e.g., it is nothing to logic whether there is, or is not, tobacco for there to be thoughts about), then holding the extra-logical separate from the logical, the most suitable candidates for the role of relevant items here are just logical forms themselves. What Frege failed to see, if he really did hold F*, is the just-mentioned incompatibility, hence its proper resolution. In this he would not have been true to himself. This lapse, however, if Frege suffered it, is not one YW was positioned to see, having confounded thoughts with a kind of *Satz*. All of which brings us to the next section.

3.6. Beyond F*:   In 1917 Russell presented what is *almost* a version of F*:

> Every logical proposition consists wholly and solely of variables. . . .
> You can consider stages of generalisations as, e.g.,

"Socrates loves Plato"
"x love Plato"
"x loves y"
"xRy."

There you have been going through a process of successive generalisation. When you have got to xRy, you have got to a schema consisting only of variables, containing no constants at all, the pure schema of dual relations. . . . So that it is, as you might say, the pure form of all those propositions.[37]

Russell speaks here of *propositions* of logic, reached through "successive generalization," terminating when there is no more generalizing to be had. So far, F*. Propositions reached in such a way would be among the most general. Where there was mention of an object, now there is only quantification over objects; where mention of a way for an object to be, now only quantification over *ways* for one to be. But Russell's generalizing operation does not end up where F*'s does. F*'s operation was meant to be thought-hood-preserving. Russell's is not. A *thought* cannot consist merely of variables. Such are simply blanks to be filled. A question of truth so formed is just ill-formed, *no* question.

Perhaps just so that Russell also calls the "proposition" thus arrived at "the pure schema of dual relations." But if xRy represents (stands for) a schema, then x, R, and y, are not variables. There is no *instantiating* on them (thus quantifiers are not *missing* here). Those letters, so understood, stand for name and elements in the schema: a naming element, a (two-place) first-order predicative element, and another naming element. The schema (what Russell also calls a "pure form") is a form for a thought to take. That form is instanced (exemplified) in such statements as *Sid freshened Pia's glass* or *Sid owes Max a fiver.*

F* moves from more specific to more general by operations which *ought to* preserve thought-hood: quantifications. For YW the operation, carried *that* far, yielded not *genuine* thoughts, but dicta. Russell's operation of abstraction is plain and simply *not* thought-hood-preserving. It leads soon enough to what are neither thoughts nor dicta, to what *could* neither entail nor be entailed. *Quantifying* (thrice) over *Sid Freshened Pia's glass,* one can arrive at any of a variety of thoughts, none a logical dictum. Abstracting à la Russell, one gets to what is not a thought but

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[37] Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (1918), in *Logic and Knowledge,* ed. R. C. Marsh (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 238.

what may be of interest to logic. One arrives at a logically relevant form for a thought to take. A *proposition* of logic then might be that there *is* such a form for a thought to take; that *such* is a way of participating in logical relations. Is *Sid freshened Pia's glass* merely a bad starting point for extracting laws of logic? Or is F* a bad conception of what a law of logic should be? What *should* Russell have been speaking of?

The upshot of the last section is that Russell should have been speaking of exactly what he did speak of: logical forms. A logical form is a form *for* a thought to take. It abstracts from a decomposition for a thought to admit of, retaining from that decomposition only that information which is relevant to the holding of logical relations. Logical forms are, in the first instance, what logic is about. *They,* precisely, are what is purely logic's business, what involves no extra-logical work. On this conception, logic *does* have a specific subject matter: logical forms. Logic's dicta are about these. One task for logic is then to tell us what logical forms there are; to generate these from some fixed "vocabulary" (set of elements)—for example, from such things as (being) (some given) naming element, or (being) (some given) first-order predicative element. Another task would be to generate truth-preserving sequences of (sets of) logical forms: for any element in such a sequence, and any later one, where any thoughts of that first set of forms (one thought for each form) and any thoughts of that second set of forms, if those first thoughts are true, then so are those second. A third task might be to say what a coherent assignment of forms to a specified set of thoughts might be. So, for example, it might be a proposition of logic that for any thought of Russell's form above (let us write it "Fab"), if that thought is true, then so is the corresponding thought, (Ex)Fxb. In that "Fab," for example, that "F" would stand for a two-place first-order predicative element (here occurring within a certain form). That it is of the type it is would be contained in its style—for example, a capital letter. "F" rather than "G" would track recurrence, on an assignment of forms to a corpus of (decomposed) thoughts, of what it is thus assigned to.

The general idea is this. Take the thought that the six-pack is hurtling towards the windshield. It is none of logic's business how that very thought might be decomposable (except that any decomposition must be of *some* logical form). So logic does not tell us *what* logical forms are to be carved out of that thought (except, again, only any logical forms there are). But once that extra-logical work has been performed for some corpus, and an assignment of logical forms made to it accordingly, logic tells us what we must then live with.

F* began from the idea that logic is even-handed; it is equally about any thought as any other. As F* read this idea, those thoughts which were logic's dicta would need maximum generality. On the present conception, even-handedness is achieved in another way. Logic is about something very specific. Logic's dicta do have specific, proprietary content. But what logic is about is, of necessity, something to be found in any thought. It is intrinsic to a thought to entail and be entailed. So it is intrinsic to a thought to stand in logical relations. Logic just tells us all the possible forms of doing that.

A law of logic, like a law of mechanics, is a generalization which holds across the relevant domain. If a conjunction is true, then so are all its conjuncts—a law of *conjunction.* A theory of mechanics aims to *state* what are in fact its laws. A *theory* of logic, or of inference, would aim to do the same. A *theory, though,* is but one of two familiar ways of expressing logic's content (neither way a *language*). The content of logic might also be expressed in a calculus. A (standard) calculus consists, first, of some vocabulary (set of signs) and some rules for generating from this some set of wholes (its "formulae"); then, second, another set of rules for constructing sequences of such wholes. Its formulae represent (i.e., stand in for, incarnate) logical forms. Its sequences stand in for truth-preserving sequences of forms, or, if you like, forms of proof. An English sentence, say, "Bachelors smoke," speaks of bachelors as smokers. A formula of a calculus, say, "A&B," speaks of nothing. A *theory* of logic, by contrast, would be a set of *statements,* employing such predicates as, "__ is a predicative element," "__is a naming element," "__is a conjunction," and "__follows from__." A theory which stated that all bachelors smoke would be committed to all bachelors smoking. If some do not, it is false. The sentence, "All bachelors smoke" has no such commitments, hence is not false. At best it merely speaks of something which is not the case.

The nice thing about a calculus' way of expressing logic is that it draws a clean distinction between logical and extra-logical work. A (successful) calculus expresses logic's content in its application to given corpuses of thoughts, each mentioned, or expressed, in some one particular way. Suppose, e.g., that a given corpus contains a thought which, recognizably, so far as it matters for our current purpose, would be true *just* where two other thoughts were true. (As may be, the thought is that Sid drinks and Pia eats.) Suppose that, in a given propositional calculus, "A" and "B" are atomic formula and that, here, in our current assigning of forms to thoughts, they are not yet in use by us. Then the first thought above

might be assigned that form (relative to all else in the corpus) which is named in the calculus by the formula "A&B." If there is some other thought in the corpus which, recognizably, would be true just in case it is not so that that thought "A" already stands for is true while some further thought (not yet assigned a form) is false, then, if the atomic formula "C" in the calculus is not yet in use, we can, so far, in our assignment of forms to the whole corpus, assign this other thought a thought named (here) by the formula "A—>C." If, now, both these assignments are to *true* thoughts, then "C" has also been assigned to a true thought.

Our changed conception of logic brings with it a changed understanding of Frege's obstacle. Section II considered an idea which amounts to this: the hierarchy of logical forms (forms of ways to represent things as being something) imposes a corresponding hierarchy on items in the world. There is a class of items which may be subjects of first-order predication, a class of items which may be subjects of second-order predication, and so on. Otherwise put, there is the class of items fit to be ingredients in naming elements, the class of items fit to be ingredients in first-order predicative elements, and so on. These classes are, as a matter of principle, disjoint. It is not just that the class of objects—the first class on the above lists—contains many things which could never function predicatively. Rather, nothing which could *ever* function as an ingredient in a naming element could *ever* function predicatively. The hierarchy, in so categorizing *things,* thus poses the obstacle. (I here illustrate with just one of the several hierarchies which *might* be involved.)

If logic were thought of as structuring some domain to which all thoughts belonged, there might be some plausibility in this idea. For such structuring presupposes some assignment of decompositions, correlatively logical forms, simultaneously, to *all* thoughts (whatever such an "all" might mean). Here are the ways *each* thought relates to *all* others, each a way it relates to all others full stop, independent of any extralogical consideration—hence, each way co-existent, conjoinable, with each other. There is no room here for the idea of making assignments to corpuses, sometimes in this way, sometimes in another, where making one (sometimes) admissible assignment may exclude *then* making some other (sometimes) admissible one; no room for the idea that not all admissible assignments can be made at once. Then, perhaps, one or another of our hierarchies has metaphysical conclusions. For then the question whether what is *ever* put to the work of an object in a naming element can ever be put to the work of a concept in a predicative element is simply the question whether a certain combination of forms can occur in an as-

signment of forms to a corpus. There is no room for the idea that *different* assignments, perhaps to different corpuses, might treat the same thing differently. In rejecting F*, though, and conceiving of logic as about logical forms, *that* route from a fact about *representational* structure to a conclusion about the structure of the world collapses.

For any *assignment* of logical forms to any given corpus of thoughts, there will be those items which function (somewhere) as ingredients in naming elements, so are treated (hence treatable) on that assignment as objects those things which function as ingredients in first-order predicative elements, so are treated (and treatable) as concepts (concepts$_1$), those things which function as ingredients in second-order predications, and so on. Perhaps these respective classes of things must be disjoint if the *assignment* is to be coherent. Nothing follows from this as to whether what is an ingredient at one level on one assignment (say, some function) might be an ingredient at another level on another.

The *Tractatus* idea that logic's dicta say nothing is rooted in that conception of logic which Frege (by repute) and young Wittgenstein share. Conant suggests two reasons, within that shared conception, for so holding. One is that logic's dicta are too general. They speak of nothing in particular. They have nothing but their structure to make them true. And, to use the *Tractatus* image, *pure* structure could do that only in its parts canceling each other out. The other is this: one could not decide any question of truth without presupposing all of logic; so one could not decide the question of truth a dictum raised (if it raised one) without presupposing that dictum itself. Hence there can be no such question to decide. On our new conception, the first idea is simply untrue. Something of the second may remain. As Putnam suggests, perhaps one cannot so much as entertain the idea of the falsity of a logical dictum until confronted with sufficient details as to how such might be.[38] Frege's laws of truth, for example, unfold a particular conception of truth and of questions thereof. There are the *pure* questions there are to pose; each of these has an answer of either yes or no; any set of these has such answers simultaneously (whether some such question has an answer cannot depend on the answer to any other). Given all this, the features of those connectives of thoughts which Frege recognizes follow trivially. This notion *pure question of truth,* though, is an abstraction from our actual representing. That *this* sometimes misfires, so that a *statement* might only contingently

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[38] Hilary Putnam, "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity," in *Words and Life,* ed. James Conant, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 245–263.

have a truth value, is beside the point. The abstraction is similarly resistant to many other *apparent* threats to these features of what underlies it. Still, such features are recognizable in it, and, recognizably, such as *might* prove *assumptions* with alternatives. A suggestion that truth does not have *quite* this structure need not prove unevaluable.

What *do* those laws say? And to what might this be hostage? They might, of course, say nothing in the sense that there is no saying *what* they say, though not in the sense that there is no such thing as the world bearing on whether what they say is so. At first glance, such might seem so. A dictum might be, for example, that if a conjunction is true, then so are all its conjuncts. Informative, it might seem at first. But if we pursue the question of what a conjunction is to be understood to be here, the answer is this: by definition, a compounding of thoughts such that the compound is true just in case all its component thoughts are. At which point the law once again appears empty. (Though still not because of its great generality.)

But if logic has commitments, these plausibly lie elsewhere. Logic generates a set of logical forms. These are, according to it, the forms there *are* for thoughts to take. So wherever we identify a thought—wherever a question of truth arises or is encountered—this thought is always correctly assignable *some* such form. Thoughts are so representable. No *thought* could fail to be assignable at least *some* form that logic generates. For any form, there are thoughts which take it. Further, those transitions from thoughts to thoughts which logic licenses are not just truth-preserving but thought-hood preserving, so that for any (correct) assignment of forms to a corpus, there is an extension of it which is closed under the inferences logic licenses. Conjunction, for example, distributes over disjunction. It is not as if all this is *just* a theory; or as if there is any specifiable way in which all, or some, of it *might* prove false. Still, on our present conception, laws of logic are substantial thoughts. Finding ways in which experience *might* bear on the truth of a thought is extra-logical work. Nothing in logic itself can rule out there being such a way. Logic, by definition, applies to *all* thoughts. Whether its specific dicta would *be* its dicta no matter what—thus unmovable boundary stones in an eternal foundation—is another question.

3.7. Concluding: In 1945 Wittgenstein wrote that in 1929 he was forced to recognize "grave errors" in the *Tractatus*.[39] As he worked his

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[39] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, x.

way from these erroneous views to the changed view of *Philosophical Investigations,* a central locus of such errors proved to be the *Tractatus*'s conception of logic. Thus, in the *Investigations* the *Tractatus*'s idea that logic is not a science—that there could be nothing substantial about it, that its dicta were, in principle, immune to being borne on by experience—became the more nuanced idea that

> Logic does not treat language—or thought—in the sense in which a natural science treats a natural phenomenon. . . . [40]

Logic is unlike a science in that its applications are unlike those of a science. As Wittgenstein writes in §81, we "compare the use of words with games and calculi. . . ."[41] Logic provides, as do those calculi which express it, forms in which to represent those representations whose relations to one another may concern us; forms by which (if assigned correctly) a particular sort of bearing of the truth of some thoughts on that of others is then made clear. But on the question of what a thought's form *really* is, or that of when a thought would be of such and such form, logic is silent. Assigning thoughts forms is extra-logical work, turning on extra-logical questions as to how *thought* is "really" (or for some purpose) to be articulated into thoughts. Correspondingly, as to those questions it thus leaves to us, logic does not require them to have an answer (at least tout court). Logic does not, as the *Tractatus* supposes, and as a science might, describe "the most general scaffolding of the world." It provides ways of *structuring* representations of the world.

> In our thoughts the ideal is immoveable. You cannot step outside it. You always have to turn back. There is no outside at all; outside there is no air. Where does this come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose, through which we see all that we do. We never think to take them off.[42]
>
> We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it. We take that possibility of a comparison which impresses us for perceiving the most general state of affairs.[43]

In philosophy we are too often blind to the place, and the burden, of extra-logical work. So it was with Frege in his difficulty about concepts

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[40] Ibid., §81.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., §103.
[43] Ibid., §104.

and objects. We suppose thoughts or propositions to have "that formal unity"[44] (as he puts it in §108) that would be had, as it is by formulae of a calculus or by members of some determinate system, or as generated by given rules from a given vocabulary or a set of building blocks (the very thing Frege himself, in his best moments, insisted that thoughts could not be). We fail to see the idea *a thought* as an abstraction from our historical representing; one which may be done in any of many ways for any of many purposes. A concern with such blindness and its effects on our posing and trying to answer, the particular questions we (philosophers) do permeates the *Investigations* and precisely distinguishes it from the *Tractatus*—a work suffering from that very blindness itself.

[44] Ibid., §108.

Alien Meaning and Alienated Meaning

Jocelyn Benoist

In "The Search for Logically Alien Thought,"[1] James Conant tackles an elusive idea, once floated by Frege, which he dubs "logically alien thought"—thought governed by laws of logic that are actually at odds with those governing our own. How could thought *so* alien ever be (knowingly) encountered? How recognized as thought? As Conant puts it,

> Creatures who moo and eat grass are not manifesting a logically alien form of thought.[2]

Cows do not think alienly. They simply do not think. Nor does Brandom's parrot fit the bill *logically alien thinker.*[3] On the other hand, if, narrowing the gap, we pick out a being closer to us, one unproblematic thinker on a par with us, it becomes difficult to portray that thinker's thought as different enough to be *alien.*

So the logically alien thinker looks pretty much like some philosophical fantasy: a case that is supposed to tell us something about thought but which cannot really be grasped as such. We may conceive of it formally, as Frege does in his foreword to *The Foundations of Arithmetic:*

> *Man kann freilich die Zahlzeichen mechanisch gebrauchen, wie man **papageimässig** sprechen kann; aber Denken möchte das doch kaum zu nennen sein.*[4]

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[1] James Conant, "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*," this volume, 27–100.

[2] Ibid., 80.

[3] Robert Brandom, *Articulating Reason: An Introduction to Inferentialism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[4] Gottlob Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (Breslau: W. Koebner, 1884), iv.

However, on a closer look, it is unclear whether we can really make any concrete epistemic sense of such a hypothesis, and, therefore, whether we think any *thought* at all.

Now, if alien thought is a philosophical fantasy, the correct thing to do is to ask what might drive us to entertain it. James Conant does just this, an exercise in philosophical therapy, in his 1991 paper. Following in his footsteps, I would like to generalize his strategy by applying it to the famous case of the funny wood sellers introduced by Wittgenstein in his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics.* In doing so, I do not claim to be original. It is perfectly logical to extend Conant's strategy to a text that was explicitly presented by its author as comment on that passage in Frege's foreword to the *Basic Laws of Arithmetic;* one pivotal in Conant's paper too. There the move has already been made, and well made. Conant himself hits there at Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics.*

What I would like to do is just make the move again, partly for my personal edification—I fear therapy is essentially individual—and possibly, I hope, for the edification of *some* others.

The first thing to make clear is that the wood sellers example as Wittgenstein introduced it in his *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics* is a follow-up to Frege's case of the logically alien thinker. Wittgenstein makes it very explicit, since he quotes the passage from *The Basics Laws* in this context:

> Frege says in the preface to the *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik:* ". . . here we have a hitherto unknown kind of insanity"—but he never said what this "insanity" would really be like.[5]

Now, let us go deeper into the matter and assess how far the two cases, Frege's and Wittgenstein's, are really connected. So doing, we shall see that the connection is not incidental but that the cases are internally related.

Frege's question, in the foreword to the *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* reads thusly:

> What, however, if beings were even found whose laws of thought directly contradicted ours, so that their application often led to opposite results?[6]

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[5] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* eds. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), I §152.

[6] Gottlob Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. Philip Ebert and Marcus Rossberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), xvi.

The salient feature here is the reference to application and results. The difference Frege has in view is a difference between what some people would *do*. The paradox is that they might equally have something that they would call (or treat as) "logic" and, nevertheless, not do the same when they reason about the same things to such an extent as to yield different results.

This is exactly the problem Wittgenstein is going to tackle by means of the example of the funny wood sellers: they seem to do the same as we do—to calculate how much wood they have in order to sell it—and nevertheless, they are effectively not doing the same, where this yields completely different results. In neither case is application an incidental issue. The fact that some people, in a definite context, are not *doing* as we do, so that they reach different results, is just what raises the present issue. One could thus say that Wittgenstein is just giving a more concrete shape to Frege's problem; and that in so doing he is in line with the spirit of Frege's case. How exactly does Wittgenstein make *his* case?

First, he puts us in that situation of running into people who are piling up logs, multiplying together the measurements of their lengths, breadths, and heights, and selling them at a price that is proportional to the result of that calculation.[7] Or, more exactly, the point is that it seems impossible not to understand that process as a calculation. The fact that the outcome of the process demonstrates such regularity: that the price is always—or almost always (allowing for mistakes)—proportional to the volume of wood so calculated seems to identify immediately what those people are doing as a calculation.

In such a case, to say that they are "calculating" is just a *description (Beschreibung)* of what they are doing, the adequate characterization of their behavior.[8] It would sound very strange to describe it as a simple sequence of physical moves: putting down a wood stick onto the pile, moving it along the different sides of the pile, then projecting ink spots onto a piece of paper, and so on. Of course, the process involves all that. What matters, however, is that all those moves have a meaning, and to describe the process, but for particular circumstances, is to describe it as so meaning.

So the idea is that those people are doing something definite according to a definite rule—something we can understand perfectly, because *it is the kind of thing we do*. This does not mean that there are not other

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[7] Wittgenstein, *Foundations of Mathematics,* I §143.
[8] Ibid., I §147.

things to be done or are not slightly different ways to do the same thing. As a matter of fact, there are different ways to assess the value of a pile of wood—starting with doing it on the basis of the weight and not the volume.[9] We can make sense of that as well because it is the kind of thing we sometimes happen to do too. Certainly we can make sense of very different ways to price a pile of wood. As such, they yield different results. However we are capable of understanding each of those results as far as we are aware of how they are obtained. We can make sense, as well, of a way of treating the wood which would not anymore be pricing and selling it but rather giving it away. All these would be practices; simply *different* practices. Some might be described as involving a calculation; others not.

"Very well; but what if they piled the timber in heaps of arbitrary, varying height and then sold it at a price proportionate to the area covered by the piles? And what if they even justified this with the words, 'Of course, if you buy more timber, you must pay more'?"[10]

What is pivotal here is the fact that those people would claim that what they are doing is grounded on a calculation and would suppose that calculation to give a certain type of result: whether there is a bigger or lesser amount of wood in one pile than in another. It is what makes Wittgenstein's case in line with Frege's scenario. The point is not at all that those people would act erratically, according to no principle. We could make perfect sense of such a situation. Do we never act in such ways? On the contrary: what we cannot make sense of here is that those people seem indeed to follow a principle in what they are doing—so they claim at least—but the result of such a procedure seems to be completely different from the one they claim to obtain. They say that they have calculated the amount of wood, but it seems to us that there is no way to characterize what they have done (taking account only of the surface) as calculating *that*.

The salient aspects of the case are (1) that those people are not doing just *anything,* but rather something definite and very systematically; something we can partially identify as such—from a certain point of view, we perfectly understand the principle of their calculation; (2) that, doing so, they claim to do the very same kind of thing we do in such a situation (they say they do want to determine the amount of wood); and (3)

9 Ibid., I §148.
10 Ibid., I §149.

that we are not ready to acknowledge that by doing so one could ever do what they claim to have done.

So, in order to make sense, the case requires a strong kind of similarity between *us* and *them* and, more precisely, some kind of *shared meaning*. The contradiction arises only if those people are really claiming to do the same as us. *If* they really want to assess the amount of wood in a pile, and if they want to do it in the sense we do, how can they do what they do; that is to say, proceed in the way they do? As they surely do *proceed*.

To draw the parallel with Frege, one might ask, "How can those people do the same as we (in theory) and nonetheless obtain completely different results?" How can they *apply* the instruction "Calculate the amount of wood" in such a dramatically different way? And the answer seems pretty obvious: if the application is that different, in their mouth, it is just not the same instruction. *By "Calculate the amount of wood," they just understand something else.* If the result is different, the principle is different as well. There are mathematically alien minds.

But why so alien? After all, in our form of life, there are different ways to understand and thus to apply the instruction "Calculate the amount of wood in that pile," and those different understandings lead to different results as well. For instance, we have just mentioned the calculation of weight as opposed to that of volume. If these different understandings of the instruction all might count as calculating the amount of wood, why not, too, for calculating the amount according to the ground surface covered?

One naïve answer would be to say that volume or weight are properties that allow a global measure of all the wood in the pile, whereas the surface on the ground determines only one side (the hidden side) of the pile and so does not determine all of "the amount of wood in the pile." However such an answer is just begging the question, because, after all, when we consider either the weight or the volume, we leave aside a lot of measurable properties of the piles we try to assess, making piles that are very unequal (from some point of view) as equal (from another point of view). We are doing the same when we take the surface covered on the ground into exclusive account. A lot of different piles representing, from our point of view, very different amounts of wood can cover the same surface on the ground. However, what if the problem is to get some pile of wood that can stick into some definite slot without being reassembled? Perhaps, in such a case, the size of the side of the pile that rests on the ground might prove to be the decisive factor and the measure of

our needs. What if "I need such and such amount of wood" means "I need a pile which covers such a surface on the ground"?

Objectively, there does not seem to be a difference *in principle* between such a way to measure the wood and others that seem more natural to us. I mean that our kinds of measure are not less "abstract" than that one. To measure, it is always to treat as identical things that are not identical. What varies is the principle of that identification.

But there is of course a difference: that is to say, the simple fact that *we do not calculate this way*. To calculate the surface covered by the pile on the ground is not one of our usual ways to assess the amount of wood in a pile, and very particular circumstances would be needed for us to call it such. By the way, if a child chose this way to solve the problem in elementary school, we would let him observe that there is the height, as well, and that the amount of wood in the pile, as they say (as *we* say), does not depend on the base of the pile only. The child's way would be chastised as a *mistake*.

Thus, when we say that, under some particular circumstances, we might wind up calculating the amount of wood exactly the way those maybe not-so-strange people do, there is something misleading in that. Because what we mean is that, under those circumstances, due to the special needs of the moment, to calculate the amount of wood would not be what it usually is for us. What would be calculated there is pretty clear, and it is just *not* what we *usually* call "the amount of wood" in the pile. Thus, the case is perfectly unproblematic. It is a difference *we* can understand.

In Wittgenstein's story everything hinges on the difference between the case of the funny wood sellers and the cases he has mentioned before:

> Wouldn't it be more correct to sell [wood] by weight—or by the time it took to fell the timber—or by the labour of felling measured by the age and strength of the woodsman?, etc.[11]

As we have interpreted it, trying to make sense of it, the funny wood-sellers case resembles those just because *it is one of them*. The point is just to know what is calculated. Once we have gotten that, everything is fine with the assessment by the surface covered on the ground. It is one possible standard among the others.

But that is not the point of that "funny" case. The idea would rather be the following: to some extent, those strange wood sellers mean to do

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[11] Ibid., I §148.

the same as we do—they want to measure the amount of wood there is in the very sense we do; *nevertheless,* they are *not* doing the same as we do. As the very same calculation, they just come up with another calculation.

To put the point another way, it is as if they meant the same thing as we do by the words they use—"an amount of wood"—but still applied them differently. It thus seems unavoidable to us that some contradiction should be found here. It is exactly as far as we do not treat their meaning as alien (to us) that we are inescapably led to take it for *logically* alien. So the question seems to be raised by the existence of beings that, at some level, would do the "same" kind of things as we do and still, at another level, while they are doing so, do not do the same.

The solution to this paradox seems quite obvious. Either they are doing the same thing as we do or they are not. Of course some variation can be allowed in the concrete way to proceed. As we know, ancient Egyptians did not have the same technique of multiplication as we do. That does not prevent us from saying that they multiplied numbers and with the same results as ours. Now to say that someone is, on the whole, doing the same kind of thing as we do in some particular circumstance and is still methodically, systematically doing something that has a completely different outcome seems just not to make any sense. So, we have the strong temptation to say that those people *cannot* do that. If they seem to be doing so, it is just that, in fact, they mean something else by "amount of wood" than we do.

A main result of Conant's work, I think, is to have shown that the first of the two last sentences is sheer nonsense. That is, it never makes sense to say a priori that people "cannot" mean in a definite way. Thus, it seems to make no sense to say a priori that people "cannot" ever mean the same as we do and still draw from their meaning completely different consequences. After all, *do they not mean what they mean?*

However, it seems to me that the other side of Conant's investigation is to have shown that for the first sentence to be nonsense is not per se for the second to be false. Since if those people behave so differently from us, it is pretty clear that they mean something else, as meaning cannot be told apart from its "application." We cannot circumscribe any meaning a priori and even exclude that it is maintained in situations we would not have thought of; however, a posteriori, as it is effectively meant, every meaning is different.

To put it in other words, the reason I am personally so interested in Wittgenstein's reformulation and discussion of that case is that, in the

last years, I have repeatedly encountered a certain interpretation of it that seems misled, although what lies behind it seems correct. Since such an interpretation might look tempting, I would like to criticize it so as to prevent myself from falling prey to it, maybe according to my natural inclination. I shall call this interpretation *the metaphysical interpretation*. It runs as follows:

> It makes no sense to say that some people *cannot,* for instance, calculate "the same amount of something" as we do in the very same meaning as we do, and still do it in such a way as to find another result; *therefore, it is possible that some people do so. Thus, logically alien minds can really exist.* As if, to put it in Conant's terms, Wittgenstein were "Cartesian" rather than "Leibnizian."

The trouble with this interpretation is that the claim it results in is, as a matter of fact, as devoid of sense as its opposite. The fact that it makes no sense to say that it is impossible for anyone ever to do such and such, does not mean that it makes sense to say that some people *could* ever do it. Quite the opposite. It is much more that, so far, the question is *pointless.*

As a matter of fact, what is really misleading in that story about funny wood sellers is that it seems to be about funny people who practice a task very strangely, but it is primarily about ourselves, about the meaning of what we effectively *do*. What surfaces in it is the specter of *a possible gap between meaning and application.* As if what we *meant* leaves the applications of what *was* thus meant still open. What Wittgenstein wants to show us with that example, as usual, it is that *there is no way to separate out* what *we meant from its applications.* If calculating the amount of wood does not yield a particular kind of result—possibly different kinds, according to the circumstances and the particular kind of calculation that is expected in those circumstances—we just do not understand anymore what this calculating is. Why? Because it is not anymore done *one of the ways we do*. But the ways we do this, in the story, are not extrinsic to what we call "calculating the amount of wood." They are just what it is.

From that point of view, it is pretty clear that the wood seller's story is tightly connected with the pivotal §242 of *Philosophical Investigations:*

> If we are to understand each other through language *(zur Verständigung durch die Sprache)* there must be agreement *(Uebereinstimmung)* not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements.

This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. It is one thing to de-scribe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state re-sults of measurement. But what we call "measuring" is partly deter-mined by a certain constancy in results of measurement.[12]

The end of the passage makes the connection clear enough: it is ex-actly about the same kind of story as the one of the wood sellers.

On the other hand, this passage makes clear, as well, that all this is about *logic,* about the conditions of what logic is. One might believe that to make meaning dependent on its concrete use in judgments—on what we apply it to—destroys logic, but it is quite the opposite: it is what makes logic possible, as the internal consistence of a use, precisely. To be "log-ical," we need actually *to do something;* to move. We cannot remain inde-terminate as to the way in which we will do it. Logic concerns determinate ways to proceed.

Thus, according to some traditional conception of logic, what is logi-cally true—"analytically" true—should depend only on meaning; that is to say on meaning that is independent of the way such meaning applies to definite objects. Wittgenstein cannot allow this. For such, being inde-terminate, would not really be meaning at all and thus would not fall within the scope of logic. Where logic governs, what are thus fixed *are* (no less than) determinate applications.

What might *a meaning independent of its application be?* For example, taking the case *au pied de la lettre* (as perhaps we should not), a meaning we might share with our funny wood sellers, who seem to want to mean the same as we do and, nevertheless, do something completely different from what we do? (One more time, this is not a *theory* about them or a possible interpretation of their behavior; it is the way their case is con-structed: they are just such a "paradox.")

The answer seems pretty obvious as long as it is about *us:* it would be *a meaning we would want to mean and not to mean at the same time.* To have the meaning and not its application is just *not* to mean. The funny wood sellers are just the external projection of that strange posi-tion in which we might wind up, meaning and not meaning something at the same time. They are the figure of that doubt that might arise about our meaning.

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[12] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), §242.

Now, what is the nature of that doubt? Is it a doubt about *what* we mean, as if we were spectators of ourselves and in position to judge about our meaning, as it were, from outside? As if we were *interpreters of ourselves?* As if, after all, we might wind up wondering what we mean, exactly as if we had met some of the funny wood sellers of the story and wondered what they meant by "amount of wood."

This does not seem to make sense. What we would be inclined to say is that it is very likely to be rather a doubt about *ourselves,* a doubt of this kind: about *whether we mean anything; that is to say, whether it is really* we *who mean* (whether it is *our* meaning). The idea is simple: in some sense, meaning is something we do; so, as with every deed, we need to be in our meaning. If we are not, what we do may sound like meaning—it might be sounds that have the same patterns as words—but it is no meaning.

The idea of "a meaning without its application," is thus really an idea of *our* possible estrangement from meaning. Thus, it seems that the story about possible other logically alien thinkers, is, as a matter of fact, essentially a story about *our possibly alienated thought*. By that, I mean our thought, wherever we are no longer sure that it is a thought; because, as a matter of fact, it is not, since we are not in it, in the sense of not completely in it. Our ostensible thought when we do not think it.

I think this what Wittgenstein's story is about: not the real possibility of such strange beings or even our lack of right or sense in restricting the sphere of meaning a priori—which is certainly a point, but not *his* point here; but what it really is to think; that is to say, *to really think*. One cannot stop short of what thinking means. From that point of view, the weird behavior of those alleged wood sellers helps us become aware of what we are really doing when we mean "amount of wood." The point is not so much about their meaning—or lack thereof—as about "meaning" as such—what meaning is.

Wittgenstein's method is the same as ever: it is by imagining other forms of language—that is to say, slightly different but not unrelated forms of language—through which we can become aware of what is entailed in ours. From that point of view, the language game of the funny wood sellers gives the example of a very particular difference. It is as if, in their language, in that language game at least, meaning and its application were just disconnected. However, that, of course, makes sense only in relation to *our* meaning: in their *imagined* language game, it is our meaning that is disconnected from its application. Imagination, here, functions as a principle of an exploration of our way to mean.

Some reflexivity can be found in that particular case, since "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life," as is said in the §19 of *Philosophical Investigations*. And now, that particular case is precisely about a possible disconnection of a language from a form of life: of our language from our form of life. This is what I call *alienation*.

What, then, is "alienated meaning"? It is a meaning in which I am not anymore, a meaning that I mean no longer, *therefore* that is no meaning. In other words, the point is not as much about "meaning" as if it were anything by itself, as about *us*. It is a point about a particular position in which we put ourselves in relation to meaning and that a certain conception of meaning—the one according to which meaning should be independent of its application—might give theoretical expression to. From that point of view, it is pivotal that such a meaning, in the construction, remains an imaginary meaning—the imagination of a meaning more than a meaning.

It is for this reason that, although my reading of the story of the funny wood sellers shares important features with Stanley Cavell's interpretation and is deeply inspired by it, I cannot go all the way with him either. It seems to me that the brilliant reading Cavell puts forward in chapter 5 of *The Claim of Reason* sounds somehow like *a re-internalization of the metaphysical reading*.[13] The astonishing move that constitutes the basis of Cavell's interpretation consists in making the story of the funny wood sellers *really* a story about us. Breaking from Wittgenstein, he talks of imagining, not forms of another life, *but of our own*—or of putting ourselves in relation of imagination to our real life. So, we would have to identify ourselves with the funny wood sellers. It is as if the funny wood selling were a real possibility for us: our way, for instance—Cavell's construction—to try to sell wood as children.

The fact that children can try to sell wood in a way that is different from what it is for grown-ups to do so—selling wood is, in our societies as well, by definition, a grown-up activity—is supposed to make clear the fact that, after all, what we call "selling wood," as any given activity, is a very contingent practice, and thus the fact that we could do otherwise. We certainly take that point. *Of course, we could do otherwise,* in the sense that we could do other things. No one is ever obliged to *sell* wood. One can give it away or gamble with it, and certainly do a lot of things we cannot presently even have an idea of. The fact that we cannot

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[13] Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

exclude a priori that any of them might turn out to be called "selling wood," in the very sense in which we mean it, does not mean that we will ever run into such a thing. Selling wood is just what we do, as we do.

So, alienation is not about *our possibly being different*—another way to name the so-called "metaphysical contingency of our being." It is about the fact that to mean something, *we* have to mean it, and nothing can spare us the trouble of doing so.

It is therefore essential that the story of the funny wood sellers, insofar as it is about others, is about others who do not exist.

THE LOGICAL ALIEN REVISITED: AFTERTHOUGHTS AND RESPONSES

On How History of Philosophy Can Be Illuminating

Sofia Miguens

"There is no sensible way to give oneself,
let alone straightforwardly follow, the instruction,
'Identify and eliminate your philosophical blind spots!'"[1]

Things grow in unexpected ways, and that is what happened here—from the Bounds of Judgement project there emerged an occasion for James Conant not only to engage in a dialogue with his critics, but also to elaborate his present philosophical perspective on the topics at issue between them. This dialogue and elaboration is what Part II of this volume contains.

The Conant who speaks here in Part II—the 2019 Conant—does not serve as a spokesman for the 1991 Conant, the author of the article "The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*." Indeed, the point of view of the replies is altogether unusual. The author distances himself considerably from the person who wrote the original 1991 article, going so far as to refer to himself in the third person, as "Conant." That person is thereby sharply distinguished from the one whose voice speaks in the first person in the pages that follow. Indeed, the replies are often as critical of "Conant" as they are of any of the other

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[1] James Conant, "Section I: Who Is the Author of These Afterthoughts and Responses?," in this volume, 325.

contributors—not shying away from claiming that in many of his 1991 interpretations, "Conant" was "simply wrong."[2] As a result, the exchange between author and critics does not assume anything like the standard form here—one in which a critic attacks some aspect of the work under discussion, while the author seeks to defend it. Rather, in these replies, Conant often triangulates between a critic's view, "Conant's" view, and his current view, sometimes expressing sympathy with "Conant," no less often siding with the critic's complaints, but most often presenting the reader with yet a third alternative.[3]

In the exchange between Conant and his critics in Part II, a great deal of the history of philosophy is drawn into play, while exploring such substantial topics as the nature of modality, the nature of logic, philosophical skepticism, the nature of representation, linguistic and conceptual relativity, perception and judgment, and questions of philosophical method. The aforementioned play of voices mobilized by Conant becomes an instrument for reflection and metareflection on how one ought to go about doing history of philosophy as well as about how progress is achieved in philosophy. These themes are explicitly broached in the introductory sections and then remain implicitly in play throughout the remainder of Part II. The first five sections are occupied with philosophical and historical stage-setting, beginning in Section I with remarks about whose voice speaks in these replies. Those remarks are followed by reflections on the historiography of philosophy in Section II. Then comes—in Sections III and V—an overview of an alternative account of the historical development of conceptions of logic from Descartes to Wittgenstein. These involve novel discussions of the central figures at issue throughout this volume: from Descartes, through Leibniz and Kant, to Frege and Wittgenstein.

Yet this is not merely a book on the history of philosophy. The topic, as its title announces, is the logical alien. This raises the question: What form of illumination about that topic may we expect from the sort of history of philosophy pursued here? This is equally a question about Part I and about Part II of this volume: What sort of history of philosophy are the contributors to this volume jointly engaged in? On the one hand, this is a volume consisting of contributions by analytic philosophers doing

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[2] See, for example, this volume, 336.

[3] In this paragraph, and in several of those that follow, I am indebted to Jay Elliott for his helpful suggestions about how to introduce Part II of this volume. I will continue henceforth to refer to the author of the original article with quotes around his name (hence as "Conant" or sometimes as "1991 Conant") and to the author of the "Replies" without quotes around his name (sometimes prefaced by "2019").

history of philosophy. Typically, analytic philosophers want to get somewhere in philosophy: to move the existing philosophical discussion forward. They do not settle for mere commentary or paraphrase; they want to make substantive moves and illuminate old questions in new ways. But how then, if they remain faithful to this aspiration, are they to avoid anachronism in their readings of the great figures of the past? How can they possibly avoid bringing their own preconceptions to such encounters while seeking ways, through such encounters, to productively "unsettle the philosophical present"?[4] Insofar as we seek to make progress in philosophy, do we not always, while reading and interpreting texts from the philosophical past, "politely avert our gaze" from various out-of-date ideas in them? Can it ever be otherwise in reading and interpreting such texts? Can we ever really do anything other than look for what such authors *ought to have said* (as Adrian Moore puts it) and believe that, in so doing, we are managing to come to terms with what must, in some sense, already be present in those texts?

Throughout Part II, and not only in its introductory sections, Conant is very much interested in just such questions. They structure his very manner of writing. He calls our attention to how easy it is for us to fall into anachronism when reading texts from the history of philosophy, even in the face of our intention to avoid succumbing to the temptation to do so. He wants to understand what it would mean to avoid the complacency of anachronism in one's writing about what the central figures in the history of philosophy *actually thought,* while nevertheless fully retaining the analytic philosopher's traditional ambition to comprehend what those same figures *ought to have said*—that is, to retain the ambition to understand those authors better than they understood themselves. It is not hard to agree that understanding an author better than he understands himself is something we ought sometimes to try to do. What is less clear is whether an attempt to understand an author in such a way strictly counts as an exercise in the history of philosophy. Maybe, at that point, our engagement with the historical figure ought simply to count as a way of doing philosophy—but no longer as a way of doing the history of philosophy. Can rigorous work in the history of philosophy really be at the same time philosophy?

At various points, the 1991 version of Conant reads past assorted things he believes his historical authors ought not to say. The 2019 version of Conant chastises him for this and believes that we should not be

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[4] As Conant puts it, in this volume, 339.

in too great a hurry to categorize such apparent errors on their part as "errors." He urges us to linger over the strangeness of a great mind seemingly stranded in the middle of a path we ourselves are disinclined to pursue. He urges us to allow ourselves to take the full measure of the distance that separates them from us. While seeking to exemplify such a mode of engagement with historical figures, he also develops a number of claims of philosophical method. One of them is that a fully successful exercise in philosophical self-understanding must pass through a stage of self-alienation.[5] Yet another, still closer to the topic of this volume as a whole, is that we must be prepared to traffic in nonsense in order to achieve philosophical self-understanding.

Thinking about such traffic in nonsense in its relation to philosophy has, of course, been a hallmark of Conant's much-discussed austere reading of Wittgenstein. In these pages, the very same topic is dealt with by other means: by doing history of philosophy. Both in the 1991 article and in these replies, Conant's way of doing history of philosophy is, whatever else it is, no doubt original. It deserves an important place in current debates, not only on the topics of this volume but also in those on philosophical method. Doing history of philosophy is hardly ever merely a matter of doing the history of philosophy; for the practices and uses of history of philosophy may be very different. They may (and may not) interact philosophically with the practice of philosophy. They may (and may not) expose issues of philosophical method. History of philosophy as Conant does it is not done merely for its own sake: it is meant to be philosophically relevant, and it is. Moreover, doing philosophy in this way does not leave the self of the one who does it untouched. The play between "Conant" and Conant in these replies is itself an experiment in such a form of work on one's self—as well as being a process with no end in sight: "There is no sensible way to give oneself, let alone straightforwardly follow, the instruction, 'Identify and eliminate your philosophical blind spots!'"[6]

One main purpose of the introductory sections of the replies is to bring out the shortcomings Conant now sees in the account proffered in the original article. For Conant's present understanding of the trajectory of philosophical inheritance from Descartes to Wittgenstein differs markedly from that of "Conant." Even though the central figures and many of the central themes remain the same, 2019 Conant alters the narrative

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[5] See this volume, 712.
[6] Ibid., 325.

arc of the original 1991 essay. In contrast with its comparatively *linear* chronological account, in which each author's progress builds on that of his predecessor, Conant now presents a narrative that has the form of a *zigzag*. A cluster of parallels that unite Leibniz and Frege is contrasted with an opposed cluster of parallels that characterize Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic.[7] In fact, of the main *dramatis personae* in the original article, Conant now thinks only two are correctly positioned in his original account: Leibniz and Frege. Above all, he sees problems with 1991 Conant's respective readings of Descartes, Kant, and Wittgenstein. Yet while he rebukes "Conant" for looking at things in wrong ways, he still credits him with having looked in some of the right places. He thereby remains interested in many of the passages and themes in the work of those three figures as "Conant" but now offers a strikingly different account of how they hang together—individually and in relation to one another.

Starting in Section VIII, and continuing throughout the replies to their conclusion in Section XV, Conant then turns to the task of discussing each of the contributions that make up Part I. Once these individually tailored replies start, each builds on its predecessor, introducing exegetical claims, forms of terminology, and strands of argument taken up and put to further use in each of the subsequent replies. In what follows here, I will attempt nothing more than a very brief summary of some of the ground traversed, in order to assist the reader in keeping her orientation in this complicated landscape.

Conant continues to hold that "Conant" was right to think that there is philosophical illumination to be had from considering the theological roots of modern conceptions of logic. But he now offers a somewhat fuller account of the *sources* of these modern conceptions, focusing on their emergence out of particular understandings of the notions of existence and creation—notions that were absent in ancient Greek philosophy and arose in the Islamic tradition.[8] Once the key issue of modality is introduced within this historical and theological context, a triangle of positions emerges. This triangle, in turn, comes to organize the entire structure of the debate that Conant joins with his critics in the ensuing replies. The posi-

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[7] This becomes particularly explicit in the discussion at the end of Section XII (Reply to Sullivan).

[8] In this connection, Conant acknowledges the importance of his ongoing dialogue with Irad Kimhi, as well as the importance of courses jointly taught by him and Kimhi at the University of Chicago—courses in which they assigned and discussed drafts of some of the contributions collected in Part I of this volume.

tions that figure in this triad of options are initially introduced to us in their theological guise; that is,, as positions about modality formulated in terms of creation and the conferral of existence. The three options are *theological modal realism* as found in Avicenna (that which is necessary is given even to God), *theological logicism* as found in Leibniz (that which is necessary is internal to God's understanding but external to His will and hence prior to the actual world He creates), and *theological voluntarism* as found in Leibniz's reading of Descartes (that which is "necessary" is solely the product of God's free activity and could have been other than it is). This triad of positions yields what Conant calls "the theological triangle."[9]

Conant explores the parallels between this triangle and the one constituted by the triad of positions in a yet further triangle, which he calls "the logical triangle." The options that figure here are realism, logicism, and psychologism as accounts of the nature of logical truth. According to *logical realism,* the laws of logic are given to thought from outside the activity of thinking. According to *logicism,* the laws of logic are internal to the capacity for thought but prior to that of judging what is the case. According to *psychologism,* the laws of logic characterize a set of "necessities" that happen to bind our thought, so that they are, in this relativized sense, "necessary" for us, but nonetheless could have been other than they are.

"Conant" was working under the assumption that this latter triangle, the logical triangle, exhausted the primary possibilities for philosophizing about logic in modern philosophy until the emergence of Wittgenstein. The 2019 Conant now rejects this. He now thinks that Descartes and Kant already anticipated Wittgenstein in seeking a conception of logic that explodes the interrelated set of options for which the logical triangle allows, by questioning their common assumptions. This means that, in his new picture of the historical unfolding of conceptions of logic, Descartes and Kant qualify as, in Conant's own words, "far more proto-Wittgensteinian" than he had originally appreciated.[10]

Once the two triangles are in place, and Descartes's, Kant's, and Wittgenstein's relations to them are provisionally indicated, the detailed engagement with the contributions that make up Part I of this volume follows. This starts with Section VII: "Reply to Moore: On the Relation of the Possible to the Actual." The question of the proper interpretation of Descartes's doctrine of the creation of eternal truths forms the heart of Conant's exchange here with Adrian Moore. The discussion turns on how

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[9] See this volume, 59–60.
[10] See this volume, 403n52.

to reconcile the following two claims by Descartes: that God freely created the eternal truths and that the eternal truths are necessarily true. How is Descartes able to maintain both at once? Conant thinks that neither "Conant" nor Moore has a good answer to this question. Under pressure from Moore, Conant does now see the need to correct various central points in his own original 1991 textual exegesis of the main passages at issue. He also now thinks that the Descartes of "Conant" was far too close to that of Leibniz. But Conant thinks that, in rightly rejecting this Leibnizian reading of Descartes, Moore's own version of Descartes turns out to be implausibly similar to Leibniz's actual position. In fact, according to Conant, Moore thinks that Descartes's conceptions of necessity and possibility require him to think something awkwardly close to the opposite of the letter of what he actually says; and Moore himself concedes that some of the passages on which Conant fastens present a problem for his reading. Moore concludes that that handful of passages should be regarded as mere lapses on Descartes's part and not careful expressions of his philosophical view that afford a true picture of what he thinks, or at least of what he ought to think. Conant, on the other hand, seeks to find a way to place these very same passages at the center of a coherent reading of Descartes.

According to Conant's current reading, Descartes is to be read as affirming neither the position Leibniz attributes to him nor something that amounts simply to its mere negation. The upshot of the passages on the incomprehensibility of God about whose interpretation Moore and Conant disagree is (for 2019 Conant) Descartes's rejection of the entire set of options represented by the theological triangle. Conant thinks that, for Descartes, the modalities come together as a package, so that there is no sense to be made of talk about what God might have willed prior to His actually having created something. According to Descartes's doctrine of divine simplicity, if we seek to consider God's nature apart from His creation, then all we can say is this: divine willing, understanding, and creating all come to one and the same thing. This leaves room neither for a theological voluntarism according to which God's will is prior to His understanding, nor for a Leibnizian rationalism in which His understanding is prior to His will. The key element in Conant's interpretation of Descartes—the one which foreshadows the readings offered further on, of Kant and Wittgenstein—comes into view when one focuses on the question of the relation of possibility to actuality. In Descartes's account of the creation of the eternal truths, the very intelligibility of modal thought requires that each modality bear an internal relation to the others. The idea that that which is merely possible is explanatorily prior to that

which is actual—and the entire conception of the priority of logic that goes along with that idea—is rejected.

This sets up the transition to Section VIII: "Reply to Boyle: On the Relation of a Rational Capacity to Its Acts." This, too, begins by high-lighting a respect in which 2019 Conant diverges from "Conant": the former thinks the latter made Kant look much closer to Frege than he really is. Conant here happily accepts a number of Boyle's criticisms of "Conant." In particular, he thinks Boyle is right that the characteriza-tion that "Conant" offers of the relation between pure general logic and transcendental logic in Kant, in effect, pulls these branches of logic too far apart from each other. This serves to provide illusory textual support for a reading of Kant as a kind of protologicist, at least about pure gen-eral logic—someone who holds that the necessities that undergird pure general logic bear exogenously on the material conditions of thought about what is actual. But, Conant now agrees with Boyle, such a reading of Kant does not yield a true picture of Kant.

A point on which Boyle focuses in his contribution to this volume, and upon which Conant seeks to build in his reply, is how to understand Kant's deployment of the notion of *form* (and hence the meaning of various related terms, such as "formal"). According to Conant, Boyle is correct to insist that what Kant means by such a term is not what most post-Fregean theorists of logic have come to understand by it. Moreover, it is not to be construed as meaning the same thing as any other term deployed anywhere by Frege—such as, for example, "structure." There is no common terminology—such as "logical form" or "logical structure"—that has a univocal meaning across Kant's and Frege's writ-ings. This has the consequence that it becomes considerably more diffi-cult to compare their respective conceptions of logic than "Conant" had originally suggested. The fact that both Kant and Frege may equally qualify in retrospect as "anti-psychologistic" theorists of logic should not be allowed to obscure from view how very differently they go about drawing the line between logic and psychology: so differently, in fact, that the very place of logic in an overall account of our mindedness must amount to a very different sort of philosophical undertaking in Kant and Frege respectively.[11]

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[11] It is in this context that Conant now suggests that there is an important respect in which Kant may be regarded as already seeking *avant la lettre* to undo Frege's psychologizing of psychology. That there is something worth doing in philosophy that may be characterized as "the de-psychologizing of Frege's psychologizing of psychology" is an idea that Conant takes from Cavell. For Cavell this was meant to serve as an apt description only of Wittgen-

Kant's conception of the faculties—and of logic as pertaining to an account of the form of the faculty of understanding—plays a crucial role in the ensuing discussion between Boyle and Conant. It takes its point of departure from Boyle's claim that "Conant" fails to recognize the hylomorphic dimension of Kant's conception of our rational capacities. Boyle and Conant concur in rejecting (what Conant calls) a layer-cake reading of Kant on the relation between sensibility and understanding.[12] In opposition to any such a reading, Boyle and Conant both wish to endorse an interpretation of Kant according to which our cognitive rational faculty forms a unity—one in which each of its ingredient sub-capacities may be comprehended only through its relation to the whole.

The parallel that Conant suggests here is the following: what Descartes claims about the nature of *God's* creative activity, Kant wants to convert into a claim about the nature of *our* cognitive capacity. In neither case can the question of what is possible be raised apart from an appreciation of its internal relation to what is actual. This yields the following consequence for a proper understanding of a Kantian conception of logic: the only way to arrive at a proper account of thought's formal character is through its relation to actuality. This contrasts sharply with Frege's conception of logic. For Frege our capacity for logical thought is a self-standingly intelligible capacity. There is no such self-standing logical capacity for Kant; it is just an internal aspect of a single unified cognitive capacity. This bears on how Kant and Frege each seek to account for the relation between thought and judgment in their respective frameworks. Conant suggests that there is no way to shoehorn the central features of Kant's conception into Frege's framework, or vice versa.

A final crucial point of difference between Kant and Frege—about which Boyle and Conant agree—plays a central role in setting up the parallels between Kant and Wittgenstein to which Conant turns in his later replies. It has to do with how one ought to conceive the relation between the realm of judgable content and the exercise of the capacity to judge. For Frege, judgment involves a transition, an advance, from judgable con-

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stein's relation to Frege. Conant adds an un-Cavellian twist in suggesting that it may equally aptly characterize a form of philosophical advance that we can attain by learning to read Kant in a manner no longer shaped by the imposition of a post-Fregean conception of the contrast between the logical and the psychological.

[12] Such a reading yields one example of what Boyle calls "an additive theory of rationality"— to which he, in turn, opposes what he calls "a transformative view of rationality." This topic begins to assume prominence starting on page 616 of this volume.

tent to an acknowledgment of its truth. For Kant, judgable content is something one arrives at through an abstraction from the logically prior activity of judgment. Conant self-consciously employs a Wittgensteinian idiom here to spell out this Kantian point: thought cannot first be dead, devoid of any admixture of the activity of the subject, and then come to have life breathed into it through a subsequent activity of judgment—as Frege's conception contrives to make it seem. This deployment of Wittgensteinian imagery (with its talk of something dead into which life must be breathed) helps to set up the parallels between Kant's conception of judgment and Wittgenstein's conception of language, which Conant is concerned to explore in his final three replies.

The business of the next section, however, Section IX, is to bring the two prior discussions of Descartes and Kant together. Lessons drawn from the dialogue with Boyle are further developed in that section titled "Reply to Hamawaki: On the Relation of Cartesian to Kantian Skepticism." The first of these lessons is that, in the case of a self-conscious capacity, such as in our capacity for perceptual knowledge, the operation of the capacity is not to be factorized into the joint operation of two self-standingly intelligible capacities—in this case, one of perceiving and one of judging. The second lesson is that the non-defective case of the exercise of such a capacity (a *good case*) is not to be analyzed as an instance of what Conant calls "an attenuated case of its exercise" plus something. Conant brings out how these structural morals regarding the nature of a self-conscious capacity, briefly touched on in the reply to Boyle, may be brought to bear on Hamawaki's discussion of the nature of perceptual experience. They facilitate a helpfully precise reformulation of the central points of that discussion.

Hamawaki's contribution complicates the prior development of these topics in three fruitful respects. First, it brings into play an important topic in Conant's philosophical corpus that plays a comparatively marginal role in the 1991 article; namely, skepticism. Second, it introduces a helpful comparison between the two authors, primarily discussed by Conant up until this point in the replies; namely, Descartes and Kant. (This allows Conant, in his reply to Hamawaki, to begin to draw together a number of strands from his previous replies.) Third, Hamawaki helps to bring out certain affinities between the philosophical issues under discussion in this volume, which surround the possibility of perceptual knowledge, on the one hand, and those surrounding the nature of logical necessity, on the other. These affinities come to the fore by attending to the manner in which modal notions figure into various accounts of the nature of perceptual ex-

perience. The central question that emerges in this context is the following: Can we make sense of the idea that our capacity to enjoy experiences that represent things as *possibly* being a certain way is prior to our capacity to grasp that things are *actually* that way? This allows Conant to explore the parallel between this question and the one already touched on in the previous reply (to Boyle)—namely, the following question: Is our capacity to represent things in *thought* (as possibly being thus and so) prior to our capacity to *judge* (things *are* indeed thus and so)?

Hamawaki's Kant takes aim at a specific feature of the Cartesian conception of experience that contrives to make it seem as if our capacity for perceptual experience could be prior to our capacity for judgment in just this sort of way—a feature crucial to the setup of any standard sort of Cartesian skeptical scenario. The Cartesian idea at issue here is that there must always be a *gap* between the most that we can ever find out on the basis of sensory experience and the way things really are. Kant seeks to show that we cannot make sense of the idea that our capacity to enjoy experiences that represent things as *possibly* being a certain way is antecedent to our capacity to experience things as *actually* being a certain way.

Hamawaki's Kant here is taking aim at an underlying assumption of Descartes's dreaming hypothesis. Conant suggests that we should distinguish the sort of paradigmatically Cartesian skeptical worry in play in such a case (the worry that I might be deceived by my senses) from the sort of worry involved in the evil demon hypothesis (the thought that I might be deceived by a supremely powerful creator). The shape of the difficulty that comes into view in the latter sort of case—with the evil demon—is an incipient version of (what Conant calls) Kantian skepticism and seeks to be distinguished from Cartesian skepticism. For Conant, Descartes comes closest to Kant precisely when he turns his attention to those problems that arise when he considers the relation of our finite cognitive powers to those of an infinite being (and hence to the related problem of the creation of the eternal truths). Whereas the dreaming scenario calls into question merely the meditator's prior conception of what is actual (while leaving his conception of what is possible undamaged), the evil demon scenario threatens the meditator's entitlement to rely upon his clear and distinct ideas of what is possible or necessary (and hence threatens the integrity not only of his capacity for perceptual knowledge but also of his very capacity for thought). The latter worry brings Descartes to the threshold of (what Conant calls) Kantian skepticism.

Hamawaki is primarily concerned with focusing on Kant's treatment of (what Conant calls) Cartesian skepticism. Once he outlines what he

takes to be crucial to the conception of experience that allows for that sort of skepticism, Hamawaki goes on to explore how a proper account of the Kantian notion of experience as a form of activity (one that is in act in even the seemingly most passive cases of sensory apprehension) may furnish the philosophical materials for a powerful critique of the Cartesian conception of experience. Conant, with Boyle's assistance, reformulates Hamawaki's account of the Kantian conception of experience as a form of activity, so as to foreground the following implicit commitment: the act of sensory apprehension of an object, insofar as it has genuine cognitive potential (i.e., insofar as it is supposed to be the sort of thing that can have objective purport) presupposes an internal relation to the power of judgment—where perception and judgment are aspects of a single rationally unified capacity for cognition.

Conant spells out the full philosophical significance of this commitment by teasing out its implications for McDowell's discussion of the nature of experience—and more generally for what has come to be known as a disjunctivist conception of perceptual experience. Hamawaki intends his own Kant-inspired account to be compatible with, and in certain respects to build upon, the central insights of McDowell's disjunctivist critique of the Cartesian conception of experience. Though Conant agrees with Hamawaki that the fundamental insight of disjunctivism is already found in Kant, he argues that the details of how that insight is best unpacked turns on nuances that are often overlooked. In particular, he argues that most ways of spelling out what disjunctivism entails are compatible with the idea that (what Conant calls) our capacity for perceptual thought is prior to our capacity for perceptual judgment, whereas Kant's own form of disjunctivism, according to Conant, centrally turns on a rejection of any such priority. Conant's development of this latter point is accomplished partly through his drawing on and endorsing certain aspects of Barry Stroud's recent criticism of McDowell's account of perception. This discussion of Stroud in Section IX resurfaces and plays a crucial role in the next two sections. Indeed, two sections later, Conant will suggest that what is right in Stroud's criticisms of McDowell should place Stroud in far more sympathy with Kant and far less sympathy with Frege than he appears to realize.

The discussion takes a brief detour before returning to these topics. For in the very next section—Section X, titled "Reply to Hamawaki and Stroud on Transcendental Arguments, Idealism, and the Kantian Solution of the Problem of Philosophy"—Conant first sets the stage for the way that he wants to bring these various issues together in his critique of

Stroud. Section X, in effect, serves as a bridge from Conant's reply to Hamawaki on the relation of Kant to Descartes to his reply to Stroud on the relation of Frege to Kant. It focuses solely on Hamawaki's and Stroud's respective readings of Kant. This is one of several points in the pages that follow, in which the discussion takes the form of Conant, in effect, enacting a trialogue between himself and two of the other contributors to this volume. The immediate pretext for this particular trialogue lies in the fact that the last part of Hamawaki's own contribution to this volume is devoted to comparing and contrasting Conant's and Stroud's respective readings of Kant. Conant now takes up the issues that arise in that connection, simultaneously addressing assorted aspects of both Hamawaki's and Stroud's contributions to this volume. A central point of this section is the following: the shape of a Cartesian account of perceptual experience is at odds with the basic schema of what Conant calls a Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy—the idea that what is thought, in our thinking of it, can be explained only from within thought, and so thought itself cannot be *explained*. This idea plays an important role in Conant's global narrative. He also takes it to be something about which he and Stroud centrally agree and which he will seek to exploit in his conversation with Stroud in Section XI.

In his exploration of the differences between Conant's and Stroud's readings of Kant—and hence of the difference between taking a Kantian transcendental argument to be directed at Kantian skepticism and taking it to be directed at Cartesian skepticism—Hamawaki brings out how fundamentally divergent their respective understandings are of what it means to say that a philosophical view or argument is "Kantian." This furnishes Conant with the opportunity in Section X, first, to be clearer about what he now wants to mean by that term—in particular, what it is supposed to stand for when it figures as part of an intended contrast with the term "Fregean." This allows him clearly to demarcate how his employment of these terms involves a very different sort of philosophical contrast from Stroud's own deployment of them.

As is widely known from his influential articles on the topic, Stroud takes the deployment of a transcendental argument to be Kant's own strategy for answering (someone Stroud calls simply) "the skeptic" and hence for arriving at his own putatively "Kantian" alternative position with regard to the nature of human knowledge. Stroud takes "the skeptic" to whom such an argument is (at least in the first instance) addressed to be the Cartesian skeptic. Hamawaki and Conant are in agreement that this already involves a misreading of Kant's Transcendental Deduction.

They both take the deduction to be concerned (at least in the first instance) with the treatment of Kantian skepticism. More important, for Conant's purposes, Stroud's reading of Kant requires the attribution to him of a Cartesian conception of perceptual experience. From Conant's point of view, this is to mistake one of the eventual targets of Kant's *First Critique* for one of the premises of the deduction. On Stroud's reading of him, Kant's way of retaining this supposed premise, while rejecting Descartes's conclusion, leads to a form of what Stroud calls "idealism." Conant's discussion in Section X of what being "Kantian" ought really to amount to—as well as how it can amount to very different things for different people; in particular, for him and Stroud—culminates in a corresponding discussion of what Conant suggests we ought to mean by the term "idealism," if we wish to employ it to capture the philosophical insight that stands at the center of Kant's philosophy.

For Stroud that term designates a way of going fatefully wrong in philosophy. Conant seeks to rehabilitate it in such a way that it usefully articulates something to which Kant and Stroud both aspire in philosophy. He here touches in Section X on a point that will emerge as increasingly crucial to the whole structure of his replies; namely, (what he calls) "the truth in idealism." For Conant "idealism" is not a term of philosophical abuse—as it so often turns out to be in most discussions carried on within the analytic tradition. He tries to show how his way of using the term helps to align it with a related way of using the term "Kantian" that one finds in Wittgenstein's writings. He also suggests that this way of using the term "Kantian" can (due to his explication of a relevant passage from Wittgenstein) even be found in Stroud's writings. Conant's elucidation of this positive sense of the term hence serves, on the one hand, to underwrite the idea of a Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy—a conception of a form of a solution to philosophical problems, with which he takes both himself and Stroud to be in sympathy—and on the other, to bring out what he takes to be a tension not only in Stroud's manner of deploying the term "Kantian" but in Stroud's entire relation to Kant.

Assessing the dispute between Stroud and Conant requires first clarifying what being "Kantian" amounts to—as well as what faithfulness to the truth in "idealism" demands of one. Each of the available ways of shading the meanings of these terms has downstream implications for how one ends up understanding further related terms of art—for example, what is meant by the term "constitutive" as a term for characterizing what is involved in a Kantian account of the relation in which logic stands

to thought. Frege himself, Conant thinks, misreads and misunderstands Kant in a way that came to infect a whole subsequent analytic tradition of philosophy. The way Frege reads Kant was transmitted through, and left its mark on, almost the whole of the engagement with Kant that one subsequently finds within that tradition. One of the 2019 Conant's central criticisms here of 1991 Conant is that he failed sufficiently to liberate himself from just this misreading of Kant.[13]

In Section XI, titled "Reply to Stroud on Kant and Frege: On the Relation of Thought to Judgment," Conant turns his attention to Stroud's criticisms of the original 1991 article by "Conant." Stroud takes issue with how the idea that logical truths are "contingently necessary" figures in that article. He knows that "Conant" wants to reject this idea but worries that he seeks to do so through furnishing some explanation—some deeper ground or source for the necessity of necessary truths, or at least for the impossibility of their being false. Stroud takes it for granted that Kant has his own preferred explanation of this variety, that "Conant" reads Kant roughly as he does in this respect, and that "Conant," in aligning Kant and Frege, must therefore also favor an interpretation of Frege according to which Frege himself pursues an account of the ultimate ground of logical laws that partakes of roughly this shape. This is the one place in the replies where 2019 Conant goes to some effort to correct what he takes to be a misreading of 1991 Conant on the part of one of the contributors to this volume—not because he wants to endorse everything 1991 Conant says about the points under discussion, but because he thinks that the misreading in question obstructs the possibility of getting clear about the significant extent to which the 2019 version of Conant and Stroud really agree (especially in their respective views of the philosophical problems themselves) and about the comparatively lesser but still not insignificant extent to which they genuinely disagree (especially in their respective readings of Kant and Frege).

Pace "Conant," Stroud thinks there is nothing to mean by the sentence "the laws of logic are constitutive of the possibility of thought" that could

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[13] Notice how great the stakes are here: how one spells out what either Kant or Frege understand the relation of logic to thought to be—and hence to what extent that relation may or not be characterized as one in which the former is in some sense "constitutive" of the latter—will, in turn, shape the very idea of what it means to say that the truths of logic are "analytic." That is not just any idea—it is an idea on which entire conceptions of analytic philosophy may be said to rest—as well as entire ways of rejecting such conceptions (such as, for example, Quine's critique of the analytic/synthetic distinction and the threat it is often supposed to present to all prior conceptions of "analytic philosophy").

simultaneously furnish an accurate description of both Kant's and Frege's respective conceptions of logic. Conant agrees with this, but the details of what concerns him in such a misalignment of Kant and Frege turn out to be very different from what most concerns Stroud in his understanding of why Kant and Frege ought not to be too closely paired. For Stroud the story to be told about how we move from Kant through Frege to Wittgenstein looks to be one of gradual progress in the attainment of philosophical clarity, whereas for Conant the conception of logic that one finds in Frege represents in various respects a radical departure from a line of intellectual filiation that is best traced more directly from Kant to Wittgenstein. For 2019 Conant the recovery of certain Kantian insights requires an intervening critique of Frege's conception of logic—and, in particular, his conception of the character of the priority and independence of logic from any material knowledge about the empirical world.

Conant's reply to Stroud here touches, above all, on the following three interrelated Fregean philosophical commitments which he explores in more depth in his subsequent replies to Gustafsson and Travis: (1) the manner of distinguishing between the merely logical unity of a thought and the assertoric force that supposedly first comes on the scene through an acknowledgement of the truth or falsity of the thought, (2) the account of the character of the priority of the content of such a thought to the activity of judging, and (3) the understanding of the separation of the stages of understanding (grasping the sense of a thought) and judgment (advancing to its truth-value). The way these themes figure in the reply to Stroud is largely ad hominem. Conant seeks to bring out how—given his other philosophical leanings (as expressed, for example, in his critique of McDowell's conception of perceptual experience)—Stroud himself ought not to regard the fact that these Fregean commitments are alien to Kant as something that counts against Kant and favors Frege. More importantly for what follows, a central point of the original 1991 article by "Conant" was to show that early Wittgenstein's critique of Frege turned on exposing the internal tension between precisely these Fregean commitments and those aspects of Frege's philosophy that Wittgenstein was most concerned to inherit. Conant suggests that a central source of Stroud's misunderstandings of "Conant" may be traced to this aspect of that article going completely unnoticed by Stroud.

Whereas Stroud thinks Conant makes far too much of alleged intellectual affinities between Frege and Kant and far too little of real affinities between Frege and Wittgenstein, Sullivan has almost precisely the opposite complaint. Sullivan, in remarkably stark contrast to Stroud,

thinks the most illuminating way to proceed is to consider what a properly Kantian view of Frege's logic might be. This challenge is taken up by Conant in Section XII, which bears the title "Reply to Sullivan: Frege on the Priority of Logic to Everything." Sullivan's article is rich in criticisms of "Conant" and hence launches a number of provocative subsidiary criticisms, while pursuing its central concerns.

One subsidiary exegetical complaint that Sullivan lodges against the story originally presented by "Conant" is that it, in effect, invites us retrospectively to inject an incipiently "quasi-therapeutic" dimension into our readings of Kant and Frege. A related subsidiary substantive complaint is that that story presupposes the attractiveness of what Sullivan takes to be an essentially deflationary conception of philosophy. Sullivan considers it evident that Kant and Frege were equally concerned to put forward (what he calls) a "positive" conception of logic, and he sees 1991 Conant's Wittgenstein as playing only a "negative" game. Hence in aligning Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein, "Conant"—according to Sullivan—obscures the starkness of the contrast between the positive conceptions of logic one finds in Kant and Frege respectively, on the one hand, and Wittgenstein's merely negative conception of logic, on the other.

Conant suggests that in speaking of "therapeutic," "anti-theoretic," or "negative" methods or conceptions of philosophy, Sullivan is expressing his solidarity with a certain audience of readers—those who are united in their shared sense of disapproval of the "throwing away the ladder" reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*—a reading for which "Conant" advocates in his 1991 article as well as in a series of other related publications. Conant responds by trying to leverage Sullivan's sense that it is evident that Kant, of all people, does not lack for a positive conception of either logic or philosophy. Once we get into view the shared set of commitments that render Kant and Wittgenstein equally distant from Frege's conception of the priority and independence of pure logic, and the extent to which they both conceive of philosophy as a form of self-understanding achieved by means of an internal critique of our capacity for thought and judgment, then—Conant suggests—it should no longer be quite so obvious what the criteria are by which one is entitled at the same time to sort Kant's conception of philosophy as fully positive and early Wittgenstein's as merely negative.

The claim of Sullivan's article that most intrigues Conant is the following: it is Frege who ought to be regarded as the one who really makes good on Kant's aspiration to confer a transcendental role on logic. What

such a casting of Frege as the true Kantian misses, according to Conant, is how, for Kant, transcendental logic (the branch of logic that articulates the conditions of genuinely world-related thought) exhibits forms that are at the same time forms of mindedness and forms of worldhood; and moreover—as Conant puts it—they only are either because they are both. It is here, above all, that Conant now sees a significant continuity between Kant and early Wittgenstein, one that he thinks both "Conant" and Sullivan miss: logic articulates a dimension of form common to thought, language, world, and the logical "I." Hence what Kant and early Wittgenstein each call "form" (for all of the differences in their respective conceptions thereof) is never prior to the world-involving matter of thought but always only internal to it. In particular, in the *Tractatus* there is no logically prior Fregean order of thoughts. *Die Welt* (everything that is the case) and *die Sprache* (the totality of propositions) are no less pervaded by logic than *Gedanken* (the totality of propositions that are *sinnvoll*). So, while Conant endorses Sullivan's reading of Frege, he charges him with failing to appreciate the extent to which the philosophical gulf that separates Kant from Frege turns on precisely those aspects of Frege's conception of logic that the *Tractatus* is most concerned to criticize.

The final three replies (to Gustafsson, Travis, and Benoist) all deal with Wittgenstein, both early and late. In Section XIII—"Reply to Gustafsson: Wittgenstein on the Relation of Sign to Symbol"—language takes center stage, along with the topic of the internality of thought to language. Neither Kant nor Frege conceive our rational capacities as essentially linguistic, but Conant reads Wittgenstein as developing precisely that idea. Yet he sees Wittgenstein's way of doing so as again placing him much closer to Kant than Frege. Conant regards Wittgenstein's way of placing our linguistic capacity at the center of philosophy both as a deepening and a thinking through of Kantian philosophical commitments and as requiring a radical break from Frege's conception of the relation between thought and language. This Wittgensteinian theme of how the ways in which we are able to speak bear on our possibilities for thought runs throughout the final three replies.

Though there is considerable agreement between them, in his reply to Gustafsson, Conant does seek to draw attention to "a bit of a wobble" in how Gustafsson understands Wittgenstein on the relation between signs and symbols. Gustafsson is interested in the strategy to be found in "Conant" for bringing out what is confused in Hacker's idea that certain propositions are inherently nonsensical qua the propositions that they are. The strategy is to stress that this involves an equivocation be-

tween sign and symbol—a hovering between regarding a "proposition" as a sign and as a symbol. Yet Conant seeks to show that the conception of the sign tacitly presupposed at certain points by both "Conant" and Gustafsson is exegetically unfaithful to Wittgenstein and presupposes a philosophically problematic picture of the relation of our linguistic capacities for recognizing signs and understanding symbols. If we are sufficiently philosophically "resolute" then, Conant suggests, the very idea that linguistic signs are, as such, mere sounds and shapes turns out to be empty—a piece of nonsense. Conant goes through various examples of the supposedly detachable dimension of the materiality of the sign and attempts to put his finger on what inclines us in philosophy to mischaracterize what is really going on in such examples.

The first part of Section XIII is about early Wittgenstein on the relation of sign to symbol. The discussion moves from there, as it does in Gustafsson's contribution to this volume, to later Wittgenstein's understanding of what is, in effect, this same relation. Conant focuses in this connection, above all, on Wittgenstein's later discussions of what is involved in one learning a first language. This allows him to express one of the teachings of Wittgenstein's later philosophy in the idiom of his early philosophy as follows: in learning one's first language, one not only learns to see the symbol in the sign but to recognize the symbol in and through the use of signs and, in so doing, one thereby learns *what a sign is*—and hence what can count as an instance of its reoccurrence.

Conant concludes his reply to Gustafsson with some reflections on what should be understood by the expression "the linguistic turn" as a way of gesturing at a supposed high watermark in the history of philosophy—one to which Wittgenstein is standardly regarded as having contributed. On one understanding of that expression, it involves the idea that one area of philosophy should be accorded a form of methodological priority over others—namely, the philosophy of language. On the understanding of it that interests Conant, it involves the idea that what we seek to explain in philosophy cannot be understood from a position outside language, but can be understood only from the self-conscious perspective of someone who already has the power of language, who already, in and through philosophizing, is involved in the exercise of that very power. The linguistic turn, on this understanding of it, does not accord a priority to one area of philosophy over others. Rather, it involves the idea that the only position from which we may seek philosophical clarity about *anything*—not only about what language is but also what it is to perceive, think, or know—is from the perspective of a being who already understands herself to be a speaker.

The next section of Part II is Conant's reply to Charles Travis. Before offering an overview of that section, this is the appropriate place to say something about the very special relation Travis bears to this volume. This is so not only because, in addition to being one of its contributors, he is one of its initial editors, but also because of the unique role he played in the conception and genesis of the larger project from which the volume emerges. As indicated in the Introduction to Part I, the volume began life in Portugal within the context of a search project titled the Bounds of Judgement. The philosophical reference points in the light of which that project was conceived were drawn from the philosophy of Charles Travis, as were the particular interpretations of Frege and Wittgenstein from which it took its point of departure. Travis's philosophical work therefore furnished an important part of the overall framework for the participants in that project—for their discussion of the nature of logic as well as the specific significance of Frege's thought-experiment in the *Grundgesetze,* which involved a "being who might be found whose laws of thought contradicted ours." Within the context of the Bounds of Judgement project, at the time of the Logical Alien conference (from which most of the contributions in Part I stem), Travis taught a seminar at the University of Porto devoted to a close reading of Frege's texts, seeking in part to make sense of Frege's discussion of the logical alien and how it constitutes part of his overall response to the psychologistic logician.[14] These background facts are worth emphasizing for a variety of reasons.

Not least of these is the fact that there are a whole range of philosophical disagreements—relevant and interesting disagreements—not only between Travis and "Conant," but especially between him and Conant, which are broached in these pages and would be interesting to explore at greater depth on another occasion.[15] Many of these are barely touched upon in Conant's responses in Part II of this volume. Some of them bear

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[14] In contrast to much of what one finds in this volume, many of the discussions that animated that seminar went into formal technical details of Frege's texts. They were, comparatively, also less centrally concerned with the history of philosophy. Travis's Porto seminar on Frege was published in Portuguese as *Frege e Intérpretes de Frege: Seminário de Charles Travis* (eds. Sofia Miguens and Susana Cadilha [Lisbon: Colibri, 2013]) and was a predecessor of Travis's now forthcoming book on Frege (*The Pure Business of Being True* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019]). For related writings pertaining to Travis's interpretation of Frege and its application to related problems in the philosophy of mind and language, see also Charles Travis, *Perception: Essays from Frege* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[15] There are also some interesting convergences between Conant and Travis that would be worthwhile to explore further.

on the interpretation of particular works of Frege and Wittgenstein; others on the more general question of what a Wittgensteinian conception of philosophical method comes to. Yet others relate to different readings of Hilary Putnam (as well as Putnam's criticism of Quine—a topic that was extremely important for "Conant" in 1991 but is not taken up by any of the contributors to this volume and hence also not by Conant in Part II).[16] Many of those unexplored issues turn on what occasion-sensitivity in the philosophy of language and contextualism in metaphysics commit one to when thinking about representation. This network of topics—relativity, context-sensitivity, and contextualism (as questions regarding thought and language as they relate to the question of the nature of logic)—stood at the center of the initial Bounds of Judgement project.[17] Conceived against this background, the project was primarily focused on the philosophical present, with little ambition to engage with the history of philosophy. Given the historical focus of

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[16] It bears mentioning that Conant's 1991 article is in no small part organized around a discussion of Putnam's philosophy of logic. Indeed, it originally appeared in an issue of *Philosophical Topics* devoted to the philosophy of Hilary Putnam. (Conant alludes to this at one point; see this volume, 650n3). Conant's 1991 article teases apart the successive positions Hilary Putnam took on the nature of logic, starting with his pair of classic articles on the topic in 1962: "The Analytic and the Synthetic" (in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science,* vol. 3, eds. Herbert Feigl and Grover Maxwell [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962], 358–397) and "It Ain't Necessarily So" (*Journal of Philosophy* 59, no.22 [1962]: 658–671), and culminating with his article "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity" (reprinted in the 1994 volume *Words and Life* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press], which Conant himself edited and introduced). Its extended engagement with this aspect of Putnam's philosophy was one of the features of Conant's 1991 article that singled it out as being of interest for participants in the Bounds of Judgement project. It is a pity that, aside from a few remarks in Travis's contribution to this volume, this aspect of the 1991 article goes undiscussed in these pages. That is perhaps the most glaring omission in this volume's reception of that article. It is also worth noting in this connection that Travis himself has written several articles on Putnam on logic that explore just these topics—see, for example, his "Overflowing Bounds," "The Shape of Necessity," and "What Laws of Logic Say" (all collected in Travis, *Objectivity and the Parochial* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011]). In the last of these three articles, Travis juxtaposes Putnam and Wittgenstein on the nature of logic in the context of elaborating his own conception. The ideas that are developed in those pages make for a fascinating contrast with those of Conant's, presented here.

[17] One reason this is worth mentioning in the present context has to do with what I believe to be one of this volume's comparatively hidden riches—one that is touched on already in the previous footnotes: namely, the latent dialogue between Conant and Travis that it contains. This exchange between them, for those of us who know where to look for it, may be seen to run throughout Parts I and II. It constitutes the opening of a discussion that is of interest not least for the ways in which it shows how the very same philosophical topics may be approached from very different methodological angles.

many of the contributions in this volume—especially those by Moore, Boyle, Hamawaki, and Sullivan—a well as Conant's concern to respond to the substance of their exegetical claims, this volume came to assume an altogether different cast from the rest of the publications related to the project.

This volume thus acquired a significance that the organizers of the project had not originally planned for it. It reveals how a certain kind of work in the history of philosophy can itself serve as a powerful instrument for discovering where our philosophical blind spots in the present lie—not less so, in fact, when it comes to one of the main sources of blindness and animosity in philosophy nowadays, the division between the analytic and continental traditions. In these pages we find analytic philosophers doing both history of philosophy and analytic philosophy at its best and at the same time. Yet they are participating in a common understanding of what would constitute a continuation of their tradition, one that allows for a form of philosophical conversation situated beyond the analytic-continental divide. They participate in that conversation with the aim of philosophizing about topics that cannot help but matter to all philosophers—in virtue of their being philosophers, regardless of which tradition they hail from—simply insofar as they are seriously interested in thinking about thinking.

This brings us to Travis's contribution to this volume on "Conant" and Conant's reply. Travis seeks to provide an answer to the question "What did later Wittgenstein regard as the gravest misconceptions of his early philosophy?" Conant, in Section XIV—titled "Reply to Travis: Wittgenstein on the Non-Relation of Thinking to Being"—presents an alternative answer. Travis says that he is not concerned to contest Conant's account of the *Tractatus*'s quarrels with Frege—he is interested rather in raising worries about the *Tractatus*'s philosophical sympathies (as well as those of "Conant" to the extent that he shares them). Above all, Travis wants to reject the idea that the *Tractatus* should be viewed as moving in the direction of either philosophical progress or the ideas of the later Wittgenstein. With regard to the issues that matter for Travis, there is no continuity between early and later Wittgenstein. Quite the contrary: Travis believes there is a line of philosophical inheritance between Frege and later Wittgenstein that was obstructed by the intervention of the *Tractatus*. Hence, in order for him to overcome his earlier confusions, it was essential that later Wittgenstein finally achieve a proper appreciation of what (for Travis) is most interesting in Frege.

Travis regards Conant's 1991 article as representing early Wittgenstein as sympathizing with Frege where he (and we) should not (for example, in Frege's worries about the Kerry paradox) and as criticizing Frege where he (and we) should not (for example, in the Tractarian rejection of the idea that the laws of logic represent a substantial body of truths about how things are). Travis believes young Wittgenstein was simply wrong on both accounts. In order to explore the ontological views that underlie Travis's readings of Frege and early Wittgenstein, Conant focuses his discussion on the issues of thought, judgment, and truth. He wants to criticize (what he calls) Travis's *dualism* between thinking things are thus and so and things being thus and so. This is to say, Conant spotlights Travis's Frege-inspired way of framing ontological issues. It is this ontological conception that Travis draws on to criticize (what he takes to be) the Tractarian conception of representation. Conant not only takes the ascription of the conception in question to the *Tractatus* to turn on a misreading, but he himself proposes an alternative reading, according to which a central concern of the book is precisely to criticize the very conception that Travis finds and applauds in Frege. As Conant says, employing Travis's favorite pair of philosophical locutions to summarize the upshot of this criticism: there isn't anything more to the idea of *a way the world is* or *how things are* than a way of *saying* how things are. This is the truth in idealism; the only form of realism this requires us to reject is a philosophically confused one—one that presupposes the aforementioned dualism of the self-standing intelligibility of the orders of thinking and being. For Conant, what Travis reads into the *Tractatus* (and then criticizes as a paradigmatic way of misconceiving the relation between thought and world, and hence the very idea of representation) is not a view that ought to be attributed to the author of the *Tractatus* on a proper interpretation of what he is up to. Though Conant's primary objection to Travis is therefore an exegetical one (that he fails to engage with what is actually early Wittgenstein's philosophy), he also seeks to sketch how early Wittgenstein's philosophy already contains the very resources required to mount a potent criticism of Travis's central philosophical assumptions. Conant concludes his reply with a very brief alternative sketch of the relation between early and later Wittgenstein and how best to approach Travis's guiding question: "What did later Wittgenstein regard as the gravest misconceptions of his early philosophy?"

In the final section of replies—Section XV, titled "Wittgenstein on the Relation of Language to Life"—Conant responds to Jocelyn Benoist's

contribution. It deals with Wittgenstein's example of the wood-sellers from the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. The wood-sellers import the original Fregean thought-experiment about the logical alien into the heart of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. On a natural way of understanding what is at issue in Wittgenstein's example, the minds of the wood sellers would appear to be utterly alien, totally unlike ours—indeed, so much so that we may conclude that it is impossible to make sense of their ways of doing what they call "selling wood." But is this really the right thing to conclude about them? Can we or can we not engage with their logically alien form of life? And, if not, then why might we be driven to entertain the philosophical fantasy that we can? These are the questions that Benoist primarily explores. Conant goes through Benoist's impressive array of ways of making sense of what the seemingly alien wood-sellers might be up to. Benoist's reading of Wittgenstein's example arrives at the following point: we may experience the temptation to conclude that this peculiar tribe of people *cannot* be doing what they seem to be doing, but—insofar as we embrace this conclusion—we thereby fall into the trap of trying to think what cannot be thought. Benoist takes a proper reading of Wittgenstein, therefore, to issue in roughly the opposite moral: we cannot say a priori that they cannot mean what they seem to mean; our possibilities for meaning our words are not a priori separable from their possible applications in particular contexts of use.

Conant does not disagree with this conclusion. He fully endorses it and, in light of the proposed reading, seeks to uncover a number of further wrinkles that reside in the precise manner in which Wittgenstein unfolds his example. Against this background, Conant pursues questions that set up an interesting comparison of Frege's parable of the logical alien and that of the wood-sellers—questions such as, What sort of philosophical example is the wood-sellers? How is it supposed to work? And how is it supposed to help us make philosophical progress with the topics that Frege's example originally sought to engage? One neglected wrinkle in Wittgenstein's discussion is his comparison of the wood-sellers to the protagonists of the British folktale *The Fools of Gotham* (also known as *the Wise Men of Gotham*). Conant saves his discussion of this particular wrinkle till the very end of his reply to Benoist: as a final surprise, as it were, for the reader—allowing it to serve as the conclusion of the volume and as the epitome of all that has come before. Only someone who has read through the preceding replies will appreciate how it is meant to so serve.

JAMES CONANT, *REPLIES*

Section I

Who Is the Author of These Afterthoughts and Responses?

Responding to the essays in this volume is no easy task. The most obvious reason why this is so is that these essays, taken together, explore a wide range of exegetical questions (pertaining to the interpretation of Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein, to mention only the four most salient) which, in turn, involve an equally daunting set of philosophical issues (ranging across the philosophy of perception, language, logic, and religion, to mention again only the four most salient). I have focused on matters that would allow my replies to build upon one another, jointly forming something approximating a single, unified text—thereby highlighting the underlying unity of this volume that Sofia Miguens and Charles Travis have had the imagination and perseverance to bring into existence.[1] The effort to construct such a unified text—one that tells a single coherent philosophical story—has resulted in a second part of the volume far longer than its first part. This is because the resulting "re-

321

plies" do not seek only to respond individually to each of the other contributions; they also aspire jointly to present a far better account of the philosophical trajectory from Descartes through Kant and Frege to Wittgenstein than that originally offered in the article "The Search for Logically Alien Thought" that comprises the first chapter of this volume.

This aspiration is the cause of further respects in which the present volume is, judged by the conventions of contemporary academic publishing, a peculiar beast. In most volumes exhibiting this format, in which an author replies to his critics, it is possible for the reader to move directly from one of the critical essays to the author's reply, while ignoring everything else in the volume. That will not be the case for this set of replies. They begin with six sections of philosophical and historical stage-setting. One main purpose of these is to bring out what now seems to me skewed in the account offered in the original article. Once the replies proper begin, each one builds on its predecessor, introducing exegetical claims, forms of terminology, and strands of argument taken up and put to further use in the subsequent replies. This means that later replies presuppose familiarity not only with earlier ones but also with all the previous contributions to which they have replied. The evident downside of this approach is that it renders it difficult for the casual reader to delve selectively into the replies. Its upside is that it enables the serious reader to penetrate more deeply into the philosophical issues here under discussion than would otherwise be permitted by a volume of this format.

This takes me to a second respect in which my task as the author of these replies involves a peculiar difficulty. The essay that stands at the beginning of this volume—to which the subsequent contributors are responding—was written over a quarter of a century ago. In the meantime, my own philosophical thoughts have developed considerably. Indeed, I am now inclined to be at least as critical of that article as are the other contributors whose essays are collected here. This raises the following question about the ensuing "replies": Who speaks in them and for whom does he speak?

There are two possible respondents to the essays collected here, on whose behalf the author of the following pages might be understood to speak: (1) the historical person who was the author of the original essay and (2) the person who is presently writing these words. If I were to choose to speak solely on behalf of the former, then my task would primarily be one of explaining and defending what I thought when I wrote "The Search for Logically Alien Thought." If the latter, then my task is to try to work out what I ought now to think about those issues in the light of my own

intervening development and present outlook. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in writing these replies, I found it impossible simply to engage in one of these tasks to the exclusion of the other. Some form of notation is therefore required to indicate when I am speaking *for* someone who bears the name "James Conant" and when I am merely speaking *about* an author of an article published over twenty-five years ago who bears that name.

At those moments in the ensuing replies where I discuss views of the author of "The Search for Logically Alien Thought" that I no longer endorse, I refer to him—as do his other critics—in the third person, as "Conant."[2] This device will be in force for the remainder of these replies (starting with the next sentence); whereas, when I say what I mean and think, I use the first-person pronoun (as I just did). This will be the voice that usually speaks in what follows, and, in so speaking, no general presumption should be in place to the effect that what I thus say is consistent with what "Conant" holds.[3]

With regard to many of these issues, all I really know for sure is that I once thought what Conant thought and I now think many things he did not think. I do not possess a clear view of the relation between these two sets of thoughts. I suppose that this is how it usually is as one makes progress in philosophy. We are suspended somewhere between what we once wanted to think and say (and no longer do) and what we will come to understand we ought now to think and say (but at present only partially know how to think and say)—between the progress we appear to have made and that which we still need to make just in order to consolidate even that initial appearance of gain. My personal estimate of the degree of accord between what I once thought and what I now think may be less accurate than that of someone else—especially when that someone is blessed not only with the interpretative skills of an excellent reader but also with the reflective powers of an excellent philosopher. When a person

[2] Beyond signaling some degree of disagreement through the employment of this notational device, I will often refrain from going into any detail about exactly where and why I disagree with Conant about the point under discussion. Were I to do so at every point, not only would these replies become annoyingly self-involved, they would also depart considerably from what they are supposed to be—namely, an attempt to express what I now think one ought to say about the issue under discussion.

[3] From here on out, when referring to the author of "The Search for Logically Alien Thought," I will dispense with the quotation marks around "Conant." Starting in the reply to Hamawaki, this notational feature of these replies will come into view as connected to one of the central questions to be explored in these pages: What is the significance of the difference—for logic and for philosophy—between what can be said only in the first-person present indicative form and what can be said only in some other form (e.g., in the past tense)?

has undergone a great deal of change, it becomes a delicate matter to balance one's sense of the self that endures against the one achieved. So it is more than probable, in the pages that follow, that I, at certain points, underestimate the degree of continuity between that author and me, while at other junctures vastly overestimating it.

This lack of clarity notwithstanding, with regard to a handful of issues—namely those that will loom largest—I am acutely aware of having moved on from Conant: hence the need for the aforementioned notational device. Its purpose is to indicate when I wish to hold certain views of the author of "The Search for Logically Alien Thought" at a distance, handling them, as it were, with tongs—allowing myself to join the debate about the merits of what he holds, without thereby having to side either with Conant or with one of his critics concerning the matter under discussion. The voice that speaks in these pages is, in this sense, a third party to these disputes, occasionally joining Conant's side, sometimes piling on and following the lead of the critic but most often concerned to call into question something on which both Conant and his critic agree.

It is often deemed a virtue in philosophy to leave one's discussion of a philosophical issue in as invulnerable a condition as possible. The implicit maxim might be formulated as follows: avoid treading wherever you are unsure of your ground! Leaving aside the question of how generally conducive to philosophical progress the adherence to such a maxim might be, it is certainly not one I have followed in these pages. With respect to many of the questions under discussion here, I have a sense of the general direction in which progress ought to lie, without always being clear about how to think the difficulty all the way through. At a number of junctures, I intimate that in order to arrive at a satisfactory resting point, a further slight change in the direction of thought is required—a subtle alteration in course, the need for which I can, at present, only dimly make out. I have tried not to let the ensuing vulnerability deter me from pushing a point as far as I am able to within the compass of these replies, even if I do not always know quite where that leaves me.

Dogmatism is a somewhat antiquated philosophical term of art for holding that no further progress need or can be made in an effort to vindicate one's entitlement to some particular thing one wants to think or say in philosophy, beyond one's present conviction that it is the right thing to think or say. (Allowing that practitioners of philosophy may have "diverging philosophical intuitions" is a bit of current jargon for reconciling oneself methodologically to some of the characteristic forms of failure of contemporary philosophical method.) Skepticism is still a fash-

ionable philosophical term of art for thinking that we are in some area of philosophy unable to vindicate our entitlement to some claim that philosophy had thought it should be able to establish. Less fashionable is Kant's thought that the proper initial response to dogmatism in philosophy *is* skepticism—that skepticism is born of a justified dissatisfaction with the idea that we can do no better than stake our claim to philosophical vindication in the manner that the dogmatist does. The skeptic's thought is that, whenever we do so, this is a failure of philosophy: that, as philosophers, we ought to be dissatisfied with where this leaves us.

Conant's essay is an attempt to overcome an instance of the stalemate between dogmatism and skepticism in philosophy (in particular, with respect to the philosophical question of whether our thought could bear a logical form other than it does and yet still be a form of thinking). I continue to harbor his ambition for the treatment of this and related philosophical questions: namely, the aspiration to eschew dogmatism in method and hence justified skepticism with regard to its conclusions. One of my essential differences from Conant is that I now detect a great many unwitting moments of dogmatism in his handling of the issues. To say that they are unwitting is to say that he himself was blind to them as moments of dogmatism. To Conant, at the time of writing, they seemed perfectly innocent. In the pages that follow I will need to draw attention to an inordinate number of such moments in his essay. As will become clear, from my present vantage, many of the criticisms advanced in this volume against his essay rest on a shared participation in these moments of blindness.

No doubt, given my present criticisms of Conant, there are yet further moments at which I ought to hold myself at a greater distance from him than I do. These are presumably due to forms of philosophical blindness that I share with Conant—to forms of intellectual continuity between him and me—the significance of which I presently do not even glimpse. For there is no sensible way to give oneself, let alone straightforwardly follow, the instruction "Identify and eliminate your philosophical blind spots!" Neither what is involved in identifying such moments of blindness, nor what is required in eliminating them, can be reduced to a general formula. Such moments in one's thinking have to be brought to reflective consciousness one at a time, each on its own terms, usually with the aid of philosophical interlocutors. Only in this way, case by case, can one's philosophical blind spots gradually be identified and then circumvented, or compensated for, or otherwise overcome. Even where I am most in disagreement with my interlocutors in this volume, I usually at

least owe them thanks for enabling me to make this particular form of progress in my own thinking.

One could hardly ask for better interlocutors than those with which I am blessed in this volume: ever charitable to my intentions, yet merciless toward my errors. With their help, numerous philosophical blind spots are, one by one, brought to light. Once these are fully registered, how many unwitting blind spots does this still leave *me* with? This, too, is not a query that one can sensibly address to oneself. It would be a drastic understatement to say that my answer to this question is unlikely to be more accurate than someone else's. The difficulty here has not only to do with that of stepping outside one's own manner of thinking and seeing it from the outside, as it were, but also with that of gauging the circumference of a blind spot and determining where "it" leaves off and the next one begins. When it comes to philosophy, these two difficulties are more essentially related than one may be inclined at first to suppose.

My primary aim throughout these replies will be not to defend Conant, but to make philosophical progress with the issues under discussion in his text and those of his critics. There are a few junctures, where there is a misunderstanding of Conant that stands in the way of progress, where I first labor to make clear how one of his critics misreads him. But, in most of the replies that follow, I simply allow myself to feel as free as his critics do to move beyond what Conant says to a consideration of what one ought to say—especially where clarity about my differences with him may contribute to a better understanding of the philosophical questions at the heart of this volume.

To this end, before diving directly into my replies in Section VII, the intervening five sections prepare the ground by highlighting how the subsequent replies interlock with one another and how they each turn on my present understanding of the trajectory of philosophical inheritance from Descartes through Kant and Frege to Wittgenstein—one that differs substantially from Conant's.

If the fate of these replies should prove to be anything like that of this volume's opening essay, then I may look forward to having my present blind spots brought to my attention in the future. Nothing would please me more. It is no mark of philosophical virtue to imagine that one has reached a stage in one's thinking where no further form of fundamental progress is required. And with their probing responses to my original essay before me, the contributors to this volume have made it especially hard for me to imagine any such thing about myself. Thanks to their ef-

forts, my own intellectual progress has been subject to a variety of welcome, though unanticipated, forms of deflection.

Given how much I now find wanting in Conant's article, some readers may conclude that this ought to be more an occasion for despair than joy. But of the two, joy predominates—not least because it is difficult not to be delighted by how that early article of Conant's provoked the foregoing set of thoughtful responses, opening up a remarkably rich and stimulating array of questions to be explored.

Section II

A History of Philosophy That Challenges Contemporary Preconceptions

It makes sense to begin the coming sequence of replies with a discussion of A.W. Moore's contribution, not merely because his essay is primarily about Descartes (and Descartes comes before Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein in the history of philosophy), but because his essay explicitly pauses to reflect on a number of methodological questions that remain pressing throughout the remainder of the replies.

The preparation for my response to Moore will put in place a framework within which I will locate each of my subsequent replies. The next four sections (prior to my reply proper to Moore) aim to accomplish the following two things: (i) introduce some terms and concepts that I will deploy throughout, and (ii) frame a set of questions, both historical and systematic, whose possible answers will continue to be explored throughout my replies to the other contributors—in particular, to their respective readings of Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein. More specifically, the aim of this section is to reflect for a moment on the sort of history of philosophy in which the contributors to this volume—starting with Conant himself—are engaging.

Moore begins his essay with the following quotation from Jonathan Bennett: "I continue to be, in the words of an unhappy reviewer of my earlier work, one of those commentators who are more interested in what Kant ought to have thought than in what he actually did think."[1] There

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[1] Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), viii.

are various reasons a reviewer of Bennett's book on Kant might well be unhappy with this remark and much that follows it in his book. Moore is succinct and to the point about this when he wryly observes that if determining what Kant ought to have thought about some philosophical matter "simply reduces to determining what it is right to think about it," Kant himself "is liable to drop out as irrelevant."[2] Moore believes, as do I, that there is a way to do history of philosophy in which one neither needs to put aside a concern with what an author should have thought in order to figure out what he actually did think, nor vice versa. It is possible to combine an interest in understanding the author as he understood himself with an interest in understanding the author better than he understood himself. Hence, Moore writes, "Probably you, like me, find it hard not to sympathize both with Bennett and with his unhappy reviewer." Moore then goes on to say this:

> What an author ought to have thought must surely be of interest to any historian of philosophy. . . . In particular, what an author ought to have thought is of critical interest when the author was involved in some fundamental error that we now want to avoid. . . . To that extent our sympathy must lie with Bennett.[3]

This is fine as far as it goes. But notice that it does not seem to account for the following sort of case: one in which we resemble Bennett in no longer wanting to affirm what the author says, but also one in which the thought in question—the one which we perhaps rightly no longer wish to affirm—is of continuing philosophical interest precisely because it represents a case of something both that we are no longer *able* to think and which a great philosopher once thought it was urgent to be able to find a way to say. The interest and difficulty of such a case lie in the fact that what now seems to us to be the expression of something stranger than a mere error seemed to the great philosopher to be the very thing that needed to be said in order to express an important truth. Usually, when it comes to such cases, a reader will not make progress on understanding why the great dead philosopher wants to say what he does, unless she is also willing to take the effort gradually to enter into a way of thinking that is presently philosophically altogether unfamiliar to her.

Such a case is not one of mere philosophical error—something that we should simply be eager to avoid. When it comes to such a case, it is a

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[2] Moore, this volume, 102.
[3] Ibid., 101.

poor idea to have one's reading of the philosopher be everywhere overly urgently controlled by the following question: Should we conclude that the surprising thing that the philosopher thinks needs to be said here is the expression of a truth or a falsehood? Not because that question does not matter, but because that question should not be our first question—one that we can assess prior to understanding what motivates the philosopher to speak in just this way at this juncture in the overall prosecution of his larger philosophical task. For the form of philosophical instruction that this sort of puzzling case holds out the promise of affording is unlikely to be one that will immediately eventuate in an increase in our stockpile of true thoughts through our simply coming to believe either what the philosopher here says or its negation. Its powers of philosophical illumination can come into view in this sort of case only if we are willing, first, to linger over it, savor its strangeness, come to appreciate its twists and turns for what they are, and not be in too much of a hurry just to correct it out of a zeal to avoid error.

Something like this is, indeed, the spirit in which Conant takes up Descartes's doctrine of the creation of eternal truths. I no longer think Conant's reading of that region of Descartes's thought is correct. But I continue to share his sense that we would do well not to be in too much of a hurry to regard what might seem philosophically alien to us in these pages of Descartes as simply registering the presence of errors to be avoided. I also continue to share his sense that this remarkable moment in Descartes not only plunges us into the heart of the issues that most concern Conant throughout the rest of his article but that it does so in ways that have a singular power to illuminate the interconnections between subsequent developments in Leibniz, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein.

In any truly significant philosophical debate, there is some truth on each side of the contest—even when one of those sides is proven by history, over the long term, to be the minority position. This means that, in philosophy, moments of concerted resistance to prevailing dogma tend to harbor elusive and easily forgotten truths. The difficulty is to sift out the grains of truth from the dregs of philosophical overkill. When we are in too much of a hurry to keep score on a past philosophical controversy and to determine who should be deemed the winner and who the loser, we ourselves tend to be the losers. We lose out on the insights behind what motivated the supposed losers in the debate in the first place. Moore is by no means deaf to this danger. In explaining to us why we should also sympathize with Bennett's critic, he goes on to say:

[S]ubordinating what an author actually did think to what he ought to have thought runs the very real risk of producing history that is anachronistic and complacent, far less of a challenge to contemporary presuppositions than any worthwhile history of philosophy should be.[4]

I applaud the sentiment. But there is, alas, no way to address to oneself sensibly the following specification of our earlier example of a hollow self-admonition: "Identify and eliminate your philosophical blind spots when doing the history of philosophy!" One of the ways in which the history of philosophy, if done philosophically, is an invaluable resource for the ongoing activity of philosophizing, is precisely that it provides us with a powerful instrument for discovering just where our philosophical blind spots lie. It can disclose to us what is philosophically provincial—and hence far less intellectually obligatory than we are apt to suppose—in our current dispensation of philosophy.[5] It does this precisely by bringing us face to face with a way of thinking that is philosophically alien to us yet no less compelling in its own way.

One reason it is useful to have the coming set of replies begin with an exploration of Moore's reading of Descartes is, first, because Moore himself articulates the very danger—and hence the nature of the missed opportunity at issue here—so clearly and forcefully, and second, because he helpfully exemplifies (if my criticisms of his reading of Descartes are sound) how puzzlingly easy it is, when seeking to do philosophically illuminating history of philosophy, to fall straight back into the very trap one seeks to avoid. This is what tends to happen more often than not when someone (such as Moore or I) who is trained in analytic philosophy attempts to do philosophically illuminating history of philosophy. One sets out to produce an account of an episode in the history of philosophy that avoids anachronism and affords an opportunity to identify and unsettle some of our contemporary philosophical presuppositions, and yet one ends up doing the opposite—one projects into one's account of that episode the very presuppositions that it could not have been more perfectly suited to expose. I will go on to level a version of this criticism

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[4] Ibid., 102.

[5] I explore some of the difficulties posed by trying to do history of philosophy in this way, particularly in connection with narrating the history of *analytic* philosophy, in my essay "The Emergence of the Concept of the Analytic Tradition as a Form of Philosophical Self-Consciousness," in *Beyond the Analytic-Continental Divide,* eds. J. A. Bell, A. Cutrofello, and P. M. Livingston (New York: Routledge, 2017), 17–58. For a related discussion, see also Michael Kremer, "What is the Good of Philosophical History?," in *The Historical Turn in Analytic Philosophy,* ed. E. Reck (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 294–325.

at a number of the contributors in this volume, in connection with their readings of various moments in Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein—including, crucially, a number of such moments in Conant's readings.

In the next two sections, I will contrast Conant's big-picture sketch of an episode in late medieval and early modern philosophy with an alternative sketch of that same episode. Both pictures purport to highlight a lost philosophical background that can help to reveal what is most questionable in our contemporary philosophical dispensation. Conant's historical archaeology (which I will briefly review in Section III) is primarily concerned with bringing out how contemporary empiricist and naturalist conceptions of logic retain the structure of Descartes's conception while seeking—at this point, unwittingly—to set to one side the theological elements that conferred upon that conception its original semblance of sense. My alternative historical archaeology (which will be first sketched in Section IV) is primarily concerned with bringing out how contemporary anti-naturalist conceptions of logic retain aspects of the views Descartes opposes while also seeking, no less unwittingly, to set to one side the theological elements that originally conferred upon those alternatives their original semblance of sense.

On this alternative sketch, contrary to what Conant suggests, it turns out to be to Descartes's credit that he disagrees so violently with his predecessors and contemporaries; and it turns out to be no less to his credit that he is out of intellectual sympathy with what Moore thinks he ought to think. This is no accident, since the aim of that alternative sketch is to reveal how very different Descartes's manner of thinking is from anything for which Conant's and Moore's joint reliance on certain contemporary preconceptions can allow. This will put in place a framework for exploring similar questions about Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein—questions about the relation in which they stand to the philosophical past, as well as the extent to which they are each able to afford us further intellectual resources for liberating ourselves from unquestioned assumptions that characterize our philosophical present.

Before moving onto other matters, one further word about the angle of my intervention into the dispute between Conant and Moore may help to illustrate another aspect of the spirit of the coming replies. As we shall see, Moore shows that something in Conant's reading of Descartes goes badly wrong.[6] Moore then seeks to put a more satisfying alternative in

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[6] I should perhaps make it clear that I cannot claim to have been first convinced that Conant's reading of Descartes goes badly wrong by reading Moore. I was convinced of this by Lilli

its place. He does this by offering a reading of Descartes that corrects the lack of charity in Conant's reading at the cost of having to minimize the significance of the very passages from Descartes on which Conant places most weight—the passages which set the philosophical agenda not only for his reading of Descartes but for his article as a whole. Our consideration of this proposal of Moore's will prompt a series of methodological questions to which we will have occasion to return and gradually sharpen over the course of these replies: How should we approach the texts of the great philosophers of the past? What does it mean to read them charitably? Which passages are we entitled to ignore and to which should we attend closely? How much in the way of our present philosophical outlook ought we to bring to bear on an understanding of them? What on earth could it mean, in approaching such authors, to set our present philosophical conceptions aside?

More specifically, Moore makes a compelling case that the aforementioned passages from Descartes, if read the way Conant reads them, stand in an unacceptable degree of tension with other things that Descartes says (especially in more familiar and famous texts, such as the *Meditations,* which we all know and love). But this will still leave room for the question of whether the solution Moore takes to lie most readily at hand obscures from view the possibility of an encounter with the past of the sort that philosophically illuminating history of philosophy ought to enable. In the very next exchange, we will encounter a structurally parallel moment in the dispute between Boyle and Conant about how to read Kant.[7] Conant overlooks everything that Kant says that does not fit neatly into his picture of what Kant ought to be saying. A brief comparison of what these two disputes (Conant/Moore and Conant/Boyle) have in common will serve to indicate, first, the presence of a pattern that recurs between Conant and his critics and, second, how the twin attempts at a historical

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Alanen over a series of helpful conversations on the topic with her in the late 1990s, as well as by an essay of hers, written around then, criticizing Conant's reading. As far as I know, this essay of hers (criticizing Conant) has never been published, but for a closely related discussion (which is not about Conant but simply about the topic in Descartes), see her "Omnipotence, Modality, and Conceivability," in *A Companion to Descartes,* eds. J. Broughton and J. Carriero (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 353–371.

[7] It is time to make the following explicit: Henceforth, the name Kant, where it occurs without further qualification, refers always to the critical Kant, starting with the publication of the A edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781. Many of the claims about Kant made below—for example, those that draw a sharp contrast between Leibniz's and Kant's respective conceptions of logic—would require considerable reformulation if the topic under discussion at any point were the doctrines of the pre-critical Kant.

archaeology of the philosophical present (outlined in the next two sections) bear on that pattern.

When it comes to the moments in Descartes of most concern to Conant, Moore does not try to give us a way really to make sense of how (his) Descartes could have been moved to say these things. He simply writes them off as lapses on Descartes's part and represents this as interpretative generosity on his part. When it comes to the moments in Kant of most concern to Boyle, Conant regards them as involving an antiquated philosophical idiom for expressing philosophical thoughts that we are now able to express in less cumbersome ways. Conant tries to do Kant a version of the same favor Moore is trying to do Descartes—that of understanding him better than he understands himself. It just so happens that this also requires ascribing to Descartes and Kant philosophical assumptions of a sort that appear to a contemporary analytic philosopher to be no assumptions at all. Once the philosophical assumptions have been smuggled in, the illusion is induced that Descartes and Kant each encounters unnecessary and easily avoidable difficulty when it comes to actually saying what they each ought to think.

The apparently off-key remarks in Descartes come when he broaches the topic of the relation of the logical character of our thought to an understanding of what is possible for an infinitely powerful being; in Kant, they come when he broaches that of the relation of logic to the form of a finite power of understanding. Moore seeks to do Descartes the favor of reminding him of what he ought to think about the limits of possibility and hence about what is and is not possible *even for God*. Conant seeks to do Kant the favor of reminding him of what he ought to think about logic and therefore what he ought to mean when he says that logic investigates the *form* of thought. In the one intervention, I will try to rescue a bungled philosophical insight in Conant's reading of a historical figure from his critic's attempt at correction; in the other, with the help of the critic, I will try to recover the historical figure's philosophical insight from Conant's misplaced attempt to read him generously. Just as Moore dismisses certain of Descartes's remarks as lapses, Conant averts his gaze from anything in Kant's remarks about pure general logic that cannot be accommodated by the framework into which he attempts to press those remarks. Where Moore self-consciously dismisses certain remarks of Descartes's, Conant unwittingly seeks to instruct us in how to read remarks of Kant so that we simply learn over time no longer to be struck by aspects of his formulations that ought to strike us as philosophically alien.

In the first case, I will try to bring out why we do Descartes no favor in generously ascribing to him a conception of the relation of possibility to actuality that comes naturally to us. In the second case, I will build on Boyle's attempt to bring out how Conant does Kant no favor in ascribing to him Fregean ways of thinking about logic that come naturally to us. In both Moore's reading of Descartes and Conant's of Kant, an opportunity is missed to get some distance on the underlying preconceptions that animate our contemporary ways of thinking. In each case, the opportunity is missed by failing to linger over why Descartes and Kant each expresses what he wants to say precisely in ways that almost no contemporary analytic philosopher ever would. These cases involve different sorts of impatience in reading, but they have a shared source and a common cost.

When one comes upon moments of impatience of this sort in one's reading of a great philosopher, this is usually a sign that one has failed to diagnose some philosophical blind spot of one's own. (It is the blind spot that makes it seem as if the unacceptability or awkwardness of what the author says must be due to a lapse or a lack of clarity on *the author's* part rather than ours.) In the interest of consolidating a reading of Descartes in which the passages that most interest Conant have no significant role to play, Moore asks us to regard these passages as peripheral to the corpus, incidental to Descartes's central commitments, disconnected from everything else he thinks, and hence ultimately to be explained away. This leaves us not only with a reading that makes Descartes seem much less strange and (along one dimension at least) less interesting than he originally was, but it also misses out on a golden opportunity to challenge our contemporary preconceptions. In the interest of consolidating a desired reading of Kant in which certain nuances of his actual formulations may be minimized, Conant, too, in effect, asks us to regard outward aspects of Kant's preferred formulations as peripheral to a true understanding of the inner core of his conception of logic. This leaves us with a reading that makes Kant seem much less philosophically alien, and hence less unapproachable, than he originally was, but again at the cost of shielding us from whatever challenge to our contemporary preconceptions a genuine encounter with his philosophy might have been able to pose. Moments of impatience or blindness such as these—as they arise in Conant's readings of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Frege, Wittgenstein, and his critics—shall interest me throughout.

Just as my reply to Moore happily concedes that he has shown that something is wrong in Conant's reading of Descartes, in my next reply, I do not try to defend Conant's reading of Kant against most of Boyle's

criticisms, but rather reflect on the implications of those criticisms for the issues under discussion in the rest of the volume. This means that I do not intend to take up time in these replies going over the points where Conant's critics have shown him to be *clearly* wrong. I will mostly presuppose a familiarity with those aspects of the previous contributions to this volume that show him to be simply wrong on certain points and will attend instead to those where they at best show something less, turning on matters about which he is not entirely mistaken or where a change in perspective may bring out how he is partially right. That is to say, I will respond to each contributor with the aim of advancing the philosophical conversation a further step or two. If I am successful in my aim, then we should end up not only with more philosophically satisfying individual readings of Descartes, Kant, etc., but also in a better position to rethink the relations of each of these thinkers to the others. So, my overall aim will be to recapitulate the narrative arc of Conant's original essay while offering an alternative account of the stations it traverses. So, like Conant, my aim is to continue to try to do philosophically illuminating history of philosophy—and to try to do it in connection with the same figures and themes his original article treats—only, this time, to do it better.

His numerous philosophical misunderstandings and failed readings notwithstanding, there is a limited respect in which I will attempt to serve throughout as Conant's advocate. When I turn (in Sections VI–VII) below to how to read Descartes—and similarly (in Sections VIII–X) to how to read Kant, etc.—in each case, my discussion will be organized around a desire to see if we cannot do justice to Conant's initial sense of the significance of the passages on which he originally focused for a proper overall understanding of these figures. So, though Conant will repeatedly be rebuked for looking at things in wrong ways, he will also repeatedly end up getting credit for looking in the right places.

This limited dimension of advocacy on Conant's behalf will already be evident in the first reply, in the structure of my response to Moore's criticisms of Conant's reading of Descartes. On Moore's reading, Descartes emerges as someone who, with respect to the issues under discussion, turns out to be surprisingly similar to Leibniz—especially in a respect in which, as we shall see, most contemporary philosophers may be said to be children of Leibniz. This saves Descartes from Conant's original criticism, but it leaves it a mystery as to why Leibniz and so many others took themselves to be at odds with Descartes on just those issues. And it leaves us with a Descartes who is unable to reveal to us what might be philosophically provincial in the perspective that we bring not only

to our reading of him but also—as we shall see later—to our readings of others (such as Kant and Wittgenstein). Similarly, in the following section, on Conant's reading, Kant emerges as someone who, with respect to the issues under discussion, turns out to be surprisingly similar to Frege—precisely in a respect in which, as we shall see, most contemporary philosophers may be said to be children of Frege. This helps to explain why Frege could have regarded himself as closer to Kant than many have been able to credit, but it leaves it a mystery as to why certain other philosophers, such as Wittgenstein, took themselves to be at odds with Frege on just those issues where Kant and Frege are in fact much further from each other than Conant is able to appreciate. Here it is Conant's reading that misses out on the chance to reveal what is philosophically provincial in the perspective that he brings not only to his reading of Kant but to his readings of other figures as well.

One unifying theme of these replies will be to try to expose some examples of the aforementioned sort of philosophical assumption that we now tend to project onto our readings of, for example, Descartes, Kant, or Wittgenstein—an assumption of a sort that appears to us late modern philosophers to be no assumption at all—as well as to uncover the possibility of an alternative reading of that same philosopher that, once in place, can help to reveal the assumption in question for what it is: a philosophically non-obligatory way of conceiving the form that an answer to a philosophically fundamental question must take. To give just a few examples of the topics on which such assumptions will bear and that will come in for discussion in the coming replies: in Section VII, the relative modal priority of possibility to actuality; in Section VIII, the relation of formality to generality in logic; in Section IX, the relation of sensory apprehension to judgment in perceptual knowledge; in Section X, what words such as "skepticism," "idealism," and "transcendental" mean and how their senses are interrelated; and in Section XI, the relation of thought to judgment. The aim of each of those replies is to "expose" an assumption, where this means to reveal that, in claiming what we thereby assume, we make a substantive move in philosophical thinking. It does not mean that a contemporary philosopher, if forced to, will prove unable to vindicate her entitlement to that move. But it does mean that if she recognizes her obligation to vindicate it, then it may no longer be relied upon as a *mere* assumption—as a move that can go without saying in philosophy.

To say this is not only to circumscribe what I am aiming to do in what follows but also to mark off what I do *not* aim to do—to indicate *how much* is left to be done. Each reply ends at the threshold of a larger

conversation—one into which, given the compass permitted by this format, it cannot afford to enter. That larger conversation, exploring the philosophical credentials of the claim in question once it is no longer merely assumed, would, in each case, be defined by two poles. The first of these poles would explore and assess everything that might be philosophically advanced in favor of the assumption in question, once it is recognized to be no longer merely self-evident. The second pole, in each case, would require thinking through what it would mean to philosophize without relying on the assumption in question. Philosophical tasks are thereby opened up in each reply that cannot be pursued here.

After alluding, at the outset of his contribution, to Bernard Williams's distinction between *history of ideas* and *history of* philosophy,[8] Moore goes on to indicate that his own reading of Descartes aspires to offer a faithful exemplification of the latter. Conant's readings of Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein were similarly each developed with such an aspiration very much at the forefront of their author's mind. A sobering lesson that is borne in on me, reconsidering Conant's forays into the history of philosophy with the benefit of the distance of over a quarter of a century, is how exquisitely difficult it is to live up to this aspiration. These replies will attempt not only to improve on Conant's previous readings but also to convert their weaknesses into opportunities to reflect on the very nature of the difficulty of doing philosophically illuminating history of philosophy.

Those last five words mean to pick out the relevant member of Williams's pair of concepts for how history and philosophy can bear on one another—the concept he himself simply and unapologetically calls "history of philosophy." This kind of history, for Williams, if successfully practiced, yields not just historical but also *philosophical* insight: "[It] yield[s] . . . philosophy that can help us in reviving a sense of strangeness or questionability about our own philosophical assumptions."[9] This requires, Williams says, that it "must maintain a historical distance from the present, and it must do this in terms that can sustain its identity as philosophy."[10] Part of how it sustains its identity as philosophy is by learning how to train its eye on that in the philosophical past which, if

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[8] Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry* (London: Harmondsworth, 1978), 9.

[9] Bernard Williams, "Descartes and the Historiography of Philosophy," in *The Sense of the Past: Essays in the History of Philosophy,* ed. M. Burnyeat (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 260.

[10] Ibid., 259.

properly uncovered, cannot help but productively unsettle the philosophical present.

This requires that one walk a difficult tightrope. One must balance an eagerness to determine a past text's philosophical relevance for the present with a willingness to measure the degree to which it may presuppose a conception of philosophy utterly alien to one's own—and thus to the entire philosophical framework through which one is first inclined to approach it. To do this, one must be able to hold in mind, at one and the same time, both the pressing problems of the philosophical present and those of the past thinker's philosophical moment. And, finally, one must appreciate how each of these two sets of problems bear on the other, revealing new resources for making philosophical progress.

This is what Conant is trying to do and what I will try to do better. It requires a form of engagement with history that is "untimely" in the sense of the term that Nietzsche seeks to explicate in the following passage:

> . . . I wouldn't know what meaning classical studies could have for our time, if they were utterly unable to effect it—that is to say, act against it and, in doing so, upon it, and thereby hopefully for the good of a time to come.[11]

Nietzsche's official topic here is what it means to pursue the study of classical philology with such an aim of untimeliness—one that investigates and narrates the past with an eye to the present and for the benefit of the future. Yet his remarks capture a conception of a possible form of engagement with history that ought to be able to find its counterpart in a way of doing (and thus being what Bernard Williams—a student of Nietzsche—simply calls) the history of philosophy. In the next section, I will offer a brief strategic reconstruction of the outline of the historical narrative through which Conant attempts such a form of history, highlighting some of its weak-points—its failures to achieve genuine untimeliness.

In the following two sections, I will sketch an alternative narrative that aims to bring into focus those blind spots in the original story that will most concern us in the coming replies and whose removal will help us to uncover several of the main assumptions that will concern us throughout.

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[11] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen. Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben." In *Kritische Studienausgabe sämtlicher Werke,* vol. 1, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980. (My translation.)

Before we move to those sections, a word is in order about one very particular respect in which Conant's article aspires to avoid anachronism as well as one of the ways in which he fails to live up to that aspiration. This brings us to the first of three respects in which the expression "logical alien"—which figures in the title of this volume—may be understood to apply to the discussions that follow: namely, by denoting a philosopher whose conception of logic is philosophically alien to our own. On this understanding of the term, Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein may come into view for us as logical aliens—as philosophers whom we are either bound to misunderstand, if we simply read our contemporary conception of logic into them, or whom we are apt, at least initially, to find alien if we allow ourselves fully to register how little of our conception they share. The aim of the replies below is to make vivid various respects in which Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein each operates with an understanding of logic that ought to strike us as strange—or, conversely, to bring out how our inclination to see them as less alien to us in their understanding of logic than they actually are is a function of how we unwittingly fall into certain forms of anachronism in our contemporary readings of them. The aim of these replies is to reveal Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein to be, each in their own way, this sort of logical alien—a philosopher working with a conception of logic that it is exceedingly difficult for someone intellectually at home in the assumptions of contemporary philosophy to so much as get into view.[12] The benefit of a genuine encounter with this sort of alien, if it can be arranged, is that it may render philosophically visible what otherwise remains invisible to us.

The word "logic" occurs frequently in the pages that follow. We need to be clear what that word stands for—and what it does not stand for—not only in Conant's article but also in the replies that follow and, indeed, in many of the contributions to which they respond. It is best to begin with what it does not stand for: in most of its occurrences in the pages that follow, the expression "logic" does not mean what many contemporary philosophers assume it has to or ought to mean. Jan van Heijenoort, Warren Goldfarb, Thomas Ricketts, Peter Hylton, and others

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[12] Insofar as the author of Part II of this volume at one or another point espouses some sympathy for one or another moment in Descartes's or Kant's or Frege's or Wittgenstein's ways of thinking about logic apt to strike a contemporary philosopher as alien to the way of thinking about logic that comes naturally to her, then he is apt to strike her as being—in the sense just specified—himself a sort of logical alien. In this understanding of the meaning of the term, the title is one that I am happy to embrace and have applied to myself.

have helpfully traced a development over the course of the early decades of the twentieth century from (what they call) a universalist conception of logic to one that is more familiar to our contemporaries.[13] These historians of logic seek to show that this way of thinking about logic dominated early analytic philosophy, paradigmatically in the writings of Frege, those of Russell for the first two decades of the last century, and perhaps also (depending upon exactly how much is built into the very idea of such a conception) those of Wittgenstein, at least up to the *Tractatus*. In his original seminal article on the topic, van Heijenoort emphasizes (what he calls) "the ontological import" of Frege's conception of logic. He explains why, if a historian of logic says that Frege "restricts" himself to one universe of discourse, she thereby reveals that she has already completely misunderstood the conception in question:

> Boole has his universal class, and De Morgan his universe of discourse, denoted by '1.'But these have hardly any ontological import. They can be changed at will. The universe of discourse comprehends only what we agree to consider at a certain time, in a certain context. For Frege it cannot be a question of changing universes. One could not even say that he restricts himself to one universe. His universe is the universe. Not necessarily the physical universe, of course, because for Frege some objects are not physical. Frege's universe consists of all that there is, and it is fixed.[14]

Van Heijenoort then goes on to mention another feature of the idea that logic is universal—one that he characterizes as a *consequence* of the most fundamental features of the conception: "Another important consequence of the universality of logic is that nothing can be said . . . outside the

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[13] The passages quoted from Goldfarb in the footnotes below are from his article "Frege's Conception of Logic" in *Future Pasts: The Analytic Tradition in Twentieth-Century Philosophy,* eds. J. Floyd and S. Shieh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 25–42. For other useful discussions of some of the distinctive features of the universalist conception of logic, see also Goldfarb's "Logic in the Twenties: The Nature of the Quantifier," *The Journal of Symbolic Logic* 44, no. 3 (1979): 351–368. For relevant work by Peter Hylton, the best place to start is *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), esp. 200–206. For Thomas G. Ricketts, perhaps the best place to start is "Frege, the *Tractatus,* and the Logocentric Predicament," *Noûs* 19, no. 1 (1985): 3–15; but see also "Frege's 1906 Foray into Metalogic," *Philosophical Topics* 25, no. 2 (1997): 169–188. For the early path-breaking article that helped to open up this entire area of research, see Jean van Heijenoort, "Logic as Calculus and Logic as Language," *Synthese* 17 (1967): 324–330.

[14] Jean van Heijenoort, "Logic as Calculus and Logic as Language," 325.

system."[15] The attribution of especially this last feature (of this putatively quite different conception of logic from the contemporary one) to the founding figures of analytic philosophy has not proved uncontroversial.[16]

In the ensuing details of those controversies, the following enormous contribution of these historians of logic (such as Van Heijenoort, Goldfarb, Ricketts, and Hylton) is sometimes overlooked: simply by dint of struggling to articulate an alternative to the contemporary conception of logic, they are thereby able to achieve an illuminating degree of historical distance from it—affording a view of its parochialism—one that enables us to highlight features of our current ways of thinking about logic that at least might not be shared by conceptions that preceded it. So let us first say a few words about what is comparatively parochial in the contemporary conception.

Here, in three brief sentences, are a few of the features of the contemporary conception to which these historians of logic draw our attention: Logical properties such as validity and consequence are metalinguistic properties of schemata. These properties are determined only once the truth-values that result from interpretations of their placeholders are introduced. Their very expression therefore requires the employment of a truth predicate and applies only indirectly to actual statements and only through the additional specification of a set of semantic disquotational facts.[17]

Some of the conceptions of logic that will concern us in the replies that follow regard logic as having its own proprietary subject matter, and some do not; but none of them understands the concern of logic to be the "logical properties and logical relations among sentences"—if the notion of a "sentence" is understood in anything like the contemporary fashion.[18] Some of the conceptions that will concern us below regard logic as an

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[15] Ibid., 326.

[16] For a taste of the ensuing controversy, see, for example, Ian Proops, "Russell and the Universalist Conception of Logic," *Nous* 41, no. 1 (2007): 1–32; Jason Stanley, "Truth and Metatheory in Frege," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 77 (1996): 45–70; Jamie Tappenden, "Metatheory and Mathematical Practice in Frege," *Philosophical Topics* 25, no. 2 (1997): 213–264.

[17] Goldfarb highlights some of the relevant features of what is historically parochial in the contemporary conception as follows: "Schemata do not state anything and so are neither true nor false, but they can be interpreted: a universe of discourse is assigned to the quantifiers, predicate letters are replaced by predicates or assigned extensions over the universe, sentence letters can be replaced by sentences or assigned truth-values. Under interpretation, a schema will receive a truth-value" ("Frege's Conception of Logic," 26).

[18] The conception of a "sentence" required here, to articulate the contemporary conception of logic, comes with "the" linguistic turn in philosophy—on a certain understanding of

inquiry into something these authors will call "logical form" (or "logical syntax"), and some of them do not; but none of them conceive of logical forms as schemata awaiting interpretation[19] (or conceive of "syntax" as involving uninterpreted strings of signs). Hence, though all of the conceptions that are of concern below take logic to be intimately concerned with truth, none of them sees truth as entering logic in the contemporary manner. Some of them do distinguish between an object of logical inquiry, for which no truth value has yet been determined, and a further moment in the inquiry in which the acknowledgment of truth has entered the picture; but even on those conceptions the distinction between these two moments in the inquiry is never conceived as one in which truth comes on the stage only once a universe of discourse is "assigned" to the quantifiers or some other set of operators and predicate letters and sentence letters come to be "replaced," (e. g., with the "assignment of extensions and truth-values" and so forth). And this means that none of the fundamental logical notions ("proposition," "validity," "truth," etc.) that figure in the conceptions explored below, on a proper understanding of them, are such that they ever are defined, or otherwise introduced into the logical discussion, in anything remotely resembling the contemporary manner.[20]

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that turn. The reply to Gustafsson below explores varieties of conception of a 'linguistic turn" and their respective understandings of what a "sentence" is.

[19] These schemata—and that which is denoted by the correlative schematic letters (e.g., predicate, sentence, and function letters)—are often spoken of as "logical forms" and the resulting conception of logic as "formal." In this brief sketch, I have sought to avoid employing the term "logical form"—a term that Goldfarb, for example, understandably finds it helpful to draw on frequently in spelling out the contemporary conception—and one whose historical significance will preoccupy us in the pages below. Here, for example, is one of Goldfarb's summaries of the contemporary conception: "[T]he subject matter of logic consists of logical properties and logical relations among sentences. Sentences have such properties and bear such relations to each other by dint of their having the logical forms that they do. Hence, logical properties and relations are defined by way of the logical forms. . . . [T]hey are simply schemata" (Goldfarb, "Frege's Conception of Logic," 26). This is a conception of logical form that contemporary philosophers and historians of logic tend to find it difficult not to read back into the past. We shall explore some alternative conceptions of logical form in the replies below—as well as a few of the varieties of anachronism that ensue from such a retrospective projection of the contemporary schematic conception of logical form onto the past.

[20] For such definitions (e.g., "a schema is *valid* if and only if it is true under every interpretation") rely on a contemporary understanding of the role of interpretation in conferring logical substance on logical notation. This is not to say that every conception of logic that is "contemporary" in the merely chronological sense that it has been advocated by a practicing logician or philosopher of logic at some point in the past half century belongs to what I am here calling "the contemporary conception"—but the exceptions are becoming

The three concluding sentences of the last paragraph but one, viewed from one perspective, furnish an insanely superficial sketch of the contemporary conception of logic. But they already suffice to indicate how starkly that conception departs from what Van Heijenoort, Goldfarb, Ricketts, Hylton, and others call the universalist conception. Moreover, they equally suffice to mark a contrast with yet further conceptions of logic—ones that will also occupy us below. Hence those three sentences already allow me to make the following provisional, albeit purely negative, observation about every one of the conceptions of logic that will concern us in the pages below: every feature of the contemporary conception singled out in those three sentences is utterly alien to them all. However, if one simply puts a "not" in front of each of those sentences to introduce the idea of a conception of logic, then one has specified the supposed ensuing conception in merely privative terms—by saying something about what it is *not* (through specifying some of the ways in which it differs from the contemporary conception). A non-privative characterization of the so-called universalist conception usually involves an additional emphasis on a combination of some or all of the following four ideas:

(i) Logical propositions have their own proprietary material content—they say true things about what is the case.

(ii) Logic is absolutely general: the universe of which logic speaks is *the universe*—and not just the physical universe, for not all entities are physical.

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increasingly rare. If I needed for the purposes of the discussion in the body of this volume to be more careful about my terminology, I could (and would be happy to) distinguish more scrupulously between the standard or orthodox "contemporary conception" and various delightfully heterodox contemporaneous exceptions to it. Thus, to give just one example of the latter, Per Martin-Löf will insist—just as Aristotle, or Leibniz, or Kant or Frege would—that every line of a logical demonstration must itself constitute a *cognition*. Hence, he will insist that a perspicuous logical notation requires some descendent (or series of descendants) of Frege's judgment stroke. It requires this in order to distinguish between (what Martin-Löf calls) mere propositions and judgments. On the one hand: "[P]ropositions are things that are held true, or sometimes held false, and the things on which the logical operations operate." While, on the other hand: "Judgments . . . are what we demonstrate: in each step of a chain of reasoning, or demonstration, we proceed from previously demonstrated judgments to a new judgment . . ." This prepares the way for the following conclusion: "The forms of judgment are totally different from the logical operations." As we shall soon see, the conception of logic here defended has affinities with that of Frege, and thus—even though these remarks are drawn from a paper published in 1998 (namely Per Martin-Löf, "Truth and Knowability: On the principles C and K of Michael Dummett," in *Truth and Mathematics*, eds. H. G Dales and G. Oliveri [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 107–108])—they do not represent an expression of an instance of what I am here calling "the contemporary conception" of logic.

(iii) There is an internal relation between the standpoint of the logical theorist and the subject matter of her investigation of such a sort that there can be no such thing as a metalogical perspective.

(iv) There is only one logic—no sense is to be made of the idea of a plurality of logics.[21]

Even if one stipulates that the above four ideas are all supposed to characterize aspects of a conception of logic that stands in sharp contrast to the contemporary one, that may still not yet suffice to fix how each of them is to be understood.[22] We will see in a moment that this is especially the case if one or two of these ideas come to be prioritized over the others as central to the supposed conception in such a way that they are to admit of a self-standingly intelligible specification apart from the others.

Yet more drastic problems arise if one tries to pick up on one or more of these ideas and extend their employment in a manner that is meant to fund the specification of a conception of logic sufficiently capacious so as to be able to accommodate figures in history of philosophy as diverse as Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein all at once. For example, we will see in the replies below that a certain combination of the first two ideas already plays an essential role in Leibniz's conception of logic; yet we will also see that *that very conception* is a central target of criticism in Kant's philosophy, while (a non-Leibnizian understanding of) the third idea remains at the center of the entire Kantian critical conception of both logic and philosophy. According to the Kantian conception, logic belongs to the *Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft*—to reason's knowledge of itself: it is an investigation into the very capacity we exercise whenever we think (including when we think about logic) and has the task of displaying why each of our attempts to step outside of logic—and view what it investigates from a perspective that does not presuppose it—must founder. Finally, as we shall see, in Frege's way of seeking to inherit aspects of both Leibniz's and Kant's conceptions of logic—blending a Leibnizian understanding

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[21] This point is perhaps more happily put as follows: Sense is to be made of the idea that there can be more than one logic only if the meaning of the term "logic" is dissociated from any commitment to (ii) or (iii). Put this way, however, it also becomes clear that this is not actually a self-standing idea about how to think about logic but rather a consequence of other aspects of the conception.

[22] I do take it to be a necessary, if not sufficient, condition on understanding what Van Heijenoort, Goldfarb, Ricketts, and Hylton mean by the term "universalist" that the conception in question does not partake of the features of the contemporary conception mentioned in my three sentences above.

of the priority of a law of logic with a Kantian understanding of how an act of judgment is required for any consciousness of truth—there eventuates a certain instability in what this third feature is supposed to amount to within the context of Frege's own very particular version of a universalist conception of logic.

As we shall see when we delve more deeply into Kant's conception of logic, a verbal twin of the sentence employed above to specify feature (iii) of the universalist conception could also be used to capture an aspect of Kant's conception. But now, however, the account of why no line between the logical and the meta-logical of the contemporary sort is to be drawn flows from a conception of logic other than the universalist one. Though Kant and Frege both think that logic seeks to understand, codify, and bring to reflective self-consciousness the very capacities that we exercise in everyday life whenever think, judge, and infer, Frege's version of logical universalism still admits of a fundamental duality of standpoints upon our logical activity of a sort that Kant's conception cannot tolerate— a duality that stems from Frege's quasi-mathematical understanding of what a system of logic is. For Frege, there is still a sharp distinction to be drawn between what belongs to the *antechamber* of the science of logic and what falls *wholly within* in its purview—between the preliminary elucidatory activity required to set up such a system and the serious business of working within the logical system itself. Kant's conception is not able to tolerate even this sort of distinction between what falls inside and what falls outside the "frame" of logic. On his conception of logic— as the reflective self-conscious articulation of the form of the understanding of a finite knower—the only position we can ever, qua thinkers, occupy with respect to logic is that of bearer of the form we seek to understand. On this conception, the capacity employed for logical thought and that employed in logical elucidation and self-clarification are in no way distinct—and it is the form of this capacity that we seek to understand throughout. As we shall see, in this respect Wittgenstein stands far closer to Kant than he does Frege. On their shared conception, the task of logic is through and through one of achieving a form of self-understanding. This in no way invalidates a contemporary logico-mathematical activity of carrying out proofs in formal settings. But a sharper appreciation of how and where these respective conceptions of logic diverge from one another can nonetheless assist us in understanding how a thinker as acute as Frege—and not only Frege—comes to be torn between differing conceptions of logic. While most of contemporary analytic philosophy has resolved this tension at the heart of Frege's conception of logic by shearing

it off from its sources in the broader tradition of (what I will call below) philosophical logic, Wittgenstein—and a minority of other figures in the analytic tradition[23]—took the other fork in the road, not only by distinguishing sharply between a conception of logic as calculus and a conception of logic as the articulation of our form of mindedness, but by continuing to find philosophical value in the latter.

But these are all things we will see only much later. What we want to understand right now is what is unclear in Conant's view of these matters—and how that can lead to the sort of anachronism in our understanding of the philosophical past that deprives us of the benefits of a philosophically more rewarding form of engagement with the history of philosophy.[24] All of the above four features, mushed together in a rather inchoate way, jointly play some role in Conant's conception of the supposedly shared conception of logic that he thinks runs from Kant through Frege to Wittgenstein. I have no stake in what follows in attempting to fix on some particular preferred account of how we should understand the idea of a "universalist" conception of logic—and hence how the above features should be prioritized in some supposedly correct understanding of that idea.[25] So the point of adverting to the idea of such

[23] In this connection, the names of Anscombe, Diamond, Geach, Kimhi, Martin-Löf, Mc-Dowell, Putnam, Rödl, Ryle, Sellars, Stroud, and Thompson, among others, will recur in the pages and footnotes to follow.

[24] Ian Proops, in the article cited above, has wondered whether historians such as Goldfarb, Ricketts, and Hylton—when, for example, they characterize the universalist conception as alternatively involving a "universally applicable theory," or as understanding logic in terms of "universal language," or as involving laws that are "maximally general" or principles that are "all-encompassing"—do not end up equivocating in their understanding of what they mean by "universalist." This worry turns on whether these characterizations are really all getting at aspects of one single unitary conception of logic. As a criticism of the aforementioned accounts of Frege's or early Russell's conception of logic, this strikes me as an unfair criticism. I do not see why, on a proper understanding of each of these expressions, these historians cannot be read as employing these terms in the service of characterizing interrelated co-occurring aspects of, say, Frege's conception. But I think Proops's charge, if it were to be directed at Conant, would be a fair criticism. For Conant needs some of these characterizations (especially the one about logic being "all-encompassing" or some equivalent to that idea) to be an equally apt characterization of a single determinate recurring feature of a conception of logic that can bear a single non-equivocal understanding across its applications to Kant's, Frege's, and early Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic.

[25] If one wants to know what a term (such as "universalism" about logic) has come to mean in the contemporary literature, it can be helpful to look at attempts by authors to summarize its meaning in a single sentence. If one does this, one will encounter cases in which each of these four aspects of the conception bear the primary weight of emphasis in a one-sentence summary of what "the" universalist conception is taken by the author in question to be. It is the first feature, for example, that comes in for special emphasis in Anssi Korhonen's account—as I explain in the next note. It is the second feature that gets especially

a conception of logic is not to argue that Conant is working with the wrong understanding of that conception.[26] The point of bringing it up is simply because it can help to highlight some of what gets run together in Conant's original article.[27]

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mentioned when Marie McGinn wants, in connection with Frege and Russell, to remind us of "what is known as their universalist conception of logic"—"that is, their idea that logic is a system of maximally general truths" (Marie McGinn, *Elucidating the* Tractatus [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 53). Similarly, we find Bob Fischer writing, "Russell and Frege had a universalist conception of logic: they regarded it as the most general theory, the theory that applies to absolutely everything" (B. Fischer, *Modal Justification via Theories* [Cham: Springer, 2017], 48). Jaakko Hintikka likes to hit the third feature hard in explaining what the conception is, characterizing, for example, the second feature as "implicit in the idea of language as the universal medium" (see *Lingua Universalis vs. Calculus Ratiocinator* [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997], 3). Hence when Martin Kusch seeks to summarize what Hinktikka takes the term to mean, Martin Kusch just quotes Hintikka, saying that "one cannot as it were look at one's language from the outside and describe it" (Martin Kusch, *Language as Calculus vs. Language as Universal Medium* [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989], 3). Similarly, Pierre Wagner summarizes "Frege's universalist conception of logic" as being one "in which no concept of a meta-system is ever considered" ("Introduction," *Carnap's Logical Syntax of Language,* ed. P. Wagner [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009], 24). It is the fourth feature that comes in for emphasis when Cory Juhl and Eric Loomis employ it in connection with the early Carnap:

> Like Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein, Carnap in his early writings assumed a universalist conception of logic, one derived from Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica.* According to this conception, a single logic underlies all of our reasoning, whether it be about science, mathematics, or philosophy. (Cory Juhl and Eric Loomis, *Analyticity* [London: Routledge, 2010], 49)

This fourth feature will play no separate role at any point in the discussion that follows, since I think that once one detaches it entirely from the other three, it no longer carries enough sense on its own to serve as an illuminating positive characterization of a conception of logic (as opposed to a mere consequence of such a conception that indicates that it must in some way differ from a contemporary conception of logic).

[26] Some people do have a stake in what they take to be *the* right way to understand the idea of such a conception. For example, Anssi Korhonen, in his book *Logic as Universal Science: Russell's Early Logicism and Its Philosophical Content* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), has argued that it is simply a mistake to understand what Russell is doing in subscribing to (something properly termed) a "universalist conception of logic" in terms of a rejection of the idea of a meta-perspective in logic. Rather it is to be understood in terms of his commitment to an underlying metaphysical view about why and how logic as a science has its own proprietary content. So the crucial feature of the conception turns out to be the first of the four mentioned above. Korhonen concedes that logic thereby comes to be regarded by Russell on the ensuing conception as a maximally general science, but this is now to be understood as a consequence of the crucial commitment of the conception rather than the most interesting feature of the conception. This may serve as a representative example of the sort of controversy in which I mean to be taking no part here.

[27] As we shall see (especially starting with the reply to Boyle), the crucial term that Conant unwittingly employs in an equivocal manner to effect the illusion of more continuity than there is between Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein is (not "universal" but rather) "form."

To take just one example, Conant writes as if there were some way to fill out the third idea mentioned above that would allow it adequately and simultaneously to summarize something that is common and central to Kant's, Frege's, and early Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic. I offered a quick account of why Kant's conception might be regarded by someone as partaking of the third idea mentioned above as ingredient in universalism—namely, the idea that there can be no perspective on logic from outside logic. What I said about Kant might strike one—and does strike Conant—as just a different way of summarizing a consequence of the universalist conception of logic, which Thomas Ricketts, borrowing a phrase from Sheffer, has taught historians of early analytic philosophy to call *logocentrism*. Ricketts writes,

> Before proceeding to use logic to state proofs, Frege and Russell alike find themselves compelled to talk about logic, about their fundamental logical notions and about the intended construal of their notations. In thus erecting logic, they face what Henry Sheffer, in his review of the second edition of *Principia Mathematica,* calls the logocentric predicament: "In order to give an account of logic, we must presuppose and employ logic."[28] Every statement setting forth an alleged fact must be subject to logic, including those that communicate the fundamental ideas required fully to understand logic.[29]

Why isn't the Kantian self-understanding of reason just the same thing as Shefferian logocentricism? One preliminary indication that what Ricketts wants to say here about Frege and Russell, and what is said above about Kant, might not simply amount to the same thing is that the Kantian characterization is supposed to indicate why logic, so understood, forms the *backbone* of the entire Critical Philosophy, whereas the Rickettsian one is supposed to indicate a *predicament* in early analytic philosophy that has to be carefully negotiated—one that haunts and threatens the logical projects that Frege and Russell seek to prosecute.

Conant is after a way of formulating some rough equivalent of the problem of logocentrism that would allow it, on a single non-equivocal understanding of what "it" is, to stand equally at the center of Kant's, Frege's, and Wittgenstein's philosophical projects. This way of yoking

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[28] Henry M. Sheffer, "Review of Whitehead, Alfred North, and Russell, Bertrand, *Principia Mathematica, Vol. I,* 2nd ed., 1925," *Isis* 8 (1926): 228.

[29] Thomas Ricketts, "Pictures, Logic, and the Limits of Sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus,*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein, 2nd Edition,* eds. H. Sluga and D. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 56.

these three figures together has the effect of minimizing the following dif-
ference between Kant and the author of the *Tractatus,* on the one hand,
and Frege, on the other: for the first two authors, the issue in question
frames the entire philosophical project, whereas for Frege, it is an internal
philosophical difficulty that arises within the context of a broader logico-
mathematical project. Frege's books or articles do not begin by framing
his overall inquiry as one that seeks to come to terms with (what Rick-
etts calls) the logocentric predicament and only get down to the business
of explaining how nothing other than a full and proper appreciation of
the shape of *that* problem will be required in order to appreciate why his
project is what it is and must take the shape that it does.[30] Whereas *The
Critique of Pure Reason* starts like this:

> Human reason has the peculiar fate in one species of its cognitions that
> it is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss, since they are
> given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it also
> cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason.[31]

And the *Tractatus* like this:

> Thus the aim of the book is to draw a limit to thought, or rather—not to
> thought, but to the expression of thoughts: for in order to be able to draw
> a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable
> (i.e., we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought).[32]

These are formulations of difficulties, each of which has an admittedly
logocentric flavor; yet, unlike in Frege, in these authors the formulation
in question is presented as the obverse side of a philosophical task whose
reverse side is nothing less than the project of the entire ensuing work.
Taking the measure of the predicament in question for Kant issues in the
project of a critique of reason (". . . a demand upon reason to take up
anew the most urgent of all its tasks, namely that of its self-knowledge"[33])

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[30] The closest exception might be "On Concept and Object," in which the issue immediately
arises that the logically primitive notions of concept and object (that form the topic of the
article) cannot be defined, but only elucidated. In the ensuing elucidation, author and
reader must each advert to a prior implicit mastery of these formal notions—one that they
already possess and that is latent in their very capacity to think and use language. But what
"On Concept and Object" itself seeks to frame is not Frege's entire logical project but only
a particular difficulty that arises within the context of its prosecution.

[31] *Critique of Pure Reason,* Avi.

[32] *Tractatus,* preface, third paragraph.

[33] " . . . *eine Aufforderung an die Vernunft, das beschwerlichste aller ihrer Geschäfte, nämlich
das der Selbsterkenntniß, aufs neue zu übernehmen*" (Axi).

and in Wittgenstein in that of a critique of language ("it will therefore only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense"[34]). This requires an altogether different degree of intimacy than one finds in Frege between logic and philosophy—between the logico-philosophical task of displaying the form and limit of thought from within an activity of thinking and that of engaging with the varieties of logico-philosophical illusion to which the employment of our capacity for thought non-accidentally gives rise. Frege's conception of his project is of a *logical* one that requires *philosophical* vigilance and clarity at every point if it is not to founder, whereas Kant's and early Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of their projects is of one that does not admit of even this degree of separation in its logical and philosophical moments—each of their projects is (as the title of the *Tractatus* says) a *logico-philosophical* one.

More generally, Conant writes as if, *au fond,* there was only a single philosophically significant alternative to the contemporary conception of logic that undergoes internal development as it successively evolves in the hands of Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein. Conant thereby, in effect, seeks to underplay the differences between the conceptions he finds in Kant and early Wittgenstein respectively and the very particular conception that Van Heijenoort, Goldfarb, Ricketts, and Hylton all find in Frege and early Russell, which they call in their writings the "universalist" conception. But if one attends carefully to what must go into any reasonably detailed specification of that latter conception, as specified in those writings, and then attends carefully to the texts of either Kant or early Wittgenstein, it should become clear that neither of those two philosophers fits the specifications for being a universalist about logic—at least not unless the category of "universalism" comes to be understood in a very different way and is consequently drained of much of its original historically and philosophically illuminating specificity. It will help if we can get a clearer sense of why this is so.

Here is Goldfarb describing some of the features of Frege's conception of logic—presented here as an exemplary case of the universalist conception—such that the features in question jointly yield a sufficiently rich characterization so as to allow us clearly to appreciate some of what differentiates it from the contemporary conception of logic:

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[34] *Tractatus,* preface, fourth paragraph. See also §4.0031.

There are no parts of his logical formulas that await interpretation. There is no question of providing a universe of discourse. Quantifiers in Frege's system have fixed meaning: they range over all items of the appropriate logical type (objects, one-place functions of objects, two-place functions of objects, etc.) . . . The letters that may figure in logical formulas, for example, in "(p & q → p)" are not schematic: they are not sentence letters. Rather, Frege understands them as variables. Here they are free variables, and hence in accordance with Frege's general rule the formula is to be understood as a universal closure, that is, as the universally quantified statement "($\forall$p)($\forall$q)(p & q → p)." Similarly, logical formulas containing one-place function signs are to be understood not schematically, but as generalizing over all functions.[35]

First Van Heijenoort (as we have already noted) and then, following him even more vehemently, Goldfarb, Ricketts, and Hylton have emphasized that on a proper understanding of such a conception of logic, once fully thought through, it may be seen not to allow for an exterior or outside point of view on logic—a metalogical perspective—of the sort so familiar to us from the contemporary conception. But, like Van Heijenoort, these historians of logic tend to characterize this further idea in such a way that it comes into view as a consequence of the first two ideas mentioned above. The initial emphasis falls on the contentful generality of logic and on how this already suffices to yield a conception that is at odds with the contemporary one. That is, for example, where the emphasis falls in the following brief summary paragraph from Goldfarb (that occurs just a few lines further on in the same article), highlighting the most central features of the universalist conception:

> On Frege's universalist conception, then, the concern of logic is the articulation and proof of logical laws, which are universal truths. Since they are universal, they are applicable to any subject matter, as application is carried out by instantiation. For Frege, the laws of logic are general, not in being about nothing in particular (about forms), but in using topic-universal vocabulary to state truths about everything.[36]

We find such an emphasis also, for example, in the following passage from Ricketts, writing about Frege and Russell in order to set up a contrast with the *Tractatus:*

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[35] Goldfarb, "Frege's Conception of Logic," 27–28.
[36] Ibid., 28.

On the universalist conception of logic, the logical laws that mediate demonstrative inference are maximally general truths. That is, they are laws that generalize over all objects, properties, and relations; and their formulation requires only the topic-universal vocabulary needed to make statements on any topic whatsoever—for example, signs for conjunction and negation as well as quantifiers to express generality. This topic-universal vocabulary is the proprietary vocabulary of the science of logic and symbolizes the indefinably simple notions of logic, the logical constants. The quantifiers and variables in logical laws generalize without restriction over logical types. Thus, on a universalist view, there are no different universes of discourse for quantifiers; and no use is made of varying interpretations of a language. Indeed, Frege scorns talk of varying interpretations of sentences as a confused way of expressing what is properly said by the use of quantification, including quantification into predicate positions. As a result, contemporary semantic conceptions of logical truth and consequence are completely absent from the universalist view. On the universalist view, then, logic is thus a science in its own right, one that is directed at reality in the same way that physics is, but at reality's more general features.[37]

The emphasis here is right where it needs to be, if one wants to go on and argue in an article on the *Tractatus*—as Ricketts does—that "Wittgenstein *rejects* Frege's and Russell's universalist conception of logic."[38] After all, a version of the idea that logic has no outside (or as Ricketts puts it, "logic frames all thought"[39]) is front and center in the *Tractatus,* from the opening pages of its preface to its concluding sections. This means that the conception at which early Wittgenstein arrives precisely in and through (what Ricketts calls) his "rejection of the universalist conception" is one within which the survival of the above supposed third feature of a universalist conception may no longer be regarded as in any way being an idea that is to be understood as a consequence of the first two—since this idea not only manages to remain in place despite the disappearance of the other two but has now come to constitute the central commitment of the entire conception.[40] In this respect, there is

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[37] Thomas Ricketts, "Pictures, Logic, and the Limits of Sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 54–55.

[38] Ibid., 54; my emphasis.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ricketts, at the outset of his article, characterizes this as a matter of the *Tractatus* "retaining" what is "an inchoate but guiding assumption" (54) in Frege's and Russell's universalist conception of logic, while going on to reject the heart of the conception outlined in

already at least a superficial point of resemblance to be registered between the relation in which Kant stands to Leibniz and that in which early Wittgenstein stands to Frege and Russell.

So even if one wants to nod in agreement when our historians of logic tell us, for example, that Frege subscribes to a "universalist" conception of logic, one can still find oneself left with a desire for greater clarity than Conant ever manages to achieve regarding how to answer a question such as the following: What in such a characterization of a conception of logic is simply specific to Frege, and what in that characterization might be retained to specify a wider category—one that allows us to lump Frege together with a number of other philosophers (such as Kant or Wittgenstein) under a single heading?

As we have noted, one can with no less justice claim about Kant's conception than about Frege's that it does not allow for an exterior or outside point of view on logic, but that is certainly not because Kant understands logical generality as a matter of Fregean universal quantification. It is equally accurate to say that the *Tractatus* does not allow for an exterior or outside point of view on logic, yet it is also no less wrong to say about early Wittgenstein than it is about Kant that he shares Frege's account of logical truths as maximally general.[41] If what makes one a universalist is that one's conception of logic allows for no exterior or outside point of view on logic, then Kant, Frege, and early Wittgenstein may all be termed "universalists."[42] If, to be a universalist, one must embrace

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the quotation above from Ricketts. I will suggest below that the development here indicated turns on Wittgenstein not merely hanging on to one or more of Frege's (and/or Russell's) ideas while throwing out a couple of others; rather it turns on his radically rethinking what that idea—and hence what the place of the logical subject in a conception of logic—must amount to in a manner that completely transforms it.

[41] The paragraph from Goldfarb above comes from an article titled "*Frege's* Conception of Logic" [my emphasis]. So, as presented in that article, the description given is not initially supposed to characterize anything other than Frege's own conception of logic. But the term ("universalist conception") is deployed by some of those who figure in the preceding footnotes as if it clearly articulated a generic alternative to the contemporary conception—an alternative to be found in the writings of not only Frege but also early Russell, early Wittgenstein, early Carnap, and various followers and fellow travelers of these figures. To arrive at a not inaccurate but sufficiently generic characterization to comprehend the respective conceptions of logic held at some point by Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and Carnap would arguably require considerably draining Goldfarb's characterization (in that quoted paragraph) of much of its helpful and informative specificity.

[42] This is not to deny that some historians of logic—both ones who endorse and ones who oppose the ascription of such a conception to, say, Frege—now present it as a *defining* feature of "universalism" about logic that there is no stepping outside of the laws of thought and contemplating them from sideways on (or that there is no such thing as a metalogical per-

a conception that turns on much of the detail that Goldfarb provides above—for example, about what goes into Frege's understanding of a universally quantified statement such as "$(\forall p)(\forall q)(p \,\&\, q \to p)$"—then of the three (especially if a proper understanding of the idea in question is to be understood as flowing from or otherwise requiring the detail that Goldfarb there provides), only Frege is a universalist.[43]

It will be one of my aims below, in effect, to argue that Kant and early Wittgenstein are, in this latter respect, equally far from being universalists. But this is a merely negative point. More importantly, I will argue that Conant's—though, as we shall see, by no means only Conant's— understanding of the possible space of alternatives to the contemporary conception is sufficiently undiscriminating as to be philosophically crippling. Some aspects of that understanding (expressed by remarks such as "there is no stepping outside logic" or "the laws of logic are the laws of thought") may initially appear to be sufficiently generic so as to allow one to group the universalist conception together with various other non-contemporary conceptions (that reject certain fundamental features of the universalist conception) under a common heading. Other aspects of the understanding with which Conant implicitly or explicitly operates are

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spective). But when it comes to conceptions of logic, this is not much of a *differentium*. For although they all have differing conceptions of why logic is all-encompassing (whether it be in terms of the special status of the law of non-contradiction, the supreme First Principle of being, the eternal verities created by God, etc.), Aristotle, Avicenna, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Frege, Russell, and early Wittgenstein each, in his own way, takes logic to have no outside. So this feature of universalism may be quite useful for marking a difference between many traditional conceptions of logic and the contemporary conception, yet it is (absent some further elucidation of the source of logic's supposed metaphysical priority, or absolute universality, or formality, or inescapability, or whatever) quite useless for highlighting a respect in which, say, Aristotle's, Kant's, Hegel's, Frege's, or Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic differ from one another.

43 More specifically, I take it to be a constitutive feature of "universalism"—as it is explained by Goldfarb and Ricketts in the quotations immediately above—that it holds that logical propositions have (as Kant would have put the point) *material generality:* that they are, on the one hand, absolutely *general* (ranging over everything) and, on the other, genuinely *contentful* (expressing truths about what is the case). This commitment of the universalist conception of logic sharply differentiates it from some of the other conceptions that will concern me here. To anticipate, Kant's complaint about the Leibnizian conception of pure general logic is (as we shall see below, starting in the reply to Boyle) that it fails to realize that such "judgments" achieve their absolute generality at the cost of all relation to the object—by emptying the form of thought of all relation to its matter. Early Wittgenstein expresses his opposition to the Fregean conception of pure general logic when he says, "All theories that make a proposition of logic appear to have content are false" (*Tractatus,* §6.111). The ensuing conception of logic (as we shall see, starting in the reply to Sullivan below) also turns on a distinction between form and matter in the expression of significant thought.

far more specific—such as when, for example, the conception of logic in question is thought to turn centrally on ideas such as that logical laws are topic-neutral or universally applicable or that they involve logical operators that range over everything, expressing maximally general truths.[44] On any such comparatively specific understanding of what the universalist conception encompasses, "universalism" will come into view as a conception that we need to learn to distinguish sharply, even from its most immediate predecessors and successors, if we wish to be able to narrate the history of philosophy at all well.

We shall see below that Conant—and not only Conant—fails to appreciate that if one has only a single clear candidate (namely, the contemporary conception) firmly in mind for how to think about logic, absent these more specific and characteristic features of the universalist conception, then one is bound to remain in the thrall of a very particular way of understanding sentences (such as "there is no stepping outside logic" or "the laws of logic are the laws of thought")—one that might seem to enable one to capture one or another "feature" of a conception of logic that universalism shares with various other non-contemporary conceptions. Such sentences will then seem to point to very generic features of a conception of logic—ones that may be detached from the specific manner in which such a generic conception is realized in intellectual and technical detail in the writings of any particular figure. These allegedly generic features will then seem to be able to furnish at last some of the resources required for talking about what Kant's, Frege's, and Wittgenstein's conceptions of logic all share.

This illusion is crucial to Conant's account: that there is a generic characterization of a conception of logic that may be simultaneously attributed to those three philosophers. Once the differences between these thinkers come more sharply into view in the replies that follow, it will become clear, for example, that neither Kant nor early Wittgenstein share a (universalist) conception of logic with Frege—and, indeed, that they are in certain respects much closer to each other than either is to Frege.

This means that if we do wish to have a very generic term for conceptions of logic that differ from the contemporary one—one that is sufficiently indeterminate to encompass a wide range of historico-philosophical phenomena and yet not so empty as to be completely uninformative—

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[44] I do not mean to deny here that even when it comes only to, say, Frege and various phases of Russell one can still encounter very different specific understandings of what precisely is involved in such a conception of logic and hence what it means to say that its laws are "universally applicable," etc. But these differences will not concern us below.

we need a very different way of carving up the topic. The term "universalism" will not serve to group even just Frege and some of his closest neighbors in the philosophy of logic together.[45]

In what follows, there will be two or three moments when I attempt to step way back and say something almost hopelessly general about the grand tradition of (what I will call, following Irad Kimhi) *philosophical logic*[46]—one that begins with Aristotle and runs through Kant to Wittgenstein. It is a tradition in which the most fundamental tasks of logic and philosophy respectively are conceived to be coeval.[47] Unlike on the contemporary conception of logic, the topics of "thought" or "judgment" do not first enter the purview of logic through the interpretation of certain schemata, the specification of a universe of discourse,

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[45] As should already be clear, I think the term "universalism" has occasioned a lumping together of very disparate conceptions of logic. I will not employ this term again in what follows. I have relied on it thus far merely to gesture at some of the confusions that I think animate Conant's account of the transition from Kant to Frege to Wittgenstein. I have in mind, in particular, the confusion between the two senses of the "universality" of logic distinguished in the foregoing footnotes: (1) "universal" in the Leibnizian/Fregean sense of there being no question of "providing for" a universe of discourse because logical laws inherently involve absolutely unrestricted quantification, and (2) "universal" in the Kantian/Wittgensteinian sense of precluding a perspective onto the supposed "limits" of logic from a standpoint putatively external thereto. As we shall see below, even Conant senses that Frege's own conception of logic involves a tension that has its source in his trying to combine elements drawn from these two incompatible conceptions of logic, but Conant does not appreciate the extent to which he himself inherits and participates in the very confusion he seeks to criticize.

[46] I take this way of characterizing the grand tradition from Irad Kimhi, *Being and Thinking* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 1–23. Here is how Kimhi, on the first page of his book, sums up the very idea of philosophical logic: "the idea of a study that achieves a mutual illumination of thinking and what is: an illumination through a clarification of human discursive activity in which truth (reality, aletheia) is at stake. Philosophical logic, so understood, is a first-personal engagement from within the activity of thinking, one which allows the articulation and comprehension of thinking to emerge from out of itself."

[47] The expression "coeval" is a mere placeholder, gesturing at a fundamental difficulty to which each major participant in the grand tradition must respond, starting with the "Second Aporia" of *Metaphysics Beta,* where Aristotle asks the following: Is it the business of a single unitary form of inquiry to uncover and investigate first principles, or are there two distinct forms of such inquiry—philosophy and logic—each somehow related to the other? It is no accident that a parallel aporia must be resolved to answer the following question: What does the hyphen in (the title of) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (or *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*) mean (or stand for, or indicate)? To say that early Wittgenstein participates in the grand tradition is to take it that any reading of the book (and hence any understanding of the relation of the book to its title) that makes it appear as if the hyphen might be replaced without much cost by a connective that is not logically *sui generis*—say, by an "and" or an "or" or an "if . . . , then . . ."—already involves a complete misunderstanding of the book.

etc. Rather, both philosophy and logic, thus traditionally conceived, begin from *within* the activity of thinking and judging. They constitute twin aspects of the effort of the thinking subject, prosecuted from within her activity of thinking, to achieve a self-understanding of what she, the logical subject, is doing when she thinks—where a proper understanding of the activity in question must account for how truth, falsity, and sophistry (i.e., illusions of thought) are so much as possible from this immanent self-conscious perspective of the thinker. This very generic conception of what is of joint concern to philosophy and logic in the grand tradition already contrasts starkly with a prevailing conception of *philosophy* (and the manner in which it divides up into "areas" such metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and logic) as well as with the contemporary conception of *logic* and how it comes to secure a relation to some philosophical topic only through a subsequent "application" of logic to some area of philosophy (through the interpretation of schemata, the specification of a universe of discourse, etc.).

The aforementioned gesture at a more viable way of characterizing a generic grand historical alternative to the contemporary conception of logic will prove to be, as we shall see, of only limited use in the inquiry that follows. It awkwardly locates a figure such as Frege. Unlike for most post-Fregeans, for him, logic is not simply one "area" of philosophy among others. In this respect he still inherits and participates in the grand tradition. He regards, as we shall see, most of the fundamental concerns of philosophy—the topics that it, from its beginnings in Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle, has sought to clarify: "thought," "judgment," "object," "predicative unity," "truth"—as indefinable notions that properly belong to logic, a prior elucidation of which is essential to an adequate philosophy of logic. For Frege, too, no clarification of these is possible apart from reflection from *within* our logical activity and the power of logical thought it presupposes. Yet Frege's conception of how these fundamental notions are to receive elucidation also depends upon a very specific conception of the priority of logic—one that not only drives a very particular sort of wedge between purely logical knowledge and other forms of knowledge, but one that turns on a very particular conception of the priority of logical over non-logical truths. Frege will therefore emerge as a liminal figure, someone who still has one foot in the grand tradition, while the other foot seeks a foothold for an account of logic of a novel sort—one which unwittingly helps to begin to carve logic off from (what comes to be conceived as) "the rest of" philosophy. He thereby

helps to pave the way toward the contemporary conception, even if its most characteristic features are utterly alien to him.

We shall also see, beginning in Section V below, that within the grand tradition there are enormous differences. Aristotle, Kant, and early Wittgenstein—for all of their differences—regard logical knowledge as standing to non-logical knowledge hylomorphically, as form to matter.[48]

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[48] A cautionary note is in order about how, in the pages that follow, I use expressions such as "hylomorphically" (as a characterization of the relation in which formal judgments stand to material ones) or "hylomorphism" (as a characterization of a generic conception of logic— differently realized in the writings of Kant and Wittgenstein, but nowhere present in the writings of Leibniz or Frege), and hence also expressions such as "form" and "matter" in connection with logic. On at least one reading of Aristotle, form and matter are internally related; neither is self-standingly intelligible apart from its relation to the other. When we come to the reply to Boyle, I will argue that Kant inherits this understanding of what a genuinely hylomorphic conception of the relation of form to matter requires. Suffice it to note the following for now: many so-called hylomorphic conceptions of logic are "hylomorphic" only in the minimal sense that they speak of "logical forms" (of variable, or argument place, or schemata, or structure, or formulae, etc.) that range over a kind of "content" (an ontological kind, a truth-assignment, an interpretation, an element in a model) etc.), where the determinate character of the "form" is supposed to be specifiable prior to and independently of that over which it is taken to range. Such a conception of logic does not count, on my employment of the terminology, as hylomorphic, though it does so count—on a more common and permissive use of the terminology—employed by many historians of logic. John Macfarlane, for example, in permitting himself to employ terms in this more permissive way, has done a wonderful job of drawing attention to some of the enormous differences in what philosophers mean when they say logic is "formal." When MacFarlane speaks of "a tradition of logical hylomorphism," the primary criteria for ascribing to someone membership in that tradition lies in the presence of (what MacFarlane calls) "hylomorphic language" in their writings—that is, in the occurrence of a certain vocabulary, despite that vocabulary meaning quite different things in the mouths of the various participants in that putatively common tradition of thought. Indeed, MacFarlane makes it a primary aim of his investigation to uncover and highlight the differences of conception disguised by this commonality of idiom. After presenting a lengthy series of quotations (each of which contains some locution such as "the form of thought," "logical form," "formal character of logic," etc.)—including quotations by Kant, Lotze, De Morgan, Jevons, Frege, Russell, Einstein, and Tarski, along with various other philosophers and logicians—MacFarlane then goes on to comment,

> These passages exemplify a tradition, going back at least to Kant and encompassing philosophers and logicians with wildly different philosophical views, of demarcating logic by its formality. I call this tradition logical hylomorphism. Logical hylomorphism is a tradition or current, not a thesis, because its advocates understand the formality of logic in very different ways. (In this respect it resembles traditions like liberalism and eudaimonism.) (John MacFarlane, *What Does it Mean to Say that Logic is Formal?* PhD diss. [University of Pittsburgh, 2000])

On MacFarlane's way of picking out the tradition that concerns him, all of the philosophers and logicians whose names figure on the above list can be made out to be participants in a "hylomorphic" tradition. MacFarlane's use of the term gathers together a range of figures that span the divide from those who subscribe to conceptions of logic that are

While Leibniz and Frege—for all their differences—regard the logical as standing to the non-logical in a quite very different way: as the exceptionlessly general to the comparatively more particular instances that fall under such generalities. The primary concern in the replies that follow will, accordingly, not be with what generically characterizes conceptions of logic other than the contemporary one, but rather with what differentiates some of these from others and with what are the philosophically most illuminating ways to group some of these non-contemporary conceptions together with others.

Even if the inquiry that follows may serve as a prolegomenon to a critique of the contemporary conception of the nexus that unites philosophy and logic, for the most part no such critique will be attempted in the pages that follow—hence almost nothing will be said below either in favor of or against that conception. The aim will rather simply be to make vivid that there are alternatives to our contemporary ways of thinking that are both conceptually possible and historically actual.

If no direct, simple, or straightforward challenge to our contemporary conception of logic is immediately entailed or intended by the ensuing inquiry—let alone some hidden agenda for reforming the curriculum of a standard contemporary course titled "Introduction to Formal Logic"—then what is the reader to make of the fact that I clearly, on occasion,

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comparatively familiar and ones that are comparatively alien to us—including ones who are *innocent* of any version of (what I have called above) the contemporary conception of logic, ones who *take for granted* some version of that conception and ones who are caught up *in the midst of that transition*. I will restrict my use of the term (and related terms such as "form" and "matter") to characterize a far more limited, non-contemporary tradition of thought. On my use, the tradition in question is defined not by the presence of certain vocabulary in the writings of its participants but by a conception that determines a particular way of understanding that vocabulary. The tradition that I seek to carve out (on my much narrower employment of the term) includes Kant and Wittgenstein but almost no one else singled out by MacFarlane (in connection with his far more inclusive way of using the term). I observed in a previous footnote that in the contemporary conception of logic the schemata that figure in the specifications of the syntax of a logical system are often spoken of as "logical forms" and the resulting conception of logic as "formal." But such an understanding of the "formality" of logic presupposes the contemporary conception, along with its entire manner of distinguishing syntax from semantics—in which one first lays down the rules of the syntax and then introduces a truth predicate and specifies a domain of discourse in order to confer semantic content on initially uninterpreted strings of logical signs. As we shall see, this way of proceeding is equally alien to both (what I will call) the Leibnizian and Kantian conceptions of logic. My comparatively restricted employment of the term "hylomoporhic" (and related terms) finds its justification in the manner in which the character of my inquiry differs from that of MacFarlane. It is intended to call to attention and fashion an appreciation of what differentiates the philosophical commitments of one of these two non-contemporary conceptions of logic from the other.

evince a notable philosophical sympathy for, or some other sort of heightened interest in, some of the conceptions explored below? What might a reader who learns to share such sympathies and acquire such interests gain in the way of philosophical insight? There are a number of answers to this question. I will mention just three.

The first thing one might acquire is a more vivid sense of intellectual possibilities that have largely been lost to contemporary philosophy—possibilities, in the first instance, for thinking about topics in areas such as epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mind—that is, areas whose topics and subject matter are considered today to be sufficiently independent of those that ought to concern us in an introductory or advanced logic course such that one can pursue the one inquiry independently of the other. The second thing that may then come to strike one is that there are intellectual costs to how the contemporary study of philosophy has come to be institutionalized. A genuine encounter with any of the major thinkers discussed below—one that is alive to ways in which they may reveal our own philosophical parochialism to us—ought at the same time to reveal a connection between their respective conceptions of logic and their respective understandings of which clusters of philosophical questions must be treated together if they are to be treated properly at all. The fact that, on the one hand, certain possibilities for philosophical thought have been largely lost to us, and the fact that, on the other, the aforementioned areas of philosophy are usually conceived today as each having its own proprietary set of topics and questions, independent of those that properly belong in the first instance to the study of logic, may then come into view as a pair of non-accidentally related facts.

The third thing one might gain is a newfound sensitivity for the fatefulness of the contemporary understanding of (what I called above) the nexus that unites philosophy and logic. If one assumes that the basic shape of one's conception of logic is such that it can largely be put into place in advance and then only later have "logic" be put to work to help clarify or answer questions about the nature of thought or judgment or truth—that is, if one assumes that one can largely acquire an appreciation of the fundamentals of "how to do formal logic" prior to the "application" of its instruments, methods, and notation to some particular set of problems in some further "area" of philosophy—then this conception of how pure logic is to be demarcated from its application may itself come into focus as possibly involving countless further hidden costs.

The pages that follow will have achieved one of their purposes if they provoke a reader to ask questions such as the following: If we express

every general proposition that we seek to elucidate in philosophy in a notation that is able to express only one form of generality (say, for all x, if x is an F, then x is a G), have we already made an important assumption? If we translate every significant aspect of a proposition into a notation that requires that every dimension of its logical complexity be expressible in function/argument form, have we already thereby taken a significant and unexamined philosophical leap? If we want our notation to represent not only propositional contents but also the subjects who entertain them, so we introduce variable letters that stand for "subjects" and operators that stand for "propositional attitudes," what philosophical presuppositions do we thereby commit ourselves to? If we require that any really proper subject for predication be logically singular—a discriminable individual, something of the logical shape that suits it for predication by a count noun such as "item," "hill," "house," "word," "number," or "planet" (hence not something irredeemably non-singular, something of the logical shape that suits it for predication by a mass noun such as "stuff," "wine," "wool," "molasses," "tension," or "leisure"), to what extent do we thereby import ontological or metaphysical assumptions into our supposedly antecedent and neutral conception of the logical?[49] Each of these questions touches on a specific way in which our contemporary conception of logic can make it difficult to get the central philosophical concerns of a Kant, or sometimes even of a Frege, or certainly of any Wittgenstein into view. There are numerous further such questions that the pages that follow might provoke. No such question, insofar as it bears directly on the larger task of furnishing a critique of our contemporary conception of logic, is explored in any detail—let alone answered—in these pages. This inquiry is, in that respect, a historical one. Yet, as indicated above, it is at the same time a philosophical one, insofar as it is prosecuted with an eye toward provoking an interest in questions such as these, thereby hoping to loosen the grip that the philosophical present may exercise on us.

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[49] For further discussion of this issue—including some of the ways it bears on the preceding issues—see Henry Laycock, *Words without Objects: Semantics, Ontology, and Logic for Non-Singular* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).

Section III

Some Aspects of Conant's Version of the History

One advantage of having (what I called above) the grand historical conception of philosophical logic in view is that it can allow us to see how the very word "logic" underwent certain forms of transformation with regard to what it was to stand for in the centuries prior to the advent of analytic philosophy. One of the more traumatic sources of transformation came with a theological turn initiated in medieval philosophy and largely completed by the end of the early modern period. Once a conception of logic not only has to account for how thought bears on the world but also has to make room for the God of the monotheistic religions—so that both our forms of thought and the world are equally products of divine creation—the picture changes. For the question of where logic fits into this equation (one in which God is supposed to be absolutely prior to absolutely every aspect of His creation) becomes a vexing one. Does logic partake of the absolute priority of God? Or is logic prior even to God (and hence His priority not absolute)? Or is it, like everything else, just a product of His creation? This set of questions might seem to introduce an altogether unnecessary historical digression. However, as we shall see, certain, very fundamental ways of thinking about logic—ones that are still with us today—first emerged in the wake of this theological turn. One of the merits of Conant's article is that it appreciates this. One of its demerits, as already indicated, is that it has an insufficient overview of the alternative conceptions of logic that come into play in the wake of these developments.

363

Before offering an alternative lens through which to view the historical development from Descartes to Wittgenstein, it will be helpful first to recall the larger philosophical themes of which Conant's article seeks to treat and attend to how they are framed—themes that the article initially gets into view by quoting certain passages from Descartes about what God can and cannot do—about whether, for example, He has the power to make the conjunction of a pair of logical contradictories express a truth. One of article's reasons for focusing on these passages becomes evident when it turns to a comparison of Descartes's views (on what God might have done) with early Putnam's and (any phase of) Quine's views (on what science might reveal).

This brings us to the second of the three ways in which the expression "logical alien"—which figures in the title of this volume—may be understood to apply to the discussions that follow. In the first of those ways, it denoted a philosopher whose conception of logic is philosophically alien to our own. This form of incommensurability between two philosophical conceptions of logic presupposes a background of commensurability—one that is a condition of their points of philosophical divergence being so much as even identifiable. Philosophers who are "alien" to one another in this first sense of the term share countless non-philosophical and philosophical points of common reference. They can engage in conversations about non-philosophical matters, thank one another for their recent letters, and even achieve agreement on some points of philosophy. In the second of the ways in which the expression "logical alien" will be employed in the discussions that follow, two forms of thought that are alien to one another are not merely incommensurable; rather they are worse off than this in their relation to one another. They are globally bereft of the sort of common standard or measure that forms the very condition of any possibility of communication, disagreement, or even determination of identifiable points of radical divergence. There is and cannot be any such shared conceptual background between two beings who are in this sense "alien" to one another. On this second way of employing the term, a "logically alien" form of mindedness is supposed to be so systematically divergent from my own that I am simply, at every point, unable to find my feet with a being that is so minded.

As Conant seeks to bring out, Descartes on the one hand, and Quine and a certain Putnam on the other, appear at certain junctures to envision the possibility of thought that is logically alien in just this latter sense—a structure of thought that is presumed to be, on the one hand, *radically other* than our own and yet one which we, nonetheless, have

reason to regard as a species of the genus *logical thought*. This raises the question, How radically unlike our form of thought could an alien one be and still count as a form of *thought* at all—hence partake of a form, however divergent from ours, that may still properly be characterized as *logical*?[1]

In the pages that follow, we will consider a whole range of supposed kinds of logical alien of this second sort. In the reply to Moore—by exploring Descartes's suggestion that we ought not to say that God cannot do what we find it impossible to think—our question will be what sort of sense should be made of the idea of a logically alien *infinite* being, as well as how and why Descartes's response to that question assumes the very particular form that it does. In this context, we will consider the idea of (what I will call) *the ontological alien*—a being that is such that we are able to apprehend from the positive character of its very manner of being that it is incomprehensible to us. From there we will move on to considering various candidates for a logically alien *finite* being. In the initial reply to Hamawaki—by exploring the thought experiment that I was created by an evil demon proposed in Descartes's *First Meditation*—we will ask whether I can think the following: that the form of thought required to grasp the truth is logically alien to the one I presently have. Can I make sense of the idea that (in order to think truly) I need to be able to think in a way that my own form of thought debars me from being able to think—so that, viewed from the point of view of a being who can grasp the truth, *I am* the logical alien? In the joint reply to Hamawaki and Stroud—by exploring Kant's suggestion that the relation between our powers of perception and thought could have been such that the understanding would have been unable to find any order in what was given to it in the manifold of sense—our question will be whether we can make sense of the correlative idea of a logically alien *form of experience*. There our question will be: can I make sense of the idea that (in order to experience things as they are) I need to be able to experience things in a way that my forms of understanding debar me from being able to experience them? We shall be interested there, too, in how and why Kant's response to that question assumes the very particular form that it does. In the subsequent reply to Stroud alone—by exploring Frege's attempt to envision an encounter with a logical alien—our question will be not only whether

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[1] The differences in the dimensions of logical radical otherness at issue here will be explored in a number of the replies below, starting with the reply to Hamawaki and ending with the one to Benoist.

there can be a logically alien *form of thought* but also whether there is a tension introduced into Frege's conception of logic through the manner in which he seeks to answer that question. In the reply to Gustafsson—by exploring the idea that the order of the linguistic sign could be completely independent of that of the logical symbol—our question will be whether some tribe of beings could be logically alien to us without being phonologically alien or vice versa—hence whether sense can be made of the idea of a phonologically alien *form of language,* one that, at the level of the spoken sign, must remain forever impenetrable to us. It will be argued that Wittgenstein's response to that idea is critical to an understanding of his philosophy as a whole.

Finally, in the reply to Benoist, we will consider the idea of (what I will call) *the anthropological alien*—a being that is such that we are able to apprehend from the determinate character of its practices that its form of life is incomprehensible to us. We will do this by exploring Wittgenstein's suggestion of a tribe in which wood is sold at a cost which varies with the amount of area it takes up on the ground because—so the wood sellers tell us—"the more area it takes up the more wood there is" (so that a small inexpensive pile can be converted into a large expensive one simply by knocking it over). Our question here will be how far can we go in trying to imagine a form of life that is so radically alien in character from our own that it cannot ever come into view for us in any way other than as one that must forever remain incomprehensible to us. Here, too, we will take an interest in why Wittgenstein's response to our question assumes the very particular and peculiar form that it does.

It is not simply in the interest of exploring the full range of possible cases that we begin with the possibility of a logically alien infinite *creator* before exploring varieties of alien finite *creature.* Conant argues that some of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century versions of preoccupation with his topic not only have theological roots but also continue to partake of a repressed theological dimension:

> There is certainly something to the thought that certain classic papers of Putnam and Quine[2] offer perhaps the closest thing to be found in twentieth-century philosophy to an attempt to rehabilitate Descartes's claim that it would be hubris for us to assert of an omnipotent God that He would be inexorably bound by the laws of logic—those laws

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[2] Putnam, "The Analytic and The Synthetic," in *Mind, Language and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 33–69; Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in *From a Logical Point View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 20–46.

which happen to bind our finite minds. In a move which is character-istic of much of contemporary naturalistic thought (both in and out of the academy), science is substituted for God. Cartesianism in the phi-losophy of logic, freed of its theological trappings, becomes the view that it would be hubris for us to assert of the ongoing activity of scien-tific inquiry that it will be forever bound by the laws of classical logic—those principles which happen to be most fundamental to our present conceptual scheme. The contrast is now no longer, as in Descartes, be-tween the finite powers of man and the infinite powers of God, but rather between the limits of present scientific thought and the infinite possibilities latent in the future of science as such. . . . If Descartes is led by a sense of theological piety to insist that God can do *anything*—no matter how inconceivable it may be to us—the contemporary ultra-empiricist is led by an equally fervent sense of naturalistic piety to in-sist that the science of the future might require a revision of *any* of our present axioms of thought—no matter how unacceptable such a revi-sion might seem by our present lights. The exploration of the contours of possibility belongs to the business of the physicists. In this regard, we philosophers must issue them a blank check—it would compromise our standing as underlaborers to put a ceiling on how much they can spend. To paraphrase Descartes on God: we must not conclude that there is a positive limit to the power of science on the basis of the limits of our own (present) powers of conception. All of its hostility to the-ology notwithstanding, this contemporary form of piety is, in a sense, no less religious (in its unconditional deference to a higher authority) than Descartes's—it has simply exchanged one Godhead for another. But, unlike Descartes, precisely because it is overtly hostile to theology, it is able easily to blind itself to the fact that it *is* a form of piety.[3]

The connection drawn here between Descartes and Quine plays little overt role in the ensuing replies largely because none of the eight respon-dents wishes to contest it. Some of them explicitly endorse the proposed parallel between (what I will call below) *theological voluntarism* and various nineteenth- and twentieth-century variants of an *ultra-empiricist account of logic*. What the respondents are concerned to explore instead is the article's claims about how Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein respectively stand to such an account. So a guiding background concern that animates the entire volume may be put as follows: What are the ways

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[3] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 43–44.

in which these four philosophers each seek to reject some form of voluntarism, empiricism, or psychologism about logic, and how do their respective ways of doing so differ from one another and from Conant's accounts of how they each do so?

In taking the full measure of just how profoundly some of these four philosophers' respective ways of rejecting voluntarism, empiricism or psychologism about logic differ along some dimension from those of each of the others, we will begin to explore the third of the three ways in which the expression "logical alien"—that figures in the title of this volume—may be understood to have a form of application to the discussions that follow. In doing so, we will discover how remarkably difficult it is in philosophy to remain faithful to the following maxim: Do not read the character of the logically primitive phenomenon off the model of its logically alienated counterpart! We will see over and over again that this is what the contemporary philosopher is especially prone to do. Indeed, it is what each of us is prone to do when we first begin on attempting to understand the difficulties with which we will be concerned in the following pages. On this third way of deploying the expression "logical alien," a philosopher who suffers from logical alienation is one who mistakes a case that suffers from logical privation—a logically alienated case of consciousness, or of the exercise of a cognitive capacity, or form of human life—for the logically primitive form of the phenomenon under philosophical investigation. On this third way of understanding who the logical alien is, the words in the title of this volume refer in the first instance neither to one of the great philosophers of the past (such as Descartes or Kant or Wittgenstein) for failing to be sufficiently contemporary in their mode of thought, nor to some strange being encountered in one of their thought experiments, but rather to the philosopher in each of us: in each reader of this volume who, when reflecting upon the conceptual landscape in which she is always already at home, becomes—through the effort to achieve philosophical understanding—a stranger to herself. The eight contributors have differing assessments, from each other and from Conant, of the grounds on which one or more of these historical figures stake out the conception of logic that they each do—as well as of the merits of the alternatives for philosophical thought about logic with which they each present us. Whereas Conant is primarily concerned, on the one hand, with the parallel between Descartes's voluntarism and later forms of empiricism, and, on the other, with how Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein each rejects any such conception, these replies will focus on other matters. They will follow the new sets of concerns about these issues that

Conant's critics introduce through their criticisms of him. These replies will therefore be taken up with discriminating and exploring dimensions of philosophical difference between Descartes, Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein for which Conant does not even allow—where an appreciation of these will, in turn, disclose affinities between some of these philosophers that he wholly overlooks.

At the outset of his article, Conant primarily focuses on the relation between, on the one hand, that which might be possible apart from what is comprehensible to us (i.e., forms of possibility that appear to lie *beyond* the limits of our thought), and, on the other, that which is possible in a way that is fully comprehensible to us (i.e., those forms of possibility that fall squarely *within* the near side of the limit of logical thought). He reads Aquinas and Leibniz (for all of their differences) as being in agreement about the following two points: (1) the limits of the supposed former sort of "possibility" cannot be wider than those of the latter (that beyond the realm of the logically possible there is no further realm of possibility); and (2) this sets limits to what God can do (that the limit of our power of thought marks the limit of God's power). Conant's crucial organizing principle for understanding this controversy is one that strikes him as perfectly innocent—as involving no assumption at all—namely, that Descartes and his critics are all in agreement about the following: that (1) entails (2), and hence that the denial of (2) entails the denial of (1).

Conant reads Descartes as denying (2) and therefore taking himself to be obliged to deny (1). Whatever the merits of that reading, it does appear to find ample confirmation in the near universal contemporaneous consensus of the period that Descartes, whatever exactly his position was supposed to be, was an extreme outlier—that he was determined to advocate for a peculiar minority position within the early modern debate about how best to think about the nexus of modality and divinity. Conant embraces what is in effect Leibniz's understanding of Descartes's position. On this understanding of what kind of an outlier Descartes is, he is read as arguing that there are forms of genuine possibility that are incomprehensible to us—incomprehensible to us precisely because they exceed the limits of logic and hence our power of thought. Hence Descartes is read as affirming that the following is genuinely possible: God could have created beings whose form of thought is logically alien to our own.[4]

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[4] As we shall see in the reply to Moore, A.W. Moore regards Conant's crucial organizing principle as perfectly innocent—or, rather, he, too, regards it as involving no assumption at

Within that debate, as Conant presents it, Aquinas and Leibniz worry that if our thought about God's power requires a kind of thought that exceeds the limits of logic, then our thought about the Creator will be running on empty and will be indistinguishable from nonsense.[5] Conant invites us to notice that Descartes's treatment of the logico-philosophical question about the limits of thought is intertwined in a theological debate about the nature of God. But there are further divisions within (what Conant represents as) "the majority position" of that debate, to which Conant gives scant attention. The parties to the dispute whom Descartes opposes still find themselves in a quarrel with each other about this question: What is God's relation to the various modalities? Here is a view that, as we will see below, some of them are concerned to defend: God stands in an asymmetrical relation to what is possible, on the one hand, and to what is actual, on the other. God is the author of what is actual, but He is not the author of what is possible. It is through His activity as Creator that the actual comes into being. That activity, in turn, is (in a sense that then needs to be explicated) *constrained* by what is possible; for God does not create what is possible. So the modalities come apart: the determinate shape of one of them (actuality) is determined by God's activity, whereas those of the others (possibility, necessity) adumbrate the logically prior circumference within which that activity proceeds.

Within this majority consensus there is plenty of room for dispute about how to conceive God's relation to the possible. (Does it precede God and determine the space within which His activity takes place? Is it coeval with Him? Is it somehow part of Him?) The trick here, for each of those whom Descartes opposes in this debate, is to explicate the sense in which God's power is in some sense marked by the limits of the logically possible without representing these as limits to His freedom—without, that is, wandering into the blasphemy of affirming that He is less than fully omnipotent. Conant attends to this idea (of how the limits of possibility might appear to constrain God's power) only insofar as it figures in the debate as an idea Descartes seeks to oppose. Conant takes

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all. Hence, Moore takes the failure of Conant's reading to indicate that we should read Descartes as someone who, if he were brought to think through his own view, would have to agree with his interlocutors that he ought to hold the position that Conant attributes to Aquinas and Leibniz.

[5] Conant's reading does take one thing seriously that Moore's reading never seems to get into focus—namely, that Descartes is centrally concerned with the following worry: If our idea of "God" is of a being whose power extends no further than our powers of conception, then it is no longer an idea of God. How to understand this concern of Descartes's will be the central topic of Section VI below.

no interest in the variety of ways in which Descartes's predecessors and contemporaries attempt to flesh out that idea. This leaves both Conant and his reader without any clear sense of how there could already have been an ongoing theological debate prior to Descartes's joining it. We will see that this ends up seriously distorting Conant's account not only of how the issues are framed in the early modern period, but of their subsequent transmission and inheritance in the philosophical concerns of Descartes, Frege, and Wittgenstein.

Each of the major interlocutors in the medieval and early modern debates has a different way of trying to thread the needle of explaining why the limits of possibility are not subject to God's will without thereby constituting limits to His will. At one end of the spectrum, Avicenna affirms that the realm of the logical—the realm of pure possibility—precedes God's activity. At the other end of the spectrum, Leibniz tries to make out that the limits of the possible are no more extrinsic to God's nature than are those of the actual, but that the former are internal to His understanding while the latter are due to His will; hence both are intrinsic to His nature. Conant rushes past the details within this spectrum of disagreement in order to attend to what he takes to be most interesting in the debate. His attention is fixed on the space of options for how to think about logic (and what we can say or show about what we cannot think) that emerge out this debate about how to think about God; but he thinks an account of how that later space of options is generated can be provided without having to attend to hardly any of the detail of the earlier understanding of the space of options.[6]

To overstate matters somewhat, let us talk for a moment as if there were simply two wholly distinct sets of issues here.[7] Let us start with the set of issues foregrounded in Conant's way of framing the debate between Descartes and his contemporaries. Conant turns that theological debate into one that is centrally about the relation between the thinkable and the logical and whether there can be such a thing as (what Conant calls) logically alien thought. The question in the original theological

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[6] As indicated in the previous footnote, Moore accepts Conant's original framing of the logico-philosophical options available here. The first task of a philosophically illuminating history of philosophy under these circumstances is to separate the original theological question most at issue in the original debate from the detheologized question that comes to be most at issue in Conant's and Moore's accounts of what is supposedly at stake in that debate. The first step in that direction is taken below in the reply to Moore.

[7] We will return later to how these sets of issues are intertwined with one another—that is, why they are not and cannot be wholly distinct.

debate, however, is not only whether what is possible is prior to God or whether God is prior to what is possible, but also whether what is possible is prior to what is actual, and, if so, how it can be so without being prior to God's activity. Though the original debate does involve as one of its moments the logico-philosophical question that interests Conant, he makes it seem as if the entire debate revolves simply around this single issue. We will see in the next section that for the parties to that original debate, it is not about two separate questions: a logico-philosophical question (that does not interest Conant) regarding the relative priority of the modalities to one another and a theological question (that does interest Conant) about the relative priority of God's creative activity to the various modalities. For the participants in the original debate, these are two aspects of a single question.

Once we come to appreciate this, we can note something important that Conant misses. The various theological positions that Descartes is concerned to ward off all have the following shared consequence for the philosophy of logic: they all eventuate in the conclusion that purely logical thought is able, through recourse to nothing other than itself, to ascertain the topology of a self-standingly intelligible space of what *can possibly be,* prior to any knowledge of what *actually is.* This is where Descartes's real concern—both theological and philosophical—lies, unbeknownst to Conant. With respect to his preferred set of issues, Conant simply reads Descartes as flatly denying what Aquinas and Leibniz, in their very different ways, affirm,[8] thereby obscuring from view the real issue of concern to Descartes and hence the originality of his own intervention into that debate.

It will be helpful at this point to introduce some terminology. Let us call the position that Conant's reading attributes to Descartes "voluntarism."[9] We can distinguish within Conant's discussions two different degrees of voluntarism—one having to do with the theological and the other with the logico-philosophical question; one involving a broad thesis regarding the priority of God's will over everything (in-

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[8] Aquinas and Leibniz both argue that God could not have made contradictories true (or two plus two equal five). Each in his own way goes on to explain why His not being able to do so should not be regarded as in any way revealing some limitation of His power or freedom to act. According to Conant's reading, Descartes is to be read as affirming what they thereby deny—thus as holding that it is fully and actually within God's power to have created a universe in which, for example, a pair of contradictories could be true together.

[9] There is historical precedent for this use of the label, but I will use it in a slightly more focused way than is usual.

cluding logic) and one involving a thesis of narrower scope regarding what is prior to logic. It will prove useful to have two distinct labels for the narrower and broader thesis respectively, so let us call them *theological voluntarism* and *logical voluntarism*. The first is a label for the theological position that God's will is prior to everything—where in the most extreme version of this position it is held to be prior, and thus external, even to His understanding. (This is the position that both Leibniz and Conant, among others, take Descartes to hold.) The second is a label for the position that what determines the necessity of the principles of logic is external to the exercise of *our* understanding.[10] Of course, if one is a theological voluntarist and holds that the principles of logic, along with everything else, are subject to God's will, then one is *a fortiori* a logical voluntarist.

As I have just tried to make clear, though Conant's reading of Descartes is voluntaristic in both respects, what really interests Conant is Descartes's logical voluntarism. Hence what matters to Conant is the following feature of the conception: that what determines the contours of logical thought is something given *from outside* logic. This is what allows Conant to draw the connection between logical voluntarism and psychologism about logic (of the sort Frege criticizes). In his eagerness to focus on this issue, Conant fails to attend sufficiently to the assumption that is common to the other parties in the theological debate—the assumption that Descartes himself is most concerned with targeting. I shall argue below that this leaves Conant unable to understand the puzzling passages in Descartes (about the creation of eternal truths) that most intrigue him.

We come now to one of those points where I want to say that Conant is looking in the right place but looking at it in the wrong way. Conant is interested in Descartes's insistence that we must not say, with regard to anything (even when the something in question is logically impossible), that God cannot do it. Conant's way of trying to understand what on earth this could mean, as indicated above, essentially follows Leibniz's lead. Leibniz takes this to mean that Descartes holds that God's will is prior to his understanding and suggests that that is exactly backward. According to Leibniz, it is God's understanding that is prior to his will. It is therefore not within God's power to have created a universe in which contradictions were true, or in which two plus two equals five. For

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[10] This is, of course, the feature of (what he takes to be) Descartes's doctrine that most interests Conant.

Leibniz, however, the truth of this doctrine is not to be regarded as a constraint on God's freedom, but rather as merely articulating the sphere of activity of a genuinely free being—even that of an infinitely free being. For any such being must proceed from a prior understanding of what it is possible for him to do, if such a being is to be able then to go on and actually do one of things that it is open to him to do. It is logic that articulates the space within which any such understanding—finite or infinite—operates. There is no such thing as making two plus two equal five, and this belongs to God's understanding of what is and is not creatable—of the genuine possibilities for action that are open to Him. It does not mark a limit on His freedom but articulates a condition of that freedom.

I will call any position (within this debate about the relation between God and the modalities) that holds that if *p is logically impossible then p is logically impossible for God* "theological rationalism."[11] And I will call Leibniz's variant on this position—in which its impossibility is to be traced to its relation to the divine understanding—*theological logicism*. Here, too, we can distinguish within such a position two different degrees—a thesis regarding the priority of God's understanding over everything and a thesis regarding the priority of the domain of the logical over that of the actual. It will be useful to have labels for these, too. I will dub them theological logicism and logicism respectively. The former is the position that God's understanding is prior to everything—even to His will. The latter is the position that logic is prior to everything—this means not only that nothing constrains the necessity of the principles of logic from without, but also that logic constrains everything else—that our capacity to grasp the principles of logic is prior to our capacity to grasp anything else.

So far, we have reviewed the sorts of positions in the theological debate that Conant himself considers, drawn some distinctions within them, and introduced some labels that will prove helpful later. Let us now attend to various aspects of the theological debate that Conant himself neglects and the ways in which they relate to the logico-philosophical debate to which he wants to attend. For here, too, Conant is looking in the right place but looking at it in the wrong way. I continue to find that a consideration of the structural parallels between these two debates furnishes an extraordinarily useful foil for approaching the issues in

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[11] Here, too, there is historical precedent for this use of the label, but I again use it in a slightly more focused way than is usual.

Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein that will concern us anon—though not in the way that Conant originally intended. So like Conant's original article, these replies are prefaced by a historical preamble that seeks to get a dimension of the logico-philosophical present in view by contemplating it from the vantage of the theological past.

This would not be worth doing in the present context, if the point were simply to straighten out what is wrong in Conant. But, as we shall see further below, not only Conant reads Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein in ways that may be brought under critical pressure through the replacement of his original historical narrative with a more adequate one. It is equally true of a number of the other contributors to this volume that they (1) read into some or all of these three figures aspects of the conception of logic that Descartes was already concerned to pinpoint and reject; that they thereby (2) follow Conant in failing to appreciate the depth of the affinities between Descartes, Kant, and Wittgenstein in this regard; and that they therefore (3) follow Conant in failing to appreciate the enormity of the differences between Kant and Frege, on the one hand, or Frege and any Wittgenstein, on the other.[12]

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[12] We will see in the replies to each of them that this, for example, is true of Moore's reading of Descartes, of Sullivan's understanding of the relation of Frege to Kant, and of Travis's reading of what in later Wittgenstein is supposedly anticipated by Frege.

Section IV

Theological Sources of Modern Conceptions of Logic

Let us first focus on two words that frequently occur in the aforementioned theological debate: "existence" and "creation."[1] A number of historians of philosophy have recently argued that these two terms began in medieval Islamic philosophy to denote concepts not found anywhere in ancient Greek philosophy and that their emergence plays a philosophically fateful role in the subsequent history of philosophy. These words come to denote two new concepts through their simultaneous emergence—that is, through the manner in which their senses come to interlock. The new concept of causation (divine creation) is required to

[1] Starting with this paragraph, and the ensuing digression into medieval philosophy, everything I say is indebted to (somewhere around a hundred or so) conversations with Irad Kimhi over the past four years. He and I presented various stretches of this material over three different classes that he and I co-taught—the first of which was titled "Tractarian Themes in the History of Philosophy." In those courses, we assigned the essays by the other eight contributors to this volume and debated the merits of various interpretations of Aristotle, Avicenna, Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, Frege, and early Wittgenstein as they bear on the topics discussed in the pages that follow. In some of the footnotes below, I will occasionally direct the reader to certain pages in Kimhi's book *Thinking and Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018). But the intersection between that book and Part Two of this one goes far beyond anything I will attempt to document in those occasional footnotes. Moreover, the specific topic that will occupy us immediately below—concerning the relation between various theological and logical debates in the history of philosophy—is not taken up at all in Kimhi's recent book. I hope that he will write up his own understanding of that relation sometime soon in the form of a second book. When he does, it should not be assumed that merely because that book happens to be published after this one that Kimhi's reflections on that topic did not influence mine.

give sense to the new concept of existence—where "existence" is a determination something acquires simply in virtue of coming to be, without having to undergo any further form of change. And vice versa: this new concept of a mere conferral of existence—a bare transition from nonactuality to actuality—is required to make sense of what the term "creation" is supposed to mean. The term "creation" thereby comes to signify something radically different in connection with God (in which "creation" is an act of bringing forth something out of nothing) than it has in connection with finite beings (where it is an act of starting with something already given and making something new out of that starting material). The task of elucidating these concepts itself then becomes the first order of business of metaphysics, thereby also transforming the understanding of what metaphysics is. Charles Kahn offers the following summary of how a new metaphysics takes shape in Islamic philosophy:

> My general view of the historical development is that existence in the modern sense becomes a central concept in philosophy only in the period when Greek ontology is radically revised in the light of a metaphysics of creation; that is to say, under the influence of biblical religion. As far as I can see, this development did not take place with Augustine or with the Greek Church Fathers, who remained under the sway of classical ontology. The new metaphysics seems to have taken shape in Islamic philosophy, in the form of a radical distinction between necessary and contingent existence: between the existence of God on the one hand, and that of the created world on the other.[2]

The new metaphysics that takes shape in Islamic philosophy proves fateful for subsequent philosophy in various ways. What will interest us immediately below is how it plays a role in triggering a debate about how to conceive divine creation. What will be of implicit interest later in these replies is how a remarkably unvarnished version of this new metaphysics comes to be detached from its original theological context. The ensuing detheologized modal metaphysics remains in force in some quarters of analytic philosophy, even though it takes its point of departure from a topic (how to understand the act of divine creation) that is no longer of much interest to most analytic philosophers. For the new metaphysics introduces concepts and ways of thinking that, once divested of their theological garb, continually resurface in the history of philosophy up to the present day.

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[2] Charles Kahn, "Why Existence Does Not Emerge as a Distinct Concept in Greek Philosophy," in *Essays on Being* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 62–63.

The new Islamic way of understanding the ground of the difference between the necessary and the contingent in terms of a distinction between two kinds of existences—that of God and that of the created world, and between that which necessarily exists and that which possibly exists—finds its most powerful and influential articulation in the writings of Avicenna.[3] Here we find an initial distinction between what exists necessarily and everything else that exists put to work in such a way that it becomes the engine that propels one to the following conclusion: everything that depends upon God's creative activity for its existence "exists possibly for itself"; only God exists necessarily. According to Avicenna, metaphysics is first philosophy, prior to all other sciences, for only it can establish the existence of a first and absolute principle—one which allows us to grasp why there is something rather than nothing and hence why there is a subject matter for other branches of philosophy or science.[4] The first task of metaphysics, so understood, is to put in place the conceptual resources required to make sense of the idea that the world is created by God, based on a certain understanding of what that idea has to involve. The original difficulty with which Avicenna and other Islamic theologians wrestled was how to make as literal sense as possible of the scriptural idea that God's creation is a creation ex nihilo.[5] In the beginning, there is nothing; then—

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[3] There is no shortage of controversies about how to interpret the details of Avicenna's philosophy, but every serious commentator seems to agree with Etienne Gilson on the following point: "Not a commentator, but an original thinker, he really was trying to say something that was both new and true," *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), 80.

[4] See Jon McGinnis, "The Ultimate Why Question: Avicenna on Why God Is Absolutely Necessary," in *The Ultimate Question,* ed. J. Wippel (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 65–83.

[5] Faced with the conceptual innovations that Avicenna sought to introduce in order to make sense of the idea of creation ex nihilo, later Islamic thinkers argued the best way to avoid the difficulties into which one thus becomes entangled is just to reject the whole idea of creation of ex nihilo. This required an argument on scriptural, as well as philosophical, grounds that this way of conceiving creation may be regarded as optional. Thus we find Averroes writing:

> If the apparent meaning of Scripture is searched, it will be evident from the verses which give us information about the bringing into existence of the world that its form really is originated, but that being itself and time extend continuously at both extremes, i. e. without interruption. . . . Thus the theologians . . . in their statements about the world do not conform to the apparent meaning of Scripture. . . . For it is not stated in Scripture that God was existing with absolutely nothing else: a text to this effect is nowhere to be found. (Averroes, "The Decisive Treatise," in *Philosophy of the Middle Ages,* 3rd ed., ed. A. Hyman, J. J. Walsh, and T. Williams [Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010], 296)

Oliver Leaman argues that this issue was much more contested in medieval Islamic philosophy that in the other two contemporaneous scriptural traditions because it is less clear that

in a moment that must be logically, but not temporally, posterior—God creates. This is a transition prior to which there is nothing and posterior to which there is something. How to understand this transition becomes a central issue in medieval philosophy. In the first sentence of chapter 16 of his *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Aquinas writes, "God has produced things as regards their being out of no pre-existing [subject], as out of matter."[6] Norman Kretzmann comments, "[T]here can't be . . . any pre-existing stuff *out of* which God produces *all* things (as you produce things out of vegetables or out of words, the matter of your salad or of your poem)."[7] Commenting on a further parallel moment in Aquinas's thought, Brian Davies summarizes the nature of the supposed transition as follows: "The only thing presupposed to creation is God. In creation, what is not (period) comes to be (period)."[8] Two of the central questions with which Avicenna and later theorists of divine creation wrestle may therefore be put as follows: What becomes of our ordinary non-theological concept of "what is not" when what it needs to denote is—what Davies here calls—"what is not (period)," and what becomes of our ordinary non-theological concept of "comes to be" when what it needs to denote is "comes to be (period)"? Ordinarily, when we say of something that "it is not," it is to draw a contrast between it and a range of things (not too dramatically unlike it) about which we can say that "they are." The idea of "what is not (period)" is one that obliterates this ordinary contrast, placing *everything*[9] prior to creation into the category of "what is not." Creation is therefore not a matter of the world being made *out of* a set of materials about which one can say (prior to creation) "they are."[10]

A similarly radical distinction is required to make sense of the difference between any ordinary concept of "come to be" and the required concept of "come to be (period)." To say "prior to the transition there is nothing and posterior to the transition there is something" is not to say "at one moment in time there is nothing and then at a subsequent moment

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parochial. The tendency to approach the question of creation in such all-or-nothing terms is, for example, less pronounced in the Jewish tradition. Walter Benjamin's commentary on the book of *Genesis*, as set forth in his essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man" (in *Early Writings: 1910–1917*, trans. H. Eiland [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011], 251–269), provides a summary of an alternative view. It is helpful to see Benjamin's alternative reading of creation as involving six moments corresponding to the following six sorts of remarks to be found in that essay:

(1) In individual acts of creation . . . only the "Let there be" appears. (259)
(2) With the creative omnipotence of language this act begins. . . . In God, name is creative because it is word. . . . (259)
(3) The second version of the Creation story, which tells of the breathing of God's breath into man, also reports that man was made from earth. In the whole story of the Creation, this is the only reference to a material in which the Creator expresses his will, which is doubtless otherwise thought of as immediately creative. (258)
(4) In this second story of the Creation, the making of man did not come about through the word (God spoke and it was so), but this man who was not created from the word is now endowed with the gift of language, and he is elevated above nature. . . . (258) God did not create man from the word, and he did not name him. (259)
(5) God's creation is completed when things receive their names from man—this man from whom, in the name, language alone speaks. . . . (255) Language is therefore that which creates and that which completes; it is word and name. (259)
(6) The absolute relation of name to knowledge exists only in God; only there is the name, because it is inwardly identical with the creative word, the pure medium of knowledge. This means that God made things knowable in their names. Man, however, names them according to knowledge. (259)

The six points may be reformulated to bring out their relevance to our concerns as follows:

(1) When it comes to the first five days of the creation story, there is no question of God's making something out of something, but only the act of His saying to each: "Let there be ___."
(2) In each such creative act, God speaks out what is to be. This is *the initiation of the creation through the word*. God's initiatory speech, His knowledge, is essentially creative, and each such act of creation is immediately creative.
(3) God's creation of man is mediated through his creation of the world. Man was made from earth. The mode of man's creation differs from that of the rest of creation and needs to so differ for the creation to be able to become complete.
(4) This is not a further creation of a thing through the speaking of the creative word; rather it is the creation of the one who is to speak and name all things.
(5) When man names all things and comes to know them, the creation itself thereby comes to be complete. This is *the completion of creation through the name*.
(6) In creating, God makes things knowable. In learning their names, man knows them. In coming to know them, man fully actualizes their potentiality not only to be sayable, but said—not only to be knowable, but known—within creation itself.

in time there is something." The concept of time belongs to physics, not metaphysics, and presupposes the concepts of motion and change as well as that of substances susceptible to alteration. The creation is not in this sense something that takes place—that happens. It is not in time. Stephen Menn writes,

> [M]edieval writers think that God *created* the world, in some way other than by generating it out of a preexisting matter. The *mutakallimun* in Islam, and most Christian writers, think that God created things out of nothing at the beginning of time, when before that moment only God existed. . . . This analysis of creation does not depend on creation happening in time.[11]

Talk of "the beginning of time" earlier in this quotation therefore does not mean the first moment *in* time, and its talk of a "moment" before which only God existed does not mean a temporal but rather only a logical moment. There is no first moment in time. From the inception of the debate about the nature of divine creation, an elucidation of the idea of creation is sought, in which creation does not exclude eternity. The first moment of the book of *Genesis*—"in the beginning"—is a logical mo-

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We may formulate the parallels and divergences of this creation story from the one that will concern us below, as follows:

(1) Over the first five days of the creation, things are called forth by words—where what is thereby created is, in each case, delimited by its essence.

(2) The initiation of the creation may be pictured as a conferral of existence upon essence—but this proves to be a hopeless picture if it is to encompass the whole of creation.

(3) Man is made from earth and not called forth by words. This is the creation of a being into which God's breath, His spirit, has been breathed—a creature that partakes of a form of being in no way delimited by a prior essence.

(4) Man himself is a source of the word, of knowledge, and not just its product—the calling forth of such a being into being calls for a difference in the mode of creation.

(5) Such a being, unlike any other being, is an agent, and not merely a patient, in the drama of creation. This means that the creation lies not only in God's act; man himself has a speaking part to play, an active burden to shoulder, in its completion.

(6) The full creation requires that it become fully accomplished through being known—though a community of spirit between God and man coming to be formed.

It is an intriguing feature of this alternative vision that it requires according *language* pride of place throughout—in an account of both what creation is and what sort of creature the human is—a place that it does not hold in the theological conception that will concern us below. The latter aspect of Benjamin's account, in turn, allows for a remarkable series of parallels between some of his reflections on language and precisely those aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy that will most occupy us in our final three replies.

[11] Stephen Menn, "Metaphysics: God and Being," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy,* ed. A. S. McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 155.

ment, one in which the creation (including space and time) comes to have being. For Avicenna, metaphysics must explain the transition from nothing to something—from non-being to being—where the transition in question must have all of the following features: first, it must be atemporal in nature; second, it must be such that it does not exclude eternity from what is caused to be; third, that which effects the transition (that which necessarily exists: God) is wholly outside the order of time; fourth, that which acquires existence through creation exists in time. As we shall briefly indicate below, there is much resistance to certain aspects of the new metaphysics; nonetheless, these four features of Avicenna's conception of creation have been retained by most of the subsequent Christian thinkers who are party to the ensuing debate about how to make sense of the concept of creation.

How are we to understand this sort of "making," if God's making the world does not involve making it out of any antecedently given materials?[12] And is making something out of nothing to be understood as a special and strange form of causation?[13] Or does it mark the very point at which a causal form of explanation necessarily breaks down and some other form of explanation (or non-explanation) is required?[14] Some of the par-

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[12] One question that this raises is whether this form of causation, in which first there is nothing and then God *makes the world,* can be understood on analogy with other senses of "making." There is reason to think that Avicenna would insist that this form of causation is *sui generis* and cannot be understood on the model of any other case. On the other hand, it looks to be important to a thinker such as Aquinas (and not only to him) that we *can* acquire an understanding of the words required to talk about even this aspect of God by analogy with their use in non-theological contexts. Here is how Peter Geach begins to sketch how, according to Aquinas, one might learn the relevant sense of "make" (required to speak of God's creative and sustaining activity) through reflection upon its non-theological uses:

> Aquinas would say we learned it by analogy with other senses of "making"; there are various familiar senses of the word, with complex likenesses and differences between them, and we may show how the word is applied to God by bringing out the likenesses and differences between this use and the familiar uses. For example, in one respect the use of the word when applied to God is more like "the minstrel made music" than "the blacksmith made a shoe"; for the shoe is made out of pre-existing material, and, once made, goes on existing independently of the smith; whereas the minstrel did not did not make the music out of pre-existing sounds, and the music stops if he stops making it; and similarly God did not make the world out of anything pre-existing, and its continued existence depends upon his activity. (G. E. M. Anscombe and Peter Geach, *Three Philosophers* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961], 110)

[13] For a searching discussion of this issue, see Stephen Mulhall, "Five Ways of Refusing to Make Sense," in *The Great Riddle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 42–60.

[14] Denys Turner, speaking for Aquinas, offers the following comment: "'Nothing' . . . is not a peculiar explanatory 'something' . . . neither is there some specialized theologized sense

ticipants to the medieval debate over these questions wished to retain the idea that God is the cause of the world, yet they felt the force of the worries raised by the preceding questions. Avicenna drew the moral that what this showed was that a radically new *form* of causation was required to make sense of divine creation, one that could not be accommodated within Aristotle's fourfold classification of kinds of cause.[15] The debate also raised the closely related question of whether the transition from non-being to being (required by the new concept of creation) requires a radically new concept of change, or whether it can be accommodated within Aristotle's classification of kinds of change.

In seeking to account for the origin of Avicenna's distinction between a thing and its being or existence (and thus his account of what it means for God to confer existence on a thing), Stephen Menn remarks on how the medieval conception of the kind of change required by divine creation relates to the kinds of change for which Aristotle allows:

> One way this distinction arises is through the analysis of creation, as distinguished from other kinds of change. Aristotle recognizes four basic kinds of change: alteration (change in quality), augmentation and diminution (change in quantity), locomotion (change of place), and generation and corruption. In the first three kinds of change, there is a persisting substance that loses one accident and acquires another. In generation or corruption, there is not properly a substance that persists, but only the matter, which loses one substantial form and acquires another; in such a case, Aristotle says that the substance (the matter-

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which might give force to that sort of 'out of' which is 'out of nothing'; the 'ex' in 'ex nihilo' means, Thomas says, just the contrary: the negation negates the 'out of', no antecedent conditions, so no process, no event, an 'after' but no 'before'. It is just for this reason that the notion of a 'cause of everything' strains at the lines of continuity with our ordinary, intra-mundane, explanatory employments of cause" (Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 251).

[15] I think Avicenna was right about this. The claim quickly became a topic of great controversy in medieval philosophy and remains one even to this day. It continues to be subjected to various sorts of challenges by recent historians of philosophy. Some have argued, for example, that even if Aristotle's philosophy is admittedly innocent of the idea of creation ex nihilo, it is nonetheless somehow friendly to it. The strongest version of such an argument seeks to make a case for the claim that Aristotle's conceptions of causation, cosmos, and hylomorphism not only do not simply stand in a relation of contradiction to the medieval conception of creation but may even be said to prepare a philosophical path that leads directly to that conception. This seems to me a very hard case to make out. For a valiant attempt to try to make it out, see Horst Seidl, "Is Aristotle's Cosmology and Metaphysics Compatible with the Christian Concept of Creation?" in *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought*, eds. M. Treschow, W. Otten, and W. Hannam (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 85–100.

form composite) "comes-to-be absolutely" (rather than X merely coming-to-be Y), but it does not come-to-be *out of nothing,* and Aristotle does not believe that coming-to-be out of nothing is possible. However, medieval writers think that God created the world, in some way other than by generating it out of a preexisting Matter.[16]

This opened up an enormous space for debate about whether the concept of divine creation is something of which sense can be made *within* Aristotle's scheme of kinds of causes (as a further instance of the category "comes-to-be-absolutely"—hence a kind of change that may be introduced *into* that scheme); or whether it is be regarded as a *sui generis* form of change—one that has no place within such a scheme but is nonetheless required, hence so much the worse for Aristotle; or whether the very idea of creation ex nihilo should be rejected precisely on the ground that it cannot be made sense of in Aristotelian terms.[17]

What I want to focus on for the moment is what is new in the specific form of account introduced by Avicenna.[18] Kahn offers the following suggestion for how his concept of creation involves a radical departure:

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[16] Menn, "God and Being," 155.

[17] Within such a spectrum of responses, Aquinas falls on the side of those who wish to effect as complete a reconciliation of Christianity and Aristotelian philosophy as possible. Nevertheless, as Davies emphasizes here, even for Aquinas, a sharp distinction between divine creation and change is required: "[C]reation by God . . . is . . . the making of something from nothing. When things come to be in the world they always do so against a background where things already exist. They come to be from something. . . . According to Aquinas, however, with God's act of creating we have something different. We have the coming to be of things with no background of existing things, a coming to be which is not from anything. . . . [A] distinction must be drawn between creating and changing, and . . . only God can create" (Davies, *The Thought of Aquinas,* 34).

[18] In what follows therefore I do not mean to be describing what came to be far more theologically mainstream ways of thinking about creation—such as Aquinas's—developed partly in reaction to Avicenna's ideas during the subsequent centuries. I am also setting aside yet a further way of thinking that had tremendous currency among the common folk (that is, outside the circles of theological controversy among the medieval intellectual elite) and which could also serve as a model for thinking about creation. According to this way of thinking, the following two ideas are to be understood along parallel lines: (1) the idea of making something happen involved in God's making something be the case by saying "Be!" to it, and (2) the idea of making something happen through the uttering of certain words in a magic formula—such as "Open, sesame!" On this way of looking at things, (1) and (2) are cases of the same thing: causation by telling. There are differences (as there always are) between the divine and mundane case of causation by telling: when mere mortals do it, there is something that already exists to which one addresses the magic word; when God does it, there is nothing prior to His uttering the divine word. The example given above of a magic formula comes, of course, from the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" in *One Thousand and One Nights*—a compilation whose oldest elements date back to the early eighth century. There is evidence that the

The old Platonic contrast between Being and Becoming, between the eternal and the perishable (or, in Aristotelian terms, between the necessary and the contingent) now gets reformulated in such a way that for the contingent being of the created world (which was originally present only as a 'possibility' in the divine mind) the property of 'real existence' emerges as a new attribute or 'accident', a kind of added benefit bestowed by God upon possible beings in the act of creation. What is new here is the notion of radical contingency: not simply the old Aristotelian idea that many things might be other than they in fact are—that many events might turn out otherwise—but that the whole world of nature might not have been created at all: that it might not have existed.[19]

For both Aristotle and for Kant, we can say that existence is not an attribute or an accident of a thing. (Kant will go so far as to say that it is not a concept.) The suggestion here is that we have the emergence of a form of metaphysical account, alien to Aristotle's philosophy (and later targeted by Kant), in which the idea of "real existence" comes to

tales in the Arabic literature of this period were rife with examples of such magic phrases. This invites the question as to what extent the passage from the *Qur'an*, which we shall see Avicenna discuss below (in which when Allah wills something to be, His way is to say, "Be"—and it is!; *Qur'an*, 36:81–83 trans. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 284), should perhaps rather be understood on the model of causation by telling. For an interesting discussion of how attacks on the idea of causation by telling were also often based on Aristotelian views of causation, see Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), especially 104–106.

[19] Charles Kahn, *Essays on Being*, 63. The idea from Kahn that I wish to endorse is that medieval philosophy introduces a particular set of interrelated conceptions of existence and creation—and, with them, a particular conception of creation: as a superadding of a matter to a form (rather than a further forming or reforming of a matter that already stands in some relation to a form). But I do not wish to endorse a further idea that, throughout his writings, Kahn takes automatically to go with this claim—namely, the idea that what this shows is that the ancient Greeks were concerned with the "is" of predication and the veridical "is" but never with the "is" of existence. What is new in medieval philosophy is not the very idea of the "is" of existence but a particular interpretation of its metaphysical character. I do not share Kahn's conviction that Greek philosophy is simply unconcerned with existence. This requires ignoring, for example, Aristotle's discussions of the distinction between essence and existence (as seen, for example, when he distinguishes [in chapter 1 of *Posterior Analytics*] between what *is simpliciter* and what *is not simpliciter*, on the one hand, and what *is such and such* and what *is not such and such*—to take Aristotle's example there, what is white and what is not white—on the other). I am indebted to conversations with Irad Kimhi regarding what is right in Kahn's attempts to narrate a *Seinsgeschichte* (his idea that the philosophical concept of existence acquires a new grammar in the context of medieval theories of creation, one that it retains to this day in contemporary analytic metaphysics) and what is wrong (his idea that the ancient Greeks are altogether innocent of any version of the distinction between essence and existence).

be conceived precisely as a further determination—one that is conferred on "a something" that, logically prior to its existence, only possibly exists.

Avicenna's way of solving the problem of creation comes with considerable metaphysical consequences, for it requires that we have some way to make sense of *what it is* upon which this further determination is conferred prior to its coming to exist. God is necessarily existent; everything that belongs to His creation, considered apart from the act of creation, is possibly existent.[20] This involves the idea that everything[21] (prior to creation) possibly exists before anything really exists. This way of mixing modal and existential categories introduces a nested hierarchy of priority within the modalities, so that the concept of what necessarily exists comes to be logically prior to that of what possibly exists, and the concept of what possibly exists, in turn, comes to be logically prior to the concept of what really or actually exists.[22] Many of the other parties to the theological debate, both Islamic and Christian, sought to avoid this consequence of Avicenna's proposal.

What Kahn calls in the passage above "the old Aristotelian idea that many things might be other than they in fact are" is the idea of ways that things might possibly be, given some of the ways in which they already *actually* are. This is a conception of what is modally possible that does not come free from a conception of what is modally actual. In Aristotle, one is equipped with a substantive material understanding of how things actually are, and it is this that constrains and gives content to one's conception of various ways that actual things might be, might have been, or might come to be.[23] It is useful to see Kant—in his later reaction to Leibnizian rationalism—as trying to recapture this piece of Aristotelian wisdom: a piece of wisdom that is a casualty of the emerging dominance

[20] "The necessarily existent is the existent, which when posited as not existing, an absurdity results. The possibly existent is the one that, when posited as either existing or not existing, no absurdity results. The necessarily existent is the existence that must be, whereas the possibly existent is the one that has no 'must' about it in any way, whether in terms of its existence or nonexistence" (Ibn-Sina, *The Salvation,* "Metaphysics" II.1–5a, trans. Reisman and McGinnis, in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages,* eds. Hyman, Walsh, and Williams [Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010], 244).

[21] Or more precisely, everything that does not necessarily exist.

[22] Avicenna puts this last point as follows: "Whatever exists necessarily through another exists possibly in itself" (*Philosophy in the Middle Ages,* eds. Hyman, Walsh, and Williams, 244).

[23] This is not to claim that for Aristotle what is actual is prior to what is possible and necessary—this would be as wrong about Aristotle as it is about Kant. It is simply to deny that for him what is possible and necessary may be conceived as being metaphysically self-standingly prior to what is actual.

of the new concepts of existence and creation. Hence Kant will insist upon the role of the actual in giving content to a genuinely object-related conception of the possible. This leads him to distinguish between mere possibility and real possibility—and thus between pure general logic and transcendental logic. Conant is greatly interested in this latter Kantian distinction—in the role it plays in Kant's critique of Descartes and Leibniz and how it comes to be obliterated in Frege—without clearly having in view what its intended metaphysical target is supposed to be.[24] What we want to investigate here is the shape of these issues before they come to be divested of their original theological garb.

If one introduces this new concept of causation—that of the divine creation of the whole world out of nothing—in the manner that Avicenna does and yet still wants to regard God as free (as in some sense freely creating the universe to be one way rather than another), then one needs to confer intelligibility upon the idea that there are a range of ways that things could be apart from anything's actually being any way in particular. One's conception of the most fundamental domain of possibility thus comes to be one in which the domain of the possible precedes any actuality whatsoever within the world. The conception of "possible existence" is no longer to be understood as involving a reflection upon the actual that allows one to arrive at a determinate conception of the really possible—as involving a movement *from* some determinate set of ways that things actually are *to* other ways they could be.[25] Rather, what is actual in the world now comes to be understood as logically posterior to that which possibly exists. Leibniz will later give this idea a very vivid twist in his doctrine that God *first* contemplates all of the possible worlds that He might create, selects the best one, and *then* creates it. The feature of this doctrine that matters for our present purposes is simply this: that the domain of all possible worlds has a determinate logical topology prior to there being any actual world. As noted above, in most contemporary versions of it, the theological trappings of this doctrine (be it those we find in Avicenna or those we find in Leibniz) have largely fallen away, but the modal metaphysics underlying these conceptual innovations remains in force in a certain conception of the priority of the modally possible over the actual.

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[24] These are matters to which we will return beginning in Section VIII, in my reply to Boyle.

[25] This concept of "possible ways things could be," through which we seek to comprehend the activity of divine creation, needs to be a concept of "possibility" whose conditions of intelligibility presuppose only the existence of that which necessarily exists (God); it must not presuppose the existence of anything that merely, as Avicenna puts it, "exists possibly in itself."

What matters for our present purpose is how Leibniz's later conception—one that, as we shall see, seeks to avoid what are supposed to be the worst consequences of Avicenna's account—nonetheless preserves certain logical aspects of what Kahn calls "the new metaphysics" (that initially takes shape in Islamic philosophy) and its radical distinction between necessary and contingent existence. As Kahn suggests, this distinction has its roots in a certain understanding of the nature of the distinction between the existence of God, on the one hand, and that of the created world, on the other; where, as we saw, the sense in which God "exists" is to be radically distinguished from the sense in which anything He goes on to create may be said to exist. The former sort of existence is an essential kind of being (one that could not possibly not have been); the latter is a contingent kind of being (one that is actual only because existence was conferred on certain possibilities by God). This requires that we be able to answer the following three questions: What is there prior to the act of creation? What kind of "being" does "it" have? How does it differ from the kind of being that something that God creates has? According to the conception here at issue, "existence" becomes the term of art for answering the last of these three questions. But that answer makes sense only if we have some way of answering the first two—only if we have something that stands in the right counterpart relation to this concept of existence.

On Avicenna's picture, the act of creation involves God's contemplating a way things could be and then willing them to be *that* way, thereby bringing about the actuality of their being as thus and so—or, as a wonderfully vivid passage in the *Qur'an* puts it, it involves God saying to a way things could be, "Be!"[26] To fully get into view what is radically new in this conception, it may help to return for a moment to the topic of the difference in what we do when we create and what God does when He creates. In the case of finite beings such as us, creating something does not involve simply contemplating its bare possibility and then issuing the decree "Be!" to that possibility. It requires that we start with some things that already exist and then transform them in such a way that something new under the sun comes into being. As we have seen, this is the only sort of creation for which Aristotle allows. He gives a wonderfully nuanced overall account of what sorts of transitions can be involved in something's coming to be in this sense, depending upon what sorts of ac-

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[26] "Of course He is! He is the All Knowing Creator: when He wills something to be, His way is to say, 'Be'—and it is! So glory be to Him in whose Hand lies control over all things. It is to Him that you will all be brought back" (*The Qur'an,* 36:81–83, 284).

tualities one starts and ends with. But for all of the diversity of cases for which his account allows, it cannot be extended to cover the case under consideration if it is to be explicated in the manner that Avicenna proposes. Let us look at that proposed explication a bit more carefully now.

It is reasonably clear, according to the new concept of divine creation, what we are, more or less, supposed to end up with—the whole of the world in which we find ourselves. But we have a clear concept of this new form of causation only if we also have clear answers to questions such as these: What is its creation a transition from? How should we characterize the sort of change effected through such a transition? The task of answering these questions gives rise in Avicenna to the new concept of "essence" as the much-needed counterpart to the new concept of "existence" and further determines the sense of the latter—where creation is now to be conceived as a transition from essence to existence. Stephen Menn is helpful here:

> The language of essence and existence gives a way to explain what creation is. When God *creates* something, no part of it previously existed: God is not taking a preexisting matter and giving it a form, but giving existence to something that did not previously exist. . . . But what status do these things have prior to their existence? Since the results are different when God tells a horse "be!" and when he tells an ostrich "be!," there must be some difference between a horse and an ostrich even before they exist. Before an individual horse exists, the *essence* of horse—what a horse is, or what it is to be a horse—already grounds propositions such as "the horse is a quadruped." For Avicenna, it is this essence to which God adds existence.[27]

Avicenna's view is that there is a self-standing realm of essences that is prior to the realm of existing things; divine creation is the act of conferring existence upon an essence. The description "God confers existence upon an essence" writes a certain internal logical complexity into the nature of each product of creation. (To say this is not to describe a process that an essence undergoes in time in order to acquire existence.[28]) The

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[27] Menn, "God and Being," 154–155.

[28] "As indicated above, for Avicenna and subsequent parties to the theological debate, the act of creation is not to be regarded as something that takes place in time. Acquiring existence (being created) is not coming to be; it does not have the logical and temporal features of a process. Even if God creates a star or an angel from eternity, He is still adding existence to an essence. Even if the essence never lacks existence, it does not contain existence of itself, but needs it supplied, by God or by some proximate cause" (ibid., 155).

description, if unpacked in the manner proposed by Avicenna, requires that the product of creation be something that has both essence and existence, that these can come apart, and that the essence be logically prior to and independent of its existence. This introduces the idea of a realm of logical reality—one of essences or quiddities upon which existence can be conferred—which is prior to that of actuality or real existents.[29] This, in turn, allows the essence/existence distinction itself to mark a difference of logical type between two sorts of beings: between those whose essence and existence can come apart (so that they need causes for their existence) and those whose essence and existence cannot be thus disjoined and hence (because requiring no cause in order to exist) necessarily exist. The explication of the former category of beings requires the concept of creation (to account for how what exists is caused to be), and the latter category of a being requires the concept of God (to account for what does the causing).

Here is how Stephen Menn summarizes the logical feature of Avicenna's account of the ontological difference between uncaused and caused beings—between God and his creation—that will interest us below:

> The essence/existence distinction thus allows Avicenna to discern an intrinsic difference, indeed a difference of logical type, between things that need causes for their existence and things that do not. . . . The ultimate sufficient reason for the existence of those things that do exist can only be some being (or beings) whose essence includes existence. So, if Avicenna can sustain his metaphysics of essence and existence, he can defend his proof of something necessarily existent through itself [i.e., God].[30]

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[29] "[E]ach thing has a reality proper to it—namely, its quiddity. . . . [T]he reality proper to each thing is something other than the existence that corresponds to what is affirmed" (Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing,*" II.1–5a, trans. Michael Marmura [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005], 24).

[30] Menn, "God and Being," 156. It should be noted that Menn (in saying that God's essence includes existence) here takes a position on a controversial question in Avicenna scholarship. There is a debate about whether Avicenna should be read as holding that God has no essence distinct from his existence or as holding that God has no essence. Gilson offers an eloquent defense of the opposed view: "If God is existence, He cannot have an essence. Had God an essence, then His essence would have existence, so He Himself would exist—not as Existence, but merely as having it" (Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers,* 80). For a probing attempt to arrive at a precise formulation of Avicenna's conception of the relationship of essence to existence in God, see Amos Bertolacci, "The Distinction of Essence and Existence in Avicenna's Metaphysics: The Text and Its Context," in *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas,* eds. F. Opwis and D. C. Reisman

What will primarily concern us below is the generic idea of a *difference in logical type* between two ontologically distinct orders: (i) an order of being that is prior to actuality and (ii) a logically posterior order of the actual—where (i) has a self-standingly intelligible logical character apart from (ii), but not vice versa. This generic idea is unpacked in Avicenna's metaphysics in a very particular way. Nonetheless, his account bears two interrelated features that will interest us later in its relation to Leibniz's and Frege's respective conceptions of the priority of logic. First, in Avicenna's account of the nature of those beings whose existence depends on God's activity,[31] the notion of an essence is explanatorily prior to that of existence. Existence is logically external to essence: a created thing has a self-standingly intelligible essence in the light of which an account of its existence may be furnished.[32] If we want to arrive at a set of logically fundamental notions, we must begin by formulating a set of notions that enable us to characterize the logical features of what is and what can be considered apart from the contingencies of the layout of reality, upon which the recognition of the truth of an empirical judgment depends. The step beyond such a purely logical account—so as to include an account of the logical character of that which is the case in the world in which we happen to find ourselves—involves a further extension of this same set of fundamental notions (in this case the notions of being, cause, necessity, essence, and existence, among others), upon which sense has already been conferred prior to their application to the sphere of the actual.[33] Second, existence is something that is added to essence, so that the internal logical character of any contingently existing thing is to be conceived as a logical composite of essence and existence,[34] where the

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(Leiden: Brill, 2012) 257–288; for a helpful overview of contemporary literature on the issue, see especially 276–277n26.

[31] In God's case, His existence, too, depends on His activity, but in Him these are coeval. Thus, in God's case, essence is not explanatorily prior to existence.

[32] God's existence, for Avicenna, is not external to an essence. What is less clear is exactly how the essence/existence distinction should now be applied. In the aforementioned exegetical controversy, the two leading options are as follows: (1) Essence and existence in God, unlike in created things, are not distinct; and (2) God is pure activity—pure existence—and has no essence.

[33] I will be interested below in a parallel between this aspect of Avicenna's philosophy and Frege's conception of what is explanatorily prior and posterior in an account of notions such as "content," "object," thought," "judgment," and "truth."

[34] More precisely, everything created by God has this composite character. Avicenna seeks to give the following form of account of the ontological difference between God and His creatures—between the uncaused First Principle and the caused world: The First Principle is absolutely necessary and simply *is* its existence, whereas everything else has a logically

former is a highest logical common factor that can be shared by something that possibly exists and something that actually exists.[35]

Let us call this species of theological rationalism (that holds there is a realm of essences that lack existence prior to the logical moment of creation) *theological modal realism*. Notice that theological modal realism presupposes *logical modal realism* (or sometimes just *logical realism*, for short)—the doctrine that there is a realm of logically essential possible beings prior to the realm of contingently existing actual beings. Logical modal realism often figures in the contemporary philosophy of logic as a doctrine that has ostensibly been detached from its original theological commitments; it becomes the doctrine that possibilities, considered apart from what does and does not exist, must already possess a kind of being, or else they could not figure in claims about what can be the case in the ways that they do.[36] Both theological and logical modal realism conceive the transition from possibility to actuality as a conferral of existence upon something that already partakes of a self-standingly intelligible logical character.

Many of the parties to the late medieval and early modern theological debate about the nature of divine creation steer a middle course, in which they seek to hang onto some of the ingredients of Avicenna's series of

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dual or composite nature such that a distinction can be drawn with regard to it between *what* the thing is and that it *is*. As the next note makes clear, this leaves room for controversy about how this former idea (that something simply *is* its existence) is to be understood.

[35] In a being that is necessary in itself—in God—there is no such internal logical complexity. The aforementioned controversy about Avicenna's view of God thus turns on the following two remaining options for what one should say about the absolutely necessary First Principle: (1) What is logically distinct in created beings (essence/existence) forms an indissoluble unity in it or (2) it somehow partakes of existence but lacks essence (for only created beings require an essence).

According to (1), *what it is* and *that it is* are one and the same. According to (2), there is no *what* it is; it just *is*. The original statement of (2) above is intentionally vague. To say that it "somehow partakes of existence" leaves room for both: (2a) Existence is a highest common factor shared by God and created beings, and (2b) created beings *have* existence, but God *is* existence, so there is no straightforward way to express that which they share. The latter reading of Avicenna prepares the way for Aquinas's strategy for cleaning up this issue in Avicenna through the introduction of (3): There is no univocal predication of existence to God and creatures; there is analogical predication in the case of creatures.

[36] There are a variety of ways of trying to flesh out a non-theological variant of modal realism. It suffices to qualify a philosophical doctrine as a variant of modal realism, for our purpose, if it seeks to give sense to the idea that possible worlds or possible beings partake of a kind of being or "reality" of their own, so that they may be regarded as irreducible entities in their own right. (This neither requires nor excludes the additional extravagance of claiming that possible worlds are "just as real"—or real in just the same sense of "real"—as the actual world.)

conceptual innovations (thus the distinction between essence and exis-
tence will become a popular one) while seeking to avoid the commitment
to logical realism that his way of disjoining essence from existence ap-
pears to entail.[37] (Some do not take a middle way but see the extremity
of the problem as calling for equal extremity in the solution—such as
theological voluntarism.[38]) The ways in which such a middle course is
pursued (and how little or much of the Islamic theological contribution
is thereby retained) vary enormously from Ockham (and his nominalist
attempt to deflate essences as far as possible) to Aquinas (and his attempt
to reconcile the doctrine of creation with Aristotelian philosophy as far
as possible). Descartes and Leibniz, in turn, in their equally divergent
ways of joining the debate, share this much with Ockham and Aquinas
(and many other Christian thinkers): they, too, seek an account of cre-
ation that retains what had come to be regarded as the fundamental log-

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[37] Gilson summarizes Avicenna's conception of the created world prior to its creation as fol-
lows: "in such a world, essences always remain in themselves, pure possibles, and no
wonder, since the very essence of essence is possibility." Gilson contrasts such a conception
(in which an essence, as such, is "innocent of existence" and connotes the mere capability
of receiving existence) with both the ancient understanding of the internality of the essence
of a thing to its reality and with that of (what Gilson takes to be) a properly Christian way of
deploying the conceptual tools that Avicenna introduced (of the sort that one finds, for ex-
ample, in Aquinas). Gilson, however, also suggests that a certain modern way of thinking
(that he takes to be equally alien to both ancient philosophy and properly Christian thought,
but that now comes all too naturally to us) has its roots in Avicenna: "When we speak of
an 'essence', the very first connotation of the word which occurs to our mind is that what
it designates may exist and as easily may not. Modern essences are pure possibles . . ." (Gilson,
Being and Some Philosophers, 82).

[38] My way here of sorting positions in the debate so that some count as steering a middle
course (if they accept Avicenna's conceptual innovations but reject his logical realism) and
as extreme (if they reject both) is not a standard way of sorting positions within this debate.
The value of this way of sorting parties lies in how it can help to bring into view parallels
between the positions within this debate and those in later non-theological debates about
logic. A more standard way of dividing up positions in the late medieval period would be
to distinguish those that seek (as Gilson puts it) "to blow up the solid block of Greco-
Arabic [logical] determinism" and those that do not. This principle allows Gilson to group
Franciscans such as Ockham (who seeks "to annihilate all essences") and Scotus (who
proposes a deflation of essences) together, on account of their both being figures who want
"to break up Greco-Arabic necessity." According to my classification, on the other hand,
Ockham counts as an extreme figure because his position anticipates the voluntarist ac-
count (of the sort that, as I argue below, Leibniz and Conant mistakenly attribute to Des-
cartes); whereas Scotus counts as steering a middle course because he continues to deploy
the conceptual tools bequeathed by Avicenna. Gilson does not dispute this last point.
Hence, he writes, "But Duns Scotus also wanted to break up Greco-Arabic necessity, and
he did it in a very different way: not through annihilating Avicenna's essences but, on the
contrary, through taking fullest advantage of their existential neutrality" (ibid., 84).

ical features of the concept,[39] while avoiding the ontological excesses of Avicenna's realism. What will be of concern below is some of the nuances in Descartes's and Leibniz's respective ways of seeking to elucidate the concept of creation and how they anticipate possibilities for thinking about logic among subsequent generations of philosophers.

Avicenna's logical realism differs from the species of logical rationalism that we later find in Leibniz in this respect: it holds that that there is something given to logical thought from without—a realm of essences—which constrains the necessity of the principles of logic. According to realism, logic is about something that in some sense *is*, even if the kind of "being" it possesses is different in kind from that possessed by existing material things. According to Leibnizian logicism, logic is about *what can be* and *what cannot be*—but the realm of what can be is not itself to be understood as a further and higher region within the realm of being. Where the realist postulates two whole realms of entities (one prior to created reality and one identical with it), Leibniz requires only one. For the logical realist, just as the truth of our empirical thoughts resides in their properly tracking the contours of the antecedently given contingencies of a prior existing actuality, so too the truth of our merely logical thoughts resides in their properly tracking the contours of the antecedently given necessities and possibilities of a prior logical reality. For Leibniz, on the other hand, there is only one reality upon which our thought bears: empirical inquiry bears on what is actually true of it; logical thought on what is possibly or necessarily true of it. While the realist and the theological logicist differ here about how many kinds of reality there are, they are both working with the conceptual innovations that came with the medieval debate about divine creation. Both hold that our capacity to know the most basic modal truths (about what is possible or necessary) does not depend on our capacity to know empirical truths about what is actual. We shall see that it is this underlying presupposition at which first Descartes, and then Kant, and then Wittgenstein (even early Wittgenstein) all seek, each in their own way, to take aim. All three are concerned with targeting the idea that the contours of the logical are fixed prior to and independently of the contours of the world in which we find ourselves.[40]

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[39] First, divine creation must be atemporal in nature; second, it must not exclude eternity from what is caused to be; third, that which effects the transition (that which necessarily exists: God) is wholly outside the order of time; fourth, that which acquires existence through creation exists in time.

[40] This formulation is meant to be neutral between the very different ways of drawing the

It is useful to see the debate around the new doctrine of divine creation as struggling to find a way to make room for the following two claims:

(a) God caused (created) absolutely everything other than Himself.[41]
(b) Creation is an absolutely free act on God's part.

Descartes sees his predecessors in the ongoing theological debate as saving (a) at the cost of having rendered it impossible to make satisfying sense of (b). They give an account of how there could be creation ex nihilo but at the cost of making it seem as if the prior fundamental constraints on what is possible determine even what God can do. This would mean that there would be something that determines God's activity from without. They have, Descartes fears, avoided the blasphemy of denying (a) and the cost of the blasphemy of denying (b).

The problem underlying the debate can be made vivid by considering the paradox of the stone—which may be posed as follows: Could God create a stone so heavy that even He could not lift it?[42] If we answer this question with a yes (God can create such a stone), then subsequent to His act of creation, there will come to be something that He cannot do (namely, lift this stone). If we answer the question with a no (God cannot create such a stone), then there can now seem to be something prior to His act of creation that He cannot do (He cannot create such a stone). Descartes does not want to be caught up in the situation in which he has to say, either way, that there is something God cannot do. (Hence even He cannot do certain things.) Descartes charges his contemporaries with claiming there is something prior to God, when they seek to dissolve the paradox of the stone by answering that we should not be worried about having to say that it is not within God's power to create a stone with such peculiar logical features, for the inability to do that is not an inability to do something doable.[43]

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contrast between what is here taken to be prior and posterior—between uncaused and caused beings, between God and creatures, between what possibly exists and what actually exists, between the thinkable and the knowable, between the form and matter of thought, and between maximally general laws that hold of everything and laws whose formulations require a restriction in the scope of the quantifier.

[41] God being the "cause of himself"—*causa sui*—is not a typical Medieval idiom.

[42] This version of the paradox of omnipotence dates back to at least the twelfth century and is treated by Averroes (*Tahafut al-Tahafut [The Incoherence of the Incoherence]*, trans. Simon van den Bergh [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], sects. 529–536) and Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, bk. 1, question 25, art. 3).

[43] As we shall see below, Descartes's own solution to this problem (equally missed by both

Leibniz is extremely sensitive to Descartes's worry. It is helpful to see him here as siding with Descartes against the logical realist who wants to claim that there are necessities prior to and given to God. Leibniz is therefore at pains not only to dissipate the impression that he is saying that there are things that God cannot do, but also to make it clear that what determines God does not determine Him from without but merely from within. The question for Leibniz is, How then is what is necessary dependent upon God's nature? Leibniz takes Descartes to have the details of the answer to this question wrong. In particular, he thinks the main detail in Descartes's answer is the following: God's understanding depends on His will. Leibniz vehemently denies this:

> [I]n saying that things are not good by virtue of any rule of goodness but solely by virtue of the will of God, it seems to me that we unknowingly destroy all of God's love and all of his glory. For why praise him for what He has done if He would be equally praiseworthy in doing the exact contrary? Where will His justice and wisdom reside if there remains only a certain despotic power, if will holds the place of reason . . . ? Besides, it seems that all acts presuppose a reason for willing and that this reason is naturally prior to the act of will. That is why I also find completely strange the expression of some other philosophers who say that the eternal truths of metaphysics and geometry and consequently also the rules of goodness, justice, and perfection are merely the effects of the will of God; instead, it seems to me, they are only the consequences of His understanding, which, assuredly, does not depend on his will, any more than does His essence.[44]

This passage is helpful, first of all, because it makes clear Leibniz's understanding of Descartes's position: everything is as it is "solely by virtue of the will of God." This is what I called above the voluntarist reading of Descartes, according to which the space of reasons is itself posterior to God's first willing it to have the contours that it does: what is good and true and what is bad and false are as they are and not otherwise simply because God willed them to be that way and not otherwise.

Conant and Moore) is to insist that we should not pose, let alone attempt to answer, questions of a certain form about God—namely, ones in which He figures within the scope of a modal operator (as He does in the paradox of the stone when we ask, "Is it possible for God to create such a stone?").

[44] Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics," sect. 2, in *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Essays,* trans. D. Garber and R. Ariew, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 2.

The above passage from Leibniz is also helpful because it brings out particularly clearly the sense in which he sees his own position as the polar opposite of Descartes's. According to Leibniz, the problem with Descartes's account is that "will holds the place of reason." The true account, according to Leibniz, is not one according to which what is good and true is good and true solely because God willed them to be so, but rather the other way around: it is because this world is the best possible world that God willed it to be actual. Hence, in order to grasp why God willed what He did, we must have some prior grasp of what is good and what can be true. For Leibniz, the following dictum holds for a divine being no less than for a finitely created one: "[A]ll acts presuppose a reason for willing and . . . this reason is . . . prior to the act of will." What is good and what is necessarily true are not effects of the will of God. On the contrary, "they are only the consequences of His understanding, which, assuredly, does not depend on His will, any more than does His essence."

Leibniz shows himself here to be sensitive to the worry that we saw Descartes has about a position such as Avicenna's. He agrees with Descartes that the space of logical possibility must not be conceived as something antecedently given, hence as something that determines God's actions from outside His nature. Hence Leibniz shares with Descartes the following thought: there can be no necessity outside of God. But he sees Descartes's reaction to the modal realism of a thinker such as Avicenna as involving overkill and leading to a conception of God that is no less inadequate than the one it seeks to avoid. From Leibniz's point of view, Descartes solves the problem that the eternal truths are no longer external to God's creative activity at the cost of depriving them of their necessity. We must conceive the rules that even He must follow in creating the world as neither a *fatum* that binds Him from without nor as a set of principles merely freely chosen by Him. This requires a middle way: we must conceive of those conditions that would obtain in any possible world as stemming from and belonging to His understanding.[45] Descartes is con-

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[45] Hence, the following holds for Leibniz no less than for Descartes: the reality of all the eternal truths—and hence that of any logical truth, no matter how basic—depends on the existence of God. But, as the following three quotations make clear, for Leibniz, (1) it is the understanding of God that is the region of eternal truths, (2) His will has no part therein, and (3) to the region of eternal truths belongs not only what is necessary but also all that is possible:

> It is true . . . that in God is not only the source of existences, but also that of essences, insofar as they are real, or of what is real in possibility. This is because God's understanding

fused in holding that if what is necessary is prior to God's activity, then it binds Him from without—that it constitutes a sort of *fatum,* to which even He is subject:

> This so-called *fatum,* which binds even the Divinity, is nothing but God's own nature, His own understanding, which furnishes the rules for His wisdom and His goodness; it is a happy necessity, without which He would be neither good nor wise. . . . [T]he will of God is not independent of the rules of wisdom. . . . [46]

This is a usefully clear statement of theological logicism: the position within the early modern theological debate about the eternal truths, which holds that their necessity is to be traced to their internality to God's understanding.

On Leibniz's version of logicism, the principles of logic articulate the structure of God's mind—of what Jonathan Bennett calls "divine psy-

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is the realm of eternal truths, or of the ideas on which they depend. And without him there would be nothing real in the possibilities, and not only nothing existent, but even nothing possible. (*Monadology,* trans. Nicholas Rescher [Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991], sect. 43, 150)

It is . . . the divine understanding which gives reality to the eternal verities, . . . God's will has no part therein. (*Theodicy,* trans. E. M. Huggard [LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1985], sect. 184)

In the region of the eternal verities are found all the possible. (Ibid., 189)

For Leibniz, no less than for Descartes, God is the source of what is necessary and possible no less than what is actual. Hence the crucial difference between Leibniz and Descartes *as Leibniz understands it* is the following: Even though they both hold that all the modalities have their source in God, Descartes thinks that all equally have their source in God's *will*—that is, only in and through His creative activity—whereas Leibniz holds that only all that is actual (aside from God Himself) has its source in His creative activity, while what is necessary and possible have their source in His *understanding.*

[46] *Theodicy,* op. cit., sects. 191, 193. Since for Leibniz a coherent conception of the will requires that it be dependent upon the understanding, he will charge the Cartesian conception of God, if it is strictly thought through, of amounting to a conception of a being that has neither will nor understanding:

> Descartes's God is something approaching the God of Spinoza, that is, the principle of things and a certain sovereign power or primitive Nature that puts everything into action and does everything doable. Descartes's God has neither will nor understanding, since according to Descartes He does not have the good as the object of the will, nor the true as the object of the understanding. ("Letter to Gerhard Molanus, 1679," Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays,* trans. R. Ariew and D. Garber. [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989], 242)

What is interesting about this passage (in which he tries to think through the implications of Descartes's conception) is that Leibniz here comes a bit closer to reading Descartes along the lines that I recommend below than he does anywhere else in his corpus.

chology."[47] Every case of (what Descartes and Leibniz both call) an eternal truth, and therefore any logical truth, has its "ultimate foundation" in (what Leibniz calls) *the Supreme and Universal Mind*—to wit:

> that Supreme and Universal Mind who cannot but fail to exist and whose understanding is indeed the domain of eternal truths . . . . And lest you think that it is unnecessary to have recourse to this Mind, it should be borne in mind that these necessary truths contain the determining reason and regulating principle of existent things—the laws of the universe, in short. Therefore, since these necessary truths are prior to the existence of contingent beings, they must be grounded in the existence of a necessary substance. That is where I find the pattern for the ideas and truths which are engraved in our souls.[48]

For Leibniz—as for Frege—the ontological (the being of anything finite and actual) supervenes on the logical. This way of formulating what is parallel in Leibniz's and Frege's respective conceptions of logic requires that we overlook one not all that minor difference. For Leibniz, there is one necessary being (God) in whose existence the existence of everything else—even logic—must be grounded. For nothing can be prior to God.[49] But the manner in which logical truths depend on God is different in kind from the manner in which existent things do. They depend upon His understanding, not His will.

Let us now also spell out Leibniz's overall view of the possible positions within that early modern theological debate about the status of the eternal truths. Leibniz basically thinks there are three interestingly different fundamental kinds of possible positions with respect to the question of the creation of the eternal truths. I will henceforth refer to this particular way of understanding the space of options within this debate as the *theological triangle*. To endorse the theological triangle means to endorse a certain understanding of what the fundamental possibilities for philosophical thought were at a certain moment in the history of philosophy. It is worth spelling this out for three reasons: (i) because it controls Conant's view of the theological debate no less than Leibniz's, (ii) because (once it is divested of its theological garb) it plays a crucial role in Conant's understanding of the relations Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein

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[47] Jonathan Bennett, "Leibniz's *New Essays*," *Philosophic Exchange* 3, no. 1 (1982), 33.

[48] Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. P. Remnant and J. Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Chapter xi, §14; 447.

[49] As we shall we below, Descartes will question whether Leibniz's conception of logic really respects the thought that nothing is prior to God.

can stand in to one another, and (iii) because many of the contributors to this volume, while challenging details of Conant's conception, more or less wittingly share a non-theological version of what is essentially the same picture of what the options for philosophical thought are.

The theological triangle may be represented as follows[50]:

Theological Modal Realism: That which is necessary is given even to God. (Avicenna)

Theological Logicism: That which is necessary is internal to God's understanding, but external to His will, and hence prior to the actual world He creates. (Leibniz)

Theological Voluntarism: That which is "necessary" is solely the product of God's free activity and could have been otherwise than it is. (Leibniz's Descartes)

There are, of course, other equally valid ways of characterizing the philosophical options represented by each of these three corners—alternative ways of presenting what nonetheless would, in many respects, be essen-

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[50] In casting Leibniz as concerned with avoiding the first of these three corners of the triangle—and hence with avoiding the idea that that which is necessary is given to, rather than coincident with, the divine understanding—I do not mean to claim that he was particularly familiar or concerned with the very particular version of logical realism that I focused on above (namely Avicenna's). This means (as the next footnote makes clear) that, with other philosophical aims in mind, there could be equally valid alternative ways of framing the positions that comprise the non-Leibnizian corners of such a triangle.

tially the same philosophical triangle.[51] The primary aim of the above manner of presentation is to bring out Conant's picture of what the op-

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[51] In particular, the options for philosophical thought here at issue can be presented in terms that are more or less embedded in what is philosophically parochial in that historical moment. Robert M. Adams in effect presents a version of such a triangle—one in which "anthropological and Platonist ontologies of logic" comprise the two options in the philosophy of logic to which Leibniz's own is most usefully opposed. Adams characterizes the occupants of the three corners as follows:

(1) According to "Platonism" . . . the necessary truths themselves, or the essences, propositions, numbers, or whatever sort of "abstract object" it may be that they depend on, exist, or perhaps "subsist," independently of any other sort of reality—independently, in particular, of being either exemplified or thought of.

(2) The principal alternative to Platonism has been "anthropological" . . . holding that the truths of logic and mathematics are true in virtue of some feature of human thought, which might be ideas in our minds, our intentions regarding our use of language, or proofs we have actually constructed.

(3) Leibniz [in holding that what logic studies are ideas in God's mind] rejected both Platonistic and anthropological theories in the ontology of logic, and he was conscious of this rejection as part of the grounds of his argument for the existence of God from the reality of eternal truths. (*Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994], 178; my numbering)

Adams's triangle has the virtue of presenting Leibniz's conception in a way that allows one immediately to see how it steers between options still very much alive in the contemporary philosophy of logic. The primary aim of Adam's presentation is to bring out how Leibniz's way out of a certain philosophical impasse is one that goes missing in the field of play as it is standardly conceived in contemporary philosophy. This is a merely secondary and preparatory aim of my presentation. Since I wish to uncover options for philosophical thought other than Leibniz's that have largely gone missing in contemporary philosophy, I need to proceed more circumspectly. Adams's triangle is also essentially an amalgam of the theological one I present above and the non-theological one I present below—so that only one of his three corners involves any explicit dimension of theological concern. As I will be concerned below with relating certain determinate medieval and early modern variants with further determinate variants of (what Adams calls) "Platonism" and "the anthropological view"—namely, those that Descartes, Kant, and Frege respectively were each most concerned with avoiding, hence variants whose historical moments come too early to share in (what I called above) the contemporary conception of logic—my formulations of the four non-Leibnizian corners of the two triangles above and below will initially be presented in slightly quainter terms, highlighting what Descartes, Kant, and Frege each took to be philosophically most fateful in the conceptions they opposed. One interesting feature of Adams's way of partitioning the options is that it allows him to classify Leibniz without further ado as an "idealist" (a point that receives emphasis even in the title of Adams's book). When I classify Leibniz instead as a proto-logicist, I do so in part to prepare the way for a discussion of why I think what is conceptually most significant in Leibniz's position can be detached from its theological commitments and, when so detached, can come into view as being closer to Frege's (who is no kind of idealist) than to Kant's (who is supposed to be an idealist), thereby carving out a space for a form of idealism that is no kind of logicism.

tions are. Conant's way of representing the theological debate has the following three questionable features, which I sought to highlight in my brief discussion of Leibniz above: (1) it assumes that the space of options for intervening in the debate are as Leibniz conceives them, (2) it situates Descartes's position within that space of options in just the way Leibniz does, and (3) it sees the theological-logicist option as the higher synthesis that simultaneously resolves each of the respective inadequacies of the other two positions.

Later on in my replies, I will explore and contest both Conant's and his critics' conceptions of the relation between this early modern theological debate about the eternal truths and later debates about the laws of logic. Hence, as a sort of sneak preview, let us compare for a moment the above triangle with what I will henceforth call the *logical triangle*. To endorse the logical triangle means to endorse a certain understanding of what the fundamental possibilities are for philosophical thought about the status of the laws of logic. This triangle may be represented as follows:

Logical Realism:
The laws of logic are given to thought.

Logicism:
The laws of logic are internal to thought, but prior to any actual act of judgment.

Psychologism:
The laws of logic characterize the necessities that bind our thought and these could have been otherwise than they are.
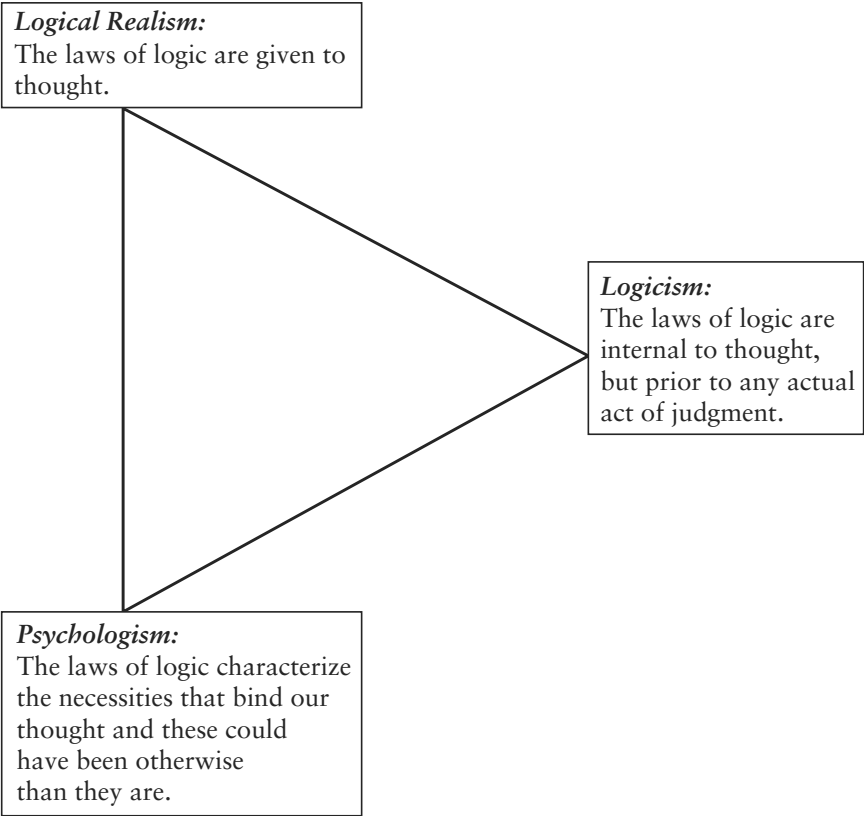
Conant is working with a picture largely shaped by the assumption not only that these two triangles parallel one another in roughly this way, but also that Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, and Frege must all find their places at one of the corners of at least one of these triangles.[52] This way of representing things allows two further features of Conant's narrative (that will be of concern in what follows) to come into helpful focus: first, his exploration of the supposed parallel between Descartes's *voluntarism* (about the eternal truths) and *psychologism* (about logical truths); second, his way of representing Leibniz, Kant, and Frege as sharing—their various differences notwithstanding—some single overarching conception of logic, so that these three thinkers may be seen as all moving in roughly the same direction, further and further along a single dialectical trajectory that converges on Wittgenstein.

As will begin to become clear in my reply to Boyle, these latter features of Conant's narrative strike me as no less wrongheaded than the three earlier ones mentioned above.[53] I now think Descartes and Kant and Wittgenstein all have at least this much in common: all three of them reject the idea that the relevant triangle exhausts the options for intervening in the corresponding debate. But each of these three thinkers rejects the relevant set of options in a very different way. So the task of working out even a rough outline of their moments of philosophical overlap and divergence is a far more complicated task than Conant contrives to make it seem. This also means that in my present view of the major philosophical personae dramatis discussed in "The Search for Logically Alien Thought," the only two Conant has even approximately properly positioned within his overarching narrative scheme are Leibniz and Frege. An adequate reading of either Descartes or Kant, let alone Wittgenstein, requires appreciating the specific manner in which each of these thinkers is concerned with targeting the philosophical assumptions that contribute to the appearance that the options represented in these triangles could be exhaustive.

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[52] It is only once we get to Wittgenstein in Conant's story that we encounter someone who wishes to contest the assumption that these options (as represented in the two triangles) are philosophically exhaustive. In this regard, the readings offered below of Descartes and Kant respectively are, each in their own way, far more proto-Wittgensteinian, as it were, than Conant's readings of those two philosophers.

[53] In the next two sections but one, we will take up the question of what Descartes's relation to the theological triangle is. In the following sections, we will explore Kant's, Frege's, and Wittgenstein's respective relations to the logical triangle.

The questionable features of Conant's narrative that I have just sought to highlight have consequences that some of his critics have been concerned with targeting.[54] Where they do so, I will generally find something in what they say to agree with. Other critics of Conant find much to agree with in just these features of his narrative, which I now find to be most questionable.[55] So disagreeing with those critics will often require first being clear about our diverging relations to Conant, and disagreeing with them will often require my highlighting and rejecting aspects of their shared background of agreement with him. In the next section, I will sketch an example of the latter sort of case, as it will prove to be especially important, starting in Section VIII. It has to do with interrelated parallels in Leibniz's and Frege's respective ways of thinking about logic that reveal—their many differences notwithstanding—the extent to which they participate in a shared, overarching conception of logic that I now think each of Conant's other philosophical heroes (especially Kant and Wittgenstein) are far more centrally concerned with targeting than either Conant or several of his critics appreciate.

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[54] This is particularly clear in Boyle's and Stroud's very different ways of contesting the terms of Conant's alignment of Kant and Frege.

[55] Sullivan, for example, though he finds plenty to disagree with in Conant's story (perhaps more than anyone else in this volume), applauds the very feature of his narrative that Boyle and Stroud (albeit for very different reasons) find most dubious—namely, his way of bringing Kant and Frege into alignment with one another.

Leibnizian versus Kantian Conceptions of Logic

Conant presents a narrative of evolving conceptions of logic according to which there is a fairly continuous, ever deepening line of philosophical inheritance informing the following trio of transitions: from Leibniz to Kant, from Kant to Frege, and from Frege to early Wittgenstein. The aim of this section is to challenge even this very broad feature of the outline of Conant's narrative by highlighting a cluster of parallels in Leibniz and Frege and to employ them as a foil to help bring more sharply into view a contrasting cluster of parallels in Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic. On this alternative way of sketching the development, the arc that traverses these four landmarks in the history of conceptions of logic bears something far more akin to the outline of a zigzag than to anything resembling a linear development.

The depth of each of these two clusters of parallels is easily overlooked, in part because Frege does not formulate his conception of how logical thought differs from empirical thought (as do Leibniz and his interlocutors in the theological debate) through reference to modal categories, and in part because when Frege does pause to characterize what he takes to be distinctive about logical thought, he often has recourse to Kantian terminology. For example, when characterizing the difference between a judgment that is analytic or synthetic, or between one that is a priori or a posteriori, he explains it in terms of the source(s) of knowledge—the *Erkenntnisquelle(n)*—on which it depends. Frege follows Kant up to a point in adducing this latter notion to explicate the relevant pair of

Kantian distinctions (analytic/synthetic and a priori/a posteriori). At the same time he subtly refashions these distinctions. For Frege, everything turns out to depend in the end on whether the justification of a given judgment depends merely on a strictly logical source or on one that requires some additional admixture of intuition or empirical observation. Frege's application of Kant's terminology is shoehorned into what is for him a philosophically prior and more fundamental framework—one that turns on his own distinctive understanding of the difference between the nature of the logical and the non-logical: between those thoughts whose content can be fully expressed simply through the employment of the notation of a proper logical *Begriffsschrift* (and thus can be comprehended without recourse to intuition or observation) and those whose expression requires the employment of signs with non-logical content (whose sense and reference can thus be comprehended only through the exercise of our capacities for intuition or observation). This subtly shifts the entire meaning of every central Kantian term of art, relocating each such expression within the confines of an overarching philosophical conception in which even the most basic outlines of Kant's original philosophy are no longer fully recoverable.

This is not to say that Frege wittingly attempts a violent appropriation of Kant's terminology. Frege represents himself, without being the least disingenuous, as merely clarifying Kant's original view, while attempting to carve out a space within it for his own Leibnizian predilection to regard our capacity for logical thought as a self-standing source of a *sui generis* category of knowledge: purely intellectual knowledge. He thereby explodes the entire Kantian framework to a far greater degree than he is able to appreciate. For Frege is unable to read Kant otherwise than through the lens of his own fundamental commitments and thereby unwittingly causes himself to misunderstand almost every fundamental term in Kant's writings that he seeks to appropriate. This matters for our present purpose because what was originally just Frege's idiosyncratic problem, qua reader of Kant, comes to infect an entire tradition of philosophy. Frege's influential deflection of the senses of central Kantian terms of art induces a schema through which to read Kant. It remains at work throughout much of analytic philosophy's subsequent history of purported engagements with Kantian ideas. It is a schema from which Conant seeks but largely fails to liberate his own reading of Kant.

Let us sketch briefly how Conant sees the matter. In Kant, an *Erkenntnisquelle* is an alternative term for an *Erkenntnisvermögen*—a cognitive faculty. His three primary cases of such sources of knowledge are

sensibility, understanding, and reason; where, for Kant, all genuine cognition requires some form of relation to sensibility—so that an account of the ways in which the latter two capacities issue in knowledge requires an account of how their forms of exercise bear on sensibility. Frege, too, distinguishes three primary sources of knowledge and contrives to make it seem as if he differs with Kant only about whether there is a self-standing logical source of knowledge (while agreeing with him about the nature of empirical and geometrical knowledge). Conant briefly outlines this region of Frege's thought in the following passage:

> The absolute generality of the laws of logic, for Frege, is tied to their ultimate ground in pure thought alone. For Frege, the pair of Kantian distinctions of analytic/synthetic and a priori/a posteriori permit the categorization of propositions according to the kind of ultimate ground that figures in their justification. There are three possible sources of knowledge . . . : (1) sense perception (for propositions that are synthetic a posteriori, (2) intuition (for propositions that are synthetic a priori) and (3) pure thought (for propositions that are analytic). An analytic truth, for Frege, is one whose justification depends on logic and nothing but logic. When Frege says that the truths of arithmetic are analytic, he means they are derivable from the laws of logic which, for him . . . means the laws of thought. For Frege . . . to identify a proposition as synthetic a priori is not to say that it lies outside the domain of the analytic[1]—that would be tantamount to saying that the most general laws of thought do not apply to it. But these laws "govern everything thinkable." Frege's tripartite division of ultimate grounds constitutes a hierarchy of generality, and the classification of a truth depends upon how far down one must go in this hierarchy in order to supply all of the materials necessary for its justification. The most general truths are those whose justification rests solely on the laws of pure thought.[2]

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[1] Though it does not affect his main point, Conant's use of the term "analytic" at this juncture is confused. Frege himself nowhere speaks of "the domain of the analytic," and if we wish to introduce such a locution, then it is not clear why, for him, that ought to cover anything other than analytic propositions. Conant's previous sentence gives us Frege's account of analytic propositions: "When Frege says that the truths of arithmetic are analytic, he means they are derivable from the laws of logic which, for him . . . means the laws of thought." Conant talks here as if there were two kinds of use of "analytic," one specifying certain propositions, the justification for which involves only laws of logic; the other specifying a domain of applicability of laws of thought. The latter way of talking comes free of Frege's own use of the term "analytic."

[2] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 60–61.

Though the terminology is Kantian, the picture is very un-Kantian. For Frege, an appreciation of what justifies the recognition of logical truth requires the exercise of a self-standing capacity for logical thought; an appreciation of what justifies the recognition of geometrical truth requires the twofold joint exercise of our capacity for logical thought and geometrical intuition; an appreciation of what justifies the recognition of an empirical truth requires the threefold joint exercise of our capacities for logical thought, intuition, and sense perception. The strikingly un-Kantian features of this picture include the following: (1) the capacity for logical thought is a self-standingly intelligible capacity; (2) this capacity, off its own bat, is able to yield knowledge of objects; (3) the grasp of purely logical propositions (apart, as Kant would say, from any prior synthesis) involves the grasp of a judgable content; and (4) laws of logic are true in virtue of their relating to and holding generally of all possible objects of thought. These four differences between Frege and Kant are all interrelated aspects of their differing overall conceptions of logic. Conant registers some of these differences but fails to appreciate how profoundly interrelated they are and how deeply they cut. I will begin to explore some of the more interesting implications of these differences in Kant's and Frege's conceptions of logic—and why they cut far deeper than Conant imagines—when I turn to my reply to Boyle. For our present purpose, it will suffice just to have a very partial overview of some of the most salient ways in which Frege's conception (the pervasiveness of his employment of Kantian terminology notwithstanding) is much closer to Leibniz's than to Kant's. Such an overview will help to bring out why I now think the middle transition in Conant's original narrative arc is misguided: namely, the extent of the continuity he attempts to discern in the transition from Kant's to Frege's conception of logic. This, in turn, will help prepare the way for a discussion of Conant's account of the next transition: namely, the extent of the continuity he attempts to discern in Frege's and early Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic.

One point in the previous paragraph might appear to be one on which Kant and Frege could agree: the recognition of empirical truth requires the simultaneous exercise of our capacities for logical thought, intuition, and sense perception. Put this vaguely, it may indeed qualify as a passable description of something that each of them thinks. The differences in their conception that remain masked by such a formulation come clearly into view only when we focus on questions such as the following: What is involved in exercising several cognitive faculties jointly? Or to put the same question a bit more pointedly, What is the logical character

of the "involvement" when the exercise of one particular cognitive faculty is somehow "ingredient in" the exercise of another? How, for example, is our capacity for logical thought in act in our capacity to recognize an empirical truth?[3] How is the unity of such a complex of jointly exercised capacities to be conceived?[4]

For Kant, a proper approach to these questions requires that we distinguish between paradigmatic cases of knowledge-involving exercises of our capacity for knowledge and relatively recherché exercises of our cognitive faculties, where the intelligibility of the latter sorts of case depends upon their parasitic relation to the former. For Kant, this means that we can understand what is involved in the sorts of judgments that centrally concern us in mathematics or pure general logic only if we can furnish an overarching elucidation of, first, what it is to have a faculty for finite theoretical cognition at all; second, how the different forms of exercise of such a unified faculty relate to one another; third, how the conditions of the possibility of mathematical and purely logical judgment are bound up with those of empirical judgment so that we appreciate precisely how each depends upon the others; and hence, fourth, how each such form of judgment is an exercise of one and the same general power of knowledge.

For Frege, a proper approach to the aforementioned questions requires that we distinguish between simple and complex cases in accordance with

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[3] When I speak of a capacity being "in act" I mean something closely akin to what Aristotle does when he speaks of something's being in *energeia*. My conception of this brings with it a commitment that Jonathan Beere elucidates in connection with Aristotle as follows:

> Aristotle thinks of bodily, perceptible things as having being either in capacity, or in *energeia* (in activity or actuality) . . . . Aristotle thinks of being—including perceptible bodies—in terms of two complementary ways of being, only one of which is associated with capacity. Perhaps most importantly, Aristotle insists that *energeia* has priority in being (*ousia*) over capacity: while things can be x either in capacity or in *energeia*, being x in *energeia* is really and fully being x . . . To be x in capacity is genuinely a case of being x, but only in an attenuated way. Really and truly and fully being x is being x in *energeia*. (Jonathan Beere, *Being and Doing* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], 13–14)

Aristotle applies the distinction (between being in capacity or being in *energeia)* primarily to *substances*. I will follow Kant in employing it in application to *rational cognitive capacities*—such as perception, judgment, and knowledge—while retaining the following Aristotelian commitment: An act of such a capacity's really and truly and fully being a perception, a judgment, and so forth, in the logically full-blooded sense of those terms, requires that the general capacity in question (for perception, judgment, etc.) be in act—in *energeia*—in a no way attenuated manner. When we reach the reply to Boyle, we will begin to consider in more detail what this means.

[4] This question arguably constitutes the central, unifying thread running through my replies to Boyle, Hamawaki, and Stroud.

a very different conception of logical complexity than Kant's—a very different conception of what it means to differentiate the logically basic from the logically complex in an exercise of our capacities. Let us approach this issue by considering two interrelated dimensions of difference in Frege's conception, from both that of Kant and that of early Wittgenstein.

The first dimension of difference has to do with which sorts of exercises of our capacity for knowledge are explanatorily prior and which are explanatorily posterior in an account of notions such as "content," "object," "thought," "judgment," and "truth." On Frege's conception, our capacity to grasp the truth of an empirical judgment is something we work our way out to: the nature of empirical judgment is comparatively complicated and messy in comparison with that of purely logical judgment. It involves various sorts of non-logical admixtures—additional features that may initially be bracketed from view without cost to a preliminary elucidation of the aforementioned fundamental notions. Hence, for Frege, empirical judgment is not the place from which to start if we want to understand notions such "judgment" or "truth." The place to start is with an appreciation of the order of inferential relations that obtain between purely logical propositions.

From Kant's and early Wittgenstein's point of view, this means that, for Frege, the place to start our inquiry is with an appreciation of what is involved in the grasp of examples of judgment or proposition that Kant and Wittgenstein each, and for not unrelated reasons, would regard as limiting cases of judgment or proposition—cases that have to do with (what both Kant and early Wittgenstein would have regarded as) the mere outer form of a proposition: the form considered apart from its matter. Judgments of pure general logic for Kant and what the *Tractatus* calls "logical propositions" are to be arrived at only through an act of reflection in which we abstract the logical form of thought from its relation to any object or reality. The purely logical here, for both Kant and Wittgenstein, involves form considered apart from its relation to judgable content; but not for Frege. Pure logic, for Frege, already traffics in content.[5]

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[5] This is not to say that Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein share a conception of the scope of the logical—that they have extensionally the same set of judgments of propositions in mind when they speak of merely or purely "logical" judgments or propositions, as opposed to other sorts of judgment of proposition. Quite the contrary: Kant (if you explained to him what a Fregean existential quantifier is supposed to be) would not have regarded anything with an existential quantifier in it as a purely logical proposition; neither Kant nor early Wittgenstein would have regarded arithmetical propositions as candidates for logical propositions; and so on. The point here rather is this: Where what is in question is a proposition that all three are willing to characterize as purely logical, even then, Kant and Wittgenstein

Pure logical propositions may be privileged by Frege as the starting points on which to focus our attention if we wish to elaborate an account of what "content," "object," thought," "judgment," and "truth" respectively are. These notions first acquire their significance as philosophical terms of art by our coming to understand the manner in which they apply to the proper characterization of our grasp of a purely logical proposition and its inferential relations to other such propositions—through our coming to appreciate how the inferential order of the purely logical already partakes of everything required for the expression of thought. We are to come to appreciate that it is *au fond* through its relation to such an order that any judgable content whose truth admits of recognition via judgment has its life. This means that the central terms that figure in the philosophical characterization of our power to judge are ones whose significance is fully determined through reflection on a particular (later Wittgenstein will say) one-sided diet of examples of propositions. Though both Kant's and Wittgenstein's real complaint will turn out to be not just that the diet is one-sided but that is not even properly nourishing insofar as it limits itself to certain bloodless sorts of cases of (so-called) propositions. These will be cases with regard to which, according to Kant, no question of objective validity can arise—since, for him, an account of a full-blooded judgment is, in the first instance, an account of objectively valid judgment, where this, in turn, requires an account of thought's relation to sensibility. Similarly, for early Wittgenstein, some of Frege's preferred examples of logical truths would be classified as tautologies, as lacking in sense—where, as we shall see below, for early Wittgenstein, unlike for Frege, a projective relation to empirical reality is a condition of "sense." For early Wittgenstein, comprehending a proposition with sense requires the exercise of a capacity that is not in act in the determination of the truth-values of (what he calls) "logical propositions"—tautologies and contradictions. There are, of course, countless differences in detail in Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective reasons for thinking that many of Frege's "purely logical" cases of thought must belong to the periphery, and not to the center, of a philosophical elucidation of what it is for thought to traffic in truth-evaluable, world-directed, judgable content. All that need interest us for our present preliminary purpose is just this: "purely logical" propositions figure in Frege's account as *paradigms* of judgable content. For him, they

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would find themselves at odds with many of Frege's further philosophical characterizations of the nature of such a proposition: as—independently of its relation to sensibility—bearing on objects, having content, possessing a sense that we can grasp, etc.

constitute the bedrock case from which we work our way out in order to understand, as best we can, the messier sorts of case in which thoughts have bearing on specific regions of empirical reality.

For Frege, an account of what it is for a purely logical power to be in act suffices to allow us to achieve a proper philosophical appreciation of what "content," "object," "thought," "judgment," and "truth," as such, are. These notions come to be fully in place through an elucidation of that power, considered apart from our capacity to arrive at kinds of knowledge that are not purely logical in content. Our capacity for empirical judgment, when it comes into view, will come into view as a comparatively complex joint exercise of a variety of faculties, in which the logically fundamental notions that figure in its explication ("content," "object," thought," "judgment," "truth") are still supposed to retain the specific sense originally conferred upon them in our explication of the purely logical case, while allowing for their extension to logically impure cases of thought and proposition.[6]

A certain picture of the role of reflection on the purely logical case, in the order of explication of kinds of knowledge, is at work here—a picture that has been enormously influential on the subsequent development of analytic philosophy. On this picture, only if we are armed with a prior account of the case of purely logical thought, supplementing it as we go along, can we come to understand what empirically contentful theoretical thought (or practical thought) is. On this picture, the spatiotemporal bearing and the self-consciousness of the thinking subject do not belong to the form of thought (and hence their treatment does not belong, as Kant held, to a suitably capacious conception of philosophical logic); rather, all such further details among various species of thought are to be subsequently specified, if at all, through the introduction of further indices figuring within the content of thought. (Thoughts are simply conceived of as occurring at a time or at a person.) These consequences of the Fregean picture are not, on the whole, something for which post-Fregean analytic philosophers argue. Rather, it involves an entire philosophical

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[6] Frege allows for two very different kinds of cases of "extension" of the fundamental notions to logically impure cases—where these, in turn, are tied to two very different kinds of "logical impurity": (1) propositions of systematic science (such as those of a regimented and systematized geometry or physics) and (2) propositions of pre-systematic science, such as those of ordinary language. The former are logically impure only in the sense that they have empirical content; hence their justification does not depend upon logic alone. But their logical impurity is not a function of any logical defectiveness of the sort that may arise in the case of the latter. In the former, unlike the latter, only concepts with sharp boundaries and only singular terms whose reference is secure may occur.

picture that is simply tacitly, and largely unwittingly, assumed—a picture that is already under attack, albeit in very different ways, in both Kant and early Wittgenstein. According to this post-Fregean picture, we can furnish an account of the wider reaches of our capacity for finite theoretical cognition only by assuming the prior intelligibility of some self-standing account of how one of the ingredient capacities in empirical cognition—the capacity for logical thought—off its own bat is able to yield a delimitable sphere of truth-evaluable, object-related thoughts with judgable content, without its yet having entered into any form of co-operation with our other cognitive capacities.

This first dimension of difference in conceptions of what is simple and what is complex has to do with which sorts of exercises of our capacity for knowledge are explanatorily prior and which are explanatorily posterior in an account of what is to be onto the truth. Let us turn now to a second interrelated dimension of difference. It has to do with whether one takes simplicity and complexity to be explicable in accordance with a picture in which the complex case shares a highest common factor with the simple case. Or, more specifically, whether the explanation of the act of a logically complicated exercise of a cognitive capacity is one in which the logically simple case is ingredient in the complex act as a self-standingly intelligible component act in its own right. Recall how we saw these two dimensions in play in Leibniz.

Consider, for example, Leibniz's conception of the relation between God's faculties (of understanding and will) and the modalities (of necessity, possibility, and actuality). God surveys all the possible worlds that there are; then, in a second step, God acts and creates that world which He has judged to be the best. What is helpful in this two-step way of framing the Leibnizian conception is that it highlights how these two dimensions figure in his picture. First, what is explanatorily prior for Leibniz is what is necessary and possible; the actual figures on this account as the explanatorily posterior notion. Second, the logically more basic case is self-standingly intelligible, and the conferral of actuality is conceived as the supplementation of the sphere of mere possibility with a new dimension: actuality. Thus the logical features that characterize the best possible world qua possibility figure as a highest common factor in both (1) the best possible world conceived apart from and prior to its actualization by God and (2) the actual world. In (1) and (2) we have the same self-standingly intelligible possibility, considered first as unactualized and then as actualized. We might summarize this in what I will call the *Leibniz point*: occurrences of the "same" possibility as unactualized

in the mind of God and actualized in His creation "have" a modal content "in common" (a possibility that could either have being or not)—where the proper logical analysis of what they are thus said to "have in common" reveals it to be a highest common factor.

This understanding of divine creation underwrites a particular conception of logic—one that comes to be divested of its theological garb in the centuries that follow. For Leibniz, God is the ground of essence (the possibility of things) as well as of existence (the actuality of things), but there is a sharp distinction now to be drawn in how he grounds each. God grounds essences or possibilities by *thinking* them. Essences have their sort of being simply in virtue of figuring as objects of God's thought. God grounds that which exists by *willing* a set of compossible essences to be actual. Existing things have their sort of being in virtue of being objects of God's will. We can now reformulate the conception of logic at work here in a non-theological register by focusing on how, for Leibniz, this anchors a particular understanding of the distinction between a priori and a posteriori truths. For Leibniz, on the one hand, there is knowledge of the essence or principle of the possibility of a thing (which is a priori) and, on the other, there is knowledge of the actuality or existence of thing (which for finite beings such as ourselves can only be a posteriori).[7] On this conception, at least from the perspective of a finite knower, an aspect of the difference between logical and non-logical truths may be formulated as a distinction between which of the capacities of a finite knower need to be exercised for knowledge of the truths in question. Knowledge of priori truths draws only on our capacity for pure reason; knowledge of a posteriori truths require the supplementation of that capacity with experience.

Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence is here redeployed in the service not only of reconceiving the precise location of the line between a priori and a posteriori truths, but also the precise characterization of the distribution of labor among the capacities of a finite knower. Nonetheless, Leibniz's way of redeploying this distinction—between a thing's essence (conceived as the principle of its possibility) and its existence (conceived as the principle of its actuality)—preserves the following feature of Avicenna's original distinction: the contours of the domain of the possible remain self-standingly intelligible prior to and independent

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[7] "Essence is fundamentally nothing but the possibility of the thing under consideration. . . . [E]xperience comes to our aid by acquainting us a posteriori with the reality (when the thing actually exists in the world). This will do, when reason cannot acquaint us with the reality of the thing . . ." (Leibniz, *New Essays,* sect. 294).

of those of the actual. Logical knowledge is knowledge of what must be the case independently of the contingent layout of actuality. This serves both further to specify and underwrite a certain conception of what it means to say logic is "pure"—one that Frege inherits: logic investigates a body of truths that may be grasped without in any way drawing upon the capacity or capacities we must additionally exercise in empirical thought and judgment about the actual world. Our capacity for logical thought is a self-standingly intelligible capacity.

On Leibniz's own conception, the ultimate ground of the distinction between logical and non-logical knowledge is specified in *theological* terms as the distinction between those truths whose ground lies in God's thinking and those whose ground lies in His willing. This distinction may be seen on that conception to non-accidentally coincide with the following distinction—one that may be specified in non-theological terms: between those truths that can be known by a finite mind simply through the exercise of the capacity of reason and those that can be known by such a mind only by drawing upon a further repertoire of cognitive capacities. But for Leibniz the latter non-theological characterization has a merely secondary explanatory status and is not to be regarded as the ultimate source of the intelligibility of the ground of the distinction in question. In Frege, the relation of the priority between these ways of grounding the distinction comes to be reversed. The fundamental distinction is to be adumbrated in non-theological terms and turns solely on whether the justification of the order of truth in question is grounded solely in the logical source of knowledge or whether its justification draws additionally on non-logical sources of knowledge. This leaves room for the idea that the logical capacity is of such a sort that its truths might figure as the objects of the intellectual faculty of both a finite and infinite thinker—an embodied being and a pure intellect, a being that requires language and one that does not—but that aspect of what it means to characterize logic as "pure" comes no longer to play any philosophically weight-bearing role in the overall account. We will return to this matter below.

I want now to explore a parallel between (what I have called) the Leibniz point and the standard understanding of (what is usually called) the Frege-Geach point. To fully bring out the parallel, let us summarize the latter point as follows: occurrences of the "same" thought as unasserted and asserted "have" a logical content in common (a thought that could be either true or not), where what they thus "have in common" is a highest common factor. Consider the following passage from Frege:

We can grasp a thought without recognizing it as true. To think is to grasp a thought. Once we have grasped a thought, we can recognize it as true—make a judgement—and give expression to this recognition—make an assertion. We need to be able to express a thought without putting it forward as true. In the *Begriffsschrift* I use a special sign to convey assertoric force: the judgement-stroke. The languages known to me lack such a sign, and [in them] assertoric force is closely bound up with the indicative mood of the sentence that forms the main clause.[8]

Here, too, as in the Leibnizian account of divine creation, there are two logically distinct moments. There is the act of thinking the thought. Then there is the act of advancing from the thought to its truth-value—in the case of Leibniz's God, that means creating (or refraining from creating) the state of affairs that renders the thought true; in the case of Frege's finite logical being, it means recognizing the thought to be true (or false). Three further dimensions of difference between a Fregean and a Kantian/Wittgensteinian conception of logic may be seen to be operative here. First, for Frege, in an account of what is to be onto the truth, the act of grasping a thought is logically less complex than that of judging it to be true. Second, for Frege, the judgable content figures as a highest common factor in both (1) that thought and (2) the corresponding judgment. Third, for Frege, that which is grasped, when we grasp a thought, has a self-standingly intelligible nature apart from its being such as to be graspable by logically finite minds such as ours—apart from its being the sort of thing of which we can take possession through an act of thinking it and expressing it in a verbal or written notation.[9] We will return to these below.

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[8] Frege, *Posthumous Writings,* trans. P. Long and R. M. White (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 185.

[9] Hence, Frege writes, "The metaphors that underlie the expressions we use when we speak of grasping a thought, of conceiving, laying hold of, seizing, understanding, of *capere, percipere, comprehendere, intelligere,* put the matter in essentially the right perspective. What is grasped, taken hold of, is already there and all we do is take possession of it. Likewise, what we see or single out from amongst other things is already there and does not come into existence as a result of these activities" (*Posthumous Writings,* 137). Frege here does not clearly distinguish between the (evidently psychologistic) claim that the intelligibility of the being of such a judgable content depends upon its relation to some particular actualization of our capacity for thought or judgment and the (genuinely Kantian) claim that the intelligibility of the being of such a judgable content is internally related to the idea of a finite discursive capacity for thought or judgment such as ours. What is at stake in such a distinction will concern us below.

It is worth pausing for a moment to note the extent to which certain passages in Descartes might seem to parallel Leibniz's distinction between the divine act of thinking and the divine act of willing, on the one hand, as well as to anticipate the Fregean distinction between thought and judgment, on the other—prompting the suspicion that I have Descartes positioned in the wrong place (in placing him closer to Kant and Wittgenstein than to Leibniz and Frege) in my brief sketch above. The suspicion is apt to be exacerbated if one considers passages from his corpus in which Descartes seeks to explain the possibility of error in human cognition:

1. I notice that they [judgment errors] depend on two concurrent causes, namely on the faculty of knowledge [*cognoscendi*] which is in me, and on the faculty of choice or freedom of the will; that is, they depend on both the intellect and the will simultaneously. Now all that the intellect does is to enable me to perceive the ideas which are subjects for possible judgments; and when regarded strictly in this light, it turns out to contain no error in the proper sense of that term. . . . So what then is the source of my mistakes? It must be simply this: the scope of the will is wider than that of the intellect; but instead of restricting it within the same limits, I extend its use to matters which I do not understand.[10]

2. [If] I simply refrain from making a judgement in cases where I do not perceive the truth with sufficient clarity and distinctness, then it is clear that I am behaving correctly and avoiding error. But if in such cases I either affirm or deny, then I am not using my free will correctly. If I go for the alternative which is false, then obviously I shall be in error; if I take the other side, then it is by pure chance that I arrive at the truth, and I shall still be at fault.[11]

3. The will [or freedom or choice] simply consists in our ability to do or not to do something (that is, to affirm or deny, to pursue or avoid); or rather, it consists simply in the fact that when the intellect puts something forward for affirmation or denial or for pursuit or avoidance, we move in such a manner that we feel that we are determined to it by no external force.[12]

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[10] Descartes, "Fourth Meditation," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothof, and D. Murdoch in 3 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–1991), vol. 2, 39.

[11] Ibid., 41.

[12] Ibid., 40.

I will not focus on the features of this account that allow Descartes to suppose that he has made important philosophical progress in solving the problem of the possibility of error, let alone go into any detail about how his solution is supposed to be superior to its contemporaneous competitors'.[13] I wish for the moment simply to draw attention to the proto-Leibnizian/Fregean aspects of the account. The crucial distinction offered in the passages above is a distinction between two different faculties: the intellect and the will. What is of interest for our present purpose is how their respective jobs parallel in certain respects those that Leibniz assigns to God's faculties and Frege assigns to the faculties of thought and judgment. The intellect, for Descartes, enables me to perceive those candidates for thought which are subjects for possible judgments. As the first of the three passages above emphasizes, insofar as I merely entertain such candidates qua thoughts, my activity contains no possibility of error (and therefore no possibility of truth). As the second passage warns, it is only once I affirm or deny the thought in question that I run the risk of error. And, as the third passage insists, there is and must be a strict separation, and a correlative logical priority, between these two moments in the exercise of my cognitive power: first, there is the operation of the intellect (in which something is put forward for affirmation or denial), and then (in a second and logically distinct step) comes the act of the will (which is an exercise of my ability to do something—namely, affirm or deny).

The combination of ideas that make up the thought that is to be affirmed or denied, according to Descartes, is simply given to the mind;

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[13] I want to concentrate here simply on Descartes's account of the relation between the judg*ed* and the judg*ing*—between that which (as he puts it in the first of the three quotations above) "the intellect enables me to perceive [qua] ideas which are *subjects for possible judgments*" and *the act of judgment* itself. In particular, for the purpose of the following discussion, I want to put to one side arguably the most distinctive feature of Descartes's theory of error: namely, that judging is to be understood as a guise of *willing*. Thomas Lennon rightly observes: "[T]hat judgment is a function of the will may be Descartes' most novel view . . . [It results in a] voluntarist theory that construes judgment as an action, thereby placing it under the aegis of the will" (Thomas M. Lennon, "Descartes's theodicy avant la lettre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*, ed. D. Cunning [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 170, 173). This idiosyncratic (and often ignored) feature of the account is essential to the actual details of Descartes's own version of a solution to the problem of error. (From a Kantian point of view, it rests on a confusion of theoretical and practical reason—of the form of spontaneity of a mental *act* with that of an *action*, hence of spontaneity of thought with freedom of the will.) What I wish to focus on here is the structural feature of Descartes's account that is comparatively influential: his way of decomposing judgment into act and content.

the genuinely cognitive activity of the subject therefore commences only in the next step: with the act of affirmation or denial.[14] Even in the *optimal* cognitive situation—one in which we *clearly and distinctly perceive* that things are thus and so—Descartes takes it that the operation of our cognitive faculty here still involves two logically distinguishable moments, despite the fact that the second step cannot but immediately follow upon the first (absent some extraordinary interference, such as the disturbing thought that God might be a deceiver). We enjoy a clear and distinct idea and *then* we affirm that which we clearly and distinctly perceive. This absolves the subject of any responsibility for the *adequacy* of the idea to be judged, focusing all cognitive responsibility on the moment when the idea is to be affirmed or denied. Thus, according to Descartes, for finite beings such as us, even in the best case of cognition, the attainment of knowledge must involve at least two distinct acts—one of apprehension or understanding and one of affirmation or judgment.[15]

On this picture, the ideas that are to be affirmed or denied simply present themselves prior to and independently of any activity on the part of the cognizing subject. It is just this picture of the relation between adequate perception and affirmation—one that he finds in Descartes and his followers—that Spinoza seeks to criticize when he writes: "They look on

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[14] I am about to draw attention to a parallel between Spinoza's criticism of Descartes's conception of the acts of affirmation and denial and early Wittgenstein's criticism of Frege's conception of the act of judgment. In seeking to foreground that parallel, I will, in effect, obscure from view the significance of the following difference in Descartes's and Frege's respective conceptions: Where Frege insists upon a single form of act—*judgment*—and hence is obliged to distinguish a pair of differing contents in the cases of *S judges x is F* and *S judges x is not F*, Descartes will distinguish a pair of logically complimentary forms of act—*affirmation/denial*—operating upon one and the same content (*S affirms x is F* and *S denies x is F*). As we shall eventually see, in this respect at least, Descartes remains a step closer to Kant and Wittgenstein than to Frege. A crucial thought shared by both Kant and Wittgenstein—and deeply unavailable to Frege—is that the act of affirming *x is F* and that of denying *x is not F* are one and the same act. To put it in Kant's idiom: these are two characterizations of one and the same self-conscious act of combining and holding the elements of a logical manifold together in the same way within a single unity of apperception.

[15] Some coming attractions: As we shall see in the reply to Moore, for Descartes, this is true only for finite beings such as us—not for an infinite being. Descartes would thus reject Leibniz's account of divine activity in which there is space to logically distinguish a moment of understanding (in which God surveys all possible worlds) and one of affirmation (in which God creates the best). As we shall see in a moment, Spinoza thinks that in those moments in which we achieve full adequacy in cognition, there is no separation between the moment of understanding and that of judgment: in such moments, the logical form—the simplicity—of *our* cognitive act is akin to that of Descartes's God. And, as we shall see in the subsequent replies, Kant and Wittgenstein each have their own way of siding with Spinoza here.

ideas as dumb pictures on a tablet, and misled by this preconception they fail to see that, insofar as it is an idea, it involves affirmation or negation."[16] Spinoza does not start with mere thought or understanding and then ask what must be added to it for it to yield knowledge. Rather Spinoza takes *suspension* of judgment to be a sort of phenomenon in our cognitive life that calls for special explanation. He holds that a proper account of the case in which such a suspension occurs must be logically parasitic on a proper account of the more fundamental case of knowing. If we fail to judge that which we perceive, then this must be due not only to a lack of adequacy in our perception of the thing but also to the subject's *recognition* of some degree of inadequacy. When we say that someone suspends judgment, we are not saying that something is presented to his mind (like a dumb tablet with some ideas inscribed on it), and then, through an exercise of free will, the subject withholds his affirmation thereto. Rather, "[w]hen we say that someone suspends judgment, we are saying only that *he sees* that *he* is not adequately perceiving the thing."[17] This is to be contrasted with the default case, in which there is no consciousness of inadequacy in that which we perceive. In such a case, in a single act we both perceive, and, in perceiving, we affirm that which we perceive:

> To understand this more clearly, let us conceive a boy imagining a winged horse and having no other perception. Since this imaging involves the existence of a horse[18] and the boy perceives nothing to annul the existence of the horse, he will regard the horse as present.[19]

Spinoza's criticism of Descartes here anticipates Wittgenstein's criticism—to be discussed in the replies below—of what Peter Geach calls the Frege point.[20]

The problem that the Frege point is supposed to solve is how to make sense of the following truism: "a proposition may occur in discourse now asserted, and now unasserted, and yet be recognizably the same proposition."[21] Geach moves effortlessly between this formulation of the problem and another—one that essentially already presupposes Frege's solution in the very form of its restatement. Here is Geach's putatively

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[16] Spinoza, *Ethics* [henceforth *E*], 2P49S.
[17] Spinoza, *E,* 2P49schol.
[18] Spinoza has argued for this in *E* 2P17C.
[19] Spinoza, *E,* 2P49S.
[20] See Peter T. Geach, "Assertion" *The Philosophical Review* 74, no. 4. (1965): 449–465.
[21] Ibid., 449.

innocuous reformulation of the original truism: "[A] thought may have just the same content whether you assent to its truth or not."[22] Frege's proposed solution, as we shall see below, is to disassociate force from content. To bring out how this bears on the above problematic, the crux of the proposal may be reformulated in the (very un-Fregean) idiom of early modern philosophy as follows: an act of clearly and distinctly perceiving that something is the case can occur with or without one's affirming that which one perceives with the mind's eye. This allows us, when we first perceive *if p then q* and then subsequently affirm *p,* to understand how that which we initially perceive (without affirming *p*) may be logically linked to that which we subsequently affirm in a manner that entitles us to conclude *q*.

In a neglected moment in his classic discussion of the Frege point, Geach notes that the proposed solution may appear to introduce a problem for understanding how thought is related to judgment. Geach himself confesses that he is attracted to the solution to this latter problem that Spinoza proposes (in the discussion of the boy's idea of the winged horse) but worries that that solution may not fit comfortably together with the Frege point:

> [P]ossibly a thought is assertoric in character unless it loses this character by occurring only as an element in a more complicated thought. In Spinoza's example, the boy whose mind is wholly occupied with the thought of a winged horse, and who lacks the adult background knowledge that rules out there being such a thing, cannot but assent to the thought of there being a winged horse. This would be a neat solution to the problem of how thought is related to judgment, but I do not insist on it; there may be fatal objections. Anyhow, if this theory is true, I need not recant anything I have so far said; it would still be true that a thought may occur now unasserted, now asserted, without change of content. But if I had to choose between this theory and the Frege point, this is what I would reject.[23]

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[22] Ibid., 449. As we shall see below, the reformulation is no longer a truism, if it is taken to imply that that to which one gives one's assent is intrinsically forceless. One way to describe what Irad Kimhi's book *Thinking and Being* as a whole is about would be to say that it seeks to show the following: that the initial statement of the problem admits of a solution only once one comes fully to appreciate why one should resist the slide from the first formulation to the second.

[23] Ibid., 456–457.

Geach here senses that he may have to choose between Frege's solution to his problem (of how there can be the appropriate sort of logical link between contexts in which *p* is asserted and ones in which it is not) and Spinoza's solution to the other problem (of how thought is related to judgment). And Geach concludes that if we have to choose between these—between Spinoza's theory and (what Geach calls) the Frege point— then we should go with Frege's disassociation of force from content over Spinoza's understanding of the priority of judgment to thought. In the replies that follow, I will suggest that Kant and Wittgenstein agree that it is correct to think that we are forced to choose here but that they take the opposite turn at this crossroads.

As already indicated, the objection that Spinoza raises against Descartes (regarding the relation of thinking to affirming) anticipates one that early Wittgenstein levels against Frege (regarding the relation of the verb of the assertion to that of the proposition). Does this mean that Descartes's position lies elsewhere in the overall dialectic than I have suggested above? Shouldn't Descartes's position be grouped together with that of Frege—rather than with those of Spinoza, Kant, and Wittgenstein? Well, Descartes's position about *what*? The above passages (on the source of error) take a stand on how the intellect and the will are related in a *finite* being. They bear, therefore, on a discussion of how to locate Descartes's view of *our* intellectual abilities. As we shall see below, one of Descartes's criticisms of his contemporaries—and his criticism, *avant la lettre,* of Leibniz—is that, in seeking to understand the nature of divine creation, we must not *anthropomorphize* the idea of God. Not only must we not conceive of His faculties so that each is related to the others as they are in us, but we also must avoid assigning to them, in our idea of His creative activity, the specific form of division of labor they have in our cognitive life.[24] Explanations involving a relative priority among the faculties, for Descartes, have their proper place only in the description of the cognitive activity of a finite being. As we shall see, if this is right, then there must be something grossly wrong about the characterization of Descartes's position as voluntaristic—and hence something wrong with Leibniz's and Conant's readings of Descartes—where priority is assigned

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[24] As we shall see, this point holds equally for the various conceptually related distinctions that do not make explicit references to cognitive faculties—such as the distinction between a supposedly logically prior space of what it is possible for Him to think or do and a supposedly logically posterior space of actuality due to His creative activity. For these, too, are distinctions whose proper sphere of application presupposes that the material universe and the finite cognitive beings that inhabit it have already been created.

to God's *will* in relation to His understanding in an explanation of the source and nature of the eternal truths.

This way of putting things may make it seem as if what Descartes has to say about our topics in his passages that Conant discusses can bear, at most, only on an understanding of the issues at stake in the first of our two triangles above—and hence that it is, at best, of merely theological interest. When we turn to my reply to Boyle, we shall see why this conclusion would be premature. We shall see there how the dialectic takes an interesting turn with Kant. There is a sense in which Descartes's conception of infinite cognitive activity actually comes closer to capturing Kant's conception of the nature of our *finite* mindedness than does the picture we sketched above (the picture of finite human cognition common to Descartes and Frege, according to which the power of thought is logically prior to that of judgment). Kant's conception of human cognitive activity will incorporate aspects of Descartes's conception of divine cognitive activity. Kant takes us one step closer to Descartes's God than Descartes himself would have imagined possible.[25] At the same time, however, this requires furnishing an account of the laws of logic in which they do not figure equally as the laws of our understanding and of God's. For Kant, there is an unbridgeable divergence in form between a finite and an infinite capacity for knowledge—a chasm that Leibniz imagined could be bridged by the laws of logic. Kant's *après la lettre* criticism of Leibniz's conception of God echoes certain features of Descartes's *avant la lettre* one, faulting it not merely on the general ground of being too anthropomorphic but on the far more specific ground of being insufficiently cognizant of the extent to which what logic articulates is the specific form of the mindedness of a finite cognitive being. A brief overview of this point will allow us to appreciate the respect in which Kant's criticism *avant la lettre* of Frege's position within the logical triangle recapitulates an important feature of Descartes's criticism *avant la lettre* of Leibniz's position within the theological triangle. For Frege's conception of logic continues to bear the imprint of Leibniz's—of the rationalist aspiration to delineate a set of thoughts whose truth could be equally entertained and acknowledged by us and by a being unencumbered by our forms of finitude. The remainder of this section will offer a scandalously brief overview of what Leibniz's and Frege's respective conceptions of logic have in common and how they both differ from Kant's.

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[25] This trick turns out to be repeatable: Hegel takes us yet another step closer—in this case, toward Kant's God—than Kant himself would have imagined possible.

Conant tries to say what Frege's conception shares with Kant's and where it differs from his in the following passage:

> Any law can be considered as a "law" in either of two senses: either as a law which asserts *what is* or as one which asserts *what ought to be.* The laws of physics are laws in the first sense insofar as they assert how matter in motion, in fact, comports itself; they are laws in the second sense insofar as they tell us how one ought to think if one wishes to think correctly about matter in motion. They are laws in a descriptive sense insofar as they represent true statements about the physical world; they are prescriptive insofar as they prescribe how one should think about the physical world (if one wishes to think in accordance with the truth). The laws of logic, Frege holds, can equally be said to be "laws" in each of these two senses. In the second sense, they are, as Kant held, *the* laws of thought—that is, the most *general* laws of thought. In this sense, the laws of logic are laws which prescribe what ought to be—that is, they prescribe how one is to think if one is to think at all. The un-Kantian twist comes with the idea that the laws of logic are laws in the first sense as well—laws which assert what is the case in the world. Conceived in the first way, the laws of logic are hardly "purely formal rules" (in either Kant's sense or Hilbert's): they state (absolutely general) substantial truths. They are laws to which the "behavior" of everything conforms. The laws of logic hold for anything, any sort of subject-matter whatsoever.[26]

In my reply to Boyle, I will take issue with Conant's claim that Frege's understanding of the sense in which the laws of logic may be said to be "prescriptive" parallels Kant's conception of logic as formal.[27] But for the present purpose, all we need to get into view are some of the respects in which Frege's understanding of these matters remains far closer to Leibniz's than Kant's.

Kant seeks to draw a fundamental distinction between (what he called) the *algebraic generality*[28] of a mathematical law about numbers such as $a(b + c) = ab + ac$ and the logical formality of an Aristotelian syllogism.

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[26] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 67.

[27] I will therefore at that point also have to take issue with Conant's account of why Frege's understanding of the sense in which the laws of logic may be said to be "descriptive" introduces an allegedly merely locally un-Kantian twist in an otherwise generically shared Kantian conception of logic.

[28] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* 2nd ed., trans. N. K. Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), A717/B745, 579.

For Kant, unlike for Leibniz, the schematic letters that figure in the representation of a bit of purely logical reasoning—such as a syllogism—do not range over possible contents of thought. Rather the syllogism articulates the *mere form* of the thought by abstracting from all content—from all relation to objects. The letters in the algebraic representation of a mathematical formula range for Kant over everything there is within the domain of quantity. In this respect, they contrast with the schematic letters of a syllogism. The latter for Kant do not "range" over anything. Indeed, in the expression of an Aristotelian syllogism such as Barbara (unlike in a Fregean *Begriffsschrift*), the logical category of that which is to fill the argument place of such a schematic letter remains conceptually indeterminate, as does the nexus of predicative unity expressed by the grammatical copula uniting the schematic letters.[29] If what Kant calls

[29] Hence, those cases of reasoning that are to be recognized as true in virtue of their syllogistic form in Aristotelian logic abstract from the internal logical character of the nexus of the judgment—from, for example, whether the nexus is one of predication (in which a general term is predicated of an individual: "Socrates is man") or one of subordination (in which both schematic letters are filled by general terms: "All men are mortal"). This is generally taken to be a point that Frege appreciates but Kant misses. Frege takes this to be a sign that Aristotle's theory of inference is flawed and must be replaced by a more comprehensive and adequate theory of the inferential order. Frege puts his complaint by saying that Aristotelian logic makes the mistake of thinking that the grammatical unity of the simple categorical proposition is always that of subject and predicate. (By Frege's lights, this conflates the nexus of object and concept with other logically distinct sorts of nexus, such as, occurs in a judgment that two objects are identical, or in a judgment that the extension of one concept falls within the extension of another.) But that there is some failure of discrimination on the part of Aristotelian logic here is not lost on Kant either. He will charge Aristotelian logic with abstracting from a distinction central to the Critical Philosophy: that between singular immediate and general mediate representations. But for Kant, such a distinction is not to be drawn apart from an account of how judgment relates to sensibility. Hence, Kant draws a very different moral than Frege about the sort of supplementation required to remedy the incompleteness of Aristotelian pure general logic. Kant takes the same locus of limitation in Aristotelian logic to indicate something altogether different than Frege does: namely, that pure general logic—logic conceived as a theory of the inferential order—*qua logic* requires completion via transcendental logic: an account of the forms of logical nexus that permit judgment to possess empirical content. From this vantage, what Frege shares with the neo-Aristotelian logicians of Kant's time is the assumption that logic is exhausted by an adequate theory of inference. Kant takes it that a science of logic that seeks to vindicate its entitlement to regard itself as a theory of genuinely object-related thought requires supplementation with a theory of *categories*. Hence, Kant puts his complaint by saying that the logicians declare that a judgment consists in a relation between a subject concept and a predicate concept, but they do not tell us wherein the asserted relation consists (*Critique of Pure Reason,* B141). To fully elucidate this requires for Kant something quite different than it does for Frege: namely an account of the *twelve* logically distinct modes of unity through which the given *Erkenntnisse* may be brought to the objective unity of apperception. Regardless of whether one prefers Frege's or Kant's (or some further) diagnosis of wherein the

"the subject concept"—the subject of logical predication—in such a judgment is specified by nothing further than the sort of schematic letter that figures in pure general logic, then the subject of such a judgment remains—as Kant himself puts it—without *Sinn oder Bedeutung.* It "stands for" nothing more than an *Objekt*—a merely logical concept of an object. For Kant the conformity of a thought to the formal requirements of merely logical thought does not tell us whether it has relation to a *Gegenstand*—an object of possible experience: something that partakes of (what Kant calls) "real" (and not merely "logical") possibility—and hence whether the thought in question expresses a possible candidate for objectively valid judgment.

So here is the first important difference between Leibnizian and Kantian conceptions of logic: for Kant mere logical unity does not suffice to confer the sort of formal unity required to yield judgable content, whereas for Leibniz it does. Conversely, for Leibniz the principles of pure logic articulate substantive truths, hence a species of knowledge—of cognition; whereas for Kant they articulate only necessary but not sufficient conditions for knowledge. They articulate only those conditions on thinking that one has to respect in order to avoid self-contradiction in thought—those of *mere* (as Kant will put it, *merely logical*) possibility, as opposed to those of real possibility: the conditions that must be in place in order for thought to possess genuine content, to be of such a form that it expresses something that can so much as be a genuine candidate for cognition.[30] Finally, for Leibniz the purely logical represents an independently intelligible body of truth; whereas for Kant the very intelligibility of the merely logically possible presupposes that of the really possible.

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incompleteness of Aristotelian logic lies, this much ought to be conceded: Kant actually distinguishes many more distinct forms of "logical" nexus (that the outward grammatical subject/predicate form of the copula in ordinary language obscures from view and that certain neo-Aristotelian logicians fail properly to distinguish) than does Frege. Of course, this is not simply a matter of Kant having noticed a number of cases Frege overlooked. For they are not looking for the same thing: the main point of contention between Kant and Frege turns precisely on what ought to count as a "logically" distinct form of judgmental nexus.

[30] "To cognize an object I must be able to prove its possibility, either from its actuality as attested by experience, or a priori by means of reason. But I can think whatever I please, provided only that I do not contradict myself, that is, provided my concept is a possible thought. This suffices for the possibility of the concept, even though I may not be able to answer for their being, in the sum of all possibilities, an object corresponding to it. But something more is required before I can ascribe to such a concept objective validity, that is, real possibility; the former possibility is merely logical" (CPR, Bxxvii).

This means that for Kant, unlike for Leibniz, pure reason runs the risk of running on empty—of failing to traffic in genuine content—while also failing to appreciate that it has thus severed itself from the conditions of the possibility of judgment. This leads Kant to distinguish sharply between two branches of logic: one that preserves a relation to the conditions required for the possibility of judgment and one that does not. The latter branch—pure general logic—abstracts from the conditions that render genuinely object-related judgment possible. For Kant genuine objectivity requires a relation to actuality. This means that, for Kant, as we engage in logical abstraction—as we do what the Leibnizian will think of as merely ascending the ladder of generality—there will come a point at which we reach a philosophically significant tipping point. As we ascend from the comparatively *determinately* thinkable to the comparatively *determinably* thinkable, we will traverse a point at which we will have wandered from having a judgment with some determinate content in view to having the mere form of a thought in view—something that has merely logical unity but no longer expresses judgable content. Hence, for Kant, as we move up the rungs of what the Leibnizian regards as a single continuous Porphyrian ladder—from Lassie to collie to dog to canine to mammal to vertebrate to space-time occupant to possible subject of logical predication—we gradually achieve a concept with an ever higher degree of generality, precisely at the cost of rendering it ever emptier of empirical content. There comes a point, as we do this, at which that which we "hold" in thought—the *Inhalt* of the thought—is null and void; we are left with the mere intellectual vessel for the holding of an *Inhalt,* without there any longer being anything that we thus hold. Once we reach this point in the activity of abstraction—the point in which the philosopher finds himself framing notions such as "logical subject of predication," "predicate," "relation"—we are trafficking in the realm of (what Kant calls) "the merely logical." Only Kant seeks to show the Leibnizian this is not a genuine "realm"—or "domain"—at all. The expression "merely logical" in Kant modifies *use*—a merely logical use of a notion is one that employs it apart from the conditions of objective validity. It is a trafficking in notions from which every dimension of categorial schematization, and hence any intentional bearing on reality, has been eviscerated.

As we move up the Leibnizian ladder of abstraction, Kant wants to show that there comes this point of sharp discontinuity. This is the tipping point when we wander from contemplating that which is constrained by the conditions of real possibility to framing bare thoughts that are no

longer so constrained—we wander from the realm of genuine judgment into the unconstrained employment of pure reason. Once this tipping point has been traversed, all relation to sensibility has been drained from the concept; it becomes—as Kant puts it—empty. The concept of an object that figures in pure general logic (and in much of the Transcendental Dialectic) is the concept of a mere (what Kant calls) *Ding* or *Object*.[31] The *Critique of Pure Reason* seeks to pinpoint this moment at which we slide from genuinely substantive material judgment to such a trafficking in mere forms of thought that no longer partake of *Sinn* or *Bedeutung*.[32] On this conception of the relation of the general to the particular, as we gradually strip a logically determinable form of its particular determinations, we eventually arrive at a point where we have something that retains nothing more than the mere outer form of logical determinability while no longer retaining any relation to the determinate conditions of logical unity required for substantive truth-evaluability.

By contrast, for Leibniz, we can keep moving up the ladder of abstraction as high as we want without ever having to fear that we might be emptying our thought entirely of content. The objectivity of thought requires no Kantian internal relation to actuality. For Leibniz, as for Kant, the letters in the algebraic representation of a mathematical formula range over everything there is within the domain of quantity. But for Leibniz, unlike for Kant, the schematic letters that figure in the representation of a bit of purely logical reasoning—such as a syllogism—are to be understood as involving the same form of generality. Leibniz not only (qua innovator of logical notation) seeks to employ algebraic notation in logic, but also regards the relation between the schematic letters of a syllogism and the possible elements of a material judgment as belonging to the same

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[31] This is not to deny that Kant will sometimes formulate the principle of non-contradiction in a manner that involves the use of a German word for "object." See, for example, the formulation in A151/B190 of the principle of non-contradiction: "No predicate pertains to a thing that contradicts it." ("*Keinem Dinge kommt ein Prädikat zu, welches ihm widerspricht.*") It would be a mistake to take the occurrence of such a phraseology as evidence that, for Kant, a principle of pure general logic has genuine ontological import. When Kant is being careful, as, for example, in the passage just quoted, the German word in question will be either *Objekt* or *Ding,* and what that term there signifies is nothing more than the merely logical concept of that which occupies the subject position in a thought that has the outward form of a predicative judgment. It does not signify relation to a *Gegenstand;* to something that we can encounter—that which we can stand over and against [*gegenüberstehen*]—in experience.

[32] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B148–149, 163; A155–6/B194–5, 192–193; A240/B299, 260; *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics,* ed. G. Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4:315, 66–67.

logical order as that of the relation between a variable and its substitution-instances in an algebraic formula. The only difference in these sorts of logical relation for Leibniz is one of degree (rather than, as for Kant, one of kind): the former relation (between a logical truth and what there is) possesses a wider scope of generality than the latter. The schematic letters now range not merely over this or that domain but over *the* domain of all domains. The expression of a logical law holds not merely (as does the expression of an algebraic one) for all mathematical magnitudes or (as the laws of physics do) for all corporeal bodies, but rather tout court—for *everything*—for any possible object of thought.

For Leibniz, unlike for Kant, not only does the framing of purely logic principles not require abstraction from all relation to an object, but the principles themselves possess objective content as they stand. John Mac-Farlane seeks to capture this dimension of difference in neo-Leibnizian and Kantian conceptions of logic as follows:

> [The Leibnizian requires only that we] abstract from all particular content—otherwise it would lose its absolutely general applicability—but not from the most general or abstract content. Thus, although logic abstracts from the contents of concepts like *cat* and *red*, it does not abstract from the contents of highly general and abstract concepts like *being, unity, relation, genus, species, accident*, and *possible*. Indeed, logical norms depend on general truths about reality that can only be stated using these concepts. For example, syllogistic inference depends on the dictum *de omni et nullo*—"the determinations of a higher being [in a genus-species hierarchy] are in a being lower than it" (§154)[33]—which the neo-Leibnizians regard as a straightforward truth about reality. And the section of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* devoted to ontology begins with statements of the principles of non-contradiction, excluded middle, and identity, phrased not as principles of thought but as claims about *things:* "nothing is and is not" (§7); "everything possible is either A or not A" (§10); "whatever is, is that thing" (§11). Logic is still distinguished from metaphysics in being concerned with rules for *thinking,* but (as Wolff puts it) "these should be derived from the cognition of being in general, which is taken from ontology. . . . It is plain, therefore, that principles should be sought from ontology for the demonstrations of the rules of logic" (§89). Since

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[33] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten. 1757. *Metaphysica*. Reprinted (with Kant's marginal notes) in Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 17 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1924).

thought is about reality, the most general norms for thought must depend on the most general truths about reality.[34]

The principle of non-contradiction for a Leibnizian is a principle that holds of objects—hence it may be formulated as a principle ranging over everything that can be: "Nothing is and is not." And the principle in question may be regarded as a substantive material truth—as a proposition with ontological import. MacFarlane contrasts this Leibnizian conception of logic with the Kantian conception, according to which the principle of non-contradiction articulates the *mere form of thought*. He concludes from this that a principle of pure general logic for Kant lacks the sort of ontological import that such a principle possesses for Leibniz.

What MacFarlane correctly appreciates is that Kant's understanding of logic differs radically from any version of a universalist conception and, indeed, that Kant is specifically concerned with criticizing the Leibnizian variant of the latter conception. This is correct, so far as it goes. But we are on the verge of a misunderstanding if we construe what Kant means when he says that transcendental logic is concerned with "the mere form of thought" as if it were an incipient version of (what I called at the end of Section II) the contemporary conception. Historians of logic can find it tempting to regard the relation between pure general logic and transcendental logic in Kant as if were a technically unsophisticated version of a precursor to the contemporary distinction between syntax and semantics. This leads to an interpretation of Kant's conception of logic that blinds us to the most interesting ways in which it might challenge our contemporary ways of thinking about logic. According to the resulting anachronistic interpretation: (i) Kantian pure general logic investigates properties of logical forms in a manner that is supposed to be somehow roughly akin to the way in which the contemporary study of syntax constitutes a self-standingly intelligible form of inquiry (investigating logical properties such as validity and consequence as properties of uninterpreted "forms" understood as schemata); (ii) Kant's talk of transcendental logic's concern with "relation to the object" is taken to be somehow roughly akin to the concern of a contemporary conception of semantics (with its employment of a truth predicate and provision of disquotational facts); (iii) the transition from pure general to transcendental logic is conceived to be somehow roughly akin to a contemporary

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[34] John MacFarlane, "Frege, Kant, and the Logic in Logicism," *The Philosophical Review* 111, no. 1 (Jan. 2002): 45–46.

understanding of the transition from syntax to semantics (through which mere syntactic forms thereby acquire semantic content); and hence (iv) Kantian transcendental logic thus comes to be regarded as a non-technical anticipation of the contemporary conception of how truth enters logic.

Even if the foregoing remarks are taken to adumbrate nothing more than a vague outline for a general framework for how to go about interpreting Kant—one according to which the distinction between pure general and transcendental logic is presumed to be just *somehow roughly akin* to a distinction that can now be found in contemporary logic—it already suffices to guarantee that the resulting reading of Kant will be a misreading. This interpretative framework reads into Kant an anachronistic account of, first, *what* logical form is a form *of,* and second, *how* form *relates* to that of which it is the form. On the first point: for the modern conception, the "forms" that are investigated in "formal logic" are uninterpreted schemata; whereas in a Kantian transcendental inquiry, what are called "forms" articulate aspects of *self-conscious rational activity*—pure general logic articulates the form of our capacity for thought as such, transcendental logic the form of our capacity for objectively valid judgment, transcendental aesthetic the form of our capacity for sensory consciousness of objects, and so on. On the second point: for the modern conception, logical forms are prior to and independent of any specification of content (which comes only with the move from syntax to semantics); whereas in Kantian hylomorphism, form stands to matter as it does in Aristotle before him and the *Tractatus* after him—namely, in such a way that neither form nor content can be individuated apart from the relation of each to the other. We will return to a more detailed exploration of these aspects of the Kantian conception below, starting with the reply to Boyle.

It suffices for the very preliminary purpose of the present section simply to mark the grossest respects in which the Kantian conception of logic is to be distinguished from both Leibnizian and contemporary ones. Both pure general and transcendental logic, for Kant, abstract *from* some aspect of the prior unity of form and matter in objectively valid judgment; the two branches of logic differ from one another in their *degree* of abstraction from that prior unity. The former abstracts from all relation to the object, and the latter only from all differences in objects but not from relation to the object *überhaupt*. Pure general logic articulates the form of *all* thought, common to those exercises of our capacity for thought that are in accord with, and those that that flout or otherwise fall short of, the conditions of objective validity. Transcendental logic, on the other

hand, articulates the comparatively more demanding conditions that characterize pure thought of an object: those that must be minimally in place for any exercise of our capacity for thought to achieve world-directed, object-related content.

Both the Leibnizian and Kantian conceptions differ from the contemporary one in regarding logic as at every point concerned with the articulation of *laws* and the conditions of *truth*. In this respect they both contrast with the contemporary conception, where syntax is a self-standing inquiry and where semantics supplements syntax through conferring content on that which initially lacks content. On the Leibnizian conception, the laws of logic are laws of truth: logic articulates laws that hold generally and are true of everything. On the Kantian conception, any branch of logic involves a form of inquiry that takes its point of departure from our self-conscious awareness of the actuality of our capacity for first-order material thought; each branch of logic then abstracts to some degree or another from this or that dimension of our full-blooded exercises of that capacity. However, the Kantian critique of Leibnizian pure reason begins with the claim that pure general logic, in contradistinction to transcendental logic, involves such a severe degree of abstraction from the material exercise of our capacity of thought that it comes to drain it of all content, rendering it a merely empty form.

For Kant, unlike Leibniz, freedom from contradiction is a negative criterion of truth, but mere accord with this form leaves it open whether a putative judgment displaying such an outward form is objectively valid—whether it is actually *about* anything—or not. For Kant, the principles of pure general logic do not secure an ontological foothold simply in virtue of their outwardly general form. Rather they articulate the form of thought in abstraction from its matter.[35] Genuine ontological import enters only with transcendental logic, but there, too, not in the guise of a series of material judgments with maximum Leibnizian logical generality but in the guise of an account of principles partaking of Kantian formality—exhibiting the possible range of judgmental forms of which any material judgment must partake if it is to have bearing on reality.

For Leibniz, the abstraction from actuality required to arrive at a formulation of the principles of logic does not deprive them of their general applicability. The Leibnizian is committed to the intelligibility of the following ideas: there is a stock of preexisting thoughts that subsist in God's

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[35] In my reply to Boyle, we will explore what this means and how it differs from a Fregean conception of logic.

understanding prior to His willing some compossible set of them to be actual and thereby creating the world.[36] Logic treats of this stock of preexisting thoughts. Logical truths are those that hold in any of those worlds. Those truths belong to God's understanding, prior to the actuality of the world He creates and prior to the sort of capacity for judgment that is characteristic of a finite being whose knowledge of that world depends upon its actuality. Pure logic is what pure reason grasps when it understands what must be true in any possible world. The laws of logic are the most general laws of being.

For Kant, the idea of the domain of all domains is an empty one. Pure general logic is therefore not the doctrine of the most general truths of being. For its laws are, in no sense, laws of being. It is no accident that, in marking the difference between the forms that pure general logic and transcendental logic respectively articulate, he refers to the latter as *categories*. This is not, for Kant, merely a fancy word for a kind of very general concept. It is a word for the highest form of logical unity requisite to forge a relation to judgable content. A category articulates a distinctive type of "what-it-is-to-be."[37] There is no thought that bears on being prior to this degree of determination of the form of thought. The Aristotelian idea of a categorial difference is the idea of a difference in genus that is not a mere difference in species but one that renders "the genus itself other"[38]—a difference not merely within the kind but in the *logical form* of the kind. For Kant, only once we have this degree of determinacy of logical unity in view (what he calls categorial unity) do we have judgable content in view. This means that, for Kant, some differences in "subject matter" or "domain" are not *mere* (material) differences. The conditions of the possibility of a thought's bearing on this subject matter rather than on that subject matter, if the differences in "subject matter" are sufficiently fundamental, comprise categorial differences in the form of judgment—in the form *of* judgment, not merely in the matter *on* which judgment bears. That is, they are not merely differences in the kinds of objects or concepts that figure in thought, but in the forms of categorial-logical nexuses according to which object and concept can so much as be brought together in judgment. Kant's critique of pure reason is therefore a critique of the Leibnizian idea that the kind of merely logical unity

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[36] The occurrence of the word "prior" in this sentence (as in the earlier conceptions of creation discussed above) is not to be understood temporally.

[37] I owe this formulation to Matthew Boyle; see "Essentially Rational Animals," in *Rethinking Epistemology,* eds. G. Abel and J. Conant (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 409.

[38] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X.8, 1058a7, trans. and ed. W. D. Ross.

that comes for free with abstraction to the highest degree of generality suffices to confer objective bearing on thought.

This fundamental difference in Leibniz's and Kant's respective conceptions of logic is tied to the fundamental difference in their ways of understanding the relative logical priority of the concepts of the infinite and the finite. Leibniz, like Descartes, takes our grasp of the concept of a finite knower to depend upon some prior apprehension on our part of the infinitude of God.[39] To understand the nature of our power of cognition is a matter of fully understanding just how we differ from God and how the very possibility of that power depends upon the actuality of God. We understand what a finite being is—hence what finitude is—precisely through a comprehension of the forms of privation, limitation, or imperfection that characterize our nature in contrast with that of an infinite being. For Leibniz, it is through understanding how our cognition necessarily falls short of that of an infinite being that we come to a proper philosophical appreciation of why we are able to grasp only those truths we can and why our grasp of them must take a certain form.[40]

For Kant it is the other way around: the only form of cognitive capacity that we can form a positive conception of is that of a finite knower. Our effort to grasp the concept of an infinite knower—unlike that of a finite knower—must end shortly after it begins. Our reflective elaboration of the concept of a finite cognitive capacity, precisely because it begins

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[39] This is not to deny that—as will be explored in my reply to Moore—Leibniz's conception of the infinite differs profoundly from that of Descartes.

[40] Leibniz's way of conceiving of the distinction between a cognitively perfect infinite and a cognitively imperfect cognitive being permits the distinction to turn on attributing the concept of a "capacity" or "faculty" to both in a manner that most medieval philosophers would not be comfortable with—and, as we shall see, for similar reasons it disturbs Descartes. The appeal to divine faculties and how they come to be in act plays an essential role in Leibniz's way of conceiving of creation—namely, as an actualization of a potentiality in the Divinity (through the activity of His will) to bring about that which (through the activity of His understanding) he sees to be the best possible world. Contrast this with what Andrea Kern says about Aquinas's conception of God's knowledge:

> God's knowledge does not, as it is sometimes suggested, contrast with human knowledge on account of being the exercise of an infallible capacity instead of a fallible capacity. God's knowledge is not the exercise of any capacity. It is knowledge that does not *come to be* . . . . By contrast, the knowledge of a finite being, of a creature, as Aquinas says, is an actualization of a capacity. (Andrea Kern, "The Capacity to Know and Perception," *Philosophical Issues*, forthcoming)

This requires a different model for thinking about divine creation than the one that Leibniz's divine analogue to faculty psychology affords. Aquinas here anticipates a point that comes to play a central role in Kant's critical philosophy: the applicability to our cognitive power of the distinction between act and capacity is a constitutive mark of our finitude.

from our own case—from our knowledge of the actuality of such a power in us—may strive to attain a more and more adequate articulation of its own form and the conditions of its own possibility. This is what critique aims at: the achievement of knowledge of our cognitive capacity *from the inside*—in and through the exercise of the very capacity that we seek thereby to know. To frame the concept of the possibility of a fundamentally different form of cognition is to frame the concept of a form of cognitive capacity that we are unable to reflectively elaborate in this way—that cannot be known to us from the inside through the exercise of the very capacity whose conditions of possibility we seek to comprehend. It is the concept of a form of cognitive capacity that we can know only *from the outside*.[41] Our reflective elaboration of the infinite counterpart to our capacity must therefore remain irremediably cognitively weightless. Reflection upon it can get no further than the elaboration of the bare idea of a putative form of knowledge that we can think without contradiction, but one whose application can play no role in any constitutive exercise of our capacity to know. It is a concept that can have only (what Kant calls) a merely logical use—it cannot figure in any objectively valid judgment. That means that in framing a concept of such an alternative form of cognition, we entertain in reflection a concept that can play no positive role in our cognition. Not only do we not know whether such any such form of non-finite cognition *is* actual, we are unable even to adjudicate in any genuinely meaningful way the question of whether it *could* be actual. Or, as Kant prefers to say, we are unable to comprehend the conditions of the real possibility of such a concept. Hence the *Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft* can lay claim to being genuine *Erkenntnis*—genuine self-*knowledge* on the part of a finite knower—only if, over the course of its prosecution, it nowhere calls upon the concept of an infinite knower to bear cognitive weight.

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[41] Johannes Haag helpfully distinguishes the two very distinct roles the concept of a faculty of knowledge plays within Kant's Critical Philosophy as follows: "[T]he concept of a faculty served a twofold methodological purpose. On the one hand, it was frequently used to delineate our own epistemic capacities *from within,* insofar as faculties were postulated as conditions of the possibility of these very capacities. On the other hand, the concept of faculties proved useful in delineating our epistemic capacities *from outside,* as it were, insofar as they helped to articulate the conceptual possibility of capacities we—as human beings or, broadening the scope of the investigation, as finite rational beings—do not and cannot have for principled reasons" (Haag, "Faculties in Kant and German Idealism," in *The Faculties: A History,* ed. Dominik Perler [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015], 199; my emphases).

This means that (in critique's effort to illuminate the conditions of the possibility of finite knowledge) the concept of an infinite being can serve as nothing more than a heuristic conceptual foil—a point of contrast in a reflective elaboration of what the form of our capacity is *not*—in a preliminary step within the overall quest to elucidate what our cognitive capacity is. The concept of an infinite knower may play no weight-bearing role in the vindication of my entitlement to regard the sort of finite capacity I bear as *cognitive*—as able to yield *knowledge* (and not merely the illusion thereof).[42] Such a vindication must remain immanent at every point—it must be executed wholly from within the standpoint of finitude. Indeed, for the *Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft* to be able to live up to its name, it must never rest on anything other than reason's knowledge of *itself*. Hence the vindication of our form of knowledge can lay claim to being a form of genuine *self*-knowledge only if its attainment requires no knowledge of the real possibility of an alien form of thought or knowledge.

The logically basic concept here, for Kant, is that of a knower whose form of cognition is dependent on receptivity yet one who is able to represent what is thus given through receptivity as really possible—as knowable through a really possible exercise of our cognitive capacity. In elucidating our form of cognition as one that must be able to meet these conditions, Kant provides a positive—not a merely privative—characterization of the finitude of that power. He does this through exhibiting (in the transcendental expositions of the Transcendental Aesthetic) it to be dependent upon the enabling conditions of our forms of sensible intuition, while revealing (in the Transcendental Deduction) these, in turn, to be in accord with those of any spontaneous self-conscious discursive understanding. That the form of understanding or thinking is necessarily discursive is for Kant a mark of our finitude—as is the necessarily receptive character of our forms of intuition. *The Critique of Pure Reason* aims to show that these aspects of our finitude—discursivity and receptivity—each presuppose the other, if either is to figure as ingredient in a genuinely rational cognitive capacity (in a form of *Vernunft*). The

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[42] From this, it follows that our knowing that an infinite knower exists cannot itself be one of the conditions that must be secured in order to achieve an understanding of the conditions of the possibility of finite cognition (because, for Kant, the concept of an infinite knower is not even a candidate for a sort of thing about which *knowledge* is possible). This is what Kant is bound to find misguided in Descartes's conception of the role that the idea of God must play in the vindication of reason. We will return to this difference between Descartes and Kant in the next section.

question of how each bears and yet depends on the other yields the starting point for a non-privative characterization of the form of cognitive capacity we bear. In Kant, these intertwined formal dimensions of our cognitive capacity are known through a reflective exercise of that very capacity—a form of use of that capacity through which the implicit conditions of its own possibility are fully brought to explicit self-conscious comprehension. Unlike in the case of the concept of an infinite form of knowing, in the case of the concept of our own form of knowing we are able to advance to such a positive reflective comprehension of the conditions of the possibility of such a cognitive capacity thanks to our prior first-person acquaintance with its actuality.

In stark contrast to such a way of investigating the nature of a cognitive capacity—namely, our own—what little we are able to grasp of a concept of an infinite knower, we grasp through building it up out of ingredient concepts of cognitive capacity, each of which, taken in isolation, has some application to our own case, but each of which are then recombined in such a way that we attempt to strip each ingredient concept of the conditions of finitude required for its really possible application to our own case. We frame these ingredient concepts that go into the concept of an infinite knower by abstracting from one or another of the aspects of the sensible and intellectual dimensions of the only form of cognitive capacity that we are able to know from the inside. For example, we retain the dimension of immediacy that our form of sensible intuition bears to its objects but attempt to think away that of its affective receptivity (and hence dependence on something given to us from outside); or we retain the dimension of spontaneity of the intellect but attempt to think away that of its discursivity (and hence dependence on sensibility for cognitive content). Then we reflect upon the highly abstract variants of the concepts of "intuition," "intellect," etc., with which we are left, recombining the resultant conceptual frames in various ways to form a merely logical concept of a form of cognitive capacity other than our own.[43] Any concept of a non-finite knower that thereby results is

[43] The most common example of such a limiting concept in Kant's writings is that of intellectual intuition. In Sections 76 and 77 of *The Critique of Judgment,* Kant discusses how we may distinguish two related concepts of an infinite knower: (1) the concept of a knower who generates its object through an intellectual form of intuition and (2) the concept of a knower who comprehends its object through a non-discursive form of understanding. Arguably both these limiting concepts of "a form of knowledge" explode the distinction, applicable to beings such as us, between a specifically theoretical and a specifically practical form of knowledge. In his writings on practical philosophy, Kant develops the limiting concept of the holy will—the concept of a cognitive capacity that still bears a recognizably

one that we are able to grasp merely privatively. It can play no positive weight-bearing load in a philosophical clarification and presentation of what *our* form of cognitive capacity is. It plays a merely negative role as a *limiting concept (Grenzbegriff),* through juxtaposition with which, we can sharpen the philosophical elucidation of the concept of the one and only cognitive capacity that we are able to comprehend from the inside—the one we exercise in and through this very activity of elucidation.

What holds in this way generally for the task of critique holds for every major aspect of its prosecution. Hence it holds also for the prosecution of that ingredient aspect of the overall task that Kant identifies with *logic*—the task of the self-clarification and presentation of the form of the intellectual dimension of our cognitive capacity. On Kant's conception of logic, thinking's investigation of itself, on the one hand, forms part and parcel of a broader inquiry in which our capacity for knowing is engaged in the task of investigating itself, while on the other, that broader inquiry as a whole is oriented around a proper clarification of and response to the central question of transcendental logic: How is objectively valid judgment so much as possible?[44] Kant seeks to show that

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practical form yet abstracts from more determinate aspects of the finitude of our form of practical cognition. For a brief, helpful overview of how Kant distinguishes these various limiting concepts from one another while still employing each for an exclusively heuristic purpose within his overall transcendental investigation into the nature of our cognitive capacity, see section 3—titled "Strange (Forms of) Faculties as Limiting Concepts"—of Johannes Haag's article, "Faculties in Kant and German Idealism," op. cit., 219–231.

[44] This is something that Hegel understands far better than most of Kant's readers, prior or subsequent. For an account of how Hegel's conception of logic inherits and builds on this aspect of Kant's, see especially chapter 1 of Robert Pippin's *Hegel's Realm of Shadows* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). Pippin observes, "Hegel . . . never tires of saying that his own theoretical philosophy is like Kant's in that at its heart it is a logic, an enterprise in which our thinking has itself as its proper object" (11). And Hegel says, "The primary [*das nächste*] concern of the Kantian philosophy is . . . that thinking is supposed to investigate itself, the extent to which it is capable of knowing" (*Encyclopedia Logic,* §41A, quoted by Pippin, 11). In declaring that his theoretical philosophy is a *logic* in the Kantian sense of the term and that thinking can investigate itself only if it investigates the extent to which it is capable of *knowing*, Hegel rightly sees Kant as refusing a conception according to which logic simply forms one branch of philosophy among others. So one of Hegel's tasks was to show why and how *pre-Kantian* ways of distinguishing between what belongs to "the subject matter" of logic, on the one hand, and what was held rather to belong to metaphysics or epistemology or philosophical psychology, on the other, involved a way of thinking about logic that was constitutionally unable to get the Kantian conception of logic into view. Pippin's book inherits a version of this difficulty (one with which we will see that Boyle also struggles in connection with Kant). In his book Pippin endeavors to bring out how, if we hold in place our *contemporary* ways of distinguishing between what belongs to "the subject matter" of logic, on the one hand, and what belongs to metaphysics or

this means that logic must be the comprehension of a form of capacity that is essentially discursive in nature and hence positively characterizable as non-accidentally belonging to a finite being. The logical form of objectively valid thought must be suited to figure as an internal aspect of the full range of really possible acts of finite cognition, be they analytic or synthetic, a priori or a posteriori. Logic, for Kant, is the finite thinker's self-comprehension of her own essentially discursive form of thought—of a form that is *essentially finite* in character. If our conception of logic were of something that could equally well characterize the thought of both a finite and an infinite being—if logic were to afford no comprehension of the essential finitude of the very form of thought we exercise over the course of our logical reflection and inquiry—then, from a Kantian point of view, that would betray a fundamental failure on the part of logic itself to prosecute its own most basic task.

Indeed, in Kant's writings after the critical turn—unlike in any writings of Leibniz—the term "thought," even in the strictest of its logical employments, always signifies either a general capacity or the acts of a capacity that is essentially discursive and hence finite in character.[45] Thought is, in this respect, internally related to our form of intuition; it is—as we shall see in the reply to Boyle—an internal aspect of a single *unified* cognitive capacity. This means that the peculiar variety of intuition that would be involved in divine cognition, if it were possible, would bear no relation to "thought" on a Kantian conception of thought. In the case of a divine knower, "its knowledge must be intuitive and *not thought,* which always involves limitation."[46] Hence, even if we are in some minimal sense able to frame a limiting concept of a non-finite knower, this does not mean for Kant that we are able to do the same for

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epistemology or the philosophy of mind, on the other, we will be unable to get Hegel's conception of logic into view. I will need to wrestle with yet a further variant of this same difficulty each time I turn below to discussing Wittgenstein. This is no accident: Hegel stands in a tradition of philosophical logic that runs from Kant to Wittgenstein—a tradition to which Frege, Russell, and most of their followers, on the one hand, and a great many continental and analytic so-called neo-Kantians and neo-Hegelians, on the other hand, do not belong. Since none of the other contributors to this volume discusses Hegel, I have refrained in what follows from indicating how he fits into the tradition of philosophical logic whose outline I here seek to provide. This renders my account of this tradition woefully incomplete.

[45] The essential finitude of thought is a point on which Heidegger rightly lays great emphasis in his reading of *The Critique of Pure Reason.* As he puts it there, "Thought as such, then, is in itself the seal of finitude" (*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics,* trans. James Churchill [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965], 30).

[46] *Critique of Pure Reason,* B71; my emphasis.

the supposed concept of a *non-finite thinker*—a non-finite logical being. The putative concept of such a sort of logically alien being is, for Kant, less than empty; it is not even thinkable. It is not "something" with regard to which we can form even a limiting concept. Yet the concept of a non-finite logical being—one who differs fundamentally in this respect from the sort of thinking beings we are—is one the thinkability of which is everywhere presupposed by Leibniz's conception of logic, and not only Leibniz's. We shall explore below the implications this has for a proper delineation of the depth of the differences that obtain between the sort of conception of logic we find in Kant and those we find in Leibniz and Frege respectively.

For Leibniz, the principles of logic articulate a kind of unity of which God's infinite and our finite understandings may both equally partake. For Kant, as we move from considering the form of thought characteristic of a finite cognitive being to framing the concept of an infinite cognitive capacity, we move not only from a conception of a cognitive capacity that we know from the inside (through the actuality of its exercise) to one that we can know only from the outside; we move also from the concept of a cognitive capacity that we know to be actual (through the actuality of its exercise) to the concept of one whose conditions of real possibility we cannot comprehend. The concept of an infinite knower, for Kant, is a concept that is free of contradiction but categorially unschematizable—hence, as we said above, not a concept that can figure in objectively valid judgment. As we also saw above, this means that we are unable to offer a non-privative characterization of "the form of thought" of such a being. This means, in turn, that pure general logic, for Kant, does not articulate—as it does for Leibniz—a kind of unity characteristic of the thoughts of both a finite and infinite mind, but rather merely the dimension of logical unity of which finite thought still partakes once we abstract out from judgment everything that pertains to the conditions of its relation to a genuinely judgable content. Thus even the barest conception of logic we are able to form (pure general logic), for Kant, articulates the form of thought of a *finite* cognitive being. For Kant the very intelligibility of a capacity for merely logical thought depends on its internal relation to a capacity for judgment, where the latter must bear on the actual world in order for any of our cognitive capacities to be able to traffic in content. What for Leibniz is a difference in *degree* (in logical power)—the difference between an infinite and a finite intellect—for Kant marks a difference in *form* (between the concept of a power of understanding regarding whose form we can know nothing and one we

know from within—hence whose form we can bring to self-consciousness through the activity of logical reflection).

As we shall see below, with respect to this disagreement between Leibniz and Kant (regarding the relation between *logic,* on the one hand, and the *finitude* of our overall cognitive capacity, on the other), Frege stands in a number of significant respects closer to Leibniz than to Kant. That we require some form of notation in order to express and logically appraise the validity of our thought is, indeed, for Frege (as it was for Leibniz) a mark of our finitude. This is taken by the Leibnizian/Fregean philosopher to reflect nothing more than an aspect of the contingency of our own nature—not something about the nature of thought. On this conception, that which we characterize—the logical structure of thought as such—should not be regarded as in any way reflecting the imprint of our finitude. Let us work our way gradually up to seeing how Frege leans towards Leibniz and away from Kant in his understanding of these matters. This will prepare the way for seeing—in the much later replies below—how Wittgenstein pushes the critical insight that our forms of thinking bear the mark of our finitude far beyond where Kant ever intended it to lead.

After saying where Frege's conception of logic differs from Kant's, Conant quotes the following passage from Frege:

> How must I think in order to reach the goal, truth? We expect logic to give us the answer to this question, but we do not demand of it that it should go into what is peculiar to each branch of knowledge and its subject-matter. On the contrary, the task we assign logic is only that of saying what holds with the utmost generality for all thinking, whatever its subject-matter.[47]

We see here Frege's Leibnizianism: the mere logical unity of a thought suffices to confer upon it the requisite degree of articulation for it to yield judgable content. Hence for Frege, as for Leibniz, the laws of logic prescribe how we have to think if "we are not to fail of truth"[48] in any domain whatever. In this respect, Frege says, they contrast with the laws of geometry which prescribe how we have to think "if we are not to fail of truth" in thinking about things in the domain of geometry; or the laws of physics, which are laws about how we have to think, if we are not to

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[47] Frege, *Posthumous Writings,* 128, quoted in Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 67.

[48] Frege, *Posthumous Writings,* 145.

fail of truth, if we are thinking about matter in motion. So what distinguishes the laws of logic for Frege—as for Leibniz—is their maximum generality: that they hold of any domain whatever. They are fully able to retain their objective bearing for Frege—unlike for Kant—considered as exercises of a self-standingly intelligible, purely logical faculty. Frege holds, as does Leibniz, that this faculty traffics in its own proprietary sorts of concepts and relations—ones that partake of purely logical content.[49] The formulation of logical laws involves the employment only of such expressions, together with variables and schematic letters ranging over the universe of all of their possible substitution-instances.[50]

One crucial expression in Frege's *Begriffsschrift* that does not partake of this sort of content—indeed, that is not supposed to be an expression for any sort of *content*—is the judgment stroke. It also does not express a relation (at least if a relation is that which obtains between contents and in thereby uniting them itself expresses a judgable content). It is sometimes said that the judgment stroke expresses "a relation between a judging subject and a judgable content." Yet it is far from clear that there can be a logically coherent genus (call it the genus "relation") of which is expressed by the judgment stroke could count as a species thereof for Frege.[51] In one of the quotations from Frege above (about the difference

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[49] "[L]ogic . . . has its own concepts and relations. . . . To logic, for example, there belong the following: negation, identity, subsumption, subordination of concepts . . ." (Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, 338).

[50] Thomas Ricketts puts this point as follows: "[L]ogical laws are maximally general in that the only vocabulary required for their expression is the topic-universal vocabulary required for statements on any topic whatsoever" ("Logic and Truth in Frege," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. Vol. 70 [1996], 123). Again, this is not to deny that there can be maximally general laws that for Frege would not qualify as logical. This is one of several reasons that Ricketts concludes the following: "Frege has only a retail conception of logic, not a wholesale one. He tells us what logic is by identifying specific laws and inferences as logical. . . . [He] does not state a defining criterion of the logical" (124). This signals a possible area of interpretative dispute concerning which I take no position here. What is of concern here is not whether or not Frege has a *criterion* for what singles out a law-like form of expression as a "logical" law. All that matters for our present purpose is to foreground the respects in which Frege's conception of logic qualifies as generically Leibnizian in character and hence as very far from generically Kantian in character.

[51] This is connected to a theme to which we shall return below and which figures centrally in the Tractarian critique of Frege: this nexus (expressed by the judgment-stroke and that to which it attaches) is the one case in Frege's *Begriffsschrift* of a nexus that does not partake of the logical complexity of function and argument. For many subsequent figures in the history of logic and analytic philosophy, this has been taken to be sufficient to indicate that such a sign is superfluous and should simply be dropped from a proper logical notation. For early Wittgenstein, too, it may be dropped but for roughly the opposite reason. That it points to something of which logic must treat and yet does not belong to the content judged

between grasping a thought and recognizing it as true), he explains the role of the judgment stroke in his notation. There is much in this explanation that will interest us later, but let us now simply focus on how it serves to exhibit the manner in which our capacity to grasp a thought may be said to be "prior" to our capacity to judge of its truth.

It is "prior" not in the sense of being explanatorily prior but in the sense of being logically less composite. Thought and judgment, for Frege, are equally logically fundamental notions. No logically fundamental notion can be defined: each one can only be elucidated—where a successful elucidation will display its logically internal relations to further logically fundamental notions. This aspect of Frege's conception bears (what I will call in Section XI) a formally idealist structure: one in which the unity of the whole is prior to the unity of the parts. The overarching logically fundamental nexus within which thought and judgment are united, for Frege, is the judging-to-be-true of that which can be true or false—where (what Frege calls) "judgment" corresponds to the former and (what he calls) "thought" corresponds to the latter of these two logically distinguishable moments within this nexus. The thought is that which is grasped as judgably true or false in judging; judgment is the act of recognizing a judgable content of this sort to be true. This aspect of Frege's conception of logic is far closer to Kant than to Leibniz. It is precisely in those passages in which he stresses the centrality of judgment to his entire conception of logic that Frege sounds most like Kant.[52]

A fully Kantian version of this conception, however, would require that that which is here called "the thought" is something at which we can arrive only through an *ab*straction from its involvement in the logically prior nexus of judgment—hence that it not be conceived as something that can survive *ex*traction from this unity and occur apart from an exercise of our faculty of judgment. As we shall see in more detail in

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is taken by Wittgenstein to mark an insight on Frege's part—one that, if properly thought through, should lead to the conclusion that a proper logical notation must abandon the very idea that logical complexity is fundamentally of function-argument form. The proper treatment of negation, identity, and much else, must reveal these, too, to be internal to the logical character of the act of judgment and hence not part of the content judged. For these, too, a proper logical notation may dispense with any sign that denotes them, precisely because they do not express any sort of content. For early Wittgenstein, this is a mark of their logical depth, not their logical superficiality.

[52] This formally idealist dimension of Frege's conception is particularly audible in a passage such as the following: "To answer the question how things are independent of reason amounts to judging without judging, to washing the fur without wetting it" [my translation] (*The Foundations of Arithmetic*, §26).

Section XI, Frege wants to combine the apparently Kantian aspect of his conception of logic with a Leibnizian conception of how logical parts relate to logical wholes. For Frege also wants to be able to say this: the thought is that which is true or false considered apart from its being grasped or judged—where the thought may be conceived as a highest common factor in an act of mere grasping and one of judging. The respective differences between Kant's and Frege's conceptions of how the logically complex relates to the logically basic here will be explored in further detail in Section VIII. It will suffice for now just to note the following: what happens here is that a certain conception of the part/whole structure of the logical complex, considered as the structure of thought apart from any act of thought, comes to inform the conception of the part/whole structure of the analysis of the exercise of the faculties involved. This requires that even the most basic exercise of our capacity of judgment be analyzed as a complex of acts. The *grasping* of the thought, on the other hand, is an act (one in which judgable content is taken up in thought), but it itself, qua mere thought, is not an exercise of our faculty of judgment. Every act of judging presupposes such a logically prior act of grasping that judgable content. In judgment, therefore, there are two distinguishable logical acts for Frege: that of grasping the thought and that of judging it. At the level of capacities (this is the Kantian aspect of the conception), neither thought nor judgment is prior to the other; however, at the level of their exercise (this is the Leibnizian aspect of the conception), there can be thought without judgment but not the other way around.

The term "judgment," in Frege's hands, comes to appear radically ambiguous. It can denote either a properly logical or a merely psychological notion. The *logical notion of judgment* pertains to the acknowledgment of those truths that ought to be asserted and whose logical structure is to be rendered apparent in Frege's *Begriffsschrift*. The rules of inference that underlie such a notation, in turn, articulate when it is logically permissible to assert one such judgment on the basis of one's assertion of other such judgments, thereby articulating the principles in accordance with which a user of *Begriffsschrift* is to assess the logical validity of her reasoning. The *psychological notion of judgment,* on the other hand, pertains merely to actual episodes of particular judging subjects holding particular judgments to be true. With regard to this latter notion, it may well be possible to articulate general principles as well— laws of holding true—where the "principles" or "laws" in question furnish observably testable generalizations regarding such empirically observable

episodes of judgment. On Frege's conception of logic, such principles are not properly logical: they generalize over historically occurring episodes; the instances they range over require the specification of an empirically given class of judging subjects. Frege thereby opens up a sharp cleavage between the topic of judgment proper (qua logical notion) and the topic of how we happen to judge in general (where the latter topic can be conceived in Frege's philosophy as nothing other than an empirical generalization governing matters of mere psychology).

This sharp cleavage in Frege's conception of logic is the moment in it that is perhaps most alien to the Kantian-Wittgensteinian conception.[53] On the latter conception, in articulating the form of our capacity, logic articulates how we judge in general—that is, how we judge when nothing interferes or otherwise attenuates the exercise of the capacity for judgment.[54] All that the words "how we judge in general" can mean for Frege is an empirical generalization about episodes of holding true. The comprehension of the truth of a proposed law of holding true is available to a given judging subject (say the judging subject that I am) only *from the outside*—through empirical observation of the logical activity of observably given subjects. Even my comprehension of the truth of such a proposed law governing my own episodes of holding true is something that can be given to me only from the outside—from, that is, a comparatively alienated perspective on my own logical activity. This contrasts with the source of my grip on the logical notion of judgment. Comprehension of that notion is available to me qua judging subject *from the inside*—from within reflection on my own logical activity. Its elucidation calls for reflection on the character and exercise of a logical capacity that each of us exercises whenever we think in accordance with the principles of logic. This means that an understanding of that for which the judgment stroke is supposed to stand in Frege's notation requires in every case a corresponding actualization on the part of a reader of the relevant aspect of her logical capacity—one whose actuality is known by her first-personally through her act of judgment.[55]

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[53] For further discussion of this cleavage, see Irad Kimhi's *Thinking and Being*. Kimhi's discussion of this topic commences on page 35 and recurs intermittently throughout the rest of his book in the guise of a critique of (what he calls) *the dualist account* of logic. He contrasts this with what he calls a monistic account. The accounts ascribed in the replies below to Kant and Wittgenstein are broadly monistic (on Kimhi's understanding of this term).

[54] As we shall see in the reply to Boyle, the relevant notion here of how we "in general" judge cannot be captured by statements that exhibit (what I call below) Fregean generality—and hence would not be expressible in a Fregean *Begriffsschrift*.

[55] For a discussion of this comparatively neglected aspect of Frege's logical notion of judgment, see Maria van der Schaar, "Frege on Judging and the Judging Agent," *Mind* 127

To say that it requires the "*actualization* on the part of a reader of the relevant aspect of her *logical* capacity" is to say that it must at one and the same time have a foothold in the order of the actual and in the order of the logical. This means that, though the judgment stroke must attach to denizens of the realm of logical content—available to us qua possible thoughts—judgment qua act must be something that has a foothold in the being of each judger. The difficulty for Frege here is to be able to find a way to maintain this insight, without having the relevant notion of judgment collapse into a merely psychological act—a mere event in the order of actuality—rather than what he requires it to be: a purely logical act in which the truth of the reasoning carried out in his formal system is acknowledged by a reasoning agent to be correct. The premises and conclusions of a chain of inference expressed in *Begriffsschrift* are to be displayed as expressions of judgments—not merely as thoughts to be grasped and entertained by the reader. To follow along, a reader of a proof carried out in the notation must at each step make the corresponding judgments herself.[56] This is something she must *do*—not "do" (as we shall see in a moment) in the sense of performing an action, but rather in the sense of actualizing a self-conscious rational capacity. The notion of judgment in Frege needs therefore to discharge the following delicate task: It has to form a bridge that allows one to move back and forth between a content-based and an act-based conception of logic—between a Leibnizian conception of logic (as a set of general contents whose truths are independent of the order of actuality) and a Kantian conception of logic (in which the comprehension of logical truth presupposes a first-personal actualization of a general capacity for a certain form of knowledge). The general shape of Frege's overall account is one of trying to enfold a conception of logic that has an essentially Leibnizian core within such an outer layer of Kantian wrapping.

To say that what Frege calls "judgment" names a *logical* act means that the act itself must belong to the logical order. Frege's conception of judgment anticipates the crucial point that Wittgenstein thought was so beautifully driven home by Moore's discovery of his paradox.[57] The

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(2018): 225–250. She writes, "The central point of the idea that Frege understands judgment not only in a logical sense, but also from a first-person point of view, is that the ideography is essentially a first-person engagement: each of us can make use of the ideography as a calculus only if we have made the axioms and inference rules evident to ourselves" (239).

[56] For further discussion of this point, see van der Schaar, ibid., especially 225–227.

[57] See *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, section x.

following utterance is Moore-paradoxical: "*p* (is the case), but I do not judge *p* (to be the case)." ("It is raining, but I do not judge it to be raining.") If one thinks that judging is a merely psychological stance toward a proposition, then the Moore-paradoxical utterance should be no more paradoxical than an utterance of the form: "*p*, but S does not judge *p*." Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein, each in their own way, hold that it belongs to a proper conception of logic to account for why the case of the genuinely Moore-paradoxical utterance—the case in which the verb "to judge" takes the first-person present indicative form and hence the one who is thereby said not to so judge is the very person who asserts the utterance—should be rejected on *logical*, and not merely psychological or pragmatic, grounds. As noted above, this emphasis on the ineliminable role of judgment in an account of logic is the most Kantian moment in Frege's philosophy.[58] But a very un-Kantian duality is inscribed into the structure of even this very Kantian moment in Frege's conception.

Before we dwell further on the differences in their respective conceptions of logic, it ought to be noted that Kant and Frege agree on this much: their notion of an *act* of the mind (of the sort that matters to their inquiries into the nature of judgment, inference, and truth) is not to be confused with a sort of thing that has the logical features of an *action*. Frege distinguishes the properly logical notion of judgment from judgment conceived as (what he calls) a "psychical process," observing this about the latter: "If a judgment is a deed, it happens at a certain time and thereafter belongs to the past."[59] For Kant, as for Frege, the properly logical notion of judgment is not a category of psychical deed.[60] This would be for him to confuse the actualization of a capacity for logical thought or judgment with a sort of

[58] Hence, unsurprisingly, it is the moment in Frege's conception that the subsequent history of logic has been most eager to dispense with. Indeed, it is even sometimes pushed to the side in interpretations of Frege himself. It is not uncommon to find commentators claiming that the judgment stroke in Frege should be understood to correspond to something merely psychological—a stance or attitude that some merely empirically given subject happens to take up toward logical content. To read Frege in this way is to lose hold of how the judgment stroke is essential to his understanding of what it is that a logical notation seeks to articulate.

[59] Frege, "Negation," in *Logical Investigations,* ed. P. T. Geach (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 44, 42n.

[60] Philip E. B. Jourdain asks in a letter to Frege "whether you now regard assertion (⊢) as merely psychological" (Letter of Jan. 15, 1914, *Frege: Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence,* 78). Frege makes it clear that he would regard this as a confusion of an inner mental process with a logical act; in his draft response, he goes on to say, "If one were to delete the judgment stroke from the premise sentences in the presentation of an inference in my ideography, something essential would be missing" (ibid.).

mental process or operation having features of the following sort: it takes time for it to come into being, it can be interrupted prior to completion, it has temporal parts or phases, and so on.

Kant often glosses judgment as "the representation of the unity of the consciousness of various representations" or as the "act of representing the unity of the consciousness" of such a manifold.[61] Similarly, he will speak of *synthesizing a manifold of concepts into a judgment*. How is this to be understood? Many commentators on Kant's philosophy go wrong by interpreting his employment of terms such as "act" of "synthesis" along empiricist lines. They end up assuming that what Kant is talking about here is a form of mental agency—a doing—that happens *over time* and is *located in* the mind. Some readers of Frege make a parallel mistake in their understanding of how to distinguish force from content: reading into his talk of the "act of judgment" (what for Frege would be) a psychologistic conception according to which, under the heading *acknowledging the truth of judgable content,* they think Frege must be talking about something logically analogous to the performance of an action.

Other readers of Frege appreciate that this is a misunderstanding of Frege but think it is a fine way to read Kant, missing the significant continuity here between them, attributing to Kant a form of empiricism or psychologism regarding the nature of our logical capacities that he, no less than Frege (following him), is concerned with opposing. Such commentators do not appreciate that they make a fateful interpretative move when they read the idea of temporal process into the very notion of Kantian acts of synthesis, combination, and putting together representations. Stephen Engstrom rightly insists upon the importance of respecting the distinction between *act* (qua actualization of a theoretical cognitive capacity) and *action* (qua deed) if one is to avoid misreading of Kant:

> [J]udgment in Kant's sense must be an act . . . for the very same reason that it cannot be any sort of process or occurrence in the mind. . . . Judgment is an act in the sense that it is an actuality. It is an actualization of the understanding, but not in a sense that implies that it is a transition or a coming-to-be: the act of combination in which a judgment consists is not a putting together of representations, but a holding of them together. So we might say that to judge in this sense is to hold.[62]

[61] See, for example, Kant, *Jäsche Logic,* in *Lectures on Logic,* translated and edited by J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), §17, 597.

[62] Stephen Engstrom, *The Form of Practical Knowledge* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 103.

For Kant, as for Frege (again, who follows him in this), acts of thought or judgment per se do not happen in or take time. What is true is that a linguistic representation of a judgment may (if spoken) have temporal and (if written) spatial parts. A speaking or writing out of a judgment always happens somewhere and at some time; they each take time and can be interrupted. These facts about the material enabling conditions of the expression of judgment are related to the following: I can *say* the first half of a sentence (say, the sentence: "Judgments do not have temporal parts") by enunciating the first half of its words ("Judgments do not . . .") without yet having spoken the second half of the sentence (". . . have temporal parts"). But—for both Kant and Frege—there is no such thing as my having *judged* the first half of the judgment that sentence expresses, absent my having judged its second half.[63] For neither Kant nor Frege is the act of judgment an activity that has temporal or spatial parts.[64] Where these two philosophers differ is not here—for they are equally opposed to this sort of empiricist or psychologistic blurring of logical and non-logical concepts; rather, it is in their respective accounts of the logical character of the multiplicity and dependence within and among the sorts of acts (thought, judgment, inference, etc.) they each seek to elucidate, as well as among the capacities of which these are actualizations.

In a proper *Begriffsschrift,* each logically significant aspect of the inferential order must be perspicuously displayed through a different aspect of the symbolism, so that the true logical structure of that order is rendered transparent by the notation. If there is a significant logical difference between the act of merely entertaining a thought and that of judging it to be true, and if, moreover, the former is the logically simpler and the latter the logically more complex and derivative act (on Frege's conception of what this involves), and if the latter always contains the former as a proper part (on Frege's conception of what this involves), and if the logically simpler part is in some respect prior to the complex in which it occurs (on Frege's conception of what this involves), then all this must be rendered perspicuous through the notation. The manner in which the relation of thought to judgment is displayed in Frege's logical nota-

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[63] As Peter Geach appreciates, this is also why the blurring of logical and non-logical features of thought "makes it impossible to see why one cannot *think* nonsense though one can talk nonsense" (see his "What Do We Think With" in *God and the Soul* [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1969], 35).

[64] To deny that a judgment has spatial or temporal parts is not to deny that a judgment can be made by a person at a time and a place.

tion renders perspicuous the sense in which thought is prior to judgment. *Thought* and *judgment* are logically primitive notions, and as such—according to Frege—do not admit of definition. For something to count as a definition for Frege, wherever the *definiendum* occurs in a sentence, it must be possible to replace it with the *definiens*. Nothing of this sort is possible, Frege maintains, for the terms occurring in his elucidatory remarks that refer to logically primitive notions.[65] When one is engaged in coming out with sentences whose aim is to elucidate such logically primitive notions—notions that Frege himself takes himself to be obliged to employ in order to explain the significance of his logical notation—one is compelled to come out with sentences that do not themselves admit of translation into a proper *Begriffsschrift*.[66] Moreover, there are no expressions within *Begriffsschrift* itself that "stand for" *thought* or *judgment* or any other logically primitive notion. This leads to the first of two circles whose arc we must gradually circumscribe in order fully to comprehend such notions. The first and narrower circle is one in which we must move in order so much as to be able to enter *Begriffsschrift*. For a proper elucidation of each such notion will not be able to forebear employing a range of further logically primitive notions—object, concept, relation, inference, truth, and so forth—in its explication of any logically primitive target notion. The aim of the collective employment of the full set of such notions over a series of elucidatory remarks is to vault one into *Begriffsschrift*. The sign that one has correctly comprehended Frege's elucidation of the entire set of interrelated logically primitive notions is one's attainment of a full mastery of the logical notation itself.

This leads into the second and wider circle you must circumscribe in order rigorously to comprehend such notions. For it is only by your coming fully to master the employment of *Begriffsschrift* itself that you win your way through to complete clarity concerning such notions. For example, you achieve complete clarity regarding what a thought is by learning fully to recognize what figures in your use of the notation as a judgable content, while appreciating how one and the same content is able to occur

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[65] The word "notions" won't really do here and indeed is quite misleading insofar as it suggests that there is some overarching category under which all of these "notions" fall. But there is, according to Frege, no word that will do. I shall continue in what follows to finesse this problem by pretending that talk of "logically primitive notions" is able to possess greater referential powers than Frege thinks it can.

[66] For further discussion of this point, see my "Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Early Wittgenstein," in *The New Wittgenstein*, eds. A. Crary and R. Read (London: Routledge, 2000), 174–217.

forcelessly (for example, when it figures in the antecedent of a conditional) and forcefully (as it does when it is put forward by you, through your use of the notation, not only as worthy of endorsement but as *judged* by you to be true). The points here made about *thought* and *judgment* generalize: Frege looks upon a mastery of his *Begriffsschrift* as a condition of the full mastery of the panoply of logical distinctions and notions (such as object, concept, inference, truth, etc.) that he seeks to convey in his assorted ordinary-language elucidations of all that is logically primitive. An attainment of the relevant form of mastery shows itself in the manner in which a user of *Begriffsschrift* inscribes thoughts into the notation and brings it to bear in the activity of assessing the truth of the judgments in which those thoughts figure.

This activity of the assessment of judgment is, on the one hand, a condition of achieving full clarity with regard to what judgment is, while, on the other hand, the availability of some form of notation—optimally a logically perfect one—(in which thoughts can be inscribed and displayed) is a condition of the very possibility of such an activity of assessment.[67] *Begriffsschrift* therefore is for Frege nothing short of the indispensable instrument through which—and only through which—full logical self-consciousness is to be attained. A notation may only fully enable the attainment of this end, however, if it has been successfully designed to meet the following exiguous constraint: it must render absolutely perspicuous the logical identity of a judgable content through the very manner in which it is inscribed in the sign-structure of the notation, so that each sign bears its manner of logically symbolizing on its sleeve. A notation that fulfills this constraint not only permits us to recognize in a glance which thoughts are identical to which—and which are logically contained in which—but also which logical dimensions of thought depend on or are essentially mutually implicated in which.

Indeed, for Frege, the only completely rigorous way to explicate these dimensions of logical dependence and mutual implication is through their mode of display in a proper logical notation. Through our engagement with the notation, and reflection upon this engagement, we complete the wider circle. Even though, on the one hand, there is no beginning on the task of explaining why Frege's notation is constructed just as it is without

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[67] As we shall see in the reply to Gustaffson, this insight of Frege's—regarding the mutual dependence of a comprehension of the logical identity of the sign on that of the symbol and vice versa—is further developed and plays a central role in all of Wittgenstein's philosophical writings.

employing elucidatory ordinary-language sentences that employ indefinable terms for logically primitive notions; nevertheless, it is only at the end of the day—through reflection on such a properly designed notion, having comprehended its mode of employment—that we are able to achieve a fully rigorous comprehension of those very same notions that were first deployed and initially comprehended in a preliminary and rudimentary manner in order to enter *Begriffsschrift* in the first place.

Hence, unsurprisingly, Frege's most rigorous attempt to explain what judgment is takes the form of a commentary on the role of the judgment stroke in his notation. Frege comments on the relevant bit of his notation in the following passage:

> I distinguish the *judgment* from the *thought* in this way: by a *judgment* I understand the acknowledgment of the truth of a *thought*. The presentation in *Begriffsschrift* of a judgment by use of the sign " ├──" I call a *proposition* of *Begriffsschrift* or briefly a *proposition*. I regard this " ├──" as composed of the vertical line, which I call the *judgment-stroke*, and the horizontal line, which I will now simply call the *horizontal*. . . . Of the two signs of which " ├──" is composed, only the judgment-stroke contains the act of assertion.[68]

The judgment stroke of the *Begriffsschrift* is supposed to make it as clear as Frege can make it what it means on Frege's conception to say that the judgment may be said to "contain" the thought as a "part,"[69] what it means that the judgment is a logical complex consisting of two elements (a content grasped and the recognition of the truth or falsity of what is thus grasped) and, finally, what it means that the judgable content is

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[68] Gottlob Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* §5, trans. M. Furth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 99–100. For an alternative translation see P. Ebert and M. Rossberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9–10. In his brief posthumous overview "A Brief Survey of My Logical Doctrines," the following item figures as the very first item on the list: "Dissociating the assertoric force from the predicate" (*Posthumous Writings,* 184).

[69] In one respect, however, Frege's notation obscures the mode of containment here at issue, insofar as, by Frege's own lights, it is not to be assimilated to the model of how a functional expression (that is to say, every other expression into which a further expression may be inserted in Frege's notation) contains its argument. Irad Kimhi comments, "[T]his symbol must be external to the semantically significant composition of the proposition. Moreover, a proposition that contains the symbol can only stand alone. It cannot be embedded as the significant constituent of a proposition. . . . The assertion symbol is a composite. But unlike every other composite sign in the *Begriffsschrift,* the composition of this symbol is not itself functional. The nature of its composition remains mysterious. Presumably it is unanalyzable in the same sense that 'acknowledgment of something as true' is unanalyzable" (*Thinking and Being,* 39–40).

common to both the thought and the judgment. Frege's notation is designed precisely to enable us to dissociate assertoric force from asserted content. The vertical judgment stroke is positioned to the left of the content stroke,[70] clearly separating it from and indicating it as something that logically subtends the ensuing specification of the content or thought. The notation thereby clearly disjoins two logical dimensions within a judgment that natural language in Frege's view regrettably fails properly to keep apart: the assertoric force (that first enters the scene with judgment) and the indicative mood of the sentence which forms the main clause of the thought (and which corresponds to the mere logical unity of the thought, prior to the act of judgment).[71] Ordinary language, Frege thinks, leads us to confuse the "is" of predication with that of assertoric force—to confuse the predicative "is" of *a is F* (that binds the elements of the thought together into a logical unity) with the assertoric "is" of *such and such is the case* (that declares that that which is thought is true). To Frege, it might seem a mere accident of natural language—to be eschewed in a proper logical notation—that in ordinary discourse I can successfully communicate my commitment to the judgment "Trump is a liar" by emphatically intoning the very same "is" that also expresses the predicative unity of the thought ("Trump *IS* a liar"). For neither Kant, nor Wittgenstein, I will suggest later, is this a mere accident of natural language. Language, for them, properly indicates here an inextricable entanglement of a power for logical combination in one of assertion and vice versa.

The structural whole which consists of the combination of Frege's vertical judgment stroke and that to which it attaches is not a logical complex that itself has a function / argument structure—that is to say, it does not share in the form of structure that otherwise characterizes the whole of Frege's logical system, and hence also that of any judgable content that falls within the scope of the judgment stroke. Frege himself says of the judgment stroke that it is *ein Zeichen eigner Art*—"a sign of its own peculiar sort."[72] In contrast to every propositional sign—that is, which

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[70] Or the "horizontal," as Frege calls it in the passage quoted immediately above. See Gottlob Frege, *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege,* eds. P. Geach and Max Black (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), 34; Gottlob Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. M. Furth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 38; Gottlob Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. P. Ebert and M. Rossberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9.

[71] Here too the "prior" bears a logical and not a temporal sense.

[72] Frege, *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, op. cit., Band I, §26.

displays functional compositional unity—the mode of unity that the judgment stroke seeks to display is for Frege of a logically entirely *sui generis* sort: it must display the form of unity that characterizes the manner in which a content figures within an act.[73] Its peculiar office is to display not some further logical component in *what* is thought, but rather *how* it is put forward in so far as it is judged.

It is, in fact, not at all easy to understand what exactly, according to Frege, the logical status is of that *to which* the judgment stroke is to be attached. He suggests that his other stroke—the horizontal—may be called a content stroke. For this stroke "ties the symbols which follow it into a whole"[74]—it ties them into a judgable content. It thereby displays the expression that follows it as assertable and negatable. This requires the horizontal stroke in Frege's notation to play a peculiar liminal role.[75] It bridges the gap between that which is the actual content of an act of judgment and that which lacks the requisite unity to even be a fit content for judgment. What sort of unity is effected by the introduction of the content stroke? Mere logical unity, Frege tells us. But what exactly is this? For Kant such a description could make sense only if the content

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[73] In Frege's *Basic Laws of Arithmetic* (op. cit), there is a whole stretch of sections inscribed under the heading "Signs for Functions." In these sections, one after the other, Frege goes on to explicate the various signs for each distinct kind of function that occurs in the notation. The first of these sections is §5, where the *judgment-stroke* is explicated. This heading suggests—in contrast to how he later characterizes the judgment-stroke in §26 (as "*ein Zeichen eigner Art*")—that this stroke is just another sign for a function in some non-equivocal sense of the term "function" that signifies a logical genus under which all of the cases discussed in §§5ff may be gathered, thereby belying the *sui generis* character of this sign.

[74] *Begriffsschrift,* §2. To emphasize that no assertion is yet made by the symbol F prefaced by the content stroke, Frege immediately goes on to suggest that the resulting complex might be paraphrased by a nominalization such as "the circumstance that F" or "the proposition that F."

[75] I borrow the term "liminal" here from the following remarks by Irad Kimhi:

> The vertical sign, the judgment-stroke, can only be attached to the horizontal, but this attachment is not a functional application. The vertical must be regarded as external to the functional composition of the sign and thus to its semantically significant logical composition. The horizontal is therefore supposed to play a liminal role by forming a complete functionally complex expression with judgeable content, an expression that manifests by its functional composition the assertability of the content while itself being dissociated from assertion. (*Thinking and Being*, op. cit., 28–29)

For a provocative exploration of some of the difficulties that arise in trying to understand how Frege's horizontal stroke is supposed to discharge its liminal office—of conferring the form of a judgable complex upon that which antecedently merely has the form of a functional complex—see William Taschek "Truth Assertion, and the Horizontal: Frege and the Essence of Logic" (*Mind* 117, no. 466 [April 2008]: 375–401).

stroke itself already signified an act of intellectual self-consciousness—
an act on the part of a thinking subject of holding together the elements
of the thought in question in a particular manner. Frege, however, wishes
the activity of intellectual self-consciousness to enter the scene only with
the attachment of the judgment stroke to the content stroke.[76] Frege is
closer to Kant than the standard contemporary philosopher of logic in
one respect: our self-conscious activity is not external to the concern of
the logician.[77] (For Frege the attachment of the judgment stroke is not

[76] Although its adherents to do not formulate the difficulty in the terms that I have posed it
here, there is a tradition of post-war work in logic and the philosophy of logic that is at-
tuned to this difficulty. They seek to replace Frege's judgment stroke—that has a solely as-
sertoric significance—with a form of operator that displays what comes within its scope as
a form of "assertion candidate"—an assertible that may be taken up in any one of a variety
of possible moods, of which the assertoric mood is the logically primary one. The most in-
fluential contemporary logical system that employs a version of such a logical symbol is Per
Martin-Löf's constructive type theory. For a relatively accessible presentation of a version
of the system, where the relevant set of notions are termed "forms of judgment", see his
Intuitionistic Type Theory (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1984), 7–21; for a commentary on their
role in a formal system, see his "Truth of a Proposition, Evidence of a Judgment, Validity of
a Proof" (*Synthese* 73 [1987]: 407–420); for a discussion of why the notion of judgmental
act is a primitive one, see his "A Path from Logic to Metaphysics" (in *Atti del Congresso
Nuovi Problemi della Logica e della Filosofia della Scienza* [Bologna: CLUEB, 1991] Vol.
II, 141–149). For a broader discussion of the philosophical significance of this aspect of
Martin-Löf's constructivist type theory, see Maria van der Schaar, "The Cognitive Act and
the First-person Perspective: an Epistemology for Constructive Type Theory" (*Synthese*
180 [2011]: 391–417). For a wider overview of the history of the development of the idea
of judgmental forms within the whole sweep of this tradition of logical thought from
Heyting to Sundholm, see Maria van der Schaar, "The Assertion-Candidate and the
Meaning of Mood" (*Synthese* 159 [2007]: 61–82).

[77] Ryan Simonelli argues that the seeds of a Kantian conception of logic are more pronounced
in Frege's *early* writings. He points out that in the *Begrffsschrift*, when Frege introduces the
logical operators, he does not characterize them in terms of the possibilities of truth and
falsity—indeed, he doesn't use the expressions "true" and "false" there at all. Rather, Frege
speaks instead of various contents being either "affirmed" or "denied." Simonelli points
out that we are bound to overlook the manner in which this provides a comparatively more
hospitable landscape in which to nurture the seeds of a Kantian conception of logic, if we
take what Frege there says to be a mere terminological variant on his later view. Simonelli
comments:

> Most commentators regard Frege's early explication of his logical notation in terms of
> affirmation and denial as a mere terminological variant of his later, more sophisticated
> explication in terms of truth and falsity. Hans Sluga, for instance, writes "Frege uses the
> terms 'affirmed' and 'denied' in the *Begriffsschrift* in the sense of 'true' and 'false.' In his
> later writings the terminology is changed accordingly," (1980, 78). Michael Beaney, in his
> commentary on the *Begriffsschrift* simply puts "i.e. are both true" next to Frege's state-
> ment of the possibility that two propositions are affirmed, (1997, 376). To construe this
> difference as a matter of mere terminology is, I think, misleading. It is, of course, a matter
> of terminology, but it would be wrong to say that it is a matter of *mere* terminology. What

a matter of taking up a mere "attitude" toward a content whose nature may be conceived apart from its essentially belonging to the domain of that which is judgable through such an act.) Yet he is closer to the contemporary philosopher of logic than Kant in another respect: the unity of that which is to be judged is external to the activity of any self-conscious subject. That which is to be judged is, in and of itself, at one and the same time forceless and truth-apt. This means that the question of the relation of such a content to a possible self-consciousness in which it may figure must be a delicate one for Frege. It poses difficulties for him that it does not for his contemporary interpreters who have thoroughly psychologized the very idea of judgment; hence they are able to construe his original distinction between two logical moments (logical force and logical content) as merely one of a relation between a psychological moment and a logical one (psychological attitude and logical content). So we may ask, What for Frege is the logical character of that which the content stroke has gathered together in the notation and to which the judgment stroke may be attached? What is the logical status and source of its unity subsequent to its having been gathered by the horizontal but prior to its having been modified by the vertical? Acute readers of Frege will differ in their answers to this question. It suffices for the present purpose simply

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is at stake in this terminological decision is the core set of terms that we are going to employ to give sense to the logical notation. The terms we opt for will determine how we think about the logical notation that we use these terms to explicate. My claim is that, if we take Frege's early terminology seriously, we end up with a very different conception of Frege's logic, a Kantian rather than Leibnizian one. (Simonelli, "Frege and the Logical Notion of Judgment," unpublished manuscript) [The embedded references here are to Hans Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* [New York: Routledge, 1980] and Michael Beaney, "Frege's Logical Notation," in *The Frege Reader*, ed. M. Beaney [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 376–385]

Simonelli goes on to point out that in other early writings—for example, shortly after the publication of the *Begriffsschrift*, in his essay "Boole's Logical Calculus and the Concept Script" (published in 1881)—Frege provides brief expositions of his logic in which the terms "true" and "false" play the role of "affirmed" and "denied" in the *Begriffsschrift*. So the point is not that Frege, in his early writings, is for a time committed to (or even has a preference for) some set of Kantian terms (such as a vocabulary of affirmation and denial) for explicating his logical notation, but only that in his early writings Frege is perfectly friendly toward such ways of characterizing what he is up to and that such characterizations make for a natural fit with his original conception of the role of the judgment stroke. However, as his logical system matures, such ways of speaking are increasingly purged from his accounts of how to understand the significance of the signs in his logical notation, thereby causing the judgment stroke itself to appear to be an increasingly alien feature of that notation.

to point out that this is a question with which any satisfying overall reading of Frege must contend.

This aspect of Frege's philosophy plays an important role in Conant's overall story as soon he begins to discuss the differences between Kant and Frege. Conant highlights Frege's emphasis on the idea that to form a judgment is to advance from the thought to its truth-value. Conant quotes a passage in which Frege says that a "propositional question contains the demand that we should either acknowledge the truth of a thought, or reject it as false."[78] The question that Conant explores is this: Is it a constitutive feature of thought, for Frege, that it be able to face this demand? This requirement—"the demand that we should either acknowledge the truth of a thought or reject it as false"—Conant dubs "the demand for judgment." This is how Conant explicates the strand in Frege's philosophy that makes it look as if aptness for the demand for judgment is an essential feature of a thought's being a thought:

> In grasping the content of a thought, we grasp that either it or its negation is true—this is a constitutive feature of what it *is* to grasp the content of a thought. So, for Frege, to grasp a thought is to be faced with the demand for judgment. It is to be faced, that is, with the question of whether the thought is to be affirmed or denied. . . . To grasp the content of a thought, Frege therefore holds, is to be faced with a *candidate* for judgment.[79]

Conant goes on to suggest that this strand of Frege's philosophy (in which being a candidate for judgment is constitutive of what a thought is) is in tension with another strand of his philosophy. (We will return to this suggestion of Conant's in Section XI.) Conant is also concerned to note how various further aspects of Frege's general conception of the relation of thought to judgment also have consequences[80] that place him at odds with both Kant and Wittgenstein. Unlike some of his critics in this volume, I think Conant is right about this. But I now think that he, too, underestimates the extent of its significance and hence the depth of the differences

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[78] Frege, *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy,* ed. Brian McGuinness (London: Blackwell, 1984), 373. See Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 64.

[79] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 64.

[80] For example, it has the consequence that logical laws express thoughts—judgable contents—and hence face the demand for judgment. Conant's original discussion of this point, as he notes, is itself indebted to Thomas Ricketts, "Objectivity and Objecthood: Frege's Metaphysics of Judgment" in *Frege Synthesized,* eds. L. Haaparanta and J. Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1986). We will return to this in my reply to Stroud below.

it opens up between Frege, on the one hand, and thinkers such as Kant and Wittgenstein, on the other.[81]

There is a parallel in the manner in which the late medieval distinction between essence and existence provided a new and useful framework within which to explain *creation,* on the one hand, and the manner in which the Fregean distinction between force and content provides a new and useful framework within which to explain what *judgment* is, on the other. Creation, according to Leibniz's reworking of the first of these frameworks, is supposed to be the act in which God moves from contemplating a possible world to His saying to it, "Be!" This involves no transformation in the logical character of that which "possibly exists" other than its becoming actual.[82] The contours of logic adumbrate not only the space of the possible worlds that can be created but also the truths that hold in any such world—which are objectively true of all worlds prior to the actuality of any world. Judgment, on Frege's account of it, is the act by which we move from a thought to recognition of its truth or falsehood. Here, too, there is no transformation in the logical unity of judgable content in its coming to be so recognized beyond its merely coming to be so recognized. On the Leibnizian conception, the logical unity of that which *can be or cannot be* is prior to the actuality of that which *is.* Leibniz might have said this: we must dissociate sharply the logical unity of that which can be (and hence can exist or not exist) from the actuality of that which God has created (and hence is). Frege says this: we must dissociate sharply the logical unity of that which can be thought (and hence is true or false) from the act through which we assert it (and hence judge it to be true or judge it to be false). On the Fregean conception, the comprehension of the logical unity of that which *can be true or false* is, in this respect, prior to its comprehension by any finite thinker as true or false.

This is, of course, not to deny that there are numerous salient differences between Leibnizian creation and Fregean judgment. For starters, whereas divine creation is an exercise neither of merely theoretical nor merely practical reason (it is somehow neither or both at once), Fregean logical judgment is an exercise of specifically theoretical reason. It traffics

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[81] These are matters I will take up in my replies to Boyle, Hamawaki, Stroud, and Sullivan.

[82] Leibniz differs with Avicenna here not only in his understanding of the *grade* of being of that to which God says "Be!"(hence in his account of the kind of being which should be ascribed to that which God creates considered apart from creation), but also in his account of the *kind* of being it is to which God says "Be!" Avicenna's God says "Be!" to a great many essences; Leibniz's to a possible world (namely, the best one).

in truths that are to be *recognized* as true by us and not *made* true through our cognitive activity. This difference notwithstanding, the following holds for both Leibniz and Frege: the conditions of the possibility of the exercise of our capacity to know what can be known through logic alone are independent of the conditions of the possibility of the exercise of whatever further cognitive capacities are required to recognize the truth of an empirical judgment. For both Leibniz and Frege, there is a form of knowledge we can achieve in the theoretical sphere that involves the exercise of a capacity for knowledge that is self-standingly intelligible apart from our capacity for knowing empirical truths about the layout of the world in which we find ourselves.

For Kant, this is not possible in either the theoretical or practical sphere. According to Kant, what characterizes the form of practical knowledge is that the actuality of the knowing is the ground of the actuality of what is known; whereas, in theoretical knowledge, when all goes well, what characterizes its form is that the actuality of what is known is the ground of the actuality of the knowing. In Frege's conception, the general direction of accord in the relation of judgment to reality corresponds roughly to that of (what Kant calls) theoretical knowledge. But for Frege—unlike for Kant—the idea of a purely logical yet content-involving kind of (theoretical) knowledge[83] is not an empty idea, because for Frege—unlike for Kant—the candidacy of the judgment for truth or falsity does not require that the content judged bear a relation to the empirical order of actuality. All it requires is (what Frege calls) *objectivity*—that it be objectively true. For Frege the thought that two plus three is five is as objective as is the number two itself, and the conditions of recognizing its truth are prior to and independent of the conditions under which we recognize the truth of any judgment pertaining to the order of the actual. Many of the details of what goes into the ensuing account's way of spelling out the relation between an order of logically objective truth and an order of actuality, and how much else needs to be in the picture in order to spell it out, are no doubt peculiar to Frege. They are due to the brilliant and original manner in which he struggles to make sense of the philosophically fundamental question, What is logic? But this need not distract us from noticing that what this struggle yields is a very particular way of filling in a generic idea he shares with Leibniz.

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[83] What Frege calls the *logical source of knowledge*; see *Posthumous Writings*, trans. P. Long and R. M. White (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 267.

Leibniz's way of filling it in, as we have seen, turns on his deployment of modal categories. For Leibniz, there is a preexisting stock of possible worlds that God can individuate in His understanding prior to His act of creation. The truths of logic articulate what is true in any such world. They also hold, of course, in the actual world; but the ground of their truth is independent of their apparent entanglement in that world. To arrive at a conception of God is to arrive at a conception of what is possible and what is necessary that allows us to disentangle the most general laws of being from those laws that hold only of the actual world.

Frege's way of filling in the generic idea here at issue does not turn on any equally overt deployment of modal categories. But his way of specifying it does eventuate in a parallel conception—one in which the ultimate ground (the *Erkenntnisquelle*) of logical truth is independent of any dimension of its entanglement in a non-logical order of reality. Here, too, the achievement of clarity about the nature of logic permits the disentanglement of the most general laws of truth from those of, say, geometry or physics—those whose conditions of validity turn on further circumstances of the layout of the intuitive or the actual order. So, for Frege, we must distinguish: (i) the order within which purely logical truths find their justification and (ii) those orders within which logically more determinate, less general, truths find theirs, such as those of geometry, physics, etc.—where (i) has a self-standingly intelligible logical character apart from (ii), but not vice versa.

I will conclude this section by touching briefly on just one consequence of this conception of how the logical order must be independent of that of the actual. For Frege, the stock of thoughts common to any language or notation are prior to any actual language or notation in which we are capable of expressing them.[84] Hence they are also prior to and independent of the capacity to express thought in language—a capacity of which in any case, according to Frege, only a finite being has need. The inferential relations between thoughts laid bare in a *Begriffsschrift* obtain equally for those expressed in a logically perfect language and for those that find expression in the encumbrances of a natural language. But the obtaining of those relations is prior to and independent of the accident of their entanglement in any natural language. It is therefore independent of the connections of particular thoughts with particular sentences— that is, with the sensibly apprehensible vehicles for the expression of

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[84] "For all the multiplicity of languages, mankind has a common stock of thoughts" (Frege, *Collected Papers,* 185).

thought that finite beings such as us happen to require. The logical connections between the thoughts themselves qua thoughts belong to the order of what is objectively true; our sensory apprehension of truths as expressed in sentences of some particular language belongs to the order of actuality.[85] An account of the sort of dependence the truths have on the sentences that may express them is an account of a relation between what is essential to the logical order and an accidental set of conditions that we additionally require for their thinkability—conditions necessary for us but incidental to the logical order itself. Hence Frege writes,

> To be sure, we distinguish the sentence as the expression of a thought from the thought itself. . . . The connection of a thought with one particular sentence is not a necessary one; but that a thought of which we are conscious is connected in our mind with some sentence or other is for us humans necessary. But that does not lie in the nature of the thought but in our own nature. There is no contradiction in supposing there to exist beings that can grasp the same thought as we do without needing to clad it in a form that can be perceived by the senses. But still, for us humans there is this necessity.[86]

For us humans there is no grasping thought apart from its entanglement in the order of actuality and, indeed, apart from a language within which that thought can actually find expression. But this is external to the nature of *thought*. It is a mere fact about *our* nature. A being that has no need of language could still grasp the same thoughts that we do. For Frege, as for Leibniz, our capacity for logical thought is a mark of our capacity to transcend our finitude[87]—to grasp a kind of content that a

[85] It is a further question whether, for Frege "sentences"—as we normally employ this term—should be said to belong to the realm of actuality. A string of sensibly apprehensible marks or noises—what a modern philosopher would call a "sentence-token"—belongs to that order. But sentences, as normally understood, can be repeated and occur in different places at different times. The sentence, on this understanding of it, as an iterable logical sign, isn't, for Frege, something that belongs to the causal order of (what he calls) the actual.

[86] Frege, *Posthumous Writings*, 269.

[87] I am here allowing myself the liberty of using the term "finitude" in its Kantian sense—where embodiment and dependence on sensibility are marks of our finitude—in order to express the commitments of a non-Kantian conception of logic. If one thinks that sense can be made of the idea of a finite but purely intellectual being (i.e., an angel)—as Leibniz certainly did—then the point here may be reformulated in less contentious terms as follows: for Leibniz, our capacity for logical thought is a mark of our ability fully to transcend our embodiment and reliance on sense perception. Frege's beings who (unlike us) are able to grasp thoughts without having to clothe them in a form that can be perceived by the senses must, on Leibniz's view, at least be angels—and on Kant's view, they must have a non-finite

less encumbered form of cognitive being, one that has no need of the outer trappings by which thought comes to be clad in language, would be equally able to grasp.

We have seen that Kant is concerned with criticizing the Leibnizian idea that our finitude, and hence the mutual dependence of our sensible and intellectual cognitive capacities, is external to the logical form of our thought. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is concerned with criticizing the Fregean idea that our finitude qua linguistic beings, and hence the mutual dependence of our capacities for speech and thought, is external to the logical form of our thought.[88] In later Wittgenstein, this evolves into a criticism of the intelligibility of the very idea of "a stock of thoughts," expressible in any language prior to the actuality of any practices or capacities in which such thoughts find expression. Viewed against the background of this particular set of issues, in the replies that follow, Frege will come into view as the lingering Leibnizian and Kant as the proto-Wittgeinsteinian. Frege, in his essay "The Thought" draws the following threefold distinction:

(1) the apprehension of a thought: *thinking;*
(2) the recognition of the truth of a thought: *judgment;* and
(3) the manifestation of this judgment: *assertion.*[89]

For Frege, (1) is prior to (2), and (2) is prior to (3) in the following sense: for any case of (2) there are a pair of instances of (1) and (2) for which a case of (1) is a highest common factor; and for any case of (3), there are a pair of instances of (2) and (3) for which a case of (2) is a highest

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form of cognition. I have no idea where Frege himself stands on these finer questions pertaining to the nature of a purely intellectual being.

[88] This is why Wittgenstein is the true originator of (anything that really deserves to be called) "the linguistic turn in philosophy." Frege will seem to be deserving of that title if we understand the turn to be a merely methodological one—that philosophy take the entanglement of thought in language to be the necessary starting point for its investigation, where the goal is one of disentangling thought from language. Early Wittgenstein, unlike Frege, holds that thought has an essentially linguistic aspect—the logical symbol is *as such* sensuously apprehensible through the sign. It is no less methodologically important for early Wittgenstein than for Frege that a system of signs can be more or less logically perspicuous, but in the *Tractatus* the philosophical importance of this methodological insight is disjoined from the metaphysical presupposition that thought's expression in language is *external* to the nature of thought, reflecting a mere requirement of *our* nature. On this (Wittgensteinian) conception of what a linguistic turn ought to involve, much of analytic philosophy has yet to take the linguistic turn. I will return to this topic in the final paragraphs of my reply to Gustafsson.

[89] Gottlob Frege, "The Thought," *Mind* 65, no. 259 (July 1956): 294.

common factor. Kant may be read as concerned with challenging such a conception of the relation of (1) to (2). For Kant, as we shall see, the general capacity for (2) is logically prior to any exercise of the capacity for (1), such that an exercise of the capacity that achieves recognition of truth is formally distinct in character from one that does not. However, this nexus of capacity and act is still construed as prior to the capacity for (3). As we shall also see, Wittgenstein will challenge this conception of the relation of (3) to (2), thereby deepening Kant's original critique of the Leibnizian tradition—a tradition to which Frege (as it has been the aim of this section to argue) belongs.

None of these thinkers would deny that there are acts that fall under the following description: "entertaining something in thought without judging it to be true" or "thinking something *in foro interno* without expressing it." But this leaves open how the particular acts thereby described are to be conceived as related to a more general capacity or set of capacities. It leaves open the question of whether the possibility of such forms of actualizations of our capacities requires that we conceive of each such particular act as itself involving the exercise of a fully separate and independent, self-standingly intelligible capacity. If we conceive of matters along these lines, we may be prone to conclude from the very possibility of the first phenomenon (that of a form of thinking that does not involve acknowledgment of truth) that every case of judging must be a composite of two acts—a merely logical act of thinking supplemented by a force-conferring act of judgment. Similarly, we may be prone to conclude from the very possibility of the second phenomenon (that of having something on one's mind without saying what it is) that every case of speaking must be a composite of two acts—an inward act of mental activity supplemented by an outward act of linguistic expression. As we shall see below, the Kantian critical critique of Leibniz and both the early and later Wittgensteinian critiques of Frege—the many differences between the three notwithstanding—are all equally concerned with identifying and rejecting a common form of assumption operative in the accounts of their predecessors. As we shall also see, the difference between Kant and Wittgenstein lies in their respective conceptions of how to conceive the overarching capacity in whose light the logical form of the aforementioned particular acts are to be elucidated. Kant wants to show the Leibnizian that the possibility of (that which Frege would call) merely entertaining a thought is itself a form of the actualization of our capacity for judgment: the very possibility of the former sort of act is intelligible only in the light of a logically prior capacity, where the paradigmatic exercise of

that capacity is a single unitary act (in which one thinks *in* judging) and not a logical composite (in which one thinks *and* judges). Already, early Wittgenstein agrees with this as far as it goes, but he goes well beyond Kant in further holding that the possibility of judging *in foro interno* is itself a form of actualization of a linguistic capacity: here, too, the very possibility of the former sort of act is intelligible only in the light of a logically prior capacity, where the paradigmatic exercise of that capacity is again to be conceived as a single unitary act (in which one thinks or judges *in* speaking) and not a logical composite (in which one thinks or judges *and* speaks).[90]

In what follows, we will begin to broach Kant's treatment of these issues in the reply to Boyle. We will take up Wittgenstein's treatment of the relation of (what Frege calls) thought to judgment in the reply to Stroud, and we will take up his treatment of the relation of either to language in the reply to Gustafsson. Starting with the reply to Gustafsson, we will explore Wittgenstein's disagreement with Kant regarding whether our capacity for thought and judgment is externally and contingently, or internally and essentially, related to our capacity for speech. However, up until that point—that is, up to and including the reply to Sullivan—our focus will initially be centered on uncovering the ways in which Kant and Wittgenstein are equally concerned to depart from a traditional conception of the priority of logical over non-logical forms of knowledge.

On the traditional conception, the logical truths to be known through logical reflection in no way depend upon the finite character of the capacity through which they are known. Hence the fact that in our case the power of thought happens to be embodied in a being whose (other) power(s) of knowledge involve and depend on perception and language may be regarded as incidental to logic. Whereas, for both Kant and Wittgenstein, logic is the finite knower's self-knowledge of the form of the capacity she exercises whenever she thinks or speaks. So not only does this require that, in seeking logical understanding, she exercise the very capacity she seeks to understand, but it also means that logical theory cannot

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[90] In saying that "Wittgenstein goes well beyond Kant" here, I am describing an arc of intellectual development that for the most part does not reflect the trajectory of the broader philosophical tradition that traces its origins back to Frege and Wittgenstein. For example, it is an interesting peculiarity in the development of the analytic tradition that there are a significant number of philosophers—to name just one such cluster: those influenced by Sellars—who wholeheartedly accept Wittgenstein's critique of Frege's conception of the relation of the capacity of judgment to that of linguistic expression, while wholly failing to register Wittgenstein's critique of Frege's conception of the relation of thought to judgment.

stand to its object as natural scientific theory does to its. The hallmark of the latter sort of theory is that the acquisition of the forms of understanding it enables in no way transform the very nature of what is thereby known. (The advent of molecular theory does not affect the nature of the molecules it studies.) It is therefore true to say that for Kant or Wittgenstein logical understanding is humanistic, if by "the humanities" one seeks to designate those forms of understanding that may unleash their potential to transform their bearer through the reflective acquisition of an ever-deepening degree of self-consciousness of the forms of understanding they enable.[91]

In codifying the forms of inference, Aristotle—according to Kant— neither discovered nor invented what inference is. But in introducing the instruments of logical self-reflection that enable a reflectively perspicuous recognition of the forms of valid inference—and, with them, the analytical resources for the logical characterization of the internal forms of inference ("major premise," "contradictory pair," etc.) and dialectical resources for the prophylactic exposure of sophistical simulacra of such forms ("equivocating on the middle term," etc.)—Aristotle unleashed reason's internal potential to transform the very nature of its bearer. It is the logical revolution that Aristotle thus initiated that Kant seeks to complete, in seeking neither to discover nor to invent, but rather instead just to bring to full self-consciousness the full array of forms of human understanding and judgment (theoretical, ethical, juridical, aesthetic, and teleological)—logical forms that are always already in act in our acts of knowledge. Kant's term for this transformative project of self-understanding is *critique*. As we shall see, this broadly Kantian vision of philosophy as critique undergoes numerous modifications in Wittgenstein's hands, but an appreciation of its transformative dimension—its bearing on our latent potential to transform ourselves through our forms of self-understanding—remains.

To sum up what we have covered in this section, here is an absurdly brief and oversimplified summary[92] of the six main dimensions of difference in the conceptions of logic that we have just surveyed, sufficiently

[91] This does not mean that logic cannot exhibit the form of what the Germans call a *Wissenschaft* (specifically a *Geisteswissenschaft*), but it does mean that for Kant or Wittgenstein it cannot be what contemporary English speakers call a *science* (if that means a form of natural science).

[92] To pair Leibniz's and Frege's conception together as belonging to one conception of logic and Kant's and Wittgenstein's as belonging to another evidently requires abstracting from numerous significant differences between Leibniz and Frege, on the one hand, and Kant and Wittgenstein, on the other hand. My defense for doing so is that such a way of carving things up, through the neglected dimensions of difference and similarity it highlights, is able

generically characterized so as to highlight how what Frege's and Leibniz's respective conceptions share contrasts with what Kant's and Wittgenstein's share:

1. **Relative Priority of Thought to Judgment**
    (i) Thought is prior to and logically simpler than judgment: to judge is to advance from the thought to an affirmation or denial of its judgable content; thought is here conceived as the highest common factor of a mere thought and a judgment. (Leibniz, Frege)
    (ii) Judgment is prior to the judgable content of thought and the logically more basic notion. (Kant, Wittgenstein)

2. **Generality vs. Formality of Logic**
    (i) A logical truth has absolute generality: it ranges over everything.[93] The statement of a logical truth must therefore involve only logical concepts, where these articulate the highest genera of being. (Leibniz, Frege)
    (ii) The distinctive mark of a logical truth is its formality. Logic articulates the form of thought. The concepts it employs to do so are not themselves genera of being but merely the forms of such genera. (Kant, Wittgenstein)

3. **Object vs. Capacity Conceptions of Logic**
    (i) Logic articulates a body of truths whose relations of logical compatibility are prior to their compossibility in the consciousness of a finite thinking subject. (Leibniz, Frege)
    (ii) Logic articulates the form of a capacity—a capacity that is in act not only in the activity of logical reflection, but every act of cognition. (Kant, Wittgenstein[94])

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to correct much that is skewed in most contemporary historical narratives that seek to encompass any of these thinkers.

[93] For Leibniz, it is the distinctive mark of a logical truth that it is absolutely general. For Frege, this is a condition on logical truth, but not a mark that discriminates between logical truths and non-logical laws.

[94] Though, as we shall see, Wittgenstein does stand much closer to Kant's conception of logic (as articulating the form of a finite discursive capacity) than he does to either that of Leibniz or Frege; it is nevertheless, in the end, a misunderstanding to portray logic or grammar for early or later Wittgenstein as articulating the form of a capacity. For to portray the character of the actuality of language in this way is already to open up more of a gap between world and self, on the one hand, and the supposed capacity—as well as between the supposed capacity and its bearers—than Wittgenstein allows. We will gradually work our way up to the difficulties involved in understanding this dimension of Wittgenstein's philosophy in the final three replies—those to Gustafsson, Travis, and Benoist.

4. **Relative Independence of Our Capacity for Merely Logical Thought**

    (i) The capacity for purely logical thought is a self-standingly intelligible capacity whose nature is prior to and independent of our other cognitive capacities. It therefore could be embodied in a being who lacked or had no need of those other capacities. (Leibniz, Frege)

    (ii) The capacity for merely logical thought is part and parcel of a single unified cognitive power, and its nature is therefore intelligible only through an articulation of the mutual reciprocal dependence of the ingredient capacities whose joint exercise constitute the logically full-blooded case of the exercise of such a power. (Kant, Wittgenstein)

5. **Relative Independence of the Finitude of the Logical Subject from the Object of Logical Knowledge**

    (i) Our knowledge of logic requires an essentially first-person point of view on that which is judged to be true,[95] but the

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[95] Though both conceptions of logic here at issue can accommodate a stress on the importance of the first-person, as we shall see, in Frege this must be conceived as a point of view "onto" thought, whereas in Kant and Wittgenstein the significance of the first-person lies in the self-consciousness that is internal to thought and not in a vantage point "onto" it. I discuss below how Descartes's conception of judgment (as the affirmation of the truth of a clear and distinct idea) and above how Frege's conception of judgment (conceived as the exercise of a logical, as opposed to a merely psychological, power) each presuppose an essentially first-point of view on the part of the judging subject "onto" that which she judges. This presupposes some conception of the cogito (i.e., of the priority of the first-person form of understanding of what one thinks), as well as a manner of articulating that conception that inscribes (what I will call below) a moment of self-alienation into its understanding of the very form of all first-person thought (i.e., a splitting of the logical I into the one who thinks or perceives and the one who affirms or judges). Leibniz does not seem fully to share Descartes's and Frege's sense of the logical significance of the first-personal character of judgment. But he, too, takes logic to be concerned with a body of cognition and therefore to involve judgment. Insofar as (what I called above) the contemporary conception of logic (and its understanding of the role of a truth-predicate in the interpretation of syntactical schemata) takes itself to be able to do without with any conception of judgment, it implicitly dispenses with something that figures as a crucial moment of common ground between the Leibnizian and Kantian conceptions of logic. This provides one way of seeing that neither (what I am here calling) a Leibnizian nor (what I am here calling) a Kantian conception of logic is any sort of version of the standard contemporary conception. This is not accidentally related to the manner in which, on the standard contemporary conception, logic only articulates a form of cognition once an "application" or an "interpretation" is conferred upon a logical system. There is, as noted above, interesting recent work in logic—such as that of Per Martin-Löf—that departs from this orthodoxy but it constitutes a minority trend.

character of what is thus known does not bear the mark of the finitude of the capacity through which it is known.

(ii) Logic reveals the form of an essentially finite thinker's capacity for thought in and through a reflective exercise of that very capacity.

6. **Relative Independence of the Object of Logical Knowledge from the Activity of the Logical I**

 (i) The character of that which is known through logical reflection in no way depends upon the exercise of the capacity through which the object of logical knowledge is known. Hence, no development or refinement in the latter can in any way bear on an understanding of the nature of the former.

(ii) Logic is a form of self-understanding in which the capacity that comes to know itself is one that determines itself through its operation—unleashing its potential to transform its bearer through the actuality of the activity of thinking, thereby constituting the formal object of logical understanding.

The first of each of the above pairs characterizes something generically common to Leibniz's corner of the theological triangle and Frege's corner of the logical triangle;[96] the second of each of the above pairs characterizes something generically common to Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective strategies for avoiding all three corners of any such triangle.

This brief glimpse into coming attractions should suffice to make the following clear: I continue to share Conant's sense that an appreciation of the relation between the theological and the logical triangles harbors powers of philosophical illumination. But, unlike Conant, I now think the first and most important step in doing this is to appreciate how Descartes (with respect to the former triangle) and Kant (with to respect to the latter) each seeks to reject the entirety of the relevant triangle—and, along with them, the assumptions that give rise to their parallel conceptions of what the fundamental possibilities for philosophical thought are. This means that the first epoch-making attempt at a dialectical intervention seeking to show that this space of philosophical possibilities is not exhaustive comes, pace Conant, not with Wittgenstein, but rather already with Descartes, in a way that is renewed and deepened by Kant.

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[96] It is by no means intended to be an exhaustive account of this generic commonality. A crucial further respect in which the charge of "lingering Leibnizianism" would qualify as a compliment, from Frege's point of view, concerns the connection between the very idea of a *characteristica universalis* and the themes here emphasized.

Section VI

A Resolute Reading of Descartes

"The . . . truths which you call eternal have been laid down by God and depend on Him entirely—no less than do his other creatures."[1] How to understand a remark such as this forms the crux of the interpretative dispute between Conant and Moore. There is no evidence that Wittgenstein was directly familiar with that remark or any of Descartes's other equally notorious remarks about the creation of the eternal truths.[2] There are, however, some scattered remarks of Wittgenstein's that suggest that he might have found himself in some sympathy with them—that he would have been able to detect a philosophical spirit kindred to his own in them—were he ever to have come across them. In his *Sixth Reply,* Descartes says this:

> God did not will the creation of the world in time because he saw that it would be better this way than if he had created it from eternity. . . . On the contrary, it is because he willed to create the world in time that it is better this way.[3]

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[1] Descartes, "Letter to Mersenne," April 15, 1630 (I have slightly amended the translation; *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 23).

[2] Though his student Peter Geach certainly was; see his blistering criticism of these remarks in his *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), chap. 1. It follows from what I say immediately below that Geach misses the opportunity for (what I would now regard to be) a genuinely Wittgensteinian reading of Descartes's remarks. For Wittgenstein's most famous comment on the claim that God could create anything except what would be contrary to the laws of logic, see *Tractatus,* §3.031.

[3] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 291. The example given here (about the creation of the world in time) is adduced merely as a representative case of an eternal truth, as the context makes clear:

Wittgenstein, in his conversations with the Vienna Circle—in the presence of, among others, Moritz Schlick—says this:

> Schlick says that in theological ethics there used to be two conceptions of the essence of the good: according to the shallower interpretation the good is good because it is what God wills; according to the profounder interpretation God wills the good because it is good. I think that the first interpretation is the profounder one: what God commands, that is good. For it cuts off the way to any explanation "why" it is good, while the second interpretation is the shallow, rationalist one, which proceeds "as if" you could give reasons for what is good. The first conception says clearly that the essence of the good has nothing to do with facts and hence cannot be explained by any proposition. If there is any proposition expressing precisely what I think, it is the proposition "What God commands, that is good."[4]

One is apt to share the sense that the conception of the nexus between God and goodness that Schlick deems preferable is the profounder of the two available options, and that the alternative with the Cartesian ring must be the shallower of the two if one thinks that it is impossible to hold consistently the following two things at once:

(1) That which is good is freely willed to be so by God.
(2) That which is good is genuinely *good* (in and of itself, as it were—and not merely derivatively so).

Moreover, if one hears (1) in a certain way—namely, as accepting a schema of a certain form for the philosophical explanation of *why* that which is good is good and proposing a particular candidate (God's will) with which to fill in that schema—then (1) is bound to seem to undercut (2).

> God did not will the creation of the world in time because he saw that it would be better this way than if he had created it from eternity; nor did he will that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles because he recognized that it could not be otherwise, and so on. On the contrary, it is because he willed to create the world in time that it is better this way than if he had created it from eternity; and it is because he willed that the three angles of a triangle should necessarily equal two right angles that this is true and cannot be otherwise; and so on in other cases. (Ibid.)

It is a particularly nice example, however, for bringing out the peculiarity of the notion of *eternal* in play here. To be an eternal truth is not to be "eternal" in the sense of being *in time* for infinitely long—from the beginning to the end of time, as it were. It is to be "eternal and unchangeable" in the sense in which for Descartes God's will may be said to be eternal and unchangeable. What sense is this? That is what we shall endeavor to understand.

[4] I have amended the translation; Wittgenstein, "On Schlick's Ethics," in *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle,* ed. F. Waismann (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 115.

Similarly, one is apt to share A. W. Moore's sense that the conception of the nexus between God and necessity that he prefers to ascribe to Descartes is the profounder of the two main exegetical alternatives, and that the counterpart to it[5] must be the shallower of the two, as long as one assumes that it is impossible for someone consistently to hold the following two things at the same time:

(1) The eternal truths are freely created by God.
(2) The eternal truths are necessarily true.

Yet any sensitive survey of the textual evidence suggests the following: both (1) and (2) are affirmed by Descartes.[6] Moreover, he affirms them with his eyes fully open to what he is thereby doing: he wants to be able to hold both at the same time.[7]

Some commentators will object to what I have just said—namely, that Descartes is equally fully committed to (1) and (2)—by insisting that any satisfying interpretation of Descartes's major published work must not undermine Descartes's entitlement to (2); yet (1) eviscerates (2), hence we must do everything we can to minimize and contain the damage that would be wrought were we to give weight to those passages in which Descartes expresses an apparent commitment to (1). Edwin Curley finds license for this approach in the fact that Descartes's own commitment to (1) is nowhere made explicit in the major published works.[8] Hence

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[5] That is to say: the conception of necessity yielded by the schema provided by Wittgenstein above if one substitutes "what is necessary" into that schema for "what is good."

[6] Which truths count as eternal for Descartes? Lilli Alanen remarks: "Descartes never explicitly defines what he means by 'eternal truth.' The category of eternal truths, roughly, corresponds to the class of truths which are necessary in the traditional sense of truths whose denial involves logical contradiction. It is not restricted to logical and mathematical truths, however, but covers [certain] metaphysical and moral principles as well" ("Omnipotence, Modality, and Conceivability," op. cit., 359).

[7] Indeed, sometimes he affirms both (1) and (2) within the space of a single sentence. Here are two examples of sentences drawn from the *Replies* where Descartes affirms both—with the portion corresponding to (1) marked in italics and the portion corresponding to (2) in boldface:

> *I do not think that the essences of things, and the mathematical truths which we can know concerning them, are independent of God.* Nevertheless I do think that **they are immutable and eternal**, since *the will and decree of God willed and decreed that they should be so.* (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 261)
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> It is because he [*God] willed that the three angles of a triangle should **necessarily** equal two right angles* that **this is now true and cannot be otherwise**; and so on in other cases. (Ibid., 291)

[8] Descartes was fully aware that most of his philosophical contemporaries saw no way to reconcile a commitment to (2) with the sort of full-throated affirmation of (1) upon which

Curley remarks, "In the *Meditations* Descartes is careful not to invoke that extravagant conception of omnipotence, and we would do him no service by bringing it in."[9] Jonathan Bennett remarks, "That typifies the kind of thing Cartesian scholars have felt forced to say, charitably

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he himself insisted. This meant that his own view, in thus straying considerably from the theological mainstream of his day, might well land him in considerable trouble, if it were widely known to be his. So he was justifiably worried about having this teaching casually associated with his name. This has consequences for where, when, and how he communicates it. Jonathan Bennett offers the following survey of the textual landscape:

> This "creation" or "voluntarism" doctrine does not appear in the *Meditations,* the *Discourse on the Method,* or the *Principles of Philosophy.* Descartes first declared it in three private letters to Marin Mersenne, most of a decade before his first published work appeared. It glows luminously just behind something Descartes wrote in reply to the *Second Objections to the Meditations . . .* ; and he announced it openly in his response to (Gassendi's) *Fifth Objections.* Descartes had described the essences of things as "immutable and eternal," Gassendi had demurred at giving that label to anything but God, and Descartes replied—unlimbering his voluntarism doctrine—that God causes everything that is immutable and eternal. The authors of the *Sixth Objections,* who had seen the *Fifth Replies,* challenged Descartes on his voluntarism, and he responded forthrightly. Furthermore, when first announcing the doctrine he urged Mersenne to "assert and proclaim [it] everywhere." His reason for keeping the doctrine out of sight in the major published works was evidently not that he was unsure of its truth. How, then, can it be all right to attribute to him arguments and opinions which obviously conflict with it? (Jonathan Bennett, "Descartes's Theory of Modality," *The Philosophical Review* 103, no. 4 [Oct. 1994], 639–640)

Though Descartes did urge Mersenne to "assert and proclaim [it] everywhere," he did so with the following qualification: "provided you do not mention my name" (*Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 23). I think Bennett therefore is quite right about all of the following: (1a) Descartes thinks that he has good reason to keep the teaching "out of sight in the major published works," so that it is left implicit there; (2a) that that same teaching is nonetheless made fully explicit in those letters and replies that Bennett mentions above (though not only in those); and (3a) that Descartes is indeed fully committed to the teaching that he there makes explicit. So I think we should take Bennett's question seriously: How can it be all right to attribute to Descartes—as, for instance, Adrian Moore does—arguments and opinions which obviously conflict with what he says in those letters and replies? As shall become clear in what follows, I think Bennett is nonetheless quite wrong about all of the following: (1b) that it is as fully hidden from view in the major published works as someone who reads Descartes as a voluntarist is obliged to take it to be; (2b) that it fully comes to the fore only in the handful of letters and replies that Bennett mentions; and (3b) that the teaching in question is happily characterized as any form of "voluntarism." Getting clear about what is wrong with (3b) is, I will try to show, the key to being able to survey the textual landscape properly here and, hence, for example—to mention a few coming attractions—of being able properly to assess the character and dialectical role of the idea of an omnipotent evil demon in the *Meditations,* or the depth and nature of the contrast drawn between the finite and the infinite in the *Principles,* or the fundamental importance of the doctrine of divine simplicity affirmed throughout the *Correspondence* and *Replies.*

[9] Edwin M. Curley, *Descartes against the Skeptics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 198.

shielding Descartes from his own splatter."[10] As we shall see, A. W. Moore is one of those interpreters who thinks this is the only reasonable response to the textual situation with which we are here confronted: out of deference to the principle of charity, we ought to do our best to shield Descartes from the impending threat of his own splatter. Other commentators will object to what I have just said by drawing the opposite conclusion: Descartes means just what he says and says just what he means in those notorious remarks; he really does hold (1), and if he holds (1), then, of course, he cannot—that is, not *really*—hold (2).[11] So if we are resolutely to follow through on the task of providing a satisfying overall interpretation of Descartes, we must think through the philosophical consequences that a commitment to (1) has for an understanding of (2)—taking account of the extent to which it relativizes what it means to say of a so-called "necessary" truth that it is necessary.[12] This is the approach that Conant takes.

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[10] Bennett, "Descartes's Theory of Modality," 639.

[11] Hence, for example, Alvin Plantinga argues that Descartes's doctrine really just amounts to the following: "Every truth is within his [God's] control; and hence no truth is necessary" (A. Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?* [Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1980], 113).

[12] Harry Frankfurt is probably the most forthright and uncompromising of those commentators who react in this way; see his "Descartes on the Creation of the Eternal Truths," *Philosophical Review* 86, no. 1 (1977): 36–57—though Conant ranks a close second to Frankfurt in this regard. Bennett sums up this vantage on the dialectical situation in the following remark:

> Descartes propounded the allegedly strange, peculiar, curious, and incoherent doctrine that necessary truths are made true by God's voluntary act. It seems to imply that God could have made necessary truths false, which entails that they are not necessary after all. (Bennett, "Descartes's Theory of Modality," 639)

Bennett goes on to remark: "Some of Descartes's interpreters have taken him in that way, as firmly implying that nothing is absolutely necessary or impossible." Indeed, the idea that because Descartes holds (1) he therefore *must* deny (2) is set forth, as if it were simply obviously true, in a number of standard works of reference. For example, John Cottingham, in the entry titled "Eternal Truths" in one such work, writes:

> One of Descartes's most striking doctrines is that the eternal truths depend wholly on the will of God. He is their 'efficient and total cause', Descartes wrote to Mersenne on 27 May 1630, and he established them by 'the same sort of causality as that involved in all his creation'. From this it follows that, from the perspective of God, they are in no sense necessary. (*A Descartes Dictionary* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1993], 58)

I proceed just below to quote from a stretch that comes slightly later in that same letter to Mersenne. As I understand what Descartes goes on to say there—on my reading of the letter—he is happy to concur with Mersenne in affirming that the eternal truths are eternal and unchangeable, yet he is insistent in also affirming that that they are depends on God's

This is just the response that Descartes himself anticipates—namely, one along the following lines: if you, Descartes, are saying that God has ordained the eternal truths to be true, then (given that He very well could have willed things to be other than He did) those things that He ordained to be true could be other than they are; hence, if you think through what you are saying, then you, Descartes, are really saying that the so-called eternal truths are neither eternal nor unchangeable. He puts a variant of this objection into the mouth of an imagined interlocutor in his letter of April 15, 1630, to Mersenne—the letter that we quoted at the outset of this section. It continues as follows:

> It will be said that if God had established these truths he could change them as a king changes his laws. To this the answer is: Yes he can, if his will can change. 'But I understand them to be eternal and unchangeable.'—I make the same judgment about God. 'But his will is free.'—Yes, but his power is beyond our grasp. In general we can assert that God can do everything that is within our grasp but not that he cannot do what is beyond our grasp.[13]

How is this last sentence supposed to help Descartes's interlocutor get past his worry?[14] If we could understand this (and properly align it with what we saw Descartes say at the outset of this letter), then we would be able to see clearly that he is concerned with insisting that the following two claims are consistent and that he does indeed hold both:

(1) The eternal truths have been laid down by God and were caused by Him to be in the same way as were all His other creatures.[15]
(2) These truths are eternal and unchangeable—just as God Himself is.

In order to understand the puzzling last sentence in Descartes's response to his imagined interlocutor, we need first to ask and answer this question: If these truths are unchangeable, why ought we not say that God

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having willed them be just so (i.e., eternal and unchangeable) and not otherwise. The question is how Descartes can affirm both.

[13] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 23.

[14] As we shall see below, understanding this remark—and those like it in Descartes's writing—requires arriving at a proper understanding of the double negation which it contains.

[15] "You ask me by what *kind* of causality God established the eternal truths. I reply: by the same kind of causality as he created all things, namely as their efficient and total cause" (Descartes to Mersenne, "Letter of May 27, 1630," trans. Jonathan Bennett, in *Selected Correspondence of Descartes,* 17; part of Bennett's collection *Early Modern Texts*—available at earlymoderntexts.com).

cannot change them? Indeed, as we shall see, Descartes holds that for any X, even if X is a logically contradictory proposition, we ought not say "God *cannot* do X." Is this just a bit of excessive piety on Descartes's part? Is he just saying that we should refrain from ever saying anything that so much as sounds like it might be a denial of God's omnipotence—hence we should never utter a sentence with the outward grammatical form "God *cannot* do X"—even when X stands for something logically contradictory? Or in saying this, does Descartes thereby really mean to affirm that for any X, even when X is logically contradictory, "God *can* do X"? And, if neither of those—if his aim is to express neither his mere distaste for certain remarks that others affirm (because they have the ring of impiety) nor his commitment to the philosophical thesis he appears to affirm (because he is a mad-dog theological voluntarist)—then *what* is he saying?

More generally, to appreciate the difficulty of making sense of this region of Descartes's philosophy requires coming to see how difficult it is to spell out a textually plausible version of (1) that does not immediately undercut (2). What is evident from the surface of his remarks on this topic, however, is that Descartes himself is actually far more worried about the opposite problem: that one might try to give an explanation of what is necessary, which attempts to lodge it in a ground that is prior to God's activity.

Let us now recall the suggestion we uncovered in Wittgenstein's remarks about Schlick: if one hears (1) in a certain way—namely, as proposing a schema for a certain form of philosophical explanation as to *why* that which is good is good—then (1) is bound to seem to undercut (2).[16] In the passage quoted above, Wittgenstein is concerned to suggest in particular that this is the wrong way to hear the version of (1), to which he himself is attracted. If we want to know what Wittgenstein would mean in calling upon such words, then we will go wrong if we construe them as proposing an account that mirrors the form of a rationalist explanation of the nature of the good—if we hear those words as proposing

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[16] In this respect, Descartes's worry about the sorts of philosophical account of necessity that he opposes parallels Wittgenstein's worry about the sorts of philosophical account of the good that he opposes: both sorts of account attempt to provide a grounding for the good or the necessary from the outside—from a vantage that steps outside the space from within which the good or the necessary has its being. Descartes and Wittgenstein, each in his own way, is concerned with attempts in philosophy to dig beneath the ground—in search of an illusory foundation—rather than recognizing the ground *as* the ground. (This is not to deny that they have very different conceptions of what it is involved in a philosophical revelation of the ground as bedrock.)

a reason for why the good, as such, is good in virtue of some more fundamental independently intelligible consideration or entity whose nature we can fully grasp apart from our grasp of the nature of the good. This suggests the possibility of an altogether different way of hearing the version of (1) to which Descartes might be attracted—one to which most of the secondary literature on Descartes is deaf.

As we shall see below, on the standard way of construing what Descartes must be saying—when Descartes insists upon his version of (1) in his letters and replies—his philosophical proposal is taken to differ from those of his contemporaries with respect only to the content which he seeks to plug into a shared explanatory schema for the ground of necessity. Descartes is read as proposing that we substitute God's will for the logical realist's or theological logicist's preferred candidate for an ultimate explanatory ground of necessity. A reading of Descartes along the lines suggested by Wittgenstein's remark above would need to turn on a very different construal of (1)—hearing it instead as a way of rejecting the very idea of a philosophical explanation of necessity that partakes of the aforementioned form. Elsewhere, Wittgenstein writes, "'It is good because God commands it' is the correct expression of groundlessness."[17] Applied to the early modern controversy about the eternal truths, this suggests the possibility of the following way of summarizing the point of Descartes's intervention into that debate: "It is necessary because God commands it" is the correct way of expressing what we ought to say once we reach that juncture in our philosophical reflection on the eternal truths at which no further ground can be given for them.

My aim will be to show the following: to say that nothing is prior to God is not, for Descartes, a way of proposing a theological explanation for the ground of necessity—one that participates in a common schema with those philosophical conceptions of the ground of necessity he opposes

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[17] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Movements of Thought: Diaries 1930–1932, 1936–1937,* trans. A. Nordmann, collected in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions,* eds. J. C. Klagge and A. Nordmann (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). The original of the remark can be found in *Denkbewegungen: Tagebücher1930–1932, 1937–1937,* ed. Ilsa Somavilla (Innsbruck: Haymon-Verlag, 1997). I am following Michael Kremer's translation of the passage. He offers the following comment on the passage: "So the proposition 'expressing precisely what I think' is also the correct way to express the *groundlessness* of ethics. Saying 'it's good because God commanded it' is really just a way of saying 'it's good—period.'" Both the translation and the comment occur on the final page of Kremer's "The Whole Meaning of a Book of Nonsense: Introducing Wittgenstein's *Tractatus,*" in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy,* ed. M. Beaney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

(but into which he then substitutes God's will as the explanatory ground, where a logical realist such as Avicenna would appeal instead to a metaphysically prior logical first principle, or where a theological logicist such as Leibniz would appeal to God's faculty of reason). Rather, it is Descartes's way of expressing a rejection of all philosophical accounts of the nature of divine activity seeking to operate with an explanatory schema sufficiently capacious that even God may fall within their scope without depriving them of their explanatory force—the sort of force they genuinely have when applied to finite beings. His insistence that nothing is prior to God constitutes a rejection of any attempt to explain why even God Himself *necessarily* cannot will or do that which that runs counter to what is necessary or good. His aim is to show why the occurrence of the word "necessarily" in a sentence such as the preceding must be idle.

Not until the end of the next section of these replies will we fully be in a position to appreciate the radicality of Descartes's rejection of all such accounts of what is necessary or possible for God. The aim of the present section will be to take the measure of how resolutely Descartes carries through on such a rejection; the aim of the next, the reply to Moore, will be to unpack the consequences of this for a proper understanding of Descartes's conception of the modalities—of the relation of the necessary, the possible and the actual—to each other and to God.

At the time of his writing, all of the parties to the theological dispute into which he seeks to enter hold (2); what concerns Descartes is how to spell out (2) so that it does not undermine (1). Descartes's distinctiveness therefore lies not just in his holding (1), but in his insistence that the views of his contemporaries—their ways of making sense of (2)—lead them into the blasphemy of asserting that there are things that God cannot do and that nothing less than full commitment to a non-attenuated version of (1) is able to avoid this blasphemous consequence. This yields a criterion of adequacy for a genuinely satisfying reading of Descartes on these matters: it must allow us to see how it could be the case that he is resolutely determined to affirm—without watering down either in the least—both (1) and (2) at the same time.[18]

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[18] This way of setting up the issue is indebted to Dan Kaufman's article "Descartes's Creation Doctrine and Modality" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 80, no. 1 (March 2002): 24–41. I am also indebted to conversations with Kaufman on this and related topics in Descartes. Though my reading differs from his in various details, I agree with him on the following two central points: that (1) and (2) are reconcilable and that Descartes affirms both theses.

Neither Conant's nor Moore's readings of Descartes are able to satisfy this desideratum. As we shall see in the next section, Moore seeks to have his reading of Descartes avoid the problem in much the way that Descartes's contemporaries do, by adhering firmly to (2) and then watering down what, if anything, is still to be meant by (1)—so that Descartes's remarks that have the outward appearance of endorsing (1) are either dismissed as mere lapses or reinterpreted so that they no longer even appear to threaten a theologically mainstream account of the status of (2). Conant goes to the opposite extreme and concludes that, given his commitment to (1), Descartes cannot really hang onto (2), except in some highly qualified version of the thesis—so qualified as to really be an abandonment of the thesis. The eternal truths, on Conant's reading of Descartes, are necessary for us, but they are not necessarily necessary. They are only contingently necessary, in as much as God could have freely willed things to be other than they are.

Most leading contemporary commentators on Descartes seek to occupy some middle ground between these two interpretative extremes occupied by Moore and Conant, according to which we either have to dismiss (1) as a lapse in order to save (2) or fess up and come clean about our not being able to save (2) if we want to hold onto (1).[19] Though it is difficult to generalize about this variegated body of scholarship, the following five statements offer a fairly accurate representation of the drift of much of the scholarly consensus with regard to how Descartes and his early modern interlocutors and successors stand in relation to one another in the ongoing theological debate about the compatibility of (1) and (2):

(a) Descartes's commitment to (1) is uncontroversial.
(b) His commitment to (2) is, to the say the least, controversial.

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[19] As noted above, most of Descartes's serious readers—be they contemporaries, immediate followers or critics, or more recent commentators—have sided with Conant in regarding Descartes's adamant and consistent expressions of commitment to the idea that the eternal truths are created as anything but mere lapses on his part. They also tend to agree with Leibniz and Conant that Descartes is committed to some form of voluntarism. (For an overview of the entire history of reception of Descartes on the eternal truths, see Patricia Easton, "What is at Stake in the Cartesian Debates on the Eternal Truths," *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 2 [2009]: 248–362.) Moore treats Conant, in reading Descartes in this way, as simply failing to be charitable. Moore does not seem to be aware that his own reading is considerably further out of step with the historical tradition of reception of Descartes's engagement with this issue than Conant's.

(c) Most philosophers of the period seek to reconcile (2) with (1) by softening the apparent force of (1).[20]

(d) Descartes criticizes his contemporaries for seeking to water down the force of (1).

(e) Most of his contemporaries and many of his subsequent interpreters are thereby led to think that Descartes's way of spelling out (1) either eliminates or threatens any straightforward version of (2).[21]

As indicated above, Leibniz proved to be the most influential of the early modern critics of Descartes's supposed doctrine regarding the creation of the eternal truths. The following is a representative example of the sort of passage from Descartes that Leibniz has in mind:

> If anyone attends to the immeasurable greatness of God he will find it manifestly clear that there can be nothing whatsoever which does not depend on him. This applies not just to everything that subsists, but to all order, every law, and every reason for anything's being true or good. . . . If some reason for something's being good had existed prior to his preordination, this would have determined God to prefer those things which it was best to do.[22]

It is important to be clear about where Descartes's common ground with his contemporaries lies here, and where the break comes. All parties to the debate want to be able to affirm some version of the thesis that "there can be nothing whatsoever which does not depend on God"—or at least some set of words that closely resemble these. What is at issue revolves around the question of what it takes to be genuinely entitled to affirm such a

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[20] Nicholas Malebranche is a good example of a fairly faithful Cartesian who takes it for granted that unless (1) is watered down, it will eviscerate (2): "Surely, if eternal laws and truths depended on God, if they had been established by a free volition of the Creator, in short, if the Reason we consult were not necessary and independent, it seems evident to me that there would no longer be any true science" (Nicholas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989], 615).

[21] In summarizing the central worry that Descartes's contemporaries and subsequent interpreters shared regarding the apparently unavoidable upshot of his so-called Doctrine of Created Truth, Thomas Lennon writes, "Indeed, it appears that Descartes may have gone so far as to claim that since God's omnipotence requires all truth to be dependent on His will, there is no necessary truth, certainly no absolutely necessary truth" (Thomas M. Lennon, "The Cartesian Dialectic of Creation," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy,* eds. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 335).

[22] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 293–294.

thing. As we saw in considering Aquinas and Leibniz, they each seek, in their different ways, to draw distinctions between different senses in which something may be said to "depend upon God." Each of them goes on to explain how everything that it makes sense to think of as possibly dependent on God does depend on Him *in some sense* or another of "depend." Descartes means to be speaking here against just such ways of attenuating (as he sees it) the force of the thesis that everything depends on God—against attempts to rescue its appearance of truth via a strategy of dividing it up into a series of theses, each of which must be understood in a different manner in order to be able to understand how one and the same set of words could both assert something true about contingent matters of fact (how what is actual "depends" on God) and about the eternal truths (how what is necessary "depends" on God). Hence Descartes seeks to stress in the quotation above that the truth of the words "everything depends on God" holds not just with regard to everything actual (everything that subsists) but also with regard to all that is necessary (all order, every law, and every reason for anything's being true or good); and he seeks to stress in other passages that these words say something that holds univocally of all these cases, with no ifs, ands, or buts.

It is against such remarks of Descartes that Leibniz inveighs in the *Theodicy* and elsewhere. Leibniz insists that the only sense in which "every reason for anything's being true or good" may be said to depend on God is that it depends on His understanding—not on His creative activity. Therefore, for Leibniz, the sense in which a reason for something's being true or good may be said to "depend" on God is importantly different from the sense in which actual features of the world "depend" on his creative activity. Leibniz is not wrong to think that his view is in conflict with Descartes's. Descartes thinks it is crucial that we be able to affirm that *everything depends upon God* full stop—in a single unqualified understanding of what those words mean. His charge against his contemporaries is that they fail to respect this thought as soon as they begin to distinguish different grades or degrees of dependence upon God's creative activity (a stronger degree of dependence that holds for what is actual being thus: such states of affairs would not exist unless God created them; and a weaker sense of dependence that holds for what is necessary being thus: every reason for anything's being true or good depends upon God because it informs His activity as Creator and depends on His understanding).

At the very least, what remarks such as the above indicate is that Descartes will not be happy with any solution to the problem (regarding how

the eternal truths could have been created) according to which it is to be dissolved by treating this class of truths as standing in some special or privileged relation to God's activity as Creator. For Descartes, the eternal truths "depend upon God" in the same sense in which everything else does.[23] Hence he will object to a realist conception of these truths, according to which the essences upon which they depend are prior to God's having conferred existence on anything.[24] But Descartes will object no less vehemently to the theological-logicist conception, according to which the eternal truths depend upon God's understanding but not (as merely contingent truths do) His will.

Descartes has no objection to the idea that *we* recognize the eternal truths to be true because they stand in a special relation to *our* understanding. *We* can know them to be true without reference to any particular matters of fact, or without recourse to the senses—simply through the employment of *our* power to discern the truth of clear and distinct ideas. This claim about the internality of the relation of our understanding to the eternal truths is consistent with the claim that what is thus true is true *prior* to your or my recognition of its truth. But this is just the sort of thing that, for Descartes, we may not say about God. For Descartes, nothing can be prior—in any sense of "prior"—to God's knowledge of it:

> As for the eternal truths . . . they are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible. They are not known as true by God in any way that would imply that they are true independently of Him. If men really understood the sense of their words they could never say

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[23] It is worth remarking that though Descartes usually employs the expression "eternal truths" to denote only the class of necessary truths whose necessity depends on God's free activity (such as that contraries cannot be true together), he sometimes employs it more broadly so that it also encompasses those truths which he takes to be "the most eternal"— namely those truths about God (such as that He exists and that nothing is prior to or independent of His activity), knowledge of which is required to ground our knowledge of any other truths (including any other necessary truths). Hence, Descartes writes of the former sorts of truths (such as that contraries cannot be true together): "So we must not say that if God did not exist nevertheless these truths would be true; for the existence of God is the first and most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which alone all others proceed" (Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 24). In what follows, I will employ the expression "eternal truths" throughout in the former, comparatively narrow way, so that it refers only to those necessary truths whose truth depends on God (and hence not those that are about God).

[24] In what follows, I will not further explore Descartes's objections to such a realist conception.

without blasphemy that the truth of anything is prior to the knowledge which God has of it.[25]

Now Leibniz would, of course, respond to this by saying, "What I say does not imply that the eternal truths are true *independently* of Him. All I claim is that God's nature is more intimately bound up with these truths than it is with those further truths that come to be true because of the actual world that He goes on to create." But it is important to see that this is already enough to draw Descartes's ire. Descartes insists that God is equally prior to everything—hence to both eternal and contingent truths—in a single and unequivocal sense of "prior."[26]

Bearing this in mind, let us now turn to some of the passages in which Descartes explicitly broaches the topic of the creation of the eternal truths and lays down some strong conditions on what, according to him, we ought and ought not to say about the topic.[27] First and foremost in this connection are a number of passages in which Descartes takes up questions of the following sort: Could God have made a pair of contradictories true together? What is clear is that Descartes regards most of his contemporaries as happy to answer this question with a no. There is a widespread consensus among scholars of the early modern period that Descartes seeks to criticize his contemporaries precisely on the ground that they answer this question in this way.[28] Leibniz and Conant, among others, assume that this must therefore mean that Descartes himself wants to answer that same question (which his contemporaries answer with a no) with a yes. That is to say, Leibniz and Conant take Descartes to share with his contemporaries the conviction that the question here at issue is well posed and, since he clearly rejects the prevailing answer to the question, he must be attempting to offer an opposite answer to it.

Conant attempts to rest his case for such a reading on a series of passages. We will look at them in a moment. They are all—at least implicitly and sometimes quite explicitly—concerned with the task of clarifying our idea of God—and, in particular, what it means to say of Him that he is *infinite*. Descartes emphasizes that he "reserve[s] the term 'infinite' for

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[25] Ibid. We will explore below what licenses the charge of blasphemy here and how this is distinct from, though closely related to, another charge that Descartes levels against the other parties to this debate—namely, that of idolatry.

[26] As Descartes himself puts it at one point, "The existence of God is the first and most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which alone all others proceed" (ibid.).

[27] How to read these passages constitutes the crux of the exegetical disagreement between Conant and Moore.

[28] A.W. Moore is an exception to this consensus.

God alone."[29] (Descartes does not mean thereby to deny that there is nothing besides God that is non-finite or unlimited, but he reserves the term "indefinite" to speak of such types of entities or collections.[30]) Descartes understands the idea of the infinite to be the idea of that which *is*, full stop. To simply *be* in this sense—and for the being in question to be, in this sense, utterly *simple*—is for it, in being the being that it is, not to depend in any way on the being of anything else. There is only one such being: God. Anything else that *is* "is" in a secondary, in a lesser, sense. For it not only owes its very being to its having been created, but it also owes the continuance of its being to the ongoing activity of the creation.[31] Hence everything—every finite sustance and every mode thereof—is dependent on the activity of the infinite being. For Descartes this means, first, that all finite beings partake of a lesser grade of reality and perfection than the infinite;[32] second, that the very intelligibility of the idea of the finite presupposes the prior intelligibility of the idea of the infinite[33]; and, third, that any adequate comprehension of our own nature (what we can know) depends on an adequate apprehension of God (on a proper understanding of what it is to know Him).[34] If we commit ourselves to the wrong sort of conception about what such a being can or cannot do, then we operate with an inadequate idea of an infinite being—and nothing is more critical to the successful prosecution of the entire Cartesian project than that we first properly clarify this idea.

Our broader topic is how to understand Descartes's remarks about the creation of the eternal truths. Our present topic is his conception of the infinite. Each of these topics must be understood in the light of

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[29] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 201.

[30] See Anat Schechtman, "Substance and Independence in Descartes" (*The Philosophical Review* 125 [2016]: 155–204) and "The Ontic and the Iterative: Descartes on the Infinite and the Indefinite" (in *Infinity in Early Modern Philosophy,* eds. Ohad Nachtomy and Reed Winegar [Dordrecht: Springer, 2018]). We will return to this topic below.

[31] Not only is creation, therefore, for Descartes (as for his contemporaries) not something that happens in time—so that there is no first moment of creation; but for Descartes (unlike some of his contemporaries) there are all also no, as it were, "later" time slices in the unfolding history of the creation which are not themselves equally dependent on divine activity.

[32] This is the crucial point on which the argument for the existence of God in the *Third Meditation* turns.

[33] Hence, in a passage from the *Third Meditation* that we shall look at more carefully in a moment, Descartes writes: "[M]y perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 31).

[34] This is the crucial point on which the dialectical structure of the *Meditations* as a whole turns.

the other. Our ultimate aim in this section is to account for why Descartes insists that for any X we must not say of God that He cannot do X. In his correspondence and replies, he repeatedly says to his interlocutors that one will be inclined to say such things only if one fails properly to appreciate what it means to say that *God is infinite.* This is not a theme in Descartes's thinking so outré that one is entitled to regard it as pertaining to a mere theological side issue—one that for most exegetical purposes can (as Moore, in effect, suggests) legitimately be bracketed, set aside, or otherwise discounted—having no bearing on an understanding of central works, such as *The Meditations.* For, as we have just seen, the idea of the infinite plays an absolutely fundamental role in Descartes's philosophy. On the one hand, there is no understanding that philosophy apart from understanding that idea; on the other, his remarks about the creation of the eternal truths elucidate what is involved in a proper apprehension of just that idea. The idea is *fundamental* because a proper comprehension of all other ideas depends on a proper apprehension of this one. And we only succeed in getting *that* idea—that is, *Descartes's* idea of the infinite—into view if we appreciate why he thinks his contemporaries fail to appreciate what it means to say that God is infinite. For Descartes, it means that He is the absolutely— and not merely a comparatively—infinite being, and as such positively apprehensible as in every way without limit or dependence on anything. For Descartes, it is only as such that He can be proved to exist, and it is only in the light of such a positive apprehension of Him that our own nature—as finite—is properly to be comprehended. But wherein for Descartes does such *a positive apprehension* (of the infinitude of God) consist?

The argument for God's existence, on the one hand, and the elucidation of how the idea that I am finite presupposes the idea of the infinite, on the other, equally turn on the account Descartes offers of what it means for one *idea* to possess greater objective reality within itself than another. This, in turn, rests on his account of what it means for one *thing* to possess greater reality than another. Thomas Hobbes found the very notion of such a dimension of difference in things (and hence also in the ideas of things)—the notion that there could be *more reality* in one thing than another—utterly baffling:

> M. Descartes should consider afresh what "more reality" means. Does reality admit of more or less? Or does he think one thing can be more of a thing than another? If so, he should consider how this can be

explained to us with that degree of clarity that every demonstration calls for, and which he himself has employed elsewhere.[35]

Hobbes's challenge here is twofold. First, can this idea (of reality as admitting of more and less) so much as be made intelligible? Second, even if it can, how can it possibly be rendered sufficiently clear and distinct to play the role Descartes calls on it to play in his demonstrations? Before we are in a position to answer these questions, we need to be clear how a variety of terminological distinctions work here.

To start with the most basic of these, Descartes distinguishes the *objective reality* of an idea from its *formal reality*. Formal reality is a notion that applies to both ideas and what they represent: the formal reality of an idea or thing is what it is in itself. Objective reality pertains only to representations—ideas, images, pictures, and so on—that is, to that which has *representational content*. The objective reality of an idea is what, if anything, it represents. More specifically, for Descartes, to say of an act of represent*ing* (an idea) that it has objective reality is to say of the represent*ed* (or as I shall say henceforth: the object of the idea) that it has possible existence. The objective reality of a clear and distinct idea entails the *possible* existence of that which it represents. According to a fairly standard interpretation of Descartes, the objective reality of an idea consists in the objective purport of the represent*ing*—assuming that it has genuine purport[36]—not in the actuality of the represent*ed*. On this in-

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[35] Thomas Hobbes, Third Objections; in Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 130.

[36] Not all ideas have genuine objective purport. Could we have a *clear and distinct* perception that *merely* has objective *purport*—that represents a possible existent that is not actual? Descartes's appears to answer this question in the negative. In the *Fourth Meditation,* the meditator—having worked through the argument of the *Third Meditation*—can now take the following as a premise in his reasoning: "[E]very clear and distinct perception is undoubtedly something real and positive" (*Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 43). By contrast what he calls "materially false ideas"—those of such a type that they cannot be rendered clear and distinct—lack objective reality altogether. They are of "non-things." While possessing apparently representational purport, they fail to represent anything that is a genuinely possible existent. So a materially false idea is not merely one that is false (because the object of the idea is not actual); it is one that provides only an illusion of objective purport (because the putative object of the idea is not even so much as possible). Such an idea is incapable of so much as being false of something: "[F]alsity in the strict sense, or formal falsity, can occur only in judgments, [but] there is another kind of falsity, material falsity, which occurs in ideas, when they represent non-things as things" (op. cit., Vol. II, 30). For a thorough discussion of this topic, see Cecilia Wee, *Material Falsity and Error in Descartes' Meditations* (London: Routledge, 2006). One task of the Cartesian clarification of our ideas is to distinguish which ideas these are (hence distinguishing those that have objective reality from those that only apparently do); another is to demonstrate that clear and distinct perceptions not only have objective reality (and hence represent possible existents)

terpretation, that which is represent*ed* by an idea (in Descartes's termi-nology: that which exists in the idea as "the objective reality that the idea contains within itself") will, in the happy case, also exist "outside the idea"—say, in the world (in Descartes's terminology: it will have "formal reality" qua actual existent).[37]

To say of one idea that it has *greater* objective reality within itself than another is to say that the possible existence of the object of the latter idea depends on *the ontologically prior* possibility of the existence of the ob-ject of the former idea. Here is the initial example of such a relation of ontological priority between ideas offered in the *Third Meditations*:

> [T]he ideas which represent substances to me amount to something more and, so to speak, contain within themselves more objective reality than the ideas which merely represent modes or accidents.[38]

It is this moment in the *Meditations* to which Descartes alludes in the first sentence of the following part of his response to Hobbes's objection:

> I have . . . made it clear how reality admits of more or less. A substance is more a thing than a mode; and if there are real qualities or incom-plete substances, they are things to a greater extent than modes, but to a lesser extant than complete substances. Finally, if there is an infinite and independent substance, it is more a thing than a substance that is finite and dependent. All this is completely self-evident.[39]

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but also have (what Descartes calls) formal reality (and hence represent actual existents). There is, however, no separate preliminary phase of philosophical elucidation in the Carte-sian enterprise devoted to the following question: how is it possible that any of our ideas so much as have objective reality—that they rise above the level of material falsity? Once re-course to the Cartesian idea of the infinite is off the table as a philosophically viable rescue strategy, this emerges as an urgent question. It gives rise to (what I call in my reply to Hamawaki) a Kantian problematic.

[37] Wilfrid Sellars succinctly summarizes (what I am here calling) the standard interpretation as follows:

> Descartes distinguishes between the act and the content aspects of thoughts. The con-tent . . . "exists in" the act. And . . . contents as contents exist only "in" acts. On the other hand, there is a sense in which something which "exists in" an act can also exist . . . "out-side" the act. In Descartes terminology, that which exists "in" the act as its "content" can have "formal reality" in the world. (Sellars, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," in *Kant's Transcendental Metaphysics,* ed. Jeffrey Sicha [Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 2002], 407)

In this volume, 488–489n44, I touch on a respect in which I think this interpretation may well be mistaken, having to do with the question of whether the identity of an idea is simply exhausted by what it is qua mode of thought.

[38] *Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 26.

[39] Ibid., Vol. II, 130. I have slightly amended the translation.

If we do not understand what Descartes takes to be straightforward in the first sentence of this response (about the relation between substances and modes), then we have no chance of understanding its second sentence (about the relation between the infinite and the finite). That, in turn, will surely leave us without any chance of understanding what he says in the third sentence of this reply: "All this is completely self-evident." Insofar as we are inclined to share Hobbes's reaction, then our task as readers of Descartes is not merely one of coming up with some reading or other that makes some sort of sense of what he says here; rather, what we require is a reading that allows us to see how what appears to be utterly *baffling* (for a reader such as Hobbes) may be deemed *self-evident* (by a philosopher such as Descartes).[40]

The idea of corporeal substance contains more objective reality within itself than do any of my ideas of its possible modes (such as, say, its position at a given time) because that which it is an idea of—a subject that undergoes change—is more of a thing than any of its modes. Its modes can undergo alteration (such a substance can, for example, change its position) while remaining unaltered qua *res extensa*; but the converse is not true: it cannot cease to be an extended thing while retaining its position. The modes of corporeal substance not only cannot exist apart from such a substance; they cannot even so much as be clearly conceived independently of a conception of the substance in which they inhere and of which they are modifications.[41] Similarly, the idea of a thinking substance contains more objective reality within itself than do any of my ideas of its possible modes. A thinking being, such as I am, can go from doubting to affirming or from affirming to denying while remaining all along unaltered qua *res cogitans*; but the converse is not true: I cannot

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[40] As we shall see, what Hobbes finds baffling (and Descartes self-evident) in the *Third Meditation* is closely related to what Moore finds baffling (and Descartes thinks is the only right to say) when it comes to the creation of the eternal truths.

[41] There is a Kantian line of thought here: in order to represent something as *a thing* that undergoes change, it does not suffice to experience a mere congeries of sense impressions or otherwise represent to oneself a mere succession of ideas—I must represent that succession in such a manner that I comprehend it through a category of being (the category that Descartes and Kant both call *substance*). It is only if such a category is brought to bear in my understanding (or experience) of that which is represented that the manifold of succession can figure in a thought of an object. But there is an unKantian line of thought here as well: this category of being for Descartes must involve the thought of something whose manner of being partakes of *a higher grade of material reality*—one that makes the elements of the manifold of a lower grade possible. By Kant's lights, this involves the mistake of materializing—or reifying—a formal concept.

cease altogether to be a thinking thing while continuing to doubt, affirm, or deny.[42]

In the French edition of the *Meditations,* Descartes introduces the following gloss on what it means for an idea to contain within itself a higher grade of objective reality: "[to] participate by representation in a higher degree of being or perfection."[43] The idea of finite extended substance represents an object of a particular grade (or, as this passage puts it, degree) of being or perfection. More specifically, it represents a category of possible existent with a higher grade of being or perfection than does any idea of a mere mode (such as position) because the one can exist—can retain its *being*—independently of the other's having being, but not vice versa. Similarly, the idea of finite thinking substance represents a possible existent with a higher grade of formal reality than that of any particular determination (doubting, affirming, denying, etc.) of such a substance, but not vice versa. To say that the idea of a substance contains within itself greater objective reality than any of the ideas of its modes is therefore not only to say that the object of the one idea is ontologically dependent on the object of the other; it is also to say that there is a *priority in the order of ideas* themselves corresponding to the ontologically ordered grades of being of the objects they respectively represent.[44] In clarifying my idea of what a mode is, thereby rendering such an idea clear and distinct, I have recourse to an idea of a higher

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[42] Here, too, there is a Kantian thought: in thinking something, I know not merely what I think, but thereby—in one and the same act—know myself to be thinking. And, here too, by Kant's lights, Descartes's account of this categorial unity involves the mistake of reifying the formal into something material. We will return to this Kantian critique of Descartes in the reply to Hamawaki, when we explore why for Kant self-consciousness of the unity of my consciousness is not to be construed in *identificatory* terms—as an act in which I subsume what I think under a general kind—so that such an act of self-knowledge comes to seem (as it did to Descartes) to require an act in which I identify myself as being a certain sort of (thinking) substance.

[43] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 26n. In what follows—for reasons indicated below—I will speak of a higher "grade" of being or perfection for what Descartes here calls "a higher degree of being or perfection."

[44] The degree of objective reality of a represent*ing* corresponds to that of the formal reality of the represent*ed*. But what about the formal reality of ideas qua ideas—do all ideas qua represent*ings* occupy the same ontological plane, or do they, too, come in a hierarchy of degrees? The standard answer to this interpretative question is that all there is to be said on this question is that ideas qua ideas all occupy the same ontological plane: they are mere think*ings*. The following passage from *Third Meditations* is often adduced in this connection: "Insofar as ideas are considered simply as modes of thought, there is no recognizable inequality among them: they all appear to come from within me in the same fashion" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 27–28). On the standard reading, Descartes is read here as saying that the formal reality of the represent*ed* can differ widely, but the formal reality of

grade of possible existent (a substance) upon which the possible existence of the object of the idea with a lower grade of objective reality (a mode or accident) depends.

To summarize matters for a particular purpose: the objective reality of an idea consists in the possible existence of its object. For the object of idea X to possess a higher grade of objective reality than that of Y consists in the ontological independence of the possible existence of X

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ideas qua represent*ings* is always on a par. Proponents of that reading find confirmation in the comparison of ideas with paintings—as offered, for example, in the following passage:

> Suppose someone said that anyone can paint pictures as well as Apelles, because they consist only of patterns of paint and anyone can make all kinds of patterns of paint. To such a suggestion we should have to reply that when we are talking about Apelles' pictures we are not just considering a pattern of colors, but a pattern skillfully made to resemble reality, such as can only be produced by those very skilled in this art. (Ibid., Vol. III, 214)

The point of this passage is often interpreted as follows: just as the formal reality of a Velasquez portrait of Pope Innocence the Third consists in oil and canvas—so that qua painting it belongs to the same order of formal reality as does any other painting (regardless of what sort of reality a given painting represents)—so, too, all ideas qua ideas have the same degree of formal reality qua modes of thought. (For a pithy statement of such a reading, see Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Inquiry* [Abingdon: Penguin, 1978; 2005 reprint], 123–124.) Lilli Alanen has argued that this orthodox interpretation misses an important distinction: "Though all ideas taken materially, qua modes of thought, have the same amount of formal reality, ideas taken objectively, as representations, differ: some contain more and some less reality or objective being depending on the nature of the thing they represent" (Alanen, "Sensory Ideas, Objective Reality, and Material Falsity," in *Reason, Will and Sensation: Studies in Descartes's Metaphysics*, ed. J. Cottingham [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 235). After adducing the passage that offers the comparison with a painting, Calvin Normore suggests that the standard reading misses the real point of the comparison—namely, that there is more to a painting (qua, say, portrait of Innocence the Third) than a mere pattern of colors: "Just as a painting involves both an assemblage of colors and a picture, so an idea involves both a mode of mind and an object present with objective reality. This second element, the object present with objective reality, has different degrees of reality in different ideas" (Normore, "Burge, Descartes, and Us," in *Reflections and Replies: Essays on the Philosophy of Tyler Burge*, ed. Martin Hahn and Bjørn Ramberg [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003], 6). Hence—as Normore points out—the passage from the *Third Meditation* quoted above continues as follows: "But insofar as different ideas are considered as images which represent different things, it is clear that they differ widely" (Vol. 2, 28). This may be read as saying that ideas considered (not merely as modes of thought, but rather) qua *representings with intentional content* differ in their formal reality depending on the objective reality of the represent*ed*. Deborah Brown underscores the central underlying claim of this heterodox interpretation (which she, too, endorses) as follows: "The objective reality of an idea is what makes an idea be the very idea it is precisely because it just is *the very same thing* as that which is represented by the idea" (Brown, "Descartes on True and False Ideas," in *A Companion to Descartes*, ed. J. Broughton and J. Carriero, op. cit., 199). This leads to a very different reading of Descartes than the standard one.

over Y.[45] The aim of that very brief and crude summary is to make the following point perspicuous: Descartes's notion of objective reality is closely tied to the topic at the center of A. W. Moore's contribution to this volume—namely, Descartes's theory of modality.[46]

We can make that connection even more perspicuous if we note the following feature of Descartes's account: in order to give an account of what is (and what is not) possible for the objects of ideas of a given category of being, we must draw on ideas whose objects are not of that category.[47] If we want an account of the conditions of the possibility of the object of idea Y, then the ideas in terms of which that account is to be framed are those of category X, where those of category Y are ontologically dependent on those of category X. If we want to know what are the possible modes of thinking (doubting, affirming, denying, willing, etc.) and what is not per se a possible case of such a mode, then the answers to such questions will not be attainable through perception of and reflection on mere modes alone, but rather only through *moving up one ontological level*—that is, through clear and distinct perception and reflection on the very nature of thinking substance as such.[48] This is precisely what

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[45] Conversely, for the object of idea Y to possess a lower grade of objective reality than that of X consists in the ontological dependence of the possible existence of the object of Y on that of X.

[46] For a more nuanced discussion than that offered above of the relation between Descartes's notion of objective reality and his theory of modality, see Calvin Normore, "Meaning and Objective Being" (in *Essays of Descartes's Meditations*, ed. Amelie Rorty [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986], 223–41), see especially 237ff.

[47] *Nota bene*: on this way of using the terms "ontological category" and "category of being," what many philosophers take to be a fundamental difference in (what they term) "ontological category"—namely, the difference between mind and body—does not qualify as one. For Descartes those two kinds of substances have (in the terminology employed here) precisely *the same grade*—or, in the terminology one finds in most translations of Descartes, *the same degree*—of being.

[48] The difference in (what I here call) "ontological level" between a finite substance and its modes is for Descartes a function of the absolute difference in their *grade* of ontological independence. The difference is one of ontological category, not merely one of *mere degree* within a category of possible existent. (I use the term "grade" for such categorial differences in ontological level of being and the term "degree" for mere intensification of quality within a grade. This terminological stipulation is introduced in order to mark certain subsequent distinctions clearly.) A mode has a zero grade of ontological independence: it has no reality apart from a given substance's being this way rather than that way. For a mode to undergo something approximating alteration amounts to nothing more than its going out of existence, as it were, and being replaced by a different mode. Whereas a finite substance—for example, a *res cogitans*—is that which itself undergoes genuine alteration while remaining throughout the same underlying thing that it is. For Descartes, the class of finite possible existents that are in this sense genuine *subjects of alteration* are, at one and the same time, the class of those beings that are genuinely able to *exist independently* of all other

the meditator in the first half of the *Second Meditation* seeks to do—for example, through formulating the cogito and clarifying for himself what is thought in it—where the task in question has two sides: first, an eliminative task (separating out from the pure idea of thought everything that does not belong to it as such) and an ampliative one (expanding it back out so that it includes everything that does properly belong to that idea). If we want to know what are the possible modes of extension—possible positions, shapes, lengths, and so on, of bodies—and what is not per se a possible case of such a mode, then the answers to such questions will again not be attainable solely through perception and reflection at the level of the mere mode, but rather only via ascension to a higher plane of being: through clear and distinct perception of, and reflection on, the very nature of extended substance as such. This is precisely what the meditator in the second half of the *Second Meditation* does—for example, through his thought experiment with the piece of wax—where the task in question has two sides: first, an eliminative task (separating out from the pure idea of body everything that does not belong to it as such) and an ampliative one (expanding it back out so that it includes everything that does properly belong to that idea). It is through reflection on ideas that have one grade of objective reality higher than that of an idea of a mode that we arrive at a comprehension of what is and is not possible on the ontological plane of mere modes.

So far, we have considered instances of the formula "idea X contains greater objective reality within itself than does idea Y" only for cases in which X stands for an idea of finite substance and Y for one of its possible modes. But it is crucial to Descartes's overall argument strategy that this formula permits of wider philosophical application.[49] More gener-

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(finite) possible existents. This is what makes them each a case of something deserving of the title *substance*. In the *Principles of Philosophy,* Descartes emphasizes that this latter sense is for him the strict sense of this term of philosophical art: "By *substance* we can understand nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. I, 210).

[49] The immediate juxtaposition of topics in the previous paragraph highlights the parallelism in task prosecuted by the meditator in the first and second halves of the *Second Meditation* via reflection on the cogito and the piece of wax—through which he clarifies for himself his respective ideas of thinking and extended substance. This is meant to highlight not only the correlative ontological independence of each of those substances from their modes. It is also meant to underscore how these two substances of *body* (Cartesian corporeal substance) and *mind* (Cartesian created thinking substance)—which tend to figure as the paradigmatic pairing in post-Cartesian philosophy of things differing in ontological kind—do not for Descartes himself differ at all in (in what I have been calling) *ontological category*: they belong to the same plane of being. It often goes unappreciated that in the respect that

ally, if idea X contains within itself greater objective reality than does idea Y, then for Descartes the act of attaining a clear and distinct intellectual perception of the conditions of the possibility of the object of idea Y will require the employment of an idea whose object is of ontological category X, where the possible existence of the object of the latter idea is ontologically prior to that of the former. If idea X has greater objective reality within itself than Y, then in order for me clearly and distinctly to conceive the ground of the possibility of the existence of the object of idea Y, idea X must be of a category of possible existent ontologically independent of that of the object of idea Y.

Now the question arises: Am I able to form an idea of a sort of being that stands to my ideas of finite substance as the latter stands to my ideas of the modes of such substances—an idea that therefore contains greater objective reality within itself than do any of my ideas representing finite substances? Yes, I can form such an idea:

> [T]he idea that gives me my understanding of a supreme God, eternal, infinite, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, and the creator of all things that exist apart from him, certainly has in it more objective reality than the ideas that represent finite substances.[50]

Descartes notoriously goes on to attempt to argue in the *Third Meditation* that one can extract through reasoned reflection on the mere fact that *I am so much as able to form this idea* (one that contains more objective reality within itself than is to be found in my idea of myself) the following conclusion: there must *be* such an infinite being—hence God exists.[51] But what concerns us here is not that next step (from the claim that I have in me this idea to the claim that the object of that idea

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matters most to Descartes this pair of substances belong to the same category of being. (Or to put the same point differently: the ideas of such substances have the same grade of objective reality within themselves.) The heading of Section 52 of Part I of the *Principles* puts this point succinctly: "*The term 'substance' applies univocally to mind and body.*" Despite the notoriously profound difference in the character of their essential natures, *res extensa* and *res cogitans* are therefore for Descartes "substances" *in precisely the same sense of the term*. As we shall see below, this is not a thing Descartes thinks we should say about the employment of the term "substance" across its use in the expressions "finite substance" and "infinite substance." To maintain that the term "substance" occurs univocally across its occurrences in the latter two contexts would be utterly to fail to appreciate the depth of the divide in ontological category indicated by a Cartesian use of the qualifiers "finite" and "infinite." This is what we now need to see.

[50] Ibid., 26.

[51] As the meditator, looking back on the argument of the *Third Meditation* from the retrospective vantage of the *Fourth*, says: "From *the mere fact that there is such an idea in me*,

necessarily exists). It suffices for our present purpose simply to get clearer about the premise of that argument—hence about what this extraordinary idea is supposed to be: an idea that each of us already has. It is an idea that I always already implicitly think whenever I explicitly think of myself—as I ineluctably must whenever I think—as being what I am: a finite thinking being.[52]

This is what our brief peek above at the *Third Meditation* has permitted us to gather so far about this idea that is always already in me: it is that idea that contains more objective reality within itself than any of my ideas of finite substance. Or, as he formulated the answer in the last sentence of his reply to Hobbes above: "if there is an infinite and independent substance, it is more a thing than a substance that is finite and dependent."[53] For Descartes, the idea of infinite substance is the idea of that which remains unaltered and retains its being qua the sort of being it is regardless of how it stands or acts in relation to anything finite—in relation to anything that is ontologically dependent on (or posterior in the order of being to) it. The ontological difference here in question obtains regardless of whether the infinite being confers or does not confer—or upon so conferring, whether it sustains or at some point ceases to sustain—existence upon (that which figures in our thought as) a given possible finite existent.[54] There are no changes in being at the ontological level of finite substance that constitute a change in being at the level of infinite substance. This is the logical dimension in which infinite substance stands to finite substance as finite substance does to its modes.

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or that I who possess this idea exist, I clearly infer that God also exists" (ibid., 37; emphasis added).

[52] This raises a question about what it means to claim that a certain idea is "in me"—and that, for example, if I reflect on my intellectual activity I will find that I, in some sense, "always already" have the idea of a thinking thing as what I am in and that I presuppose such an understanding of myself when I think of myself as engaged in acts of doubting, affirming, or denying. Or, if I reflect on my finitude, I will find that I, in some sense, "always already" have the idea of God as my creator and that I presuppose that idea whenever I think of myself as doubting and wanting—and hence as lacking—something. Robert McRae attempts to elaborate a "reflective" (and, in certain ways, strikingly proto-Kantian) account of how such ideas are "in me"; see his "Innate Ideas," in *Cartesian Studies*, ed. R. J. Butler (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972).

[53] Op. cit., Vol. II, 130.

[54] Note here how Descartes's conception of the relation of the infinite to the finite bears the mark of one aspect of the philosophical revolution that I associated above with Avicenna: the act of divine creation is conceived not (á la Plato's demiurge) as one of crafting something new out of some pre-existing matter, but rather as one of conferring existence where, prior to that act, there is nothing. The parenthetical qualification here "what figures in our thought as" marks a difference between Avicenna and Descartes that will occupy us below.

Descartes's theory of modality (of what is possible for a given category of being) is nested within his wider account of ontological grades of being. On this account, there are at least three different grades of being corresponding to *properties, subjects,* and *God,* where these, in turn, correlate with the three different grades of objective reality that an idea can have within itself, depending on whether it represents a mode, a finite substance, or an infinite substance.[55] These differences in grades of reality, in turn, are a function of how an entity of a given category depends

[55] I say "at least three." There are ways of reading Descartes that can seem to bring this number up. In his reply to Hobbes, in the bit quoted above, he says: "if there are real qualities or incomplete substances, they are things to a greater extent than modes, but to a lesser extant than complete substances" (op. cit.). This might seem to interpolate *an intermediate rung* in the ladder of being. What Descartes has in mind here (as he explains in the *Fourth Replies,* op. cit., Vol. 2, 156–157) is how something that is in one sense complete may nonetheless be regarded as incomplete qua part of a larger whole. The most crucial example of this for him concerns the way in which a part of the human being—say, the hand qua part of the human body, or the entirety of a human body, or a human mind—is in one way incomplete and in one way complete. Qua parts of the substantial union of mind and body (that is qua parts of what is a unitary substance in its own right: a human being), each is an incomplete substance; yet regarded in its own right (qua *res extensa* or qua *res cogitans*), each is a complete substance. (For further discussion, see Marlene Rozemond, *Descartes's Dualism* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998], 155ff.) So a question such as the following can arise: does the substantial union of mind and body constitute a substance situated at a higher ontological plane than that of the substances through which it is formed? Does the substantial union of mind and body partake of a higher grade of reality than the mind alone? Or is it the other way around? After all: a mind can exist apart from the substantial union, but not the other way around. Yet this point is compatible with Descartes's claim that the idea of such a union is nonetheless a *primitive* notion. (See, for example, Descartes's May 21, 1643, letter to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia; *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 218.) Deborah Brown explains:

> To say that a notion is primitive is to say that it cannot be analysed in terms of other notions, but also that it is somehow explanatorily basic—that in virtue of which other things are understood and which is not itself understood in terms of other things. Our conception of the union is primitive in the first sense because it is not entailed by the two basic concepts of Descartes' metaphysics, mind and body, taken separately or conjointly. The conceptions of mind as thinking substance and of body as extended substance entail nothing about how these substances interact or affect one another. Our notion of the union, which is a notion of mind and body interacting, must therefore derive from some source other than our metaphysical concepts of mind and body. It derives instead, Descartes claims, from our "experience" of moving and being affected by our bodies. (Deborah Brown, *Descartes and the Passionate Mind* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 13–14)

But this still seems to establish at most that the idea of human being is no less explanatorily primitive than that of thinking substance or that of extended substance. Even if this makes room for a third sort of finite substance in the ontology, it does not seem to yield the idea of a being belonging to an ontological plane *higher* than that of the other two finite substances. A further nicety of exegesis concerns the question of whether there is an ontological

for its reality upon the sort of being that is one ontological category higher up than it is. Each of these differences in grades of being, in turn, is a function of differences in grade of *ontological dependence*: the more ontologically "independent" (or, as we shall see Descartes saying again below: the more "perfect") a being is, the higher its grade of reality. If a commentator is in search of something she wishes to call "Descartes's core conception of modality" but remains exegetically blind to these sorts of distinction in ontological level and hence in category of being, then she is bound to end up flattening out Descartes's conception of what ought to be said in connection with something belonging to a given category. If she construes his conception of what is possible for beings at one of these levels (say, for finite substance) as yielding an overarching conception that governs what is possible for "everything," then Descartes's manner of employing (or refusing to employ) certain concepts (in particular, modal concepts) at a higher level (say, at the level of infinite substance) will inevitably appear to her to involve a lapse on his part.

We will see below (in the reply to Sullivan) that for Frege the ontological supervenes on the logical.[56] As we shall also see, Frege's conception of the priority of the logical can be understood in a variety of ways—some less philosophically shallow than others. On any construal of it, however, it contrasts (as Boyle endeavors to show) with Kant's conception. Kant concludes that pure general logic is incomplete qua logic since it cannot comprehend logically determinate differences in forms of judgmental unity; we further require a doctrine of categories—of logically dis-

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level *below* that of the merest of modes—the basement of being, as it were—a level to which the meditator might be read as adverting in a remark such as the following:

> I find that I possess not only a real and positive idea of God, or a being who is supremely perfect, but also what may be described as a negative idea of nothingness, or of that which is farthest removed from all perfection. I realize that I am, as it were, something intermediate between God and nothingness, or between supreme being and non-being. (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 38)

If one includes such non-being as *the lowest rung* of the ladder of being, then one has introduced a further grade of being into Descartes's ontological hierarchy. I think there are good reasons not to regard non-being—which Descartes equates with what is represented in a merely negative idea of nothingness—as comprising an ontological level in its own right, but for our purposes below not much turns on this issue. In what follows, I will restrict my discussion of grades of being in Descartes to mode, substance, and infinite substance as that suffices to elucidate the points that matter for a clarification of his conception of the creation of the eternal truths.

[56] I owe this way of trying to put Frege's conception of logic into a nutshell to Thomas Ricketts, "Objectivity and Objecthood: Frege's Metaphysics of Judgment," in *Frege Synthesized*, ed. L. Haaparanta and J. Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1986).

tinct forms of object-dependence in thought—hence pure general logic must be (to put the point misleadingly) supplemented with transcendental logic. Wittgenstein (as will concern us over the final four replies) shows that if one philosophically thinks this insight all the way through, then the ground of the distinction between pure and transcendental logic collapses; logic becomes (what later Wittgenstein calls) grammar. We stand here, with Descartes, at the threshold of these developments. His conception of how the structure of our intellect stands to the realm of being as a whole is, at least in one respect, precisely the reverse of Frege's. For Descartes it is the logical (the structure of thought) that supervenes on the ontological (the layout of being).

Here, too, there is a philosophically shallow and standard way of understanding what this might mean—in this case, what it means for the logical to supervene on the ontological. It goes like this: the varieties of logical argument place (for an individual, for a concept, etc.) and the correlative forms of unity in judgmental nexus (predicating a concept of an object, subsuming a first-level function under a second-level one, etc.) mirror the antecedently given structures of the kinds of "things" and "relations" that are "out there" (bare particulars, universals, etc.) "in" the "world." From a Cartesian point of view, this is to regard a class of ideas that all partake of the same grade of reality as supervening on a class of things that all also partake of the same grade of reality. Now Descartes is as opposed to that conception (of the supervenience of the logical on the ontological) as is Kant or Frege. Though Descartes's objection to this would be on theological, rather than merely logical, grounds, it would be no less vehement. For Decartes there were neither ideas nor things—neither thoughts thinkable by us nor truths about the world to be known—until God catered for the conditions of the possibility of both through a single act of creation; hence the forms of finite thinking and the varieties of finite substance are (logically and ontologically) equiprimordial aspects of God's creation. The sense in which the logical supervenes on the ontological for Descartes cannot be captured on that sort of picture. It will remain invisible as long as we look for it *within* a Cartesian ontological level—within the relation of finite ideas to finite things, or finite forms of thought to finite forms of being. It becomes visible only when we try to align ideas appropriate to one Cartesian ontological level with beings of a *higher* level. If, for example, one seeks to frame thoughts about *infinite* substance, then one will fail—Descartes thinks—to engage the intended object of one's thought, as long as one holds in place the demand that the form of such thought accord with

those logical structures required for grasping what is possible or necessary for *finite* substances or their modes.

If a commentator takes some version of a Fregean or post-Fregean conception of logic for granted and fixes it in place as a non-negotiable exegetical constraint on what counts as a "charitable" reading of any of the three philosophers mentioned above—Descartes, Kant, Wittgenstein—then this will not only lead her into a misreading but will also cause her to miss out on a chance, through an encounter with an alien form of philosophy, to get into view assumptions she takes for granted in her philosophizing. Our present concern is what happens when such assumptions are held in place and brought to bear on a reading of Descartes on the infinite. So what we want to get into view now is this: What does it mean to say that for Descartes the logical shape of our thought must be attuned to the ontological category of the object of our thought? Why must *what* we say, as well as *how* we allow ourselves to say it (and hence what we ought to refrain from saying), be attuned throughout to the grade of being of that of which we wish to speak? And more specifically, as we move from speaking of the ontological category of finite substance to that of infinite substance: why ought an eternal truth (i.e., a proposition that enunciates a truth that holds for everything "within" the scope of God's creation) never be construed as a truth that holds "of" (or "for" or "about") God?

Most of the formulations in the preceding paragraphs are compatible with the conclusion that the idea of infinite substance for Descartes is the idea of a category of being*s* that are ontologically prior to finite substances. But that is not quite right. Nor is it quite right to say that the idea of the infinite is the idea of *a* (or *some*) being that contains a high*er* grade of objective reality within itself than does any idea of a finite being. For it genuinely to be *the* idea of *the* infinite it must contain illimitable objective reality within itself.[57] The positivity in the infinitude of that which this idea represents lies precisely in there being nothing of the following form to think: the object of this idea might stand to something further as finite substance stands to it. The idea of the infinite is the idea of that which is ontologically absolutely independent—the idea of that

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[57] By the idea of that which contains *illimitable* (as opposed to *unlimited*) objective reality, I mean the idea of a being whose nature cannot be thought through even a merely indirect or heuristic employment of the concept of limit—that is, cannot be thought by first introducing the concept of a limit and then negating it (or otherwise attempting to take it back). We will return to this point below, when we come to Descartes's distinction between the *infinite* and the *indefinite*.

which is such that *there is nothing ontologically prior to it.*[58] For Descartes, as we shall see below, that means that what is represented by this idea must be perfectly *simple*—and hence that there can be no plurality in that which is represented by the idea of the infinite.[59]

We observed earlier that, for Descartes, in order to provide an account of what is (and what is not) possible for the objects of ideas of a given category we must draw on ideas whose objects belong to the ontologically next highest category. Hence, for example, we concluded that if we want to know what are the possible modes of thinking—doubting, affirming, denying, willing, and so on—and what is not per se a possible case of such a mode, then answers to such questions will not be attainable via perception of and reflection on mere modes alone, but rather only by moving up one ontological level: through reflection on the very nature of thinking substance as such. A closer look at the *Third Meditation* reveals that Descartes thinks the same holds for the relation between finite and infinite substance. If we want to know whether in endorsing our clear and distinct ideas of finite substances (and, more generally, in judging in accordance with the natural light of reason) we thereby acquiesce in mere appearances of impossibility, necessity, and truth (as we would be doing if, for example, we were created by an evil demon), we need to ground our reflection in a higher ontological plane. Here again, in order to arrive at an answer, we need recourse to an idea that has more objective reality within itself than those that we employ in originally framing the question. Hence in order to answer the most pressing questions about my own nature (those that the meditator in the *First Meditation* poses), I need to look upward, as it were—to be able to rely upon a clear and distinct idea of that which is situated at a higher ontological plane than I, qua finite substance, am. Such an idea is precisely what the

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[58] I will express this Cartesian doctrine henceforth by simply saying: *there is nothing prior to it.*

[59] The difference in ontological "level" or "plane" between finite substances and their modes lies in the absolute nature of the difference in their grade of ontological independence—that that difference is one of kind and not of mere degree. We saw that the ontological priority of substance over mode lay in the former's capacity—as Descartes says in *Principles,* I, 51—to "exist in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence" (*Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 210). The difference in ontological "level" or "plane" between infinite and finite substance is equally one of absolute difference in grade of ontological independence. But in this case, properly thinking through the idea of that which is ontologically higher yields the conclusion that there is only *one* such substance. Hence *Principles,* I, 51, continues: "And there is only one substance which can be understood to depend on no other thing whatsoever, namely God. In the case of all of other substances, we perceive that they exist only with God's concurrence" (ibid.).

meditator in the *Third Meditation* arrives at—in clarifying his idea of the infinite—where the task in question has two sides: first, an eliminative task (separating out from the pure idea of the infinite everything that does not belong to it as such) and an ampliative one (expanding it back out so that it includes everything that does properly belong within its purview). If I want to know what underwrites my conception of what is so much as possible or necessary at the level of minds and bodies in the world, then the answer to such questions will, according to Descartes, not be attainable solely via clear and distinct perception of, and reflection on, what pertains merely to my own ontological level qua finite thinking being. Here, too, in order to answer the question about what underwrites what is possible and necessary at that level, I must again move up one ontological level: I must arrive at a clear and distinct idea of the infinite. Hence, here too, it is only through clarifying an idea that has a higher grade of objective reality (than that at which my question was originally posed) that I can arrive at a comprehension of what is and is not genuinely possible on the ontological plane of finite substance.

In order for it to play the fundamental role assigned to it in Descartes's writings—in which it provides the ultimate ground of all comprehension of the nature of finite substance—the idea of the infinite needs to harbor a *positive* content. The entire dialectical procedure cannot rest on the foundation of a merely privative idea of God—one that turns on nothing more than a purely negative characterization of the nature of the infinite (according to which all that we are able to conceive of God is the bare idea that He is wholly unlike us). It must afford positive insight into the actuality of the nature of an infinite being. This point is crucial for negotiating what might otherwise appear to be an irreconcilable tension in the overall account.

Indeed, Descartes himself is acutely aware that to many of his readers (especially to those who are not "used to contemplating the idea of God and to considering his supreme perfections"[60]) the following two claims are bound to appear to conflict:

(a) The idea that we are able to grasp most clearly and distinctly is that of God.
(b) We cannot comprehend the greatness of God.

Versions of each of these two claims occur over and over again in Descartes's writings. Claim (a) underwrites Descartes's insistence not only

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[60] See the next note for the full context of this passage.

that the idea of God is "the truest and most clear and distinct of all my ideas"[61] but also that "knowledge of all other things depends on the knowledge of God."[62] Claim (b) figures most emphatically whenever the topic of God's relation to the eternal truths is broached—for example, in each of the letters to Mersenne discussed above and below. Indeed, the formulation of (b) offered above is taken *verbatim* from the letter to Mersenne of April 15, 1630, with which we began. On May 6, Descartes reiterates the point to Mersenne in the following terms: "God is a cause whose power surpasses the bounds of human understanding"; on May 27: "God is infinite and all-powerful even though our mind, being finite, can neither conceive nor comprehend it."[63] But not only do versions of (a) and (b) each occur over and over again in Descartes's writings, they often occur in *immediate proximity* to each other.[64] Where he emphasizes that God is incomprehensible, he also insists, frequently within the space of the same sentence, that we *know* this—indeed, if we reflect at all, we will find that we cannot help but know this.[65]

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[61] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 32. Here is a yet more fulsome statement of that point from the *Principles*:

> *Even if we do not grasp the nature of God, his perfections are known to us more clearly than any other thing.* This is sufficiently certain and manifest to those who are used to contemplating the idea of God and to considering his supreme perfections. Although we do not fully grasp these perfections, since it is in the nature of an infinite being not to be fully grasped by us, who are finite, nonetheless, we are able to understand them more clearly and distinctly than any corporeal things. (*Principles,* Part I, Section 19, Ibid., Vol. I, 199)

Although the main point of the above is tied to (a)—that the idea of God is the one that is most clear and distinct to the human mind—(b) also comes up within the scope of the same passage ("it is in the nature of an infinite being not to be fully grasped by us"). As we are about to see, this passage is no exception in this regard.

[62] Ibid., Vol. I, 197. This is from the heading of Section 13 of Part I of the *Principles*.

[63] Letter to Mersenne of April 15, 1630, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 23; of May 6, 1630, ibid., 25; of May 27, 1630, ibid., 25 (translation amended).

[64] This observation plays a central role in the interpretation of Descartes offered by Jean-Marie Beyssade in his *La Philosophe Première de Descartes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979).

[65] Hence in the April 15 letter: "We cannot comprehend the greatness of God, . . . even though we *know* it" (my translation and emphasis). And in the one of May 27: "I say that I *know* it, not that I conceive it or comprehend it" (my translation and emphasis). The translation of the former remark in the now standard edition of the *Philosophical Writings* is: "The greatness of God . . . is something which we cannot grasp even though we know it" (Vol. III, 23); that of the latter: "I say that I know this, not that I conceive it or grasp it" (ibid., 25). As I explain immediately below, I prefer "comprehend" to "grasp" as a translation here not just because it is the cognate of the relevant Latin and French words that consistently occur in these contexts in Descartes's writings, but also because it is the term that is meant to contrast with "apprehend."

Such an immediate juxtaposition of claims (a) and (b), in the course of an elucidation of the idea of the infinite, occurs in the *Third Meditation* as well. Here is the now standard English translation of the passage I have in mind from the *Third Meditation,* with the parts in it that correspond to claim (a) marked in bold and those that correspond to claim (b) in italics:

> **This idea of God is . . . utterly clear and distinct**; for whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive as being real and true, and implying any perfection, is wholly contained within it. It does not matter that *I do not grasp the infinite . . .* for it is *in the nature of the infinite not to be grasped by a finite being like myself.* It is enough that I understand the infinite, and that I judge that all the attributes which I clearly perceive and know to imply some perfection . . . are present in God. . . . This is enough to make **the idea that I have of God the** truest and **most clear and distinct of all of my ideas.**[66]

Some comments on this translation are in order. With regard to the parts that express (a): the Latin for "utterly clear and distinct" (*maxime clara & distincta*) is more literally rendered "maximally clear and distinct"—and, similarly, a more literal rendering of the final clause would read as follows: "the maximally true and the maximally clear and distinct [*maxime vera & maxime clara & distincta*] of all of the ideas that are in me [*omnia quae in me sunt*]." As for (b): what is translated above respectively as "not grasp" (*nec comprehendere*) and "not to be grasped" (*non comprehendatur*) (marking a contrast with that which "it is enough that I understand" [*suffit me . . . intelligere*]) could also be rendered by employing "comprehend" for *comprehendere*. Henceforth this is the term that I will use to mark the front end of the distinction here in play between *comprehendere* and *intelligere*. This yields the following re-translation of the passage, continuing to indicate the occurrences of (a) in bold and those of (b) in italics:

> **This idea of God is . . . maximally clear and distinct**; for whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive as being real and true, and implying any perfection, is wholly contained within it. It does not matter that *I do not comprehend the infinite . . .* for it is in the nature of the infinite *that it not be comprehensible by a finite being like myself.* It is enough that I understand the infinite, and that I judge that all the attributes which

[66] Ibid., Vol. II, 31–32.

I clearly perceive and know to imply some perfection . . . are present in God. . . . This is enough to make **the idea that I have of God** the one that is maximally true and **maximally clear and distinct of all the ideas that are in me**.

This passage suggests that the following pair of claims about the infinite represent two interrelated dimensions of one and the same idea: (b) it is *manifestly incomprehensible*, yet (a) *maximally prior in the order of clarity and distinctness*, inasmuch as its intelligibility is implicit in our clear and distinct comprehension of anything else—hence of anything finite.[67] Yet a third dimension of that idea is also touched on here—one that serves to bridge the other two dimensions: in apprehending God as infinite, I thereby understand Him to be the ontological basis of my understanding of the attributes that I clearly and distinctly perceive finite substances to have. For in perceiving the attributes in question to be in each case those of something *finite*, I thereby perceive them as implying a standard of *perfection*—a standard of which they themselves cannot be the source, where the incomprehensibility (as opposed to the mere intelligibility) of that normative source is latent in my implicit understanding of what genuine perfection is.

What figures in the above passage as a distinction between what we can *comprehend* and that which we can at most only *understand* recurs in some guise or other almost everywhere the topic of the nature of the infinite comes up in Descartes. The following passage is Conant's favorite in this connection:

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[67] A respect in which my idea of God is the *clearest* of the ideas in me is that it requires less clarification—less purification of all that it might merely seem to contain but which is in fact a true perception—than other ideas. In this respect, it stands at the opposite extreme from my ideas about corporeal things (that initially appear to me to warm, colored, smelly, etc.): "[T]here is very little about corporeal things that is truly perceived, whereas much more is known about the human mind, and still more about God" (op. cit., Vol. II, 37). Descartes, in saying—as he repeatedly does—that of all my ideas it is "the most clear and distinct" appears to be committed to the claim that the idea of God is not only the clearest but also the most *distinct* of all of my ideas. It is difficult to shake the worry that his insistence on (b) sits awkwardly with his claim in (a) that our idea of God is distinct—let alone, that it is our *most* distinct idea. In the explication of (a) offered below I attempt to spell out the sense in which our idea of God may be said to be *clear*—that is, the sense in which for Descartes there must be something *undeniably manifest to us* if we properly apprehend the idea in question—and I seek to do this in a manner that is consistent with (b). Nothing I say below, however, goes very far toward explicating how my idea of God could be maximally *distinct*. Indeed, I find such a claim altogether hard to square with Descartes's own explication of God's incomprehensibility. Having noted this difficulty, I propose not to linger over it any further and, in the interests of ease of exposition, will henceforth ignore it.

> I know that God is the author of everything and that these [eternal] truths are something and consequently that He is their author. I say that I know this, not that I conceive it or grasp it; because it is possible to know that God is infinite and all-powerful although our mind, being finite, cannot grasp or conceive Him. In the same way we can touch a mountain with our hands but we cannot put our arms around it as we could put them around a tree or something else not too large for them. To grasp something is to embrace it in one's thought; to know something, it is sufficient to touch it with one's thought.[68]

Here the distinction is expressed in terms of that which one can fully *embrace in thought* and that which one can only *touch with thought*. Conant, in his original article, rephrases this as the distinction between that which one can *com*prehend and that which one can only *ap*prehend.[69] (I will adopt this latter formula for expressing the Cartesian distinction here at issue, but—as will soon become clear—not Conant's interpretation of it.[70]) Descartes tries out a remarkable variety of ways of terminologically marking some version of such a distinction. For example, in the *Fifth Replies,* in his response to Gassendi (on the question of what it is that humans grasp by the term "infinite"), Descartes readily agrees that the term stands for something that we cannot comprehend. He then counters that simply to say this, leaving that as one's last word on the topic, would be to fail to distinguish between a way of understanding the infinite "that is suited to the scale of our intellect" and "a fully adequate conception of things." It is specifically in the former way, Descartes insists, that "each of us knows by his own experience . . . that he has this sort of understanding of the infinite."[71] To understand the infinite *in the way suited to the scale of our intellect* is to apprehend the positive content of that idea (due to the infinite grade of objective reality it contains within itself) as singling out as its object precisely that which we cannot comprehend (due to its very nature).

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[68] Op. cit., Vol. III, 25.

[69] Conant takes this way of marking the distinction from Peter Geach, *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), chap. 1.

[70] Conant focuses on the passages in which this distinction is drawn, but he treats them as if they were part of a heroic attempt on Descartes's part to finesse an awkward consequence of his philosophical commitments. What we are already in a position to note in this connection is that Conant, no less than Moore, fails to appreciate the extent to which that distinction figures as part of an elucidation of the idea that Descartes regards as "the clearest . . . of all those present in my mind."

[71] Descartes, *Fifth Replies*; *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 252.

We saw above that for Descartes the idea of our own finitude (an idea that we cannot do without in forming a clear and distinct idea of ourselves) depends on the idea of a being such that *nothing is prior to it*. "Nothing is prior to it"—both in the sense that our *idea* of it is prior to our idea of anything else and in the sense that what this idea is *of* is that which IS absolutely (in the maximally ontologically independent sense of "is" explicated above). This means not only that (a) and (b) are not inconsistent for Descartes but that they are two sides of the same idea: (b) is an articulation of what must belong to the positive content of that idea in order for it genuinely to satisfy the condition laid down in (a); and (a) is a characterization of the epistemic role that the one and only idea that has such a content must play in the project of a finite knower's attaining full comprehension of the source and nature of her powers.[72] For it to be the idea that is prior in the order of philosophical understanding to a proper comprehension of all other ideas (including, as we shall see, the ideas of possibility and necessity), it must be the idea of that without which (or whom) there would be nothing to have an idea of.

The idea of God admittedly serves a negative function for Descartes insofar as it serves to mark a limit to that which we can fully comprehend in thought. But the claim that it is *incomprehensible* must not be equated with the bare idea of its suitability to serve that limiting function. For Descartes, the idea of the infinite harbors a positive content. The maximal degree of objective reality that the idea contains within itself—he insists—is manifestly clear to us and apprehended as such.[73] His oft-repeated claim that the idea of God is incomprehensible should therefore not be interpreted to mean it is devoid of sense and reference. Quite the contrary: it means that in order to apprehend properly the idea of the infinite we must acknowledge the absolutely independent ontological character of its referent, and hence the absolutely peculiar logical character any statement seeking to engage such a referent must display.

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[72] Once we have fully ascended to a clear apprehension of the idea of God, the method to be followed from that point on is summarized in the heading of Section 24 of Part I of the *Principles* as follows: "We pass from knowledge of God to that of his creatures by remembering that he is infinite and we are finite" (201).

[73] We recently saw Descartes saying in a remark quoted in this volume, 479: "If anyone attends to the immeasurable greatness of God he will find it *manifestly clear* that there can be nothing whatsoever which does not depend on him" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 293; emphasis added).

This aspect of the idea of God—the peculiar logical character it has qua idea of the positively infinite—is, on the one hand, the one that Descartes seeks to clarify in his remarks about the creation of the eternal truths and, on the other, the very one that he calls upon in the central weight-bearing argument for the existence of God in the *Third Meditation*:

> I must not think that, just as my conceptions of rest and darkness are arrived at by negating movement and light, so my perception of the infinite is arrived at not by means of a true idea but merely by negating the finite. On the contrary, I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, and hence that my perception of the infinite—that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself. For how could I understand that I doubted or desired—that is, lacked something—and that I was not wholly perfect, unless there were in me some idea of a more perfect being which enabled me to recognize my own defects by comparison?[74]

The meditator is here beginning to clarify for himself the idea that will help him out of his skeptical difficulties: If I, qua Cartesian meditator, consider that I am the sort of being that is beset by doubt and by desire, then it becomes clear to me that "I am a thing that is incomplete and dependent." For Descartes, what it means for this to become completely clear to me—what it means for me completely to comprehend, in an act of self-consciousness, that I am *finite*—simply *is* for there to "arise in me a clear and distinct idea of a being who is independent and complete, that is, an idea of God."[75]

As we shall see, beginning with the reply to Hamawaki, post-Cartesian philosophy has for the most part remained more impressed by the considerations in the *First Meditation* through which Descartes draws us into his skeptical difficulties than by those alleged in the *Third Meditation* to afford safe passage back out of them.[76] Our present aim is not to address the merits of Descartes's putative path out of the trouble he gets

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[74] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 31.

[75] Ibid., 37.

[76] Considerations that would take us down a bunny hole whose twists and turns cannot be explored here: such as that "there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause," hence that the cause of the objective reality in an idea must "have as much reality formally or eminently as the idea has objectively," hence that "what is more perfect—that is, contains in itself more reality—cannot arise from what is less perfect" (op. cit., Vol. II, 28). Hence if I exist, and have a clear and distinct idea of myself, and see that the possibility of this idea (of which not even an evil demon can de-

philosophy into, but rather merely to clarify the idea of the infinite upon which the proposed rescue strategy rests. As the passage above indicates, the crucial first step in that strategy is the thought that I would not so much as even be able to comprehend that I am finite, unless in one and the same thought I were also able to apprehend the standard of perfection by which I thereby assess the character of my own nature in so conceiving of myself.

This thought—as Stephen Menn points out[77]—goes all the way back to Plato's *Phaedo*:

> When someone sees something, and thinks that this thing he is now seeing wants to be like some other thing, but falls short and cannot be what that other thing is, but is inferior—then, necessarily, the person who thinks this must somehow already have *known* the thing that he says this resembles but falls short of.[78]

Descartes applies this Platonic thought to the question of the relation of the finite to the infinite. He concludes: in thinking of myself as finite, I, necessarily, must already know that to which I implicitly advert in estimating myself as falling short.[79] Perfection is logically prior to imperfection—as health is to illness—so that I must have some acquaintance with the standard implicit in my act of estimation: a standard that comes with at least some inchoate grasp of the logically prior concept (perfection, health). I require this in order to apprehend the logically privative case as I do (as a case of something that is imperfect, or ill). The surface grammar of the pair of terms that here concern us might appear to belie this line of thought. If we take "healthy" and "*un*healthy" or "perfection" and "*im*perfection" as our model, then the outward

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prive me) itself, in turn, presupposes a clear and distinct idea of God, then God must be actual.

[77] Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 284.

[78] Plato, *Phaedo,* 74d9-e4; emphasis added. The translation of the passage is Menn's (*Descartes and Augustine,* 284). The connection between Descartes's line of thought and the Platonic one is far more evident in Menn's helpful translation than in, say, G.M.A. Grube's widely used translation of the *Phaedo*; collected in John Cooper, ed., *Plato: The Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 65.

[79] Menn puts the point as follows: "In order to recognize that I, or any other finite being, 'want' or lack further perfections, I must first know the ideal standard that the finite being falls short of" (*Descartes and Augustine,* 284). Why cannot my idea of myself (qua the sort of finite substance that I am) rather than my idea of God be the source of my knowledge of the standard of perfection that I employ when I recognize myself to fall short of the standard? We will return to this point below.

appearance of "finite" and "*in*finite" would suggest that in this third pair of terms (as in the first two) it is the latter member of the pair that is arrived at through modifying the former, rather than vice versa. So the first point to register in this connection is that Descartes emphatically insists that we must not allow ourselves to be misled by this appearance. The proper way to conceive the logical relation between the finite and the infinite is, he insists, as follows: in the case of this pair of terms, it is the former member that involves a privative modification—more specifically (what Descartes calls) a *negation*—of the latter; so that the content of the former idea (of finitude) is intelligible only in the light of a prior understanding of the latter (of infinitude). The relation between the idea of the finite and that of the infinite contrasts precisely in this regard with what Descartes takes the relation to be between the ideas of the finite and (what he calls) the *indefinite*. When it comes to the latter pair of terms, things are just as they appear when we take the surface grammar at face value: the latter idea is arrived at by negating the former—by starting with the idea of the finite and attempting to think away some aspect of it.

The logical form of the idea of the indefinite—which Descartes thinks most philosophers mistake for the concept of the infinite—therefore contains two distinct forms of privation within itself: a merely negative (or limiting) negation of the logically prior (and fully comprehensible) concept of the finite, whose intelligibility, in turn, presupposes a substantively positive (or ontological) negation of the fully positive (and hence merely apprehensible) idea of the infinite. Hence in disagreeing with his interlocutors on this topic, we find Descartes saying things like what he says in his reply to Gassendi. After distinguishing between ways of talking about the infinite that are suited to the scale of our intellect and those that are not, Descartes cautions Gassendi that we must also distinguish between a (merely negative) way of negating the idea of the finite (that yields an idea of the non-finite still suited to the scale of our intellect) and a (fully positive) way of negating that idea (that yields the properly Cartesian idea of the infinite). He concludes: "[I]t is false that the infinite is understood through the negation of a boundary or limit; on the contrary, all limitation implies a negation of the infinite."[80] This passage distinguishes two forms of negation. The first of these is the one that Gassendi and other philosophers mistake for the true idea of the infinite, but that Descartes identifies with the merely indefinite: an idea that is first

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[80] Descartes, *Fifth Replies*; *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 252.

arrived at by our negating the notion of boundedness or limitation essential to our own idea of ourselves as finite substances. This idea of the non-finite (as indefinite) is logically posterior in the order of ideas to our idea of ourselves as finite. The second of these is the idea already presupposed by—and implicitly already thought in—our idea of ourselves as finite and which Descartes identifies with the true idea of the infinite: the idea of that such that nothing is prior to or dependent upon it. This idea of the non-finite (as positively infinite) is logically prior to our idea of ourselves as finite. It is this idea that we implicitly negate in explicitly thinking of ourselves as essentially dependent beings—beings whose very possibility is posterior to the actuality of something whose reality in no way depends on ours.[81]

It is instructive to compare and contrast Descartes's idea of the infinite here with those of Leibniz and Kant respectively. We saw above that for Leibniz the principles of logic articulate a kind of unity of which God's infinite and our finite understandings may both equally partake. That is to say that for Leibniz, as we move from considering the nature of our own understanding to that of God, we do not move from the idea of a form of understanding that we are able to comprehend to one that we are unable to comprehend; for the fundamental nature of the object of each of these ideas (human understanding, divine understanding) is articulated in and through the principles of logic. As we saw, this contrasts with Kant's account of the relation in which these two concepts stand to one another: as we move from considering the form of thought characteristic of a finite cognitive being to framing the concept of an infinite cognitive capacity, we move from a conception of a cognitive capacity that is utterly familiar to us to one that is utterly alien. For Kant no sense is to be made of the Leibnizian conception of a set of principles that govern both of these forms of cognitive capacity. If you think there could be such a set of principles, for Kant this suffices to show that you are

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[81] The relation between the former pair of ideas (the indefinite to the finite) involves what Descartes calls a "merely negative" or limiting (or we might also say: indeterminate) negation; whereas the relation between the latter (the finite to the infinite) involves a positive (or we might also say: determinate) negation. The merely negative negation of the idea of the finite (which itself contains a positive negation of the infinite) yields a logically doubly privative concept of a sort that Descartes thinks is apt to confuse us when philosophizing. Such a case of an indeterminate privation of a determinate privation is not to be assimilated to the logically familiar case of iterated negation that cancels out. We will see below that most readings of Descartes's remarks on the creation of the eternal truths turn on the following assumption: wherever a pair of nested negations occur in one of Descartes's claims they cancel one another out, yielding an affirmation of the doubly negated claim.

construing the putatively infinite being's way of knowing in such a manner that it bears the marks of our finitude. The gulf between an infinite and a finite knower is in this respect, we might say, infinitely large for Kant—hence unbridgeable through any ingredient power (such as the power of mere "thinking") within the overall power of cognition available to us finite knowers; whereas for Leibniz such a gulf can be bridged through logic—through those principles that articulate the structure of reason *überhaupt*, both in us and in God.

If one formulates the contrast between Leibniz's and Kant's respective conceptions in the foregoing (admittedly selective) fashion, it has the effect of making Descartes appear much closer to Kant than Leibniz. The very possibility of such a formulation rests on profound philosophical affinities between Descartes and Kant. The significant parallels in their respective conceptions—ones that could be teased out in much more detail than would be appropriate here—include the following: (1) our reflective elaboration of any concept of a cognitive capacity *must begin from our own case*; (2) my philosophical reflection must therefore take as its point of departure a *spontaneous first-person point of view* on myself from within my activity as a rational being; (3) we achieve philosophical self-comprehension *through the exercise of that very capacity*—the very one that we seek better to understand over the course of our philosophical reflection; moreover (4) the only concept of a cognitive capacity we can *fully comprehend* is the one that we thereby exercise: namely, that of a finite knower; hence (5) the concept of an infinite knower is *incomprehensible* to finite beings such as ourselves; and thus (6) Leibniz's concept of an infinite knower—in requiring that God's power of understanding be comprehensible to ours—*confuses* the concept of a *genuinely infinite being* (whose cognitive capacity differs from ours utterly in form and hence is incomprehensible to us) with that of a merely *cognitively superior being* (whose cognitive capacity stands to ours as a perfect to an imperfect realization of a common form).

Folded within each of these profound parallels are equally radical divergences in conception. For Kant the only concept of a cognitive capacity regarding which we can form any *positive* conception is that of a finite knower; whereas for Descartes it is crucial that I have in me *a real and positive idea of God*. For Kant, to say that critique aims at a form of vindication of our cognitive capacity *from within* means that the arc of its reflection must remain *immanent* to the sphere of our finitude; whereas for Descartes its arc must pass through the fixed point of

that which (as Kant would say) *transcends*—or (as Descartes does say) *surpasses*—our power of understanding. For Kant, the concept of an infinite being is the concept of a being whose form of cognitive capacity is such that we can understand it only *from the outside*. Hence for Kant it is a concept we can merely think, but not one that can figure in any objectively valid act of knowledge. While for Descartes—though it is true that it is something I merely apprehend and do not comprehend—the positive idea of the infinite is nonetheless is in act *in my thought of myself* as finite: indeed, contained in such a way that I would not be able to comprehend my own nature (as finite) unless I were able to apprehend God's (as infinite). Hence for Descartes, there must not only be a way of framing the idea of an incomprehensible cognitive being, but His incomprehensible infinitude must be actually thinkable by me in a way that constitutes *my knowing Him*. Hence, whereas for Kant a reflective elaboration of the concept of a genuinely infinite counterpart to our way of knowing can bear no weight in our own cognitive activity,[82] for Descartes it is *the* cognition par excellence—the one that must ground all reflective activity that aspires to construct an edifice of genuine knowledge. So, while for Kant the concept of an infinite knower has a *merely logical* use and cannot figure in any objective valid judgment, for Descartes we cannot vindicate the objective purport of any of our ideas (apart from the cogito) without making a *real use* of the idea of God—one in which it is understood to contain not only objective reality within itself but the maximum possible degree of such reality. This means that, whereas the logically non-contradictory but

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[82] In order to avoid a possible confusion, the following point should be made clear: the Kantian concept under discussion here—that bears no weight in our cognitive activity—is the concept of an *infinite knower*. This must be distinguished from a philosophically altogether distinct manner of specifying an idea of an infinite being within the Kantian framework—namely, the one that Kant elucidates in the Transcendental Dialectic of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, in the context of setting forth the three transcendental ideas that govern the activity of our faculty of reason as its aim and thereby "serve the understanding as a canon for its extended and self-consistent use" (A329/B385). Unlike the concept of an infinite knower, this transcendental idea of God—as "the absolute unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general" (A334/B392)—does have a certain sort of role to play in the full Kantian story in the exercise of our cognitive activity, albeit a merely regulative and not a constitutive one. Unlike the merely privative concept of an infinite knower, a transcendental idea does not lie simply outside that which our capacity for reason can encompass by being *ex hypothesis* absolutely alien to it. Rather it represents a dimension of the ideal—hence only asymptotically approachable (A663/B691)—limit of our rational inquiry. It is therefore tied to an immanent aspect of our cognitive capacity. Such a Kantian transcendental idea is not our topic here.

cognitively empty concept of such a being can serve for Kant as no more than a heuristic conceptual foil in the elucidation of the nature of our own capacity, for Descartes it serves as the Archimedean point for all philosophizing.

If we are to understand Descartes, we must simultaneously appreciate how his conception of the infinite has the genuine affinities with Kant's conception (enumerated in the last paragraph but one) that it does, while partaking in the profound divergences from it (listed in the previous paragraph) that it does. We must simultaneously appreciate how Descartes is no less opposed to theological rationalism than is Kant, yet how it can be that Descartes still has a use for the thought in Continental philosophical rationalism that Kant deems most dogmatic: namely, that all true knowledge must be grounded in knowledge of God.

From Descartes's point of view, Kant's way of arriving at a concept of an infinite knower yields the idea of a knower who differs only indefinitely—not infinitely (in Descartes's positive sense of the latter term)—from us. In framing his concept of such a knower, Kant thinks away aspects of our form of cognition. He explains that this leaves us with nothing more than a concept of a non-finite knower that we are able to "grasp" at most privatively. Now notice: Descartes and Kant actually agree that *that* idea of the "infinite" can play no positive weight-bearing load in the philosophical clarification of what we can know. It can play at most a merely negative role as a *limiting concept (Grenzbegriff)*. Whence then their disagreement about the infinite? Descartes thinks there is a non-privative idea of an infinite knower that we can and must form that Kant thinks is unavailable to us. We said above: If I, qua Cartesian meditator, want to know what underwrites my conception of what is so much as possible or necessary at the level of minds and bodies in the world that God created, then the answer to such a question will not be attainable solely via a clear and distinct perception of, and reflection on, what belongs merely to my own ontological level qua finite thinking being. In order to answer questions regarding what underwrites what is possible and necessary at my level of cognitive activity—as we have seen—I have to frame answers that draw on concepts grounded in a higher ontological plane, where the concepts in question are not mere *Grenzbegriffe,* not mere limiting concepts. From Kant's point of view such a move constitutes abandoning the method of critique. For it attempts to ground my philosophical attempt to vindicate my entitlement to my forms of thinking through a mode of reflection that is not *transcendental*—but rather, as

noted above, *transcendent*—in form. It *requires* recourse to a non-limiting concept of the infinite.

Descartes could not be clearer on this point. In a letter to Clerselier, he in effect explains that his idea of an infinite being is not a Kantian *Grenzbegriff*:

> By "infinite substance" I mean a substance which has actually infinite and immense, true and real perfections. . . . It should be observed that I never use the word "infinite" to signify the mere lack of limits (which is something negative, for which I have use the term "indefinite") but to signify a real thing, which is incomparably greater than all those which are merely limited.[83]

Two important points are contained in this passage. The first is explicit in the first sentence: the true idea of the infinite is not of the merely potentially infinite but the *actually* infinite. The second is implicit in the second sentence: although the negative idea of the indefinite has potentially indefinitely many applications, the positive idea of the actually infinite must have precisely one. It does not just signify "*a* real thing"; it signifies *the* maximally real thing belonging to the incomparably highest grade of being: God. Apart from our idea of Him, every other idea we are able to form of something that exceeds the finite—such as an idea of so-called infinite extension or of a so-called infinitely large quantity—is in fact an idea of nothing more than something merely indefinite:

> Our reason for using the term "indefinite" rather than "infinite" in these cases is, in the first place, so as to reserve the term "infinite" for God alone. For in the case of God alone, not only do we fail to recognize any limits in any respect, but our understanding *positively* tells us that there are none. Secondly, in the case of other things, our understanding does not in the same way positively tell us that they lack limits in some respect; we merely acknowledge in a *negative* way that any limits which they may have cannot be discovered by us.[84]

In order more precisely to clarify the sense in which the idea of the finite presupposes a positive idea of the infinite, it is instructive to compare Kant's argument for *space* with Descartes's argument for *God*. Interestingly, Stephen Menn goes so far as to suggest that the relation of the idea of space as such (conceived as an unbounded whole) to that of a region

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[83] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 377.
[84] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 202; emphasis added.

of space (conceived as a limitation of such a whole) furnishes a helpful parallel through which to understand why Descartes holds that the idea of God (as a positively infinite being) must be presupposed in each and every act in which I think myself (as a finite being):

> Descartes' point is most easily understood through the analogy with spatial limitation: I conceive of a limited space by adding the idea of limits to the idea of space as such, and space as such is infinite. I cannot reach the idea of infinite space by negating the idea of spatial limits, or by amplifying the idea of a small bounded region; on the contrary, the idea of bounds presupposes the idea of a space outside the bounds, and ultimately the idea of infinite space. Similarly, Descartes says, the idea of a being of limited perfection presupposes the idea of the perfections this being lacks, and ultimately the idea of infinite perfections. I cannot reach the idea of an infinite being by negating the idea of limits or amplifying the idea of a finite being, since I conceive of a finite being by adding the idea of limits to the idea of being as such, and being as such is infinite. . . . So when I first conceive of myself, if I am aware of my defects, I presuppose a concept of an infinite standard of perfection; if I am not aware of my defects, this is because I have not yet distinguished a proper concept of myself from my prior concept of an infinite being.[85]

Introducing Kant back into the equation, we might put the parallel like this: just as Kant's argument for space seeks to show that all finite regions of space are parts of one unbounded space, Descartes's argument for God seeks to show that all finite regions of being are parts of one unbounded being. But Kant's argument for space is not meant to possess the sort of ontological import to which Descartes's argument for the existence of God aspires. It is not an argument for the necessary existence of another material being in addition to ordinary beings—one possessed of greater power and degree of independence than that possessed by the objects we encounter through outer sense. Space, for Kant, is not a super-object upon which the existence of other material objects exist. The argument for space is an argument regarding what the *form* of our outer sensible representation must be in order for us to be able to enjoy representations of outer things—things such that we are able to represent each of them as *actually here* at one moment, as *actually there* at the next, and (so long as it *is* at all) as *necessarily somewhere* at every moment.

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[85] Menn, *Descartes and Augustine,* 284.

The form in question is a condition of the possibility of an aspect of our *finite* cognitive capacity—a capacity such that objects must be given to it from without in order for it to be able to know anything. It is a conclusion about the conditions of the possibility of such a cognitive capacity arrived at through immanent reflection on the part of a bearer of such a capacity. It is therefore not an argument that can equip us with any conclusions about the nature of an infinite knower. The conclusion of Descartes's argument is meant to possess ontological import. It, like Kant's argument, is a conclusion about what the conditions of the possibility of our cognitive capacity must be. It, too, is arrived at through reflection on the part of the bearer of such a capacity. But not all of the stations traversed in the arc of that reflection remain merely immanent. It is not reflection that is strictly *transcendental* on the Kantian understanding of that term. The Cartesian arc requires a putatively necessary reflective ascension to a *transcendent* apex in order to ground the possibility of a finite knower. For Descartes, unlike for Kant, I can make sense of the "I" that thinks and knows—and hence of the very character of the activity in which I engage when I think and know—only if I have recourse to the idea of a being whose activity and nature is maximally unlike my own. What is involved in the task of thinking the idea of a being whose nature is maximally unlike my own in the way that Descartes here requires of us? We might call this the problem of *the ontological alien*. Is it possible to think the idea of the ontological alien through recourse to a form of thought that is in no way logically alien?

This brings us to the question at the center of A. W. Moore's contribution to this volume: what is the relation between Descartes's conception of modality and his various attempts to elucidate the idea of the infinite? In particular, what are the implications of his elucidation of that idea for what we may say can or cannot be brought about God? A. W. Moore thinks that Descartes ought to have said "God cannot do X" for all sorts of possible values of X. Indeed, this is how the chapter on Descartes in Moore's book *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics* begins:

> René Descartes (1596–1650) held that some truths are beyond doubt. Among these he held that some are necessary, in a sense robust enough to mean that not even God could have made them false.[86]

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[86] A. W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 25.

Descartes vehemently insists that we ought never to make a remark of the form "Not even He could have . . ." if our intention is to speak of God.[87] In his May 6, 1630, letter to Mersenne, he offers a diagnosis of how those who say such things come to be so mistaken:

> It is easy to be mistaken about this because most men do not regard God as an infinite and incomprehensible being, the sole author on whom all things depend; . . . Those who have no higher thoughts than these can easily become atheists; and because they perfectly comprehend mathematical truths and do not perfectly comprehend the truth of God's existence, it is no wonder that they do not think that the former depend on the latter. But they should rather judge on the contrary, that since God is a cause whose power surpasses the bounds of human understanding, and since the necessity of these truths does not exceed our knowledge, they must be something less than, and subject to, the incomprehensible power of God.[88]

Descartes's attempt to be charitable to philosophers who say such things lies in his diagnosis that they evidently have failed sufficiently to meditate on what it means to say that God is "an infinite and incomprehensible being" (so much so, indeed, that "they can easily become atheists"). This he thinks must be the cause of their mistakenly imagining there could be a single set of truths univocally applicable to that which we can perfectly comprehend (the necessity of mathematical truths) and to that which surpasses the bounds of our human understanding (an infinite and incomprehensible being). Moore, on the other hand, thinks that the charitable thing to do is to regard such passages (in which Descartes says that the necessity of arithmetical or logical truths "must be something less than, and subject to, the incomprehensible power of God") as lapses on the part of this particular philosopher. They are to be regarded as lapses on the putative ground that they conflict with (what Moore takes to be) this philosopher's own core conception of necessity and possibility:

> When we say that God could not make one plus two anything other than three, we do not describe any limitation on the part of God. At most we reveal something about our human concepts. Such, at any rate, seems to me the most robust and compelling account of these matters

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[87] As he puts it to Arnauld in his July 29, 1648, letter: "I do not think that we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God" (op. cit., Vol. III, 358).

[88] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 24–25.

that is in accord with Descartes' core conception of necessity and possibility.[89]

Before we can assess the merits of this response as an account of what Descartes should have said about God (which we will do in detail in the next section, in the reply to Moore), we need to be sure we are in a position to answer the following question: What is Descartes's "core" conception of necessity and possibility?

If what has been said above is along the right lines, then we already know this much about Descartes's conception of modality: if we want to give a "robust and compelling account" of what is possible for objects of ideas whose grade of reality is n, then we must arrive at a clear perception of the objects of ideas whose grade of reality is n + 1. More particularly, we have seen that if we want to know whether "our human concepts" are up to the task of grasping what is possible or necessary for finite substances (including what is possible or necessary for a finite thinker), then we must clarify for ourselves the idea of an ontological ground that contains more objective reality within itself than do our ideas of finite substances (including our ideas of finite thinkers and those concepts adequate to articulating what is possible for such beings).

Now how should we go about answering the question to which Moore claims he knows what Descartes's answer should be (if it is to be "in accord with Descartes' core conception of necessity and possibility")? Ought we to say "God could not make one plus two anything other than three"? Is it impossible for God to do this? Is such a creative act a *possible divine act*? The very form of such questions is such as to invite us to endeavor to shoehorn the object of the idea of God *within* the scope of a modal operator.[90] In order to answer questions of this putative form, according to Descartes, we would first need to avail ourselves of ideas that contain greater objective reality within themselves than our idea of God contains within itself. Or to put the same point slightly differently: in order to arrive at a clear and distinct idea of "what is and what is not possible for God," we need to have recourse to at least one idea that contains within itself a grade of reality of n + 1 where n = the grade of reality of the idea of infinite substance.

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[89] Moore, this volume, 106.

[90] To anticipate: I am going to agree with Lilli Alanen that by Descartes's lights "it is a mistake to seek for a modal theory applicable to God's act of creation as well as to the truths he created and eternally wills" (Alanen, "Omnipotence, Modality, and Conceivability," op. cit., 354).

We may now say what the aim is of Descartes's remarks about the creation of the eternal truths. It is to explore the full implications of what is involved in clarifying "a real and positive idea of God."[91] From Descartes's point of view, the theological rationalist (in his account of God's relation to the eternal truths) attempts what is, in effect, a move of the following form: to treat the eternal truths as if my ideas of them contained more objective reality within themselves than my idea of God contains within itself. Just as my idea of a finite substance has greater objective reality within itself than do any of my ideas of its possible modes (so that the ability to form a clear and distinct idea of the former is a condition of underwriting my clear and distinct ideas of the latter)—and just as my idea of an infinite being has greater objective reality within itself than does my idea of myself as finite (so that the ability to form a clear and distinct idea of God is a condition of underwriting the clear and distinct ideas available to my finite power of reason)—so too the rationalist (Descartes thinks) is implicitly committed to the following: the eternal truths contain greater objective reality with themselves than my idea of God contains within itself. They contain greater objective reality in the following sense: my clear and distinct conception of what is possible and necessary articulates prior conditions on my conception of what is (and what is not) so much as possible (or necessary) for God.

If one thinks that this could be how one's understanding of the eternal truths stands to one's idea of God, then—according to Descartes—this suffices to show that one has failed sufficiently to clarify one's idea of God. It shows that what here is called "the idea of God" is in no way the idea of the infinite. It is not the idea of a being of illimitable and maximal objective reality. For Descartes, to think that the theological rationalist's idea of "God" could be an idea of the infinite is to fail to appreciate the following: there can be no idea X that stands to the idea of the infinite in the relation required by the rationalist. Given that I require a prior grasp of ontologically higher-order ideas of category X that range over ontologically lower-order ideas of category Y in order to be able to say what is and is not possible for the object of idea Y, this already suffices for Descartes to show that whatever it is that the logically subordinate idea Y may be taken to represent in a schema of the aforementioned form, it cannot be God.

The rationalist account becomes even more nonsensical, from the Cartesian point of view, if it is further maintained that X in the above

schema stands for a concept that applies univocally to God and to finite substances. Any such employment of a concept would involve what we might call *Cartesian ontological cross-category equivocation*.[92] Any modal operator within whose scope a judgable content about finite substances can occur is not an operator that can be non-equivocally employed to embed a claim about the modal limits of divine power.[93] As we shall see below, the only modal concepts with objectively real content for Descartes are those within whose scope claims about created substances or their modes occur.[94] Hence the modal concepts that Moore

[92] For a thorough treatment of this topic, see Jean-Luc Marion, *Sur la Theologie Blanche de Descartes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981). That book is concerned to argue not only that Descartes holds that a systematic lack of univocity obtains among certain predicates insofar as they apply to God and to His creatures, but also that an appreciation of this point is crucial for a proper understanding of Descartes's doctrine of the creation of the eternal truths.

[93] There are, of course, ideas—intelligence, knowledge, power, will, etc.—that Descartes will employ in elucidating the idea of the infinite that involve terms that are also used in connection with finite thinking substances. But he is adamant that in their application to God—if, for example, we say He is supremely intelligent or supremely powerful—we must appreciate what it means that each such idea contains an infinite grade of objective reality within itself. If we fail to do this—and take such an idea to apply perfectly univocally to the finite and the infinite (so that the difference between His intelligence and ours may be conceived as a mere difference in degree)—then we have committed another version of the same mistake that Descartes thinks the theological rationalist makes about the eternal truths. There is no term that can be univocally predicated of both infinite and finite substance—not even that of "substance" itself: "[T]he term 'substance' does not apply *univocally* . . . to God and to other things; that is, there is no distinctly intelligible meaning of the term which is common to God and his creatures" (emphasis in the original) (*Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 210; for a generalization of the point about the non-univocity of terms across God and his creatures, see Vol. II, 252). The frequent failure to see what is here for Descartes far and away the single most significant difference in ontological category—and hence the failure to master the logical grammar of (what for Descartes is) the most fundamental idea for arriving at philosophical insight (the idea of the infinite)—has numerous other deleterious exegetical consequences (apart from the topic of the creation of the eternal truths). Not least among these is the following: what is a difference in essential natures that (for Descartes) is philosophically comparatively insignificant (not without significance, of course: mind and body are essentially distinct) is accorded utterly the wrong degree of weight in most interpretations of his work—as if it were for him the most profound difference in metaphysical category there could be. In this respect, things are just as Descartes anticipates: if we fail to clarify properly our idea of the infinite, then we will be left in a state of irremediable philosophical puzzlement regarding the relation of mind to body. For we will lack (what he thinks is) the essential idea required to bridge the (comparatively insignificant) divide between two kinds of substance within the same ontological category—that is, partaking of the same grade of being.

[94] I introduce the term "created" into this formulation to indicate an issue that will occupy us below. I remarked in a previous note that Descartes's conception (of the relation of the infinite to the finite) bears the stamp of one aspect of Avicenna's philosophical revolution: the finite is created by the infinite not out of some pre-existing matter, but rather ex

seeks to illuminate in the passage quoted above—those that display the logical shape of our human concepts in their application to finite substances—are, by Descartes's lights, not even candidates for concepts of the right logical shape to figure in sentences in which we seek to engage in the delicate business of speaking of the infinite.

If the foregoing is right, then this shows that the following are not two distinct interpretative tasks:

 (i) arriving at a proper understanding of what Descartes means (in a work such as the *Meditations*) when he says that my idea of God has more objective reality within itself than any of my other ideas

(ii) arriving at a proper understanding of why Descartes thinks he must reject a rationalist account of the creation of the eternal truths, according to which the eternal truths articulate what is and what is not possible even for an infinite being

From the point of view of the account offered in the *Third Meditation,* the rationalist account of the creation of the eternal truths, in effect, confers *greater objective reality* upon my conception of possibility than upon my conception of the infinite, thereby threatening the entire dialectical strategy of both Descartes's *Meditations* and his *Principles of Philosophy*.

By Descartes's lights, it is actually the theological rationalist, in his haste to say something that sounds quite reasonable about God, who ends up speaking theological nonsense. It is nonsense born of a premature eagerness to make sense. For even the rationalist must concede that the logical subject of a question of the form "Could God create X?" is supposed to be the sort of being without whom there would be nothing—one whose nature is immeasurably greater than my own and upon whose mine is essentially dependent. The theological rationalist—by Descartes's lights—in the end fails to respect what he thereby at the outset concedes, as soon as he attempts to deliver an answer to a question of the above form.

The very intelligibility, Descartes thinks, of our own idea of our selves—as limited, imperfect, essentially dependent beings—presupposes

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nihilo—there are no actual cases of finite substance prior to creation. The difference between Avicenna and Descartes, however, is now starting to come into focus: for Descartes there are no *merely possible finite existents* prior to creation either. For Descartes, it is no less theologically oxymoronic to speak of the possible things that there are ("qua mere possible existents") prior to creation as it is to speak of the actual things that there are prior to creation.

an idea of a being free of all limitation, imperfection, and dependence on anything independent of itself. Descartes thinks that a proper understanding of this point entails that certain of his philosophical predecessors "in the Schools" were right about at least this much: a proper recognition of what it means to think such thoughts—really to think that He is positively free of any mark of finitude—leaves us with a difficulty about how to talk about God. On the one hand, the very ideas that we cannot help but draw on in the comprehension of our selves (limitation, imperfection, essential dependence) are conceptually posterior to the ideas of illimitability, perfection, and absolute independence that figure in the apprehension of such a being. On the other hand, for Descartes, this should not be taken to imply that the words that here recur, across their respective applications to our selves and to Him, bear a univocal sense. The sense that they must bear, if they are to elucidate the nature of the infinite, must be of a sort that they cannot bear in the characterization of the nature of finite substance.[95] The moral Descartes draws from this, however, is arguably more radical than that drawn by most of his scholastic predecessors who concurred with him that we cannot speak univocally of God and His creatures. When it comes to a topic such as the creation of the eternal truths, Descartes holds, in effect, the following: if we start with a question of the form "Can X do φ?" (where X = any finite creature), the moment we attempt to substitute the idea of the infinite into the argument place of X, we end up with a statement that is not false but rather *theological nonsense*. And, conversely: if we take a statement that has the right logical shape to be something we ought to say about His power or activity and try to say such a thing about ourselves, then that will yield *logical nonsense*. As we shall see below, this places Descartes in the awkward position—as he is all too painfully aware—of being the party to the debate about the creation of the eternal truths whose remarks are apt to appear to be the least reasonable.

Let us now to turn to the passages on which Conant attempts to rest his reading, starting with the following notorious set of remarks from Descartes's letter to Mesland of May 2, 1644:

> I turn to the difficulty of conceiving how God would have been acting freely and indifferently if he had made it false . . . in general that

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[95] This is how Aquinas puts the point: "Because perfections flowing from God to creatures exist in a higher state in God Himself, whenever a name taken from any created perfection is attributed to God, it must be separated in its signification from anything that belongs to that imperfect mode proper to creatures" (*Summa Theologica,* op. cit., I, Q. 14, Art. 1., Resp. 1).

contradictories could not be true together. It is easy to dispel this difficulty by considering that the power of God cannot have any limits, and that our mind is finite and so created as to be able to conceive as possible the things which God has wished to be in fact possible, but not be able to conceive as possible things which God could have made possible, but which he has nevertheless wished to make impossible. The first consideration shows us that God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore that he could have done the opposite. The second consideration assures us that even if this be true, we should not try to comprehend it, since our nature is incapable of doing so.[96]

Conant reads the first of the considerations in the concluding part of this passage as if it simply expressed a straightforward endorsement of the following thesis: "God could have made it the case that contradictories be true together." Let us notice two tricks Conant subtly performs in order to yield the impression that this is a sound reading of the passage. First, his reading of (1) has Descartes giving a clear and definite answer to our above question (Could God have made a pair of contradictories true together?). Second, Conant drives through a double negation, taking the two negation operators in question to cancel out in order to yield a definite and positive answer to the question about what God could have done.

Let us now look back at the Descartes passage. In connection with the first consideration, what Descartes actually says is considerably more qualified and nuanced than Conant's reading would suggest. This is what Descartes says:

> The first consideration shows us that God *cannot have been determined* to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore that He could have done the opposite.

Descartes does not answer our above question here; rather what he does is simply reject, wholesale, a certain *form of answer* to it—any form of

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[96] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 235. As indicated below, I find this to be the single hardest of Descartes's passages about the creation of the eternal truths to account for in an overall reading of his treatment of the topic—especially the final clause of this sentence: "The first consideration shows us that God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore that he could have done the opposite." I believe it is this passage—far more than the one from the letter to Arnauld on which Moore focuses—that originally misled Conant into thinking that Descartes must be concerned with endorsing some version of theological voluntarism.

answer that helps itself to the idea that God was determined to do what He did. According to Descartes, we must not say that God was determined to make things a certain way. (Thus we also must not say that God was determined to make things so that contradictories cannot be true together.) It is important to see that the topic here is the same as it was in the passages that we canvassed above. The following thoughts all belong together for Descartes: everything depends upon God; God is prior to everything; there is nothing that is prior to God; God cannot have been determined to do this or that; etc.[97] The outermost negation operator in the first consideration marks a rejection of a certain way of thinking about God—a way of thinking that Descartes thinks his contemporaries fall into all too easily and that he warns against over and over again, in countless passages, in a large variety of ways, and employing a wider variety of locutions. The subsequent negation operators (such as in the above statement of what the first consideration shows) occur within the frame of the example Descartes adduces—an example of the sort of thing we should not say about God (e.g., that He was determined to act in a certain way). If one drives the negation through here, as Conant does, then one misses what Descartes is up to in this passage. The verb-complement "to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together" figures as an example of the sort of thing about which we should not say "God was determined to act in this way," and not as an example of the sort of thing about which we should claim that "It was perfectly possible for God to do the opposite."

To say we should not say this sort of thing does not mean we should affirm the truth of the negation of the thing we should not say. Contrary to Conant's reading of the passage, Descartes makes no positive claim here about what God could have done instead of making it true that contradictories cannot be true together. He simply rejects any account of the necessity of the eternal truths that attempts to have recourse to a conception of what God was determined to do. He rejects any account of the necessity of the eternal truths (e.g., that contradictories cannot be true together) that attempts to ground their necessity in the idea that God

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[97] I am here agreeing with the following point of Kaufman's: Descartes's creation doctrine is not primarily a thesis about modality but rather about the dependence of everything, including the eternal truths, on God (see Kaufman, "Descartes's Creation Doctrine," 38). But Kaufman further specifies that it is primarily to be understood as a thesis about the dependence of everything on "God's independent and indifferent will." As I indicate below, this way of putting things needs careful handling if it is not to run afoul of Descartes's commitment to divine simplicity.

Himself could be bound by the necessity of such truths. To say that we should not attempt to ground their necessity in such an account is not to affirm the opposite account of their modal status (as Conant assumes)—according to which, in relation to God's creative activity, the eternal truths are to be regarded as having the modal status of being merely contingently true.

This still leaves us with a question about how to understand the final clause of the first consideration: "God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together, and therefore that he could have done the opposite." He *could* have done the opposite? How should this "could" be understood?[98] Conant thinks the only way to understand it is in terms of a commitment to theological voluntarism.[99] Moore does not try to understand this "could" but dismisses it as a lapse.[100] It is, indeed, a difficult passage to understand.[101] We will return to it at the end of this section.

The topic under discussion in the last paragraph, but one (namely, that we should not say God was determined to create things this way rather than that) is closely related to another topic that comes up in a number of Conant's favorite quotations from Descartes. This is the topic of whether we may say that God willed certain things necessarily. Descartes says we should not say this. Here again, Conant reads Descartes as if he

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[98] Janet Broughton goes so far as to say, "There is no good sense we can make of this 'could.'" See her "Necessity and Physical Laws in Descartes's Philosophy," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 68, no. 3–4 (Fall 1987): 208.

[99] It is Lilli Alanen who first convinced me that Conant's account of this "could" is unsatisfying. Indeed, she had already discussed how difficult it is to give a satisfying account of it in her 1985 essay "Descartes, Duns Scotus, and Ockham on Omnipotence and Possibility," *Franciscan Studies* 45 (1985): 157–188—see especially page 168—which Conant regrettably had not read.

[100] Moore does not comment on this passage. I am assuming that his proposal for how to read a similar passage (in a letter to Arnauld) is supposed to provide his template for how to read this passage (from a letter to Mesland) as well.

[101] As I indicated above, I find this particular sentence—and especially the occurrence here of the auxiliary verb "could"—in the letter to Mesland far harder to accommodate in a plausible reading of Descartes than any part of the remark in the letter to Arnauld that Moore himself singles out below as supposedly the greatest obstacle to such a reading. Indeed, I think the letter to Mesland provides the single best piece of apparent textual evidence in favor of the Leibnizian reading of Descartes that Conant endorses. Since I now think the Leibnizian/Conantian reading is wrong, this makes urgent the question of how best to interpret remarks such as these—ones that appear to invite a voluntaristic reading of the modality of the auxiliary verb—without construing them as advancing theological voluntarism. My own strategy for dealing with this problem will require attending to what becomes of conditionals such as this one as we climb the dialectical ladder in Descartes's treatment of the problem of the creation of the eternal truths.

were therefore claiming the opposite. But, here again, what Descartes actually says involves the same sort of nuance in formulation (to which, again, Conant attaches no significance):

> [E]ven if God has willed that some truths should be necessary, this does not mean that He has willed them necessarily; for it is one thing to will that they be necessary, and quite another to will this necessarily, or to be necessitated to will it.[102]

The idea that God wills some truths to be necessary figures here only in the antecedent of a conditional. The main point of the passage is to go on to clarify that even if we were to grant the antecedent of that conditional, it does not follow that we should therefore conclude that He has willed them necessarily. Conant does not read the example which figures in this passage as Descartes's merely displaying a case of the sort of thing that we should not say—in this case, "God willed the eternal truths necessarily." Conant reads it much more strongly: as an example of the sort of thing about which Descartes is concerned with recommending that we affirm its negation. Thus he reads it—as we shall see Conant do with regard to a number of other passages—as Descartes seeking to affirm the opposite of the thing that he wishes to warn us against saying. Conant therefore regards this passage as one in which Descartes encourages us to think that, in relation to God, it was a merely contingent matter that he willed these truths to be necessary. Conant takes this to mean that He could have willed other truths than these to be necessary. That is, Conant reads Descartes as taking the modalities of possibility and necessity to come apart here: he reads Descartes as taking up a position within the theological triangle. Just as what is actual on Leibniz's account of divine creation is determined only once God has acted, thereby conferring actuality upon some possible world; so, too, what is necessary on Conant's Descartes's voluntarist account of divine creation is determined only once God has acted (thereby conferring both necessity on some truths and actuality on some possibilities). On both these accounts, the idea of "what is possible for God" makes perfectly good sense prior to the determination of the contours of certain other modalities (the contours of what is actual, for Leibniz; the contours of what is necessary and what is actual, for Conant's Descartes). On Leibniz's account, the space of what is possible cannot be antecedent to what is necessary; on Conant's Descartes's account, it can. This difference is so arresting that it can lead one to

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[102] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 235.

overlook something that the two accounts have in common—namely, their both seeking to sever some of the modalities from others—regarding some modal concepts as sufficiently determinate in content (once having been severed from others) to characterize the modal space God inhabits prior to His creating anything, while insisting that the determinate content of yet further modal concepts comes to be in place only once God has accomplished the act of creation.

An even simpler example of such a passage with doubly nested negation operators (that Conant drives through in order to read as an affirmation) is the following:

> In general we can assert that God can do everything that is within our grasp but not that He cannot do what is beyond our grasp. It would be rash to think that our imagination reaches as far as his power.[103]

Descartes tells us here not to assert the following: God cannot do what is beyond our grasp. Conant reads this as Descartes saying that God *can* do various determinate acts of that which falls under the description of being "beyond our grasp" (e.g., make contradictories true together). Conant then encourages us to think that the point of the last sentence in the above quotation is to caution us against trying to comprehend that which we can merely apprehend in thought. I now think this misconstrues that last sentence. Contrary to the point of that sentence, Conant's Descartes's position does involve an attempt to allow our imagination to reach as far as His power. To truly heed Descartes's advice here—to scrupulously avoid permitting our imagination to try to reach as far as His power—requires that we assert neither (as Moore's Descartes does) that God *cannot* do what is beyond our grasp nor (as Conant's Descartes does) that God *can* do what is beyond our grasp.

Once we are made sensitive to the way in which these doubly nested negation operators figure in such passages in Descartes (with the outer negation taking what we ought to say or assert as its complement and the inner negation taking an eternal truth as its complement), we will start to notice the frequency with which this nuance in formulation recurs throughout his writings. The following passage is a particularly clear example:

> For my part, I know that my intellect is finite and God's power is infinite, and so I set no limits to it. . . . And so I boldly assert that God can do

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[103] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 23.

everything which I perceive to be possible, but I am not so bold as to as-sert the converse, namely that He cannot do what conflicts with my con-ception of things. I merely say that it involves a contradiction.[104]

Conant reads this as Descartes claiming God that *can* do what conflicts with my conception of things. I now suggest it should be read more cau-tiously, as his refusing to assert that God cannot. This is not to take a position about what it is determinately possible for God to do. It is a principled refusal to take a position on this topic. Since Moore attempts to get around the problems that such passages present by suggesting that they represent mere lapses on Descartes's part, it is important to realize how numerous such passages are (and therefore how unsatisfying this exegetical strategy is). Though Moore is right to be worried by Conant's reading of this passage, it is important to realize that they typically in-volve just this sort of nested series of negations in their formulation (and that they thus admit of a very different reading). Here again is another very clear example:

> I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth . . . depends on his om-nipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make a mountain without a valley, or bring it about that 1 and 2 are not 3. I merely say that He has given me such a mind that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley, or a sum of 1 and 2 which is not 3; such things in-volve a contradiction in my conception.[105]

Conant encourages us to read this as Descartes advancing the following thesis: any sentence we can formulate (even if it involves the negation of an eternal truth) expresses a genuinely possible state of affairs that God could have brought about. This yields a reading of Descartes on which he seems to occupy the voluntarist corner of the theological triangle. But upon closer examination, we can now see that the point of the passage may be understood to be far more limited—it is merely concerned with insisting that we should not say the sorts of things that the occupants of the other two corners of the triangle say.[106]

Conant reads Descartes as sharing with his interlocutors the generic idea that some of the modalities can have substantive application in

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[104] Ibid., 363.

[105] Ibid., 359.

[106] And, indeed (though this is not Descartes's immediate concern in those passages), that we should also not say what the occupant of the voluntarist corner of the triangle says.

theological theorizing prior to others. He takes the specific difference between Descartes and the others to lie simply in which modalities may come apart from which other ones as well as which modalities are to be regarded as prior and which as posterior to the act of divine creation. Do possibility and necessity go together with both being prior to actuality (which requires creation)? Or do necessity and actuality go together (both requiring creation) so that it is only possibility (in the capacious sense of what is possible for God) that is prior to both?

Conant takes a passage such as the following to show that Descartes thinks that what is necessary is subject to God's will in such a way that Descartes must be understood to be a proponent of theological voluntarism:

> [S]ince God is a cause whose power surpasses the bounds of human understanding, and since the necessity of these truths does not exceed our knowledge, these truths are something less than, and subject to, the incomprehensible power of God.[107]

If everything is subject to God—if, but for God (and His creative activity), there would be nothing—then, in some sense, it must be right to say (as Descartes does here) that the necessity of these truths are "subject to God." But the question is, What does this mean? Conant, in his reading of Descartes, understands this in a very particular way: he takes what is necessary to be subject to God in a way that what is possible is not. He thus takes the idea of what God possibly could have willed to be prior to what God determinately does will—thereby also taking the idea of God's will to have some genuine determinate modal content prior to the act of divine creation. This introduces an explanatory priority not only between the modalities but also between the divine faculties.

It is worth pausing to register how much difficulty a reading such as Conant's will have in making sense of Descartes's remarks about the nature of divine simplicity. The following passage is perhaps his most succinct summary of this region of his thought: "In God willing and knowing are a single thing."[108] Contrast this with what Leibniz says: "It is, in my judgment, the divine understanding which gives reality to these [the eternal] truths."[109] Leibniz takes Descartes to hold that, in God, willing is

[107] Ibid., 25.
[108] Descartes, *Oeuvres de Descartes,* vols. I–XII, eds. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1996), vol. I, 149; Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 24.
[109] Leibniz, *Theodicy,* sect. 184.

prior to understanding; Leibniz is very clear that he takes this to be exactly backward. What I want to suggest now is that Descartes's doctrine of divine simplicity[110], properly explicated, cuts equally against the position (regarding the relative logical priority of the divine faculties) that Leibniz here seeks to affirm and the one that he seeks to deny.[111] Descartes equally rejects any version of theological rationalism (be it Avicenna's or—*avant là lettre*—Leibniz's) without thereby affirming any of the forms of theological voluntarism commonly attributed to him (including the version of it that Conant attributes to him).

The following passage brings to particularly clear expression Descartes's refusal to apportion different degrees of logical priority to the divine faculties in relation to God's act of creation:

> [F]rom eternity he willed and understood them [i.e., the eternal truths] to be, and by that very fact he created them. . . . In God, willing, understanding and creating are the same thing without one being prior to the other even conceptually.[112]

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[110] I have in mind here this doctrine: "[T]he unity, the simplicity, or the inseparability of all of the attributes of God is one of the most important of the perfections which I understand him to have" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 34).

[111] By "Descartes's doctrine of divine simplicity" I mean the doctrine that figures, for example in the *Third Meditation*, when—in response to the objection that the meditator's various ideas of divine perfections might each severally owe its origin to something of a higher degree of reality than the meditator himself, but this does not suffice to show that they jointly owe their origin to some one common cause, namely God—the meditator lays it down that a conception of the unity (i.e. the necessary belonging together and hence merely notional separability) of God's perfections is itself essential to a clear and distinct idea of God. Spinoza, in his characteristically sharp way, detects a problem in this step of the meditator's argument. His alternative conception of divine simplicity is a considerable improvement on Descartes's own. (For a penetrating discussion of this topic, see P. T. Geach, "Spinoza and the Divine Attributes" (*Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 5 (1971): 15–27).) Spinoza is therefore arguably in a far better position to make the sort of argument against someone like Leibniz that I am here suggesting Descartes would have wanted to make than Descartes himself was. What matters for my present purposes, however—in my dispute with Moore over the logical character, as it were, of Descartes's idea of God—is not whether Descartes has managed perfectly to marshal all of the philosophical resources required to mount an adequate response to Leibniz, but rather simply the extent to which the very shape of Descartes's view differs from that of Leibniz.

[112] *Oeuvres de Descartes,* Vol. I, 152–153; *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 25–26. There are some passages such as the following where Descartes does appear to give God's *will* just the sort of foundational role that the voluntarist reading accords it. Consider, for example, the following passage:

> As for the freedom of the will, the way in which it exists in God is quite different from the way in which it exists in us. It is self-contradictory to suppose that the will of God was not indifferent from eternity with respect to everything which has happened or will ever

If in God, willing, understanding, and creating are the same thing without one being prior to the other even conceptually, then it makes no sense to hold either with Leibniz that, in Him, understanding is prior (that is, prior to willing—where both understanding and willing are prior to creation,) or with Leibniz's and Conant's Descartes that, in Him, willing is prior (that is, prior both to creation and to what there is to understand). Moreover, if in God, willing, understanding, and creating are the same thing,

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happen because it is impossible to imagine that anything is thought of in the divine intellect as good or true, or worthy of belief or action or omission, prior to the decision of the divine will to make it so. I am not speaking here of temporal priority: I mean that there is not even any priority of order, or nature, or of 'rationally determined reason' . . . as they call it, such that God's idea of the good impelled him to choose one thing rather than another. For example, God did not will . . . that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles because he recognized that it could not be otherwise, and so on. On the contrary, . . . it is because he willed that the three angles of a triangle should necessarily equal two right angles that this is true and cannot be otherwise. . . . Thus, the supreme indifference to be found in God is the supreme indication of his omnipotence. (*Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 291–292)

This passage is of interest for a variety of reasons. (We will return to it when we turn to the question of idolatry and the incomparability for Descartes of divine to human agency.) Our present question is how to understand this passage's idea of supreme indifference. (Kaufman, op. cit., has some interesting things to say about this.) Conant would seize on this passage as evidence that his reading must be right. But I now think that the key to reading a passage such as this requires a full appreciation of the extent to which for Descartes any talk about what God "wills," "could have done," and so on, requires at every point a non-univocal construal of the meanings of such expressions across their respective applications to finite and infinite substance. Hence it requires giving due weight to the passage's opening sentence: "As for the freedom of the will, the way in which it exists in God is quite different from the way in which it exists in us." What is at issue here is a concept of willing (and of a related concept of freedom) of a sort that has a fundamentally different character from any that properly applies to a finite being—and thus to any concept of willing of which we have a fully determinate grasp. Commenting on this passage, David Cunning offers the following astute observation: "For Descartes, divine freedom is not a two-way power" ("The First Meditation: Divine Omnipotence, Necessary Truths and the Possibility of Radical Deception," in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations,* ed. D. Cunning [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 77). A proper appreciation of this point ought to be able to yield a reading of this passage that does not deny the conclusion of the passage to which this footnote is appended—namely: "In God, willing, understanding, and creating are the same thing without one being prior to the other even conceptually." This means that talk of God's "will" in connection with how things are prior to His creative activity cannot be identified with the conceptually far more determinate notion of "willing" that presupposes a contrast between willing, understanding, and creating (and the related modalities). This is related to a question that we will take up at the end of this section: how talk of what God "could" have done prior to His creative activity must not be identified with the far more logically robust and determinate notion of "could" that presupposes a contrast between possibility, necessity, and actuality.

without one being prior to the other even conceptually, then so, too, are possibility, necessity, and actuality.

Conant's reading of Descartes takes a wrong turn at both of these interrelated junctures: both where Conant introduces an explanatory priority among the modalities (what is possible for God being prior to what is necessary) and where he introduces one among the divine faculties (God's willing being prior to His understanding). If we give the right weight to the effaced nuances in the various passages adduced above, Descartes can come into view as being concerned in these passages with rejecting all such accounts on the same grounds—with rejecting all attempts to parcel the modalities (and the putatively correlative divine faculties) up into those which are logically prior and logically posterior to the act of creation—and hence with rejecting all accounts that seek to embed descriptions of God's creative activity within some modal operators, while restricting the application of other modal operators to what is on the scene only once God's creation is in place.[113]

On this reading of Descartes, the modalities come together as a package, and all of them come to have application at one and the same time through the creation—that is, only once God has created the sorts of beings that have their life within these modalities: only then does talk of what is possible, necessary, and actual make sense. Prior to God's creative activity, such talk has no application: talk of what God could possibly will prior to His having created anything (à la theological voluntarism) is just as misguided for Descartes as talk of what God must understand prior to His having willed anything (à la Leibnizian theological logicism).

We saw in Section IV that the new metaphysics (and its way of understanding the contrast between concepts such as "existence" and "essence") grows out of an effort to make as literal sense as possible of the scriptural idea that God's act of bringing forth the world proceeds ex nihilo. In the beginning, there is nothing; then God creates. We saw that this required a new form of cause—namely, divine creation. We can now see Descartes as responding to the leading theorists of this new concept of causation in the following terms: "What you propose is not really creation

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[113] Once the creation is in place—and, along with it, the contours of the modalities—then we can speak of what is possible and what is not and, correlatively, what—in the light of what we know of the creation—God could and could not have done. Claims about what is and is not possible for God to have done in the light of an understanding of His creation is philosophically unproblematic, inasmuch as it does not take the contours of what is possible (or necessary) to be independent of an understanding of what is actual.

ex nihilo, though you profess it to be. If prior to God there is nothing, then you should not speak as you do of what is possible or what is necessary prior to God's act of creation: nothing means nothing."

What we are trying to do when we seek to give such accounts of what is possible or necessary for God prior to creation, according to Descartes, is to grasp something that we cannot grasp: we are trying to confer a determinate and semi-comprehensible character upon the nothing. Conant makes much use of the many passages in which Descartes spells out his conception of the infinitude of God as that which we can touch in thought but not grasp in thought.[114] But I now think he misrepresents the manner in which those passages bear on the problem of the creation of the eternal truths. Conant reads those passages as speaking to our inability to grasp the various determinate things that (the theological voluntarist holds) God could have done but does not do. Conant takes Descartes to be out to settle the peculiar counterfactual question at the heart of the theological debate ("Could God have made a pair of contradictories true together?"). That is, Conant reads Descartes as being just as willing as his contemporaries to treat a question of this form as one that can be taken up by us and answered. This allows Conant to construe the bearing of the various passages in Descartes about the infinitude of God as meditations on the topic of the peculiarity of the sort of thought-content we apprehend in entertaining a putatively Cartesian answer to the peculiar theological counterfactual question. The finer details of Conant's interpretation of Descartes's remarks about how we cannot grasp God's nature turn crucially on this exegetical assumption: that Descartes should be read as seeking to answer such a question with a yes rather than a no.

I now think think that this mistakes the place of the remarks about the incomprehensibility of God in the overall dialectic. These remarks seek to bring out how questions that we may ask about a finite being (for example, what is and is not within his power) are not questions we may sensibly ask about God. By the lights of this reading, to claim—as Conant's Descartes does—that it would have been possible for God to have determinately brought about a state of affairs that cannot be grasped by us (e.g., a state of affairs in which a pair of contradictories are true together) and that can be grasped only via a logically alien mode of thought is to make illegitimate use of the concept of possibility. It is to imagine that we can comprehend the infinitude of God through the modal

114 See Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 40.

concepts we employ to grasp the powers of a finite being—such as the power to think determinately about what is possible in the light of what we know to be actual. Such a criticism of theological voluntarism cuts much deeper than Leibniz's. Leibniz's complaint is that the voluntarist seeks to give an account of what it is possible (and thus what it is possible for God to do) apart from an account of what is necessary (and thus of what God, through his understanding, recognizes as necessary). Descartes's complaint tells equally against Leibniz's position and its voluntarist counterpart: they both seek, in their accounts of God's creative activity, to have recourse to modal concepts.

I therefore am now able to see the passages about the incomprehensibility of the infinite as cutting in a very different way than Conant suggests. The correct way to bring the upshot of those remarks (about the incomprehensibilty of God) to bear on the question of the creation of the eternal truths is simply to conclude the following: we cannot claim that God could have made contradictories true together, and we cannot claim He could not have done this. More generally, what they suggest is simply that, for any X, we should not say "God could have done such and such"; nor should we say "God could not have done such and such," if the "could" in question is to bear the modal significance of "such and such is possible."[115]

To hold this is therefore not merely to reject the voluntarist corner of the theological triangle, but to do so on grounds that equally tell against the other two corners. The ground of the rejection, therefore, is one that, if properly thought through, must lead to a rejection of the triangle in its entirety. All three positions within the triangle seek to give a modally substantive account of what God can and cannot do. The realist account grounds its answer in a modal reality to which even God is accountable; this places limits on what God can will. The voluntarist answer reverses that relation (between what grounds and what is grounded in God's creative activity), so that everything falls within the scope of God's will but at the cost of massively expanding the contours of possibility in such a way as to undercut the idea that anything is necessary tout court. The theological-logicist account seeks an answer to the question that retains an element of each of the other two answers. It wants to agree with the realist that there are limits to what God can will but seeks to find a way to grant the voluntarist's thought that there is nothing external or prior

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[115] As we shall see in a moment, I am here disagreeing with a certain feature of Kaufman's reading.

to God Himself. In the reading just sketched, Descartes strikes at a presupposition shared by all three of these parties to this debate.

What does it mean to strike at this presupposition? And how does this bear on the logical triangle that parallels the theological one? It might help to bring out how this reading of Descartes will anticipate issues that will be of concern later in these replies if we contrast it with that of Dan Kaufman—the Descartes scholar whose reading of the relevant passages from Descartes has perhaps the most affinities with the one on offer here. The contrast in question is meant to bring out the sense in which it would not be a stretch to refer to the reading of Descartes on the creation of the eternal truths proposed here as a resolute reading.

Let us return to our previously postponed question about how to understand the final clause of the first consideration in Descartes's famous letter to Mesland on May 2, 1644. Descartes there not only said that "God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together"; he also seemed to draw from it a further conclusion, namely, "He *therefore* could have done the opposite." This remark appears to be the consequent of a conditional. An observation about the priority of God (i.e., about how God cannot have been determined to make it true that contradictories cannot be true together) figures as the antecedent of that conditional; and a conclusion about what God could do (about how he could have done the opposite of making it true that contradictories cannot be true together) figures as its consequent. There are two questions I would like to focus on in connection with this apparent conditional. First, there is the one we postponed until now: What does it mean to say, "God *could* have done the opposite"? How is this "could" to be understood? Second, what is the dialectical role of this conditional within Descartes's larger path of reflection? Are we supposed to be able to detach its consequent and affirm what it says?

With respect to the first question, Conant thinks the only way to understand the "could" here is in terms of a commitment to theological voluntarism. And Moore does not try to understand it but dismisses all remarks in which it figures as lapses. It is, indeed, a difficult "could" to understand. Kaufman concludes that what we should say is that there is a sense in which it is true to say that, for any eternal truth p, God could have willed not-p, but it is not true to say that not-p is possible.[116] Kaufman thereby seeks to introduce a sense of "could" (in connection with talk about what God "could" do) that has a wider scope than talk

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[116] See Kaufman, "Descartes's Creation Doctrine," 26.

about what is possible. Talk about what God "could" (in this special sense of "could") do should not be taken to imply possibility. Kaufman attempts to work out what he takes Descartes to be committed to in wishing to carve out such a space for a premodal sense of "could."[117]

It is interesting to see how Kaufman's reading here lies somewhere on a spectrum between Conant's and mine. My reading and Kaufman's have this in common: Kaufman's ways of giving sense to talk about what God "could" do in willing not-*p* to be the case at no point entail a positive claim about the possibility of not-*p* considered apart from what God has willed. In short, Kaufman seeks to find a way for Descartes to give an answer to the question that underlies the theological triangle that has him saying things that sound a great deal like some things the theological voluntarist would say (regarding what God "could" have done), while seeking to confer a sense upon those things that blocks them from having the consequence that the necessity of the eternal truths is thereby threatened. In this respect, Kaufman's reading is like mine and very far from Conant's.

Conant's and Kaufman's reading, nevertheless, have this much in common: they both seek to detach the consequent of the above conditional. Conant does so in a way that involves a voluntaristic reading of the consequent and undercuts the necessity of the eternal truths. Kaufman does so in a way that works hard to avoid that consequence. But they both take something to follow from the conditional. I recommend, instead, a reading on which *nothing* follows here.[118] This still leaves considerable

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[117] It involves Kaufman in ascribing theses such as the following to Descartes: "For any eternal truth P, it is not the case that there were any independent factors preventing God from willing not-P or impelling Him to will P" (ibid., 38).

[118] In particular, nothing determinate follows (that we are positively able to grasp) regarding what God could have done in creating things to be radically other than they are. So I agree with Kaufman that when Descartes speaks of what God "could" have done prior to His having created anything, this should not be taken to license any claims about what would have been possible. But I am dubious that it can even license the weaker theses that Kaufman wants to ascribe to Descartes, at least in the spirit in which Kaufman seems to want to understand them—that is, if such remarks are to be understood as something more than mere elucidations of the ungraspable nature of an infinite being. Kaufman sometimes seems to regard them as fully comprehensible theses explicating His nature, and hence as theses standing in logical relations of incompatibility with those that represent each of the three corners of the theological triangle. I think this misses the radicality of Descartes's intervention in the debate. So the question becomes: How should one understand a remark such as the one from Kaufman quoted in the previous footnote? What, by Descartes's lights, should our final view of such a remark be? If it is to represent an alternative answer to the question that animates the theological debate—hence, something theologically more weight-bearing than a dialectical move in a train of thought that leads to a wholesale rejection of

room for a sort of nominal agreement between my reading and that of Kaufman on any number of points. We both will insist on points such as the following: if God's power is without limit, then there cannot be anything which is prior to Him. God's creation bears equally on *all* the modalities. Neither possibility nor necessity is prior to God; they stand and fall together. But Kaufman's way of understanding these points is such that they entail the falsity of various positions within the theological triangle. For Kaufman, the correct reading of Descartes's letter to Mesland is supposed to show that various theses are false.[119] From their falsity, moreover, he takes Descartes to derive further consequences that enable him to arrive at something he regards as a correct theory of divine creation. On his reading, Descartes is still trying to answer the underlying question that gives rise to the triangle—in effect turning it into a rectangle.

It is on this point that his reading and mine diverge most sharply. The reading I recommend is not one according to which the theological polygon should be expanded from having n sides to having n + 1. It is one according to which a conditional of the sort which figures in the letter to Mesland forms a rung on a dialectical ladder that we are to climb up and throw away. We are not, at the end of the day, supposed to detach the consequent of such a conditional and put our full weight on it, asserting what it allegedly claims. Rather, in coming fully to appreciate the emptiness of the antecedent—in coming to see that no sense is to be made of the idea of God that could have been determined to do such and such—we also come to appreciate the emptiness of any apparent consequence that might appear to flow from such an idea. Unlike Kaufman, therefore, I do not regard the conditional in Descartes's letter of Mesland as itself forming a weight-bearing moment in some larger argument in favor of an alternative, robust account of how we are to conceive of the nature of divine creation. Rather, I take Descartes to reject the possibility of any such account—and, indeed, to reject the very question that forms the basis of the entire theological debate into which he here seeks to intervene. Rather than taking Descartes to have his own idiosyncratic account of the creation of eternal truths, as Conant and Kaufman both do, I read

the theological triangle—then I worry Kaufman's reading is still trying to employ the conceptual resources available to us that come only with God's act of creation to grasp how things are apart from and prior to God's act of creation.

[119] Kaufman is mostly concerned with theses that represent some specification of a voluntarist position. He distinguishes two such theses: LP (limited possibilism) and UP (universal possibilism).

him as seeking to show us why this is not something about which we can—or ought to want to—have a theory. Descartes says,

> I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth . . . depends on his omnipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make a mountain without a valley, or bring it about that 1 and 2 are not 3. I merely say that He has given me such a mind that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley, or a sum of 1 and 2 which is not 3; such things involve a contradiction in my conception.[120]

When it comes to passages such as this, Conant—in the manner that we have traced out above—drives the negation through and allows himself to conclude from Descartes's report that he would not dare say that God could not do these things that *therefore* He could do them in some interestingly specifiable sense of "could." I am now suggesting that this is Conant's crucial misstep. The mistake is to attempt to say what follows (about what God can do) from the things that Descartes says we should not say (about what God cannot do). And this is the crucial common denominator of Conant's and Kaufman's readings to which I am presently trying to draw attention. They both try to say what follows here.

Conant employs the last part of the above quotation to set up the Cartesian voluntarist about logic to play the role of a fall guy, first for Kant, then for Frege, and then for Wittgenstein. I am now suggesting that he would have done better looking for the connection between Descartes and Wittgenstein in the first part of this quotation, where Descartes says, "I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God." I am now no longer inclined to read this remark (as Conant does), as it were, irresolutely. Descartes speaks here only of what we should not say (about what God cannot do). *Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.*

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[120] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 359.

Reply to Moore: Descartes
on the Relation of the Possible
to the Actual

Moore's reply to Conant takes the form of an exercise to distinguish, from among the many things that Descartes actually says, between those things that he ought to think and those that he ought not to think:

> It seems to me that, given various things that Descartes thinks about necessity and possibility, there are various other things that he ought to think about them but does not or ought not to think about them but does. My aim is to disentangle these.[1]

Most of the passages quoted in the preceding section of this volume will turn out to be ones in which Descartes is concerned with saying things that, on Moore's reading of him, Descartes ought not to think. We will look at Moore's treatment of a representative example of such a passage in a moment.

For the present, let us simply note the following: from Moore's point of view, my reading of Descartes continues to have this deplorable feature in common with Conant's: Conant and I are both committed to regarding passages in which Descartes says things that, according to Moore, he ought not to think as crucial for an understanding of his philosophy. So there is some broad methodological sense in which I con-

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[1] Moore, this volume, 102.

tinue to side much more closely with Conant than with Moore about how to approach Descartes. I continue to think that something of philosophical interest is happening in Descartes's remarks about the creation of the eternal truths—and that we do well to try to understand these remarks and not merely dismiss them.[2]

One reason Moore thinks the remarks in question must be lapses is that he thinks there are other remarks where Descartes straightforwardly contradicts what he says in the allegedly dubious remarks. Moore takes the following remark to be an especially straightforward example of this:

> I have never judged that something could not be made by [God] *except* on the grounds that there would be a contradiction in my perceiving it distinctly.[3]

I have italicized the "except" here because the way it is positioned in this translation may give rise to the impression that Descartes is saying just what Moore wants him to. Thus translated and taken out of context, this passage can perhaps seem to say what Moore needs Descartes somewhere to say—namely, something roughly along the following lines: "If there is a contradiction in my conception of something, then that shows that it is something that God cannot do." We have already canvased many passages above that show that Descartes thinks that this is something we should not ever dare to say about God in such an unqualified manner. This gives us reason to pause over the string of words that Moore quotes out of context here and to make sure that we have understood their dialectical position within Descartes's text.

The original Latin version of the quoted bit of the remark is rather tricky to parse, let alone to translate into non-tortured English. The bit Moore quotes here figures in Descartes's original as part of a longer sentence. The lines that precede this remark (and belong to the same sentence) clarify what the topic here is. The whole sentence reads in the original as follows:

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[2] Like most world-historically significant moments in the history of philosophy—this holds no less of Kant and Wittgenstein than it does of Descartes—to say that it is generally recognized to be significant, that it is widely discussed, and that it crucially shapes the subsequent course of the history of philosophy is not say that the moment in question is generally well understood. If that was the case for such moments in the history of philosophy, then there would be nothing for the essays in this volume to be about.

[3] Descartes, "Sixth Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 50 [emphasis added], cited in Moore, this volume, 103.

Non enim dubium est quin Deus sit capax ea omnia efficiendi quae ego sic percipiendi sum capax; nihilque unquam ab illo fieri non posse judicavi, nisi propter hoc quod illud a me distincte percipi repugnaret.

This sentence is from the opening of the *Sixth Meditation.* Its purpose is not to introduce some surprising new claim, but quickly to review ground already traversed in the previous meditations. The topic of the sentence as a whole is this: Given that God is capable of effecting all of the things that I am capable of perceiving clearly and distinctly, how should I judge those things that I do perceive clearly and distinctly?[4] The evil demon

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[4] Emphasizing that the question here concerns the relation between a proposition about what God can do and one about what *Descartes has believed* God cannot do, Jonathan Bennett cites this very sentence as textual evidence for the opposite conclusion from the one that Moore attempts to draw from it. Bennett contrasts what Descartes actually says with what he thinks Descartes ought to have said were he trying to say what Moore, in effect, takes him to be saying. Hence Bennett writes:

> [A]lthough Descartes does not put his voluntarism on display in the *Meditations,* that work shows him trying to conform to its constraints. It occurs at a point where one might expect him write:
>
>   There is no doubt that God is capable of creating everything that I am capable of perceiving in this manner; and there is nothing that could not be made by him except for what involves a contradiction.
>
> But the chief theological thrust behind the voluntarism doctrine is an unwillingness to say of anything that God could not do it. We see that at work here, for what Descartes actually writes is this:
>
>   There is no doubt that God is capable of creating everything that I am capable of perceiving in this manner; and I have never judged that something could not be made by him except on the grounds that there would be a contradiction in my perceiving it distinctly.
>
> When he wrote the *Meditations,* it seems, Descartes's voluntarism was alive in his mind. What else could explain his immediately following one proposition about what God can do by another about what Descartes has believed that God cannot do? (Jonathan Bennett, *Learning from Six Philosophers, Vol. 2* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 59–60)

It is striking that Moore and Bennett each cite the very same sentence from the text: Moore to clinch the case for the claim that the teaching of the *Meditations* is inconsistent with his remarks about the creation of the eternal truths, and Bennett to clinch the case for the opposite claim. Taken in isolation, the passage does not strike me as dispositive—or even particularly probative—either way. One needs to read that sentence through the lens of the whole package of interpretative assumptions that Moore or Bennett each bring to it for it to seem to clearly say what either of them takes it to. So I am not inclined to try to derive the desired conclusion from just this bit of text. Nevertheless, I do agree with Bennett that the *Meditations* is to be read as conforming to the constraints of Descartes's conception of the eternal truths—that that conception is alive in his mind as he writes that work (though, pace Bennett, I do not think that conception, properly characterized, is voluntarist). But for reasons touched on in a previous footnote (having to do with Descartes's diffidence about having this aspect of his teaching become too widely known), it is no accident that there is no single passage anywhere in the *Mediations* that, taken in isolation, could suffice to support this exegetical claim.

hypothesis in the *First Meditation* raised a worry about whether I am rationally entitled to infer from my clear and distinct perception of such and such that such and such is the case. The conclusion arrived at in the *Third Meditation* (that God is not a deceiver) defeated his worry. These points are being quickly rehearsed here at the opening of the *Sixth Meditation* and brought to bear on the topic at hand (which quickly becomes the topic of whether I may judge that material things exist). So nothing new is happening here; a number of by now familiar points are being collected together.

The point of the first clause of the Latin sentence above is to assert the following: "If I am capable of perceiving something clearly and distinctly, then there is no doubt that God is capable of bringing it about." The middle clause of the sentence reminds us that this is a straightforward consequence of Descartes's most fundamental claim about God (indeed, the very one that gives rise to the evil demon of worry), which for good measure is repeated here once again; namely, "There is nothing that cannot be made by God." Now the question is this: Given that there is nothing God cannot bring about, when should I judge that something was effected by God and when should I not? The final clause goes on to say that the only legitimate ground (this is the point of the "except") for judging (given that God is not a deceiver) that something *could* not have been effected by God is the following—translated literally: ". . . it would contradict being perceived distinctly by me."

The "could" italicized above, in this bit of reasoning about what God could not have brought about, takes the conclusion arrived at in the *Third Meditation* as a premise. The statement in which that "could" occurs is therefore not a claim about what we should say about the limits or lack thereof of God's power tout court—about the very limits of His capacity to create as such. For the "could" here is not an unrestricted modal claim about what it is possible for God to do *überhaupt,* apart from our understanding of what He has done in creating us and much else that he has created in the ways that He has.[5] The "could" here is conditionally

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[5] To recur to a point made in an earlier footnote: Once the creation is in place—and, along with it, the contours of the modalities—then we can speak of what is possible and what is not and, correlatively, what—in the light of what we know of the creation—God could and could not have done. This means we must be careful, in reflecting upon the topic of God's relation to the modalities, not to quote passages from Descartes out of context. If we are not careful about this, then it will not be a great challenge to find passages in a text such as *Meditations* (subsequent to the point in that text at which the conclusion is reached that our creator is not a deceiver) involving claims about what God could and could not have done.

embedded in an understanding of the nature of actuality—the nature of God's creation—at which we have arrived by gradually clarifying our idea of God in the light of actuality (and, in particular, in the light of each finite thinking substance's first-personal self-knowledge of the actuality of her own power of thought). It is a genuinely contentful modal claim about (given what is necessary and actual) what is possible—one that gets its traction from the various considerations introduced in each of the preceding meditations, starting with the second (and the revelation of the cogito).[6] This conditionally embedded "could" expresses a claim about what we should conclude God could have done, given that He has created what He did, given that He has created us as He has, and given that we (now) know that He is not a deceiver.

Moore does not read this passage as merely asserting something we can conclude regarding what is possible given our knowledge of God—so that the content conferred upon the modal operator requires that it be logically posterior to God's creative act. Moore tries to read it in such a way that it says something about what the limits of possibility are in relation to God's power as such—so that our understanding of the modal operator in question is logically prior to our knowledge of God's creative act. God's creative activity may therefore be brought fully within the scope of the modal operator.

Let us put aside for a moment the question (to which we will return below) of whether this gives us a reason to be suspicious of Moore's reading of this remark. Let us attend instead to the way in which his reading of the passage figures as a wedge in the next step of his argument against Conant. Moore moves straight from the above passage, which occurs late in the *Meditations,* to his only attempt to attend to the details of one of Descartes's remarks about the problem of the creation of the eternal truths. Moore takes the *Sixth Meditation* remark to express a "straightforward" conception of impossibility and the remark about the creation of the eternal truths to qualify that conception in a manner that runs contrary to Descartes's own philosophical intention:

> So far, you might think, so straightforward. Not so. We also find Descartes conveying the very opposite idea, in some correspondence. Most notably we find him saying the following, in a letter to Arnauld:

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[6] As I have sought to show in the preceding section, all genuine modal claims about what is possible, for Descartes, presuppose actuality; they presuppose God's creative act.

I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God. For since every basis of truth . . . depends on his omnipotence, I would not dare to say that God cannot make [it] . . . that one and two should not be three. I merely say that he has given me such a mind that I cannot conceive . . . an aggregate of one and two which is not three, and that such [a thing involves] a contradiction in my conception.[7]

My suggestion, bluntly, is that this is a lapse. It seems to me that Descartes has actually thought something here which, in his own terms, he ought not to think: in Kant's words, he has thought "contrary to his own intention." Given Descartes's conception of necessity and possibility, I think that he should treat the claim that not even God can make one plus two anything other than three as being entirely of a piece with the claim that one plus two cannot be anything other than three.[8]

Notice, first, that Descartes is only here "conveying the very opposite idea" from the one conveyed elsewhere, if Moore's radically decontextualized exploitation of the *Sixth Meditation* passage is sound.[9] Notice,

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[7] Descartes, "Letter to Arnauld," dated July 29, 1648, in *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. III, 359.

[8] Moore, this volume, 102–103. Moore allows himself here to make reference to Kant's idea that a philosopher may think "contrary to his own intention." That is a deep and important idea. It requires that we grasp the true intention of a philosophy and then see how a given philosopher's repeated attempts to express it non-accidentally—hence, over and over again—fail to reveal that intention properly. When a philosopher does this, it is because of some deep failure on his part to properly appreciate the real thrust of his thought. What one seeks to explain in such a case is how and why something goes systematically wrong in the thought of a philosopher contrary to the true import of his own philosophy. The task in such a case, Kant says, is to understand the philosopher better than he understands himself. To do this requires showing him, first, what the real source is of his felt compulsion to say what he says; second, why this sense of compulsion is misplaced; and, third, why he should in fact say the opposite of what he does. Moore is interested in showing only the third thing. Indeed, only then could the concept of a "lapse" even begin to seem to be the right term of criticism here. But that is to say these two diagnoses of why a philosopher says the wrong thing (the Kantian and the Moorean one) are very different—only the latter can be dispatched with the sort of offhandedness with which Moore treats Descartes's remarks in the letter to Arnauld.

[9] Moore first takes the conditionally embedded passage from late in the *Meditations* to give us Descartes's true conception of the nature of modality. Having read it in such a way that it appears to be in conflict with what Descartes says in the excerpt that he quotes from the letter to Arnauld, Moore then concludes that the latter passage must be a lapse. If we read both of these passages in context, however, we can come to see that they in no way conflict. The passage that involves the supposed lapse is a claim about what we can say about God's power *tout court* (and whether, in characterizing the nature of God's power, we may say that there are certain things that it was not possible for Him to create). The passage from

second, that several of Descartes's remarks above (in the letter to Arnauld of July 29, 1648) have nested negation operators of just the sort we have seen in a great many of Descartes's passages that we previously examined. Moore thinks that "this" must be a "lapse" because he thinks what is said directly contradicts the idea that our concepts can be a reliable guide to what is possible. In so reading the letter, he follows Conant in thinking that the negation operators cancel one another out.[10] This would mean that when Descartes says, "I do not think we should ever say of anything that it cannot be brought about by God," the thought may be rephrased as "I think we should say that such and such is possible, even for the sorts of cases I mention in my next sentence." When, in his next sentence, he says, "I would not dare to say that God cannot make [it] . . . that one and two should not be three," the thought may again be rephrased as "I would dare say that God can make it that one and two should not be three." Conant and Moore agree that this is what the passage says. Moore and I agree that this cannot really be what Descartes thinks. Conant and I agree that this remark is no mere lapse.

Moore claims that the lapse is quite local and easily contained.[11] This strikes me as, frankly, ludicrous. If we collect all of the remarks—both those that I have collected above and those not cited—in which the rel-

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late in the *Meditations* is a claim about what we may conclude God could have done in the light of other things that we know about Him and know Him to have done. It is a claim about what we can know about how He in fact exercised His awesome power of creation given that He has created what He did create. It is not a claim about how He necessarily exercised His power due to a supposed necessity to which even He is subject. To construe it in this manner requires neglecting the manner in which it is embedded in the unfolding dialectic of the *Meditations*.

[10] Moore does pause for a moment to wonder if something might be made of the nested negative clauses, with the outer one merely involving a refusal to say something. He writes,

> Notice that Descartes is merely declining to say what I claim he should say; he is not denying it. Can this perhaps be attributed to a scholastic scruple of some kind? . . . I shall ignore this possibility: I shall presuppose the reading that is least conducive to my exegesis, the reading whereby Descartes's reason for declining to say what I claim he should say is that he takes it to be false. (This volume, 103n10)

To be entitled not to "ignore this possibility," one must have some sort of story about what the point of the scruple is. If to say it is a "scholastic" scruple means that nothing of real importance, for Descartes, ought to hang on it, then the point of the previous section of these replies is to deny that. If it is to say that it is the sort of scruple only someone who seeks to intervene in the central theological debate of late medieval scholastic philosophy would have, then I suppose that I agree—in this sense, it is a scholastic scruple, albeit one that Descartes thought the scholastics ought to have (about what they say God can do)—not one they generally did have.

[11] "[T]he letter to Arnauld is a comparatively isolated case" (Moore, this volume, 104).

evant sort of nested negations occur in connection with the topic of how to speak about God, then we already have quite a few remarks. If one understands those remarks to form (along the lines sketched above) part of a single unified conception, so that they must be understood together with many of the other remarks that I have quoted or cited (about the difference between a finite and infinite being, the gulf between the limits of our powers of conception and God's power, the nature of divine simplicity, etc.)—as well as the many versions of such remarks not cited above—then the problem that Moore seeks to handle here through a strategy of quarantine is bound to seem less local and far less easily contained than he seems to imagine.[12]

The closest Moore comes to acknowledging that there might be an important topic comes in the following, remarkably offhand, observation: "Another factor in Descartes's being led astray is presumably a reluctance to declare anything to be beyond the power of God."[13] Well, yes, that is right.[14] Now we should ask: Whence comes this reluctance? This is not a question that interests Moore. Instead, this is what he says next:

> But as far as this is concerned, he could and should have taken the same line as Aquinas in the lengthy passage from *Summa Theologica* that

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[12] Moore's description of what goes wrong here as being due to a "lapse" on Descartes's part involves a use of the concept of a lapse that is quite peculiar in other respects as well. It would be instructive to see precisely where the concept of a lapse belongs in J. L. Austin's typology of excuses—where it belongs among the other members of the family that includes cases such as "I said it by mistake, by accident, thoughtlessly," etc. What does the surrounding context have to look like so that the concept of a lapse is the appropriate form of explanation for a certain failure to say what one wants to say? After all, the real problem, by Moore's lights, is not that Descartes is saying something somewhat at odds with what Moore would like him to say. Rather, the problem is that what Descartes is vehemently insisting we ought to say (and, indeed, insisting upon this over and over again) is precisely the opposite of what Moore thinks Descartes ought to say. Moore's argument would be easier to follow in this regard if his claim were that the remarks in question involve a systematic error of expression due to some sort of negation-blindness disorder akin to dyslexia. The suggestion that it was a "lapse," in that sense (but is *that* a "lapse"?) would illuminate how Descartes could have managed to speak so totally and self-evidently contrary to his own intention whenever the topic of what God can do arises. For the "lapse" in question is remarkably systematic. Considering even just the letter to Arnauld in isolation: the same putatively inappropriate "not" occurs several times over the course of the letter—not to mention the fact that that "not" recurs over and over again in other remarks. Surely, this sort of consistency in the nuance of Descartes's formulations (of his views about what we should not say about God) requires an entirely different form of explanation than one that has its home in Austin's typology of excuses.

[13] Moore, this volume, 106.

[14] Though, I would argue, that to describe it as "another factor" is already to fail to appreciate the significance of this topic for Descartes.

Conant quotes at the beginning of his essay.[15] He could and should have said that, even though it is impossible for God to make one plus two anything other than three, there remains a clear, reasonable, and substantive sense in which nothing at all is beyond the power of God; for there is a clear, reasonable, and substantive sense in which there is no such *thing* as one plus two being anything other than three; the sense, namely, in which the domain of quantification consists of absolute possibilities. . . . When we say that God could not make one plus two anything other than three, we do not describe any limitation on the part of God.[16]

If this were right, then it would have the following consequences for how to situate Descartes in relation to the theological corner: he does not belong in the voluntarist corner; rather, he belongs in one of the rationalist corners. This is an improvement over Conant's reading in only one respect: it does avoid the specific misreading of Descartes's puzzling remarks that Conant (or, for that matter, Leibniz) falls into. It is hardly an improvement in other respects. It leaves it a mystery what Descartes is up to in these remarks, why they have been so frequently misread in the way that they have, and at whom they are directed. This last point is important because the puzzling remarks are, as we have seen, directed at precisely those philosophers, such as Aquinas, who see the limits of God's power as lying within the limits of possibility. I find the casualness with which Moore is prepared to move Descartes over to that side of the theological debate fairly stunning.

Moore's sense that the passage in question must be a lapse is fueled by the manner in which he reads other passages from Descartes—passages that do not say anything about God (or anything about what we should not say about God) but help to bring out important features of Descartes's understanding of the modality of possibility. He argues, quite correctly, that these passages speak against Conant's modal voluntarist reading of Descartes. A good example of such a passage is one that Moore glosses as showing the following:

Descartes understands by the possible what in his view everyone commonly understands by the possible, namely "whatever does not conflict with our human concepts.[17]

[15] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 28–29.
[16] Moore, this volume, 106.
[17] Descartes, "Second Set of Replies," in *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 107, cited in Moore, this volume, 102.

I think Moore is right here about what Descartes's thinks we should understand by "possible." The proposition that contradictories could be true together is something that conflicts with our human concepts, so—for the reasons we just went over, which are very briefly summarized at the beginning of the *Sixth Meditation*—we may judge that it is not possible. That is another way of saying that the negation of that proposition is a necessary truth. Conant's reading undermines the ground upon on which such truisms stand and thereby deprives Descartes of his genuine entitlement to them. This has disastrous consequences not only for his truth-rule but for many other things in his philosophy.

This is not news to Conant. He knows that his reading severs an internal connection between what is absolutely possible (which he takes to be a function of the absoluteness of divine freedom) and what our clear and distinct ideas reveal to us to be true (which he ties to a contingent feature of the way that God happened to create us). Conant thinks he has no choice but to sever this connection (between possibility and necessity) because he does not see any other way to make sense of those remarks in which Descartes says we should not say God could not have made the eternal truths to be other than they are (e.g., that we should not say that He could not have made contradictories true together). Conant infers from such remarks that Descartes thinks that God *could* have done the things at issue (such as making contradictories true together). He thus bites the following bullet: the remarks in which Descartes sets forth his doctrine of creation of the eternal truths, if properly thought through, undermine the rest of his philosophy.

Moore understandably wishes to avoid this conclusion. Conant's *modus ponens* becomes his *modus tollens*. He refuses to allow possibility and necessity to come unmoored from one another in the manner in which Conant allows. His way of avoiding this, however, involves his having to bite the opposite bullet: since Descartes's remarks about what he understands by the possible (namely "whatever does not conflict with our human concepts") conflict with his remarks about the creation of the eternal truths, we should regard all of the latter remarks as lapses on Descartes's part.[18]

[18] In his book *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Moore offers a momentarily revealing description of what goes wrong in Descartes's formulations in the letter to Arnauld of July 29, 1648. It is a moment that suggests that Moore knows that the bullet he is trying to bite in his reply to Conant cannot be quite as tiny as he tries to make it out to be. After quoting the bit where Descartes says, "I would

The aforementioned conception of the possible (that whatever conflicts with our human concepts is not possible) is, in effect, called upon by Moore to serve as a premise in an argument that is supposed to rebut skeptical concerns that arise within Descartes's philosophy about the adequacy of our human concepts. This seems to accord the conception an inappropriately fundamental role within the overall dialectic. While I do think that Descartes wants to be able to vindicate his entitlement to this feature of his overall conception of the possible (and I agree with Moore that Conant's reading blocks Descartes from successfully being able to do so), it seems equally evident that the role such an idea can play in Descartes's philosophical reflections cannot be as fundamental as the role that it might play in the writings of, say, G. E. Moore. A reading of Descartes that is Moorean in the envisioned respect could deal quickly and decisively with the evil demon hypothesis—roughly along the following lines:

> Question: Could an evil demon have created us in such a way that our human concepts for thinking about what is possible would be inadequate to the task of accurately gauging what is possible?

> Answer: This idea of an evil demon is the idea of a creator who has the power to bring about a state of affairs which conflicts with our conception of what is possible. If it conflicts with our human concepts in this way, then it is not possible. Therefore such a being is not possible. Q. E. D.

Our hypothetical Moorean can simply rely on what A. W. Moore calls our core conception of impossibility to rule out the possibility of an evil demon. It seems evident that Descartes's way with such a difficulty cannot be as short-winded as this. It cannot be Moorean in this way. We cannot simply point out that our human concepts are the only concepts we have and ask pointedly in return: Are we supposed to use *somebody else's*

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not dare to say that God cannot make [it] . . . that one and two should not be three," Moore goes on to remark, "It seems to me that Descartes is being over-cautious here. I think he is at perfect liberty, by his own lights, to say what he 'would not dare to say,'" (34). Over-cautious? By Moore's lights, Descartes is saying the opposite of what he ought to think here. How does that constitute a case of over-cautiousness? I suppose that what Moore means is that when it comes to speaking of God (and of what God cannot do), Descartes seems to feel for some reason that he needs to speak cautiously. If that is his observation, then it seems sound. But then we should ask, for what reason? Why does he feel this way about this topic? This is the question that Conant's reading and my reading each try to make sense of in very different ways and that Moore's reading tries to make no sense of—which is why he is able to conclude that the compunction to speak cautiously here is simply misplaced and that Descartes ought just to feel at liberty to say what Descartes says he would not dare to say.

concepts—non-human ones? The skepticism raised by the specter of the evil demon concedes that our human concepts are the only ones available to us, while precisely refusing to allow this observation by itself to suffice to vindicate our rational entitlement to rely upon those concepts in seeking something worthy of the title of genuine knowledge. The philosophical path that Descartes thinks we have to traverse in order to end up where our hypothetical Moorean does is a comparatively long and winding one. Descartes arranges for us to ascend a ladder of reflection, each of whose rungs permit us to clarify our idea of God further. Once we have sufficiently clarified that idea, we are able to rule out the possibility of an evil demon. That happens in the *Third Meditation*. This then equips us in each of the steps we take in making our way back down that ladder, to rely upon our clear and distinct perceptions of what is possible and necessary with a degree of rational entitlement that we did not previously possess. The passage that Moore takes to directly contradict what Descartes says to Arnauld occurs in the *Sixth Meditation*. It already rests on our having achieved a properly clarified idea of God. The passage in the letter to Arnauld addresses the following question: What must we not assume or dare to say in our endeavor to clarify this idea?

Contrast what I have said so far with what Moore says here:

> [W]hat makes certain propositions indubitable for Descartes is precisely that their falsity would conflict with our human concepts. . . . In particular, he needs to pass, in indubitable steps, from an assurance that he himself is thinking, to an assurance that he himself exists, to an assurance that God exists, to an assurance that nothing can occur except what God, in His benevolence, would allow to occur. It is when he takes the very first of these steps that he supplies the example to which I have been referring of his properly adhering to his own core conception of impossibility.[19]

I distinguished between the hypothetical Moorean and the author of the above passage, leaving it open how close they are to one another, because it is not entirely clear to me if A.W. Moore really wants to go so far as to hold that each of the subsequent steps on the meditator's path involves exactly the same sort and degree of reliance on our core conception of impossibility that he wants to claim that at least the first step does.[20] If

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[19] Moore, this volume, 113.
[20] I shall return in a moment to the question of whether the first step, the cogito, should be understood as Moore conceives it.

that were the suggestion, then it would have two unfortunate consequences. First, if Descartes can simply cleave to his core conception of impossibility throughout, as he takes each of these steps along the dialectical path of the *Meditations,* then that path looks to be one that ought to be far more—as I put it above—Moorean than it is. It seems to underestimate the depth of the skeptical problematic that enters the scene along with the evil demon. The dreaming hypothesis is comparatively less severe in its skeptical implications: it calls into question the meditator's prior conception only of what is actual (not of what is possible) without the mind. If that were the only skeptical doubt that needed to be assuaged, then it is a bit easier to have it appear tenable for the meditator simply to cleave to his core conception of impossibility. What the idea of an evil demon calls into question cuts much deeper[21]: it is whether the meditator is entitled to cleave to his conception of any of the modalities—his interrelated conceptions of what is possible, what is necessary, and what is actual. Second, if the suggestion is that we should never frame an idea of anything without cleaving to our core conception of impossibility as we do so—and thus should not form any idea of God that is not fully fathomable within those terms—then this has the awkward consequence that, according to Descartes, we cannot frame an idea of God.

I temporarily conceded above, for dialectical purposes, that Moore's description of the meditator's first step was an accurate one. Moore explains why he thinks that concession, if he could secure it, would make a great difference. He draws our attention to the moment, near the beginning of the *Second Meditation,* when the meditator is still toying with the skeptical possibility that there is, as he says, "a deceiver of supreme power." The meditator then exclaims, "Let [the deceiver] deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something."[22] Moore comments:

> That seems to me to be just what Descartes should say. And it is vital to his project that he should be able to say it. On Conant's view, however, it appears to be an aberration. For if the deceiver really is "of supreme power," then why, for Conant's Descartes, should he *not* bring it about that Descartes is nothing, even though he thinks that he is something? Surely, on Conant's view, Descartes is not entitled to rule

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[21] We touch here on a point to which we will return in my reply to Hamawaki.
[22] Descartes, "Second Meditation," in *Philosophical Writings, Vol. 2,* 17.

out the possibility of an omnipotent being's bringing about an absurdity even as gross as this.[23]

I suppose that Moore will want to claim that not only on Conant's but also on my alternative reading of the *Meditations,* the meditator is impotent to rule out "the possibility of an omnipotent being's bringing about an absurdity even as gross as this." But the problem Moore here raises for Conant's reading, if properly considered, cuts far deeper than he realizes and turns out to be no less a problem for his own reading. The reason that it is equally a problem for both Moore's and Conant's readings is that both are prone to frame the question (of the vulnerability or invulnerability of the cogito when brought face to face with the idea of a being of supreme power) as a question about what is and is not possible for a being of supreme power to bring about.

Moore makes it look as if "a being of supreme power," for Descartes, is a being for whom some things are possible and some are not, and as if what the meditator must now rule out is (something that may be happily described as) a particular possibility. We are supposed to attempt to locate a putatively possible act of God within the space of what our human concepts reveal to us to be possible; once we attempt to do so, we come to see that this putative possibility is, by the lights of our core conception of modality, an impossibility. This way of understanding the matter turns the cogito into an act of the mind requiring a far greater complexity in the employment of our logical powers than it may have for Descartes.

It would take us much too far afield to go into this properly now, so I will simply dogmatically assert that I take Moore to be wrong here about the first step as well. He makes the cogito seem as if it depended on my recognition of the truth of some modal proposition (e.g., "It is not possible for me to think *I am thinking* without also thinking *I am*"), the grasp of which locates that thought within a space of thinkability whose contours are determined by (what Moore calls) "our core conception of impossibility." If it depended upon the meditator's "core conception of impossibility" in this way, then it would not be something the "I" of the meditator could rely upon in responding to the evil demon worry—for that worry is precisely a worry about whether I can rely on my core conception of impossibility. If "I" cannot rely upon that, what then can "I" rely upon?

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[23] Moore, this volume, 113.

The certainty of the cogito needs to be one that survives in the face of the idea that "I" was created by an omnipotent being (where omnipotence is to be understood as Descartes understands it, not as Avicenna or Leibniz understands it). It rests on the inseparability, in any self-consciously exercised act of the power of thinking, of the following two acts: the act of thinking and the act of knowing that I am thinking. In this respect, the cogito is like God. Just as God's free creative activity, for Descartes, is absolutely simple (and cannot be analyzed into a series of distinct acts) as well as prior to anything it brings about and can subsequently be known; so, too, for Descartes, the cogito—my free activity as thinker—is absolutely simple (not to be analyzed into something requiring a logically complex employment of modal operators) as well as prior to anything it subsequently comes to know (including anything aside from itself which, through its exercise of its power of thought, it subsequently comes to recognize as possible, necessary, or actual). The cogito stands to all that can be thought as God does to His creation—nothing can be prior to it.[24] In each case, first in Him and then in "me," what is at issue here is that moment of pure activity that is the originating source of logical complexity and modal multiplicity.

I have just sought to bring out a structural homology between what I know in the knowledge expressed by the cogito and what I know in knowing God. But to leave the matter there—in effect, suggesting that the relation between the two may be conceived as *parallel*—would still be drastically to underrepresent the extent of the implication of the one in the other. The cogito, for Descartes, does not just express a fortuitous respect in which I am like God. Rather, once the journey is completed, the progress of the *Meditations* will reveal the cogito to have been, all along, the divine mark in me that renders the "I" of my "I think" a knower.[25] In each such act of knowledge, I not only come to know the

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[24] Kant will contest this, while allowing that there is something right in Descartes's idea that the "I think" represents the highest point of reason. I return to this issue in my reply to Boyle.

[25] The most proximate mark "that God, in creating me, . . . placed . . . in me to be, as it were, the mark of the craftsman stamped on his work" is, of course, as we have seen above, the idea of an infinite being—an idea that is presupposed in my idea of myself as a finite thinking being. But then Descartes immediately goes on to conclude that same sentence from the *Third Meditation* by saying: "not that the mark need be anything distinct from the work itself" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. 2, 35). Sebastian Rödl summarizes this moment of Descartes's conception beautifully: "God is not simply other than our knowledge of Him. It is through God and God alone that we know God. Descartes elaborates this in this way: We know God because he left a mark of Himself in us; this mark is nothing other than our self-consciousness. Knowing God through this mark of His, we know God in every act

ostensible object of that exercise of the capacity but thereby also come better to know God through knowing it. No act of a capacity of knowledge, so conceived, counts as genuinely (rather than merely putatively) knowledge-involving until it first comprehends the character and degree of its dependence and implication in God.[26] This is why Descartes's meditator must first fully purify his idea of God before he is in a position to attain genuine knowledge of anything beyond the cogito.

We have just seen that, pace Moore, my grasp of the truth of the cogito must not depend—on pain of a vicious circle—on the series of subsequent exercises of my power of thought (those, for example, that will be required before I have achieved a clear and distinct grasp of the modalities and, yet later still, even after I have entitled myself to rely upon them). To put the same point differently: the certainty of my apprehension of the "I think" must precede my entitlement to regard all the more particular acts of the faculty of thought (that "I" cannot help but exercise each time "I think") as reliable—for this entitlement comes only once I have penetrated well into the *Third Meditation:* once I have sufficiently purified my idea of the powerful being that created me so that it in no way departs from the true idea of God; hence so as to be in a position to know that the Creator who conferred this faculty upon me is not only omnipotent but also benevolent and, only in and through being both, the ground of knowledge.[27]

In short, I do not think it can be right to say that the first step, the cogito, rests on my core conception of impossibility in the manner that Moore suggests. If it did—if it already rested upon my entitlement to acquiesce in the reliability of my clear and distinct ideas of what is possible—then the meditator, faced with the thought of the evil demon, would not be justified in exclaiming, "Let him deceive me as much as he can; he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something." For the meditator's exclamation (if it is to have the force Descartes wants it to have) requires that the knowledge that "I think" and the knowledge that "I think that I am something" not be two

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of reason" (*Self-Consciousness and Objectivity* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018], 75).

[26] Descartes cites the proposition, "I am, therefore God exists" as a particularly clear and important instance of "things which are necessarily conjoined, even though most people count them as contingent" (*Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 46).

[27] For a penetrating development of this point, see Annette C. Baier, "The True Idea of God in Descartes," in *Essays on Descartes' Meditations,* ed. A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 359–388.

distinct acts of knowledge: that they not be sufficiently separate so as to allow an evil demon to come between them—arranging (as it would be within his power to do, if they were distinct in that way) for the one to *seem* to be impossible without the other.

Moore's lack of sympathy with Descartes's conception of God is therefore not merely—as Moore represents it—a regrettable impediment to understanding some isolated remarks about God (which Moore is happy to dismiss); it is no less of an impediment to understanding the overall dialectical structure of the *Meditations* (which, I am hoping, Moore will be less happy to dismiss as involving a lapse on Descartes's part). The problem with Moore's reading that comes to light in the preceding paragraph is not only that it is too Leibnizian, as it were, to allow there to be anything like Descartes's conception of a supreme being in play, but that it equally does not allow for anything genuinely resembling his conception of a malign version of such a being to be in play. For Descartes, the idea of an evil demon—and the form of skeptical problem that it raises—stems from an inadequate (something that is not yet a true) idea of God.[28] Initially, it comes into view as the idea of a creator who has the power to make what seems to us to be the limits of the possible (and hence the necessary) merely *seem* to be those limits (and who hence has the power to make things *seem* necessary to us without their being necessary).[29] Before

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[28] Hence, Descartes writes, "Although in my *First Meditation* I did speak of a supremely powerful deceiver, the conception there was in no way of the true God, since . . . it is impossible that the true God is a deceiver" (Letter to Voetius, May 1643; *Philosophical Writings, Vol. 3*, 222). But the conception there was of an infinite and hence supremely powerful being—hence, of God—only it was a conception that had yet to be sufficiently clarified (so that it could still appear possible to the meditator that He could be a deceiver). This is something Spinoza (arguably the most discerning reader of Descartes in the early modern period) fully appreciated—that the idea of an evil demon presupposes at least this much clarity in one's idea of God: namely, that He can do all things. Hence, he remarks about Descartes, "[D]eeply rooted in his mind was an old opinion, according to which there is a God who can do all things and by whom he was created such as he was. Perhaps this God had made him so that he would be deceived even about those things that seemed clearest to him. And this is the way he called all things in doubt" (Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy,* in *The Collected Works of Spinoza, Vol. I,* trans. and ed. E. Curley [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985], 232).

[29] This way of putting the point of the evil demon worry hypothesis makes it sound as if its philosophical upshot were of the same form as that of the dreaming hypothesis—as if both were concerned with driving a wedge between appearance and reality: between how things seem to me and how things really are. This is, admittedly, the guise in which that hypothesis is first introduced in the *First Meditation*. I discuss in my reply to Hamawaki below why I think this initial way of putting the skeptical worry (apparently raised by the evil demon hypothesis) is not stable—and hence why the worry, once fully thought through, eventuates in a philosophical anxiety that is no longer of this familiar form.

it can unabashedly acquiesce in the thought that what thus seems necessary *is* necessary (and not merely necessary for us), the power of reason in us that allows us to apprehend such necessary truths as clear and distinct must come to know itself—to recognize itself—as the power that it is through its apprehension of the true idea of God.

The reason that, for Descartes, an inadequate idea of God might readily lead to the thought of an evil demon is because any genuine idea of God (including the inadequate idea of God involved in the idea of an evil demon) is the idea of a divine being who freely created everything ex nihilo. Doesn't this mean that He has the power to create things along the lines envisioned in the evil demon hypothesis? Are we to say that God could not have done this? We are here faced with the same question that occupied us throughout the previous section of these replies—a question that Moore invites us to regard Descartes's answer to as being of marginal concern to an understanding of his philosophy as expressed in the *Meditations*.

Notice that the problem of the evil demon (and the related difficulty of the Cartesian circle that stands at the heart of the *Meditations*) involves a difficulty about how to hold the following two ideas together:

(1) The eternal truths are freely created by a supremely powerful being.
(2) The eternal truths are necessarily true.

The hypothesis of the evil demon is a thought-experiment, part of whose point is to allow us to appreciate a version of the very same difficulty that we have already seen at heart of Descartes's discussion of the problem of creation of the eternal truths—the difficulty of arriving at an idea of God consistent with (1) that does not immediately undercut (2).

Moore says what Descartes says in his letter to Arnauld is a lapse because (what Moore calls) "Descartes's conception of necessity and possibility" requires that he ought to think the opposite of what he says.[30] *Exactly what,* according to Moore, ought Descartes to think? Moore says (in his passage quoted above) that he thinks Descartes should have treated the following two claims as being entirely of a piece with one another:

(a) One plus two cannot be anything other than three.
(b) Not even God can make one plus two anything other than three.

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[30] Well, we are in a position to conclude this only if we are in *full* possession of Descartes's conception of the modalities. We will return to this point below.

Moore thinks this because he thinks that the following two thoughts, which both figure in the letter to Arnauld, contradict one another:

(1′) I would not dare to say that God cannot make [it] . . . that one and two should not be three.

(2′) One plus two cannot be anything other than three.

Moreover, as we have seen, Moore thinks we should resolve this interpretative problem by regarding (1′) as a "lapse" in which Descartes says the opposite of what he ought to think.[31] But, as we saw in the previous section, Descartes does not think that these two remarks contradict each other; rather, (1′) is Descartes's way of trying to warn us against saying something that would amount to a denial of (1), whereas (2′) is simply a substation-instance of (2). To regard (a) and (b) to be of a piece is, therefore, by Descartes's lights, precisely to fall into a way of thinking that makes it seem as if (1) and (2) are irreconcilable—that is, to concede the crucial assumption that gives rise to the theological triangle. Though he hardly draws attention to this (from Descartes's point of view, momentous) consequence of his reading, Moore is perfectly sanguine about having (1) be something his Descartes ought not to think.

The previous section of these replies proposed the following criterion of adequacy on a genuinely satisfying reading of Descartes on the eternal truths: it must allow us to see how it could be the case that Descartes really holds both (1) and (2) at the same time. We can reformulate this so that it may also serve as a criterion of adequacy on a genuinely satisfying reading of the *Meditations:* it must allow us to reject the idea that God is an evil demon without rejecting (1)—that is, without rejecting the underlying idea which both adequate and inadequate ideas of the deity share (the common denominator, as it were, of both the scriptural conception of a divine creator and the conception of the Creator involved in the idea of an evil demon): namely, the idea that nothing is prior to the Creator and everything proceeds from Him. The rational grounds for the meditator's conclusion that our Creator is not a deceiver must not be of such a sort that the meditator is thereby also rationally obliged to con-

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[31] Moore's view that each of the puzzling remarks must be read as saying the exact opposite of what Descartes ought to think is made particularly clear in what he says about the letter to Arnauld of July 29, 1648, in the footnote in *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics,* where (after quoting the bit where Descartes says. "I would not dare to say that God cannot make [it] . . . that one and two should not be three") Moore goes on to remark, "I think he is at perfect liberty, by his own lights, to say what he 'would not dare to say,'" (34).

clude that the correct idea of God cannot be in accord with (Descartes's understanding of) the scriptural conception of the Creator. I observed that neither Conant's nor Moore's reading of Descartes on the creation of the eternal truths is able to satisfy the relevant criterion of adequacy in its treatment of that topic.[32] My point now is that Moore's reading of the *Meditations,* were it to be spelled out, would also not satisfy the parallel desideratum with regard to that work.

The evil demon hypothesis involves a fuzzy understanding of (1)—one that might appear to threaten (2). As we move through the *Mediations,* we clarify what is involved in (1), resolving it into an idea of God that is consistent with (2). In particular, the dialectical path from the *First Meditation* to the *Fourth Meditation* has to be able to work with a version of thesis (1) that gradually gains resolution along a certain dimension until it can be brought into alignment with the truth of thesis (2). If our understanding of the truth of (2) is incompatible with (1), then we do not first need to clarify our idea of God gradually, in the manner that Descartes envisions. To understand the relation between the problem of the creation of the eternal truths and the problem of the Cartesian circle, we must see why Descartes will not allow us to discard the possibility of an evil demon on the grounds that the theological logicist would be happy to discard it—by simply appealing to the priority of God's reason (or, for that matter, our reason) to His will. To solve the problem in this way is to give up, for Descartes, on the idea of a divine being who freely created everything—including what is possible, necessary, and actual—ex nihilo.

If the dialectical strategy of the *Meditations* succeeds, then it will lead us where Moore wants to end up in the following respect: we will be able to conclude from the concepts that God has given us that we could not have been created by an evil demon. But one difference between arriving at this result by the hypothetical Moorean route and reaching it by Descartes's actual route lies in the sort of answer we will give at the end of our journey to the following question: *Could* God have created things in the manner envisioned in the evil demon hypothesis? If we arrive at this conclusion via the Moorean route, *we will answer it,* and, moreover, we will answer it with a straightforward "No, God could not have done this because it is not possible; and if it is not possible, then it is not possible

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[32] As noted above, this way of setting up the issue is indebted to Kaufman. Though my reading differs from his in various details, I agree with Kaufman that (1) and (2) are reconcilable and that Descartes affirms both theses.

for God." If we arrive at this conclusion via a Cartesian route, consistent with the reading of Descartes advanced in the previous section, *we will not answer this question;* we will reject it. We will say that we ought not to assert statements of the form "such and such is not possible for God."

To assert things of this form (things that Descartes himself says he would never dare to assert) is to think that the concepts that are adequate for grasping the *product* of God's creative activity (His creation) are also adequate for grasping that *activity* itself and thus the idea of God qua Creator. It is to do something that Descartes warns us against doing in countless passages (basically any passage in which he seeks to clarify his conception of the difference between the finite and infinite): it is to mistake the limits of our powers of conception for the limits of His power. To solve the problem in this way is, for Descartes, to wander both into blasphemy and idolatry. It is blasphemous because it denies God's omnipotence in placing limits on God's power, failing to respect the idea that He freely created *everything*—including what is possible, necessary, and actual. It is idolatrous insofar as it conceives of God's creative activity on the model of the freedom of a finite rational agent.

The following passage from Descartes brings out the depth of the difference between him and Leibniz on this question:

> As for the freedom of the will, the way in which it exists in God is quite different from the way in which it exists in us. . . . [I]t is impossible to imagine that anything is thought of in the divine intellect as good or true, or worthy of belief or action or omission, prior to the decision of the divine will to make it so. I am not speaking here of temporal priority: I mean that there is not even any priority of order, or nature, or of 'rationally determined reason' . . . as they call it, such that God's idea of the good impelled him to choose one thing rather than another. For example, God did not will . . . that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles because he recognized that it could not be otherwise, and so on.[33]

Judged by these lights, the idolatrousness of Leibniz's conception stems from its relying on an overly anthropomorphic conception of the manner in which God exercises His creative power—one according to which God's will is exercised in the light of an antecedently available, rationally determined set of reasons (or, for that matter, an antecedently determined

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[33] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 291–292.

set of possibilities and necessities). From Descartes's point of view, Leibniz's conception of God's choice of which possible world to create is far too closely modeled on the relation in which a finite agent stands to her possibilities and reasons for action. According to such an agentive conception of God, He is just better at doing what finite moral agents do than they ever could be—not only because He is more powerful, but also because He is wiser. God always acts well in the face of the alternatives He confronts (such as those which involve letting people suffer or preventing their suffering): He always behaves as well as possible. It is this way of thinking about God, which comes so naturally to Leibniz, that Descartes is most concerned to challenge. If one misses this, then one is apt also to miss—as Leibniz and Conant both do—that the view that Leibniz ascribes to Descartes is bound to strike the actual historical Descartes (assuming my present reading of him is correct) as no less idolatrous than Leibniz's own. Instead of regarding God as a Leibnizian moral agent who always behaves well, Leibniz takes Descartes to regard God as a modality agent, behaving as well as He can as He sets up the eternal truths. It is important to see what Leibniz's own conception and the one that he attributes to Descartes have in common. God differs from a finite rational agent, on Leibniz's conception, in being infinitely wise—in having an infinite power of understanding to go along with His power of creation. God differs from a finite rational agent, on Leibniz's construal of Descartes's conception, in having a faculty of willing (something that may be contrasted with His other faculties) of infinite volitional capacity—in having the power to bring everything, even the eternal truths, under the scope of His will. Conant takes Descartes's conception of God to be the very one Leibniz attributes to Him, while Moore attempts to ascribe a conception of God to Descartes that, in effect, turns Him into a Leibnizian infinite agent. According to the reading of Descartes that I am presently proposing, these two conceptions of God qualify as equally idolatrous.[34]

Leibniz's own central criticism of Descartes is that his conception of God, rather than providing us with a conception of an infinite agent who

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[34] This is related to a point that has come up in an earlier footnote. For Descartes, the logical grammar of talk of God's "will" in connection with His creative activity cannot be identified with the conceptually far more determinate logical grammar of "willing" applicable to finite agents—one that presupposes not only a threefold contrast between willing, understanding, and acting, but also the contrast between the three related modalities of possibility, necessity, and actuality. For Descartes, the sense of each of the terms in these two conceptual triads presupposes that God's creative activity is already in effect.

acts well, actually robs us of any possible remaining ground upon which we can still remain entitled to regard Him as acting well rather than badly. To take this criticism to have the significance Leibniz attributes to it is to perceive Descartes's conception of God only through a glass darkly, so that its real point never comes into view. For its point is to block us in our attempts to regard Him as a person-like agent at all—one about whom the question "Is He morally good?" or "Does He act well in the manner in which He creates the world?" could apply to Him in the same sense that it could to a moral agent whose actions are determined by antecedently available reasons but whose powers of agency are infinitely greater than ours.[35]

Such a false conception of God is tied, for Descartes, to the trap that we fall into when we ask a certain sort of question about God—a question that presupposes that He is fundamentally like us, only infinitely

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[35] In this respect, Descartes turns out to be much closer to Aquinas, at least on Brian Davies's reading of him, than Conant appreciates. Davies writes:

> I take idolatry to be the worship of a creature. And I say that Aquinas provides an antidote to it since I take him to have successfully shown that what many have taken to be God, and therefore to be worshipped, is not God at all. In particular, I take him to have shown that much that is currently offered as an account of God is grounded on a premise which is fundamentally idolatrous. This is the premise 'God is a person' as construed in the light of the philosophy of Descartes. . . . Descartes maintains that people (persons) are immaterial thinking substances contingently connected with bodies. They entertain thoughts. They reason. They have beliefs. They go from one intellectual state to another. And, though essentially immaterial, they have effects in the world of matter. According to Descartes, I am a disembodied mind, yet I can get things done in the material world. . . . Curiously, however, Descartes's account of people seems to have been taken to heart by many contemporary theologians and philosophers of religion. For we often find them saying or presuming that God is more or less what Descartes takes people to be: a person without a body who invisibly thinks and wills and lives a life as our contemporary. . . . [S]uch a view . . . is evidently wrong if considered as an account of what Christians mean, or ought to mean, by 'God'. . . . [B]iblical authors continually insist that God is incomparable since he is the Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of the universe, the one who, as St Paul puts it, 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Romans 4:17). The notion of God as a Cartesian disembodied person is just incompatible with the Bible when taken as a whole. It is far too anthropomorphic. (*The Thought of Aquinas,* 185–186)

It becomes even more curious that that the so-called Cartesian account of a person is taken to heart in the conception of God offered by many contemporary theologians and philosophers of religion, if I am right that Descartes himself is concerned to insist that God Himself is not (in this Cartesian sense of the term) a *person*. In taking it for granted, as many post-Cartesian philosophers of religion do, that God is something like a disembodied Cartesian being, they not only miss (if Davies is right) what Aquinas appreciates in the biblical authors' conception of God's incomparability, but they also miss (if I am right) Descartes's own conception of how God is incomparable to His creatures. Hence, they miss the most fundamental thought common to Aquinas's and Descartes's respective conceptions of God.

more powerful, intelligent, etc. The fundamental trap in the debate about the eternal truths is set the moment it comes to look as if there is no way to avoid answering the questions to which such a conception of God gives rise—questions such as "Can God create a world in which both members of a pair of contradictories are true?" Once we fall prey to the crucial trick in this theological conjuring game and take such a question to be well posed, we appear to be left with two fundamental possible ways of answering it: either by saying no (there are some things God cannot do), or by saying yes (He could have made contradictories both true). Moore ascribes the first answer to Descartes; Conant ascribes the second. That's the trap that is set.

Descartes's remarks in which he responds to this trap can be helpfully compared to certain remarks of Wittgenstein's about what happens in philosophy once we go down the path that a certain apparently well-posed question leads us, and about how and why it happens.[36] People will tend to go straight ahead in the direction that seems to be marked out by the question, without noticing that it is possible to avoid the tempting path that construing the question as well-posed sets one upon. Having taken this fateful step, one will subsequently make one of the branching turns that still appears to remain for one to take along this trajectory. So Descartes—in this respect not unlike Wittgenstein—labors to post various sorts of warning signs at the dangerous dialectical crossroads in question. He warns us against saying certain sorts of things or attempting to answer certain sorts of questions about God. Interestingly, it is these very warning signs that he posts—hence those moments in his writing in which Descartes most resembles Wittgenstein—that turn out to constitute those of his remarks about which Moore and Conant end up most in disagreement, while both agreeing that Descartes is to be read as happily embarking down the path in question. Moore construes these remarks as mere lapses on Descartes's part. Conant tries to construe them as injunctions to take the voluntarist turn at the crossroads.

Descartes's conception of the modalities involves two thoughts highlighted above:

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[36] Such as this one: "Language has the same traps ready for everyone; the immense network of easily trodden false paths. And thus we see one person after another walking down the same paths and we already know where he will make a turn, where he will keep going straight ahead without noticing the turn, etc., etc. Therefore, wherever false paths branch off I ought to put up signs to help in getting past the dangerous spots" (Wittgenstein, *The Big Typescript,* ed. and trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue [Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2005], 312).

(i) The limits of the possible are properly marked by the limits of human powers of conception.

(ii) We should not take the limits of our powers of modal conception to mark limits to God's power.

I have purposely stated these in a manner that might allow Moore to think that he is able to endorse a suitable gloss on each of them. Conant's reading holds that in affirming (ii), Descartes unwittingly ends up undermining (i). Moore thinks that given that Descartes thinks (i), that there is no reason to oppose a roughly Leibnizian strategy for defanging what (ii) appears to say in such a way that it no longer even appears to pose a threat to (i) of the sort that Conant takes it to. Admittedly, this has the unfortunate consequence that we must throw out remarks such as those that Descartes makes to Arnauld, but this seems to Moore a small price to pay. My Descartes holds that a properly nuanced, non-defanged construal of (ii) is consistent with a robust reading of (i) and, indeed, that that is the very point of the remarks that Moore wants to throw out.

Moore's understanding of "Descartes's conception of possibility and necessity" requires that (i) and (ii) be understood along the following lines:

(i′) The limits of what is possible are also the limits of what is possible for God.

(ii′) There is nothing wrong with taking the limits of our powers of modal conception to mark modal limits to God's power, as long as we realize that this is not to say of God's power that it is somehow reined in by our power of comprehension, for what this rules out is nothing doable (not even by God).[37]

If we are going to rescue Descartes's conception of God, then we are going to need a different understanding of "Descartes's conception of possibility and necessity." In particular, a proper understanding of (i) and (ii) must be consistent with the following thoughts:

(i″) There are no possibilities apart from those God created, and those are the very ones marked by the powers of conception that God conferred upon us in creating us.

(ii″) This idea of God (mentioned in (i″)) cannot be the idea of a

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[37] This is Moore's version of a defanged version of (ii). See Moore, this volume, 112, for remarks along these lines. I will return to those remarks below.

creative power whose being depends upon the space of possibilities He creates.[38]

Since Moore himself is mostly interested in Descartes's more famous writings, such as the *Meditations* (and appears to regard remarks about the creation of the eternal truths from his correspondence and *Replies* to the *Objections* as penumbral to the center of his philosophy), it is worth spelling out the bearing of this point on a reading of the *Meditations* (and thus to make it clear that it cannot be insulated from the concerns that Moore seeks to represent as mere lapses of thought that occur only in Descartes's minor writings).

As I noted before, insofar as the dialectical strategy of the *Meditations* proves, in the end, to be a successful one, it is true that it will issue in the conclusion with which Moore wants to end up. That is, as noted above, we will be entitled to conclude (and indeed entitled to do so on the basis of the concepts that God has given us) that we could not have been created by an evil demon. But *how* we reach this conclusion bears on *what* we may say when talking about God—in particular, as we saw above, when faced with the task of responding to the question "*Could* God have done what the evil demon hypothesis supposes our Creator to have done?" Where Moore's Descartes is happy to answer the question in the negative, Descartes himself insists that we should answer the question neither in the negative nor the affirmative, but, rather, reject the very terms in which the question is posed. As we have seen in the previous section: to appreciate fully what is involved in the difference between saying "We should never dare to go so far as to say it was not possible for God to have made contradictories truth together" and saying "It was possible for God to have made contradictories true together" requires that we first adequately clarify our idea of God and free it of various misconceptions.

Our hypothetical Moorean has no interest in such nuances and thus no need for this detour into a consideration of the depth of the difference between the nature of the power of a finite and an infinite being. Hence, he will be able to arrive at his conclusions about what is possible and what is not without any recourse to the concept of God whatsoever. More precisely, he will be able to regard our concept of God as just one of our concepts among others, and, therefore, his considerations need

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[38] This is the non-defanged version of (ii) that I have sought to recommend in my reading of Descartes.

only to turn on an inquiry into the extent of our power of thought. His inquiry has neither room nor patience for the idea of the concept of a power whose fundamental character is different in kind from our power—let alone for the idea that the concept of such a power is a condition of the possibility of making sense of our own capacities for thought and action. Hence, the hypothetical Moorean simply needs to remind his interlocutor that our human concepts are the only concepts that we have. Are we supposed to use somebody else's concepts? To do Descartes the supposed kindness of reading him in this way, as if he were an early modern forerunner of a twentieth-century Oxbridge philosopher, is to do him no kindness at all—not because G. E. Moore is not an interesting philosopher, but because to read Descartes in this way deprives us of the opportunity for a fruitful and challenging encounter with a significant juncture in our own philosophical heritage. It leaves us with a Descartes who is unable to reveal to us what might be philosophically provincial in the perspective that we bring to our reading of him.

This raises the question of what it means to be charitable to a historical figure such as Descartes in one's reading of him.[39] We might distinguish between a Davidsonian and a Wittgensteinian conception of charity when it comes to reading the writings of a significant author in the history of philosophy. Davidsonian historical charity begins by trying to come up with an interpretative scheme that seeks to maximize the number of (what by our lights are) truths uttered by the subject of interpretation; it then works out from there, incorporating as much of what the subject says into its scheme as possible, eventually setting aside the subject's most puzzling remarks that cannot be incorporated into this scheme as, at best, very poorly expressed and, at worst, false. (Applied to the history of philosophy, this is a recipe for generating anachronistic readings.) Wittgensteinian historical charity involves starting at the opposite end: with the most puzzling things that the subject seems moved to say, especially if she appears to be deeply attached to saying them; it gradually works out

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[39] Moore raises his own version of this issue when commenting on the letter to Arnauld of July 29, 1648, in *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*. Right after reporting that he thinks Descartes ought to "consider himself to be perfectly at liberty" to say exactly what Descartes explicitly and carefully says "he would dare not say," Moore appends a footnote in which he assesses how his own attempt to make sense of Descartes here rates in comparison to the attempts of Bennett and Conant with regard to its degree of charity. He concludes that he is less charitable than Bennett (who tries—but Moore thinks fails—to make sense of Descartes's circumspection in declaring that he would not dare say what Moore thinks he ought to say). On the other hand, Moore concludes that at least he is "more charitable to Descartes than Conant is" (34n).

from there to an appreciation of the dialectical situation in which she finds herself—one that allows us to understand why she is moved to say precisely those things in just that way, using exactly those words.

Which conception of charity serves us better in approaching Descartes's remarks about the creation of eternal truths?[40] Does charity here lie in finding a way to justify averting our gaze from the most puzzling things our author says? Or does it lie in finding a way to understand *why* he says what he says (even if we would never want to say that)? I think Conant and Moore are working with different conceptions of what charity requires here. Even though I am now, in many ways, as critical of Conant's reading as Moore is, I continue to share Conant's conception of what charity toward Descartes's puzzling remarks requires.[41] This is probably the main respect in which my reading still remains closer to Conant's than to Moore's.[42]

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[40] The point is not that we should practice one of these conceptions of charity to the exclusion of the other. That would be nonsense: one measure of a successful interpretation of a historical text is that its author comes out saying true things in cases in which there is no discernible impediment to his doing so, while another is that one's interpretation of much of what he says (however true, so interpreted, it may strike one as being) ought not to render a great many other things he says seemingly gratuitously puzzling. The question is—especially when the author of the text in question is not our philosophical contemporary—what relative weight should be accorded these two approaches and their correlative conceptions of where to start in one's approach to the text and how to work out from there.

[41] My complaint about Conant is that he fails at the task that he set himself. He does not arrive at a proper appreciation of the dialectical situation in which Descartes thought he found himself—one that allows us to understand why Descartes is moved to say the very things he does in just the ways he does, using exactly those words and not others. That is why an important part of the case in favor of my reading of Descartes's puzzling remarks and against Conant's rests on my being able to give an account, first, of why those remarks are worded precisely as they are and not in the ways that Conant's reformulates them, and, second, of why Conant's reading is bound to remain blind to those nuances in formulation to which Descartes attaches so much importance and so painstakingly repeats over and over again.

[42] Having now introduced the point that there is more than one dimension along which to assess charity when it comes to approaching such a text, I would like to revisit the issue of relative charity that Moore himself makes so bold as to raise in his footnote in *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*. Once we have this second conception of our two aforementioned conceptions of charity in view, I will say this for Conant: he does not strike me as, at any point, *willfully* uncharitable in his reading of any passage. He is doing his level best to make sense of the whole (and—if the reading offered in the previous section of these replies is correct—he fails miserably). But Moore's reading of the letter to Arnauld does strike me as being, at least on this second measure of what charity requires, willfully uncharitable. This seems to me not unconnected to the utter blitheness with which Moore is willing to declare the passage in the letter to Arnauld to be utterly anomalous, blinding him to the extent to which it is one of a great many passages that present related difficulties. The willfulness of this lack of charity is, I think, the real cause of Moore's total lack of willingness

I want to turn now, however, to noting some of the many respects in which Conant's and Moore's readings far more closely resemble one another than either does mine. Here is a first feature that they share: they both give up on a great deal of Descartes's philosophy. Moore contrives to make it seem as if he is only giving up on some isolated bit of the corpus (some puzzling remarks on a theological matter), whereas Conant is giving up on "a cornerstone of Descartes's entire edifice" (namely, whether we are entitled to rely upon our human concepts in our reflections on what is possible).[43] I share Moore's sense—as, by the way, does Conant—that if Conant's reading of the puzzling remarks is sound, then it has disastrous consequences for what Descartes really ought to conclude about the reliability of our human concepts. In this sense, I think it is right to say that Conant's reading fails miserably. In fairness to Conant, however, there is no particular part of Descartes he is trying to give up on: he is just unable to see how the different parts of what Descartes says hang together (how, for example, what Descartes says about God's relation to what is possible hangs together with what he says about how our human concepts relate to what is possible). Moore's reading, on the other hand, does have the consequence that we need simply to set aside all of Descartes's most careful formulations about what we may and may not say about God. It invites us to conclude that Descartes ought to think the opposite of what he says in those passages. Contrary to what Moore suggests, however, it is the idea of God and not the idea of the reliability of our human concepts, which is the true cornerstone of Descartes's entire edifice.[44] For Descartes, in contrast to our hypothetical Moorean, it is the former idea that grounds the latter. A reading of Descartes that suggests that we should set aside what he says

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even so much as to try to enter this whole region of Descartes's thought—one that has centrally occupied Descartes's readers from Mersenne and Arnauld, through Bréhier and Goureault, to Bennett and Frankfurt. This is a remarkable attitude to have toward such a fateful crossroads in the history of philosophy. For this is the very moment in Descartes's thought which leads most directly to Spinoza and most repels Leibniz (who rightly saw that "Descartes's God is something approaching the God of Spinoza"; letter to Gerhard Molanus, 1679, in *Philosophical Essays,* 242). The condescension here in the end cannot really be contained to one's attitude toward some bit of Descartes. In shrugging off the puzzling remarks, one thereby also looks down one's nose at most of Descartes's most distinguished readers, in effect charging them with all having wasted a great deal of their time attributing significance to a mere lapse in thought.

[43] Moore, this volume, 144.

[44] I suspect that that is a pretty good one-sentence summary of the single largest difference between Descartes's own philosophical edifice and any that ought to be of interest to Moore's Descartes.

about the former so that we can hold on our conception of what we should say about the latter—prioritizing the importance of saying (what we take to be) the right thing about our concepts over saying (what he takes to be) the right thing to say about their Creator—is very far from sharing Descartes's own conception of sound philosophical method. In this respect, Moore's reading, albeit in a very different way, fails no less completely than Conant's. Conant's reading fails to make total sense of Descartes by failing to integrate Descartes's remarks about what we may say about God's free activity into a satisfying overall reading of Descartes. Moore's reading succeeds in making total sense of someone it continues to refer to as "Descartes" by setting aside Descartes's conception of God, thereby seriously attenuating its claim to be a reading of Descartes.

Moore briefly considers this charge in what he calls "The First Concern" about his reading:

> This is a concern that will occur to anyone with even a moderate knowledge of Descartes's philosophy. In fact it is liable to occur to anyone who looks at the quotation from the letter to Arnauld. We there saw Descartes proclaim that "every basis of truth . . . depends on [God's] omnipotence." Does Descartes not famously insist that both the truth and the necessity of any necessary truth depend on God's free choice? In fact is this not the non-negotiable premise of everything else that he has to say about necessity and possibility? How then can it be right to suggest that, on the most natural and coherent development of his view, not even God could make one plus two unequal to three? Surely we relinquish any entitlement to the claim still to be talking about "his" view if we say that.[45]

That seems right. Here is how Moore—in his reply to The First Concern—proposes to undo this impression:

> Descartes does indeed insist that both the truth and the necessity of any necessary truth depend on God's free choice [see, for example, Descartes (1984), "Sixth Set of Replies," 291]. But this can readily be reconciled with the claim that not even God could make one plus two unequal to three—the point being that dependence here need not be understood in terms of the exclusion of possibilities. That one plus two is three; and that it is necessary that one plus two is three—in other

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[45] Moore, this volume, 106–107.

words that our human concepts conflict with one plus two being any-thing other than three—can be regarded, for current purposes, as two data. Descartes's view is that, like everything else, they depend on God's free choice. The first holds because of how God has made the natural numbers; the second holds because of how God has made our human concepts. But we should not say that, in making the natural numbers thus, God has excluded other possibilities; nor that, in making our human concepts thus, God has prevented us from grasping other pos-sibilities. *For there are no other possibilities.*[46]

What Moore says at the end of this passage is—and is meant to be—in absolute discord with Conant's reading. More importantly, for our pre-sent purpose, it is, taken in isolation, in perfect accord with my reading of Descartes. But it is important to distinguish the three different ways in which our three different readings relate to Moore's final italicized proposition above. Conant's reading requires that this proposition be false: that there is a wider modal space within which God operates, which extends beyond the limits of (what we, based on our human con-cepts, take to be) all the possibilities there are. Moore's Descartes re-quires that our grasp of the truth of this proposition not rest on our grasp of any of the actualities there are—that we be able to reason as follows: these are all the possibilities there are; therefore they define the modal space of possibility, which limits even God's free activity prior to His having created anything. This is just what Descartes tells Arnauld and Mersenne we must never say. My reading of Descartes shows us a way to disagree with both Conant and Moore but still agree with Descartes.

It may help to bring out the difference between Moore's Descartes and mine by taking two consecutive looks at the following passage from Moore—first with something from the passage omitted and then with the omission restored:

> The fact remains that it is *not* possible, in Cartesian terms, for one plus two to be anything other than three . . . And "not possible" here does not need to be relativized. Descartes can say, as I have suggested he should say, that there is no such thing as one plus two being anything other than three.[47]

[46] Ibid., 107.
[47] Ibid., 109.

If this is all Moore wanted to claim, then my Descartes and his would be in perfect accord, and we would be at one in our discord with Conant. But let us now restore the omitted portion of the passage:

> The fact remains that it is *not* possible, in Cartesian terms, for one plus two to be anything other than three; <u>and therefore it is not possible for God to make one plus two anything other than three.</u> And "not possible" here does not need to be relativized. Descartes can say, as I have suggested he should say, that there is no such thing as one plus two being anything other than three.[48]

Moore takes the restored second half of the first sentence of the passage to be a trivial consequence of its first half. He sees no room here for any other way to think about the matter. Conant agrees with him about this, though draws from this the opposite conclusion; namely, that Descartes must therefore disagree with the rest of what is said in the passage.

We may continue the above exercise by taking two consecutive looks at another passage from Moore—again first with some bits from the passage omitted and then with the omissions restored:

> Descartes can still say, and in my view should say, that, given the incomprehensibility to minds such as ours of God's making one plus two anything other than three, it is impossible. . . . The point is simply that our power of comprehension indicates what the possibilities are. . . . [49]

Here, too, if this is all Moore wanted to claim, then my Descartes and his would be in perfect accord and at one in our discord with Conant. But let us now attend to the omitted portion of the passage:[50]

> Descartes can still say, and in my view should say, that, given the incomprehensibility to minds such as ours of God's making one plus two anything other than three, <u>it is impossible for Him to do such a thing. This is not to say that God's power of creation is somehow reined in by our power of comprehension.</u> The point is simply that our power of comprehension indicates what the possibilities are: <u>the possibilities, that is, "even for God."</u>

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[48] I have underlined the previously omitted portion.
[49] Moore, this volume, 112.
[50] That is, the portions that are underlined below.

Comparing the two versions of this latter passage yields a fuller set of examples of the sorts of inferences that Moore's Descartes finds it trivial to endorse: from its being incomprehensible to us to its being impossible for God, from the limits of our powers of comprehension to the limits of His power of creation, from what the possibilities are to what they are even for Him. Moore and Conant agree on the logical relation between antecedent and consequent in the case of all three of these conditionals.[51]

This is just the flipside of a further feature that we have already noticed Conant's and Moore's readings share; namely, that they both read the puzzling remarks along the lines that Conant proposes, taking the negation operators to cancel one another out. (That is why those remarks have such unpalatable consequences for Conant and must be deemed to be lapses by Moore.) And this, in turn, is related to yet another feature they share: they both read Descartes as offering an answer to the question that yields the theological triangle. They ascribe to him very different answers to that question, thereby positioning him, in each case, in a very different corner of the triangle. (This, of course, is no impediment to my main criticisms of Conant's reading applying equally to Moore's.)

As far as I can make out, Moore, in the following passage, simply ascribes Leibniz's view (of the relation between the eternal truths and the divine understanding) to Descartes:

> It is all a question of explanatory priority. On Descartes's view, one plus two being equal to three is explained by, but does not explain, God's decreeing that one plus two is equal to three—which is in fact no different from God's understanding that one plus two is equal to three.[52] Descartes takes the former to depend on the latter in just this sense.[53]

I think that Moore is right about both of the following things: (a) that the voluntarist account of how God's understanding depends on his decrees is not Descartes's view of the matter, and (b) that all parties to this debate (including Conant's and Moore's versions of Descartes) view it as resting upon a question of explanatory priority. But I think Moore is

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[51] Since Conant thinks that Descartes is committed in each case to the negation of the consequent, this leads him to deny something about which Moore's Descartes and mine are in complete accord: namely, that our powers of comprehension can properly serve—at least once we have reached the end of the *Meditations*—as a guide to what is possible.

[52] See Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy,* Pt. 1, §23, in *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 201.

[53] Moore, this volume, 108.

wrong to assume that this therefore means (a') Descartes's account may be identified with that of a non-voluntaristic occupant of the triangle, because (b') Descartes shares with all of the other parties to this debate the assumption that its proper resolution requires that we *answer* the presupposed question of explanatory priority.

The following remark of Moore's is helpful for further specifying how the three readings of Descartes—Conant's, Moore's, and mine—stand to one another in this regard:

> I see Descartes as acknowledging the existence of that which is absolutely impossible—"even," as Conant nicely says we cannot help adding, "for [God]."[54] What Descartes says in the letter to Arnauld is in conflict with this, and he should not, in my view, have said it.[55]

Let us break this down into a series of four claims, listing them, for now, simply in the order they occur above:

(1) Descartes acknowledges the existence of that which is absolutely impossible.
(2) Descartes regards that which is absolutely impossible as impossible even for God.
(3) What Descartes says in the letter to Arnauld is in conflict with (2).
(4) Therefore, he ought not to think what he says to Arnauld.

The following are both things Descartes says: (1) and (3); whereas (2) is not something Descartes ever says; it is something Moore thinks he ought to think. Having these propositions in the order they occur above puts the focus where Moore wants it—on (4)—putting the emphasis on what he takes to constitute the crucial point of disagreement between him and Conant. That is to say, this way of looking at things highlights the following set of relations between our readings: Conant and I agree that (3) represents clear textual evidence for rejecting (2), whereas for Moore, something Descartes never says—namely (2)—is taken to be something he ought to think and is then called upon to serve as the main reason for regarding all passages resembling (3) as lapses on Descartes's part.

Let us now excavate the substructure of this disagreement and see if we can isolate the precise point at which my reading departs from each

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[54] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 31.
[55] Moore, this volume, 104.

of the others'.[56] This should also allow us to see better where the moment of divergence between Conant and Moore really occurs. Conant and Moore both have to give up on something Descartes actually says—either (1) or (3)—whereas I do not. Moore and I agree on this much: Conant goes badly wrong in suggesting that Descartes is not entitled to hold (1). Conant and I agree on this much: Moore goes badly wrong in affirming (2) and (4) (both of which fly in the face of the text) and rejecting (3) (which is something Descartes actually says). But I reject the following crucial point, which Conant and Moore both affirm: (1) entails (2). Their most crucial point of disagreement lies here (and not where Moore thinks it does); it turns on how to solve the supposed problem with which we are saddled when we assume that (1) entails (2).

My reading does not face the problem of having to make a forced choice between two things—(1) and (3)—that Descartes actually says, whereas Conant's and Moore's both do. They both have to sacrifice something central to Descartes's philosophy. Conant thinks we must find a way to hang onto (3); this leads him to have to indiscriminately resist all three of the other points. Moore wants to hang onto (1), inferring therefrom that Descartes is obliged to think (2), concluding that this means (3) must be rejected, ergo (4). The crucial difference therefore between my reading and both of theirs is that my Descartes rejects the assumption that (2) follows from (1). More importantly, on my reading, Descartes rejects the presupposition that allows that supposed entailment to go through. He rejects the idea that we can pry the modal space of the possible apart from the other modalities and hence from God's creation. For Descartes, it is God's creation that simultaneously confers upon all three modalities whatever content they have.

Conant and Moore go wrong in opposite ways in relation to this point. Whereas Conant's Descartes seeks to expand the modal limits of possibility in order to carve out a maximally capacious playroom for God's free activity, Moore's seeks to hold those limits fixed and to shoehorn God into them. On the former reading, the space of absolute possibility requires dilation in order to provide a modal frame within which to situate God's creative activity. On the latter, God's creative power must undergo contraction so that the modality of possibility may be placed in

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[56] The one thing all three readings are able to agree on here is the following triviality: (2) and what Descartes says in the letter mentioned in (3) are logically incompatible. This is hardly surprising since in (3) Descartes is in effect just saying we should never say things that have the form of (2).

the preeminent position—in the very position, in fact, that Descartes thinks the idea of God belongs; namely, prior to everything. Notice what Conant's and Moore's Descartes have in common here. Conant's desire to hold onto (3) leads him to sever what is possible for God from what our human concepts would otherwise lead us to regard as the limits of possibility; hence Conant's rejection of (1). Moore's desire to hold onto (1) leads him to situate God's creative activity within the possible, thereby seeking to confer determinate modal content upon thought about what is it was possible for God to create prior to His having created anything—thus requiring that the conditions for thought about what is modally possible be utterly independent of the conditions for thought about what is modally actual.

For all of their differences, Conant's and Moore's Descartes therefore both fully fall within the target range of my Descartes. They are equally sanguine about making claims about what is possible for God, saying things about Him that place Him within the scope of a modal operator. Conant's Descartes's answer to the question "What is possible for God?" is "Everything." For Moore's, the answer to this question is "Anything graspable via our human concepts." For both Conant's and Moore's, this question may therefore be regarded as an intelligible one. This is the crucial point at which my reading parts company with both of theirs. My Descartes regards this question as ill-posed.

Descartes rejects the idea that we can pry the modal space of the possible apart from the other modalities and hence from God's creation; for it is this that simultaneously confers upon all three modalities whatever content they have. For Descartes, this means that *we,* in reflecting upon God's creation, can consider, for example, what is possible in abstraction from what is actual. But this exercise of abstraction is misunderstood if we take it to latch onto a feature of God's creation that could be extracted and remain in place apart from the rest of creation—apart even from God's having created anything. The modality of possibility, for Descartes, cannot articulate a self-standing dimension of constraint on God's activity; for the very intelligibility of modal thought regarding genuine possibility depends upon an internal relation to both necessity and actuality.

This underlying insight retains its importance in Kant but comes to be reformulated in a manner that divests it of its theological garb. It becomes the Kantian idea that all genuinely contentful thought—including thought about what is possible—requires a relation to the actual via the exercise of the faculty of sensibility. In Kant's hands, this leads to a

distinction between pure general logic (that treats of the mere form of thought in abstraction from all content, of what is *merely* possible in the sense of being thinkable without contradiction) and transcendental logic (that treats of what is *really* possible). This distinction plays a crucial role in Conant's article. My reply to Moore above shows that, when it comes to this issue, Conant presents us with a very misleading account of the relation between Descartes and Kant. Conant makes them look much further apart than they really are. What my reading of Descartes brings out—and Conant's and Moore's each obscures—is that Descartes holds with Kant that the conditions of genuinely substantive thought about what is possible are not independent of the conditions of genuinely contentful thought about what is actual. This requires that he break with the crucial presupposition that is common to all three corners of the theological triangle in a manner that anticipates Kant's break with the logical triangle. It is to that break that we now turn.

Section VIII

Reply to Boyle: Kant on the Relation of a Rational Capacity to Its Acts

In the previous reply, we saw how wrong Conant is about Descartes. Now we shall see how wrong he is about Kant. Boyle's contribution to this volume reveals that much of what is wrongheaded in Conant's reading of Kant may be traced directly to his misleading account of the relation between Kant and Frege. Whereas Conant exaggerates certain differences between Descartes and Kant, in this case, the problem lies in Conant's making the two philosophers in question look much closer to each other than they really are.

Though Boyle never says so in so many words, one consequence of his various criticisms of Conant, taken together, is that they, in effect, show that Conant's way of construing the distinction between pure general logic (which treats of the mere form of thought considered apart from its object-relatedness) and transcendental logic (which treats of the form of object-related thought) pulls them too far apart. It would end up having the consequence that the conditions of the former sort of thought can be in place apart from those of the latter—so that thought about the merely possible is prior to thought about the actual for Kant in the same way that it is for Leibniz. This is a consequence of a feature of Conant's reading that Boyle does bring out forcefully (though, of course, he does not put his criticism in this way): namely, that Kant looks to Conant to be someone who may be situated together with Frege in the corner of the logical triangle that bears the heading *Logicism*—that he may be read as someone who holds that the necessities that undergird logic bear

exogenously on the material conditions for thought about what is actual. The main reason that Conant's account of Kant's conception of the priority of logic can be made to appear to resemble Frege's in this way, Boyle suggests, is because Conant does not attend sufficiently to what Kant means by "form"—to how the notion of *form* that figures in Kant's conception is utterly irreconcilable with Frege's whole way of thinking about logic. If we say that Frege, like Kant, is equally concerned with what is familiarly known as *formal logic,* then—Boyle suggests—we are equivocating on what we mean by "formal."[1]

Conant is struck by how both Kant and Frege want to provide an account of logic that rests neither on metaphysics nor on psychology—that is, one that avoids each of the non-logicist corners of the logical triangle. Boyle helpfully summarizes this feature of Conant's reading of Kant as follows:

> On Conant's reading, Kant's conception of logic is innovative in that he holds that the science of logic must be sharply distinguished both from a metaphysical inquiry into the underlying structure of all real existence and from a psychological investigation of the laws that govern how our minds work. It tells us neither about "the nature of reality" nor about "how human beings reason."[2]

If this is all Conant has to say about what Kant's and Frege's conceptions of logic share, then neither Boyle nor I would have any great

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[1] In point of fact, Frege himself seldom uses the term "formal" in connection with his own view and only in comparatively early writings; and (as the following passage from 1885 suggests) what he means by it is just that the propositions of logic partake of (what I have called) Leibnizian generality—that they extend to everything that can be thought:

> [T]he basic propositions on which arithmetic is based cannot apply merely to a limited area whose peculiarities they express in the way in which the axioms of geometry express the peculiarities of what is spatial; rather, these basic propositions must extend to everything that can be thought. And surely we are justified in ascribing such extremely general propositions to logic. I shall now deduce several conclusions from this logical or formal nature of arithmetic. (Frege, *Collected Papers,* 112)

Frege picks up this term from his contemporaries, but in order to see what it means in his writings, we need to appreciate how it is there usually drained of the commitments that come with Kantian logical hylomorphism. In *What Does It Mean to Say that Logic is Formal?* (see especially chap. 5), John MacFarlane argues that Frege abandons this hylomorphic idiom when characterizing his own view as he becomes clearer about what the differences are between his own and Kant's respective conceptions of logic. In the reply to Sullivan, I discuss a passage from Frege's "Dialogue with Punjer" (dating from no later than 1884) where the use of the term "form" is not (yet) entirely drained of its original Kantian hylomorphic commitments.

[2] Boyle, this volume, 118; Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 57.

reason to object. It is important to notice, however, that the following is a merely *privative* characterization of what Kant's and Frege's conceptions of logic have in common: the necessities of logic must rest on a conception that *neither* lodges them in a reality that is prior to our power for thought (so that they are answerable to something outside of and given to thought) *nor* characterizes them as merely contingently binding our thought (so that we can make sense of the idea that they could have been other than they are).

Conant makes it seem as if this privative commonality suffices to situate Kant in roughly the same dialectical position as Frege with respect to the ongoing logical debate. What Boyle brings out, therefore, is that where Conant goes wrong in his overly Fregean reading of Kant is in a certain respect not unlike where Moore goes wrong in his reading of Descartes, in placing Descartes in roughly the same dialectical position as Leibniz with respect to the ongoing theological debate. In order to see this, we need to understand how Kant seeks to break with the crucial presupposition that is common to all three corners of the logical triangle.

Boyle concedes that many of the sentences that Conant comes out with over the course of his exposition of Kant's conception of logic have the ring of accurate summary. He is not concerned with challenging the words on which Conant draws to explain what Kant thinks but rather with questioning Conant's understanding of those words. In particular, Boyle questions whether one and the same understanding of those words can serve to express both what is most central to Kant's conception and what Conant takes that conception to share with Frege's. As already indicated, the first term singled out as requiring more attention is "form." The first question that Boyle presses in this connection may be put as follows: Can an exposition of Kant such as Conant's (which wants to emphasize the affinities between Kant and Frege) keep in focus what is at stake in Kant's characterization of pure general logic as the science of "the mere *form* of thinking"? Boyle remarks,

> The Kantian claims about logic on which Conant focuses are well known. Indeed, they are so familiar that our sense of their distinctiveness has faded, and we are prone to follow Kant in speaking of logic as a "formal" discipline without considering what is at stake in this characterization.[3]

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[3] Boyle, this volume, 119.

I think it is true that Conant is vulnerable to the charge of imagining he is simply following Kant (when he speaks of logic as a "formal" discipline) without sufficiently considering what is at stake for Kant in the characterization of logic as formal. And I think it is true that this allows Conant to imagine that he is speaking of some generic conception of the status of pure general logic that, at least up to some point, Kant and Frege share. But rather than immediately going on to say this in his next sentence, Boyle praises Conant in the following terms:

> One of the great merits of Conant's paper, I think, is that it restores our sense of the profundity of the philosophical stakes here. Conant makes vivid how difficult it is to clarify what a genuinely "formal" science could be and how easy it is, while paying lip-service to the idea that logic is concerned with the very form of coherent thought, to lapse into modes of thinking that treat logic as a substantive science concerned either with certain describable limits of human thinking or with the maximally general character of the world with which our thinking seeks to come to grips.[4]

Boyle distinguishes between what, at first blush, might appear to be three, but turn out to be four, different conceptions of logic. Let us first summarize the way of summarizing things that make it look as if there were only three:

(1) *The "formal" conception:* Logic is concerned with the very form of coherent thought.
(2) *The psychologistic conception:* Logic is a substantive science concerned with describing certain de facto limits of human thinking.
(3) *The realist conception:* Logic is a substantive science concerned with describing the maximally general character of reality.

Conant's paper is said to have the following two great merits:

(i) It makes vivid how difficult it is to clarify what is at stake in (1).
(ii) It makes vivid how difficult it is to spell out how a clarified version of (1) does not wind up collapsing into (2) or (3).

This is a remarkably artful way of accurately summarizing the central stakes of Conant's article while keeping in view what Boyle takes to be its central failing. It allows Boyle to put his agreement with Conant as one of seeing Kant as aiming to articulate (1) as an alternative to (2) and (3):

[4] Ibid.

I think Conant is exactly right to see Kant's reflections on logic as aiming to articulate an alternative to these two options, and I think he is right to identify Kant's characterization of logic as formal as the heart of his distinctive view.[5]

But once Boyle goes to work, it becomes increasingly clear that, though (i) and (ii) express thoughts that both he and Conant endorse, the agreement is largely nominal. What the preceding quotation really says is that Kant seeks to articulate an alternative to (2) and (3) and that Conant is right to think that there is an understanding of the words that figure in (1) that, if so understood, would properly characterize what is truly distinctive about Kant's conception. That turns out to involve less agreement than Boyle tactfully makes it initially appear to involve.

Conant's way of understanding the central implications of the joint truth of (i) and (ii) may be summarized in the following five thoughts:

(a) Kant and Frege both subscribe to (1).
(b) This means Kant and Frege both reject (2) and (3).
(c) Frege imports tensions into his conception of logic (with his force/content distinction, his conception of logic as free of any relation to sensibility and yet related to objects, his conception of logic as the science of maximally generally truths, etc.) that do not sit well with (1).
(d) This is why Frege's deepest criticisms of (2) and (3) cut against features of his own conception of logic.
(e) Wittgenstein seeks to free Frege's conception of logic of these tensions.

Boyle's way of understanding the central implications of (i) and (ii) involves his differing with Conant about (a)–(e) along the following lines:

(a) The words used to express (1) admit of two very different understandings, one that captures a truth about Kant's conception of logic and another that captures a truth about Frege's, but those words do not express a generic conception of logic that Kant and Frege share. So we must distinguish two ways of understanding sentence (1): (1_K) and (1_F).
(b) This means that that there are four fundamentally different conceptions of logic in play here—(1_K), (1_F), (2), and (3)—where Conant sees only three.

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[5] Ibid.

(c) Conant is right that there are many features of Frege's conception of logic (the force/content distinction, the conception of logic as free of any relation to sensibility and yet related to objects, the conception of logic as the science of maximally generally truths, etc.) that do not sit well with (1_K); this is due not to Frege's having imported a tension into (1_K) but to the fundamental differences between (1_K) and (1_F).

(d) The difficulties attendant upon giving an account of (1_K) which keep it from falling into (2) or (3) may not simply be identified with the parallel difficulties which come up in connection with (1_F).

(e) To articulate (1_K) and to articulate a version of (1_F) free of internal tensions is by no means evidently one and the same philosophical task.

Though Boyle, of course, does not put things in these terms, we may reformulate what will turn out to be at stake here in our previous terminology as follows: (1_F) represents one of the three corners of the logical triangle, whereas (1_K) is a way of thinking about logic that rejects a presupposition common to all three corners of that triangle.

The first hint in Boyle's remarks that perhaps Conant's way of understanding (1) fails to distinguish between (1_F) and (1_K) comes in this preliminary overview of his overall aim:

> There are, however, aspects of Kant's view of logic that I believe Conant's discussion understates, aspects that prompt questions about how near Kant's conception stands to the Fregean and Wittgensteinian conceptions of logic with which Conant compares it. My aim in this essay is to highlight some features of Kant's conception on logic that are *not* foregrounded in Conant's discussion, with a view to sharpening our sense of where more recent thinking about the nature of logic has followed Kant and where it has departed from him. My purpose in doing this, I should emphasize, is neither primarily to "set the record straight" about Kant nor to oppose the conception of logic that Conant calls "Kantian." It is rather to point out some resources in Kant's thinking for answering a question that naturally arises if we *accept* that logic is neither a study of the metaphysical nature of reality nor a branch of empirical psychology: the question "Well then, what *is* logic about?"[6]

[6] Ibid.

I will simply ignore for now the irritating occurrence (of the adjectival use) of Wittgenstein's name here and its assumption that Wittgenstein's conception of logic comes closer to belonging in the same box with Frege's than with Kant's when it comes to answering the question "Well then, what *is* logic about?"[7] To say that it is irritating to me is not to deny that what Boyle here implies will strike many wise historians of philosophy as obviously true (including most of the other contributors to this volume). What is frustrating to me is that Boyle, of all people, should have so much difficulty in registering some of the affinities between Kant and Wittgenstein that will occupy us below. I will allow myself to vent about this in a few paragraphs toward the end of this reply.

I will focus, for now, solely on Boyle's charge that Conant fails to appreciate the *depth* of the difference in Kant's and Frege's respective answers to the question "What is logic?" Here is Boyle's first stab at characterizing Kant's answer:

> Kant's answer, I believe, is that logic is concerned with a certain *power* of mind, the understanding—that it is in fact the *self-cognition* of this power. I want to say something about what these claims mean and how they set Kant's conception of logic apart from certain familiar post-Fregean views.[8]

It is worth noting that Boyle here emphasizes a methodological idea that Descartes and Kant share: the place to begin in philosophy is with reflection upon the thinker's self-knowledge of his own power for thought.

It is not a merely stylistic or rhetorical feature of the *Meditations* that it is written from the first-person present indicative point of view. The work exemplifies a series of spiritual exercises that the reader must undertake for herself, if she is to think the essentially first-person present indicative thought achieved in thinking (in Latin) "cogito"—or thinking (in English) "I think"—and, so too, for her thinking the subsequent thoughts that are grounded upon the cogito. Descartes issues the following warning to the prospective reader in the preface to the *Meditations*: "I wound not urge anyone to read this book except those who are able and willing to meditate seriously with me."[9] After quoting this remark, Bernard Williams observes:

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[7] I will return to this question in my replies to Sullivan and Stroud.
[8] Boyle, this volume, 119.
[9] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 8.

Descartes . . . makes it clear that he means the *Meditations* not to be a treatise, a mere exposition of philosophical reasons and conclusions, but rather an exercise in thinking, presented as an encouragement and a guide to readers who will think philosophically themselves. Its thoughts, correspondingly, are presented as they might be conducted by its author—or rather, as though they were being conducted at the very moment at which you read them. Indeed, the "I" who is having these thoughts may be yourself. Although we are conscious, in reading the *Meditations,* that they were written by a particular person, . . . the "I" that appears throughout them from the first sentence on does not specifically represent that person: it represents anyone who will step into the position it marks, the position of the thinker. . . . This "I" is different, then, from the "I" that occurs in the *Replies to the Objections.* In the R*eplies,* Descartes speaks straightforwardly for himself. . . . The "I" in the *Meditations* . . . represents their narrator or protagonist, whom we may call "the thinker."[10]

The *Meditations,* unlike the *Replies,* do not merely speak of the cogito but rather *enact* it. For the reader to recognize the claim of the cogito upon her, she, too, must *think* it—by occupying the position of the thinker—*herself.* This is a point upon which Descartes himself insists:

[T]he thought of each person—i.e., the perception or knowledge which he has of something—should be for him the "standard which determines the truth of the thing"; in other words, all the judgments he makes about this thing must conform to his perception if they are to be correct.[11]

This understanding of the standpoint from which philosophical reflection must be conducted is, as we shall see, equally central to Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein, but—as we shall also see—they each arrive at a different conception of what full faithfulness to it requires of the philosoph-

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[10] Bernard Williams, "Introductory Essay on Descartes' *Meditations*" (in *The Sense of the Past,* op. cit.), 246.

[11] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 272. The passage goes on to make it clear that even in those cases in which we rely upon the judgment of others, we do not thereby cease to exercise our own power of judgment—for we so rely rightly only if, in so doing, we rely upon our own judgment that we ought to follow the judgment of another: "Although ignorant people would do well to follow the judgment of the more competent on matters which are difficult to know, it is still necessary that it be their own perception which tells them they are ignorant; they must also perceive that those whose judgment they want to follow are not as ignorant as they are" (273).

ical inquirer: in *The Critique of Pure Reason* it is encoded and transmogrified in the demand that the inquiry take the form of reason's knowledge of itself; in the *Begriffsschrift* in the requirement (displayed through the judgment stroke) that each reader enact for herself a recognition of that which is to be judged as true; in the *Tractatus* in the ladder that each reader must ascend and throw away herself; and in *Philosophical Investigations* everywhere and in every way—in the array of philosophical exclamations, each of which are to be acknowledged by the reader as hers or not, each followed by questions, suggestions, and thought experiments that she is to pose, consider, and explore for herself.

We saw above, in the reply to Moore, that it takes quite a bit of work for Descartes's meditator to work his way out from the certainty of the cogito to a rational justification of his entitlement to rely upon the eternal truths (and hence the truths of logic). While allowing that there is something importantly right in Descartes's idea that the "I think" represents the highest point of reason—reason's self-knowledge of itself in its purest form—Kant will argue that Descartes's conception of the cogito is, in one respect, too thin and, in another, too thick.

Descartes's cogito takes its point of departure from a certain way of asking—and hearing what is asked in—the question "Who am I?" It is reformulated into the following question: "Who am I insofar as I am so much as *able to ask* this question?" But Descartes does not linger over the question so posed for anywhere near as long as Kant would have liked him to. Rather Descartes slides effortlessly into identifying that version of his question with something that Kant wants to teach us to hear as not simply the same question, but as yet a further fateful and philosophically premature reformulation of the question—namely, into the following further question: "What *sort of being* must I be that I am so much as able to ask this question?" In connection with the first way of asking the question, Descartes, in effect, observes that in asking this question I cannot doubt that I am thereby exercising a capacity for thinking. In answer to its further fateful reformulation, Descartes concludes that the kind of thing—the kind of *ens*—that I am is a thinking substance. Kant wishes to retain the insight in Descartes's answer to his first way of posing the question, while wishing to resist not only the specific answer given to the second way of posing the question, but more importantly the methodological presupposition on which it turns.

Let us call the first way of posing the question of the cogito "the question of the logical character of the I" and the second "the question of

the metaphysical character of the I"—or, for short, *the logical cogito* and *the metaphysical cogito*. The first of these questions seeks to clarify *the logical I*—where for Kant this is a question that belongs to logic, to an inquiry into what thinking qua logical capacity is. The second of these questions seeks to answer the question "What is a human being?"—where for Kant this is a question that belongs to philosophical anthropology, to an inquiry that seeks to determine the nature of a special sort of being. Descartes's first and fruitful way of posing his question contains what Kant thinks of as the insight of the cogito. It uncovers the actuality of the logical I, as well as a certain formal aspect of its unity. It uncovers its actuality inasmuch as it is manifest to me that my capacity for thinking is in *energeia* in my very asking of the question. It uncovers a formal aspect of the unity of the logical I inasmuch as it renders it equally manifest to me that I thereby exclude the possibility of judging that what I thereby think is something that I do not think or am unable to think—that is, that there are certain conditions on what is so much as compossible in the logical consciousness of a single unitary logical I.

Kant's criticism of Descartes is that the logical cogito—rather than being properly elucidated and explored in its own right—is occluded by the desire to rush on to the metaphysical cogito, hence to the question: What is the underlying substantial nature of the I that thereby thinks? One is well advised to rush on to that latter question only if the following methodological commitment about how to conduct a philosophical inquiry is sound: it is possible as *a first step* for me to work out what sort of peculiar and special kind of being *this* being is that *I* am—a being who is able to ask questions about what sort of being it is that anything is—and then in a second step to broaden out my inquiry to clarify what sort of being it is that other beings are (who differ from me in their *kind* of being) in order to make further sense of my kind of being's possibility and actuality. This is what Descartes's meditator, in effect, does: he first determines that he is a finite thinking substance and then he works his way out from there to the conclusion that this requires that there must be an infinite substance (on which his own possibility depends) and that there are finite corporeal substances (on which features of his own actuality—qua embodied sensing finite thinker—depend). That is to say, Descartes's inquiry starts from an initial determination of the nature of a special sort of being and then moves out from there to further questions about the nature of other sorts of being and to the more general question regarding the nature of being as such.

Kant—like early Wittgenstein after him—will want to disentangle the logical from the metaphysical cogito: the logical insight (into the formal character of the capacity) from the methodological rush to determine the thinker's substantive metaphysical (material or immaterial) character. Indeed, Kant—and early Wittgenstein after him—seeks to teach that it is only once we are clear that what reveals itself in the logical cogito is not merely the logical form of the thinker but equally that of anything thinkable, only then do we properly understand what the logical cogito is—in grasping that what it shows is no less a revelation of the form of being than the form of self. Only then for Kant—as for Wittgenstein—do we put ourselves in a position to approach from the proper philosophical angle questions about what self, thought, and world each are and how they might stand to one another. That is to say, only once we have clarified the dimension of identity in the logical form of thinking and being are we in a position to tease apart the ways in which philosophy may retain a genuine interest in clarifying the dimensions along which they differ.[12]

Let us first look at how Kant himself reformulates what he takes to be the insight in the logical cogito, before considering further how he disentangles it from the metaphysical cogito. For Kant, as for Descartes, there is no inferential step from what I think to that I think. That there is no such step is something Descartes emphasizes in his *Second Replies:*

> When someone says "I am thinking, therefore I am, or I exist", he does not deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognizes it as something self-evident by a simple intuition of the mind. This is clear from the fact that if he were deducing it by means of a syllogism, he would have to have had previous knowledge of the major premise "Everything which thinks is, or exists"; yet in fact he learns it from experiencing in his own case that it is impossible that he should think without existing.[13]

What Kant thinks is right here—that Descartes's conception of the cogito is the expression of a form of knowledge that is already present in every act of knowledge—he will put like this: the "I think" must be able to

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[12] The aim of the next several replies, starting with the present one, will be to reveal the more determinate shape that this fundamentally anti-Cartesian philosophical methodology acquires in Kant. The aim of the last few replies will be to consider how a philosophical project of that Kantian shape comes to be reconfigured and reoriented in Wittgenstein.

[13] *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 100.

accompany all of my representations.[14] This means that, for Kant, as for Descartes, the act of thinking "I think p" is contained in each of my acts of thinking "p" for any $p,$ and in such a way that what "I think p" and "p" respectively express are not two separate acts but one.[15] For Kant, the "I think" in "I think p" is a unitary aspect of the activity of judgment—where judgment itself must be understood as essentially belonging to a structured form of activity manifested through exercises of a rational capacity. On this account, the unity of any such act is not distinct from the consciousness of its unity—from (what Kant means by his often misunderstood term) *self-consciousness*. Kantian self-consciousness, unlike Cartesian self-consciousness, is not a consciousness of a distinct something—"the self" that is doing the thinking—a substance that is the larger something or somewhere in which the act of thinking supposedly resides and of which the determinate act of thinking is a mere mode.[16]

[14] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B132,152–153. I take it that when Kant speaks of "the 'I think'" (*das 'ich denke'*), he means his German expression to be understood as alluding to (what Descartes calls in Latin) "the 'I think'" (the *cogito*). In the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, his primary concern is to bring out the truth in Descartes's conception of the cogito, postponing the task of bringing out the confusions and illicit assumptions in Descartes's treatment of the cogito for the Paralogisms.

[15] Pierre Bourdin, the author of the *Seventh Objections,* attributes to Descartes a conception of the cogito according to which it is an act of consciousness that takes *another* act of consciousness as its object. As Bourdin puts it, by "thinking" Descartes must mean: "when you think, you know and consider that you are thinking" (Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. 2, 364). Descartes summarizes the assumed conception of what it is for the mind to have knowledge that it is thinking as follows: "[I]t is not sufficient for it to think: it is further required that it should think that it is thinking, by means of a reflexive act" (382). He rejects this as a "deluded" conception and insists that for me to have knowledge that I think it is *sufficient* that I think. The awareness that I am thinking is not an awareness that first enters the picture through a different—a second—thought "about" the first thought. As Descartes puts it: "The initial thought by means of which we become aware of something does not differ from the second thought by means of which we become aware that we were aware of it" (ibid.). If there were such a difference—such a gap—between my thinking and my knowledge of my thinking, then (as noted in the reply to Moore above) that would furnish the evil demon with the foothold he needs to disarm the cogito of its force.

[16] Matt Boyle formulates the thrust of Kant's deepest ground of objection here (against Descartes's move from reflection on the unity of the logical "I" to a substantive claim about the nature of the metaphysical "I"), as follows:

> [T]he deeper concern . . . is . . . that my apperceptive awareness of thinking does not by itself support the ascription of this activity to a subject. After all, to ascribe this activity to a subject is to ascribe it to an entity that is presumed to transcend the present act of thinking, an entity conceived as capable of performing indefinitely many such acts. . . . Certainly the claim that there is such an entity does not seem indubitable in the way that our apperceptive awareness of presently thinking is indubitable. To doubt the latter awareness seems incoherent, since to doubt that one thinks is itself to think something. But it is not obviously incoherent to doubt that there is a subject who performs this act of

The determinable something that is further determined in and through each of my acts of thinking, for Descartes, is my thinking substance: my *res cogitans*. For Kant, self-consciousness is not a determination of a *res*.

We touch here on the answer to the question: Why, according to Kant, is Descartes's conception of this single unitary act too thick? Not only because Kant rejects the idea that self-consciousness is an awareness of a determinate something (a thinking substance) over and above a self-consciousness of unity, but more fundamentally because he rejects Descartes's understanding of the logical character of what is involved in an act of "recognition" or "identification" of one's consciousness *as* having a certain unity. As we just saw, for Descartes, this act involves recognition of a particular determination of the thinking thing—the *res cogitans*—that I am. For the reasons given immediately above, this involves no inferential step for Descartes from "I think" to "I am"—this is what Kant

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thinking—for even if the existence of the act is indubitable, the existence of its subject is not, precisely because the latter is presumed to exist in a way that transcends this act. The "I" that thinks is supposed to be the bearer of this act of thinking and (at least potentially) indefinitely many others. How could indubitable awareness of a present act of thinking by itself support positing this more expansive sort of entity? . . . Nor do matters improve much if we shift from the Cartesian focus on the indubitability of I think to the Kantian emphasis on I think as expressing consciousness of the activity of unifying diverse representational materials into a thought. The point remains that it is one thing to be conscious of the activity of thinking, another to be conscious of a subject who transcends the present act of thinking. To suppose that the former sort of awareness implies the latter appears to involve a slide. . . . (Mathew Boyle, "Longuenesse on Self and Body," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 98, no. 3 [May 2019], 731)

Hobbes, in the *Third Objections,* anticipates this objection. He raised the worry that Descartes slides in his talk of "a thinking thing" from a characterization of the thinking as an act to a characterization of it as the essence of the sort of thing that is acting. Hobbes thinks Descartes is entitled to the first characterization but not the second. He is happy to concede that when I think something, I thereby know that I exercise the capacity to think, and hence thereby know myself to have such a capacity. This tells me something about acts of which the sort of thing that I am is capable, but—Hobbes objects—it does not yet tell me the essence of the thing. In the *Third Replies* Descartes does not really meet the objection head-on, but he does make it clear that the argument involves the very move to which Hobbes and Kant both object. For he admits that the "I" who is engaged in an act of thinking may be said to be identical with a thinking thing, only if on the second of those two uses of "thinking" it "is taken to refer [not just to the capacity for understanding, but rather] . . . to the thing which understands" (Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 123). Kant's arguments in the Paralogisms against the Rational Psychologist also serve as arguments against Descartes's attempts to gather the nature of the metaphysical I from the character of the logical I. For example, Kant's argument in the second paralogism is directed against a Rational Psychologist who seeks to argue from the unity of a thought to the character of the thinking substance in which such a thought inheres. Daniel Warren helpfully summarizes the drift of Kant's argument against such a move as follows:

finds philosophically astute in Descartes's conception of the cogito.[17] Yet for Descartes this non-inferential apprehension of the unity of the logical "I" is supposed to yield knowledge not only of the actuality of its capacity for thinking but also of the metaphysical nature of the underlying substance that bears this capacity and is here and now revealing itself to be the immaterial locus of that thinking—this is what Kant finds philosophically obtuse in Descartes's conception of the cogito. This rep-

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[I]f we just start from the thought itself . . . we do not have the resources that could license the inference to the character of its metaphysical ground, i.e., to the character of what metaphysically underpins the thought, the substance. From a thought we can perhaps infer, in an indeterminate way, perhaps there is a thinking thing, something which has this thought. We can perhaps infer there is something with a power: the power of thought. But if what we want is an account of the metaphysics of a substance whose accidents are thoughts, this characterization of its essential powers is too thin to serve as a starting point. So, in the absence of a substantive metaphysical account of the forces or powers constituting the essence of a thinking subject, the rational psychologist is not in a position to claim that a thought cannot be produced unless a single simple *substance* produces it. (Daniel Warren, "Kant on the Substance-Accident Relation and the Thinking Subject," in *Rethinking Kant, Vol. 4*, ed. P. Muchnik and O. Thorndike [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015], 47)

Similarly, Kant's arguments in the Third Paralogism—against the Rational Psychologist's conception of the character of the persistence of a thinking substance over time—turn on pointing out how we similarly cannot ground an inference from the character of the logical I to a substantive conception of what is involved in a thought's inherence in a thinking subject. Merely theoretical reflection on the logical I—the thinking subject—though it can yield (what Kant calls) an idea of the self, cannot yield a concept (in Kant's strict sense of the word). For it is not a representation that arises through an intuition of the self and "without an intuition, we cannot have the appropriate concept, and therefore . . . can't know the *nature* of the self, that is we can't know the *kind* of thing that a self essentially is" (ibid., 54).

[17] We might rephrase the bit of Cartesian doctrine here at issue in Kant's preferred idiom as follows: The apprehension that "I am" for Descartes is already contained in any first-person self-conscious apprehension of the actuality of my capacity to think. That this is how Descartes conceives of the relation between the "I think" and the "I am" in *cogito ergo sum* is brought out particularly vividly in Heidegger's various scattered remarks about Descartes's cogito—as, for example, in the following remarks:

Thinking is always as "I think," *ego cogito*. This implies: I am, *sum; cogito, sum*—is the highest certainty lying immediately in the proposition as such. . . . The formula sometimes assumed by the proposition—"*cogito ergo sum*"—gives rise to the misunderstanding that it forms the conclusion of an inference. This fails to hit the mark and also cannot be right; for this conclusion would have to possess as its major premise: *id quod cogitat, est;* as minor premise: *cogito;* as conclusion: *ergo sum*. But what stands in the major premise would only be a formal generalization of what lies in the proposition: *cogito—sum*. Descartes himself stresses that no conclusion is present. The *sum* is not a consequence of thinking but, conversely, the very basis of thinking, the *fundamentum*. (Heidegger, *The Question Concerning the Thing* [New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018], 71)

resents an attempt to squeeze out of the mere self-consciousness of the cogito more than Kant thinks it can yield. For Kant, the "I think" is not an identificatory act—an act of recognizing something *as* a case of something—*as* falling under a kind. Descartes—and post-Cartesian philosophy more generally—construes the "as" here as a determination of consciousness (as the subsumption of something particular under a concept)—hence as the identification of something more general and determinable under which my act of thinking falls. For Kant, this is to misunderstand what is logically *sui generis* in the relation of self-consciousness to consciousness: self-consciousness is *the form* of rational consciousness. Each act of judgment is a unity of consciousness.

For Kant, each such act is both the act of thinking a judgable content and at the same time an actualization of self-consciousness—an act of one's capacity for recognizing one's consciousness as partaking of just *this* unity. It is instructive to be clear where Kant differs here, in his account of self-consciousness, from Descartes, on the one hand, and from Frege, on the other. Having just seen what is too metaphysically thick, for Kant, in the Cartesian account of the cogito, let us now ask: How, according to Kant, is Descartes's conception of this single unitary act, in a different respect, nonetheless still too thin? For Kant, the unity of the cogito presupposes the whole of the original synthetic unity of apperception.[18] The overarching synthetic unity of consciousness is a consciousness of what is logically compossible in a single consciousness. It is implicit in any act of awareness of unity in consciousness. Yet this is also why for Kant, unlike for Frege, the very idea of logical unity already presupposes the logical "I." For Kant, the unity of thought and inference presuppose the self-consciousness of the activity of the judging subject. For Frege, both the internal logical unity of a thought and the overarching inferential unity that binds thoughts together in relations of validity are, as such, independent of a judging subject's consciousness of such unity. For Kant, on the contrary, self-consciousness of the unitary character of the whole of consciousness (synthetic unity)—one for which the unity of the whole is prior to the unity of any of its parts—is necessarily implicit in any constituent unity in consciousness and thus is a condition of the very possibility of judgable content. For Frege, thoughts are brought to self-consciousness through the act of judgment, while, for Kant, the formal

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[18] For Kant, this requires not only the forms of unity represented in the table of judgments be in act but also at least incipiently those of the categories. This means that the "I think" presupposes not only all of pure general logic but also all of transcendental logic.

unity of consciousness is logically prior to the unity of any material element or act that can figure as a content of consciousness.[19]

Descartes, Frege, and Kant all agree on this point: the Cartesian cogito (through which in thinking anything I think myself) or the Fregean "I judge" (which the judgment stroke in the *Begriffsschrift* expresses) or the Kantian "I think" (which necessarily can accompany any thought) does not add any content to consciousness. Descartes, however, takes the organizing principle of his system—that is, the logical unity of substance/attribute/mode—to be able to structure every moment of the system, including the relation between the thinking subject and his particular thoughts. Frege is, in this respect, more circumspect that Descartes. At the very moment in which the Cartesian/Kantian moment of self-consciousness is permitted to enter Frege's system, the otherwise omnipresent principle of logical structure in the *Begriffsschrift* is permitted to break down. Nothing prefaced by a judgment stroke can figure as an argument of a function; hence the relation of the judgment stroke to the judgable content to which it attaches cannot be construed as yet a further case of function/argument complexity.[20] Frege recognizes that the relation of self-consciousness to its contents does not fit the organizing principle of his system but seeks to contain the problem by confining the activity of the judging subject to the periphery of his system—as involving an act that attaches to the function/argument complexity of a structure of unity that qua judgable content can be specified without reference to the unity of self-consciousness.

Against Frege, Kant would be concerned to argue that the self-consciousness of the judging subject must already be in act in the very constitution of that to which the judgment stroke is supposed to attach in the *Begriffsschrift.* Against Descartes, Kant is concerned to argue that the condition that the "I think" must be able to accompany all of my representations is not something from which I can infer the existence of anything. The knowing subject's self-knowledge of her own existence, for Kant, requires not merely theoretical self-knowledge, but *practical*

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[19] This requires for Kant, on the one hand, that we recognize the sameness of the synthetic and analytic unities and, on the other, that each such analytic unity presupposes a prior moment of synthesis. Hence, for Kant, the analytic truths of pure general logic presuppose those of transcendental logic for their very intelligibility. This makes for a stark contrast to Frege, whose conception of the domain of analytic truths is one whose conditions of intelligibility are fully independent of any knowledge of synthetic truths.

[20] It is thus no accident that the *Tractatus,* which rejects Frege's disassociation of force from content, charges Frege with failing to appreciate the distinction between a function and an operation. These are twin aspects of a single criticism.

self-knowledge—a form of knowledge that is the cause of what it understands.

What Kant would criticize in Frege's disassociation of force from content and does criticize in the Cartesian conception of the cogito both bear on an understanding of why Kant's answer to the question "What is logic?"—as Boyle rightly suggests—is *die Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft*. The arguments in the *First Critique* that show how the Cartesian cogito is too thin at one and the same time reveal that the unity of the "I think" already presupposes the whole repertoire of our cognitive powers, where these must be conceived as the various aspects of a single unified cognitive power.

The above considerations indicate reasons for being suspicious of Conant's ways of opposing both Kant and Frege to Descartes as well as of more specifically yoking Kant and Frege together. Now let us relate these considerations to yet further reasons for suspicion that Boyle adduces. Conant's article works to produce the impression that a Kantian and a certain post-Fregean conception of logic share a good deal in common. Here are some of their putative common features:

> Conant draws attention to several features of Kant's conception of logic that look remarkably modern: his insistence on a distinction between logic and psychology, his reliance on the notion of form in characterizing logic's special subject-matter, his rejection of the idea that logic constitutes an "organon" of substantive cognition, and so on.[21]

It now looks as if there are at least three features that are generically shared by Kantian and comparatively contemporary post-Kantian conceptions. Rather than attacking this claim head on, Boyle begins elsewhere, by drawing attention to "two other, equally prominent features of Kant's conception of logic that are liable to seem puzzling and alien to contemporary readers."[22] The first of these has to do with what might appear to a post-Fregean reader to be a certain lack of resoluteness—or what Boyle calls a certain ambivalence—in Kant's view of the relation between logic and psychology. In the remainder of this reply, I will concentrate on the considerations that Boyle adduces under this heading and on the question of which sort of criticisms of Conant's reading follow from them.[23]

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[21] Boyle, this volume, 119–120.
[22] Ibid., 120.
[23] This means that I regrettably must neglect the many fascinating and pertinent points that Boyle makes in his discussion of the other prominent yet puzzling feature of Kantian

Here is the how Boyle initially indicates the prominent yet puzzling feature at issue:

> [T]here seems to be a curious ambivalence in Kant's view of the relation between logic and psychology. On the one hand, he famously complains that: "[s]ome logicians presuppose *psychological* principles in logic." . . . Yet even as Kant insists that logic differs fundamentally from psychology, he persists in characterizing its subject matter by appeal to seemingly psychological notions.[24]

What psychological notions? Boyle quotes Kant characterizing pure general logic as the "science of the rules of understanding in general,"[25] and Boyle points out that "the understanding" for Kant names a cognitive faculty—indeed, one of the two fundamental "stems" of our human cognitive power.[26] Doesn't this mean that logic investigates the *mind?* Doesn't Kant here speak in a way that Frege never would? Doesn't this already suffice to show that Kant's conception of logic is too psychological by Frege's lights? Isn't this because Kant ties what we investigate to a particular cognitive faculty in a way that Frege never would? These ways of putting the supposed differences between Kant and Frege will not appear to Conant to cut that deep.

Indeed, if the worry here were *just* as Boyle first puts it, that (though he takes the *mode* of logical inquiry to differ in important ways from that of psychological inquiry) Kant takes logic and psychology to have a common *topic*—so that we may say that both sciences are concerned with "the mind"—then Conant could counter that this hardly shows Kant is that far from Frege, or vice versa. Conant would concede that Frege has become more hesitant about speaking in this way than Kant has.[27] Frege, after all, writes at a time when psychologism about logic has become more pervasive than it was in Kant's day. So Frege is at every point concerned that the psychologistic theorist of logic may misconstrue matters. So he will be worried that, as a matter of rhetorical strategy, talk of the mind (as what logic investigates) is vulnerable to psychologistic misunderstandings. The question then becomes the following: Is this just a difference in rhe-

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logic—namely, the way in which it might appear to us to treat a mere fragment of the territory that logic should treat.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A52/B76, 93.

[26] Ibid., A15/B29, 61.

[27] But, as we shall see below, Conant also adduces passages (such as the one from *Collected Papers,* 368–369, quoted below) in which Frege *does* speak this way.

torical strategy, in which Frege abandons Kantian ways of speaking for tactical reasons, without thereby abandoning a fundamentally Kantian conception of logic? Or is the reason it comes so much more easily to Frege to abandon these ways of speaking than it ever would be for Kant a function of genuinely deep differences in their respective conceptions of how the question "What is logic?" ought to be answered?

Conant's article is, of course, at least in certain respects, very concerned with bringing out important differences in Kant's and Frege's respective conceptions of logic—but not the differences that interest Boyle most. This is certainly related to the fact that, in other respects, that article works no less hard to give the impression that some of the apparent differences between Kant and Frege are more a matter of rhetorical strategy than Boyle is inclined to suppose. Hence the article labors to adduce passages from Frege that show that he is occasionally willing (if albeit somewhat reluctantly) to talk in ways that help bring out how he is able to regard his own conception of logic as genuinely Kantian. There are three sorts of quotations in Conant's article that are pertinent here. First, there are the sorts of passages in which Frege does allow himself to talk about "the mind." Second, there are ones in which he comments on the rhetorical strategies he employs, how they differ from Kant's, and why they should be taken to represent a departure only from the letter and not the spirit of Kant's philosophy. Third, there are those in which he makes it clear that logic does investigate truths that may be traced to one of our cognitive faculties. Let us take a brief glance at each of the three sorts.

While insisting that neither logic nor mathematics investigates the contents of the consciousness of individual people, Frege is still prepared to say things such as this: "[T]heir task could be represented rather as the investigation of *the* mind; of *the* mind, not of minds."[28] We see here that Frege inherits from Kant a logical conception of the human mind or psyche—one that is to be sharply demarcated from a merely psychological conception of human mindedness. For Kant, transcendental philosophy inquires into the conditions of the possibility of knowledge, where the logical form of the capacity in question is to be distinguished from its material exercise by this or that individual knower. For Frege, logic investigates what can be true or false—thoughts—where these must be independent of individual minds. As an empirical science, psychology must start by investigating individual cases of mind and work up to em-

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[28] Frege, "The Thought," in *Collected Papers,* 368–369.

pirical generalizations about the nature of consciousness. Their various differences notwithstanding, Kant and Frege are equally insistent that such a bottom-up form of inquiry will never arrive at a conception of something either of them would be willing to call "logic." This is the common ground between Kant's and Frege's philosophy that Conant labors to bring out by adducing passages in which Kant says things like this:

> If we were to draw our principles from psychology—that is, from observations of our understanding—we would merely see how thinking occurs and how it is under various subjective hindrances and conditions. This would lead to the cognition of merely contingent laws. But in logic it is not a question of contingent but of necessary rules; not of how we do think, but of how we should think.[29]

We saw above that Kant's and Frege's shared rejection of this hyper-empiricist conception of logic is a mere privative commonality in their respective conceptions of logic. What our most recent quotation from Frege shows is how they are both happy to express that to which they are committed in rejecting the hyper-empiricist conception by saying that logic does not investigate minds or understandings but rather "the mind" or "the understanding."

This leads to the second sort of quotation from Frege that we find in Conant's article, having to do with how psychological notions such as *consciousness* and *idea* must be carefully distinguished from properly logical notions such as *thought* and *concept*. Frege is explicit, in these passages, that he is abandoning Kant's preferred terms—such as *Bewusstsein* and *Vorstellung*—because they have become hopelessly impregnated with psychologistic misunderstandings of the original Kantian terminology. Frege views these misunderstandings as largely having been occasioned through relentless misuse of the original terminology by later pseudo-Kantian philosophers. So in making his preferred terminological stipulations, Frege might appear to be differing with Kant, but he cautions us not to be misled by appearances here. About the term *Vorstellung,* Frege says, "I shall myself, to avoid confusion, use 'Vorstellung' only in the subjective sense," but he then goes on to claim that it was only because Kant was not careful to restrict his use of this term to an

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[29] Kant, *Jäsche Logic,* 9:14, in *Lectures on Logic,* ed. Michael J. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 529.

objective sense that "his true view was made so difficult to discover."[30] Frege makes a similar point about his own preferred way of characterizing the analytic/synthetic distinction.[31] As we saw in Section V above, both he and Kant, when characterizing a judgment as analytic or synthetic, are equally concerned with tracing it to the sources of knowledge—the *Erkenntnisquellen*—on which it depends.

As we saw above in Kant, *Erkenntnisquelle* is an alternative term of art for an *Erkenntnisvermögen*—a cognitive faculty. This brings us to the third sort of passage mentioned above, in which Frege traces logic to a special cognitive faculty.[32] Admittedly, the differences in Frege's and Kant's conceptions here are great. Frege thinks that the faculty of *reason,* the logical faculty, without reliance upon sensibility, can directly give us (logical) objects. As we touched on in Section V, he knows this represents a fundamental break with Kant.[33] But his very way of putting his difference from Kant shows that he wants to think of the objects in question as standing to the faculty of reason in a manner that, at least in one respect, parallels Kant's account of how the objects of knowledge stand to sensibility (namely, that they *are given to* the faculty), while in another respect differing (namely, in virtue of being given to our mind *even more directly* than objects known through the senses are). The objects known in this way, Frege says, are utterly transparent to the faculty in question—reason.[34]

The foregoing shows that, without further commentary, none of the following might seem to suffice to demarcate Kant's conception from Frege's: Kant thinks that logic is concerned with the mind, more specifically still with (something that we might call) the understanding in general, and this is because he sees it as tied in some special way to one of our cognitive faculties. Without further elaboration, the apparent insufficiency of such considerations is no accident: Frege is laboring to retain various features of (his understanding of) the Kantian conception while introducing enormous innovations into it. But to leave matters here would be to miss the points at which Boyle's criticisms of Conant begin to have their real bite. Boyle brings out how the sense in which logic is concerned with a certain "power" or "faculty" of our mind in Kant *is* genuinely different from anything that such a claim could mean for Frege.

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[30] Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic,* 37n.

[31] Ibid., 3n.

[32] See, for example, Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 59, and then 59n.

[33] See Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic,* sect. 89, 101–102.

[34] See ibid., sect. 105, 115.

Before we explore further the sense in which (what Kant calls) logic, according to Boyle, investigates the form of our power or faculty for thought, it is worth pausing to note the range of cases across which the hylomorphic terminology of form and matter is put to work in Kant's critical writings. In Aristotle, this terminology has its primary home in application to substances. It is important to appreciate not only that Kant "also" applies this terminology to cognitive faculties, but that his application of this terminology is not a mere extension. It involves a transformation and reinterpretation of the distinction itself and hence of its significance even in connection with its application to the sorts of cases that are to be found in pre-Kantian philosophy (such as we find, for example, in the distinction between the form and matter of a syllogism or an inference). All applications of the form/matter distinction in Kant's writings subsequent to the critical turn are to be understood in the light of the distinction's logically primary application to cognitive faculties,[35] where this application, in turn, is to be comprehended through the first-person self-conscious form of reflection animating the critical project as a whole—one through which our power of knowledge seeks to understand itself.[36]

We can bring out some of what is at stake here by pausing to consider an intriguing chart tabulated by Nicholas Stang—and, in particular, by considering what sorts of entries do and do not figure under its columns. The chart is introduced with the following remarks:

> One thing that leaps out about Kant's ubiquitous use of the matter/form distinction is that some of the things to which he applies the distinction

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[35] Our topic, in the pages to follow, will primarily concern a substitution instance of this general point: namely, the specific application that Kant makes of the form/matter distinction in his writings on *logic*. The guiding assumption will be that in this application all employments of the term "form" are to be understood in the light of the distinction's primary application to the relevant cognitive faculty—namely, *the understanding*. Hauping Lu-Adler, in a manner characteristic of a number of contemporary scholars of Kant's logic, seeks to bring order into Kant's ideas by distinguishing different senses of the term "formal" as it occurs in his writings in application to logic. (She herself is concerned to distinguish three such primary senses of the term; see her *Kant and the Science of Logic* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018], 149.) I follow Boyle in taking it that there is no such equivocation on the term in Kant's writings: the supposedly distinct senses of the term that such scholars seek to distinguish all flow from Kant's primary characterization of logic as concerned with *the form of the understanding.*

[36] In Kant's theoretical philosophy, arguably the most fundamental application of the form/matter distinction proves to be the one that pertains to the relation between self-consciousness and consciousness—between the original synthetic unity of apperception and anything that can so much as figure as a moment or element in such unity of consciousness. We will return to these matters in the next section—in the reply to Hamawaki.

are not standard hylomorphic cases. Some of the things that are said to have a form and a matter are not very naturally thought of as complex structured wholes with parts. Very roughly, we can divide the cases into two kinds.[37]

The chart that follows therefore aspires to provide an overview of the variety of cognitive phenomena to which Kant applies the form/matter distinction, dividing the cases into two kinds:

Standard hylomorphic cases	Non-standard hylomorphic cases
Judgments (Ak. 9:101)	Understanding (Bx)
Inferences (Ak. 9:121)	Reason (Bx)
Intuition (A23/B37)	Sensibility (A20/B34)
Maxims (Ak. 5:28)	Will (Ak. 4:436)
Concepts (Ak. 9:91)	Thought (A59/B84)

Stang introduces the chart with a final parenthetical observation in which he informs us that he has furnished after each entry "citations to relevant texts in parentheses."[38] It is difficult to avoid the feeling that unless he is prepared to provide a great many more citations, it would be far better to offer none. For example, the citation to A/23/B37 of *The Critique of Pure Reason* that follows the entry "intuition" is to the first paragraph of the first section of The Transcendental Aesthetic—one of many passages in the book in which the phrase "the form of intuition" occurs. The relevant application of the form/matter distinction under investigation at that juncture in the book concerns the relation between empirical and pure intuition, in which the former stand to space and time as matter to form. But this is by no means the only way in which the form/matter distinction has application to "intuition." Within an empirical intuition, sensation stands to (the singular immediate representational unity of) intuition as matter to form. More generally and famously, intuitions stand to concepts as matter to form, as does our general faculty of sensible intuition (comprising both intuitive form and matter) to the faculty of understanding (within which pure concepts stand to empirical ones as form to matter). Hence what figures in one contrast on the "matter" side

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[37] Nicholas F. Stang, "Kant, Bolzano, and the Formality of Logic," in *New Anti-Kant,* eds. Sandra Lapointe and Clinton Tolley (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 210.
[38] Ibid.

of the form/matter distinction figures in another contrast on the "form" side. This holds for every entry on the above chart. Concepts stand to intuitions as form to matter, but to judgments as matter to form. Judgments stand to concepts as form to matter but figure in inferences as the matter of such forms. We will return to this point below.

The main point of Stang's chart, however, is not to illuminate how the distinction applies to what it applies to, but simply to classify whatever it does apply to into those items that are "naturally thought of as complex structured wholes" (which he calls "the standard hylomorphic cases") and those items that are not naturally so thought of (which he calls "the non-standard hylomorphic cases").[39] This raises some questions: "Naturally so thought of from what or whose point of view and hence in accordance with what philosophical conception? And what sorts of assumptions does that conception involve and whence their seeming "naturalness" to Stang—whence the supposed naturalness of applying the distinction to some sorts of "items" but not to others? It is certainly true that—and this point plays a central role in Boyle's contribution to this volume—a post-Fregean philosopher of logic is apt to operate with a conception (of what sorts of "complex structured wholes" concepts, judgments, and inferences are) that will render it altogether unnatural to regard cognitive faculties as involving the same sort of logical complexity and structure—say, that of function and argument—as judgable contents.[40]

A more plausible way to construe the overarching principle of classification at work in Stang's chart, however, is to regard it not as overtly intending to employ a principle for classifying Kantian terms of art that turns on historically provincial assumptions drawn from contemporary ways of thinking about logic, but as seeking simply to pinpoint what is revolutionary in Kant's ways of employing the terms "form" and "matter." This suggests that the point of the chart might be formulated

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[39] Ibid.

[40] It is perhaps worth remarking in passing that the point here is not just that Frege's conception of logical structure and complexity applies happily to the "items" on the left side but not to those on the right side of Stang's chart. For the Fregean conception of logical structure and complexity hardly extends effortlessly to "intuitions" or "maxims," if these terms are to be understood as meaning anything like what they do in Kant's writings. Just as "judgment" conceived as a logical act can enter for Frege into his notation only by being "attached" to a judgable content, so, too, any term for an act or capacity that requires an essential reference to the subject whose capacity it is would appear to be unsuited to designate or characterize any aspect of that which appears to the right of the content stroke in each line of a Fregean *Begriffsschrift*.

as follows: what is new and radical with Kant is the manner in which he employs the form/matter distinction not just to mental acts and/or their contents but "also" to *faculties*. It is this "also" that will most concern us in what follows. A reformulation of the point of the chart in which that word figures in this way seems a (dare I say?) "natural" way of understanding the following remarks of Stang's:

> From this table we can see that the items that are not naturally thought of as complex structured wholes (the non-standard hylomorphic cases) are faculties or capacities, while the items that are standard hylomorphic cases are products of such faculties. For instance, a judgment, according to Kant, is an activation of the faculty of the understanding.[41]

On this reading, the chart seeks to sort "items" depending upon whether the form/matter distinction was standardly applied to them prior to Kant's time. But then whether the "items" on the left are "naturally thought of as complex structured wholes" or are only unnaturally so thought of depends upon how prior philosophers conceived the faculties—how they understood the relation between general capacities, their ingredient subcapacities, and the manifold of ways in which such capacities can be in act and, when thus in act, how they exhibit and involve dimensions of complexity, containment, generality, and structure. Consider, for example, the sort of differences in complexity, containment, generality, and structure that are jointly operative in the traditional distinction between something's being in *dynamis* (or being-in-capacity) and being in *energeia* (or being-in-activity).[42] A bare allusion to those two ancient Greek concepts may suffice to remind one that a philosophical account of capacities may "naturally" issue in a comprehension of them as complex structured wholes of a certain sort—though, admittedly, not the sort that Stang has in mind. The idea that a proper philosophical elucidation of the nexus of capacity and act brings into view a single unitary complex structured whole would not have struck Aristotle as "unnatural." But it is apt to seem a less "natural" thing to say to us, if we bring certain philosophical assumptions to the table regarding what is required of an account for it to be entitled to conceive its manner of relating the comparatively determinate to the comparatively determinable as a case of relating a comparatively simple unstructured part to a com-

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[41] Ibid.

[42] I refer the reader in this connection again to Jonathan Beere, *Doing and Being: An Interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

paratively complex structured whole. We will return to this topic below as well.

Now Stang is quite right about this: the terms on the left-hand side of his chart figure in Kant's writings as the terms for the *exercises* of general capacities, while those on the right-hand side designate the general *capacities* thus exercised. In this respect, the table can help to bring out a certain unity of concern that animates Kant's overall employment of the form/matter distinction. And there is something equally right about Stang's suggestion that a proper appreciation of why and how, for Kant, that distinction applies to the entries in the right-hand column may furnish an invaluable point of departure for appreciating what is supposed to be new and radical in the Critical Philosophy. However, to grasp what is new and radical here we first need to appreciate why and how, for Kant, the entries in the right-hand column are to be conceived as logically prior to those in the left-hand column. That is to say, without extensive further commentary, the chart runs the risk of inviting us to understand the distinction's application to the entries on the right-hand side as a mere extension—as if we could simply hold in place a pre-Kantian comprehension of the significance of the distinction's application to what figures on the near side of the chart and then work out from there, without needing in any way to revise that initial comprehension in the light of a further comprehension of why and how it should "additionally" be taken to apply to the various entries on the far side of the chart. It is precisely such an additive picture of how Kant's logical hylomorphism relates to pre-Kantian varieties of logical hylomorphism—and, in particular, how his hylomorphic conception of the faculties relates to pre-Kantian hylomorphic accounts of judgment—which I am presently concerned with contesting.

This is a central task of Boyle's contribution to this volume: to illuminate why and how a comprehension of the ground of the applicability of the matter/form distinction to the comparatively general (and for Stang "non-standard") concepts for rational cognitive activity is logically prior in reason's self-knowledge of itself to its comprehension of the ground of its applicability to the comparatively determinate (and for Stang "standard") concepts of mental acts—or the contents of such acts. Its applicability to these comparatively general concepts of cognitive capacity, in turn, is logically posterior to a comprehension of the ground of the form/matter distinction in its application to the unified overarching *Erkenntnisvermögen* of which the aforementioned concepts of rational cognitive activity are ingredient aspects.

Even to begin on this task requires introducing a further dimension of (dare I say?) "complexity" into the Kantian application of the distinction of form and matter—one from which Stang's chart mostly prescinds. Any informative characterization of how each such concept of rational cognitive activity bears on its exercises will depend on whether the nexus of capacity and act at issue is *theoretical* or *practical* in *form*. In being the one or the other, it reflects one dimension rather than another of the overall finitude of our cognitive capacity.[43] This suggests that Stang—like many contemporary scholars of Kant's logical writings—fails to appreciate that part of what makes pure general logic *general* is precisely that it characterizes the mere form of thought at a level of abstraction that prescinds from whether the form of thought in question is theoretical or practical. For the very first dimension of further specification in the form of thought required—for it to be so characterized that it has possible bearing on a material content of judgment, hence for it to be more than a *mere* form—is whether the judgments exhibit a formal character that reveals them to aim at the true or the good. The absolute (Kantian) "generality" of pure general logic therefore lies in no small part in its very indifference to this required dimension in the specification of the form of any genuinely content-involving thought. In *The Critique of Pure Reason,* the target *Vermögen* under investigation is our finite capacity for theoretical knowledge; in *The Critique of Practical Reason,* it is our finite capacity for practical knowledge.[44] This means that the pair of entries on the left- and right-hand sides of the fourth line ("maxims" and "will") in Stang's chart comprise the only full line of the chart, as presently worded, that is unambiguous as to whether what is at issue across the whole of the line in question is "something" theoretical or practical in form. In that fourth line, we have two terms that go together at this level of specification of form: one term for a general practical cog-

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[43] These dimensions differ from one another no more or less dramatically than do the concept of an intellectual intuition, on the one hand, from that of a holy will, on the other. This is no coincidence. For part of the point of these heuristically contrastive limiting concepts of non-finite cognitive capacity is to highlight what characterizes the respective dimensions of finitude on the theoretical and practical sides of our cognitive faculty.

[44] If in Kant's theoretical philosophy, the most fundamental application of the form/matter distinction pertains to the relation between self-consciousness and consciousness, then in Kant's practical philosophy, it pertains to that between freedom and action. Neither, of course, is a "relation" in the standard logician's sense of the term. It is in *The Critique of Judgment* that the question of the overall unity of these practical and theoretical aspects of our overarching finite cognitive capacity comes to be most centrally under investigation in the Kantian corpus as a topic in its own right.

nitive capacity and one for one of its characteristic forms of exercise. Viewed in this light, the third line of the chart can be seen to be mixed, involving a slide as we move from left to right along that line, from the specification of an exercise of a theoretical capacity ("intuition"—as opposed to, say, "inclination") to a formally indeterminate general term for a capacity ("sensibility")—one that can be in act in formally different ways in theoretical and practical cognition. The other three lines of the chart leave it entirely open to whether we are concerned with a specification of the form/matter distinction in connection with theoretical inferences, judgments, and concepts or with practical ones—and, correlatively, whether what is at issue on the right-hand side of those three lines of the chart are the faculties of reason, understanding and/or thought qua theoretical capacities or qua practical ones.

Until such indeterminacies are remedied in the chart, we do not know even the first thing required in order to provide a formal characterization of the acts in question or of the general capacities correlatively at issue. Only once we properly come to appreciate how the notion of form in its application to acts depends on its prior applicability to capacities and how its application to any ingredient rational self-conscious capacity depends on its applicability to a more general formal notion of a rational spontaneous capacity as such, be it theoretical or practical, will we be in a proper position not only to comprehend fully wherein the unity of Stang's chart lies but also to appreciate fully what implications it might have for a properly Kantian account of the topic at which Stang gestures when he speaks of "complex structured wholes"—how, that is, the sort of complex structured whole that, for example, a judgment is turns on logically different conceptions of "complex," "structure," and "logical whole" for Kant than it turns on for either Leibniz, on the one hand, or for Frege, on the other.

For Kant, a cognitive faculty has a *form,* a *matter,* and an *end.*[45] These can be specified at various levels of abstraction and analysis. Just as, for Aristotle, matter and form can be individuated at various levels (the natural elements of a statue stand to the metal alloy as matter to form, the metal to the sculpted figure as matter to form, the figure to the style or motif as matter to form); so, too, for Kant, as noted above, the terminology

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[45] For further discussion of this threefold principle for individuating faculties, see Paul Franks, "Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Post-Kantian Philosophy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Methodology,* eds. H. Cappelen, T. S. Gendler, and J. Hawthorne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 71.

of form and matter can be deployed in similarly nested ways. Sensation stands to intuition as matter to form, empirical intuition to pure intuitions as matter to form, empirical concepts to categories as matter to form, sensibility to understanding as matter to form, judgment to inference as matter to form, and so on. The further introduction of the concept of an *end* into the analysis of each cognitive faculty, thus specified as a unity of matter and form, provides the account with its critical edge. In the case of a finite theoretical cognitive capacity, the end is objectively valid knowledge of the world. In the case of its ingredient capacity for theoretical judgment, the end is the true (in contrast with practical judgment, whose end is the good). That exercise of a faculty that realizes its end simply in virtue of its exercise represents the logically fundamental case of its exercise—that of its logically full-blooded exercise. These may be distinguished from a whole range of further possible forms of exercise of the faculty in which its aim is frustrated due to possible obtruding, interrupting, or canceling factors. In the case of the faculty of judgment, its exercise may be subject to interference from another faculty, rendering it defective (leading to error), or attenuated (unwittingly falling short of, or wittingly aiming at something short of, the true), or used for an improper end to which it is not fitted (e.g., seeking to determine the good through a merely theoretical exercise of reason).

Logic is concerned specifically with the faculty of the understanding. Its task is to articulate the *form* of that faculty. The task of pure general logic is to articulate that form considered in abstraction from any relation to objects and that of transcendental logic to articulate it in relation to sensible matter. The former yields merely negative criteria of truth (freedom from contradiction); only the latter articulates the form of a faculty whose non-defective exercise yields objectively valid judgments regarding what is the case. This conception of the forms of complexity that characterize the nexus of capacity and act operates with a very different sort of conception of "complex structured wholes" than the one with which Stang is working when he takes the left-hand entries on his chart to be relatively standard, philosophically non-puzzling cases of matter/form complexes, while finding the right-hand entries to be comparatively non-standard, philosophically puzzling cases thereof.

Boyle brings out some of the differences between Kant's conception of logic and Frege's in a number of ways. He focuses on how the sort of power at issue here makes possible a certain, specific kind of "act"; how the ensuing relation between power and act is different in kind from any that Frege allows; and how this is tied to Kant's deployment of the distinc-

tion between form and content as well as why what he means when he says that logic is concerned with the *formal* character of the faculty is nothing that Frege could mean in using the term "formal." More important, if we grasp these points, then we see why what Kant means when he says that logic describes "the necessary laws of the understanding" also may not be equated with anything Frege could mean. Hence, Boyle writes,

> I will argue that we should reflect on what he meant by claiming that logic describes "the necessary laws of the understanding." Like many of Kant's characterizations of logic, this is a formula which, when understood in a certain way, seems acceptable enough to us; but I want to suggest that this verbal agreement disguises a shift in our conception of logic, a shift so basic that it makes it difficult for us even to hear these words in the sense Kant intended them. To grasp their intended meaning, I will argue, we need to hear this formula in the context of a set of views about what a mental faculty is, on the one hand, and about what it is to understand something, on the other. These views were familiar in the period in which Kant wrote, but I believe our own rejection of them encourages us to underestimate their importance in Kant's thinking.[46]

An important part of this conception of a mental faculty (a conception we have lost, making it difficult for us to hear Kant's words as they are meant) is the following idea: the laws that articulate the form of a cognitive power constitute it in such a way that the laws in question do not necessarily determine how it acts.[47] To say that they do not necessarily determine how it acts is not just to say that the faculty in question happens often, or perhaps even most of the time, to work in the way described by those laws but then—for no systematically intelligible reason—occasionally happens to work otherwise. If that were the case, they would not be *laws*. On the other hand, these are also not laws that articulate (what we might call) Fregean generality—that is to say, the only form of generality that can be captured by a *Begriffsschrift*.[48]

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[46] Boyle, this volume, 125.

[47] See ibid., 125–126. Notice how this echoes a moment in Descartes's argument with the advocates of the conceptions that correspond to the three corners of the theological triangle. Descartes holds that we should not say that God is determined by the laws of logic (so that He necessarily must act as those laws decree); rather, we should regard those laws as coming into existence with and through His activity.

[48] This raises a large question—which I cannot afford to do more than note here: across its respective occurrences in the writings of philosophers as different as Kant and Frege, to what extent is there a general overlap in the meaning of an expression such as "law of

The sort of generality we are after here unites the general and the particular in a logical nexus of a sort for which Frege does not allow.[49] The nexus of general to particular that Kant seeks to characterize is not one that holds exceptionlessly of the relation of the general power to the particular acts that fall under it.[50] Rather it has to do, Boyle says, specifically with the manner in which the relevant law determines how the faculty acts *when nothing interferes with its operation*—when all goes as it should—in the cases of (what I have called above) its non-defective exercise.[51]

Boyle helpfully brings out the analogy here for Kant between the laws of the will and the laws of the understanding:

> [T]his, in fact, is clearly Kant's view, both about the laws of the will and the laws of the understanding. Thus he holds that our will is not *necessarily* determined by moral laws only because it is affected by another power, sensible inclination, which is capable of inclining it to deviate from what its own law prescribes; but that insofar as it is not swayed by this other power, it *will* act morally. And similarly, he holds

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logic" (or "laws of thought" or "laws of the understanding") and to what extent is such an expression best construed as a mere homonym? This is not an easy question to answer. The truth lies somewhere between these two extreme proposals for how to answer the question. But let us simply record some differences. For Frege, the basic laws of logic stand to an entire body of self-standingly intelligible truths on the model of the manner in which axioms stand to theorems in a mathematical system such as Euclidean geometry. This is no part of Kant's conception of a logical law (be it purely general or transcendental). For Kant, the laws of the understanding articulate the general form of that capacity in such a manner that both those exercises of the capacity that fully accord with its form and those that in some way involve an attenuated or defective exercise of it are all equally to be comprehended through those same laws. This is no part of Frege's conception of logic. For Frege, any exercise of our capacity of thought that is not in full accord with the laws of logic thereby wanders to that very degree out of the realm of the logical and into that of the merely psychological.

49 For a helpful discussion of the limitations of a Fregean conception of generality in this connection (explored through a contrast with the sort of conception of a capacity that the later Wittgenstein requires in order to make sense of our ability to follow a rule), see Matthias Haase, "The Laws of Thought and the Power of Thinking," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39 Suppl. Vol. 35 (2009): 249–297.

50 For a general inquiry into the concept of rational capacity that is here at issue (as well as an application of that concept to debates in contemporary epistemology), see Andrea Kern's *Sources of Knowledge: On the Concept of a Rational Capacity for Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

51 Michael Thompson has an interesting and pertinent discussion of why this form of generality cannot be captured as a Fregean quantified generality qualified by a set of *ceteris paribus* clauses. See Michael Thompson, *Life and Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 70–71.

that our understanding is not necessarily determined by its own laws only because it is affected by another power, sensibility, which is capable of exerting an "unnoticed influence" on it, leading it to mistake subjective grounds for objective ones—but that insofar as it is not thus influenced, it will judge rightly: . . . [52]

The laws of the understanding describe only how to judge in those cases in which we judge rightly. But isn't that what Frege thinks? Yes, but that misses the crucial difference here: namely, that, for Kant, all of the acts of the relevant power—both the cases in which we judge rightly and the cases in which we do not (and even those in which we fall into the illusion of judging)—are to be conceived as exercises of one and the same faculty.

According to Frege, one forms a general statement by taking a proper name out of a singular judgment, replacing it with a variable, and binding the variable with a quantifier. All statements that share the logical form of that singular judgment, regardless of which proper names occur in them, will be valid instances of the corresponding general statement. Boyle's point may now be put as follows: the laws of the power of the understanding that Kantian logic articulates (in describing the form of that power) do not stand to the acts of that power in such a relation of Fregean generality—the relation that a universally quantified statement stands to its existentially quantified instances. Rather the relation of act to power exhibits a non-Fregean form of generality. What the laws articulate is the logical character of its *non-defective* exercise. This is something general—in Kant's sense of "general," not Frege's. This form of generality allows us to apprehend the defective exercises of the faculty in question—the understanding—as being, in one sense, fully cases of our power of logical thought at work, while being, in another sense, cases which run afoul of the standards of assessment that logic articulates.

This draws the line between logic and psychology in quite a different place and in quite a different way than Frege does. For Frege, the moment our thought fails to be properly beholden to logic is the moment it wanders into the realm of the psychological. This means that a great many exercises of our mental faculties—those in which we come out with fictional thoughts, employ "concepts" that lack appropriately sharp boundaries, make statements like those that Kerry utters, speak of

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[52] Boyle, this volume, 127–128.

our inner lives, to mention just a few of the many cases at issue here—all have to be relegated to the dustbin of the merely psychological. Frege leaves us with a picture of our "mental lives" in which a great deal of what goes on there takes place completely outside of the province of the exercise of our logical capacity for thought. Whereas, for Kant, these various diverse mental phenomena in which psychology takes an interest may all be regarded as products of the exercise of one and the same power that logic describes—only now in regard to cases in which that power is subject to various kinds of logical attenuation or nonlogical pressure. For Frege, what psychology investigates is wholly different in kind from what logic investigates. The former science investigates contents of consciousness that are subjective and unshareable, whereas the latter investigates thoughts—judgable contents that are objective and shareable. For Kant, what psychology studies (insofar as it studies the understanding simply through empirical observation) is how that same faculty that logic studies in its ideality operates under non-ideal conditions—when it is *in energeia* under conditions in which it is subject to the numerous kinds of hindrance, attenuation, or outside influence that normally beset it. When Frege distinguishes between psychology and logic, he is distinguishing between kinds of inquiry that differ not only in *how* they study what they study but also in the ontological character of the subject matter they study and in the sort of content that may be ascribed to it. When Kant distinguishes between psychology and logic, he is able to regard both as the study of (what Frege calls) *the* mind. But whereas psychology takes up a third-person perspective "onto" the powers of the mind and offers empirical descriptions of the results of its operations viewed from the outside (from a standpoint that is unable to furnish a principle by which to distinguish its defective from its non-defective exercises), for Kant logic involves an essentially self-conscious first-person present indicative form of understanding—not a perspective "onto" the exercise of those powers, but rather a form of understanding achievable only from within a certain *form of exercise* of that power.

This means not only that the proper form of description of such a power is one that is available only from within the purview of someone who is exercising that very power in the act of seeking to characterize it. For Frege could agree with that (though, unlike Kant, he will tend to regard the perspective of judgment as a perspective "onto" thought). It also turns on a very different conception of the unity of logic, as well as the place of logic in the overall study of the form of our mindedness. The

unity of the subject matter of logic is different for Kant, because both non-defective and defective exercises (many of the latter of which Frege would relegate to the garbage can of the merely psychological) of our power of thought essentially belong together in the province of a proper study of our logical power, where neither form of exercise is fully intelligible apart from a proper account of its relation to the other. This, in turn, for Kant, means that logic can only fully comprehend the power it investigates if it also comprehends its relation to our other mutually interdependent cognitive powers.

In an initial halfhearted attempt to play the role of Conant's defense attorney, I suggested above that if the worry were *just* that Kant takes logic and psychology to have a common *topic*—so that we may say that both sciences are concerned with "the mind"—then Conant could counter that this hardly shows Kant to be that far from Frege, or vice versa. We can now see why my defense of Conant did not meet Boyle's challenge. For Boyle's claim is not just that Kant, unlike Frege, is entitled to see both logic and psychology sharing a topic inasmuch as both can be said to investigate something that both the logician and the psychologist will have their own reasons for wanting to call "the mind." Boyle's claim is that Kant does not need to introduce an unbridgeable schism into the center of the mind, dividing its properly logical from its merely psychological half in order to appreciate how they have a common topic. On Boyle's reading, the disciplines that Kant calls "logic" and "psychology" share a topic in a much stronger sense than do those that Frege calls "logic" and "psychology." For Kant, they study the same powers of the mind from two different perspectives. For Kant, the phenomena that the latter perspective investigates presuppose a conception of how they are to be individuated, which presupposes the former. It rests on an at least inchoate prior understanding of the relation between power and act that the first perspective seeks to articulate.

This means that the actuality of this power, and its bearing on the actuality of the acts which flow from it, can come into view only when the dimension of the realm of the actual known as "our psychology" is regarded through the lens of the perspective of logic. What psychology studies then is *that same power* under various conditions of duress. This involves not only the difference we have emphasized above (in Kant's and Frege's respective conceptions of the relation between the logical and the psychological), but, more importantly for our present purpose, a different conception of the relation between the merely logical and the genuinely actual.

It is this that allows not only Kant's conception of the relation between logic and psychology to be very different from Frege's, but also what Kant means by the word "psychological" to bear an internal, and not merely external, relation to the logical. Hence Boyle says of Kant:

> [H]is objection is not fundamentally to the idea that logic is concerned with the actual nature of our power to think but to the idea that the nature of this power can be studied *empirically,* "from observations [*Beobachtungen*] of our understanding." What he objects to is the idea that, to determine the laws of the understanding, we should study how it acts "under various subjective hindrances and conditions." This is how an empirical psychological investigation would inevitably present the understanding: as it is under the conditions that actually obtain. . . . He is using "psychology" in a restricted way, to name the empirical study of the mind. He holds, however, that there is another kind of study of our power of understanding, one that proceeds not through observation but through an exercise of reflective self-consciousness, in which the understanding grasps the form of its own characteristic activity.[53]

This involves a diagnosis that differs from Frege's regarding where the most fundamental error in psychologistic theories of logic lies. Kant's primary complaint about such theories, if he had encountered them, would have been not only that they seek to give an account of our rational powers from outside the standpoint of our self-conscious comprehension of wherein those powers consist, but rather that they do so in a manner that makes it impossible to comprehend the internal relations that obtain between those phenomena that the psychologist and those that the logician each seeks to inventory and systematize. Thus Kant's most fundamental complaint about such theories of logic would be one that he would equally direct at both Frege and the psychologistic theorist of logic. In a wonderfully pithy observation, Stanley Cavell memorably remarked that the later Wittgenstein, building upon Frege's de-psychologizing of logic, was out to undo Frege's psychologizing of psychology.[54] Boyle may be read as claiming that Kant had already begun on this task, prior to Frege's psychologizing of psychology.

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[53] Ibid., 128–129.
[54] See Stanley Cavell, "Aesthetic Problems in Modern Philosophy," in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 91.

Frege's fundamental complaint against psychologistic theorists of logic is that they confuse normative laws regarding how we ought to think with descriptive laws regarding how we, as a matter of fact, do think. Kant will agree that we should not confuse that which logic furnishes with the sort of descriptions that empirical psychology seeks. But Boyle emphasizes that we will not be able to do justice to Kant's view if we attempt to summarize it in Fregean terms—in terms that permit a straightforward opposition between those laws that are prescriptive (prescribing how we ought to think if we are thinking in accordance with logic) and those that are merely descriptive (describing the actual functioning of a mental power):

> The point I want to emphasize about Kant's view of these matters is that it does not oppose prescriptive laws to laws that govern the actual functioning of a power. On the contrary, the very laws that describe the proper functioning of a power are the laws that determine its actual functioning if nothing interferes: they are laws that describe how, as we might put it, that power is in itself disposed to act. Thus if logic is the science concerned with the laws of the understanding, it is concerned with laws that do not merely prescribe to the understanding but flow from the non-normatively-described nature of this faculty.[55]

The way in which logic, for Kant, is at the same time descriptive and prescriptive (describing an actual power of the mind while setting standards in the light of which its defective exercises may be assessed) is tied to his conception of form—a conception within which a descriptive dimension of logic (which displays the form of the capacity) is prior to the prescriptive one (which affords a canon for its exercise). The prescriptive dimension (that enables the assessment of logically infelicitous exercises of our capacity for thought) presupposes the descriptive dimension (in which I—qua one of its bearers—first make reflectively perspicuous to myself what it is so much as to have such a capacity in the first place).

On some readings of Kant, when he speaks of the laws of logic as being "formal"—as articulating the "forms" of the understanding—the point is understood in merely prescriptive terms, as if the task of logic were exhausted by that of setting correct standards for the normative assessment of thought. If the meaning of the term "form" in its application to logic is taken to be exhaustively accounted for in such terms, then it becomes difficult to see how that term could bear the univocal sense it is

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[55] Boyle, this volume, 129.

supposed to have across its range of applications in Kant's three critiques (for example, in the many passages in *The Critique of Pure Reason* in which Kant is concerned to compare and contrast the "forms of sensibility" with the "forms of understanding"). Indeed, it becomes difficult to see what the univocal sense of "form" is supposed to be even just *within* (what Kant calls) *logic:* it becomes difficult to see how pure general logic and transcendental logic both share a topic; how it is that they both inquire into *the* form of the understanding—in the one case abstracting from all relation to objects (investigating the *mere* form of thought) and in the other cases abstracting from all differences in objects (investigating the form of object-related thought as such). For Kant, across these two sorts of logical inquiry, there remains just one capacity at issue—*the* understanding—whose form is considered by these two branches of logic at two different levels of abstraction.

Hence—to anticipate a topic that will concern us in the replies to Hamawaki and Stroud—just as it is wrong to say of the forms displayed in the table of judgments that they are merely prescriptive, so, too, it is equally wrong to say of those displayed in the table of categories (as many commentators do) that their formality lies merely in their prescriptivity—as if the primary office of those forms were to lay down norms or proprieties for how we ought to engage in the activity of empirical judgment, insofar as we seek to make objectively valid material judgments regarding what is the case. What is wrong in such a characterization of logic (as merely normative), be it pure general or transcendental logic that is at issue, is that it operates with far too shallow a characterization of the connection that obtains between the form of the capacity here at issue and its successful exercise. The first office of logic, as Kant understands it, is to show not just what it means to employ one's capacity for thought well, but also what it means to think, to be the bearer of such a capacity, at all.[56]

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[56] John McDowell puts the point here at issue (in its application to the forms listed in the table of categories) as follows:

> If the forms on Kant's list are what he takes them to be, the forms in which discursive thinking must take place, they are not forms in accordance with which we ought to engage in empirical judgment—as if it would be possible to judge otherwise than in those forms, but only at the price of not thinking as one should. Forms such that an activity counts as thinking only if it is informed by them do not constitute proprieties for empirical judgment. . . . In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant aims to show . . . that experience is enabled to be of objective reality by being informed by counterparts to the forms of judgment. He is not concerned with norms for judging correctly, conditions for getting objective reality right. He is concerned with a role he attributes to the understanding in

If one reads Kant's characterization of pure general logic through Fregean spectacles, one is liable to construe the notion of form there at issue as belonging to the province of a self-standingly intelligible sphere of inquiry—thereby assigning a meaning to the term "form" (as it occurs within pure general logic) that one takes to be fully specified apart from whatever significance it may bear in its subsequent occurrence within transcendental logic. If one further construes Kant's talk of logic as "the science of the laws of the understanding" as signifying that logic is concerned to codify (what I have called above) merely normative laws, then one will be prone to assume that Kantian pure general logic may be accommodated within a broadly inferentialist conception, according to which the relevant notion of form (in its application to pure general logic) has to do with the "purely logical" relations of thoughts—relations that thoughts bear to one another qua "mere" thoughts within an inferential order. On this understanding of how pure general logic stands to any other branch of inquiry, the source of the forms of which pure general logic treats must be internal to the province of its sphere of inquiry. (And this is the way it is for both Leibniz and Frege: the topology of logical space is given through the inferential relations in which purely logical thoughts stand to one another, regardless of which further possible thoughts about how things are in the order of the actual world happen to be true.) Hence, on this reading, what Kant has in view when he speaks of the "*mere* form of thought" is a "form" that has its source outside transcendental logic. Its character qua form is thus taken to be completely comprehensible, independently of its relation to the form of our general power of knowledge—our power for modes of knowledge that are not merely logical.

To read any aspect of the conception of logic operative in the Critical Philosophy in this way is already to begin to assimilate Kant's conception to that of the Leibnizian/Fregean tradition. On this reading of Kant, we can, in a first step, fully comprehend the source of the logical form

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our having objective reality in our sights at all. ("Why Does It Matter to Hegel that Geist Has a History?" in *Hegel on Philosophy in History,* eds. R. Zuckert and J. Kreines [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017], 27)

The distinction that McDowell draws in this last sentence (between conditions for getting objective reality right and conditions for our having objective reality in our sights at all) is a version of the distinction that will concern us below in the reply to Hamawaki, between a Cartesian problematic (concerned with how to tell true judgments from false ones) and a Kantian problematic (concerned with how it is so much as possible to judge at all—hence, with how it is even so much as possible to judge falsely).

that pure general logic investigates and fully articulate its character as *logical,* without having to look beyond or outside pure general logic to understand the full import of the notion of form we treat within pure general logic.

Such a reading of Kant on logic is obliged to regard the other central branch of inquiry that Kant includes under the heading of "logic" (namely, transcendental logic) as comprising a further discipline—one that is supplemental to pure general logic and one that we arrive at in a second step by enriching antecedently available purely logical forms with content. On this construal, pure general logic cannot help but appear to a contemporary reader to be some sort of forerunner to (what we now call) syntax, and transcendental logic cannot help but seem to be charged with the task of introducing something like (what we now call) semantic content into logical forms that are antecedently given but, in themselves, "empty." The parallel between what we end up with on this reading of Kant and what we are familiar with from the contemporary conception may be formulated as follows: the maximally "pure" order whose logical topology is already fully in place in the first step (pure general logic/syntax) yields a self-standingly intelligible notion of form; then there is the logically supplemental order that is available only in a second step (transcendental logic/semantics), with the further determination of those forms through the conferral of object-relatedness upon them.

On the targeted misreading of Kant, there are two interpretative errors, and they are two sides of single misunderstanding. The first side of the misunderstanding is this: the mere form of thought (that it is the business of pure general logic to investigate) is self-standingly intelligible—it just has the formal topology that it does independently of the conditions of objectively valid judgment. The second side of the misunderstanding is this: the mere form of thought stands in the same relation to what is disclosed by transcendental logic as do comparatively general material concepts to their instances—so that transcendental logic may be conceived as introducing the specification of material content into a structure whose formal character is already completely determinate and intelligible on its own bat.

This should render it mysterious why Kant calls the categories—the forms of which transcendental logic treats—*the forms of the understanding.* On the two-step reading outlined above, this ought to seem to be misleading hyperbole on his part—for what Kant calls "the forms of the understanding" seem to be, on this reading, not logical forms per se but rather a set of very general material concepts, suitable for

forming highly abstract material judgments about what is the case.[57]
And if that is what they are, then it is bound to seem misleading to
characterize transcendental logic as providing something necessary for
an account of what *logic* as such is. On this reading, it looks as if what
logic proper really is has already been covered in the account of pure
general logic, so that the business of transcendental logic looks to be
something that acquires its point only once that prior logical founda-
tion is in place.

For Kant, however, the notion of "the *mere* form of thought" stands
to that of "the form of thought" as does the notion of "mere appear-
ance" to that of "appearance." In both cases, the conceptually prior no-
tion is essentially object-related. In each case, the conceptually prior no-
tion is the one in which the notion is adduced without qualification—without
the "mere." In both these cases (and a great many other such cases) for
Kant, the case of a mere X is intelligible only in the light of its internal
relation to the case of being X. Sebastian Rödl helpfully summarizes what
is misguided in the two-step reading of Kant outlined in the previous three
paragraphs as follows:

> Transcendental Logic develop[s] . . . a conception of logical form that
> seeks its principle not in the relations thoughts bear among themselves,
> but in the relation of thought to the object. It is not that the inferen-
> tialist conception denies that the intellect is a power to represent the
> object. It denies that the relation of thought to its object is the source
> of its form. . . . Of course the object . . . exhibits this form. But [on the
> inferentialist conception] this is a second thought, that we come to
> think only after we have explained logical form. Now, thinking of the
> intellect in this way makes it impossible to understand how it can de-
> termine a priori an object that exists independently of being thought.
> If the relation of thought to the object is introduced only after its form
> has been explained, then it is too late: then the form of thought cannot
> be shown to be the form of the object. But then we do not understand
> the very possibility of the intellect as a power to represent the object.
> So [for Kant] we must explain logical form *as* a manner of relating to

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[57] A version of such a misreading of Kant may, for example, be found in John MacFarlane's
suggestion that the difference between transcendental logic and pure general logic may be
conceived in terms of the former introducing a "domain restriction" into the latter—on
the model of "the restriction of geometry to spatial objects" ("What Does It Mean to Say
That Logic Is Formal," op. cit., 82; and "Frege, Kant and the Logic in Logicism," op. cit.,
48n).

the object. Then it is not a second thought that the form of thought determines the object.[58]

On the Kantian conception—which Rödl accurately summarizes—logic as a whole is concerned with investigating *the* form of the understanding: that is, the form of the intellectual aspect of our overall cognitive faculty to represent objects. Pure general and transcendental logic, in turn, are each concerned with investigating a dimension of *that* form. On this conception, the source of logical form is not to be comprehended apart from the role of our capacity for thought in the achievement of forms of cognition that are not merely logical. And the source of the notion of mere form of which pure general logic treats is not to be comprehended apart from its internal relation to the full-blooded form of that unified general cognitive capacity—and hence to the forms of the understanding or the categories. This means that on a Kantian understanding of the order of explanatory priority, we must first comprehend the inner logical dimension of form of which transcendental logic treats if we wish to arrive at a proper appreciation of how, via an abstraction, we may arrive at a proper comprehension of the comparatively outer logical dimension of mere form of which pure general logic treats—that dimension of form which the rationalist logician, in accordance with his logically thin conception of reason, takes to be self-standingly available.[59]

Kant and Frege differ from the contemporary conception in both holding that a comprehension of the forms that logic investigates requires an understanding of them as essentially object-related. Kant's distinction between pure general logic and transcendental logic is, however, not a step in the direction of the contemporary conception (and its manner of distinguishing between syntax and semantics); rather, it is part of a critique of (what Kant conceives as) the inability of the generically Leibnizian conception to properly comprehend the true source of the object-relatedness of the forms of inference and judgmental structure it undertakes to investigate—and hence of its inability to properly vindicate its entitlement to the notion of object-related logical form or structure to which it helps itself.

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[58] Sebastian Rödl, "Logical Form as a Relation to the Object," in *Analytic Kantianism*, ed. J. Conant, *Philosophical Topics* 34, nos. 1&2 (2006): 357–358.

[59] The varieties of transcendental illusion of which the Transcendental Dialectic treats all have their ultimate source in such a rationalist conception of the self-standing character of "pure reason"—and hence in a mistaken conception of the relation between a purely logical employment and a genuinely object-related (and hence objectively valid) employment of the forms of judgment.

Hence when Kant speaks of the formality of logic, he means, as Boyle bluntly puts it, "something quite different" from the contemporary logician:

> When contemporary philosophers characterize logic as a "formal" discipline, they tend to mean that it is concerned with the forms of propositions and of arguments in which propositions figure. . . . When Kant uses similar language, he means something quite different: that logic is concerned with the general form of cognition, which he explains as "the condition without which a cognition would not be a cognition at all."[60] And cognition is here conceived as the act of a certain mental power, the understanding, so that to study the form of cognition is to study the nature of this act, in abstraction from whatever object it may be directed upon.[61]

Boyle goes on show how this conception of form is derived from a genuinely original application of a set of fairly traditional interrelated concepts—substance, power, and act—to a characterization of our cognitive faculties. Without rehearsing all of the details Boyle covers to get there, this issues in a crucial conclusion about how Kant understands the relation of our cognitive faculties to one another:

> We must not merely seek to understand our various cognitive powers as aspects or expressions of a single fundamental power; we are entitled to assume that these powers form a unity of a quite special kind, one in which "[e]verything that is grounded in the nature of our powers must be purposive and in agreement with the correct employment of those powers."[62] That is, we are entitled to regard our cognitive powers as forming a sort of functional unity, in which each particular cognitive power performs a specific and essential role in making the fundamental act of the cognitive power as a whole (namely, cognition itself) possible.[63]

This point has enormous consequences for appreciating Kant's and Frege's different relations to the logical triangle. For Frege, our logical power is a self-standing capacity for thought that operates independently of and prior to our capacity for empirical cognition. Kant's objection here will

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[60] Kant, *Jäsche Logic,* 7:50, in *Lectures on Logic,* 558. Note: This is Boyle's modification of the translation.
[61] Boyle, this volume, 129–130.
[62] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A642/B670, 532.
[63] Boyle, this volume, 133.

not be that this has the relative priority of our cognitive capacities the wrong away around but that this fails to grasp the manner in which they form an essential unity—so that no one of them would be the capacity that it is apart from its relations to the others.

Now we are in a position to begin to see how Boyle's criticism of Conant's reading of Kant parallels my joint criticism of Conant's and Moore's readings of Descartes. The latter both read Descartes as being concerned with answering a question of explanatory priority (having to do with which of God's faculties are prior to which—as well as which of the modalities are prior to which), whereas I offered a reading of Descartes that rested on his rejection of that question. Now we see Kant saying something about *our* cognitive faculty that Descartes was prepared to claim only on God's behalf: namely, that our faculties form an essential unity—that they are *au fond* one power.

To read Kant in this way is to reject what I have called *a layer-cake reading* of Kant and what Boyle has called the ascription of *an additive theory of rationality* to him.[64] To read Kant this way is to take seriously a commitment that, as Boyle points out, Kant already makes explicit in the preface to the *First Critique*:

> [Pure reason], as regards the principles of its cognition, is a quite separate, self-subsistent unity, in which each part exists for every other, and all for the sake of each, as in an organized body.[65]

The formal character of the sort of unity here at issue is that of (what Kant calls) a *totum* rather than that of a mere *compositum*.[66] Layer-cake readings of Kant conceive the unity of our cognitive power as a mere *compositum* of cognitive faculties. Worse still, from Kant's point of view, they do so by conceiving the *matter* and the *form* of some aspect of the overall power of reason as comprising a mere composite in which each

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[64] See James Conant, "Why Kant is Not a Kantian," in *Philosophical Topics* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 75–125; Mathew Boyle "Additive Theories of Rationality: A Critique," in *European Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (September 2016): 527–555.

[65] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Bxxiii, 25–26; and cf. Axiii, 10, Bxxxvii–xxxviii, 33–34.

[66] A totum is a genuine unity: one in which the unity of the whole has logical priority over the unity of the parts, so that the very being of such "parts" is possible only in and through such a whole. A compositum is a mere composite—a whole in which the unity of the parts is prior to the unity of the whole, so that the being of the parts does not depend on their contribution to the whole. Perhaps Kant's most famous deployment of this distinction occurs at A438/B466 (405) in the statement of the thesis of the Second Antinomy ("Space should properly be called not *compositum* but *totum,* since its parts are possible only in the whole, not the whole through its parts"); but it recurs throughout his corpus from the pre-critical writings to the *Reflexionen.*

could be individuated independently of the other. The idea that they can be so individuated is just what a proper understanding of Kant's manner of deploying the concept of *form* (in its relation to that of *matter*) is out to repudiate. For Aristotle, the paradigmatic example of such an indivisible form/matter unity is the human body.[67] Boyle, in the following passage, suggests we should take what Aristotle says about how form stands to matter in the organism to hold no less for Kant's conception of how the form of a cognitive capacity stands to its material exercise:

> The various powers of reason are distinguished precisely by their different contributions to making the existence of a self-sustaining system of rational cognition possible, much as the organs of the body are distinguished by their different contributions to making our bodily existence possible.[68]

Layer-cake readings do not treat the various faculties Kant distinguishes as standing to the whole of our cognitive life as the organs of the body do to the self-sustaining organism of animal life; rather such readings treat them as self-standingly intelligible capacities—ones whose formal characters can be brought into view independently of their forms of co-operation or interaction with other cognitive capacities.

One source of the empiricist version of a layer-cake reading of Kant is the assumption that one does him a favor by attributing to him a commitment to the following idea: that the concept of a sensible cognitive capacity is best understood in the first instance as the concept of a form of *animal* cognition—where "animal cognition" here means a form of cognitive capacity that would in no way essentially differ were it to be that of a rational being. Part of what fuels this supposed bit of interpretative charity is the further assumption that what it means to say that an animal has a sensory cognitive capacity is relatively unmysterious, whereas what it means to say about ourselves that we are rational animals is comparatively mysterious. The philosophical task of explicating the concept of a rational animal then comes into view as one that ought to assume the following general form: one of accounting for which further sorts of cognitive capacity have to be added to an animal with a merely sensory cognitive capacity in order to turn it into a rational animal. On this way of picturing things, our firmest philosophical grip on

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[67] In contrast to the artifact; see Christopher Frey, "Organic Unity and the Matter of Man," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 32 (Summer 2007): 167–204.

[68] Boyle, this volume, 134.

what Kant calls sensibility flows from considering the case of animals that differ from us in lacking reason and then considering what it is that we share with such animals. On this way of understanding what is most central to Kant's conception of sensibility, not only is *nothing essential lost* in having our preliminary elucidation of the cognitive capacity of sensibility be one that equally applies to beings who are not us—non-rational animals whose cognitive capacities can be known to us only *from the outside,* through empirical observation and speculation—but it *must* be a concept that can be acquired only through our first looking about in the world, seeing what sorts of creatures resemble us, and then framing a concept of a cognitive capacity that adequately covers both sorts of cases: cognitive beings just like us as well as those who differ from us yet still have some sort of power of perception/knowledge. The concept of sensibility is then introduced into our further philosophical inquiry (about the sort of knowledge of which animals such as ourselves are capable) as the concept of a cognitive capacity that has a logical shape and scope of application that suits it to the task so conceived—that is to say, it is introduced as the concept of a highest common factor that rational and non-rational animals share.

To read Kant in this way is to fail to appreciate how the philosophical method practiced in the Transcendental Aesthetic is internal to and of a piece with the method of the entirety of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* If we are practicing the critical method, then the concept of sensibility that must initially figure in our inquiry is the concept of an ingredient aspect of our cognitive capacity, whose form and matter is disclosed to us not by our looking around at what lies outside of us but through (what Kant calls) reflection. The sort of reflection required here is one pursued on the part of a subject who already bears the very capacity in question and moreover knows this about herself *from within*—through (what Kant calls) a *critique* of reason: through reason's effort to achieve self-knowledge of itself qua capacity—hence through a priori transcendental reflection on the conditions of the possibility of the sort of finite rational theoretical cognitive capacity that we exercise in the very act of seeking to achieve reflective self-understanding of the sort of beings that we are. The concept of sensibility, which we initially frame when we pursue such a project of achieving self-knowledge of our cognitive power as a whole, gets its content from what, through transcendental reflection, we are able to understand must hold with regard to the form and matter of *our* sensory relation to possible objects of knowledge—that is, what must hold of our capacity for sensory apprehension of objects, if we wish to fully

vindicate our entitlement to regard it as an ingredient aspect of our power to acquire knowledge. On this way of reading Kant, the methodologically prior form of comprehension of the concept of sensibility is one that has application in the first instance to a rational being.[69] This is the concept that must first be rendered fully non-mysterious before we are in any position to exercise proper rational control over how it applies to beings whose cognitive capacities formally differ from our own. In a further step, it may then be projected out and onto creatures whose cognitive capacities differ in various respects from our own.[70] That is to say, for Kant, the necessarily philosophically relatively mysterious case is that of the non-rational animal—the concept of a kind of being at least some of whose cognitive capacities appear to have something generically in common with ours—where the philosophical difficulty will lie in working out to what extent we can apply a concept of a cognitive capacity (say, the concept of sensibility) to them without illicitly attributing to them forms of cognitive capacity that presuppose capacities that we have and they do not.[71] This is not to deny that Kant regards sensibility as a

[69] The point here is one about a concept of a kind of *cognitive capacity*—in this case, sensibility—and wherein our primary grasp of such a concept lies. This is not to deny that in knowing that we are human, we also know that there are other non-human creatures and that part of our mastery of the concept *human* lies in our capacity to distinguish ourselves from such creatures.

[70] I will turn in a moment to the question of how, from Kant's point of view, we ought to understand the logical shape of a claim to the effect that we and non-rational animals "have something in common" in both having a capacity for sensible affection.

[71] Each of Kant's criticisms of the classical empiricists' conception of sensibility (qua cognitive capacity to be affected by objects) is related to a difficulty that attends a corresponding philosophical task of characterizing the form of sensibility of an animal (qua capacity of a non-rational being to be affected by objects). Here are some examples of such difficulties: how should we characterize the sense in which such a creature "associates" one thing with another, given that what we are calling "association" in them is not supposed to be a characterization of a merely privative form of exercise of a capacity for the representation of objectively valid connection, but is supposed to be a positive characterization of the very nature of their form of sensibility? In what sense may such beings even be said to be aware of a "succession" of representations in space and time if they lack the self-conscious form of cognitive capacity required to represent them *as* (spatiotemporally) successive. Kant's way of accounting for these mysteries is to try to get into view the radical difference in the form, matter, and end of animal cognition. For example, to focus on the last of these: The end of the cognitive capacity in the animal is not truth but biological self-maintenance. We, too, have capacities whose end is biological self-maintenance, such a digestion. But there is a dimension of formal difference in the kinds of capacities that digestion and perception respectively are in us—a dimension of difference that does not hold in the same way for the non-rational animal. But this means that the concept *sensibility* (qua ingredient capacity in rational perceptual knowledge) does not refer to something that may be conceived as a highest common factor between them and us.

concept of a cognitive power that can be predicated of both rational and non-rational animals. But it is to insist that the philosophical task of understanding how non-rational and rational forms of cognitive power "have something in common" for Kant is not—as it is for most contemporary analytic philosophers—one of understanding how a purely animal power of sensibility must be supplemented to yield a being that has our cognitive powers; rather, it is one of understanding how the concept of such a power (whose formal character receives its primary and most rigorous philosophical elucidation in the context of the achievement of a reflective self-understanding of our own cognitive power) admits of extension to a sort of being whose cognitive power exhibits a formal unity that fundamentally differs from our own.[72] In contrast to empiricist views—according to which, the more an animal biologically resembles us in various respects, the *less* philosophically mysterious such a being ought to be to us—from the point of view of a Kantian philosophical methodology, arguably the opposite is true: the more a non-rational animal in various respects superficially resembles us, given the depth of the formal differences, the *more* philosophically mysterious such an animal is bound to be.[73]

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[72] Such commonalities of *sensibility* that do not constitute highest common factors require equally delicate handling in a Kantian account of the concepts of *practical* cognitive capacities—such as inclination, desire, pleasure, and so on. This holds, for example, for Kant on desire, as Anastasia Berg explains:

> [T]he faculty of desire in rational agents in general, and human beings in particular, is not merely an animal faculty of desire, but 'a specially constituted faculty of desire' (*G* 4:428). Our faculty of desire is 'distinct from a mere faculty of desire' by being a 'faculty of determining itself to action as an intelligence and hence in accordance with laws of reason independently of natural instincts' (*G* 4:459). In saying that the will is not a 'mere' power of desire, Kant is of course not denying that the will is a power of *desire* but is instead claiming that our power of desire is a special species of the genus, 'faculty of desire.' Our rational faculty of desire is a power to act for the sake of ends, but it is not merely that: it is the capacity to act for the sake of ends that *one sets for oneself and in accordance with principles*, and therefore in awareness of one's freedom from external determination. (Berg, "Kant on Moral Respect" [*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, forthcoming])

[73] Hence, the more difficult it becomes to do justice to those commonalities while respecting the profundity of the differences. I will not have space below to explore the connections between this aspect of Kant's philosophy and that of the later Wittgenstein. But the degree of dissimilarity in their respective treatments of this topic pale in comparison to their degree of common divergence from most treatments of this topic in contemporary analytic philosophy. The contemporary analytic philosopher tends to suppose the following: Animals are relatively easy to understand; what poses a much greater philosophical challenge is to understand the nature and possibility of rationality or self-consciousness or objective

In contemporary Kant scholarship the most popular version of a layer-cake reading is one that regards the formal character of a sensible manifold as something that can be fully in place simply through the operation of our sensible cognitive faculty, prior to any involvement of the understanding. The Transcendental Aesthetic, according to the most standard version of a layer-cake reading of *The Critique of Pure Reason,* elucidates a self-standing form of one element of a cognitive composite, while the Transcendental Analytic elucidates that of another. According to this picture: spatiotemporal unity comes first with the exercise of our capacity for bare sensory apprehension; categorical unity comes later when such a manifold is subsequently taken up into the unity of the concept of an object.[74] As against such a reading, I have argued elsewhere

thought. Kant and Wittgenstein differ with such a philosopher and agree with each other at least this far: Though these topics do pose philosophical challenges, there is no hope of achieving philosophical clarity about what the capacities of a non-human animal are until we first achieve philosophical clarity about our own capacities (so that we become able to properly frame the question of how our capacities resemble and differ from theirs); moreover, as we gradually achieve the necessary forms of prior philosophical clarity, various non-human animals will increasingly come into focus for us as far more deeply mysterious than we had first appreciated. For Wittgenstein, in particular, our capacity to apprehend various non-human animals as fellow creatures, however mysterious, does not require that we first have mastered a concept of the animal whose extension is fixed by certain defining marks and features (such as the feature of possessing a capacity for sensible affection). For more on what it means to apprehend certain non-human animals as fellow creatures, see Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," in *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). This sentence (and those that follow it) from that essay indicate a helpful starting point for a discussion of this topic: "The extension to animals of modes of thinking characteristic of our responses to human beings is extremely complex, and includes a great variety of things" (329). To say that our mastery of the concept of a fellow creature involves this sort of complexity is in no way to deny that it belongs to a proper mastery of the concept *human* that we appreciate that some of our fellow creatures are not human. Hence, the claim that the concept *human* is fundamental to our self-understanding must also not require a denial that its mastery draws on "modes of thinking" that are "extremely complex" in just this way. This is a further thought Kant and Wittgenstein share: The modes of self-understanding implicit in (what Kant calls) the common, healthy understanding—and that it is philosophy's task to bring to full self-consciousness—are nothing, if not exquisitely intricate and difficult to articulate without distortion. And here is arguably yet a further thought they share: among the fundamental concepts implicit in any such form of self-understanding is that of the non-human animal: the concept of a fellow creature whose forms of mindedness or life differ sufficiently from our own to be necessarily intelligible to us *only from the outside*—hence a concept whose formal character is far more difficult to articulate without distortion than a certain sort of philosopher is apt to imagine.

[74] An interpretation qualifies as "a layer-cake reading" of Kant with respect to the point at issue here, regardless of whether the words "first," "then," and "subsequently" in this sentence are construed as denoting *temporally* successive or merely *logically* self-standingly intelligible moments in the constitution of our cognitive relation to an object.

that the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories aims to show that the kind of condition on knowledge that the Transcendental Aesthetic articulates is reflectively *ab*stractable but not *ex*tractable in the way the layer-cake reading imagines it to be—that it brings into view an internal formal aspect of a single unified capacity for cognition.[75]

At the level of a formal characterization of what it is to have a faculty of receptivity, qua cognitive capacity, there is nothing that may figure as a highest common factor across the capacities of two creatures, only one of which is a rational creature. On the conception which I will attribute to Kant, if the two creatures here under consideration may be said to have a capacity in common, it is only because of their "having something in common" at a very generic level of description—a level of description of "the" capacity in question which completely abstracts from the manner in which it specifically figures in the exercise of their respective forms of cognition.[76]

At a certain generic level of description, an eagle and a human have upper and lower limbs in common, but what they have in common is not a highest common factor. In the case of their lower limbs, we refer to what they have in common as "legs." So it may help to concentrate the mind if we focus instead on their upper limbs, where we are less apt to be confused by the presence of a common term. The latter sorts of limbs are sufficiently different as to render us less inclined to refer to both sorts through the use of a common term.[77] In an eagle, the upper limbs of the creature are wings; in a human, they are arms. Generically speaking, they are both upper limbs. But one cannot turn the one into the other by

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[75] See Conant, "Why Kant is Not a Kantian."

[76] John McDowell puts this point well:

> If we share perception with mere animals, then of course we have something in common with them. Now there is a temptation to think it must be possible to isolate what we have in common with them by stripping off what is special about us, so as to arrive at a residue that we can recognize as what figures in the perceptual lives of mere animals. . . . But it is not compulsory to attempt to accommodate the combination of something in common and a striking difference in this factorizing way: to suppose our perceptual lives include a core that we can recognize in the perceptual life of a mere animal, and an extra ingredient in addition, . . . Instead we can say that we have what mere animals have, perceptual sensitivity to features of our environment, but we have it in a special form. (John McDowell, *Mind and World* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994], 64)

[77] Nothing of philosophical substance turns here on the degree to which we are inclined to use the same term or a different term for what is specifically different but generically the same. Yet it is remarkable how often it is assumed in philosophy that where we find a common term for a capacity found in two very different life forms, there we have a form of commonality that must be analyzed as a highest common factor.

adding some features—such as, say, an elbow to the one, or some feathers to the other. They differ in form, not merely in matter. What they generically have in common must formally differ in order for these limbs to belong to the two very different forms of life that they do.[78]

Whatever may be said in favor of the idea that an arm and wing differ not merely in their matter but in the very form of limb that they each are, it pales on Kantian grounds in comparison with the depth of difference in form he seeks to mark through his employment of terms such as "rational" and "self-conscious." That depth of difference notwithstanding, Kant is happy to affirm that rational beings (whose nature we know from the inside) and non-rational ones (whose nature we can know only from the outside) have something generically in common:

> We can quite correctly infer by analogy, from the similarity between animal behavior (whose basis we are not able to directly perceive) and human behavior (of whose basis we are directly conscious), that animals too act in accordance with representations (rather than their being machines, as Descartes would have it), and if we disregard wherein their specific difference lies, and attend only the genus to which they belong (as living beings), then animals and humans are nonetheless one and the same.[79]

What the employment of such an analogical inference allows us to regard as generically in common between our own case and that of the mere animal licenses the application of a whole range of further concepts (that we apply to ourselves from the inside) to the mere animal (now from the outside) along the dimension of our generic commonality—concepts such as "sensory representation," "intuition," "perceptual acquaintance," and so on. The logically generic dimension of postulated commonality is what grounds the intelligibility of the application of concepts for cognitive capacities we understand through our own case beyond our own case.[80]

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[78] One has failed to appreciate the point here in question if one takes it to hold only of the upper limbs of the eagle and the human respectively, but not of their lower limbs—the ones for which we employ the generic term "legs." These, too, must formally differ in no less profound ways in creatures whose preferred modes of self-transportation are to fly and to walk.

[79] *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 5:464; my translation.

[80] Kant does seem to regard this particular extension of concepts as resting on a *postulated,* not a *cognized,* generic commonality. Elsewhere he expresses himself much more tentatively about whether we ought to bank on the truth of the hypothesis that the analogical inference here at issue encourages:

> The non-rational animal [perhaps] has something similar to what we call representations

The initial ground of our comprehension of what such ways of speaking signify remains throughout our own direct self-consciousness understanding of what we know these terms are supposed to signify with regard to our own case. On any logically full-blooded use of these terms, what they mean is what they mean within the context of our own cognitive lives.[81] This does not mean that we cannot transfer their use to another context. But it does mean our grasp of what they come to mean in that further context is logically parasitic on our prior grasp of their logically primary use. Our retaining a firm grip on what such terms for sensible cognitive capacities and their exercises ought to and ought not to signify in application to a creature with a fundamentally different form of cognitive life—one that we can know only from the outside and to whom we are able to extend these concepts only tentatively and through a form of analogical reasoning based on what we outwardly observe about their behavior suggests about their possible resemblance to our own case—depends upon our holding firmly in view, at one and the same

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(because it has effects that are [very] similar to the representations in the human being) but which may perhaps be entirely different. (*Lectures on Anthropology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 7:141n) (I have amended the translation.)

The "perhaps" and the "very" occur in Kant's handwriting in the original manuscript and were subsequently crossed out by a possibly presumptuous editor. But the uncontroversial final clause ("may perhaps be entirely different") suffices to secure the point. What is here at issue is a form of speculation. The provision of the logical shape of the fundamental concepts of transcendental philosophy does not rest on uncertain speculative premises, but rather on reflection upon that which we all already know and can bring to reflective self-conscious through the proper practice of the critical method.

[81] Notice: the point made here (about how to understand the application of such concepts beyond our case) has non-accidental parallels to points made earlier (with the assistance of Johannes Haag) about how to understand what is involved when we seek to apply our concepts for cognitive capacities (whose initial significance is fixed through what we can know from the inside about the form of our own capacities) to characterize the case of some possible form of non-finite (such as intellectual intuition)—or at least less finite (such as a holy will)—form of cognition than our own. In that context the problem was to understand the contrast between the self-conscious finite knower and the limiting case of a cognitive capacity shorn of one or another dimension of our finitude. Here our difficulty is how to understand the contrast between the self-conscious finite knower and the case of a cognitive capacity shorn of our self-consciousness. There are important limits to the analogy between these two forms of outward projection beyond our own case of our concepts for cognitive capacity. In the case that limits our understanding of our own from above, the projection of the concept yields a range of concepts of a possible kind of being that we can think without contradiction but about whom we can neither observe nor know anything. In the case that limits our understanding of our own from below, the projection of the concept is invited precisely through the attempt to understand a kind of creature whom we can observe and about whom, through a combination of observation and analogical reasoning, we can and do seek to know something.

time, both our generic similarity with them (qua sentient living beings) and our specific difference from them (qua formally distinct cases of such beings).[82]

For our difference from them in Kant's eyes is not a dimension of difference in genus that amounts to a mere difference in species, but rather—to quote the phrase from Aristotle that we called upon in our earlier account of what it means to individuate capacities with regard to their form—one that renders "the genus itself other."[83] The difference in question that renders the genus itself other is to be traced in this case to our

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[82] At one point in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant formulates what the human practical cognitive agent generically shares with a mere animal, while also highlighting how the human case formally differs from that of such a creature, as follows:

> The human being insofar as he belongs to the world of sense is a needy being, and to this extent his reason does indeed have a mandate from the side of sensibility which he cannot reject. . . . Yet he is not so entirely an animal as to be indifferent to all that reason says on its own. . . . [I]f reason is to serve him only for the sake of what instinct accomplishes in animals . . . reason would in that case be only a particular manner that nature had employed in order to equip the human being for the same purpose to which it has destined animals. (Ak 61)

Both the rational and the merely animal form of creature have a mandate from the side of sensibility that they cannot simply reject. But the mere animal can respond to it in only one way. If all is well, this suffices to allow that which the mere animal generically shares with us in the way of a faculty of desire to accomplish what instinct is meant to accomplish in order that the animal may flourish. What is thus a form of flourishing in the animal is at best for Kant something that resembles a form of pathology in the human being. To be a non-pathological exemplar of a rational being is precisely not to have whatever mandate flows from the side of sensibility be the sole and overriding determining factor of one's agency, but rather to have a form of faculty of desire that—as in an earlier note we already quoted Kant as saying—is "distinct from a mere faculty of desire" by being a "faculty of determining itself to action as an intelligence and hence in accordance with laws of reason independently of natural instincts" (*G* 4:459). This shows that desire in the animal and in us differs in form. The same point that holds here of the practical side holds no less for the limits of the analogy that licenses its application on the theoretical side. The mere animal can respond to its "sensory representations" in the only way that it can. If all is well, this suffices to allow that which the mere animal generically shares with us in the way of a faculty of sensory consciousness of outer objects to accomplish what such a faculty is meant to accomplish in order that the animal may accordingly pursue or evade as appropriate—these being conditions on its flourishing: for example, its eating and not being eaten. What may be so formally characterized as an in no way defective exercise of a faculty of sensory representation in the animal is for Kant at best something that resembles a highly defective exercise of a capacity for the representation of objects in space and time. The latter requires a faculty of sensible intuition that is formally distinct from a mere faculty of bare sensory affection. How such a case of the complete and perfect exercise of such mere animal sensory representation stands to a case of the complete and perfect exercise of a perceptual capacity in a rational being is not properly comprehended for Kant as a case of a highest common factor occurring first in isolation and then in a cognitive compound.

[83] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X.8, 1058a7, trans. W. D. Ross.

"rationality" or "self-consciousness." The very point of these terms is to articulate what is constitutive of the formal character of the only cognitive capacity we can know from the inside.[84] A non-rational animal is one that in some respect generically resembles the sort of cognitive being we are without their cognitive capacity bearing this form. This means that our comprehension of such a cognitive being, insofar as it continues to depend on the analogy that licenses the outward projection of such terms ("sensory representation," "intuition," etc.) onto this fundamentally different form of cognitive life, will bear an essentially privative aspect in that their analogical extension to this further case will remain logically derivative upon our prior grasp of the logically full-blooded application of such terms to our own case. In their full-blooded use—which is the only form of use in connection with which we can make an individuated application of such terms to a sensible manifold available to consciousness—our comprehension of what comprises the matter of such a manifold depends on our implicit comprehension of its form.

To read Kant in this way is to take seriously the hylomorphic dimension of Kant's overall account of cognition—one that Boyle rightly claims Conant fails sufficiently to appreciate.[85] For Kant, as for Aristotle, form and matter are internally related and only notionally separable through a reflective exercise of abstraction: that which we thereby reflectively abstract can never be ontologically extracted from the nexus of unity in which it has its life. The "form" of which we here speak is therefore not a kind of *ens* that can be actual apart from the matter it informs. Rather, the form of knowledge is latent and operative in all material knowledge, and the intelligibility of that form, in turn, is dependent on the actuality of its matter. The manner in which the form of our rational capacity manifests itself varies depending upon which aspect of the capacity we re-

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[84] Of course, if one understands "self-consciousness" in the manner that many Kant interpreters do, then there will appear to be no problem here at all. If one thinks that self-consciousness is a further capacity that a rational being has over and above the capacity it shares with non-rational beings to enjoy a certain ("merely phenomenal") mental state x—so that self-consciousness may be identified with a capacity, say, to introspect and thereby notice that one has mental state x, or to take up some cognitive attitude y towards x, or to enjoy a certain type of first-person perspective of type y onto x—then the capacity to enjoy x and the capacity for self-consciousness (construed as the introduction of such an independent factor y) will appear to be easily separable, and there will seem to be no difficulty at all about conceiving the relation of the one capacity to the other (of y to x) as one of supplementation. We will return to the issue of why in the logically full-blooded case self-consciousness does not stand to consciousness as a perspective onto a perceptual state in the reply to Hamawaki.

[85] See also, in this connection, Boyle's forthcoming paper "Kant's Hylomorphism."

flectively consider in abstraction from the unity of the faculty as a whole. It manifests itself in one way in the spatiotemporal form that all sensory consciousness of objects exhibits, in another way in the objectively valid predicative forms of unity that every categorical judgment displays, and in yet other ways in other formal aspects of our cognitive capacity—including in the table of judgments of pure general logic. Our *Erkenntnisvermoegen,* thus considered as a whole, is a single unified capacity that is *in energeia* in each and every exercise of its ingredient capacities of perception, imagination, understanding, judgment, inference, and reflection. It is the task of transcendental philosophy to bring this latent form of the human cognitive power in all its dimensions to full reflective consciousness as the unity that it is, as well as to bring out that it is "a self-subsistent unity, in which each part exists for every other, and all for the sake of each, as in an organized body."[86]

It is one just small aspect of this much larger task that the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories seeks to discharge—namely, to illustrate how a conception of such an overarching self-subsistent unity should inform a proper account of the relation between sensibility and understanding. The more general point holds for Kant, however, for the relation between any two of our cognitive capacities—not only for the relation between sensibility and understanding but also for that which obtains between understanding and reason. This means it also holds for the relation between what pure general logic describes (as exhibited in the table of judgments) and what transcendental logic describes (as exhibited in the table of categories). These two forms of unity are not self-standing—each depends on the other. They are one and the same unity, considered at two levels of abstraction.

This means that Kant will make claims on behalf of *reason* (about our cognitive faculty considered as a whole) resembling those that Descartes makes on behalf of God (for example, in connection with God's relation to the modalities): it is only through the actuality of its activity that we can grasp its formal character; no aspect thereof is self-standingly in place prior to the actuality of that activity, exogenously determining its operations; and the faculties we distinguish in characterizing its formal aspects all flow from a single essentially unified whole.

This implies that a reading of Kant that rests on the following idea is no less a misinterpretation of his philosophy than other versions of a layer-cake reading: *the forms of judgment* (that belong to the purview of

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[86] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Bxxiii, 26; and cf. Axiii, 10, Bxxxvii–xxxviii, and 33–34.

pure general logic) are exercises of a self-standingly intelligible power for thought that an intellectual being could possess apart from *the forms of the understanding* (that belong to the purview of transcendental logic); the former set of "forms" characterize a capacity for logical thought whose operation may be conceived as prior to and independent of the actuality of the rest of our cognitive capacities.[87] This, however, is exactly how Frege thinks our capacity for logical thought stands to the rest of our cognitive faculties or, as he prefers to call them, "sources of knowledge." This means that whatever it might mean to say that Frege takes logic to articulate "the form of thought," it cannot admit of a single understanding upon which it expresses a truth both about Frege's conception of logic and Kant's, because a proper understanding of what those words mean for Kant (about the essential dependence of that form on the actuality of our capacity for making material judgments that comprise its matter) rules out Frege's way of conceiving of the priority of logic.[88] For Frege, our capacity for logical thought is a self-standingly intelligible capacity; whereas for Kant, our capacity for logical thought is part of a self-subsistent capacity for knowledge, in which each part exists for every other, and all for the sake of each, as in an organized body.

I want to tease out one more implication of Boyle's criticism of Conant's reading of Kant—namely, what Kant's conception of the nexus of power and act implies for Frege's conception of the relation between (what he calls) thought and judgment. For Kant, these stand to one another in the aforementioned order of explanatory priority and logical complexity: the power of judgment is prior to its acts, and each such act is prior to its content and, indeed, the source of the logical unity of that content—of the manner of combination of its logical elements. For Frege, this nexus of power, act, and content stand to one another in the following radically un-Kantian progression of logical complexity: the logically prior and

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[87] The empiricist version of a layer-cake conception assumes that (at least) our capacity for sensibility (as it is in act in our form of sensory consciousness of an object as characterized by the *Transcendental Aesthetic*) is a self-standingly intelligible power—one whose conditions of possibility can be fully comprehended apart from its relation to the form of our capacity for thought. The rationalist version of a layer-cake conception assumes that (at least) the capacity for thought (as it is characterized by pure general logic) is a self-standingly intelligible power—one whose conditions of possibility can be fully comprehended apart from its relation to the form of our power of sensory consciousness of an object. Kant is equally concerned with criticizing both versions of a layer-cake conception; they equally fail—albeit it in opposite ways—for the same fundamental underlying reason: they fail to appreciate that our cognitive capacity is a self-subsistent unity.

[88] This is a point to which we will return below in my reply to Stroud.

simplest notion is the thought—the judgable content per se—something which may be taken up in an act of thought but whose unity is independent of any act of the power to judge, to acknowledge, its truth. The most straightforward way of putting the relevant implication of Boyle's reading of Kant for Conant's attempt to assimilate Kant and Frege would therefore be as follows: it rules out a conception of "thought" in which the capacity "to grasp a thought" (i.e., the power to combine the elements of thinkable content into a logical unity) is prior to the general power of judgment in the manner Frege envisages.

Let us begin teasing out what is at stake here through the following merely terminological observation: there is no way to translate what Frege means by the terms "judgment" and "thought" into Kant's philosophical vocabulary and vice versa. Conant's way of aligning these two philosophers often depends upon employing these terms as if they were at least roughly synonymous in their occurrences in the writings of each. A full account of the various dimensions of non-translatability of these pairs of terms would require considerable work. I will restrict myself to drawing attention to just one such dimension: How should we translate Frege's "thought" into Kant's terminology? In fact, it has and can have no counterpart for reasons that are non-accidentally related to the way in which it depends upon an entire conception of logic that is utterly alien to Kant. So let us ask a far more modest question, which has the virtue of admitting of an answer: What is the closest equivalent in Kant's terminology for Frege's "thought"? The proper answer to this question is: problematic judgment.

Kant says that the problematic judgment expresses "logical possibility" and explains this as follows: "[I]t expresses a free choosing to let such a proposition stand—a mere electing to admit it into the understanding."[89] This might sound close to what Frege tells us the mere entertaining of a thought involves. But, for Kant, this describes a peculiar and logically secondary exercise of our capacity for judgment. Judgment full stop—the logically full-blooded exercise of the capacity—is a success concept for Kant: to judge is to grasp the truth. Hence, in its problematic exercise, the capacity for judgment is, in act, merely as a consciousness of the possibility of its actualization, not as one of the actuality of its full engagement.[90] Both the act of making a false judgment and that of exercising

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[89] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A75/B101, 110.

[90] Hence, Kant will characterize the difference between problematic and assertoric judgments as follows: "The problematic ones are accompanied with the consciousness of the mere

one's capacity for judgment problematically therefore belong in a box
for Kant, at least in the following respect: though neither of these sorts
of acts issues in a grasp of the truth, both involve exercises of the same
power—one whose logically full-blooded exercise is such as to so
issue—and their possibility essentially depends upon their relation to this
form of exercise of our prior general power for knowledge.

Before we inquire further into what it means to say that problematic
judgment involves a logically secondary exercise of our capacity for judg-
ment, it is worth lingering for a further moment over Kant's saying that
problematic judgment involves "a *free* choosing to let such a proposi-
tion stand—a *mere electing* to admit it into the understanding." I submit
that the italicized expressions here are not due to a mere rhetorical flourish
on Kant's part—to a merely figurative employment of cognitive concepts
drawn from the sphere of practical knowledge. Those cases of problem-
atic judgment that eventuate in our taking up a stance toward the theo-
retical content require a multiplicity of acts, successively drawing upon
our theoretical and practical cognitive capacities in turn. For the prob-
lematically entertained theoretical content in question to be invested with
a measure of credence requires a further act on my part, one that involves
a decision—or, as the contemporary analytic philosopher would say,
involves my adopting an attitude toward the content in question. This
requires that the initial exercise of the faculty of understanding be sup-
plemented by a further act before it eventuates in a posture of credence.
Kant does not oppose such an account of problematic judgment—though
he departs from both Frege and the contemporary analytic philosopher
in suggesting that ingredient in this multiplicity of acts is an exercise of
the faculty of will. The key point here for our present purpose is the
following: for Kant, in the problematic case, an exercise of the will is
required over and above an exercise of the understanding.

Leaving to one side for a moment the question of whether the will is
involved in such cases, the contemporary analytic philosopher will tend
to follow Frege in holding that the account of the logical complexity that
Kant finds in problematic judgment is so far, so good, but he will differ
from Kant in holding that such a structure is to be found not only in prob-
lematic judgment but in *judgment simpliciter*. For the post-Fregean, as
for Descartes, even the logically simplest possible case of judgment in-
volves a multiplicity of acts: the achievement of full-blooded judgment

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possibility of the judging, the assertoric ones with the consciousness of its actuality" (Kant,
Jäsche Logic, §30, 604).

always requires supplementing the logical unity of a judgable content with a further act in which one acknowledges its truth. This contrasts with Kant's understanding of judgment simpliciter: it is an act in which I simply judge that such and such is the case. The logical difference between these two cases is rendered dramatically evident in Kant's account through according the will a role to play in the one case and none in the other.[91] Kant holds—with Spinoza, and against Descartes—that the will has no role to play in judgment simpliciter: the act of the acknowledgment of truth is not merely a further attendant consequence that follows when what there is to judge is sufficiently obvious as to be immediately regarded as true. Rather it is not, in this sense, a *consequence* of anything at all. For in the logically most basic case of the exercise of the capacity, there is no logical step for Kant in which I move from a grasp of the content to an acknowledgment of its truth. Hence there is no room for an act in which I freely choose to let the proposition stand. To require the interpolation of such an act in an account of the very idea of an exercise of theoretical reason would, for Kant, be to confuse the spontaneity of theoretical reason with the freedom of the will. Such a spontaneous nonproblematic exercise of the capacity for judgment comprises for Kant a

[91] Related exegetical points, though viewed from a rather different perspective (motivated by a concern to assess what room there is in Kant's story for doxastic voluntarism and, more generally, an ethics of belief), can be found in Alix Cohen's articles "Kant on the Ethics of Belief," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 114, no. 3, pt. 3 (Dec. 2014): 317–334; and "Kant on Doxastic Voluntarism and its Implications for Epistemic Responsibility," *Kant Yearbook* 5, no. 1 (2013): 33–50. However, where I speak rather loosely and vaguely here of the faculty of the will, Cohen is more specific about which practical cognitive capacity is, above all, here at issue for Kant—namely, the faculty of choice. Her reading also draws on a great many more texts than mine. On page 36 of the latter article, she notes that in *The Bloomberg Logic* Kant explicitly distinguishes the faculty of cognition, which is understanding, from the faculty of investigation, which is choice, for "[h]olding-to-be-true pertains to the understanding, but investigation to the faculty of choice" (Kant, *Lectures on Logic,* 471 [AA24:736]). She also notes that in *The Bloomberg Logic* he distinguishes between cases where "approval does not arise immediately through the nature of the human understanding and of human reason" and cases where it does (Kant, *Lectures on Logic,* 125 [AA 24:158]). She summarizes the crucial point for our present purpose as follows: "In the former cases, judgment is withheld and the will is called upon to orient the inquiry. But in the latter cases, not only is the will not called upon, judgment is immediate" (39). I leave to one side here the question of whether the best way to conceive of the sort of complexity involved in such cases is Kant's way—as involving an act of the will. I also leave to one side a variety of systematic and exegetical questions pertaining to whether all such cases are to be brought under a uniform account—or whether there are important differences between cases, such as coming to believe that a thing that looks green is really blue (but is caused to appear otherwise due to yellow lighting) and coming to believe that the structure of the universe is not (even if it initially appears to be) such as to render the realization of a moral community an illusory or hopeless end.

single unitary act. Spontaneity requires the assistance of freedom only in those cases in which theoretical reason is unable to complete the job off its own bat. The difficult business of the conduct of inquiry, on the one hand, and the conduct of life, on the other, reciprocally require a cooperation and interplay of theoretical and practical reason. Nonetheless, it is crucial to a proper understanding of Kant's account that we do not project this dimension of complexity regarding what is involved in the more delicate and etiolated exercises of our capacities required for the business of inquiry and conduct—the complexity of this interplay between capacities—into our account of what constitutes the *form* of one of these capacities, considered apart from the other.[92]

We might try to bring out one aspect of Kant's conception here through an analogy. The act of problematic judgment stands to the power of judgment, for Kant, in a relation that is analogous to how the following pair of cases of act and power stand to one another: the relation in which an

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[92] I think this is exactly what Eric Watkins and Marcus Willaschek do in their article "Kant on Cognition," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 55, no. 1 (2017): 83–112. Some of what they say is fine as a characterization of a very particular kind of case of the exercise of our cognitive faculty:

> Since cognition is a conscious representation of a given object and its general features, it requires neither an act of assent nor an objective justification. Thus, I can have a representation of the ball in front of me as being red without endorsing the judgment "this ball is red," since I might not have assessed the relevant evidence or I might have done so and (rightly or wrongly) believe it to be a white ball illuminated by red light. (87–88)

What is here described is a problematic exercise of our capacity for judgment. Watkins and Willaschek, however, read the two-step structure (of the initial conscious representation of a possible state of affairs and a subsequent act of assent to the objective obtaining of that state of affairs) that characterizes such a case into the nature of judgment as such. Patricia Kitcher, in service of explicating a crucial point in Sebastian Rödl's reading of Kant, criticizes Watkins and Willaschek as follows:

> Watkins and Willaschek make it seem as though Kant thought there might be a cognition or thought or proposition just sitting there—'the ball is red'—to which the subject can give or withhold her assent. By contrast Rödl argues that to judge 'a is F,' either on the basis of perception or inference, is not to have a perception or a judgment that serves as the ground of 'a is F' and then weigh up whether you want to commit yourself to 'a is F.' If your faculties are functioning correctly and you have an adequate perceptual or inferential basis for 'a is F,' and you judge 'a is F,' there is no further step, so it makes no sense to talk about the judgment as something that you commit yourself to. ("Idealism, Subjects and Science: Comments on Sebastian Rödl's *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity: An Introduction to Absolute Idealism,*" unpublished manuscript, 6–7)

Kitcher is here explicating the point that Rödl expresses in his work by saying that a judgment is conscious of its own validity; see chapter 3 of his *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity*. He rightly regards this as one of the guiding insights of German Idealism.

act of characterizing how something merely visually appears to me (while remaining agnostic about whether it is as it seems) stands to my power of sight. On the intended analogy, the capacity for sight is to be understood as a power to know; and the power to attend to the character of mere appearances and characterize them as such (in abstraction from any objective commitment to what thus appears) is a secondary—what I have called above, an attenuated—exercise of that capacity.[93]

For Frege, in every case that I judge, I move from thought to judgment.[94] For Kant, every time I judge, I do not move from a problematic judgment to a judgment full stop. Rather, I judge problematically only in certain restricted cases and only in virtue of exercising a more general power (the capacity for judgment) in a very particular way. Moreover, I do so because the ordinary exercise of the power is in some way impeded or under duress. For example, I might have some reflective reason for viewing the circumstances under which I judge, or that which I judge about, to be such that the exercise of the power in this case is of a sort that falls short of its usual end. From Kant's point of view, Frege's conception of the move from thought to judgment bears a structural similarity to what Kant calls the "problematic idealist" conception of how we move from (supposedly always merely inner) appearances to the objects of outer sense.[95] Both conceptions contrive to make it seem as if the full exercise of the capacity in question (intuiting an outer object, judging a truth) always requires what in fact is required only under certain non-optimal conditions: namely, a move from a first step in which we merely have appearances of what might be the case in view to a second step in which we move from the appearances to a representation of them as genuinely object- or truth-involving.

Just as in intuition, non-defective or non-attenuated exercises of our capacity for sensory apprehension are essentially object-involving for Kant; so, too, non-defective or non-attenuated exercises of our capacity

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[93] To say that it is an analogy is to say that there is a feature of the case that figures in the left-hand side of the analogy that helpfully illuminates a feature of the case that figures in the right-hand side of the analogy. Whether the two sorts of cases here are just merely analogous (as I am presently allowing myself to say) or whether there is a single philosophical point here, grasped from two different directions, is a question to which we will return in my reply to Hamawaki.

[94] Talk in this context of a "move" (or "advance") from thought to judgment—and related uses of the metaphor of a "move" from x to y—are not to be construed temporally. This is simply a way of talking that Kant and Frege, each in their own way, go for in order to make a certain distinction of moments within a logical nexus vivid.

[95] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B274–279, 244–247.

for judgment are essentially truth-involving for Kant. This is arguably the most fundamental methodological commitment of Kant's entire transcendental inquiry into our cognitive powers: that it begin from (what John McDowell calls) the "good"[96] case of the exercise of our cognitive powers and work out from there to a comprehension of the conditions of the possibility of other comparatively less optimal cases of its exercise—cases which must be brought into view as being essentially dependent upon the prior intelligibility of the good case.

The most fundamental point about the relation of power to act, at issue above, does not depend on the capacity in question being one of theoretical cognition. It holds equally of the relation of power to act in practical cognition. To bring this out, let us vary the analogy: just as someone who has acquired a capacity to heal a sick person (to take Aristotle's favorite example of a two-way capacity[97]) or shoot a free throw in basketball (to take John McDowell's[98]) may intend to exercise the capacity in ways that are directly contrary to the realization of its formal end; so, too, someone who has the capacity to judge may self-consciously exercise that capacity in ways that wittingly fall short of the recognition of truth yet nonetheless issue in what Kant calls problematic judgment, hence in something that nonetheless partakes of the logical form of the capacity for judgment within the context of an act in which we refrain from judging full stop. In both theoretical and practical cognition, for Kant, attenuated exercises of the capacity are explanatorily posterior to a conception of its successful exercise. The form of the power in both the theoretical and practical cases is explanatorily prior to each of its acts. This is not to say that, when it comes to judgment, each act of the

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[96] In "The Disjunctive Conception of Experience as Material for a Transcendental Argument" (in *The Engaged Intellect* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009], 225–240) and "Tyler Burge on Disjunctivism" (*Philosophical Explorations* 13, no. 3 [Sept. 2010]: 243–255), McDowell speaks of the two disjuncts that are to be distinguished on a disjunctive analysis of perceptual experience as "the 'good' disjunct" and "the 'bad' disjunct." In the "good" case, we are not deceived by our perceptual experience; in the "bad" case, we are. This is made particularly clear in the earlier terminology he originally employed in "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge" (in *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998], 369–394) where he spoke of the "good" case as being "the non-deceptive case." In the next reply, I will ask whether the important insight here (underlying McDowell's critique of conjunctivist accounts of perception) is well captured by an account that regards the perceptual non-deceptiveness of a case as a sufficient ground for classifying it as partaking of the relevant form of "goodness."

[97] Aristotle, θ-2 1045b, in *Aristotle's Metaphysics Book θ,* trans. and ed. S. Mankin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2.

[98] McDowell, "Tyler Burge on Disjunctivism," 245–246.

power is itself a case of the recognition of truth, but only that none of its acts are intelligible as what they are apart from an appropriately general understanding of the power from which they issue.

If we proceed without such an appropriately encompassing conception of the cognitive power, then Kant's employment of terminology is bound to puzzle us. Consider the following remark of Andrew Chignell's regarding Kant's supposedly promiscuous employment of the term "Urteil":

> [A]ssent is a psychological concept whereas *judgment* is strictly speaking a logical concept. I say "strictly speaking" because Kant uses "Urteil" in a number of different ways—sometimes to refer to the logical object or content of an assent, but other times to refer to the act of judging or to the faculty of judgment itself. In the strict sense, however, "Urteil" for Kant . . . plays a role similar to that played by "proposition" in contemporary English-language philosophy. It is the logical object of an attitude. . . . So although Kant speaks loosely of "forming" or "making" judgments, what he really means is forming assents which have a subject-predicate judgment as their object. . . . [99]

We find here the following five ideas:

1. The term "Urteil" as Kant employs it is ambiguous.
2. Its strict sense pertains to the object of an attitude—a judgable content.
3. One may, without doing violence to Kant's ideas, assume that this sort of content is to be strictly distinguished from the attitude one takes toward it.
4. The former (the content) is a logical concept, whereas the latter (the attitude, say, of assent) is a psychological one.
5. When Kant strikes the note of activity—in speaking of our "forming" or "making" judgments—he is really speaking of assents rather than of "judgment" proper.

If what we have said above—in following out Boyle's suggestions—is on the right track, then all five of these exegetical assumptions are false. Kant's employment of the term "Urteil" is not promiscuous. It will inevitably seem to be, however, if one starts with Chignell's assumption regarding what "the strict sense" of the term must be. It is only if one appreciates that the logically primary sense of this term pertains to a general cognitive power that the family of uses of the term "Urteil" in Kant's texts

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[99] Andrew Chignell, "Kant's Concepts of Justification," *Noûs* 41, no. 4 (2007): 35.

may simultaneously come into view as in no way terminologically promiscuous. "Urteil" encompasses not only the general power of judgment but also the basic acts of that power (which are, as such, acts of knowledge), as well as the problematic acts of that power (in which what is logically combined is not endorsed and hence, as such, are not acts of knowledge).

It is no more accurate to say that Kant uses "Urteil" in a number of potentially misleading different ways then it would be to say of a basketball announcer that he uses the expression "shoot a free-throw" in a number of misleadingly different ways, on the grounds that at one point he uses it to mean a player's general capacity to hit such a shot, at another to mean a particular successful exercise of that capacity, at another the product of that exercise (an event of the ball going through the hoop), at another a failed exercise ("He missed his free-throw shot again!"), and so forth. And it would be even more misleading to say that the strict sense of the term has to do neither with a general capacity nor with the activity of its exercise, but *merely with the object* at which all such activity is directed: with the mere intended event (of a ball going through a hoop). Paraphrasing Chignell, let us consider the merits of the following proposal for regimenting terms: although the announcer speaks loosely of "shooting" or "making" free throws, what he really must mean is "just" *the thing* (the ball's going through the hoop in the required manner) that is "the object" of the player's activity of shooting. But, of course, in the case of a free throw there is nothing that qualifies as a proper understanding of the supposed "object" apart from an understanding of the place of the relevant capacity and its exercise in the larger field of human activity. There is nothing that counts as the relevant "thing" or "event" apart from its being appropriately caught up in a nexus of activity. Similarly, for Kant, the logically downstream uses of the term "Urteil" (one that Chignell takes to be primary) bear their intended uses only if the referent of each can come into view as the particular sort of logical unity it is through its having been effected by the spontaneity of the general power in question.

In non-problematic cases—in which the exercise of the capacity does not come apart from its end—the *combining* (the effecting of the logical unity) and the *assenting* moments in judgment are two aspects of a single logical act. In importing the grammar of contemporary logico-philosophical terminology—and hence, along with it, an entire conception of how "judgment" is to be decomposed into "attitude" and "object" and how these, in turn, are to be parceled out into metaphysically distinct "psychological" and "logical" components respectively—in the

service of clarifying what is supposedly unclear in Kant's original terminology, Chignell renders it impossible to understand why Kant is concerned to express himself in the manner that he does. In particular, it becomes impossible to understand how what Kant takes to be most central to his account of logic—namely, that it seeks to articulate the laws of a spontaneous self-conscious capacity—could be anything but external to what (by certain contemporary lights) ought to be of strict concern to the logician: namely, the supposed relations in which "propositions" stand to one another independently of any such capacity.

In taking the strict sense of "Urteil" to be confined to a sort of structured subject/predicate content whose nature is intelligible apart from the exercise of spontaneous cognitive faculty, Chignell's account has things exactly backward: the logical unity "S is F"—of subject and predicate—qua judgable content may be termed "Urteil" for Kant because one arrives at a proper conception of such content only through abstraction from the logically prior activity of combination through which such forms of unity are effected; where such an activity of combination, in turn, is termed a case of "forming an Urteil" precisely because its possibility, in turn, is logically parasitic on the basic case of the exercise of the capacity in which, in forming such a content, one is "making an Urteil": one judges "S *is* F."[100]

Chignell's account of judgment is therefore in the relevant respect the inverse of the one that Stephen Engstrom offers. We adduced the following passage from Engstrom above in the context of seeking to explicate the sense in which for Kant "acts of judgment" (in the sense of actualizations of a capacity) are not psychic processes that happen in or take time:

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[100] Chignell says: "In the strict sense . . . 'Urteil' for Kant . . . plays a role similar to that played by "proposition" in contemporary English-language philosophy." This is philosophically blinkered with regard to not only the more distant but also the recent past. Does the term "proposition" play the same "role" throughout all corners of the anglophone tradition? As we shall see in the reply to Travis, something very similar to what I have here said with regard to Kant's conception of *the content of a judgment* can also be said with regard to early Wittgenstein's conception of *the sense of a proposition*. In the *Tractatus* we arguably find the beginning within the analytic tradition itself of a very different way of thinking about what a "proposition" is than the one Chignell has in mind and reads back into Kant. Through especially the influence of the later writings of Wittgenstein, that alternative conception of the "proposition" (one whose very intelligibility presupposes the logically prior human linguistic capacity to express, contest, and agree in judgment) finds its way into the writings of Ryle, Austin, and eventually a whole minority strand in contemporary English-language philosophy.

Judgment is an act in the sense that it's an actuality. It's an actualization of the understanding, but not in a sense that implies that it's a transition or a coming-to-be: the act of combination in which a judgment consists is not a putting together of representations, but a holding of them together. So we might say that to judge in this sense is to hold.[101]

On this account, the most fundamental sense of "Urteil" has to do with an actualization of a capacity in which a cognizing subject holds subject and predicate together through thinking them jointly in an act of judgment. The content—the *Inhalt*—of a judgment is that which is held in an act of holding that "S is F." Arguably the closest thing in Kant to what Chignell calls "assent" within the case of a non-problematic actualization of our capacity for judgment is what Kant calls *assertion*. This comes under modality in the table of judgments. What is at issue in that quadrant of the table is not further acts that operate on judgments conceived as mere contents, but rather an internal logical dimension of any logically full-blooded actualization of the capacity of judgment—namely, that dimension that "concerns only the value of the copula in relation to thinking in general."[102] Assertion, so conceived, concerns one of the three fundamental specific possible manners in which that which is held together in judgment may be held together. Kantian assertion resembles what Chignell calls assent in the following negative respect: it does not refer to anything that figures as a part of the *Inhalt* of the predicative unity judged. It differs from it, however, in the following positive respect: it belongs among the conditions of the possibility of such unity. There is no such predicative unity for Kant apart from its being held together assertorically, apodictically, or problematically. Assertion in Kant has to do with a manner in which an *Inhalt* is held. The transition over the course of inquiry from a moment in which I problematically judge *p* to one in which I assertorically judge *p* is therefore not a transition from what Chignell calls "judgment" to what Chignell calls "assent"—from the independent availability of a mere content to the taking up of a stance toward it. Rather it is a transition from one manner of actualizing the capacity for judgment (one way of holding together the parts of the judgment) to a different way of actualizing that same general capacity.

The relevant contemporary conception of the proposition (the one that Chignell reads into Kant's conception of judgment), by contrast, regards

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[101] *The Form of Practical Knowledge,* op. cit., 103–104.
[102] *CPR*, A74/B100.

content as a structured entity that is fully intelligible as partaking of the "form" that it does apart from any activity on the part of a cognitive being holding such a structure together in thought or speech. This contemporary notion of "content" is the hylomorphic counterpart of the notion of "form" that Stang deems to be the comparatively "natural" one. It is a notion of something that is what it is regardless of whether its logical moments are held together in an act of spontaneity. On any such conception of what "content" is, a philosophical concern with *the form of our cognitive capacity* must appear to be at best quite secondary to an investigation into the proper objects of the science of logic. If one starts with a conception of "form" that applies in such a manner exclusively to structured items whose conditions of possibility are thus self-standingly intelligible apart from any cognitive activity, then the further projection of such a conception of form onto (what one is then apt to think of as) the "non-standard hylomorphic case" of a cognitive capacity is bound to seem very "unnatural" indeed.

What Frege calls "thought" and what he calls "judgment," for Kant, when understood to be cases of problematic judgment and full-blooded judgment respectively, have something in common only in the generic sense that they belong to the same nexus of power and act—just as seeing what is the case and having things merely visually appearing to one in a certain way are both exercises of the same cognitive capacity. For Frege, thought and judgment have something in common in a very different way. They have a highest common logical factor. The mere thought that p and the judgment that p share the judgable content p. Boyle's reading of Kant provides us with the materials for appreciating why such an account will look backward to Kant—why, for him, when it comes to representing what fully successful and merely attenuated exercises of one and the same capacity have in common, what we seek is not "a something in common" in the sense of a highest common logical factor. For Kant, there is no *ens* shared across successful and attenuated exercises of the capacity.

Consider once again one of our practical examples above. What do the following two cases "have in common": the case in which the ball *non-accidentally goes through* the basket in virtue of my exercising the capacity to shoot a free throw and the case in which the ball *non-accidentally does not go through* the basket in virtue of my intentionally missing it. The intentionally missed free throw involves an exercise of the same capacity that is also exercised in the case when the shooter hits the free throw, but, in the latter of the two cases, the capacity is self-consciously

exercised in a manner that refrains from the end of scoring a point. Similarly, for Kant, what Frege understands to be a case of someone's merely entertaining a thought involves the same capacity as that which is exercised in a full-blooded exercise of the capacity for judgment; but, in the case of that which Frege calls (merely entertaining a) "thought," that general capacity is self-consciously exercised in a manner that stops short of a realization of the formal end of the capacity—namely, truth.

Kant's term "problematic judgment" bears on its sleeve that "judgment" denotes the logically simpler and prior case (the genus of the power), and "problematic judgment" the logically posterior and comparatively complex case (a particular form of act of the power). Now contrast this with the following: the way in which in a *Begriffsschrift,* through the very structure of the notation, the relative logical priority and complexity of (what Frege calls) "judgment" in its relation to (what he calls) "thought" is made transparent. The superficial and relatively evident difference here is the following: whereas "judgment," for Kant, names something logically comparatively prior and less complex in the order of explanation, for Frege, it names something logically comparatively posterior and more complex. The deeper and less evident difference is this: that what "logical," "prior," and "complex" mean in each case is fundamentally different. For Kant, they form part of an account of the relation of powers to acts; for Frege, they turn on an attempt to extend a function/argument conception of logical complexity.

Viewed from this perspective, Frege's distinction between force and content might be regarded as introducing an anomalously Kantian moment into his philosophy. For the relation between the judgment stroke and what follows the content stroke in Frege's notation cannot be wholly assimilated to just another case of two elements of logical complexity standing to one another in a relation of function to argument. The point here cannot come into view if we focus only on the relatively superficial dimension of difference from Kant's account: namely, that for Frege, there is a relation of logical priority between the act of judging and the thought which is thus judged—between the logical moment of affirming or denying the thought and that which is logically prior to any such act (the thought considered as mere thought, qua antecedently available judgable content). The aforementioned comparatively anomalous Kantian moment in Frege becomes most vivid in those remarks in which he invites us to regard judging not only as logically posterior to thought but as bridging an ontological divide between the antecedently constituted realm of the thinkable and the activity of the intellectual subject who traffics in

such contents. With judging, a full-throated notion of intellectual activity on the part of the intellectual subject is supposed to enter the scene. Judging is a form of activity that kicks in at the moment that the cognitive subject advances from the thought to the truth-value—where such metaphors of activity, on Frege's deployment of them, are to be understood as inapt for characterizing the antecedently given being of the content we thus take up in judgment, but apt for characterizing what it is that we, qua judgers, *do* with such contents. It is inapt for characterizing the being of the content per se, for it is supposed to be a sort of content that not only is present even when we merely (noncommittally, as it were) "have" a thought before our mind but also is "there" apart from any mind. To think otherwise, for Frege, is to lapse into an objectionable form of subjective idealism and to make the being of thoughts catastrophically dependent on the actuality of thinkers. Hence, the proper account of the logical character of that which is taken up in thought, for Frege, must not turn on any implicit comprehension of a shared finite human capacity for taking up items that have the character in question; whereas, for Kant, this is just what logic seeks to articulate—the form of just such a capacity. This is where the fundamental affinity in the philosophies of Kant and (both early and later) Wittgenstein lies—the point at which they stand equally far from Frege.

Frege's way of building the fence far enough in from the edge of the cliff to ensure that he does not plunge into the abyss of subjective idealism introduces various awkward ontological distinctions—not only between what counts as subjective and what counts as objective, but even within the sphere of objectivity. For example, it introduces a fundamental asymmetry between the being of thoughts and the being of judgments. The latter belong to the order of actuality in a way that the former do not. For, on Frege's conception, judgment looks to be something we must effect through a kind doing that acts upon the realm of thought from without. Judgment is an act of assertion—the act of making a claim, of putting forward content as true. What is thus judged is conceptually intelligible apart from any act in which it might figure; it is a thought, and it is what it is apart from its being judged. What about judgment? On the one hand, it seems clear that we are not to understand what follows the judgment stroke in Frege's notation along the lines of something that is merely put forward as true or advanced as a claim through the act of *this* individual judger as opposed to *that* one. The placement of the judgment stroke at the beginning of each of the axioms of Frege's system is, after all, not supposed to deprive the logical

laws of their generality. Nor is it supposed to be understood as a funny sort of logical shorthand for a universal quantification over judging subjects. The presence of the judgment stroke is to be understood as indicating that the content that it encloses is taken up in a *general act* of mind. Thus Frege requires a conception of the power of judgment (whose exercise the judgment stroke seeks to denote) in accordance with which it is at the same time *general* and *actual*. It must not be taken to indicate some empirical individual's exercise of the power but (and now Kant can say this without embarrassment and be clear what he means by it in a way that Frege cannot) rather a generic instance of the exercise of a general power, where our very conception of the power depends not only upon our conceiving the actuality of its exercise as a condition of its reality but upon our actually exercising it.[103]

From Kant's point of view, Frege's assignment of judgment and thought to the ontologically distinct categories of force and content is an attempt to effect a hopeless factorization between what properly is due to the activity of the judging subject and what may be regarded as belonging to the realm of the thinkable considered apart from any such activity and apart from the order in which the capacity of judgment has its actuality.[104] What exactly do I mean here by "the activity" of the judging subject? I will return to this question in my reply to Hamawaki.

I will conclude this reply with some remarks about the topic we set aside earlier—namely, Boyle's way of yoking Frege and Wittgenstein together and contrasting them both with Kant in the manner that he does. A primary aim of the subsequent replies will be to show why I think Boyle is wrong to see Wittgenstein as closer to Frege than to Kant on the points touched on above. Wittgenstein, of course, does not talk in Kant's language. You will not ever find him writing the sort of sentences that figure throughout this reply—sentences that sound like this:

> The original unity of the fundamental act of a cognitive capacity as comprehended from the point of view of self-consciousness differs in

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[103] Stroud writes, "What Kant saw as essential to thought is not just the *capacity* for judgment, but *actually* judging in appropriate circumstances that such and such is so-and-so" (Stroud, "Perceptual Knowledge and the Primacy of Judgment" in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018], 105); the first italics are his; the second mine. In the reply to Stroud below, we will explore the following question in more depth: To what extent can a proper understanding of "what Kant saw was essential to thought" be ascribed to Frege?

[104] In the reply to Travis below, we will see that Wittgenstein is explicitly concerned in the *Tractatus* with criticizing Frege on just these grounds.

logical character from that of those acts in which the capacity is exercised defectively or in a manner that is subject to attenuation.

That is not how Wittgenstein speaks. In the philosophical prose of the later Wittgenstein, we are led to a descendant of that Kantian insight in a very different way—through a series of invitations to think through the significance of sentences that sound more like this:

> If there were a verb meaning 'to believe falsely,' it would not have a meaningful first person present indicative.[105]

This is the sort of remark that later Wittgenstein will call a grammatical reminder.[106] But the essential Kantian insight is retained. One could express it in the idiom of this reply as follows: the standpoint from which I can speak of such failure (misbelieving) in the exercise of a cognitive capacity (e.g., belief) requires the introduction of a gap between the logical "I" assessing the believing and the "I" whose believing is assessed, where the very intelligibility of that gap presupposes the logical priority of the first-person present indicative form of the act—that is, a form of self-comprehension of my own cognitive activity within whose purview no such gap is possible.

Frege wants to be able to agree with Kant and Wittgenstein about this point. His way of attempting to do this is to insist that a comprehension of the significance of the judgment stroke is a precondition of a comprehension of the significance of his entire system of logical notation.[107] However, we shall also discuss in several of the replies below how and why for Wittgenstein that which Frege calls "force"—the activity of the judging

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[105] *Philosophical Investigations,* pt. II, sect. x.

[106] Notice: This is not in the first instance an observation on how we actually use some word or concept we already have. (On many accounts of Wittgenstein, this would suffice to disqualify this remark as a grammatical reminder.) Rather, it is an observation about how we would not have a certain form of use for a word that we do not have, were we to have it. Through this strategy of indirection it is able to serve as a remark that illuminates the grammar of the concept of *belief* that we do have. In the reply to Hamawaki, we will consider a way of using the verb "to see" that requires that it—like Wittgenstein's variant on the verb "to believe"—has no first-person present indicative use. Here, too, through a strategy of indirection, the aim will be to illuminate the grammar of the related concept (for self-consciously seeing) that we employ all the time. In the final section of these replies, we will consider strategies of indirection employed by later Wittgenstein that are far more extreme than this— strategies he employs to allow us to reflectively recover an understanding of those concepts whose grammar we inevitably misconstrue when seeking a philosophical understanding of them. We will then see what it means to say that philosophical thought experiments envisioning putative forms of logically alien thought are cases of such strategies.

[107] This is the central insight of the article by Maria van der Schaar on Frege cited above.

subject—cannot enter thought from the outside as a subsequent add-on: something which is "attached" to the prior logical unity of thought. The superfluity of the judgment stroke, already for the early Wittgenstein, lies not in its being simply superfluous (as if Frege's conception of thought were otherwise fine once you just drop that pesky sign) but in its coming too late. For early Wittgenstein, the first-person present indicative self-consciousness of the subject who judges in speaking—the activity of the logical "I"—permeates every logical act. The "thought" must be alive (must be that which is thought by a thinker) from the beginning. This idea acquires new forms of significance in Wittgenstein's later work, but it remains a polestar of his philosophy throughout its many shifts and transformations. To borrow a related metaphor from *Philosophical Investigations,* to which we will return in the reply to Gustafsson: thought cannot begin as something dead and subsequently have its life—its significance for us—breathed into it.[108] This is, viewed from a Wittgensteinian perspective, a reason for preferring Kant's account of the relation of "thought" to "judgment" to Frege's—for preferring a conception according to which problematic judgment is no less a case of an exercise of our general capacity for judgment (albeit an attenuated one) than (what counts for Frege as) judgment full stop.

These similarities between Kant and Wittgenstein become especially striking by the time we get to the Wittgenstein of *Philosophical Investigations.* This is no accident. Their deeper ground lies in the way in which each of these philosophers is equally concerned to criticize (what I called above) a layer-cake conception of human mindedness. There are important differences in the respective perspectives from which they do this: whereas, on Kant's vision, we are fundamentally rational knowers, on Wittgenstein's, we are fundamentally speakers: the capacity for language is to the *Philosophical Investigations* what the capacity for knowledge is to the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

Consider the following passage from *Philosophical Investigations:*

> It is sometimes said that animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: "they do not think, and that is why

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[108] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §432, 135e. I am here, in effect, agreeing with the following remark from Hamawaki's contribution to this volume: "Wittgenstein's query in *The Blue Book* "What has to be added to dead signs to give them life?"—could stand in as an emblem for the Kantian skeptical question in general," this volume, 147. That remark from Wittgenstein is from *The Blue Book* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958,) 4, but the topic is central to the *Philosophical Investigations.* I return to this topic in my reply to Gustafsson.

they do not talk." But—they simply do not talk. Or to put it better: they do not use language—if we except the most primitive forms of language. Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing.[109]

If one conceives of walking, eating, and drinking as capacities that are inborn in virtue of the sorts of animals we are and conceives of the other sorts of capacities mentioned in the passage above as the sorts of capacities that we first acquire in virtue of our being reared in human society, then it becomes hard to bring all of them at once under the ambit of a single, logically unitary concept of a form of life. If we think of our form of life as what we share with some non-rational species of our merely biological kind—let us call it a *homo erectus*—then it will seem as if commanding, questioning, recounting, and chatting are external to (what we are now calling) "our form of life" in a way that the other set of capacities are not. If we think (as many readers of Wittgenstein think he thinks) that it is only at some later stage in our individual development—upon having acquired the abilities that go with, say, following certain sorts of rules (capacities that we acquire only once we are, as people like to say, "initiated" into our form of life)—then it may seem as if commanding, questioning, recounting, and chatting properly characterize what is genuinely *human* about our distinctive form of life in a way that walking, eating, drinking, and playing (conceived as our merely animal capacities) do not.

What Wittgenstein points the way toward here is the possibility of appreciating how (what we, under the pressure of certain philosophical assumptions, are prone to conceive as) our "merely" animal capacities are not merely animal. Even those capacities that we are inclined to view as belonging to our "merely" animal being—capacities such as walking, eating, drinking, and playing—come to be transformed through and through in the lives of the sorts of creatures we are: ones who speak.[110] This requires that we see, for example, what an infant is doing when it struggles to learn to walk through crawling or to speak through

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[109] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §25, 12e.

[110] A book-length discussion could be devoted to the specific sorts of shapes each of these capacities exhibit in the life of a creature who shares our form of life. Contributions to such an inquiry may be found scattered throughout the writings of Stanley Cavell. For instance, with regard to the difference in how "lower" and "higher" animals *eat,* he notes the difference "between, say, poking at your food, perhaps with a fork, and pawing at it, or pecking at it" ("Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture," in *This New Yet Unapproachable America* [Albuquerque: Living Batch Press, 1989], 41–42).

babbling—as it learns to become a characteristically human self-mover and to form sounds in humanly characteristic ways—as already involving the growth of self-consciousness and language.[111]

We said this earlier: the upper limbs of an eagle are wings, while those of a human are arms; what they generically have in common must formally differ in order for these limbs to belong to the different forms of life that they do. We can now say this: the capacities that *homo erectus* and *homo sapiens* generically have in common—such that they may both be generically characterized as "walking," "eating," "drinking," and "playing"—must formally differ in the manner in which they are done in order for these respective pairs of sets of activities to belong to the very different forms of life that they do. The philosophical obstacles that stand in the way of such a vision of the human animal are considerable. If we wish to transpose Wittgenstein's point here into Boyle's Kantian idiom, then it may be put as follows: walking, eating, and drinking are not just parts of our material animal nature that can be brought into view apart from their relation to a form. If we seek to understand what is involved in learning to walk, eat, and drink *as we do,* this will require conceiving those activities under the aspect of their *human* form. Such forms of learning characterize "initiation" into our form of life no less deeply than learning how to give orders, ask questions, tell stories, and chat. In relation to the concept of our form of life, not only do these capacities all stand at the same level, but more importantly: those in the one set would not be of the sort that characterize our form of life unless they were part and parcel of a single form of life that also involved those in the other. Our manner of walking, eating, drinking, and playing *and* our manner of giving orders, asking questions, telling stories, and chatting all partake of a single form. The form here in question figures in Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a very abstract *logical* (or, as he later prefers to say, grammatical) category—the category of a form of life.

We began this section by exploring Boyle's suggestion that in order to understand Kant's conception of logic, we must appreciate the place of the concept of form in that conception. I have concluded this section by suggesting that Wittgenstein is much closer to Kant than to Frege here. If the only logical nexus of the particular to the general that our conception of logic permits is that of Fregean logical generality, then we will be

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[111] The specific case of babbling—and how it already involves the actualization of one and the same capacity that figures in full-blown speech—is explored in further detail below in the reply to Gustafsson.

unable to appreciate the formal logical dimension that lies at the heart of later Wittgenstein's concept of a *form* of life.

In conclusion, let us sum up those implications of Boyle's reading of Kant (and the punches it successfully lands against Conant's reading) that will matter for our subsequent replies below: first, we can hold the requisite ideas of generality and actuality together only if the generality in question is *non-Fregean* in form; second, this nexus must define the *internal* relation of power and act for every ingredient moment within the manifold of exercises of the power; third, the realm of judgable content is not prior in the order of explanation to the *capacity* to judge; fourth, a proper conception of the power of judgment requires an account of its most basic form of *logically full-blooded* exercise; fifth, such an exercise of the power must be a *unitary* act; sixth, an attenuated exercise of that power may require a manifold of acts to eventuate in knowledge, but we should not read the structure of such a logically *derivative* form of exercise of the power into an account of the form of its logically primary exercise; seventh, the latter sort of exercise is an *essentially* self-conscious act; eighth, self-consciousness is not a "feature" that can be "added" to a "merely conscious" "mental state"—rather it is a characterization of the *form* of the cognitive power as such; ninth, our capacity for logical thought is an internal aspect of such a *self-conscious* power; tenth, hence it is an internal aspect of our overall capacity to *know*; eleventh, it therefore is *misconceived as a highest common factor* between the capacities of a creature that shares our finite, embodied, sensibility-dependent capacity for rational knowledge and one that does not; twelfth, the formal role that a capacity for rational knowledge plays in Kant's philosophical vision is taken over in Wittgenstein's by the capacity to *speak*.

It is not unlikely that many—perhaps even all—of the foregoing twelve points may still strike the reader as quite dark. The aim of the remaining replies is to illuminate them, each in turn, by exploring their implications for a proper understanding of certain authors (most notably Kant and Wittgenstein) and how they might figure in the criticism of certain other authors (most notably Descartes and Frege)—as well as how such an understanding might allow us to make progress on certain issues that continue to vex philosophers today (most notably ones that arise regarding the nature of perception, thought, and language) and hence in the criticism of a whole range of influential contemporary treatments of those issues.

Reply to Hamawaki: On the Relation of Cartesian to Kantian Skepticism and the Relation of Consciousness to Self-Consciousness

In the previous reply, certain distinctive features of Kant's philosophy were emphasized. A useful way to get these more clearly into view is to bring Descartes back into our discussion and to contrast some of the central questions that animate Cartesian philosophy from those that animate a genuinely Kantian philosophical project. Happily, this is precisely what Arata Hamawaki attempts to do in his contribution to this volume.

Moore's contribution to this volume focuses on the topic of how we should understand Descartes's central concerns (and, in particular, how we should understand the relation between his remarks in the *Meditations* about modality and his remarks elsewhere about the problem of the creation of the eternal truths). Boyle's contribution focuses on how we should understand the topic of Kant's central concerns (and, in particular, how we should understand the relation between his conception of logic and his overall conception of the task of philosophy as a transcendental investigation into the conditions of the possibility of knowledge). Hamawaki focuses on how we should understand the relation between these two sets of concerns.

This is how Hamawaki's contribution to this volume begins:

In his paper "Two Varieties of Skepticism,"[1] James Conant lays out a helpful distinction between two types of philosophical problems, both of which could be called forms of skepticism: Cartesian skepticism and Kantian skepticism. Although both types of problems constitute threats to the possibility of knowledge and so raise the question of how knowledge is so much as possible, they do so in different ways.[2]

As this makes clear, the primary point of departure for his discussion is "Two Varieties of Skepticism"—a comparatively much more recent paper by James Conant than "The Search for Logically Alien Thought." As I myself am intellectually far closer to the author of this more recent paper, in what follows I will use the first person to speak *for* the author of the later paper, while continuing to speak only *about* the author of the early article, referring to him as "Conant."

How does the topic of the one paper relate to that of the other? While the first heading within the body of the early article bears the title "Historical Preamble: A Different Kind of Cartesianism," the later paper distinguishes two varieties of skepticism, one of which it labels "Cartesian." So our question may be reformulated as follows: How do the philosophical difficulties indicated by these two uses of the term "Cartesian," by Conant and by me, relate to one another? In calling the difficulty he seeks to highlight from Descartes's writings a different kind of "Cartesianism," Conant mischievously employs the term in a way that is supposed to go against the grain of its usual employment in twentieth-century analytic philosophy. Even though it outwardly differs from the sort of difficulty usually so classified, what justifies him in calling it "a kind of Cartesianism" is, in the first instance, nothing other than the historical fact that it, too, may be found in Descartes's writings. This is, if you will, a merely historical, and not a philosophical, concept of a kind: the unity of the kind in question amounts to nothing more than that all instances of it come in for serious treatment in the writings of a single philosopher. By contrast, in calling one of the two varieties of skepticism that I later seek to highlight (both in Descartes's writings and outside them) "Cartesian skepticism," I there employ the term "Cartesian" in a comparatively non-mischievous way, in order to single out a shape of skeptical difficulty often referred to by twentieth-century analytic philosophers in just this way. What justifies me in there calling a difficulty of the relevant

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[1] "Two Varieties of Skepticism" in *Rethinking Epistemology,* vol. 2, eds. Günther Abel and James Conant (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 63.

[2] Hamawaki, this volume, 145.

shape "Cartesian" is, in the first instance, a systematic claim, in that it bears the features that earmark a skeptical worry as being of the sort that philosophers are now wont, in at least some of its variants, to regard as "Cartesian." This is a philosophical, not merely historical, concept of a kind: the unity of this sort of kind resides in a homology of form in philosophical problem across a wide range of areas and traditions.

The latter way in which a problem can be "Cartesian" does not, of course, rule out that difficulties of this shape may be found in Descartes's writings, but it does mean that the initial ground for properly classifying a particular philosophical difficulty as being in this sense "Cartesian" is not the mere historical fact that it occurs somewhere in Descartes's writings. So Conant and I agree on at least this much: the different kind of Cartesianism at issue in the earlier article really is supposed to be different in kind from what usually gets classified as Cartesian by later analytic philosophers (such as Hilary Putnam[3]). It is a form of difficulty that at least does not overtly bear the features that, for the most part, occasion a philosophical difficulty to be classified by a contemporary philosopher as "Cartesian."

One last merely terminological point: for parallel reasons, when I call a difficulty Kantian in the later paper, that, too, in the first instance, is meant to be a systematic, and not merely a historical claim—a claim about a structural feature of the difficulty that it shares with a whole range of other philosophical problems. The terminology is not arbitrary. For such problems bear the features that earmark a skeptical worry as being of the sort that both Kant and certain post-Kantian philosophers called "skeptical." So it certainly does not rule out that Kant himself is often concerned to address difficulties of just this shape in his writings. But here too, the initial ground for properly classifying a particular philosophical difficulty as being in the relevant sense "Kantian" does not turn on the mere historical fact that it is to be found in Kant's writings.

Taken together, the above points have three implications that are pertinent here: first, that Kant could have been and indeed was concerned with responding to Cartesian skepticism as well as to Kantian skepticism; second, that variants of Kantian skepticism may be found in Descartes's writings; third, that, if the different kind of Cartesianism at

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[3] The article occurs in a volume of essays on Putnam and seeks to advance a conversation with him about how to understand the central ideas of a variety of philosophers—not least among these, Descartes. Many features of that article—including ones that might well puzzle a twenty-first century reader first coming to it—derive from the way its seeks to be in dialogue with the Putnam of the late 1980s.

issue in the early article is not what the later article calls a "Cartesian" difficulty, then perhaps it may count—according to the relevant principle of classification—as a Kantian one. The later paper contains a footnote that makes all three of these points:

> The aptness of these labels for the purposes of distinguishing the two varieties of skepticism at issue here is not meant to turn on any claim to the effect that an interest in the other problematic (i.e., the one that does not bear his name) is absent from the writings of either Descartes or Kant. So it does not imply a denial that Kant was interested in Cartesian skepticism. . . . Kant addresses a variant of Cartesian skepticism (he calls it "problematical idealism") and seeks in "The Refutation of Idealism" to show how the proper treatment of (what he himself calls) "skepticism" contains as one of its corollaries the untenability of all such forms of idealism. Nor does it turn on a denial that there are incipient forms of a Kantian problematic to be found in Descartes's writings. . . . For some discussion of the presence of an incipiently Kantian problematic in Descartes's thought, see Conant (1992).[4] The evil demon hypothesis of *The First Meditation* (unlike the dreaming hypothesis), if pressed hard enough, does unfold into (what I call) a Kantian skeptical problematic. The most vivid appearance in the Cartesian corpus of such a problematic is to be found in the treatment of the problem of the creation of eternal truths. But such a problematic is pervasively present in the Cartesian corpus (albeit very incipiently) in the treatment of the fundamental Cartesian issue of what it is for an idea to possess objective reality.[5]

Why do the evil demon hypothesis and the problem of the creation of eternal truths involve incipient variants of a skeptical difficulty that it makes sense to classify as forms of Kantian skepticism? If the worry in the *First Meditation* about whether I might be dreaming is a classic instance of Cartesian skepticism, then we may also put our question like this: How does the worry that I might be deceived by a supremely powerful creator not only differ from the worry that I might be dreaming, but do so in a way that begins to transform the shape of the difficulty into one that begins to bear the features of the sort of philosophical problem that Kant was most centrally concerned to address?

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[4] This is a reference to "The Search for Logically Alien Thought."
[5] Conant, "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 7n.

As a first step in working our way toward an answer to this question, it will be helpful to pick up a thread left hanging in my reply to Moore above. I objected there to a reading of the *Meditations* in which the meditator can simply cleave to (what Moore calls) "his core conception of impossibility" throughout, as he takes each of these steps along his dialectical journey. In so objecting, I suggested that Moore underestimates the depth of the skeptical problematic that enters the scene with the evil demon. At that juncture in the discussion, I merely observed in passing that the worry regarding dreaming is comparatively less ravaging in its skeptical implications than that regarding the evil demon: the former calls into question the meditator's prior conception only of what is actual (not of what is possible); the latter threatens his entitlement to rely upon his clear and distinct ideas of what is possible and necessary. And I said that if something of the form of the dreaming hypothesis were the only skeptical doubt that needed to be assuaged over the course of the meditator's dialectical journey, then it would be more plausible to suggest that the meditator might be able to make progress with it while cleaving to his core conception of impossibility.

In order to get clear about the relation between the paper of mine on which Hamawaki focuses and the article by Conant on which Moore and the other contributors to this volume focus, what we need now to understand are the following three things: first, what it is about the dreaming hypothesis that makes it the paradigmatic exemplar of a variant of (what I call) Cartesian skepticism; second, why the worry about the evil demon is an incipient form of Kantian skepticism; third, how this bears on the question of whether the meditator is entitled to cleave to his core conception of impossibility.

Hamawaki addresses the first of these three issues in the following observation:

> Cartesian skepticism begins from an understanding of the difference between waking and dreaming, an understanding of what it is to be awake and what it is to dream, and what implications our being in the one state rather than the other has with respect to our capacity to know. What is at issue is whether we are ever in a position to tell which one of these states we are in at any given time.[6]

The form of a Cartesian problem is one of wondering, even when we are faced with apparently best cases for knowledge, whether we could ever

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[6] Hamawaki, this volume, 149.

be in a position to *tell* which of two states—one of knowing or one of not knowing—we are actually in. It therefore has the form of a problem about how you determine a difference between two sorts of cases—where one of the two cases qualifies as knowledge and the other falls short of knowledge. Kant could rephrase the difficulty here by saying that our problem is one of how to distinguish a non-defective exercise of our perceptual capacity from a defective one.

The Cartesian cannot reformulate things in this way because he works with a conception of our perceptual capacity in which even in the best case—even in a non-defective exercise of it—the most that it can ever yield is something which, unless it is somehow supplemented, necessarily falls short of knowledge. Descartes emphasizes that, even in the best case, there is no mark or feature that distinguishes things genuinely *being* a certain way from their merely *seeming* to be that way. In reflecting upon how to distinguish a state in which one dreams that something is happening and a state in which one is awake and correctly perceives it to be happening, Descartes remarks, "As I think about this more clearly, I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep."[7] Thomas Hobbes saw that the crux of the matter lies in this consideration:

> From what is said in this *Meditation* it is clear enough that there is no criterion enabling us to distinguish our dreams in the waking state from veridical sensations. And hence the images we have when we are awake and having sensations are not accidents that inhere in the external objects, and are no proof that any such external objects exists at all.[8]

The sensory image does not reach all the way to the external object. For the sensory experience is not—as Hobbes puts it—an accident (or property) of the external object (not a mode of a corporeal thing) but rather something happening in me qua perceiver (a mode of the human being having the sensory experience). This is taken to mean that the sensory image cannot suffice to settle the question of whether the external object exists. And if there can be no criterion that would allow me thus to distinguish my non-veridical from my veridical sensory experiences, then—

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[7] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 13.

[8] Thomas Hobbes, *Third Objections;* in Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. II, 121. In his Third Replies, Descartes accepts this characterization of what the dreaming argument shows (ibid., 121).

Descartes concludes—my merely *perceiving* something to be the case can in and of itself never suffice for *knowing* that it is the case.

On the Cartesian analysis of perceptual knowledge, it looks as if what differentiates the good case from the bad case, allowing it to qualify as knowledge, is something that blankly obtains "out there," as it were, beyond the reach of the senses, in the external world. The fundamental Cartesian assumption here is not simply that the two states in question might happen to be indistinguishable from the subject's point of view but that there is no respect in which they could differ qua exercise of the capacity in question that would allow the perceiving subject herself to distinguish the good case from the bad case. This is why, for Descartes, an appeal to God—to someone who is able to take in both how things perceptually appear to us and how they are—is required to guarantee that there is the appropriate form of accord between appearance and reality in order for us to be rationally entitled to regard our senses as reliable. It is also why, if you retain this conception of perceptual experience but drop God from the picture, the problem becomes unsolvable. The (Cartesian) skeptic wins.

The common assumption shared by both the Cartesian skeptic and Descartes himself is the following: the best possible outcome of an exercise of our cognitive capacity is one that issues in a clear and distinct idea of what is the case, where it is consistent with the very idea of such an optimal exercise of our capacity that that which we take ourselves to thereby "know" could still be false. We therefore require something over and above such an exercise of our capacity (one that issues in a clear and distinct idea) in order to entitle ourselves to the claim that we really *know* that that which we take ourselves to know in such an optimal exercise of our capacity is true. There now seems to be two different things to mean by the word "know"—two levels of knowing, as it were—there is a first-order sort of knowing that is the result of an optimal exercise of our capacity for "knowledge" (one that issues in as clear an apprehension of the object as it is possible to have), and there is a second-order sort of knowing (one that vindicates our entitlement to regard such first-order exercises of our capacity for "knowledge" as *knowledge*). Using the word "know" twice over in these two senses, the following will now seem to constitute an apt description of the task of the Cartesian epistemologist: to demonstrate to the Cartesian skeptic that I know that I know. Unlike in Kantian self-consciousness (in which "knowing *p*" and "knowing that I know *p*" are two aspects or moments of a single act)—and in the Cartesian cogito (in which there is no room for a separation of the act of knowing *(cogito)* from what is known *(sum)*)—the

dreaming argument aims to show that, in the case of perception, knowing what I perceive involves two separate acts of our cognitive capacity: one in which I perceptually apprehend what is the case *(percipio)* and one in which I vindicate my entitlement to the claim that it *is (esse)*. Absent some further mediating consideration, for Descartes, when it comes to what is known by the senses absent some mediating reflective vindication, there can be no *percipio ergo esse*. In such a *percipio*—unlike in the cogito—there always remains a gap between thinking and being to be bridged.

It is a further question whether Descartes holds something similar for that which I know because I clearly and distinctly perceive it with my mind's eye. Does the point made in the preceding paragraph hold for Descartes only for the *sensory percipio* (what I perceive by means of the senses)? Or does it hold equally for the *intellectual percipio* (the *percipio* of clear and distinct perception with the mind's eye)? Can my clear and distinct perceptions provide me with an entitlement to knowledge only if they, too, are buttressed by a further consideration (namely my knowledge that God is not a deceiver)? This is how Spinoza reads Descartes and how many commentators still read him: as holding that the evil demon argument shows that I know what I clearly and distinctly perceive only if I know that I know it.[9] *If* it is possible that I could have been so created that what I clearly and distinctly perceive is nonetheless false, *then* in order to be fully entitled to claim to know what I thus perceive requires two separate acts of my cognitive capacity: one in which I clearly and distinctly perceive what must be so and one in which I rest upon a further consideration which fully vindicates my entitlement to the claim that it must be so.[10] On this understanding of the task, the signs of

[9] I think there are reasons to question such a reading of Descartes. I have, in effect, begun to do so above, in suggesting that the evil demon hypothesis, if strictly thought through, does not have the same structure as the dreaming hypothesis. The idea that I can sometimes be deceived by my senses belongs to a conception of the senses that survives the dialectic of the *Meditations*. That conception of the senses, suitably specified, is consistent with a proper understanding of the claim that God is not a deceiver. When we are (as we are inclined to put it) "misled by the senses," we mislead ourselves, through an irresponsible use of our faculty for knowledge—one for which we ourselves bear the responsibility. We are not in such cases led astray by God. The idea that I *can* go astray in such a way belongs to a proper conception of sensory perception for Descartes. The idea that I *can* be deceived by the natural light of reason with regard to what I genuinely perceive clearly and distinctly with my mind's eye does not belong to a proper conception of clear and distinct perception for Descartes. For that very idea, if properly understood, entails that God could sometimes be a deceiver. Hence, for Descartes, it must be rejected. We will return to this issue below.

[10] The antecedent of this conditional contains the words "if it is possible." But is it genuinely possible? The argument here, if fleshed out, requires the intelligibility of the following

clarity and distinctness figure in the overall vindication as markers of an optimal exercise of my cognitive faculty, where the overall task of the demonstration comes to appear to be of the following sort: to show that I am entitled to regard such an exercise of my faculty as yielding genuine knowledge.

Spinoza was arguably the first philosopher to put his finger on how the very form of such an account already gives up the game to the skeptic.[11] Commenting on Descartes, Spinoza remarks,

> [F]or the certainty of the truth, no other sign is needed than having a true idea. For as we have shown, in order for me to know, it is not necessary to know that I know. From which, once more, it is clear that no one can know what the highest certainty is unless he has an adequate idea or objective essence of some thing.[12]

The following four Cartesian assumptions are all under fire here:

(1) In order for me to know, it is necessary for me to know that I know, where these two moments of knowing involve two distinct acts of our cognitive capacity.
(2) In order to know that I know, cases of knowing must bear some identifiable sign that marks them out as cases of knowing.
(3) The sign of having a true idea is the clarity and distinctness of the idea.
(4) Clarity and distinctness are marks of ideas.

Taking these four points in reverse order, Spinoza's criticism of Descartes may be summarized as involving the following criticisms:

(a) Clarity and distinctness are not marks of ideas but rather measures of the adequacy of a thinker's grasp of an idea.
(b) To have an adequate grasp of X *is* to know X. Clarity and distinctness are therefore not external signs of truth but rather internal aspects of what it is to know a truth.

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premise: It is possible that God created me in such a way that what I clearly and distinctly perceive to be true is nonetheless false. That is to say, the crucial premise here requires nesting God inside a modal operator. My reply to Moore aims to show that Descartes would not endorse an argument that rests on a premise of this form.

[11] I am indebted in the following remarks (about Spinoza's response to Cartesian skepticism) to a conversation with Stephan Schmid.

[12] Spinoza, "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect," in *The Collected Works of Spinoza, Vol. I,* ed. E. Curley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 18.

(c) In order to know, no other sign is needed over and above having an adequate grasp of a true idea.

(d) In order for me to know, it is not necessary for me to know that I know, if these two moments of knowing are to be conceived as involving two distinct acts of our cognitive capacity.

For Spinoza, there are not two sorts of ideas—those that possess the features of clarity and distinctness and those that do not. Unclarity and indistinctness are symptoms of some inadequacy in our grasp of an idea—that is, they are indications of defectiveness in the exercises of the capacity for knowledge and, as such, not marks of that which is grasped through the exercise of the capacity. The very idea of such a defective exercise of a cognitive capacity presupposes the intelligibility of the logically prior concept of a non-defective exercise of that *same* capacity—one that, precisely in virtue of its successful exercise, yields knowledge. If we fail to appreciate this point, then we risk making the following philosophically fatal concession to the skeptic regarding a supposed respect in which clear and distinct ideas share a cognitive footing with unclear and indistinct ones: they, too, no matter how clear and distinct they are, may still fall short of the desired target of yielding knowledge of their object (and therefore may be rationally regarded as yielding knowledge only pending additional proof that their clarity and distinctness ought to be regarded as a sign of knowledge).

We will return below to Spinoza's insight that the basic case of a successful exercise of our cognitive capacity must take the form of a single act—not a pair of acts, the first of which yields an adequate representation of the object and the second of which issues in a judgment that things are as I have represented them as being. But let us first review what it sounds like when a contemporary philosopher arrives at a similar conclusion. Barry Stroud, in his rather different way, seeks to bring out in the following passage why the very nature of the conception of perceptual experience in play in Cartesian epistemology already loads the outcome of the epistemological inquiry in favor of the skeptic:

> If we are in the predicament Descartes finds himself in at the end of his *First Meditation* we cannot tell by means of the senses whether we are dreaming or not; all the sensory experiences we are having are compatible with our merely dreaming of a world around us while that world is in fact very different from the way we take it to be. Our knowledge is in that way confined to sensory experience. There seems to be no way of going beyond them to know that the world around us really

is this way rather than that. Of course we might have very strongly held beliefs about the way things are. We might even be unable to get rid of the conviction that we are sitting by the fire holding a piece of paper, for example. But if we acknowledge that our sensory experiences are all we ever have to go on in gaining knowledge about the world, and we acknowledge, as we must, that given our experiences as they are, we could nevertheless be simply dreaming of sitting by the fire, we must concede that we do not know that we are sitting by the fire.[13]

The way Stroud sums up the relevant feature of the Cartesian conception in the passage above is to say, "Our knowledge is . . . confined to sensory experience." There are two things to focus on here: first, the character of the confinement; second, the epistemic character of that which we are here calling "knowledge." Here is how Stroud explains the sense in which, on this conception, we have reason to regard the reach of our powers of perception as being considerably more confined, or restricted, than we might at first have supposed them to be:

> Our position is much more restricted, much poorer, than we had originally supposed. We are confined at best to what Descartes calls 'ideas' of things around us, representations of things or states of affairs which, for all we can know, might or might not have something corresponding to them in reality. We are in a sense imprisoned within those representations, at least with respect to our knowledge. Any attempt to go beyond them and to try and tell whether the world really is as they represent it to be can yield only more representations, more deliverances of sense experience which themselves are compatible with reality's being very different from the way we take it to be on the basis of our sensory experience. There is a gap, then, between the most that we can ever find out on the basis of sensory experience and the way things really are.[14]

In a recent article, Stroud succinctly summarizes the assumption in Descartes's thinking that yields this restricted conception of experience: "[O]n Descartes's conception, sense-perception on its own would leave all matters of fact about the world around us in doubt; it simply does not reach that far."[15] Sense "experience," on this conception of it, yields only

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[13] Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 31.

[14] Ibid., 32.

[15] Barry Stroud, "Comments on Penelope Maddy's *What Do Philosophers Do?*" *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 8, no. 3 (2018): 225.

"knowledge" of a self-contained sphere of "inner" experience—a form of experience that always leaves it open whether things outside this sphere—out in the world—are as they are represented to be within this restricted sphere. On this conception, the so-called forms of "knowledge" and "experience" at issue—along with the "inner" realm in which they transpire—are taken to be self-standingly intelligible phenomena. Moreover, on this conception, if we can have knowledge of the external world, then it must involve some step or inference from how things are represented to be in such a self-standingly intelligible realm to how they are out in the world.[16]

It is common to read Kant as if the terms "knowledge," "experience," and "inner" could bear roughly the same meaning in his own conception of these matters as they do in the above summary of a restricted conception of sense experience—or at least as if they could bear a sufficiently generic meaning such that a restricted understanding of the meaning of these terms could figure as an element—a highest common factor—in a putatively, robustly Kantian account of wherein our "knowledge" and "experience" of "outer" objects consists. What is highlighted by Stroud as the crucial aspect of the Cartesian conception of experience is just that on which Hamawaki's Kant will seek to put considerable pressure: whether we can make sense of the idea that our capacity to enjoy experiences that represent things as *possibly* being a certain way is logically prior to our capacity to grasp that things are *actually* that way. This, in turn, we should now be able to recognize as a version of an issue that came up in both of the previous replies.

Stroud himself touches on this issue in the following passage in his discussion of (what he calls) the *epistemic priority* of Cartesian sensory representations:

> Descartes arrives at this sceptical conclusion from the recognition that all our experience could be just the way it is now whether there were any external things or not. What we can know on the basis of the senses

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[16] We have seen above that Descartes's own account of these matters is a bit more complicated. According to him, mind and world are each self-standingly intelligible in the following respect: they are really distinct from one another—the possibility of the existence of the one does not require that of the other. However, in another respect neither is self-standingly intelligible for Descartes: the conditions of the possibility of either presuppose the idea of the actuality of infinite substance. None of this detracts from Stroud's main point, however: namely, that on such a conception of the reach of the mind, we need reflective recourse to something outside the sphere of our perceptual activity to underwrite the cognitive credentials of our acts of perception.

is therefore something that could be known to be true without knowing at all about the objects existing independently of us in space. This general gap between appearance and reality is an expression of what can be called the 'epistemic priority' of sensory experiences, perceptions, representations, of what Descartes calls 'ideas', over those independent objects that exist in space. To say that things of one sort are 'epistemically prior' or prior in the order of knowledge to things of another sort is to say that things of the first sort are knowable without any things of the second sort being known, but not vice versa. Things of the second sort are therefore in that sense less directly known than, or known only on the basis of, things of the first sort. That is precisely the position Descartes says we are in with respect to our knowledge of external objects.[17]

It is precisely this feature of the Cartesian conception at which Hamawaki's Kant will take aim: at the conception of what is epistemically prior to what—whether our capacity for so-called mere perceptual representation (that purportedly furnishes a window onto what might be the case) can be prior to our capacity for perceptual judgment (regarding what is the case).

I have gone to the trouble to quote several passages from Barry Stroud above in order to bring out how his account of (what he calls) "skepticism" reveals it to have many of the features of what Hamawaki and I both ascribe to Cartesian skepticism, including the following: it opens up a (Cartesian) gap between how things seem to be and how they are; it does so by presupposing a restricted conception of experience, in which perception always delivers something less than knowledge of an outer object; this turns on a particular understanding of the epistemic priority of a capacity for perceiving ways that things might be over a capacity for perceptually judging the ways they are; and this ends in the triumph of the skeptic over those of his critics who attempt to rebut his conclusion while allowing his conception of experience to stand. Noting this common ground in our descriptions of what animates Cartesian skepticism will allow us to investigate the question that Hamawaki takes up at the end of his contribution—namely, the relation between what Stroud here calls "skepticism" and (what Hamawaki and I both call) Kantian skepticism. Before we attend further to this conception of perceptual experience with which the Cartesian operates, let us consider the role it

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[17] Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism,* 140–141.

plays in the overall argument he deploys. This will put us in a better position to consider some of the differences between Cartesian and Kantian skepticism that Hamawaki goes on to discuss.

The Cartesian skeptical argument about perception proceeds roughly along the following lines, starting with an observation such as this: I am having an experience of a certain sort (say, that I am in my dressing gown, sitting by the fire). Now I ask about that experience: How can I know that things are as my experience presents them as being? The worry that gives rise to this question is supposed to be this: I can have experiences that are indistinguishable from this one (in which I appear to be here in my dressing gown, sitting by the fire), such as when I am dreaming, and hence things are not as they appear. As I have already indicated, it is important that the case under consideration be something that for all the world appears to be a best case of knowledge, otherwise a failure to know in this case will not yield a general skeptical conclusion about the credentials of perceptual knowledge as such. But, even in such an apparently best case, the Cartesian contends that there is still room for the following question to be raised: How can I know that I am not, in fact, lying undressed in my bed, dreaming that I am here in my dressing gown, sitting by the fire? For if there are no marks or features that allow one conclusively to distinguish waking from dreaming states, then how can there be anything by virtue of which I know that I am awake rather than dreaming? But if I don't know, even in a case such as *this* (in a best-case scenario), then how can I ever be said to know anything via perception?

Contrast this with the form of a Kantian skeptical problem about perception. It turns on a question of the following sort: How can my senses so much as present things as being a certain way? How can my experience so much as be intelligibly of an external world? What I call the Kantian problematic in philosophy of perception is therefore focused on the problem of how the senses must be so as to be able to furnish testimony—even unreliable testimony. The Kantian skeptic about perception is struck by the following thought: an outer object's impinging on the senses would appear, as such, to be a mere transaction in nature, and, taken in and of itself, not to be the sort of item that is "about" anything, let alone the sort that ought to provide anyone with a reason for believing anything. This leads Kant to investigate the following question: What sort of unity must an episode of sensory experience possess in order to be able to present an appearance about which the question could arise "Shall I endorse it"? So the

philosophically most central Kantian question about perception is not the following Cartesian question: Given that I have an experience that purports to be of such and such, what entitles me to conclude that such and such is the case? It is rather the following: How can I so much as be able to enjoy an experience with the sort of purport that the Cartesian takes all experiences to have? How am I so much as able to enjoy an experience that possesses a determinate world-directed content (e.g., that I am here in my dressing gown, sitting by the fire)? The gap the Kantian initially seeks to overcome through this prior inquiry is not (as it is for the Cartesian) from how things seem to me to be to how they are; rather, it is from a condition of sensory blindness to the form of sensory consciousness that we cannot help but take ourselves already to enjoy. If this inquiry fails, the outcome of Kantian skepticism is not that the lights by which I can take myself, in exercising a particular capacity, to be able to distinguish truth from error are such that they are, as it were, insufficiently bright to permit me to tell the one from the other. The outcome, rather, is that the lights go out altogether—that the intelligibility of the very idea that there could be such a capacity goes dark. Or, as Saul Kripke suggests we put this point in a related context: that the very idea of the capacity (that I take myself to be exercising over the course of my investigation into the possibility of such a capacity) vanishes into thin air.[18]

Hamawaki sums up this last point and expands upon its implications in the following way:

> By contrast Kantian skepticism raises the question of what it is for an experience to be, in Kant's words, a "representation": what it is for it to represent something for me, for it to constitute a thought of an object. Now it seems that that is not something that we could ever be in the position of being mistaken about. . . . I could mistake reality for a dream, or mistake a dream for reality, and I could conceive of a situation in which I could discover either of these errors. . . . But it doesn't seem that I could in the same sense find out that I am mistaken about what my experience represents for me. . . . [19]

Hamawaki says—about this variety of skepticism about perception—that what falls within the scope of Kantian worry is not something that we could ever be in a position to be mistaken about. That is correct. This is

[18] See my remarks on Kripke, "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 63.
[19] Hamawaki, this volume, 149–150.

one of the crucial respects in which the Kantian worry differs from more familiar forms of Cartesian skepticism. For the Cartesian, a question is raised about whether the form of that which one of our cognitive faculties delivers can ever amount to knowledge or whether it is necessarily something that always fall short of knowledge. So Cartesian skepticism simply helps itself to a certain conception of the *form* of our perceptual experience (that it is the sort of thing that could so much as be false) without (as the Kantian will put it) investigating the conditions of its possibility. What the Kantian skeptical worry raises is whether we really are able to make sense of the very idea that our perceptual experience has such a form. The Kantian skeptic does not challenge the claim that we cannot help but take it to have this form; rather, he deploys philosophical considerations that render it mysterious how it could so much as be possible that it have the very form that we cannot help but take it to have.

We have focused here on the case of Kantian skepticism about perception. But the point holds generally for the sorts of difficulty that I call Kantian skeptical worries. They raise, in each case, a question about whether we can make sense of the very idea of something that some variant of Cartesian skepticism takes for granted—that a particular cognitive faculty is able to have the sort of unity that we cannot but take it to have. Where, for example, Cartesian skepticism about perception is directed at a worry about how we move from how things seem to how they *are,* Kantian skepticism is concerned with the conditions of the possibility of the idea that things are so much as able to *seem* a certain way to us. For each of their variants, Cartesian skepticism focuses its worry on the epistemic *reliability* of the deliverances of one of our cognitive faculties, Kantian skepticism on the *intelligibility* of the very idea of such a faculty.

As we have already seen, the Cartesian skeptical question about perception is concerned with what it takes to be able to *tell* that a particular exercise of our cognitive capacity is one that represents things in accord with the truth rather than one that represents things erroneously. The Cartesian skeptic's conclusion is that if we cannot answer this question— if we cannot tell the good from the bad case from the standpoint of the perceiver—then we can never know anything via perception. The Kantian does not address this conclusion head-on; he changes the question so that it turns into a worry about the very conception of the capacity in question that the Cartesian takes for granted. The Kantian brings within the scope of his worry the very thing that the Cartesian takes for granted

by asking, How must our cognitive capacity be constituted so that even error is so much as possible? Hence, Hamawaki rightly says,

> Thus Kantian skepticism is not something that could issue in error. I could be in error that what my experience brings before my mind is an actual object, as opposed to something that is merely the product of my imagination, such as a dream, but I could not be in error that my experience brings something before my mind, gives me something to think about, to judge, to desire, to regret, to reflect upon.[20]

This brings us to the second of the three questions that were merely touched upon, but left hanging, in the reply to Moore: Why is the evil demon hypothesis an incipient form of Kantian skepticism?

What the dreaming hypothesis does is subject everything to doubt, so that every act of perception appears to be vulnerable to the possibility of a certain form of error. It thereby effects a division between those exercises of our cognitive faculty that appear vulnerable to doubt and those that do not, on a certain conception of what our capacity for doubt is able to target. There is a widespread tendency to treat the form of the evil demon worry as parallel to that of the dreaming worry—as if it were the dreaming worry on steroids: as if it involved a kind of dream from which I cannot wake up. This is wrong. What the idea of the evil demon does is to seek to bring within the scope of a skeptical worry precisely what the dreaming worry is still able to take for granted. There are various ways to put what the dreaming worry takes for granted and what comes to be under threat once the worry about an evil demon is introduced. The most straightforward way to put what is not at issue in the dreaming worry that comes to be at issue in the demon worry is as follows: the dreaming hypothesis takes for granted that what I take to be actual is possible and raises the question of whether it is really actual, whereas the evil demon hypothesis raises the stakes and asks whether what I thus take to be possible is so much as possible.

This latter worry—about the possibility of an omnipotent deceiver—is, admittedly, initially introduced as if it were of the same form as the dreaming hypothesis: as if it, too, were engaged in raising a skeptical doubt, only of an even more radical sort than the initial doubt directed at the reliability of the senses to provide knowledge of the external world.[21]

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[20] Hamawaki, this volume, 150.

[21] Hence when the evil demon hypothesis is introduced in the *First Meditation* it is characterized as a doubt—and when looking back on his trajectory, at the beginning of the *Second*

On this preliminary construal of the idea that our Creator might be a deceiver, it appears to raise a question as to whether things are as they seem to me to be. At first blush, just as the dreaming worry raises the question of whether what (in relying upon my senses) I take to be actual is really actual, so, too, the evil demon worry is apparently concerned with raising the question of whether what (in relying upon my reason) I take to be possible is really possible (and whether what I take to be necessary is really necessary). Yet, as Descartes's meditator presses on with this worry, this preliminary way of construing its import proves unstable. For in calling into question whether I can rely upon my capacity for thought in the search for truth, this worry—unlike the dreaming worry—calls into question the very capacity that I must exercise in order to be able to so much as frame a skeptical worry in the first place. As this becomes increasingly clear, Descartes's meditator finds himself at the threshold of the Kantian problematic, confronted by this question: What are the conditions of the possibility of *that* capacity—the very one I must already be exercising—in order to be able to engage in philosophical reflection at all?

When I press the first form of skeptical worry and ask, "Am I dreaming?" I am still able to rely upon my clear and distinct ideas about what is so much as possible in order to frame an inquiry into whether what I take to be actual *is* as it seems to be. When I attempt to press the second form of skeptical worry (as to whether what I clearly and distinctly perceive to be possible involves only an illusion of thinking clearly

Meditation, the meditator bundles it together with the dreaming hypothesis as one of "the doubts into which I have been thrown as a result of yesterday's meditation" (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 16). But it becomes increasingly clear to him, as he works his way up to the end of the *Fifth Meditation* (and appreciates the first and most important implication of the conclusion that God is not a deceiver) that he must be able to make sense of the distinction between a correct and an incorrect use of the intellect. This means coming to see that no sense is to be made of the idea that I, on the one hand, am using my capacity to think as well as it possibly can be used, and yet, on the other hand, am still mistaken in what I think. Coming to see this, however, does not yet dispense of the difficulty posed for Descartes's meditator by the dreaming hypothesis—it does not yet get him the external world back. (That is the crucial bit of remaining business to which he must turn in the *Sixth Meditation*.) For that worry—that things may not really be as they appear to my senses to be—represents a genuinely sustainable doubt for the meditator. Hence once the evil demon worry is dissolved—on the grounds that it asks the meditator to try to doubt that which he cannot intelligibly doubt, for to do so involves an impossible attempt to separate himself from that which is most his: his mind and its capacity to think—the dreaming worry still remains in effect. The latter poses a form of doubt that remains intelligible for the meditator, for it concerns not merely his mind and its capacity to think (whose actuality he knows merely by thinking) but rather the actuality of the mind's relation to body (to *res extensa*)—including his own body (from which his *res cogitans* is really distinct).

and distinctly—an illusion implanted in me by an omnipotent but malign being—then I am no longer able to take myself to have a firm grip even on what could so much as *possibly* be the case.[22] The dreaming hypothesis is animated by a doubt; the evil demon hypothesis, once fully clarified and thought through, reveals itself to be animated by a deeper

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[22] There is the following nice question about the *Meditations:* At which point in the unfolding of the dialectic of that text does it become clear that the evil demon worry threatens my entitlement to rely upon my clear and distinct perceptions? On Harry Frankfurt's reading of the text, it is only once we move past the *First Meditation* that the worry begins to cut that deeply. He argues this on the alleged ground that within the scope of the *First Meditation*—since the meditator has not yet completed the task of testing the strength of his beliefs via the method of doubt—he is not yet entitled to regard *any* of his perceptions as clear and distinct. On the basis of this conclusion, Frankfurt sums up the dialectical situation as follows:

> Since there are no clear and distinct perceptions in the *First Meditation,* it is obvious that Descartes does not introduce the demon in order to raise doubts about what is clearly and distinctly perceived. On the other hand, the role the demon plays there need not be the role it plays later in the *Meditations*. And, as a matter of fact, Descartes does later invoke the possibility of the demon's existence as a basis for doubts concerning clear and distinct perceptions. But in the *First Meditation* the demon has nothing to do with clear and distinct perception for the very good reason that there is no clear and distinct perception in the *First Meditation*. (Harry Frankfurt, *Demons, Dreamers, and Madmen: The Defense of Reason in Descartes's Meditations* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008], 93)

Nothing I want to claim about the difference in the philosophical import of the dreaming and evil demon worries respectively (once we have grasped the full import of each) requires that I take a position on this issue—regarding at exactly what point in the text it is that the meditator comes to grasp the full import of the evil demon worry. I think there is some truth to what Frankfurt says above, inasmuch as it is only as the meditator furthers clarifies his idea of God—hence the extent of his dependence on his Creator—that he fully comes to appreciate how corrosive the idea is that that the Creator might be a deceiver. But I do not think that it follows from this that the meditator may not be said yet to have any clear and distinct perceptions in the *First Meditation*—hence that there cannot be any perceptions of this sort yet present in his soul for such a worry to unsettle later. Frankfurt is right about two things here: First, there are a great many things that the meditator will only at a later point in the dialectic come to be able to perceive clearly and distinctly. Second, the concepts of *clarity* and *distinctness* per se are first officially introduced and explained in the *Second Meditation* and hence those locutions do not occur as such anywhere in the *First Meditation*. They enter the scene with the example of the piece of wax—an example of the sort of *thing* that the meditator originally grasps only unclearly and indistinctly, and hence of the sort of *idea* that may be rendered clear and distinct through a properly conducted exercise in self-interrogation. Through the thought-experiment with the wax, the meditator learns that much of what he was initially inclined to ascribe to the piece of wax (color, fragrance, fixity of shape, etc.) do not belong to it as such; he thereby comes to attain a clear and distinct idea of the essence of corporeal nature (as extended, flexible in shape, changeable in appearance). But it is not follow that he is bereft of *any* clear and distinct perceptions prior to this thought experiment. Already in the *First Meditation* (as the passage from the *Regulae* cited in the next footnote suggests), the meditator is able clearly and distinctly to perceive that in doubting *p* that he is doubting something, and that, in so doing, he knows

worry—a worry as to whether I am so much as able to doubt. To enter into this latter worry is not to raise a further doubt—or meta-doubt—about my capacity for doubt. For whether or not I am able to doubt is not something that I am able to doubt:

> If, for example, Socrates says that he doubts everything, it necessarily follows that he understands at least that he is doubting, and hence that he knows that something can be true or false, etc.; for there is a necessary connection between these facts and the nature of doubt.[23]

that that something is of such a sort that it can be true or false. So he must have at least *some* clear and distinct perceptions about what is possible and what is necessary. His conviction in those propositions that are most evident to him comes to be unsettled only once the idea is introduced into the *First Meditation* that his maker might be a deceiver. Just before introducing that unsettling idea—not yet having elucidated the concepts of clarity and distinctness—the meditator refers to those propositions that are most self-evident to him as "transparent" truths (and gives as two examples of such propositions "two and three added together are five" and "a square has no more than four sides"). Looking back at his progress from the vantage of beginning of the *Third Meditation*, the meditator again mentions similar propositions and asks:

> Did I not see at least these things clearly enough to affirm their truth? Indeed, *the only reason* for my later judgment that they were open to doubt was that it occurred to me that perhaps some God could have given me a nature such that I was deceived even in matters which seemed most evident. But whenever my preconceived belief in the supreme power of God comes to mind, I cannot but admit that it would be easy for him, if he so desired to bring it about that I go wrong even in those matters which I think I see utterly clearly with my mind's eye. (*Philosophical Writings*, Vol. II, 25; emphasis added)

This suggests, pace Frankfurt, that it incorrect to say that the meditator in the *First Meditation* is not yet in any position to see the evident character of such truths utterly clearly with his mind's eye. In explicating Descartes's conception of what it means for one idea to have greater objective reality within itself than another, we had occasion to observe the following:

> If my idea of X has greater objective reality within itself than Y, then in order for me clearly and distinctly to conceive the possible existence of Y, I must be *able* to form a clear and distinct idea of the possible existence of X as ontologically independent of that of Y.

Frankfurt, however, in effect attributes something much stronger to Descartes than the above—namely this:

> For every case in which X has greater objective reality than Y, in order for me to be able to have a clear and distinct perception of Y, I must have already *completed* the task of reflectively rendering the ontologically prior idea of X fully clear and distinct.

This seems to me too strong. It overshoots the required mark. The weaker formulation suffices to allow that, for Descartes, the following holds: until I have fully clarified my idea of God, I am not yet entitled to acquiesce in my conviction that even that which I am able to perceive utterly clearly and distinctly with my mind's eye is such that it is *on that account* true.

[23] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings,* Vol. I, 46.

As Descartes makes clear here, in raising a doubt about whether X is the case, I may not know whether the proposition whose truth I doubt is true or false, but I know that I am doubting, and in doubting I take myself at least to be able to know this: that X can be true or false. That X is either or true or false is an example of the sort of thing that I am able clearly and distinctly to perceive to be true. Similarly, in entertaining some application of the dreaming hypothesis, I take myself to be able to know that what I am thereby experiencing—whether it be a dream or not—is the sort of thing that *could* be the case. So when I ask whether X is the case or whether I am merely dreaming it, in that very act, I take myself clearly and distinctly to perceive the following proposition to be true: "X is the sort of thing that can be the case." The evil demon worry threatens to unsettle what I thus take myself to be able to hold onto while I engage in such an application of the dreaming worry. This philosophically more radical perplexity (in which the evil demon hypothesis eventuates) threatens the integrity of the very capacity that I cannot help but take myself to be exercising in and through the very act of raising that worry.[24] It questions the viability of our capacity to think—hence to doubt or reflect—bringing that very capacity itself within the scope of the worry.

It may help to bring out this point if we see that if we were to try to plug a worry of this sort into our schematic representation of the form of a Cartesian skeptical argument above, it would yield nonsense. For the worry now is no longer how to distinguish a good from a bad case of the exercise of my cognitive powers, but rather what it could so much as mean that my cognitive powers stand in any sort of relation to what is the case. For what is now under threat are the conditions of my so much as being able to form a conception of what is the case—my ability to form a conception of the sort of thing that could be true or false. The worry now is not how I tell which of things I think might possibly be the case are actually the case, but whether my faculty for thinking something possibly is the case is really the sort of faculty it purports to be. If it is not the sort of faculty that I initially take it to be, then the problem is not (what Conant calls) a Cartesian one (in which I cannot tell of the things that seem possible which are really actual) but (what he calls) a

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[24] This is why it leads to the discovery of the cogito: in and through each such exercise of my capacity for thought, I cannot help but come to recognize that I always already know at least this much: that I am the bearer of such a capacity. Hence whenever I think, I know (even if I do not thereby know anything else) *that I think*.

Kantian one (in which I lose my grip all together on all twelve of Kant's categories—hence also on all three of the modalities).

This is also why a voluntaristic response to the problem of the creation of eternal truths leads to a variant of Kantian skepticism. For that supposed "solution" to the problem, if strictly thought through, leaves us (as Conant certainly appreciates) no better off than the predicament in which the evil demon hypothesis itself initially threatened to land us: in both cases we are forced to conclude that what we take to be possible or necessary is simply a manifestation of how we cannot help but think, given how we have been created.[25] If we try to think through the implications of the evil demon hypothesis, the outcome it threatens is far less easy to wrap our minds around than that which was threatened by the dreaming hypothesis. Our worry is no longer the classic Cartesian worry whether what we are inclined to view as actual is genuinely actual; rather, it is now the incipiently Kantian worry of whether it is even so much as genuinely possible.

I follow my later paper here in calling the former worry the classic "Cartesian" one and the latter the incipiently "Kantian" one, not because I think the latter is somehow less central to a proper understanding of Descartes.[26] I so denominate them because in most thumbnail sketches of "Cartesian" skepticism, it is the former worry that shapes the account of the central worry to which Descartes seeks to respond (and hence shapes the correlative sketches of what ought to be regarded as central to Descartes's philosophical legacy). As noted before, often in such accounts the evil demon worry is presented as partaking of the very same form as the dreaming worry—as if the worry were simply that an evil demon might have "rigged" things so that even when I am awake, employing my senses as well as I can, there might still be a systematic discrepancy between how things appear to me ("inside my mind") and how things are out there ("outside my mind"). But the evil demon worry is not fundamentally a worry regarding the possibility of such a systematic discrepancy in the layout of things on the near and far sides of such a Cartesian gap. Rather, it is a worry about whether the seeming possibilities entertained (such as, Could I be dreaming?) and the seeming impossibilities excluded (such as, Contraries cannot be true together) already "inside my mind"—on the near side of that gap—are so much as properly regarded

[25] And it is also why the corresponding (psychologistic) corner of the logical triangle, as Frege sought to show, threatens a similar outcome.

[26] Quite the contrary—as should be evident from my reply to Moore.

as candidates for truth or falsehood. It is worry about whether what I take to be thinkable bears any relation to the modal contours of genuine possibility and impossibility. To try to think through this worry is to be left not with the question whether the world outside my mind is as my mind represents it to be, but rather with a looming anxiety as to whether I really even so much as *have* (anything that genuinely qualifies as) *a mind*. The evil demon hypothesis therefore arguably involves the most vivid and immediate version of an imagined encounter with a logical alien. For in this case, the individual to be encountered (whom we are asked to imagine might be a logical alien) is not someone else. The alien turns out to be no one other than you yourself. Where you have to go in order to arrange an encounter with such a being is: nowhere at all. The form of the thought experiment of the evil demon is in this sense the strict inverse of that of the logically incomprehensible divine creative act. The seeming possibility that God could have created an alternative set of eternal truths appears to require of us that we imagine a universe in which (in order for us *then and there* to think what is true in *that* universe) we would *then and there* need to be able to think in accordance with a form of thought logically alien to the one we presently have. With the evil demon this problematic is turned inside out, as it were: the evil demon worry requires of me that I try to imagine that in the world in which I *already* live (in order for me *here and now* to think what is true) what I *here and now* need to do is to think in accordance with a form of thought that is logically alien to the one I presently have. The evil demon worry requires that I try to imagine that (in order for me here and now to be able to think in logical accordance with the truth) what I here and now need to be able to do is to think in a manner that my own form of thought debars me from being able to do. That is, it requires that I take myself *not* to be doing that which I take myself to be doing *in the very act of doing* such a thing. It is no wonder that the evil demon hypothesis leads to the cogito—to the discovery that the one bit of knowledge of which not even an evil demon can deprive me is my knowledge that in thinking I am aware that I exercise a faculty of thought.[27]

This takes us to the third question touched on in the reply to Moore: Is the meditator simply entitled to cleave to his core conception of im-

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[27] It is, as we have already seen, a further question—about which Descartes and Kant will differ—whether the self-knowledge of the thinking subject (my knowledge that the "I think" must be able to accompany all of my representations) is sufficient to ground a metaphysical knowledge-claim regarding what sort of a substance I am.

possibility at the relevant dialectical juncture in the *Meditations*, once the evil demon worry has been raised? If we appreciate how different the evil demon worry is from the dreaming worry, then the following should be clear: to simply so cleave is to refuse to enter into the further skeptical worry that the evil demon worry is designed to bring into view. For what that worry is supposed to bring into question is precisely our entitlement to acquiesce in our clear and distinct ideas of what is and is not possible. Descartes's entire procedure depends upon the soundness of the following conditional: if the evil demon worry is an intelligible one, then it will not be possible to vindicate the credentials of our cognitive faculty merely from within our own ken—that is, without some appeal to a ground of knowledge that lies outside the sphere of our own finitude. Kant, in effect, takes Descartes to have gotten something deeply right about the philosophical stakes here. Hence the Kantian project—one of vindicating our entitlement to regard our cognitive faculty as susceptible of non-defective forms of exercise—requires challenging the antecedent of this conditional. Since Kant's philosophical project, unlike Descartes's, is one of vindicating our capacity for knowledge within the sphere of our own finitude, Descartes's *modus ponens* becomes Kant's *modus tollens*. Hence, for Kant, the philosophically prior task must be one of showing that the very attempt to formulate a philosophical worry of the shape of the one that underlies the evil demon hypothesis already involves a fundamental form of philosophical confusion.

More generally, to respond to a Kantian question about the conditions of our cognitive faculty's having the sort of unity or form that it does by simply insisting that we cannot help but take it to have such a unity or form (a point with which the Kantian skeptic agrees) is simply to beg the question against the sort of skeptic that Kant is most concerned to address. This is the form of response to (what Kant called) skepticism that he calls dogmatism. The response of our hypothetical Moorean (in Section VII above) to the problem raised by the evil demon worry is dogmatic in just this sense. This is a point on which Descartes and Kant can agree. Where they disagree is on the question of how to proceed so that one's philosophical procedure remains free of any subsequent admixture of dogmatism. Descartes thinks the only way to avoid dogmatism here is via a recognition of the infinitude of God: through an acknowledgment of the undeniable actuality of God's creative power (a route that goes through my self-knowledge of the undeniable actuality of my own creative power of thought). For Descartes, this is the only route that can serve to ground the credentials of my clear and distinct ideas of what is

and is not possible. Kant, on the other hand, thinks the only way to avoid dogmatism is through a route of purely immanent reflection on the conditions of the possibility of a finite cognitive capacity (a route that also goes through my self-knowledge of the undeniable actuality of my own creative power of thought).

My paper "Two Varieties of Skepticism" (to which Hamawaki seeks to respond) prosecutes one line of work before it broaches another. The first task it sets itself is to introduce a preliminary taxonomy of varieties of skepticism and to identify various marks and features that allow us to sort the various problems philosophers discuss (which they might or might not call "skeptical" problems) into these varieties. The ability it seeks thereby to confer upon its reader—the ability to sort various philosophical discussions into one of these taxonomic categories rather than the other—is not supposed to turn on any collateral philosophical commitments. That task is a merely descriptive one and, in that sense, philosophically neutral. The second, philosophically committal task of the paper begins at the moment that it raises the following question: How are the Cartesian and Kantian varieties related to one another? It then goes on to consider various answers to this question—in particular, those favored by Kant and Wittgenstein respectively. Hamawaki's contribution to this volume seeks to expand upon my remarks in that paper regarding the general form of Kant's answer to this question.

Here is some of what I say in that paper (about Kant's answer to the question of how the Cartesian and Kantian varieties of skepticism are related) that Hamawaki has in mind:

> If the Cartesian skeptic grants, as he must, that he has the resources to enjoy impressions and entertain thoughts—resources required in order so much as to frame his doubt—then, having thought your way through the dialectic of the Kantian problematic, you will be in a position to show him that the gap he seeks to bridge is only the illusion of a gap. Thus, for Kant, the way to handle Cartesian skepticism is not to answer it head-on, but to think through the implications of an even more radical skeptical problematic. In coming to see what is incoherent in Kantian skepticism, we are to come to see what is incoherent in Cartesian skepticism as well. I will call this two-phased approach to the twin problematics of Cartesian and Kantian skepticism *the Kantian way with skepticism.* Most readers of Kant utterly misunderstand *The Critique of Pure Reason* by taking its response to Cartesian skepticism to begin much earlier in the book than it does. And such a misreading of

the book is inevitable if one fails to see that the Cartesian problematic represents for Kant only a special case of a more general problematic. . . . The positive touchstone of this way with skepticism is a radical following through of the implicit assumptions of a skeptical position up to the point at which the position founders in incoherence. The Kantian way with skepticism involves the ascent up a dialectical ladder that one eventually recognizes as one that is to be thrown away.[28]

And here is what Hamawaki himself says about the relation between that moment in my paper and the aim of his contribution:

> Conant writes of the "Kantian way with skepticism" that it "is a radical following through of the implicit assumptions of a skeptical position up to the point at which the position founders in incoherence."[29] What are the "implicit assumptions," and how does radically following through on them lead Cartesian skepticism to founder in incoherence? My aim in this paper is to attempt to sketch out a way of understanding this intriguing but somewhat mysterious idea.[30]

He goes on to say,

> The promise here is that although by resolving the Kantian skeptical question the Cartesian skeptic's question will not be answered, it won't need to, since an engagement with Kantian skepticism will show that the Cartesian question will not be fully intelligible in the way that the Cartesian skeptic must intend.[31]

Here is yet another way he formulates the suggestion (from my paper) that he wishes to take up:

> It suggests that Cartesian skepticism might well rest on a conception of our relation to our sensory experience and to others' behavior that already contains the seeds of (Cartesian) skepticism. Might the conditions of our being related to our own sensory experience, such that it at least purports to give us knowledge of objects, be incompatible somehow with how the Cartesian skeptic thinks of our relation to our sensory experience and to their objects?[32]

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[28] Conant, "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 52–53.
[29] This quote is from a bit later in the paper, cf. "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 63.
[30] Hamawaki, this volume, 149.
[31] Ibid., 149n.
[32] Ibid., 148.

So Hamawaki's way of construing the proposal goes like this: if we can furnish a sufficiently penetrating account of what is presupposed in the very idea of sensory experience having the form of purporting to be of objects, then we will come to see that the conditions of the possibility of that idea are incompatible with the Cartesian conception of how sensory experience is related to the objects it purports to be of. We may reformulate Hamawaki's project as follows, in order to make explicit how it relates to Stroud's account of Cartesian skepticism: it seeks to show how the Cartesian conception of epistemic priority has things backward.

I cannot review all of the details that go into Hamawaki's full sketch of how this proposal is to be worked out, but I would like to comment on those moments in it that bear most directly on the topics under discussion in my other replies. I will make a start on this by exploring the bearing of his remarks on the question (briefly touched on at the end of my previous reply) about how we should understand the Kantian emphasis upon the activity of the judging subject as a condition of the actuality of what logic investigates.

To say—as I do on both Kant's and Wittgenstein's behalf at the end of my reply to Boyle—that the subject is active in judging (or, for that matter, in merely entertaining a thought, or in perceiving how things are, or even in merely enjoying a certain array of visual appearances) does not mean that the subject engages in an *action*—an exercise of *practical* reason. What we need here is a notion of "activity" (or what Kant calls "spontaneity") that allows us to understand the sense in which the subject is active in exercising her capacity for *theoretical* cognition and how she could be so even in her apparently most passive forms of her exercise of a theoretical cognitive capacity—such as when a thought suddenly enters her mind or when, in opening her eyes, her attention is immediately seized by what she sees before her. For Kant, cognition is theoretical in form if the actuality of the object represent*ed* is the ground of the actuality of the subject's represent*ing,* and it is practical in form if the subject's represent*ing* is the ground of the actuality of the object represent*ed*.[33]

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[33] For an illuminating discussion of how theoretical and practical knowledge differ *in form* for Kant, see Stephen Engstrom, *The Form of Practical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), chap. 2 and "Kant's Distinction Between Theoretical and Practical Knowledge," *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* 10 (2002): 49–63. Kant is here reformulating a distinction that goes back to Aristotle (and his discussion of the difference between the theoretical and the practical syllogism) and was, in turn, influentially reformulated by Aquinas (though his distinction between theoretical reason as caused by what it understands and practical reason as the cause of what it understands), then made famous again in contemporary philosophy through Anscombe (and her discussion of the

Hamawaki's question might be put like this: How can knowledge be theoretical in form, so that it is materially beholden to the object of cognition (and its activity), yet formally beholden to the cognizing subject (and her activity)?

How to understand this notion of activity (so that we may distinguish it from practical activity yet appreciate how it is also in act in even the seemingly most passive cases of sensory apprehension) is arguably the central topic of Hamawaki's paper. Here is one thing he says about how Kant understands this matter:

> According to Kant, my relation to the content of my representation is essentially first personal. . . . We can see this as the point that is expressed by the oft-quoted passage from §16 of the Second Edition *Transcendental Deduction*: "[I]t must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me."[34] Kant . . . is explaining what constitutes the difference between a state that is representational and a state that doesn't represent anything for me at all. This is, I take it, the point of his adding the clause, "for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me." My sense experience constitutes a representation of an object as F only if I am aware of its doing so.[35]

This has the following consequence: for something to be able to figure in my consciousness at all, it must be such as to necessarily be able to be accompanied by the "I think." Or, as Kant also puts it, it must already belong to the unity of apperception. This is to say that the formal character of my sensible relation to an object, if the object sensed is not to be "nothing to me," must already partake of a form of unity that allows sensory consciousness of an object to be such that it can have an

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difference between knowledge that is speculative or contemplative in form and knowledge that is efficacious or practical in form). See *Intention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 82–89. At the end of the reply to Gustafsson, I will take up how Wittgenstein puts pressure on certain increasingly influential ways of spelling out this distinction.

[34] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B131, 152–153.

[35] Hamawaki, this volume, 158–159. *Nota bene:* for Hamawaki's Kant the "I think" is already in act wherever sense experience constitutes a representation of the form *x is F*.

epistemic function—that it be able to bear an internal relation to the form of judgment.[36]

Hamawaki then asks: In what sense does that which so figures in my consciousness figure *actively?*

> In what sense, then, is my relation to my sensory experiences an active one, given that the notion of activity here is not one of bringing something about? I have an active, first-person relation to my judgments in that I am aware of the reasons that support the judgment. The idea is that to *judge that p* is to be *aware of p* as something that is to be believed, something that one takes oneself to have reason to believe. This implies that the subject has an "active" relation to her judgment, not in the sense that the subject brings it about that she judges or believes but in the sense that she is accountable for what she judges or believes what she does. Her judgment or belief is answerable to the request for reasons that support it, and that is because it is constituted in the first place by the subject's normative awareness, her awareness that what she judges or believes is to be judged or to be believed. This is why one knows, at least in the normal case, what one believes by considering what to believe. And if one doesn't know what one believes, the failure here is not just epistemic in character, for what the subject lacks here cannot be supplied by some other way of knowing what one believes; for example, knowing what one believes on the basis of testimony or on the basis of the consideration of behavioral evidence. . . . The failure here is not an epistemic failure but, broadly speaking, a failure of . . . self-determination, a failure of constituting oneself as a knowing subject at all. Thus, one's awareness of what one believes is misconstrued by thinking of it in terms of "access," privileged or otherwise. Self-consciousness here is constitutive of the rationality of one's states and not something that serves simply as a vehicle of critically revising one's beliefs according to norms of belief revision.[37]

A lot happens very quickly in this passage. Its guiding thought is the following: to say that for Kant, self-consciousness is constitutive of the rationality of one's states is to say that it is partially constitutive of anything's counting as such a state that the very idea of such a state be the idea of something that already contains the "I think" within it. This la-

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[36] I am here putting things very loosely. For a more careful discussion of this point, see Conant, "Why Kant is not a Kantian."

[37] Hamawaki, this volume, 163–164.

tent "idea" can be brought to reflective self-consciousnesses, but not in the way in which something that is one "idea" among others is made explicit. Hamawaki's point here may be paraphrased in the Kantian idiom Boyle sought to illuminate above, as follows: when we thematize the "I think," what is made explicit is the *form* of the consciousness—not an additional *content* that the original consciousness harbors as one of its elements.[38] It does not alter Kant's fundamental point here to reformulate it, to bring out its dimension of affinity with Descartes's cogito, as follows: in a non-defective exercise of my *Erkenntnisvermögen,* my consciousness of *p* is at the same time a consciousness of *I think p*—where the act of knowledge wherein my knowing *p* consists and the act of knowledge wherein my knowing *I think p* consists are not two acts.

Hamawaki's point here is connected to a more general theme that runs throughout *The Critique of Pure Reason*—a theme that is missed by commentators who misconstrue his talk of "acts" of "synthesis" or "combination" along the lines of psychical processes that unfold in time. Synthesis, Kant tells us, is the act of "putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition."[39] This act is often construed by commentators to be a process in which I start with one sort one of arrangement of representations and turn it into a wholly different sort of arrangement: I begin with a whole lot of scattered representations and then I *do* something to that distributed manifold so to make it become the case that they are now no longer disparate but unified. If one reads Kant in this way then not only will one not be able to appreciate what Hamawaki means when he says that "self-consciousness is constitutive of the rationality of one's states," but one will also not be able to appreciate the sense in which self-consciousness, for Kant, is constitutive of *the very form* of the consciousness of one's states, if they are to be the conscious states of a rational being. Synthesis qua act of combination *is* the awareness—which itself is a form of self-awareness—of the togetherness of that which is held together in that very act of consciousness. There are not two acts here—one of consciousness and one of self-consciousness (in which the second is directed at the first)—rather, there is one single act.

There are two related mistakes in interpreting Kant interpretation here, each of which feeds on and sustains the other. The first mistake is to

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[38] This answers the question left hanging in the reply to Boyle: What does Kant mean when he says of the unity of the "I think" that it is merely formal?

[39] *Critique of Pure Reason,* A77/B103, 111.

construe the very idea of synthesis as if it must always refer to a psychic process whose product is a yet further, logically distinct psychic state from the one first present in the mind prior to the onset of the activity of synthesizing—thereby splitting the unity of synthesis into two separate acts: first, an act of the mind that presents us with a not-yet unified manifold of representations, and, second, an act of the mind that comes along, operates on those contents, and combines or unites them. The second mistake is one of construing self-consciousness as if it were a second-order consciousness of first-order conscious states—thereby splitting the unity of consciousness into two logically distinct acts of mind: first, an act of the mind that involves the consciousness of certain mental contents, and, second, an act of the mind that involves the consciousness that one is so conscious.[40]

Sebastian Rödl helpfully summarizes what is erroneous in the first mistake—which construes Kantian synthesis as the combining representations to produce a yet further distinct representation—and he offers the following more faithful gloss on what synthesis, for Kant, is:

> A representation of A and B as combined is a representation of A and B that is conscious of itself as containing a representation of A and one of B. We may put this by saying that the relevant representation of A and B holds together the representations of A and of B. Holding together the representations of A and B is representing A and is representing B and is representing both in one act of consciousness, this act being the act of holding together. Kant's word for holding together is "synthesis."[41]

Irad Kimhi helpfully summarizes what is erroneous in the second mistake—which construes Kantian self-consciousness as requiring a step

[40] The best version I know of the sort of reading of Kant that I here reject is found in Béatrice Longuenesse's book *I, Me, Mine: Back to Kant, and Back Again* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). It turns on her way of making out a distinction in Kant between mere apperceptive awareness of thinking and the perception that I think, where the former is both temporally and logically prior to the latter. It would take us too far afield to attempt here to litigate the merits of the different ways of reading Kant on this topic—especially when the competition involves the sort of textual subtlety and nuance that one finds in a reading such as Longuenesse's. But it should be noted that I am staking my claim here in an interpretation that is far from being either orthodox or uncontestable. Part of the point of quoting the three commentators immediately below—Rödl, Kimhi, and Held—is to make it clear that, though I may be out on a scholarly limb here, I am by no means alone.

[41] Sebastian Rödl, "Self-Consciousness and Knowledge," in *Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Akten des XI. Kant Kongresses,* eds. S. Bacin, A. Ferrarin, C. LaRocca, and M. Ruffing (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 358.

from an act of consciousness or thinking whose content is p to a distinct act of consciousness or thinking whose content is "I think p"—and he offers the following more faithful gloss on what self-consciousness, for Kant, is:

> Kant's insight [is] that a judgment belongs to a certain context of activity: the activity whose unity is the same as the consciousness of its unity, or self-consciousness. According to Kant, a judgment is a certain unity of consciousness. As such, it is a capacity for identifying consciousness as having this unity. . . . [42]

[42] Kimhi, *Thinking and Being,* 52. In the latter half of this reply, and in subsequent replies, we will explore how difficult it has proven for contemporary philosophers to reconcile themselves to the point that Kimhi here ascribes to Kant: that judgment is a form of activity in which, in the logically full-blooded case of its exercise, *its unity is the same as the consciousness of its unity*. This is what on the Kantian account self-consciousness *is*. Call this the critical insight. Contemporary philosophers, even those who consider themselves great fans of Kant or Wittgenstein, tend to regard it as a non-negotiable bit of "common sense" that the critical insight must be false—that the unity of what is thought in an act of thinking (say, the proposition p) and the consciousness of that unity (the thinking or believing or judging p) are distinct. Hence the closest that most contemporary readers of Kant or Wittgenstein are able to come to the critical insight is some version of a so-called transparency thesis—a thesis to the effect that the question whether I think p is "transparent" to the question whether p. Richard Moran is an influential advocate of a version of this thesis:

> What right have I to think that my reflection on the reasons in favor of p (which is one subject-matter) has anything to do with the question of what my actual belief about p is (which is quite a different subject-matter)? Without a reply to this challenge, I don't have any right to answer the question that asks what my belief [about, e.g., whether it will rain] is by reflection on the reasons in favor of an answer concerning the state of the weather. And then my thought at this point is: I would have a right to assume that my reflection on the reasons in favor of rain provided me with an answer to the question of what my belief about the rain is, if I could assume that what my belief here is was something determined by the conclusion of my reflection on those reasons. (Richard Moran, *Authority and Estrangement* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003], 405)

This leaves in place the assumption that wherever they occur, the utterances "p" and "I think p" (or "I judge p" or "I believe p") *must* differ in subject matter. The former sort of utterance ("p") is held to be about whether something is the case and the latter ("I believe p") is held to be "about" something quite different: me and my beliefs. Moran takes it that anyone who possesses the concept of belief endorses this supposed bit of common sense:

> It will be common knowledge, among anyone with the concept of belief, that although one believes something *as* true, the fact believed and the fact *of* one's belief are two different matters. . . . I acknowledge the two questions as distinct in virtue of acknowledging that what my beliefs are directed upon is an independent world, and they may therefore fail to conform to it. (Ibid., 61–62)

This states the distinction from the third-person point of view: as a distinction between p and *someone*'s believing p. Now what is incontrovertible here is that a belief that p and p *can* come apart—a logical gap *can* open up between them. It is something further to hold that

In the following set of remarks, Jonas Held brings out nicely how these two interpretative errors—the one that Rödl and the one that Kimhi corrects—are twin-aspect sides of a single misreading of Kant:

> For Kant, this act does not form or produce a product distinct from the act of synthesis itself. The act of combining representations is self-conscious. In putting representations together, you *are* at the very same time aware of their unity. As Kant writes: "Combination *is* the representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold."[43] To combine representations is not to form or to produce a distinct representation but to hold the representation together in one consciousness and to be aware of their unity in holding them together. So, holding representations together . . . and being aware of their unity are not two separate acts, but one and the same act. . . . Kant defines a judgment as "the representation of the unity of the consciousness of various representations."[44] . . . According to Kant, a judgment is a mental act; it is the activity of combining two representations and being aware of their unity.[45] If we now understand the activity of combining as a synthetic

there *must* always be such a logical gap between thought and being—between I think *p* and *p*—even in the logically full-blooded first-person present indicative case. It is often argued that there must always be such a logical gap—and, hence, that the two questions whether to think *p* and whether *p* must always differ in content—on the twin grounds that (1) thinking and being are distinguishable from every point of view other than that of the first-person present indicative, and (2) a uniform treatment of cases requires us to regard the first-person present indicative case as involving the same form and degree of logical complexity as the others. Below, we will return to what bearing (1) should be taken to have on (2). And in the pages that follow, we will see that this argument turns on a more general assumption that will occupy us in many different guises. For now, it suffices to remark that there certainly are uses of sentences such as "I think *p*" or "I believe *p*" in which such a gap opens up. But this does not suffice to clinch the conclusion that we can in every case determine what such a sentence is "about" by contemplating only its surface grammar, apart from considering its use. Kant and Wittgenstein each advocate that there is a kind of use of such a sentence in which what it expresses is nothing other than the logical manner in which what is combined is held together in the logical act of thinking the truth of *p*—and that on such a use, what the sentence exhibits is a formal dimension of such an act. Thus, for Kant, the necessary accompaniability of *p* by the "I think," and, for Wittgenstein, the necessary non-accompaniability of my assertion of *p* by the "but I don't believe *p*" are respectively revelatory of a form of necessity that they each wish to teach us to regard as belonging to the order of the logical. Kant's critical insight and Wittgenstein's understanding of the importance of Moore's paradox are, in this sense, two sides of one coin.

[43] *Critique of Pure Reason,* B130–131, 152.

[44] Kant, *Jäsche Logic,* §17, 597. We discussed this passage above, in clarifying why judgment for Kant (as well as for Frege) is an act, but not an action.

[45] Held rightly cautions in this connection—emphasizing the point discussed above and just alluded to in the previous note—that to say judgment, for Kant, is an activity does not mean to say that it is an intentional action or something done voluntarily.

activity along the [above] lines . . . , it follows that the awareness of the unity of judgment is neither a product produced by the activity of combining the representations, nor a further act. Instead, in combining representations, you are aware of their unity. . . . [T]he unity of the content of a judgment is constituted by the act of judging.[46]

Synthesis stands to that which is synthesized, for Kant, as form to matter. There are not two distinct representations here—one of the matter to be unified and the other of the manner in which it is unified; rather, the representation of unity that is the synthesis *is* the manner in which the matter of cognition is represented. So, too, with the relation of self-consciousness to consciousness: they stand to one another as form to matter.[47]

Yet there is an important disanalogy here as well, at least between the most paradigmatic cases of Kantian synthesis and Kantian self-consciousness. The synthetic unity of the representation through which I represent a manifold of individuals as falling under a single concept is a form of *determining* judgment: the instances are *subsumed* under a general classificatory sortal. This is not the relation of consciousness to self-consciousness. When I express the judgment *"p"* and then go on to make its form explicit by saying "I judge *p*," I am not further determining my initial judgment; in a non-defective exercise of my capacity for judgment,

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[46] Held, "Kant on Syllogistic Reasoning," unpublished manuscript.

[47] This holds equally for how self-consciousness must figure in the apprehension of the thinking of another. To apprehend the matter of another person's thought, I must apprehend it through the form of the other's self-consciousness. There is no apprehending the activity of the matter of the thinking of another subject unless it is apprehended as informed by the self-consciousness of that thinking subject. In this connection, see for example, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A346–347 and A353–354. It is worth noting that, drawing on such passages, Tyke Nunez finds an argument in Kant that parallels the one that Conant finds in Frege's encounter with the logical alien—an argument for why the idea that we could apprehend another judging subject to be a logical alien must fall apart in the end, if we attempt to think it through; see Nunez's "Logical Mistakes, Logical Aliens, and the Laws of Kant's Pure General Logic," *Mind* 128, no. 512 (forthcoming). Particularly instructive is Nunez's discussion of why Kant cannot content himself with an agnosticism about logically alien beings (those with other forms of thought) in the way that he can when it comes to the question of whether there can be sensibly alien beings (those with other forms of sensibility). It is not included within the mere concept of a receptive faculty for Kant that its outer form be that of our form of outer sense (that of Euclidean space). Hence, we can, without contradiction, frame in thought the bare concept of a being whose form of sensibility is alien to ours. "We cannot, however, form a corresponding negative concept of a logical alien, because it is essential to any concept of the understanding or reason that it is subject to logic's laws" (ibid., 23). Section 6 of Nunez's article—titled "Logical Aliens"—is devoted to showing why this must be so for Kant.

the unity of its exercise qua act of judgment, for Kant, is not independent of the consciousness of that unity.[48]

The contrast with Frege may help to bring out the crucial nuance here. As we have just seen, for Kant, in a no way defective or attenuated exercise of my *Erkenntnisvermögen,* my consciousness that *p* is at the same time a consciousness that *I judge p*—where the act of my capacity for knowledge wherein my thinking *p* consists and the act of knowledge wherein my knowing *I judge p* consists are not two acts. There is a similarity between Kant and Frege here and a difference. The similarity is that for Frege, as for Kant, there is no difference in content between my asserting *p* and my asserting *I judge p*. I do not further determine the original judgable content—for example, by subsuming it under the sortal *judgable contents which I deem to be true*—in judging it. The dissimilarity is that, for Frege, the unity of the judgable content is independent of the consciousness of that unity. For Frege (as is displayed in the very structure of his notation), unlike for Kant, *p* and *I judge p* do not represent the same act. In the former case, what is displayed is a mere content whose logical unity can be thought (but in such an act of grasping its unity, I do not draw upon my capacity for judgment); in the latter case, what is displayed is a content to which an additional logical dimension of force has been *added*. This severs the inextricable Kantian connection between the conditions of the logical unity of a truth and those of logical self-consciousness of its truth. For Kant, in the most basic case of the exercise of the capacity, the unity of the content of a judgment is constituted

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[48] Hence the passage from Kimhi, cited above, continues as follows: "According to Kant, a judgment is a certain unity of consciousness. As such, it is a capacity for identifying consciousness as having this unity; but in saying that one should be careful not to confuse an 'act of identifying consciousness' with subsumption under a general kind, namely, with a determination of consciousness" (52). Laura Davis is equally concerned with avoiding this confusion (which Kimhi here warns against). She, however, makes the further intriguing suggestion that Kant's respective uses of the terms *Handlung* and *Actus* in the B Deduction are concerned with tracking these two dimensions of synthetic unity: the former term characterizes a classificatory act of combination or subsumption and the latter self-consciousness of consciousness as having this unity—where the latter does not involve an act distinct from the former. Hence she writes the following:

> Importantly, the act to which Kant refers in both characterizations are the same act. . . . In general, Kant seems to track this distinction through his use of these two terms. . . . When Kant refers to an act of combination (synthesis) he most often uses *Handlung*; . . . every time he refers to the "I think" as an act, he uses the term *Actus*. . . . It is when he is arguing at the highest level of abstraction, when Kant discusses apperception and its original unity, that he uses *Actus* to refer to an act of the understanding. (Laura Davis, "Spontaneity as Act and Activity," unpublished manuscript)

by the act of judging in the following sense: the act through which one constitutes the unity of judgable content and that through which one judges it are the same act. For Frege, even in the most basic case of judging, the act through which one constitutes the unity of judgable content and that through which one judges it are not the same act. Rather, the original logical unity is constituted by an act of thinking whose content is such that it can be taken up into an act of judging—indeed, it is essentially such that it can be so taken up. Their essential logically interrelated natures notwithstanding, the logical act through which one constitutes such judgable content and that through which one judges it must remain, for Frege, logically distinct acts.

Hence there is an idea in Kant's account here that Frege happily accepts (namely, that in judging, I do not determine or further modify the content judged) folded into a conception of the indissoluble unity of consciousness and self-consciousness that is alien to Frege's way of thinking. For Kant and Frege, from the point of view of the self-conscious subject, as we have seen, there is no distinction in content (as Frege would put it, in truth-conditions) between *p* and *I judge p.* But for Kant, unlike for Frege, this is just because, from the point of view of the judging subject, these are two ways of representing the same act, in the former case, leaving the relation of act to power implicit, and in the latter case, making its formal character explicit. If we are talking about a case in which I assert *p* by merely saying *p,* then Frege can say something about such a case that one might mistake for Kant's point here. Frege can say, in such a situation, that if I go from first asserting "p" to then saying "I judge p," what I do in the second of my speech-acts is to make the assertoric force (that is misleadingly folded together in natural language with the logical unity of the thought) explicit. For Frege, when *p* and *I judge p* occur in his notation, their difference is to be understood in terms of a difference between a self-standing purely logical unity that has its content off its own bat and the attachment of something further (a force operator) to that content. For Kant, however, this reverses the relations of logical priority: what Frege calls "the content of the thought" is something that we arrive at through abstracting from a prior unity (one that is not "merely logical" in Frege's sense, but rather already reflects the activity of the judging subject in the constitution of its unity).

As we put it before, for Frege, the *I judge*—the activity of the subject—enters the realm of thought from *outside* the unity of thought. For Kant, the activity of the *I* must be (even in an act of mere Fregean thinking) in act *within* the logical unity of the judgable content for there so much as

to be such a content—the latter being only available (qua mere judgable content) as an abstraction from the unity of such a nexus of the logically prior engagement of our general capacity. Hence for Kant, the logical unity of the thought does not—and must not—depend upon a comprehension of mere thinking as a capacity distinct from that of judging. Rather, its very intelligibility presupposes a prior relation to a single unified general cognitive capacity—among whose possible exercises an act of mere (Fregean) thinking is not only one of a logically dependent interrelated manifold of acts (and a comparatively etiolated exercise of the power in question), but also one whose content depends upon a prior unity of self-conscious judgmental activity from which we abstract in specifying its content.

Hence, for Frege, the rational relations in which two thoughts, *p* and *q,* can stand to one another is not only independent of and prior to the activity of any particular individual thinker (a point on which he and Kant can agree) but is also self-standingly intelligible as a set of relations into which thoughts can enter, independent of and prior to the very idea that *p* and *q* are ways in which a self-conscious mind can determine itself. For Frege, there is an explanatory priority between these self-standingly intelligible relations of logical validity and the responsible exercise of our cognitive capacities. For Frege, one is already on the slippery slope to psychologism if one holds that an account of the responsible exercise of such logical powers on the part of some community of individual thinkers is explanatorily prior to these relations of logical validity themselves. Hamawaki's Kant can agree in rejecting such an account (in which a description of our powers is an empirical generalization over the powers of some empirically delimitable set of individuals) without having to reject his own more nuanced way of putting the converse of Frege's conception. For Hamawaki's Kant will not agree that a conception of the bare contents of possible judgments standing in relations of validity is prior to a proper conception of a general rational cognitive power that bears a certain form—where a characterization of that form makes it reflectively explicit wherein a rational subject's constituting herself, through the responsible exercise of her powers, consists.

Putting aside the pertinence of such considerations for a possible Kantian critique of *Frege* for a moment, let us return to this question: How do the considerations that Hamawaki adduces here bear on the *Cartesian conception of perception?* Or, as he puts the question: What, then, is the relevant form of mental activity in connection with which there is self-consciousness of the intentional object of a sensory experience?

Kant's answer is that it is the activity of applying concepts to the object, or what he calls "judgment."[49] It is through the act, or state, of judgment that my sensory experiences provide my mind with material for thought. This can seem to get the relation between judgment and sensory experience backward. Sensory experience is what is supposed to give me acquaintance with an object. . . . [B]ut what is at issue here is what explains what Conant calls "the objective purport" of experience. And in relation to the Kantian rather than the Cartesian question, it is the empiricists that get things exactly backward. Sensory experience has an intentional object at all, brings an object before my mind, only because I can give voice to it in a judgment.[50]

Perceptual experience can have objective purport only if I can give voice to it in a judgment. Couldn't the Cartesian agree with this but say, "Yes, but my question is how do I know that the judgment I go on to make, in giving voice to that experience, is true or false?" To think that this response speaks against what Hamawaki says above is to fail to see where the nuance in the account lies—in particular, it fails to appreciate what he means when he says that, in relation to the Kantian skeptical question—though not in relation the Cartesian skeptical question—that response gets the relation between judgment and sensory experience backward.

Cartesian skepticism about perception turns on the challenge that it is impossible to maintain both of the following two thoughts:

  (i) In virtue of perception, we can come to know about the world around us.
 (ii) A subject, currently having a veridical perception, is having an experience that is exactly the same as the experience she would be having were she instead having an indistinguishable non-veridical perception.

The Cartesian skeptic about perception, in effect, attempts to argue as follows: since (ii) is evidently correct, we must reject (i). Is it impossible to maintain both (i) and (ii)? Well, it depends in part upon how one understands (ii)—in particular, upon what it means to claim that one per-

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[49] Kant writes, "The manifold given in sensible intuition is necessarily subject to the original synthetic unity of apperception, because in no other way is the unity of intuition possible (§17). But that act of understanding, by which the manifold of given representations (be they intuitions or concepts) is brought under one apperception, is the logical function of judgment" (*Critique of Pure Reason,* B143, 160).

[50] Hamawaki, this volume, 161–162.

ceptual experience is "the same" as another.[51] There is an understanding of (ii) according to which it expresses a truism. What Hamawaki seeks to show is that the Cartesian's understanding of (ii) turns it into something that is by no means platitudinous. It induces a reading of (ii) according to which what the good case and the bad case have in common rests not only on (what McDowell calls) a highest-factor conception of how perceptual experience stands to perceptual judgment, but one that parallels Frege's highest common factor conception of the relation between judgable content and the act of judgment.

This can be made more perspicuous if we recall some of the lessons we learned from Boyle in the previous section, regarding how Kant conceives of the nexus of power to act. We may reformulate Hamawaki's point with Boyle's help as follows: The act of sensory apprehension of an object, insofar as it is supposed to have cognitive potential (insofar as it is supposed to be the sort of thing that can have objective purport), presupposes an internal relation to the power of judgment—where perception and judgment are aspects of a single rationally unified capacity for cognition. To sever this internal connection is to saddle oneself with a conception of a perceptual capacity according to which its sphere of possible exercise is, as Stroud puts it, restricted: first, because the most its exercise can yield is something that necessarily falls short of knowledge; second, because what it thus yields is epistemically prior to what we need to be rationally entitled to regard it as ingredient in knowledge.

In fairness to Descartes, it should be noted that he firmly insisted that any idea that genuinely possessed objective reality must formally partake of the power of intellection. But most subsequent "Cartesian" epistemologists work with a far more passive picture of sensory perception. That the exercise of a perceptual capacity could appear necessarily restricted in the aforementioned way will immediately follow from a certain picture of the passivity of perception—one that leaves no room for the idea of activity Hamawaki sought to elucidate. According to the "Cartesian" picture, in perception, something is merely given to us—no act of the power of the judging subject is required for that which is given to appear on the perceptual horizon. This is the picture we saw Hamawaki target above, according to which "the senses" yield possible contents

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[51] For a helpful extended discussion of this point, see Thomas Lockhart, "Motivating Disjunctivism," in *Rethinking Epistemology, Vol. 2,* eds. Günter Abel and James Conant (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 309–347.

for judgment without the activity of the judging subject figuring in the exercise of the capacity to determine the conceptual shape of those contents. No self-determination of the subject is required to bring into view something that can subsequently be accompanied by the "I think." On the restricted conception, it looks as if judgable contents are made available through the operation of the senses, but recognition of their truth or falsity kicks in only at a later stage—only after the cognitive capacity we are here calling "perception" has completely discharged its office. According to this picture, the self-determination of the subject's mind has a role to play only once an array of judgable contents is already in place. This involves a version of what Sellars calls "the myth of the given."[52] Kant would formulate this mythical idea as follows: It is the idea of a possible exercise of one of our cognitive capacities partaking of cognitive content without partaking of the form of our cognitive power—without the form of the understanding already being in act.[53]

What would a non-restricted conception of perception be? It would be one according to which sense can be made of the idea that there can be an exercise of our perceptual faculty that, in and of itself, through the exercise of that very power, yields knowledge.[54] Barry Stroud writes, "I think any satisfactory understanding of human perceptual knowledge must make room for the fact that we know things about the world

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[52] Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[53] Sellars would express the corresponding mythical idea in his philosophical framework as follows: It is the idea of a possible exercise of one of our cognitive capacities able to yield contents already partaking of logical form without our capacity for language already being in place. His rejection of this guise of the Myth of the Given yields the doctrine that Sellars somewhat misleadingly calls "Psychological Nominalism."

[54] The term "perception" here would then have to be able to bring within its scope, according to such a use (I do not deny that there are other ways to use it), not just the merely sensible or receptive dimension of our apprehension of the world but also our capacity to recognize—in and through perceiving—what is the case. Perception, so understood, must draw on our capacity to employ concepts. In the pages to follow, I will use "perceiving" in this way as a term for a power of *knowledge;* hence, to mean the generic perceptual capacity whose visual species is the capacity Stroud calls "seeing what is so": "To see and know that there is a red apple on a brown table requires more than seeing those objects. It requires competence in and competent exercise of the perceptual and conceptual capacities required for propositional thought about what you perceive. But those who possess that rich set of capacities, as we all do, and exercise them competently in the right circumstances, can sometimes find themselves perceptually aware of a fact of the objective world that they thereby know to be so. This is what I call "seeing what is so," and so *knowing* what is so by perception alone" (Stroud, "Perceptual Knowledge and the Primacy of Judgment," in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018], 110).

around us *by perception alone*."[55] Perception, McDowell says, "brings facts into plain view."[56] Hamawaki aims to show that any such account of perception must be one that can make sense of how our capacity for judgment can be in act *in* perception (rather than merely operate on it from *outside* the sphere of what is given in perception).

In a footnote, he indicates that his way of framing Kant's criticism of Cartesian skepticism has non-accidental affinities with McDowell's critique of what we might call conjunctivist analyses of experience, according to which the epistemically good and bad cases share a logically highest common factor.[57] According to conjunctivism, the good case consists of a conjunction of two factors: the factor it shares with the bad case (things seeming a certain way) plus an additional factor (things being a certain way). Conjunctivism purports to furnish the first half of an overall story about how we acquire perceptual knowledge, while leaving it open exactly how we come to know that the second factor is indeed in place. The disjunctivist wants to expose how the very shape of such a story is hopeless.

The problem for conjunctivism may be put as follows: even if some marvelous additional story about considerations bearing on the second factor is supplied by the conjunctivist, given the epistemic impotence of the first factor considered in isolation of the second factor, how can it ever hope to qualify as an account that recovers the truth of (i)? McDowell has taught us to reject any such conjunctivist analysis in favor of a disjunctivist one, according to which there is a logical asymmetry between the case of the successful and failed exercise of a rational capacity. The Cartesian conception of experience contrives to make it seem as if, in order to count as a knower, the occupant of the good disjunct had first to determine which of the two disjuncts she occupied and that she had to do so on some ground wholly independent of any exercise of her capacity for perceptual knowledge, no matter how responsible. What McDowell seeks to show is that if we have a sufficiently firm grip on the concept of a non-defective exercise of a capacity for knowledge, then we can appreciate that the subject who successfully exercises the relevant ca-

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[55] My emphasis; Stroud, "Seeing What is So," in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding,* 86. As the previous footnote makes clear, to say that we can know things "by perception alone" is not to deny that conceptual (and not just, as it were merely perceptual) capacities are in play and must be drawn upon in order to exercise the capacity here in question.

[56] McDowell, "Conceptual Capacities in Perception," in *Having the World in View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 139. But *nota bene*: for McDowell's Kant—unlike Hamawaki's—the "I think" comes into play only once I make a judgment about what I thus perceive; see "Avoiding the Myth of the Given," in ibid., 256.

[57] Hamawaki, this volume, 149n.

pacity *knows,* without requiring any Cartesian detour to reach an entitlement to knowledge. The Cartesian conception of the exercise of a perceptual capacity has the relative epistemic priority of the defective and the non-defective exercises of the capacity backward. Hamawaki certainly accepts and means to be building on the substance of this critique of the Cartesian conception. But I would like to suggest that we can both better understand the central claims of Hamawaki's contribution and how they are related to Boyle's if we see how they encourage a very particular way of unpacking the original disjunctivist insight.[58]

Let us recall two lessons we learned from Boyle's Kant—one about the relations of our general cognitive powers to one another and another about the relation of act to power. The first of these lessons is that in the case of a self-conscious capacity, such as our capacity for perceptual knowledge, the operation of the capacity is not to be factorized into the joint operation of two self-standingly intelligible capacities—say, one of perceiving and one of judging. The second lesson is that the non-defective case of the exercise of such a capacity is not to be analyzed as (what I called above) an attenuated case of its exercise plus something. This is close to the lesson I extracted above from McDowell, but it cuts slightly deeper. Putting the various lessons together, we get this: to perceive (in the relevant-success sense of the term) *is* to know (and to fail to know is for the capacity in question to encounter or suffer some kind of encumbrance, attenuation, or defect in its exercise).

If we bring these lessons to bear on disjunctivism, then we arrive at the following reformulation: When I am an occupant of the good disjunct, the act of knowing does not differ from that of perceiving—there is one act; when I am an occupant of the bad disjunct, the exercise of my perceptual faculty is not an act of knowledge—if I am to acquire knowledge, further acts of mind are required. It is this feature of the latter disjunct that the Cartesian tries to read into the structure of even the best case of knowledge. This way of understanding the relation of the good to the bad case retains the original virtue of disjunctivist analyses: it blocks the reading of (ii) that makes it seem incompatible with (i). But it provides further clarification on how properly to understand (i) and offers a somewhat different principle for distributing cases across the two disjuncts.

Often, in discussions of these matters, the good case is thought to be one in which I both perceive and know, and the bad case is thought to

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[58] Indeed, unpacking it in a way that places disjunctivism on a collision course with the official doctrine of McDowell's *Mind and World.*

be the one in which I perceive but do not know. The label of "goodness" may incline us to sort the cases in accordance with whether the story ends well for the occupant of the disjunct or not—in accordance with whether the exercise of her faculty eventually issues in knowledge or not. The moral I want to draw from bringing Hamawaki's and Boyle's contributions together is that this way of sorting cases obscures wherein the true virtue of (what McDowell calls) "the good disjunct" ought really to be taken to consist: wherein the real asymmetry lies between a fully "successful" exercise and a less than fully "successful" exercise of our perceptual capacity. That is to say, it obscures what it needs to reveal, if we are to extract the philosophically maximally illuminating lesson from our critique of conjunctivism.

Our reformulation above suggests the possibility of a more discriminating principle for classifying cases according to which the conditions for membership in some disjunct other than the "good" one is to be conceived in a manner that permits it to extend to cases other than simply those in which the occupant of the disjunct "perceives" but does not know. In McDowell's version of disjunctivism, the philosophical joint at which the disjunctive distinction is carved is one that takes the crucial criterion to be a matter of what the occupant of the disjunct can be said to know. In what follows, two further questions will concern us and will serve to motivate a new principle for sorting exercises of our capacity into formally distinct kinds. The first of these motivating questions will concern the delicate matter of the position from which the occupant of the disjunct is said to know. Does it suffice that from *some* (e.g., later) point of view her perceptual appearances can be said by her to accord with how things are—or must the point of view from which this can be said be in the logically strongest possible sense *hers*? The second of our motivating questions will concern the character of the nexus between *seeing* and *knowing* within the sphere of cognitive activity of the occupant of the disjunct herself. In seeing and knowing does she do *two* things or *one*? In the end it will emerge that these are not really two distinct questions, but rather two ways of asking the same question.

We will work our way up to these ways of asking our question. For the moment, it will suffice to register the following complaint: what makes the previous principle for grouping cases comparatively philosophically imperspicuous is that in its eagerness to attend to one significant dimension of logical difference, it obscures other equally significant ones. The dimension to which it dutifully attends is the epistemically fateful differ-

ence between cases in which one knows and cases in which one does not. In this respect, the traditional disjunctivist preserves the Cartesian epistemologist's way of sorting cases—in which this pair of cases (whether they are analyzed conjunctivistically or disjunctivistically) are regarded by the parties on both sides of the dispute to be the two fundamental cases of exercise of a cognitive capacity to which the philosopher needs to attend. The dimensions of difference that thereby come to be obscured are the ones we will seek to uncover below by taking up our two motivating questions. If our investigation succeeds, it will show that we need a principle of an entirely different logical shape—one that distinguishes sufficiently sharply between (what I will later call) the logically full-blooded case of a successful exercise of a perceptual capacity and any other logically somehow more attenuated exercise of the capacity, even if it is one that nonetheless eventuates in knowledge.

Let us henceforth refer to the corresponding disjuncts that our new principle of classification yields as the *felicitous disjunct* and the *non-felicitous disjunct*. According to our reformulated principle, I count a case as an occupant of the infelicitous disjunct, not only if what there is to know and what I seem to perceive do not coincide, but also when they do coincide yet my act of perceiving and my act of knowing are in some way disjoined. Any scenario, regardless of how "good" its final outcome might be, in which my act of perceiving and my act of knowing come apart (so that an exercise of additional capacities is required in order to arrive at knowledge) counts according to our new principle as a case to be sorted under the infelicitous disjunct.

The occupant of the infelicitous disjunct is someone whose exercise of a perceptual capacity does not *as such* result in knowledge. This was, of course, true of the erstwhile occupant of the original bad disjunct: he suffers from a perceptual misapprehension without knowing that he so suffers. Hence, we may say of him (viewing him from the third-person point of view) that he is unable to distinguish the situation he is in from the one he takes himself to be in. But what places him into the infelicitous category is not just this. It is not simply his inability to discriminate his own situation from one of knowing (making it the sort of case upon which the Cartesian fixates in his preferred examples of defective exercises of a perceptual capacity). What places him in the infelicitous category is a distinction that the Cartesian is unable to get into view. This classic occupant of the original bad disjunct is one of a whole possible range of possible cases of infelicity. Let us call the Cartesian's favorite variant of infelicity *the there-is-no-way-to-tell variant* of the infelicitous

disjunct. The standard disjunctivist diagnosis brings out how the conjunctivist illicitly contrives to make it seem as if the case of the good disjunct shared a highest common factor with the there-is-no-way-to-tell variant of the infelicitous disjunct.

The force of the extra wrinkle in Hamawaki's account of these matters becomes especially clear, I think, if we consider why the there-is-no-way-to-tell variant of the infelicitous disjunct does not exhaust the category of infelicity. What makes something a case of the felicitous disjunct is not that I both perceive and know; it is that I am sufficiently favorably circumstanced to know simply in virtue of perceiving. It does not suffice to disqualify a case as one of infelicity to note that my circumstances are such that my perceptual engagement with the world can form a bridge to knowledge. If the exercise of the capacity only "eventually"—rather than immediately—issues in knowledge, then it is not free of infelicity in the relevant sense.

So a whole range of cases of non-optimality for perceptual knowing will count as cases of infelicity according to this principle. It will include, for example, any sort of case in which I have reason to stand back from a perceptual judgment that I might otherwise be inclined to make because of what I take myself to know about my circumstances. Indeed, it will include any sort of case in which a gap can open up between perceptual taking and judging, even if the path to knowledge can be freed of its initial obstacle. So we are not just interested in the Sellarsian tie-shop sort of scenario, in which I can know the tie is blue by having it appear green to me and knowing (that under the conditions of the yellow lighting under which I am seeing it) that blue will appear green.[59] More relevant for the present point are cases in which things are just as they appear but in which further reflection is required to credit that things are as they appear. I am thinking here of a sort of case which philosophers love to arrange,[60] one in which I later learn that the circumstances under which

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[59] Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, 37–39.

[60] I point at features of something that I take to be the Müller-Lyer-style diagram I drew on the blackboard of my classroom earlier in the day and say, "this line *merely* appears to be longer than that one," strongly emphasizing the word "merely." While doing so, I, on the one hand, simply assume that it is the very diagram that I drew (and thus that it is, in the usual way, occasioning an optical illusion in me), while, on the other hand, noticing that the one line seems so much longer than the other that it is harder than usual to credit that they are of the same length. I then realize, with the help of their laughter, that the students of my introductory epistemology class have, during a very brief absence on my part from the classroom, *altered* the diagram (lengthening the apparently longer line) and have been eagerly awaiting the moment when I would say "this line *merely* appears to be longer than that one."

I perceive turn out not to be unfavorable in a way that I initially had reason to surmise they might be.

For even in the latter sort of case, though I end up with knowledge, it is not simply in virtue of perceiving what is the case: I perceive, I hesitate, I marshal further considerations, and then I arrive at knowledge. In such a case, I both perceive and (in the end) I know, but the perceiving is insufficient for the knowing. Let us call such a case *the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling variant* of the infelicitous disjunct. Something qualifies as belonging to this variant only if both of the following features obtain: First, unlike in cases in which blue merely looks green to the subject, in this case, the subject concludes things are *just as they appear.* Second, the subject in this variant comes to *know* things are just as they appear. The problem here lies not just in the fact that the subject misperceives or does not know, but in *how* he knows. What makes him the occupant of this variant of the infelicitous disjunct is that the usual exercise of his perceptual capacity is insufficient for knowing in a way that it would not be under less challenging circumstances.

The argument for classifying the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario under the infelicitous (rather than felicitous) disjunct rests on the originally given reason for classifying cases under the bad (rather than the good) disjunct: namely, the absence of a highest common factor. To say that even this scenario ought to be sorted as a variant of the infelicitous disjunct is to claim that there is no highest-common-ingredient act across the following two exercises of my perceptual capacity: (a) one in which I know that *a is F* in virtue of an exercise of my perceptual cognitive faculty, and (b) one in which it appears to me that *a is F* in virtue of an exercise of my perceptual cognitive faculty, but in which I only come to know that *a is F*—and thus come to know that I do not thereby perceptually misapprehend what is the case—through supplementing that act of perception with one of reflection. The temptation here, even for those who otherwise take themselves to have digested the lesson of disjunctivism, is to say that there is a common act ingredient in both of these exercises of my cognitive power—namely, "the" act that brings it about that things perceptually appear to me to be such that *a is F.* The temptation is to think that if "the" appearance is "the *same*," and there is *no misapprehension* "in" the appearance, and things *are* as they appear, and I come to *know* that things are as they appear, then what more could you want? Aren't all of the crucial elements for qualifying something as a case of epistemic goodness of a sort that we should care about in place? The point of the new principle of classification (that

sorts the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario as a case of infe-
licity) is to insist that the two cases (the logically full-blooded and the
attenuated exercise of a cognitive faculty) differ in Kantian transcendental-
logical form. What we want to call, under the pressure of the aforemen-
tioned temptation, "the" act (allegedly equally an ingredient in these two
cases of exercising the same general capacity) is not a common act: in one
case, the act in question is, as such, an act of knowledge; in the other, it is
an act of the power of knowledge which, as such, is insufficient for knowl-
edge. The underlying error in construing these two exercises of the percep-
tual capacity as having a common factor is *au fond* the same as the one
that animates conjunctivist analyses: that of reading what comes to be a
self-standingly intelligible moment in the structure of a less than fully fe-
licitous exercise of the capacity into the structure of the logically prior case
of its fully felicitous exercise, thereby decomposing its unity.

Now we can say, more precisely, what qualifies any case as one that
ought to count as a variant of the infelicitous disjunct: the question is
not whether I can be said to both perceive and know, but whether my
acts of perception and knowledge form the requisite sort of unity or not.
So, even if I end up knowing the truth and even if the exercise of my per-
ceptual faculty figures as a crucial first step in my eventually getting
there, if the act of exercising my capacity for perceptual knowledge is in
the aforementioned way distinct from my act of knowledge, then my
knowledge is not grounded in perceptual judgment full stop—but only
in (what Kant might call) a problematic perceptual judgment, one that
requires non-perceptual supplementation to issue in knowledge.[61] The
fundamental point here is just an application of Boyle's more general
point about the logical priority of power to act in a Kantian account of
the form of our cognitive power. What we need to understand is not
simply how to sort cases into those in which I both perceive and know

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[61] McDowell writes, "In experience one takes in, for instance sees, that things are thus and so.
That is the sort of thing one can also, for instance, judge" (*Mind and World*, 9). My point may
be put as follows: If what is here called the "seeing" requires a further act of judgment—so
that, as McDowell puts it, one not only sees but *also* judges—in order to amount to knowl-
edge, then the case under consideration is one in which "seeing" and knowing do not form
the requisite unity to qualify as a fully felicitous exercise of my perceptual capacity. There
are cases—such as the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario—in which, in order
to arrive at knowledge, I must first look and then also judge. But this division of labor
across two distinct acts (one of looking and one of judging) should not be read back into
the structure of the felicitous disjunct. This is where the real asymmetry between the dis-
juncts should be taken to lie: in whether the perceptual act itself constitutes the requisite
sort of unity to suffice as a case of knowing. I here anticipate the central topic of the latter
half of this reply.

and those in which I perceive but fail to know, but rather how properly to differentiate between the formal character of the logically prior case of the exercise of the faculty (in which it suffers no attenuation or interruption) and its defective or attenuated species of exercise (some of which may nonetheless eventuate in knowledge).

The superficial disjunctivist diagnosis charges the Cartesian with illicitly equating a supposed feature of the case of the happy disjunct with an actual feature of the there-is-no-way-to-tell variant of the infelicitous disjunct, thereby leaving the poor Cartesian with no way to tell knowing from non-knowing. This diagnosis is fine as far as it goes, but it can leave one imagining that one has fully learned the lesson of disjunctivism while continuing to categorize the case of the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario as a perfectly happy case on the grounds that its occupant both perceives and knows. What a more penetrating diagnosis ought to suggest is this: the Cartesian too closely assimilates the difference between the defective and the non-defective exercise of a perceptual faculty to the difference between the following two variants of the infelicitous disjunct—the there-is-no-way-to-tell variant and the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling variant. The optimal case of perceptual knowledge that the Cartesian is able to envision (no matter how much help we receive from God) is one that has the infelicitous structure of the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling variant. What the Cartesian lacks and what a properly prosecuted disjunctivist diagnosis of his error should yield is a properly delimited concept of a fully felicitous exercise of our perceptual capacity. There is nothing wrong with the idea that mundane cases of an insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario involve just the order of epistemic priority to which we saw Stroud draw attention above. The problem with the Cartesian conception is that it writes this order of priority into the very idea of what it is to know something via perception. The Cartesian conception makes it look as if every case of perceptual knowing requires additional reflective entitlement in a sense in which the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario actually does. So when we turn to the best case of perceptual knowledge, one in which no further reflective entitlement is required, it still looks as if, absent some further act of judgment, we are still missing something in order for it to amount to knowledge.

In the reply to Boyle, I sought to bring out what is philosophically apposite in the analogy McDowell deploys to illuminate the finitude of our theoretical cognitive capacity through comparison with the fallibility of a practical capacity—such as the capacity to shoot a free throw. In my

own preferred manner of developing the analogy, what ought to figure as the counterpart to a fully successful exercise of the capacity to shoot a free throw is the following: knowing by perceiving. In McDowell's own handling of the analogy, what figures as the counterpart is something slightly more attenuated: an exercise of one's perceptual capacity that *puts one in a position to know,* or more precisely, that *gets one into a position in which one has indefeasible warrant for certain beliefs.* Here is what it sounds like when McDowell himself develops the point:

> A perceptual capacity, in the sense that matters for the disjunctive conception I have sketched, is a capacity—of course fallible—to get into positions in which one has indefeasible warrant for certain beliefs. That is what the capacity is a capacity to do, and that is what one does in non-defective exercises of it, exercises in which its acknowledged fallibility does not kick in. For instance, a capacity to tell whether things in one's field of vision are green is a capacity—of course fallible—to get into positions in which the greenness of things is visibly there for one, so that one has indefeasible warrant for believing that they are green. That the capacity is fallible means that a possessor of it can be fooled; for instance, if the light is unsuitable for telling the colors of things, one can take something to be green when it is not. It is wrong to think it follows that even when one is not fooled in an exercise of this capacity, one's position must fall short of having the greenness of something visibly present to one, and thereby having an indefeasible warrant for believing the thing to be green. Fallibility is an imperfection in cognitive capacities. But the mistake I am pointing out is easier to recognize if we consider its analogue in application to other sorts of imperfection in capacities. Some people have a capacity to throw a basketball through the hoop from the free-throw line. Any instantiation of such a capacity is imperfect; even the best players do not make all their free throws. Burge thinks that there cannot be a fallible capacity in whose non-defective exercises one gets to have indefeasible warrant for certain beliefs. One might as well think that there cannot be a capacity—of course not guaranteed success on all occasions—in whose non-defective exercises one actually makes free throws.[62]

On McDowell's understanding of the terms "perceiving" and "seeing," an act of such a capacity presents me with a judgable content—one that may

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[62] McDowell, "Tyler Burge on Disjunctivism," 245–246.

be eventuate in knowledge through a further act in which I accept what I thus "perceive" or "see" as true. I do not wish to dispute that there are scenarios in which my perceptual capacity is in act in such a manner—so that there indeed needs to be a logically distinct further act of acceptance in order for my cognitive activity to yield a form of perception-based knowledge. The question that occupies us here is whether the unqualifiedly successful exercise of a capacity for "perceiving" or "seeing" should be conceived as equally partaking of such a structure. I have above already made a beginning on recommending a different conception of the unqualifiedly successful case according to which—as Stroud suggests—an act of perceiving is not distinct from one of judgment. Rather, in such a case, "perceiving" or "seeing" denominates a particular manner of judging—a particular way of actualizing our general capacity for judgment.

Now, as indicated above, there are numerous candidate proposals in the philosophical literature for cognitively far less demanding ways of understanding what the terms "perceiving" or "seeing" may be taken to stand for: such as the sub-apperceptive intake of pre-conceptualized intuitions, the implicit apperceptive awareness of a merely given colligation of sense qualities, an apprehension of a manifold of sheer receptivity, the abstractable but not extractable sensory aspect of an episode of perceptual consciousness, etc. I am not at present entering into a quarrel with those who wish to use such words in any of these ways.[63] I simply note the existence of such ways of speaking in order to contrast them with what is common to the way in which McDowell and I both employ terms such as "perceive" and "see": namely, to denote cognitive capacities whose operation requires some form of involvement of our capacity for (what Kant calls) spontaneity. Given this much shared philosophical ground, nothing interesting in a disagreement between at least just the two of us ought to turn on a nuance of linguistic stipulation regarding how such words are to be meant.[64] What matters is not who owns these words—for

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[63] This is not to say that I have no philosophical quarrel with them, but only to say that at the present moment I am concerned merely to make a terminological stipulation.

[64] The dialectical situation would be rendered far more complicated if the aim here were to pick a quarrel with the manner in which the concept of "epistemic capacities" is deployed in most recent epistemology. Ernest Sosa, for example, explicitly takes his notion of an epistemic competence to be neutral with respect to the question of whether the possessor of such a capacity is or is not a rational being or whether its possession requires that the capacity in question ever be *self-consciously* exercised. Indeed, Sosa goes out of his way to emphasize that he is concerned to deploy the notion of such a competence in a manner that is pointedly neutral with respect to the question of self-consciousness. (For further discussion, see Sosa's *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge* [Oxford:

they are used in diverse and intricately related ways both in philosophy and in life—but whether there is a paradigmatic use whose relation to a range of further possible uses of these cognitive verbs is to be elucidated in the manner that I shall propose below.[65]

If it is common ground across the range of ways McDowell and I respectively use words such as "perceiving" and "seeing" that we both intend them to name exercises of a capacity informed by spontaneity, then it would seem to follow that we both also intend them to name a rational capacity whose paradigmatic exercises partake of self-consciousness. The question I will press in a moment is the following: Is "perceiving" understood along the lines McDowell recommends (as the name of a capacity that puts me in—what he calls—"a position to know") a form of capacity whose most basic exercise is an act of self-consciousness?

Viewed from the vantage of most work in contemporary epistemology, the quarrel I am about to enter into here with McDowell is bound to seem extraordinarily parochial. For I agree with much of what McDowell intends the lesson of the above passage to be. We might put its main point as follows: just as a proper appreciation of the fallibility of the practical capacity of shooting a free throw is no bar to allowing that when an appropriately accomplished player shoots the ball through the hoop, a proper comprehension of his practical capacity suffices to explain the possibility of its non-defective exercise; so too, a proper appreciation of the fallibility of our theoretical capacity for acquiring perceptual knowledge ought not to stand in the way of an acknowledgment (e.g., in a situation where I am entitled to claim "I see p") that my seeing is due to the non-defective exercise of my capacity to see what is so. In the successful case, there is no gap to close between representation and world. We might

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Oxford University Press, 2007], 22–43, as well as his *Knowing Full Well* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011], 43–46.) The argument that I seek to enter into here with McDowell is not an argument about how best to specify something akin to Sosa's putatively neutral notion of an epistemic competence in order to yield an adequate characterization of a specifically rational species of such a putatively generic concept of an epistemic competence. Whatever our differences, I take McDowell and I to agree about the following: the concept of a rational cognitive capacity that we each seek to elucidate is not a species of a genus that can be singled out by starting with a formally generic notion of epistemic competence into which an additional moment of "rationality" or "self-consciousness" may be introduced—so that one may conceive of the resulting concept as turning on a mere difference in the further determination of the supposed form of mindedness shared by any of the creatures of which Sosa's neutral notion of a competence is alleged to be equally predicable.

[65] Some philosophers, for example—in sharp contrast to McDowell—attempt to reserve words such as "perceptual experience" for some putatively merely sensory stratum of human consciousness.

summarize McDowell's point as follows: Any concept of a capacity the appeal to which is insufficient to explain the actuality of a form of its exercise that achieves its end is an altogether useless concept of a capacity. The concept of "perception" that the conjunctivist deploys is just such a concept. The inability of even its optimal form of exercise to attain its end is due to the assumption that there is a highest common factor across the two disjuncts—across non-defective and defective exercises of our perceptual capacity—so that even in the good case, the question remains no less open than in the bad whether the representation in question is appropriately world-involving.

McDowell would rightly regard the following sort of response on the part of a conjunctivist to his version of disjunctivism as utterly point-missing:

> Consider a person who thinks her visual experience puts her in a position to say that she is seeing an oasis. But she later realizes she was wrong about that and says something on these lines:
>
> I thought I was seeing an oasis but I now realize that what I was seeing was just a hallucination.
>
> According to this quite intelligible remark, it was true at the relevant past time that she was seeing something. Indeed, she could have had that very same visual experience whether what she saw was a hallucination or a real oasis. If she subsequently learns that what she had been seeing was merely a hallucination, then she will withhold her assent from the visual appearance that there was an oasis. But whether she subsequently withholds her assent from that visual appearance or not, what she then saw was the same. So, in such a case, there is a highest common factor between seeing a hallucination of an oasis and seeing an oasis—namely, a certain sort of visual appearance.

The conjunctivist's way of using the verb "see" here involves a conflation of two different uses—what Gilbert Ryle teaches us to recognize as the use of a verb of success and a mere appearance-use of that same verb. Let us call the latter sort of "seeing" *merely seemingly seeing*.[66] Let us try calling the other sort *successfully seeing*. The conjunctivist is vulnerable to the charge that he fails to appreciate the grammatical relations that obtain between these ways of speaking of what someone sees.

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[66] When one "sees a hallucination" sufficiently vividly as to mislead one momentarily, then one does not see a merely mental (rather than a worldly) "something"; rather, one merely seemingly sees an oasis.

The wrong sort of fixation on the surface grammar of these two ways of speaking, however, might well at first appear to confirm the conjunctivist's picture: for, taken together, this pair of locutions invites the idea that they respectively refer to the members of a pair of ways of doing one and the same thing ("seeing")—merely seemingly doing it and successfully doing it—where each of the adverbs modifies the same common core of visual activity, albeit it in two very different ways. This goes with the following picture of how to understand the success-use of the verb: it involves a linguistic device that allows its user through the employment of a single word (i.e., without the need for an additional adverbial modifier) to single out a very particular way of doing something (namely, doing it successfully) from a much larger manifold of possible ways of doing that same thing. To understand the point in this way would be precisely to misconstrue the relation of logical priority between success and non-success uses of a verb.

This danger notwithstanding, let us permit ourselves to continue to use the potentially misleading locution "successfully seeing." Climbing up this ladder and throwing it away, if done right, can serve to elucidate the character of the relation that obtains between what Ryle calls verbs of success and what I will call logically full-blooded uses of verbs for rational cognitive activity. Ryle writes:

> We shall see later that the epistemologist's hankering for some incorrigible sort of observation derives partly from his failure to notice that in one of its senses "observe" is a verb of success, so that in this sense, "mistaken observation" is as self-contradictory an expression as "invalid proof" or "unsuccessful cure". But just as "invalid argument" and "unsuccessful treatment" are logically permissible expressions, so "inefficient" or "unavailing observation" is a permissible expression, when "observe" is used not as a "find" verb but as a "hunt" verb.[67]

When one speaks of "mistaken observation" one is not using the verb in its success sense. Conversely, if one is using the verb in its success sense, then the concept *observation* does not admit of the qualifier *correct* (for it in no way qualifies). One moral to be drawn from what Ryle says here is that in my foregoing use of the locution "successfully seeing," the "successfully" is at best redundant and at worst misleading, so it should be scrapped. This is the right conclusion to draw, if the locution is understood

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[67] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 114.

to imply that "successfully" seeks to introduce a modification into what otherwise would be a logically less complex description of an act. If one means to *use* the verb in its success sense, then "successfully" is logically otiose. J. L. Austin, for one, would therefore have vehemently disapproved of my use of the adverb "successfully," and his worry would not have been entirely misplaced:

> Only if we do the action named in some *special* way or circumstances, different from those in which such an act is naturally done (and of course both the normal and the abnormal differ according to what verb is in question) is a modifying expression *called for* or even *in order.*[68]

Austin's remark here is directed at those philosophers who he thinks manage to confuse themselves through the use of idle modifying expressions that in no way determine the verbs they modify. If we have no occasion to speak in such a manner in ordinary life, then *ceteris paribus* that qualifies for Austin as a sufficient ground for concluding that we ought not to speak that way as philosophers.

One can sympathize with Austin's thought that only under the pressure of philosophy will someone be prone to go in for such non-modifying uses of adverbs without thereby immediately wanting to follow him in concluding that any instance of such a form of use ought to be placed permanently on the index. Such merely apparently modifying expressions (that do not serve to logically determine the concepts they modify) play an essential role, for example, in the philosophical practices of both Kant and Wittgenstein. One will encounter such forms of use wherever these philosophers seek to characterize (what Kant or early Wittgenstein calls) the logical or (what later Wittgenstein calls) the grammatical form of a concept. In what we might call its *formal* use, the word "successfully" can serve such a philosophical purpose. When so employed, the adverbial expression bears an altogether different logical valence than does an adverb (such as *alertly*) when used to materially characterize the particular manner in which one sees. So even if Austin is right about the logically otiose character of saying one is "successfully" φ-ing where what

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[68] J. L. Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series 57 (1956–1957): 16. For a more detailed discussion of how (and how not) to understand Austin's point here, see my "Three Ways of Inheriting Austin," in *La philosophie du langage ordinaire: Histoire et actualité de la philosophie d'Oxford* [Ordinary language philosophy: The history and contemporary relevance of Oxford philosophy], ed. Christoph Al-Saleh and Sandra Laugier (Hildesheim: Olms Verlag, 2011), 395–415.

is at issue is a material use of φ and φ denotes a verb of success, this still leaves room for a philosophically elucidatory use of such an adverb—employed as (what Kant calls) a concept of reflection or in (what later Wittgenstein calls) a grammatical remark—to assist in the task of bringing to logical self-consciousness an aspect of the formal character of the concept under investigation.

In employing the expression "successfully seeing" to elucidate what is philosophically confused in the conjunctivist's conception of "seeing," the aim is precisely not to introduce a determination into a broader genus of seeing in order to isolate a species thereof. The role of the adverb is to highlight a formal aspect of the concept under investigation. Successfully seeing (so understood) stands to the merely seemingly seeing for McDowell's disjunctivist as the non-defective stands to the defective exercise of a capacity. That is to say, the expression "successfully" as used here merely indicates a form of exercise of the capacity that is free of any dimension of logical privation.[69] The elucidatory role of the word "successfully" in this context is simply to make wholly explicit such an absence of logical privation—hence properly to isolate an act of the capacity that is in no way encumbered: fully *spontaneous* in the Kantian sense of the term. So employed, the formal use of "successfully" functions as a philosophical device for clarifying what a case of *simply* seeing comes to.

One way to put the conjunctivist's philosophical blind spot would be to say that he misapprehends the formal role of "successfully" in characterizing the logical grammar of perceptual verbs that are—in Ryle's terminology—verbs of success. The Cartesian conception of sense experience requires one to construe the grammar of "successfully" as if it were on a formal par with the role of "merely seemingly"—that is, as if it denoted some form of modification of the logically most basic exercise of one's capacity for seeing. One way to put the disjunctivist's teaching would be to say that she seeks to show the conjunctivist how he comes to misconstrue the logical relation that obtains between these cases—and, in particular, to show him that merely seemingly seeing is logically parasitic on the success sense of (simply) seeing. When I (in the success sense) see p, I see what is so (not just what seems to be so); when I merely seemingly see p, there is no correlative world-involving state of affairs p that I see.

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[69] The same could be said, for example, about a whole range of coordinate expressions (such as "in no way attenuated" or "non-problematic" or "logically full-blooded") as they occur in these pages.

McDowell rightly assigns an absolute significance to this dimension of success in an account of the logical grammar of perceptual verbs of success. The way McDowell puts this is to say that for me to count as (really, simply, successfully) seeing, my seeing must reach all the way to the fact and put me in a position to know; merely seemingly seeing does neither of these things—it neither reaches all the way to the world in the relevant sense, nor does it put me in a position to know. Hence for the disjunctivist, any grasp of a merely seemingly seeing sense of the verb "see" (if one were to allow that there is such a sense[70]) would have to be logically parasitic on a prior grasp of the logically more demanding success sense of the verb.[71] One way, therefore, of putting what McDowell's version of disjunctivism teaches would be as follows: because of a misconception concerning how merely seemingly seeing stands to successfully seeing, what the conjunctivist takes for a highest common factor is a philosophical illusion—one that can be dissipated through a grammatical investigation of the relations of logical priority that obtain between these two ways of using a cognitive verb and hence between the correlative (defective vs. non-defective) forms of exercise of a cognitive capacity they denote.

As long as the conjunctivist's picture remains in place, it can seem as if we have no option but to conclude that any non-defective exercise of our perceptual capacity must share in the nature of a defective exercise of that same capacity in the following respect: all any act of perception can ever yield is a form of representation restricted to the Cartesian conception of the perceptual sphere—hence one that does not reach all the way to the things themselves. McDowell's disjunctivist analysis seeks to show that there is a fundamental asymmetry between a non-defective and a defective exercise of a perceptual capacity, such that the former reaches all the way to the things themselves, whereas the latter does not. These two disjuncts stand to one another not as two species of a genus but

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[70] McDowell sometimes writes as if this particular verb simply cannot bear such a sense. Just as Ryle speaks above of mistaken *observation,* we can equally intelligibly speak of someone's *mistakenly* seeing. The possibility of introducing a secondary non-success use for a verb of success is a standing one. Unsurprisingly, established forms of accepted usage in most natural languages therefore involve many such cases of secondary use. In English, there is a non-success use of the verb *push* (where pushing x does not require that x moves), a non-success use of the verb *tell* (where telling S that *p* does not require that S comes to be informed that *p*), and on and on.

[71] Just as the non-success use of the verb *push* is logically parasitic on the success sense of the verb (where pushing x does require that x moves), and as the non-success use of the verb *tell* is logically parasitic on the success sense of the verb (where telling S that *p* does require that S comes to be informed that *p*), etc.

rather as stage thunder to thunder—as simulacrum to genuine article. McDowell's point against the conjunctivist might therefore be put as follows: we should not read the logical structure of the defective exercise of the capacity into that of its non-defective counterpart, so that we end up conceiving of the latter as a composite of an appearance and a reality. The disjuncts do not share a common factor; they involve logically fundamentally distinct *forms* of representation—one is a genuine appearance (in which we see what is so); the other is a *mere* appearance (in which we at most only seem to see what is so). We can see McDowell here—as elsewhere in his writings—attempting to remain faithful to the following philosophical maxim: Do not try to read the character of the logically primitive phenomenon off the model of its logically privative counterpart!

Yet once we become clear in this way about where the real nub of the disjunctivist critique of a Cartesian conception of experience lies, it opens up the following question: How should we conceive the character of the logically privileged disjunct? From what point(s) of view must it be possible for the perceiving subject to answer the question: Do I occupy *that* disjunct? Does it suffice if that question can be answered from a point of view *outside* the unity of apperception of she who exercises the self-conscious cognitive capacity? Or must the knowledge that I am an occupant of the disjunct in question be self-consciously available to me from *within* the scope of a successful act of the perceptual capacity itself?

Before we take up this question, let us note that McDowell's conception of (what is involved in my in-no-way-defectively exercising my capacity for) perceptual experience still leaves room for a highest common factor across the following two cases: (a) the moderately happy case in which an exercise of my perceptual capacity successfully gets me into a position in which I have "an indefeasible warrant" for *p* but I still need to make a mediating reflective maneuver in order to exploit that warrant, and (b) the even happier case in which I simply exploit that same warrant and thereby immediately come to know *p*. One of the places in which he takes particular pains to defend this structural feature of his overall conception is in a response to Barry Stroud. At one point in the article to which McDowell is responding, Stroud says this: "A person who sees that it is raining judges or believes or otherwise puts it forward as true that it is raining."[72] McDowell comments:

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[72] Stroud, "Sense Experience and the Ground of Thought," in *Reading McDowell*, ed. Nicholas H. Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002), 84. Toward the end of this reply we will look more closely at how Stroud himself formulates the worry that he has on his mind here.

I think that is simply wrong about a perfectly intelligible notion of
seeing that something is the case. And this other notion is the right one
for my purposes. Certainly one will not *say* one sees that *p* unless one
accepts that *p*. But one can see that *p* without being willing to say one
does. Consider a person who thinks her visual experience does not put
her in a position to say how things are in some respect. But she later
realizes she was wrong about that, and says something on these lines:

> I thought I was looking at the tie under one of those lights that
> make it impossible to tell what color things are, so I thought it
> merely looked green to me, but I now realize that I was seeing it
> to be green.

> According to this quite intelligible remark, it was true at the relevant
> past time that she was seeing the tie to be green, but at that time she did
> not in any way put it forward as true that the tie was green. She does
> now, but that is irrelevant to Stroud's claim that the seeing itself must
> have involved endorsement or acceptance. She withheld her assent from
> the appearance that the tie was green that her experience presented her
> with—an appearance that was actually the fact that the tie was green
> making itself visually available to her. Stroud thinks withholding one's
> assent from an appearance is incompatible with seeing that things are
> that way. But this person, as she now realizes, did see that the tie was
> green, though she withheld her assent from the appearance.[73]

McDowell, in effect, suggests that reflection on his version of the parable
of the tie shop ought to enable us to distinguish two ways of knowing
through seeing—and hence two ways in which a perceiver can come to
know in virtue of being an occupant of the good disjunct: there is the
familiar direct route (in which one knows by just looking and seeing
what is the case and accepting it to be so), but then there is also the route
traveled by the protagonist of the parable (who can say "I now realize
that I was seeing the tie to be green"). She, too, counts as an occupant of
the good disjunct.

Admittedly, the situation of the parable's protagonist is initially slightly
less optimal than that of her more celebrated (and initially reflectively
less unfavorably circumstanced) co-occupant, but do not let that distract
you from what matters! If the parable achieves its intended purpose, it
will have shown you that our protagonist does not differ in any way that

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[73] McDowell, "Reply to Barry Stroud," in *Reading McDowell*, ed. Nicholas H. Smith (New
York: Routledge, 2002), 277–278.

ought to matter for homing in on the relevant concept—namely, that of a *successful* exercise of a rational perceptual capacity. The crucial point is that these co-occupants of the good disjunct are equally able to pass the following test with flying colors: they can both truthfully claim to have "successfully" "seen" the tie to be green. We are invited to conclude that the sentential verbal twins that respectively express each member of this pair of claims bear the same logical form. That the respective perceptual accomplishments of our co-occupants are fully on a par (in the logically relevant respect) will come clearly into focus for us if we properly reflect upon the significance of the fact that they express *one and the same claim* when each of them says: "I saw the tie to be green." That they are in equally good positions to make such an avowal shows them to have equally valid title to a perch within the good disjunct. For it shows them to have been equally able via a fully successful act of their perceptual capacity to take in what is the case. Doesn't it?

This example brings out a critical feature of McDowell's conception of what qualifies someone as an occupant of the good disjunct—of what constitutes a minimal case of someone's having cleared the threshold for counting as having successfully seen what is so. Though, of course, he nowhere formulates the upshot of his discussion in these terms, McDowell's midrash on the parable, in effect, depends on the possibility of a revelation of a highest common factor across the following two scenarios distinguished above: the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling variant and the fully felicitous exercise of the capacity variant. On this conception of perceptual experience, the sentence "I saw that p" expresses the very same perceptual thought p—equally available to these two co-occupants of McDowell's good disjunct—and it does so regardless of whether the subject of the perceptual experience initially accepts p or not.

This much seems right: it is equally appropriate for an erstwhile occupant of either of these scenarios in retrospect to conclude something that she may express by calling on the words "I saw that p." But that still leaves open the question of whether these two fully apt employments of one and the same form of words express *the same thought* across these two circumstances of use. The question that we now need to explore in order to get clear about this is the following: Do these two uses of a perceptual verb across these two scenarios denote the *same* form of exercise of one's perceptual cognitive capacity?

As long as one understands the locution "I saw that p" to mean "by means of an exercise of my capacity for sight I put myself in a position

to know *p*," then this conclusion will follow. For, on the envisioned understanding of the matter, any exercise of the capacity would per se necessarily amount to something less than an act of knowing. Now I do think there is a use of the verb "see" that approximates what is here desired, but on that sense of the verb it admits only of uses other than the first-person present indicative.[74] I can say of the subject who attempts to see the color of the tie under the reflectively unfavorable circumstances sketched in McDowell's tie shop scenario: she is seeing it to be green (though she doesn't realize that she is, because she thinks the lighting in the tie shop causes blue things to look green). Later, once she learns that the shop's lighting does not, after all, cause blue things to appear green, she'll be able to say in the first-person past indicative what I can already say about her in the third-person present indicative. The logical grammar that the verb "see" bears on the form of use common to these two speakers is one that *does not admit of a first-person present indicative employment.* A logical link that ordinarily obtains on the logically full-blooded success-use of verbs for self-conscious forms of cognitive activity has here been severed—the link that, for example, ordinarily underwrites a third-person observer's ability (say, in a normal tie shop) to move from claiming (about a customer sampling a tie) that "she sees *p*" to inferring that this same piece of knowledge is expressible (by the customer herself) in the form of a present tense avowal.[75]

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[74] I explore below what is required to conjugate this verb respectively in the third-person present, the first-person past, or the first-person subjunctive form. I say nothing about second-person uses of the verb. More generally, for reasons I touch on later, I have, throughout Part Two of this volume, prescinded from an exploration of the philosophical issues that attend a proper treatment of the second person.

[75] This is a characteristic mark of a rupture or defect in self-consciousness—a mark that characterizes a whole spectrum of cases of self-alienation (e.g., cases in which another person might rightly ascribe anger, fear, or desire to me that I am unable to express in a self-ascription). According to David Finkelstein, this kind of inability to express one's own state of mind—an inability to express it *by* self-ascribing it—distinguishes fully self-conscious states of mind from a range of other cases. He initially develops this point in connection with elucidating the difference between (what he calls) conscious and unconscious states of mind (see, e.g., his *Expression and the Inner* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003]; and his "Making the Unconscious Conscious," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Psychoanalysis,* ed. R. Gipps and M. Lacewing [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019], 331–346). We should, he argues, understand the distinction between conscious and unconscious states of mind in terms of a claim that may be put (roughly) as follows: someone's state of mind is conscious just in case she is able to express it by ascribing it to herself. In forthcoming work, Finkelstein focuses on how the connection between consciousness and expression should bear on our thinking about perceptual knowledge and, more specifically, on disjunctivist thinking about perceptual knowledge. In this endeavor, he defends a view according to which (1) a person's perceptual knowledge that *p*

Consider the unavailability in the opening scene of McDowell's parable of these two otherwise perfectly ordinary possibilities for meaning one's words: (I) the unavailability to the observer of any way to mean his words "she sees p" to express a mutually shareable thought (i.e., one the customer can express in the first person indicative), and (II) the unavailability to the customer of any way to express with the words "I see" what she later will say she saw. The presence of this set of restrictions on the possibilities for logically projecting (or even just surface-grammatically transposing) what can be said about what the protagonist of the parable *sees* indicates that we have here to do with an employment of the verb that is not just of a piece with our logically full-blooded use of the corresponding verb of success. The manner of speaking that the scenario elicits from the protagonist is no less funky than the lighting in the tie shop in which she imagines she finds herself. Just as it would be of aid to her momentarily to exit the shop (viewing the apparently green tie in the bright light of day) in order to recalibrate her sense of how the colors of things outside the shop compare with those inside it, so too it will be of aid to us to depart from the ways of speaking encouraged within the frame of the parable (in order to view them in the light of our grammatically less convoluted ways of speaking about what someone sees) in order to recalibrate our sense of how our ways of speaking outside the parable compare with those we are invited to go in for once we enter its frame.

The very intelligibility of the protagonist's manner of employing a perceptual verb (where the aforementioned link is severed) is parasitic on a logically prior use of any such verb, where it expresses a fully successful exercise of a *self-conscious* capacity for knowledge—one that *can* be expressed in the form of a *first-person present-tense avowal*. It is the mark of the relevant class of verbs when employed in their logically full-blooded success sense not only that they admit of such a first-person present indicative use, but also that this use expresses the logically fundamental form of exercise of the rational capacity they self-ascribe.

We might express this point in Kant's idiom as follows: on the logically full-blooded use of the verb, the "I see" must necessarily be able to accompany any p I can be said to see. Let us call this the *self-consciously seeing* sense of "see." On the logically derivative use of the verb we here seek to understand (the one that occurs in the protagonist's remark: "I

is non-defective only when it is fully conscious, and (2) its being fully conscious is a matter of the person's being able to express it by self-ascribing it (e.g., by saying, "I see that p").

now realize that I was seeing it to be green"), any *p* I can be said to see (by someone else or my later self) is no longer necessarily accompaniable within my first-person present indicative perspective by the "I see." Indeed, it is worse than that. The concept of "seeing" employed by the parable's protagonist requires the following remarkable logical feature to be in place: that the subject lacks (what we might call) *perceptual unity of apperception*. The necessary accompaniability by the "I see" (required for the logically full-blooded concept) must fall away for the concept to be applicable to someone who suffers from the very specific form of perceptual consciousness that the protagonist (while in the tie shop) does. We require a logically peculiar concept here because we want to speak of someone who suffers from a logically peculiar form of perceptual *disunity* of apperception. A variant on our logically full-blooded concept of "seeing" can come into play here, but only if that concept first comes to suffer privation along the requisite logical dimension—namely, one that reflects the dimension along which the subject (of whom the concept is to be predicated) has come to be logically self-alienated.[76]

Let us call the logically secondary concept of seeing that comes to be generated in this manner that of *self-alienatedly seeing*. When it comes to forms of logical alienation, this will admittedly prove to be a comparatively mild one. It will prove far easier to wrap our minds around this case than most of the other candidates for forms of logical alienation explored elsewhere in the pages of this volume. Yet its comparative logical perspicuity notwithstanding, this case, too, is harder to get into view than many philosophers will be prone to suppose. For it, too, requires a concerted effort of a comparable sort: an effort to bring into imagination a scenario whose exploration requires that we carefully disentangle the (logically non-alien) concepts that we ordinarily use to speak of ourselves from those that we require to speak of the subjects who inhabit the imagined scenario. This requires disentangling what we effortlessly mean when we ordinarily speak of ourselves from what we now need

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[76] This is something we do all the time as natural language speakers. We form logically secondary concepts by subtly removing or modifying one or more of the logico-grammatical conditions on the use of its logically primary counterpart. This leads to a great many verbal twins that are not full-blooded logical twins. One of the great sources of philosophical confusion is that we then try to understand the logical grammar of the primary case on the assumption that one of the secondary uses of the concept must be logically more basic. We start our investigation with a concept such as (mere) "bodily movement" or (dead) "sign," etc., and then try to *add* a further factor to work our way up to an understanding of the concept that occasions philosophical perplexity in us: *intentional* bodily movement, the *meaningful use* of a sign, etc.

to mean to speak of them. We need to keep painstaking track of what becomes of the logical shape of the concepts we employ as we project our words (for logically familiar concepts for rational cognitive capacities) into a scenario in which those words now need to stand for concepts of a logically less familiar form.[77]

As a first step in such an effort, it helps to register a difference in the two concepts of seeing that can come into view if we reflect on the forms of relation they respectively bear to Moore's paradox.[78] On the self-consciously seeing use of the verb, the following sentence is Moore-

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[77] Needless to say, the more alien (or alienated) those of whom we wish to speak are—hence the deeper the logical chasm across which we need to project our concepts—the more difficult such an exercise becomes.

[78] The paradox came to public attention through Wittgenstein's discussions of it. The closest thing we have to something by Moore himself discussing it (albeit at this point in response to Wittgenstein's comments about it) is the piece, tentatively dated 1944, titled "Moore's Paradox" (in G. E. Moore, *Selected Writings*, ed. T. Baldwin (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), 207–212), which comes from an untitled and incomplete manuscript from the Moore papers in the University Library, Cambridge, and which Moore never prepared for publication. In an earlier note, I remarked that Kant's critical insight and Wittgenstein's understanding of the importance of Moore's paradox are two sides of one coin. The critical insight may be summarized as follows: Judgment is a form of activity in which, in the logically full-blooded case of its exercise, its unity is the same as the consciousness of its unity. Wittgenstein's understanding of the importance of Moore's paradox may be summarized as follows: Something on the order of a logical contradiction arises when we attempt to combine the affirmation of *p* and a denial of a consciousness of *p* within the scope of a single judgment. Wittgenstein writes Moore a letter (after hearing Moore give the paper in which he first set forth a version of Moore's paradox) in which he says:

> I should like to tell you how glad I am that you read us a paper yesterday. It seems to me that the most important point was the "absurdity" of the assertion "There is a fire in this room and I don't believe there is." To call this, as I think you did, "an absurdity for psychological reasons" seems to me to be wrong, or highly misleading. (If I ask someone "Is there a fire in the next room?" and he answers "I believe there is" I can't say: "Don't be irrelevant. I asked you about the fire, not about your state of mind!") But what I wanted to say was this. Pointing out that "absurdity" which is in fact something similar to a contradiction, though it isn't one, is so important that I hope you'll publish your paper. By the way, don't be shocked at my saying it's something "similar" to a contradiction. This means roughly: it plays a similar role in logic. You have said something about the logic of assertion. Viz: It makes sense to say "Let's suppose: p is the case and I don't believe that *p* is the case," whereas it makes no sense to assert "*p* is the case and I don't believe that *p* is the case." This assertion has to be ruled out and is ruled out by "common sense," just as a contradiction is. And this just shows that logic isn't as simple as logicians think it is. In particular: that contradiction isn't the unique thing people think it is. It isn't the only logically inadmissible form. . . . (Wittgenstein to Moore, October 1944, reprinted in *Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and Documents 1911–1951*, ed. B. McGuinness [Oxford: Blackwell, 1995], 365)

This nicely articulates a question that will concern us in the replies to Sullivan and Travis: How must we conceive of *logic* in order for the grounds on which we rule out a sentence of

paradoxical: "I see p but I don't know that I am seeing p"—and so is its first-person past-tense indicative counterpart. This formal dimension of the concept pervades the entire logical space of its use. On the self-alienatedly seeing use of the verb, the following sentence is not Moore-paradoxical: "I saw p but at the time I didn't know I was seeing p"—and this entails that it has no first-person present-tense indicative counterpart. This moment of self-alienation pervades the entire logical space of the use of this concept of what it is to see.[79] Does it really? What would it require to show this?

Let us try to show this. In the service of doing so, we will explore some of the logical difficulties that arise when we attempt to conjugate this verb (for self-alienatedly seeing) in the following three ways: (i) in the third-person present indicative, then (ii) in the first-person past indicative, and finally (iii) in the first-person present subjunctive. A minor variation we have already introduced into McDowell's parable will suffice for (i). The whole point of McDowell's parable is to provide a narrative frame that enables (ii) to acquire a logical foothold. A far more difficult matter is (iii), but—if our aim is to uncover the depths of logical difference in self-consciously and self-alienatedly seeing—it is by far the most illuminating of the three. To arrive at (iii), we will first need to explore a melodramatic variant of McDowell's tale, convert it into a fairy tale, then return to the scene of the melodrama regarding it from the point of view of a very particular sort of observer.

Let us start with (i). This employment of the verb is available to the clued-in observer in my amended version of McDowell's parable. On that employment of the verb, what the words "she sees the tie to be green" (when uttered by such an observer) express is the observer's knowledge of the protagonist's initially cognitively deficient relation to p (in which she herself does not know *that she* (self-alienatedly) "sees" what she is said by the observer to see). The applicability of the concept of self-alienatedly seeing in the present tense turns on the fact that it is not one

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the form "p is the case and I don't believe that p is the case" (or "p, but I don't think p") to be regarded as no less logical than those on which we rule out contradictions?

[79] That the verbal twins "I saw p" (used in accordance with the language of McDowell's parable) and "I saw p" (used in accordance with the language game of the full-blooded verb of success) resemble one another as much as they do is certainly no accident. For they are both members of the same family of cognitive concepts—whose other siblings ("I see my reflection in the mirror"), whose distant cousins ("The cat sees p"), not to mention the descendants of their siblings ("I see what you mean"), and those of their cousins ("The cat sees this means trouble") bear a range of criss-crossing resemblances to one another. But that does not alter the point that matters for our present purpose: our verbal twins are not logical twins.

and the same person who predicates the concept of someone and who is the person of whom the concept is predicated. It is worth noting the following: though such a third-person present indicative form of use of the concept does not explicitly figure anywhere *within* the frame of the parable, it implicitly figures in our understanding of the logical character of the frame. It is the form of use of the concept required to characterize the perspective from which McDowell narrates the parable, where the one who initially predicates the concept of someone is the narrator and she of whom the concept is predicated is the protagonist. In order to understand the parable, we must enter into the perspective of the narrator: we, too, must become clued-in observers. Our prior grasp of the character of this third-person perspective (from which we initially comprehend what the protagonist may be said to see) is a condition of our being able to understand the sense that the protagonist's later ascription (to her earlier self) of "seeing" bears. It is the grammar that the concept acquires through this logically primary use of it—one of self-alienation: where the first- and third-person perspectives come apart in this way—that conditions the grammar that it retains across its further employments.

The logically primary use of our ordinary verbs for rational cognitive capacities is the *first-person present indicative*. This is the perspective from which we comprehend the capacity *from the inside*: from within and through its exercise. It is the perspective of Descartes's thinker when he thinks the cogito, as well as that of Kant's logical I who thinks that anything he can think is necessarily accompaniable by the "I think." It is the perspective from which a proper philosophical elucidation of our cognitive capacities, as beings capable of rational thought and speech, must begin. The logically primary use of the verb for the concept of seeing that figures in McDowell's parable is the *third-person* present indicative. The perspective from which to begin to comprehend the peculiar nature of self-alienated seeing is *from the outside*: looking at the subject who exercises the capacity from sideways-on. Hence, unlike Descartes's thinker who is unable (while thinking his doubt) to doubt that he thinks, she who so sees (while she is seeing) has no difficulty doubting that she sees. Unlike Kant's logical I who (in thinking p) thinks the necessary accompaniability of p by the "I think," she who sees p (while she is seeing p) is unable to accompany p by the "I see." Hence, the perspective from which one must begin a proper philosophical elucidation of the logically peculiar concept of self-alienatedly seeing is that of the third person. From there one can work one's way out to possibilities for employing the verb where it admits of conjugation in the first person.

In the parable, the words "I was seeing" (as they figure in the protagonist's remark "I now realize that I was seeing it to be green") express a retrospective understanding on the part of the speaker of her past self-alienated form of perceptual awareness of *p*. This is what allows for a use of form (ii). Though McDowell artfully contrives to make it seem effortless, what we have here in fact is a use of the concept that is not easy to arrange for—one on which the concept allows the person who predicates the concept to be the same person of whom it is predicated. The availability of any *first-person* use of this concept—in the form of a self-ascription—depends crucially on there being a case of such a form of use that is accomplished through a *past-tense* self-ascription. As I remarked above, we can only work our way out to a proper comprehension of the very possibility of such an employment of the verb (where it admits of conjugation in the first-person past form) if we have catered for a proper understanding of its use by someone who has a third-person perspective on what the subject (who is said to see) sees. In order to get to (ii), the arc we must traverse is one in which we start with our comprehension of what would be meant by a third person speaking from an outside perspective about what the subject sees and then move from there to a comprehension of what she says about herself when she speaks in the past tense about her original self-alienated perspective on what she saw. This is the very arc that we traverse in our progress through McDowell's preliminary remarks about the set-up in the parable, followed by his account of what the protagonist herself says.

In a well-wrought Hollywood film, what can seem like an effortless shift in the narrative point of view from third to first person, signified by an apparently familiar form of camera movement, may in fact involve far more sophisticated cinematic technique than an uncritical viewer is at first able to appreciate. After the shift is accomplished, the viewer, if asked, may say that the point of view from which he sees the world of the movie perfectly coincides with that of the first-person point of view of a female character in the movie onto that same world. But careful examination will reveal that the viewer's ability to follow the visual narration depends on a form of understanding of what he sees that is considerably more logically sophisticated than he takes it to be. For the viewer actually understands that he sees what happens in that fictional world from a point of view that somehow succeeds in folding her first-person point of view (through whose perceptual consciousness the world of the movie is disclosed to him) into a further first-person perspective (namely, *his*—the viewer's). The manner in which the one is enfolded in the other

needs to permit the viewer's point of view fully to subtend her perceptual first-person present point of view onto the world of the movie without his thereby coinciding with hers. The two forms of subjectivity (that of the viewer and that of the character) must manage to be perfectly aligned along one logical dimension, while along another remaining perfectly distinct. An ordinary viewer of an ordinary (so-called) point-of-view shot in a Hollywood movie achieves a remarkably logically complex form of point of view onto the world of the movie—one that requires its own cinematically specific mode of logical alienation.[80]

So, too, with McDowell's parable: we are effortlessly able to follow the shift in narrative perspective that the parable accomplishes. But it does not follow that the required shift does not involve a series of formally sophisticated transitions. If we slow the movie down here and look carefully at how the narrative transitions are affected, we can discern a pair of transitions across three logically intricate forms of narrative point of view. Let us slow it down. The first logical moment in the narrative arc is our (logically non-alienated) third-person present perspective on the protagonist's (self-alienated) first-person present self-understanding of what she sees. The second logical moment is our (logically non-alienated) third-person present perspective on her (logically non-alienated) reflectively revised first-person present perspective on her (self-alienated) first-person past self-understanding of what she saw. By passing through the first two of these logical moments and comprehending their relation, we enable ourselves to achieve a comprehension of the climactic final moment of McDowell's parable—in which there comes to be a use of that verb that admits of conjugation in the first person. The speaker who so conjugates the verb has a (logically non-alienated) first-person present perspective on her (self-alienated) first-person past self-understanding of what she saw. The form of use that such a speaker makes of this verb is formally far more complex than almost any possible first-person use of a logically full-blooded verb of success. The complexity of this use turns on the internally nested layers we find here of non-coinciding degrees of logical privation in the concept.

By the end of the parable, the protagonist achieves a form of understanding (of what there is to see and to have seen) in which her first-person past perceptual point of view is folded into her first-person present understanding of the world in the manner required to enable such a

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[80] For further discussion, see my "The World of a Movie," in *Making a Difference*, ed. Niklas Forsberg and Susanne Jansson (Stockholm: Thales, 2011), 293–324.

use. This is by no means the logically trivial manner in which the first-person present and past are integrated together in the logical consciousness of a non-self-alienated perceiver (where the "I saw" uttered at the later point in time can be effortlessly joined in a single unity of apperception with the "I see" uttered at the earlier point in time). For the protagonist faces structural obstacles felicitously circumstanced perceivers do not ordinarily face in integrating a first-person present point of view with a first-person past one (and she faces these precisely because her "I saw" cannot enter into a first-person present indicative form of unity of apperception with an "I see"). She needs to achieve a form of knowledge of the world of the parable that is mediated by the perceptual consciousness of her first-person past point of view onto that world without thereby coinciding with it. These two moments in her form of logical subjectivity (that of her qua perceiver and that of her qua knower) need to be perfectly aligned along one logical dimension, while along another remaining perfectly distinct. We see here that the protagonist in the world of the parable comes to achieve a point of view onto her world that involves a form of logical complexity not unlike that to be found in the perceptual consciousness of the ordinary viewer of an ordinary (so-called) point-of-view shot in a movie. This is because there is the following significant structural parallel between these two mediated forms of seeing: the forms of knowing by seeing which they enable are essentially mediated by a form of perceptual subjectivity that in one respect coincides with that of knower, while in another respect resists logical integration therewith. In neither case can the unity of apperception of the subject who (in the first instance) sees and that of the one who (in the final instance) knows be permitted simply to coincide.

Here, as elsewhere in the pages of this volume, a thought experiment exploring what is required in order for us to make sense of a proposed form of logical alienation assists in the philosophical elucidation of an aspect of logically non-alienated cognitive life. This is what our thought experiment about self-alienated seeing has shown us so far about the logical form of an in-no-way-logically-alienated exercise of our capacity for perceptual knowledge: the unity of apperception of the subject who perceives and that of the one who knows must in no way come apart. But what does "in no way come apart" really mean here? In order to get clearer about this, let us work our way even more deeply into the thought experiment.

We have so far been exploring only what would be required in order for someone to be able to deploy the concept of self-alienated seeing in the *indicative* mood. In order to further appreciate how the concept

highlighted by McDowell's parable is not our ordinary verb of success for simply seeing, with the aim of thereby further elucidating what logically non-alienated perception really comes to, let us attempt to conjugate (the self-alienated use of) the verb in another mood. So let us ask: What further adjustment to our protagonist's circumstances might we attempt in order for us to imagine her then being able to avail herself of a first-person present *subjunctive* use of the verb?

Let us try to do this by turning McDowell's parable into a melodrama: our protagonist yearns for nothing more than a tie of just *that* apparent shade of green—a tie of the very shade she "sees" (on the self-alienated use of the verb) the tie (in the tie shop in McDowell's parable) to be. She yearns for this because she desperately wants to be able to purchase just such a tie, right there and then, before all the shops close. Then she could rush home, and, just as the clock strikes midnight, hence in the first minute of her lover's thirtieth birthday, she could make him a present of the tie, casually noting that it perfectly matches the color of his bewitching eyes. But it is too late: the shops are all about to close. In a last desperate act before giving up and going home, she decides to try this crackpot excuse for a tie shop, where nothing is ever the color it appears to be due to the perverse lighting. Then comes the sad irony of this tie's merely apparent shade being the very shade of tie she has been frantically searching for all day. Well, it all proves too much for her; she bursts into tears. And then, this exclamation—half lament and half prayer—is wrung from her soul: "Oh, dear God, if only there were proper lighting in this accursed tie shop, I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!" And, with that exclamation, the melodrama ends, the curtains close, leaving the audience stunned. What is the logical shape of the thought she just uttered? Is it what we were looking for?

Well, we have a set of circumstances that begin to approximate those for which we hoped to arrange. A crucial condition that needed to be fulfilled has now been catered for: our protagonist conjugates a verb for seeing in the *subjunctive* mood. We have arranged for her to be moved to speak about what *she would see* (were she otherwise circumstanced). So let us now ask: Is the verb our protagonist conjugates the one that figures in McDowell's version of the parable? The closing words of the melodrama form an identical verbal twin of the utterance for which we were trying to arrange. They bear the surface-grammatical form "I would be seeing p"—but do they constitute an employment of the verb for which we are trying to find a possible first-person present subjunctive form of use?

Let us arrange for her prayers to be answered by converting—as promised—the melodrama into a fairly tale. Imagine a kindhearted clued-in bystander who is witness to the affecting scene. Moved by her tears, he comes to the rescue. He valiantly informs her: "The proprietor finally got around to replacing the lighting in the shop." And now he may address her by conjugating *her* verb in the *second-person* present indicative: "My dear, you *are*—yes, really, you ARE—seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!" Our protagonist is at first naturally rendered speechless. But then she bursts out again, half in gratitude and half in ecstasy, saying: "My prayers have been answered." She then joyously conjugates *his* (use of what was originally *her*) verb in the *first-person present indicative,* exclaiming: "Dear God, I *am*—I really AM—seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!" And with these words the curtains again close, this time to the audience's delight, and she lives happily ever after. The melodrama can admit of such a form of conversion into a fairy tale only if the ending of the tale of the one genre is able to stand in the appropriate logical relation to the beginning of the sequel that converts it into the other. The very possibility of such a transition depends on the first-person present subjunctive thought uttered in the melodrama having all along been convertible into just this first-person present indicative expression of what the heroine in the fairy tale sees to be so. From this we can draw the following philosophical conclusion: the manner in which our heroine's teary-eyed and joyous forms of conjugation enter into effortless logical community with one another reveals that the original topic of her concluding subjunctive utterance in the melodrama must have been (were her prayers to be answered) what she *would self-consciously see.*

This thought experiment shows two things: (a) When McDowell's protagonist speaks from within the frame of the opening phase of the parable, she can easily conjoin the first-person present form with the subjunctive mood if the verb for *seeing* that she conjugates is that of self-consciously seeing, and (b) it is difficult to arrange—as long as she remains situated within that frame—for her to conjoin these two moments of grammatical form in a conjugation of the verb for self-alienatedly seeing. But wait now, isn't the problem easily solved? For if *I* were to express a thought about what I *would* say if I were her (situated as she is), this would create a subjunctive context in which I could come out with an utterance of the following form, while conjugating the same verb she conjugates when she speaks of herself in the past tense. I could say: "If I were her, I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green." True. But what we want to understand is what the first-person

in the consequent of that conditional is doing. The ease with which one can say something of this form ("I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green") can easily lead one to overlook the logical complexity of what one thereby does. What sort of unity of apperception, if any, does that use of the first-person pronoun express? How many degrees of logical alienation are required to accomplish such a use of the pronoun?

Let us extract some results from our previous findings and arrange them more perspicuously. Let us start with the following: only qua self-conscious being can "I" self-ascribe a verb for self-alienated seeing and, in so doing, "I" must take there to be some reason why a self-conscious ascription of the logically full-blooded counterpart of that verb is not possible. This requires some dimension of non-identity in the unity of apperception of the logical I who is doing the ascribing and the logical I to whom the ascription is made. To self-ascribe such a verb, "I" (who speak through the verb) must identify with a further "I" (who cannot speak through the verb) who I both am and am not. In the past indicative use of the verb for which McDowell arranges, it is through the envisioned imaginative frame (in which the protagonist speaks of what she formerly "saw" in McDowell's tie shop) that we grasp how to comprehend the relation of the logical I who speaks to a further specification of the first-person who is said (through one and the same use of the first-person pronoun) to self-alienatedly see. McDowell's example caters for a past tense use of the verb by splitting the cases of unity of apperception over which the first-person pronoun ranges into forms of subjectivity that overlap without formally coinciding: that of the protagonist who speaks (and in so doing knows herself to be in McDowell's tie shop) and that of her former self (who thought she was in Sellars's tie shop). A single splitting of the "I"—into two cases of a logical I—suffices to cater for a first-person *past tense* use of such a verb. But without some degree of splitting of the soul of the speaker, no such use is possible. Moreover, for *us* to grasp the speaker's first-person use of the verb, three perspectives are required: her past perspective, her present one, and the one supplied by McDowell's narrative frame. Through the narrative frame we comprehend the relation that obtains between the speaker's past and present selves in her so conjugating the verb.

McDowell's parable shows that not all that great of an effort of imagination is required to envision a set of circumstances under which one could intelligibly self-ascribe such a verb, provided that the form of the self-ascription to be envisioned is merely that of the *first-person past*. This can make it seem as if the verb here deployed is logically less weird than

it really is. But even here, some effort of imagination is required to put into place a scenario that allows us to understand what the protagonist is doing with her words in so speaking. For we need to understand how one logical I to be associated with the speaker is related to another logical I also to be associated with the speaker. Such a form of understanding does not come for free when the verb self-ascribed is a verb for self-alienatedly exercising a cognitive capacity.

If the form of the envisioned self-ascription of such verb is to be in the *first-person present,* then some degree of logical distance must be opened up—for instance, through its conjugation in the subjunctive mood.[81] We have so far been trying to arrange for such a subjunctive use on the model of the use for which McDowell arranged: namely, through a single splitting of the soul, so that there are only two non-coinciding forms of subjectivity over which the first-person pronoun needs to range. But we were not able to succeed. This is because, as we shall see, what we require for such a use is a *three-fold* splitting of the logical I. Correlatively, considerably greater imaginative resources must be brought to bear (than those required in a case of its first-person past use) in order to understand what a speaker in so conjugating the verb is doing with her words. Indeed, as we shall see, a different *order* of imaginative effort will be required to envision a set of circumstances under which you may intelligibly take yourself to be thinking something in self-ascribing that verb so conjugated. Moreover, a fourth layer of perspective will be required in order to understand how the three other layers of perspective are folded into one another in a single use of the first-person pronoun.

That is, in effect, what we did when we arranged for *me* to express a thought about what I *would* say if I were McDowell's parable's protagonist. In that case, the "I" who speaks and the "I" with whom that I identifies are (the mediating act of "identification" notwithstanding) non-identical. That allows for there to be, all together, *three* layers of logical I: (1) the I who speaks in the subjunctive mood (in the outermost frame), while identifying with (2) the I (in the embedded frame), who speaks of (3) a further apperceptively non-identical I (her earlier self). What sort of act of "identification" does this require? To answer this question, it will help to consider a context of use that involves the following three

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[81] There are numerous ways of opening up such logical distance—for example, by prefacing it an expression that introduces some form of hesitancy or doubt about what one is seeing ("Well, I might be seeing this tie to be green, but I can't be sure") or by embedding it in some other sort of modal context that has the same logical effect.

features: (I) it is so structured that it secures a logical foothold for a multiply nested use of the first-person pronoun of the required sort; (II) we can slow it down enough to get a good look at what is going on; (III) it involves an act of mind sufficiently familiar to us that reflection on our own experience can yield insight into a case of what a speaker is really doing when he so speaks. For reasons touched on briefly above, the case of a viewer of a sufficiently compelling Hollywood rendition of our melodrama might furnish us with a good example of someone who is (I) able to vault himself into a frame of mind able to accommodate a thought of the desired form, (II) within a structure we can slow down and consider, yet which is (III) familiar to us—namely, from our own first-person experience of what we do when we watch a movie.

Let us imagine that I sell the film rights of our melodramatic scenario to Hollywood (sharing the royalties, of course, with McDowell). The movie comes out and *you* go and watch it. The movie opens with a shot of a smile playing on the lips of our heroine as she moves through the world of the movie. She is en route to her favorite department store, making her way there with a very definite purpose in mind. The camera then patiently and lovingly tracks her every movement through the store. After her perfectly pleasant but not entirely successful visit to the men's apparel department, she makes her way toward an entirely new destination. As she does so, you see her walk right past the crackpot tie establishment. Then comes the first of those moments—which every good Hollywood melodrama knows how to put to use—in which her perceptual consciousness and yours briefly but clearly are permitted to diverge for a stretch. As she walks on, the camera abruptly develops a mind of its own, revealing itself to have the capacity to interrupt its otherwise unceasing preoccupation with all that she does and sees. It suddenly lingers instead over every detail of the façade of the shop—the sundry contents of the display windows and, above them, a perhaps once handsome but now dingy sign. The gilt lettering is so faded as to be barely legible. The camera zooms in, graciously facilitating your effort to make out what stands there. After some effort you succeed in making out what it says: *Sellars's Tie Shop*. Suddenly the double doors of the entrance swing wide open. Workers in overalls, lugging ladders and recently removed lighting fixtures, make their way out onto the sidewalk. A worker headed in the opposite direction slips by them and into the shop, carrying what looks to be a brand new sign.

The camera makes its way back down the street and finds our heroine again, now conversing over lunch with her sister, both of them fully vis-

ible through a street-side window of their favorite café. Over the course of lunchtime conversation, our heroine animatedly elaborates her vision of the green tie and the midnight birthday ceremony. In an accompanying voice-over she enumerates the primary elements of her conception of how, in effect, the movie ought to end, while the camera affords you a visual glimpse into her imagination of the scene—the hands of the mantelpiece clock, the carefully wrapped package, her beloved's countenance, and the green twinkle in his eyes as he returns her loving gaze. She will stop at nothing to realize this vision. She will search every shop in town. Well, every shop but one. With a smile, she begins to tell her sister about the one and only tie shop in town in which she will not bother to stop and have a look at its wares: "You wouldn't believe this place. It's called Sellars's. It is on this street actually. Perhaps you have noticed it?" The sister shares in our heroine's giggles and snorts as she recounts her one and only visit there. Now the camera, again with an accompanying voice-over, affords us a glimpse into the past; we see her abortive attempt to purchase a green tie at Sellars's. Through spoken and visual narration, the Kafkaesque character of Sellars's system of lighting, not to mention its significance for anyone in search of an article of a precise shade of color, is brought forcefully home. As she regales her sister, the utter perversity of the establishment presently figures as nothing but an occasion for mirth. As she resumes her quest, the cinematic tone gradually shifts from comedic to melodramatic: almost everything—her chic but uncomfortable shoes, the weather, the soundtrack—contributes to the intensification of the darkening mood. As she is compelled to venture hither and yon, from one tie shop to the next, despair begins to set in. Our otherwise unceasing visual participation in her peregrinations is briefly interrupted, as the camera permits us for a second time to witness a scene that forms no part of her perceptual consciousness. We see the new proprietor of the erstwhile crackpot establishment, inside the newly outfitted confines, explaining to a customer how poor Sellars had gone bankrupt and why a state-of-the-art lighting system ensured that this would be a new day for the tie shop. He points to the shiny new gilt-lettered sign leaning against a wall in the corner. Again, the camera moves in for a closer look at what it says: *McDowell's Tie Shop*. "We hope to have it up by tomorrow." As he completes this sentence, our protagonist enters, too late to hear his words and altogether distracted and distressed. Now sufficiently desperate to condescend to visit even this establishment, but no longer with any real hope, she looks about. As her gaze—and yours, aided by the camera—zooms in for a close-up of the tie and its (what she believes to

be merely apparently) fetching shade of green, the soundtrack builds to a crescendo. She bursts into tears. The final shooting script remains utterly faithful to our original screenplay at this juncture. Sharing in her tears, fully absorbed in the action on the screen, you hear her words ring out: "Oh, dear God, if only there were proper lighting in this accursed tie shop, I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!"

Sharing in her gaze, in her thoughts, and in her tears enables a particular form of participation in another consciousness—and hence a particular first-person present form of thought. Reflecting on your participation in her experience, as the credits roll down the screen, you can say to yourself:

> Yes, in that accursed tie shop, after such a day of desperately searching everywhere for a tie of just that shade of green, that is how I would feel. I would be shattered. And the horrible irony of it! *I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!*

We have arranged not only for your last sentence to be a verbal twin of hers, but also for you to do that elusive thing she cannot—namely, conjugate that vexing verb in the first-person present subjunctive, thereby inducing her words now to express a form of thought of an entirely different logical order.[82]

Now why is it that you are able to do this thing that she cannot? Why, as someone outside the frame watching what happens in it (*knowing* both what she sees and what she does *not*), can you do something that she, as a character enclosed with the frame (knowing only what she knows), cannot? The following details are pertinent: she is a self-alienated perceiver; she herself cannot conjugate that verb in the first-person present (either in the indicative or in the subjunctive); she knows neither of these things about herself; you know them both; and you understand how they bear on one another in the use that you make of the verb (when you conjugate it in the first-person present subjunctive). This reflects an important logical feature of your form of consciousness qua viewer visually absorbed in a movie character's point of view onto her world. For almost every moment of the movie, *you see just what she sees*. Yet the standing possibility that at any moment you might not—the mere fact that it is so

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[82] *Nota bene*: Our protagonist (situated, as she is, *within* the world of the movie) still remains thoroughly unable to make such a use of the verb despite McDowell's already having (in effect) gone to great lengths to place her within a narrative frame that allows her to be able to conjugate that very same verb in the first-person past indicative.

much as intelligible that you could come to occupy a visual point of view onto her world non-identical with hers—means that the unity of your logical consciousness and hers are at no point identical (the pervasive and extraordinary extent of your reliance on her perceptual point of view onto the world of the movie notwithstanding). As the camera's two brief acts of infidelity toward her make clear, the revelation of the world of the movie admits of a possible form in which you see things in her world that she doesn't.

This makes for four nested layers of consciousness, perception, and knowledge: first, her point of view on all that she sees and knows in the world of the movie; second, your aesthetic participation in a consciousness that is not yours; third, your perspective on the point of view you share with her regarding all that she sees and knows in the world of the movie; fourth, your consciousness that that perspective is leavened with a further layer of consciousness—namely, an awareness of all that you can see and know that she neither sees nor knows. This, in turn, enables a remarkable use of the first-person pronoun. What an "I think" of this logical shape can accompany is distributed over more than merely one unity of apperception. When you think that final thought to yourself—"I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!"—in your use of it, the first-person expresses a form of aesthetic participation in a consciousness that both is and is not yours. The first-person pronoun here is able simultaneously to express a consciousness of what she takes herself to be merely seemingly seeing, what you know her to be self-alienatedly seeing, and what you self-consciously see her fail to self-consciously see. Your ability to conjugate this peculiar verb in the subjunctive mood turns not only on your knowing what she does not know but also on your understanding why the knowledge you and she do not share logically debars you from entering all the way into her perspective, even as—in the teeth of that knowledge—you strive to inhabit her point of view as best you can. Such a first-person present *subjunctive* use of the verb for self-alienatedly seeing requires three logically distinct forms of visual perspective on the green tie to each enfold the next in the following fashion: (1) your overarching reflectively enriched perspective (knowing her to be in McDowell's Tie Shop) on the protagonist's perspective on her climactic perceptual situation; where this, in turn, enfolds (2) her own reflectively unfavorable perspective (believing herself to be in Sellars's Tie Shop) on her climactic perceptual situation; which, in turn, enfolds (3) what the camera shows—a visual point of view onto her world that is in one way hers and in another yours. Your use of the "I" in your sentence "I would

be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green!" requires a comprehension of the respective relations of identity and non-identity that obtain between these three cases of a logical "I" that are all brought together through your single use in that sentence of the first-person. This is why yet a further fourth enclosing perspective is required. For you need to comprehend the precise character of the relations that obtain between three cases of a logical I—the precise extent to which their respective forms of unity of apperception do and do not coincide. We have furnished an account of one possible case of such a fourth enclosing perspective through our example of your watching a movie of the heroine in Mc-Dowell's Tie shop who thinks she is in Sellars's Tie Shop. What our example needed to do was supply some version of (4) the perspective of a participatory viewer who, through a certain form of exercise of his capacity for imaginative projection, causes (1)–(3) to become intertwined in one another in a manner that allows the first-person pronoun to express first-personal thoughts that are not merely logically *confined* to the unity of apperception that belongs to the logical I of any one of the aforementioned three perspectives—not merely to (1) *or* (2) *or* (3). Rather (4) must enable a form of use of the first-person pronoun that allows for a form of *simultaneous identification,* within the limits of the possible, with the logical I of (1) *and* (2) *and* (3). Let us explore now how (1) through (3) need to be knitted together to allow for (4).

The key weasel words here are these: "within the limits of the possible." What sorts of limits are these? After all, there is no such thing as your believing at one and the same time that you are in Sellars's Tie Shop and that you are in McDowell's Tie Shop (and hence not in Sellars's Tie Shop). How does a single use of the first-person pronoun range—somehow "simultaneously"—over these alternate candidate specifications of the unity of consciousness to be expressed?

From the vantage of (3), the tie looks to be green to the protagonist. In occupying (2), she (reflectively unfavorably circumstanced as she is) takes herself to know that it merely looks green. Finally, in occupying (1), you realize what she cannot realize: the real irony of her situation lies not where she *thinks* it does (in the tie's *merely appearing* to be that shade of green) but where you *know* it does (in her having found *the very tie* she desperately seeks). What you and she respectively see in the tie shop is in one respect identical. For as long as the camera retains its affinity for her, you only see anything—for example, the shade of the tie—thanks to your sharing in her perceptual consciousness. But in another respect what you and she respectively are able to *self-consciously see* in

the climactic scene differs dramatically. Hence the pathos of the scene: you participate in her sense of where the tragedy lies, while witnessing a tragedy of which she is unconscious. Now to acquire the form of vantage (4) affords, you must accomplish the following three things in a single act of the mind: First, you must engage in an effort of imaginative projection in which you abstract away from what you know that she does not know (hence from the *real* irony in her situation) in order to inhabit her perspective (along with *her* understanding of the irony). Second, in doing this, you must not entirely lose your grip on what you originally knew; for your possession of this knowledge is what equally enables and requires you to conjugate the verb in the subjunctive mood. Finally, you must work your way into a point of view that permits you to express your understanding of what she (in the first-person indicative) thinks in a further form of thought *only you* (in the first-person subjunctive) think. Hence in order to employ the verb for self-alienatedly seeing in the first-person present subjunctive you must retain a consciousness of the logical combinability (hence the need for the subjunctive mood) of the very elements that you must think to be non-combinable (hence the need for a verb of self-alienation) within the form of self-consciousness with which you strive imaginatively to identify (hence the first-person form) and through which you are able to see what she sees as she sees it (hence the present tense).

The multiply nested structure of this imaginative frame (required for grasping the desired subjunctive use of the verb) brings out very vividly something that may have escaped our notice in our initial encounter with this verb in the quotation within a quotation from McDowell above. In some sense, of course, we must have realized that our managing properly to grasp the intended use of the verb on the part of the speaker relied in some way on the frame for doing so that McDowell's parable put in place. But what may have escaped our notice is this: *any* understanding of a use of such a verb requires the antecedent provision of some such frame. Hence in any employment of such a verb, the order of understanding comes to be reversed from that which characterizes our comprehension of what we say when we ordinarily use logically full-blooded verbs of cognitive success. In the latter case, no antecedent provision of a special frame is required to comprehend the possibility of an act of self-ascription. Similarly, for you to understand whereof I speak, when I speak of what I *self-consciously* see, no special effort of the imagination on your part is antecedently required in order for you to comprehend what I could so much as possibly be saying in self-ascribing a cognitive

verb in the first-person present form. This is the logically basic form of use of a verb for rational cognitive activity. This logically basic form of self-conscious cognitive activity is latently present in each of our examples of a first-person use of the verb for self-alienatedly seeing—often in the form of a suppressed verb. It is the "I think" (that must necessarily be able to accompany all of the thoughts) of the logical I of the outermost enclosing layer of perspective through which any use of the first-person must think the self-ascription of self-alienated seeing to herself. McDowell's parable's protagonist speaks of what she now self-consciously thinks in speaking of what she merely self-alienatedly saw.

We need to understand any form of use of the verb that McDowell's parable's protagonist deploys through a frame, because for each such use it will be our comprehension of the frame that will serve to determine what the contours of the self-alienation are and hence where precisely the rupture in unity of apperception across the multiple cases of the logical I lies. It is the antecedently specified frame that conditions the speaker's understanding of each of the other logical moments of the first-person thought expressed. This dependence of the very possibility of a comprehension of a use of the verb on a prior comprehension of a frame is comparatively easy to overlook in grasping a first-person *past* use of the verb. Its necessity became particularly evident, however, as soon as we tried to cater for a *first-person present* use of that verb.

It was through your understanding of the frame (which allowed you to mean something in speaking of what you would be self-alienatedly seeing if you were the heroine in McDowell's Tie Shop in the movie) that you were able to grasp how to comprehend the overlapping but never perfectly coinciding relations of the three cases of a logical I brought together in your use of the first-person pronoun. Your understanding of the logical character of the outermost frame allowed you to do two things "simultaneously" that are hard to do at once but are both required to pull off a first-person present subjunctive use of the verb: (1) to keep the verb from turning into the verb for self-consciously seeing (as happened when we allowed the heroine within the melodrama to try conjugating her verb in the subjunctive), and (2) to allow the first-person and the present tense form to remain "simultaneously" in place—thereby allowing you to succeed (albeit merely seemingly through a certain use of the imagination) in logically combining the two logical elements whose combination is debarred in any indicative employment of such a verb. In order to do this, we first needed to fashion a frame that would allow these elements to be so combined. Correlatively, in order for you to comprehend the thought

you here express through this first-person present form, you needed to draw on your understanding of the frame in order properly to align the outermost logical I with the other cases of a logical I. For it was the specific character of that frame that determined the respective relations of identity and non-identity that obtained between the three cases of the logical "I" you yoked together in and through your single use of the first-person pronoun. But what thereby came vividly to light holds no less for a logically less complicated use (e.g., in the first-person past) of such a verb: the logical character of the use of the first-person pronoun requires the mediation of a frame to be so much as intelligible.

When it comes to understanding ordinary cognitive verbs of success, we begin at the opposite end, from *within* the self-conscious point of view, and work our way *out* to comprehension of what we would be saying if our speech-act were situated within a frame of a logically peculiar shape. For example, we start from our grip on what we would mean in conjugating the verb in the first-person present indicative and work our way *out* toward a comprehension of what we would be saying (in the subjunctive mood) if things were otherwise in some non-standard respect.[83] This is connected to the logically non-trivial fact that for a wide range of logically full-blooded verbs of cognitive success, we can self-ascribe them in the first-person present without the least effort of imagination or effort of any sort. In most cases, if I am able to use such a verb at all, then I am able to conjugate it in that form without further ado—without having first to master a logically nested perspectival vantage on my use of the concept.[84]

This brings us by a roundabout route back to the place where Descartes teaches us philosophy must begin. Whenever I think a thought of the form "I think *p*," I thereby think a thought that bears a logically fundamental form—one whose truth is indefeasibly available to me from within the first-person present indicative posture of mind through which I think the self-ascription. Similarly (when I employ the relevant verb of

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[83] As we move sufficiently far out—and hence ever further from the conditions that allow us to comprehend from within the first-person point of view what we would be saying in so speaking—we move toward increasingly logically permissive *forms* of subjunctive mood. The surface grammar of German, unlike that of English, helpfully distinguishes between two logical degrees of subjunctivity—a point to which we will have occasion to return in the next section.

[84] For a handful of particularly demanding cognitive verbs of success (e.g., "I retroduce"), it may require some imagination to envision *actually* self-ascribing them in this manner, but one does not need to work hard to comprehend that the first-person and the present tense admit even for such verbs of *possible* logical combination.

cognitive success) in thinking a perceptual thought of the form "I see *p*," I equally think a form of thought that bears a logically fundamental form—one whose truth is in the logically full-blooded case similarly indefeasibly available to me. There are three points here that will matter for what follows. First, the following two logical moments go together: the indefeasibility of the knowledge and the self-consciousness of the act through which I think its ground. Second, this point holds equally for verbs of *intellectual* (such as "think") and verbs of *perceptual* (such as "see") logically full-blooded *self-conscious* cognitive activity. Third, any concept of rational cognitive activity that tolerates the non-availability of the self-conscious first-person present indicative form of conjugation of its verb is a concept whose very intelligibility is parasitic on our prior grasp of its logically full-blooded counterpart.[85]

My ability to employ the latter sort of verb in the first-person present indicative form is a condition of its genuinely being a cognitive verb of *success*. Conversely, there being nothing that counts as conjugating it in the first-person present indicative is a sign that the verb that McDowell's parable's protagonist employs is not—at least not in the sense of the term I seek to specify here—a verb of success. The self-alienated sense that that latter verb bears flows from there being literally *nothing to think* through the first-person present indicative use of the verb. There is no employment of it that can bear the logical form "I see *p*" (in this sense of "see"). Indeed, it is her understanding of the non-availability of such a form of thought that enables McDowell's parable's protagonist to express, through the use she makes of the verb, the logically peculiar thought she intends to express. A parallel understanding on your part (in your thinking about the heroine of the melodrama) enabled your expression of a present tense subjunctive counterpart of the thought that McDowell's parable's protagonist thinks—the thought you think when you think about "what you *would* be seeing" if you were to be self-alienatedly seeing what the melodrama's heroine self-alienatedly sees.

We noted above that, having done this (having managed to think your way into her situation within the frame of the Hollywood melodrama), the last of the sentences that you say to yourself is a verbal twin of the heroine's teary-eyed: "I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green." In uttering these words, the verb she conjugates in the subjunc-

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[85] I would claim, with Wittgenstein (but certainly not with Descartes), that thoughts of the *second-person* present form are no less logically fundamental. But, aside from the occasional scattered remarks in footnotes below, that must remain a topic for another book.

tive mood is that of *self-consciously* seeing, while the one you conjugate is that of its *self-alienated* logical counterpart. The verb that the heroine in the movie deploys is the opposite member of the pair from that deployed within the frame of McDowell's parable, when his protagonist concludes: "I was seeing it to be green." In saying this she employs the verb for *self-alienatedly* seeing. Having arranged for such a use of the verb within the parable, when McDowell goes on to explicate "the" character of the thought his sample sentence expresses, the intended topic is the logical grammar of "seeing" as such. His aim is not to explicate just the character of the protagonist's act of "seeing" within the frame of the parable. The aim is more general: to explicate the logical character of any act of seeing that can be expressed through the use of a verbal twin of the protagonist's sentence—even when it is uttered by a reflectively favorably circumstanced speaker going about her ordinary life outside the frame of the parable.

Reflection on the logical character of the protagonist's act of "seeing" within the frame of the parable can yield a general insight into the logical character of an act of self-consciously seeing only if these verbal twins are also logical twins. This point holds no less for the pair of verbal twins ("I was seeing it to be green") encountered within and without the frame of McDowell's parable—that are comparatively more easily mistaken for logical twins—than it does for our most recent pair ("I would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green") encountered within and without the frame of the Hollywood melodrama. A central aim of our series of thought experiments was to reveal just how far the full-blooded member of each of these pairs is from being the logical twin of its self-alienated verbal doppelgänger. In eliding a logical character of verbally twin versions of two possible uses of the first-person past sentence "I was seeing it to be green," McDowell overlooks the logical depth of the difference that comes clearly to the fore when we consider the prospects for conjugating each of these sentential verbal twins in first-person present form.

The members of the sentential pair within and outside the frame of the Hollywood melodrama each conjugate one of a pair of verbs. So, too, the sentential verbal twins that occur within the frame of McDowell's parable and in his reflections upon it alternately involve these two very same verbs again.[86] In outward sentential appearance, the deployments of these verbs are identical, but not in inward logical form. If we fail care-

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[86] For example, the parable's protagonist's utterance (when she says: "I was seeing it to be green"), though merely the *verbal* twin of logically full-blooded uses of the verb without the

fully to attend to how such sentential verbal twins involve verbs for cogni-
tive activity that are at best distantly related in logical form, then we will
easily fall into the confusion of imagining that a single form of words may
express a common form of thought across grammatically distinct con-
texts of use. (Homework assignment: Apply this to the contemporary
epistemologist's use of the verb "believe.")

Once we fall into this confusion, we are bound not to attach much sig-
nificance to McDowell's protagonist's inability to say something in the
first-person present indicative that we ordinarily are able to say ourselves.
We will be inclined to suppose that *ceteris paribus* such outwardly iden-
tical forms of sentences ought to be understood to express inwardly iden-
tical forms of thoughts. This will incline us not to attach much significance
to the minor restriction in McDowell's protagonist's expressive capacities.
It will not discourage us from concluding the following: for the entire
range of cases across which the outward surface grammar of McDowell's
parable's protagonist's use (of her verb) and our everyday use (of the cor-
responding verb of success) perfectly coincide, so do the correlative logical
forms of thought. What is verbally indistinguishable across these forms of
use (first- or third-personal, present or past, indicative or subjunctive) must
be equally logically indistinguishable. Once we are determined to represent
matters in this way, anything slightly peculiar we then happen to go on to
register about McDowell's protagonist's utterance will not incline us to
suppose that we have stumbled upon the tip of an iceberg beneath whose
grammatical surface a submerged depth of logical difference lurks.

Thinking this allows us to fall into a subtler version of the conjunctiv-
ist's original confusion. We can rephrase a point we made earlier about the
conjunctivist as follows: he takes two uses of what outwardly is one and
the same verbal sign ("seeing") to involve two different employments of
one and the same concept (of seeing), and hence to refer to a pair of ways
of doing one and the same thing—merely seemingly doing it and success-
fully doing it—where each of the adverbs modifies the same common core
of visual activity, albeit in two very different ways. He then regards the
logical features that the verb exhibits in one of these uses (in its logically
derivative non-success use—where I can see p without p's being the case)
to reveal a common core of visual activity that recurs in successful acts of
seeing (where seeing p entails p). He concludes that all acts of seeing must
involve such a logical moment of mere appearance. Now we can say this

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frame, deploys the *logical* twin of the verb that figures in your utterance (when you say: "I
would be seeing the tie to be that very shade of green") in thinking about the melodrama.

about McDowell's version of disjunctivism: he takes two uses of what outwardly is one and the same verb ("seeing") to involve two different employments of one and the same concept (of seeing), and hence to refer to a pair of ways of doing one and the same thing. He then regards the logical features that the verb exhibits in one of these uses (in a logically alienated use: where I can see p without accepting p) to exhibit a common core of visual activity that recurs in self-conscious acts of seeing (where seeing p goes with judging p). He concludes from this that all acts of seeing must involve a logical moment of an act of seeing without accepting.

I do not mean to deny that McDowell's conception of the matter is far superior to that of the conjunctivist. But I do mean to raise a question regarding what it means strictly to think through the central insight that animates disjunctivism. His conception of the matter is far superior because the "common core of visual activity" that figures in it is nowhere near as logically anemic as that of the conjunctivist. The conjunctivist's concept of seeing p differs from my successfully seeing p in that my merely seemingly seeing p entails neither p nor that *I know p*. McDowellian "seeing" improves on matters considerably because now seeing p entails p. But it still does not entail *I know p*. This is what allows there to be a structural parallel between what McDowell wants to show the conjunctivist and what I want to show McDowell. Let us call the species of disjunctivism that McDowell arrives at through his critique of the Cartesian epistemologist *irresolute disjunctivism* in order to set the stage for this question: What shape ought disjunctivism to assume if we wish to resolutely think through the original insight that drives its critique of Cartesian epistemology?

McDowell wants to show the conjunctivist, given the logically fundamental character of the severed inferential link, that an overlap in surface grammar does not warrant an inference to an identity in the logical form of the concepts expressed by these different uses of an outwardly identical verb. The two concepts of "seeing" ("perceiving" or "appearing") with which the conjunctivist works stand in a logically asymmetrical relation to one another: one cannot work up to an account of perceptual success starting with the logically more anemic of these two concepts. The form of seeing one self-ascribes in ascribing the logically anemic concept to oneself is not one to which something can be merely added to turn it into a case of successfully seeing. Success is not something that can be merely added to merely seemingly seeing to yield a case of successfully seeing. The two logical moments of seeing (what the conjunctivist calls) an "appearance" of p and knowing p, when merely conjoined (without the "seeing" serving *as* the indefeasible ground of the knowing), do not yield

something that has the logical form of successfully seeing *p*. For, in such a case, their connection is not secured through the logical link constitutive of successfully seeing. If it is somehow secured at all, it will have to be through an assurance afforded by a mediating act of reflection, external to the act of "seeing" per se, that renders it intelligible how there comes to be a coincidence of the *p* that figures in the so-called act of seeing with the *p* that figures in the subsequent act of knowledge. (This is the role Descartes assigns to the idea of God, so that the meditator may reflectively surmount what would otherwise block the very possibility of his extracting knowledge from perception.) The ground of my knowing *p,* if so obtained, is not yet in place in (what is here called) my "seeing" *p*. It requires an additional source of ratification. It is precisely in this respect that it differs from the ground for the knowledge of *p* that one obtains if one successfully sees *p*.

Now the resolute disjunctivist wants to show the irresolute disjunctivist something structurally parallel. He will need to begin by conceding that what the irresolute disjunctivist calls "seeing" is logically stronger than merely seemingly seeing. This is because the former requires the presence of a logical link between (what it calls) "seeing" *p* and *p*. But it is still logically less full-blooded than self-consciously seeing. It still severs the logical link between uses in the first-person past and the first-person present indicative. So the resolute disjunctivist will still want to say something of the following form to the irresolute disjunctivist: given the logically fundamental character of the severed inferential link, the overlap in surface grammar does not warrant an inference to an identity in the logical form of the concepts expressed by these different uses of an outwardly identical verb. This asymmetry (in possible first-person and third-person present indicative employments of the verb) suffices to reveal that the concept of rational cognitive activity expressed by the logically more anemic verb involves a dimension of logical privation—one that I have dubbed self-alienation. The protagonist in McDowell's version of the parable both sees and knows, but when she maybe said (in the third-person present indicative) to see *p* she does not know either *p* or that she sees *p*. The self-ascription of such a form of seeing is only possible if it is ascribed either retrospectively (in the first-person past form) by speaking about a past version of "oneself" or imaginatively (in the subjunctive mood) by situating "oneself" within a very particular sort of frame. In either case, the form of seeing one thereby self-ascribes is not that of self-consciously seeing. Self-consciousness is not something that can be merely added to an act of doing something

less than self-consciously seeing to yield a case of self-consciously seeing. The two logical moments of (what McDowell calls) "seeing" *p* and accepting *p* when merely conjoined (so that self-consciousness of the indefeasibility of the ground does not figure *in* perceptual consciousness of the ground) do not together yield something that has the logical form of self-consciously seeing *p*. For, in such a case, their connection is not secured through the logical link constitutive of self-consciously seeing. If it is somehow secured at all, it will have to be through an assurance afforded by a mediating act of reflection external to the act of "seeing" per se that renders it intelligible how there comes to be a coincidence of the *p* that figures in the so-called act of seeing with the *p* that figures in the subsequent act of knowledge. (This is the role McDowell assigns to reflection in his example, so his protagonist may reflectively surmount what would otherwise block the very possibility of her extracting perceptual knowledge from her circumstances.) A genuinely indefeasible basis for knowing is not yet in place in (what is here called) my "seeing" *p*. It requires an additional act of ratification. It is precisely in this respect that it differs from self-consciously seeing *p*.

As with my earlier formal use of the locution "successfully," my present use of "self-consciously" will prove misleading if it is thought to introduce a modification into what otherwise would be a logically less complex description of the act in question. Here, too, we have a use of an apparently modifying expression that does not serve to further determine the concept it modifies but rather to highlight a formal aspect of what is involved in logically full-blooded seeing. The elucidatory role of the word "self-consciously" in this context—as was that of "successfully" above—is to make explicit the absence of privation along a certain dimension in the logical form of a rational cognitive activity. As before, so here too, the formal concept of *self-consciously* φ-ing functions as a philosophical device for bringing clearly into view yet a further dimension of what *simply* φ-ing comes to. The purpose of this device in this context is to underscore the following point: an account of the concept of "successfully seeing" that brackets the question of whether one self-consciously sees *p* (in assessing whether one successfully sees *p*) is one that leaves out an essential dimension of what is involved in the logically full-blooded case of simply seeing *p*.

Let us now bring together the following three points: (i) the role of a properly unqualified concept of cognitive success is to render philosophically perspicuous what it is for the capacity under investigation to operate fully spontaneously (free of any dimension of privation); (ii) the con-

cept of self-alienatedly seeing *p* introduces a dimension of privation into the form of what it is to logically full-bloodedly see *p*; and (iii) on the irresolute disjunctivist's conception of perceptual success, self-alienatedly seeing *p* qualifies as a case of (what he calls) a "successful"—that is, a putatively in no way defective—exercise of the capacity to see *p*. It follows from these points that the irresolute disjunctivist's account of perceptual success fails to yield an adequate account of the concept we ought here to take as our starting point, if we wish properly to bring into view the logical form of the rational capacity under investigation.

The irresolute disjunctivist proceeds as if the only dimension of logical contrast that really matters for a critique of the Cartesian conception of experience is that between exercises of our perceptual capacity that can eventuate in acts of knowledge and those that are sufficiently erroneous that they cannot. This logically comparatively coarse contrast shapes how the notion of "success" comes to be specified, namely, in terms of an accord between (what the irresolute disjunctivist calls) perceptual experience and reality, where the achievement of a self-conscious awareness that the requisite form *is* one of accord comes into play only thanks to a further act of judgment that supervenes on the perceptual experience. This conception of perceptual "success" therefore not only allows for, but requires of the requisite form of logical consciousness the satisfaction of two logically distinct conditions: (1) a perceptual consciousness of *p* and (2) a judgmental *self*-consciousness that *p* accords with reality. On this account, the first of these two forms of consciousness is not as such a form of self-consciousness knowledge that *p,* and cannot become an act of knowing prior to the judgmental endorsement of the perceptual content the logically prior act of consciousness affords. On this account, perceptual success—"seeing"—is achieved if the first of these conditions is satisfied, without the second yet having been achieved. On this conception of success, the retrospective realization that one had previously been self-alienatedly seeing *p* qualifies as a case in which one comes to be self-consciously aware of one's prior achievement of (what here counts as) perceptual success. I have argued that this account misses its target, not because both conditions must "somehow" be co-satisf*ied* (rather than one of the two remaining merely satisf*iable*) but rather because as long as the conditions are so conceived that they require *independent* satisfaction, then what the account yields is a conception of an act of a rational capacity into which a dimension of cognitive alienation has been introduced, tearing at the fabric of the logical form of the subject's power for self-knowledge.

As we noted before, self-alienatedly seeing is able to cater for a kind of "success"—a kind that merely seemingly seeing notably cannot. You may be said to be self-alienatedly seeing p as long as the right sort of accord obtains between your "seeing" p and p. We might put this point as follows: self-alienatedly seeing p allows for a dimension of "success" in allowing for this dimension of logical connection (namely, between seeing p and knowing p)—one for which the Cartesian concept of seeing does not. But, as we also noted before, there is a further dimension of "success" not catered for in the irresolute disjunctivist's concept of "seeing" inasmuch as it blocks a further logical connection (namely, between the first-person present and the indicative) found in the logically full-blooded case of success. On the resolute conception of perceptual success, self-consciousness of the necessity of that still missing logical link is internal to the very form of the successful exercise of a rational perceptual capacity. The irresolute disjunctivist's concept of seeing therewith falls short of exhibiting the logical form required for an act of (what I have called) self-consciously seeing p. His logically comparatively anemic use of the verb allows an act of "seeing" and an act of knowing to share a common content, but in a manner that requires that the ("successful") seeing and the full-blooded knowing remain separable. And the question now is: Should we read this logically composite structure (of what it is to "see" in this logically attenuated sense of the verb) into our conception of the logically full-blooded case of simply seeing?

If we conclude that we ought not to read the structure of the former into that of the latter, then we will also conclude that the irresolute disjunctivist's concept of "seeing" (like self-alienatedly seeing) is not an act of self-consciousness (that, to the extent that we can make sense of it, we must regard it, too, as involving self-alienation) precisely because it requires two logically distinct acts on the part of the perceiving subject in order for her to advance from "perception" to knowledge. On the irresolute disjunctivist's conception, the mood of judgmental combination (indicative or subjunctive) comes into play by taking up and enclosing a perceptual content that is already available for the perceiving subject to think in first-person present logical form prior to its having been judged. If this is how one thinks perceptual content must in every case be related to the specification of judgmental mood, then one will be prone to suppose that the manner in which McDowell's parable's protagonist thinks the logical unity of her original act of seeing involves a content that it is equally available for a subject to think in either the present or the past tense and to which a judgment in either the indicative or the subjective

mood is equally logically attachable. We see here that the source of the
irresolution in the irresolute disjunctivist's version of disjunctivism flows
from the assumption that neither the tense nor the judgmental mood be-
longs per se to (what Frege calls) the merely logical unity of that which is
supplied by an act of seeing. The job of seeing is restricted to that of of-
fering up a logically self-standingly intelligible judgable content that, with
the aid of judgmental supplementation, may come to figure in something
that has the logical form of an act of knowledge. This will remain the only
option to a disjunctivist for how to think about "seeing" if it has already
been philosophically laid down in advance as a non-negotiable require-
ment on every act of self-consciousness—be it perceptual or intellectual—
that it partake of such a Fregean relation of judgment to content.

If, however, that requirement can become negotiable, then the manner
in which the irresolute disjunctivist's account of "seeing" replicates the
original logical structure of conjunctivism could count as a point in favor
of the resolute disjunctivist's conception of perceptual "success." Just as
the irresolute disjunctivist tries to show the conjunctivist that what fig-
ures as two logically separable moments in his analysis of success is really
just *one logical moment* in an act of successfully seeing, so too will the
resolute disjunctivist try to show the irresolute disjunctivist that what he
analyzes as separate logical moments form *one logical moment* in the log-
ically full-blooded case of success. Just as the irresolute disjunctivist tries
to show the conjunctivist that the only case that ought to be accorded the
honor of being sorted into the good disjunct is the one in which seeing
p can serve as an indefeasible ground for knowing p (and that the
conjunctivist has ruled out the very possibility of such a case), so here
again: the resolute disjunctivist will try to show the irresolute disjunc-
tivist that only if self-consciousness of the indefeasibility of the ground
figures *in* perceptual consciousness of the ground (and that the irreso-
lute disjunctivist has ruled out the very possibility of such a case) do we
have a case of an act of the capacity that ought to be accorded the honor
of being sorted into the most august disjunct. Just as the irresolute dis-
junctivist says to the conjunctivist, "What you take to be an 'appear-
ance' of p does not stand to a veridical perception of p as part stands to
whole; rather if the so-called case of seeing p does not involve p's *actu-
ally appearing to you*, then such a case of appearance stands to veridical
perception as bad stands to good." So, too, the one sort of disjunctivist
says to the other, "What you take to be 'seeing' p does not stand to self-
consciously seeing p as part stands to whole; rather if the so-called case of
seeing p does not involve *actually knowing p*, then such a case of seeing

stands to the logically full-blooded case of seeing as self-alienation stands to self-consciousness. As the one says to the other: The proper understanding of what you take to be the logically complex success case (of appearance plus reality) needs to have the plus removed from it if we are to comprehend the logically basic act of the capacity; and what you take to be the logically simple case (mere appearance) is the logically privative form of exercise of the capacity. So, too, now the one sort of disjunctivist says to the other: The proper understanding of what you take to be the logically complex success case (of seeing plus knowing) needs to have the plus removed from it if we are to comprehend the logically basic act of the capacity; and what you take to be the logically simpler case (a deliverance of perceptual experience to which a judgment stroke needs to be attached) is the logically privative form of exercise of the capacity.

On the resolute conception of the case that belongs in the logically privileged disjunct, there are not two logically distinct acts that share a common content—one of seeing and one of knowing—rather, these are two dimensions of a single self-conscious act. Qua logical aspects of a single self-conscious exercise of the capacity, they are merely notionally, never really, separable. Just as the disjunctivist says to the conjunctivist: In the non-defective exercise of the capacity, your seeing the tie to be green does not fall in any way short of the green tie that you see. So now the one sort of disjunctivist says to the other: In the fully non-problematic exercise of the capacity, your seeing the tie to be green does not fall in any way short of your *knowing* it to be green. In the logically basic exercise of the capacity, there is neither room nor need for a logical separation of your seeing p from your accepting p.

As we noted above, when McDowell speaks of "seeing" in the passage quoted above, he wants his use of the word to comprehend the kind of "seeing" he illustrates with his tie shop parable (in which seeing p and knowing p admit of the sort of separation of logical moments that cases of self-alienatedly seeing plainly exhibit), while also wanting his deployment of the verb not to refer just to such cases. He also wants what he means when he speaks there of "seeing" to comprehend logically full-blooded self-conscious acts of seeing as well. He wants his use of the word "see" to cover both of these cases as if they comprised two species of a single formal genus. I have tried to show there is no such genus. The case of self-alienatedly seeing can be properly comprehended only when it comes into view as a privative exercise of an essentially self-conscious capacity. In order to appreciate precisely what sort of privation in form the capacity suffers in such a case, we must first appreciate what is in-

volved in an exercise of the capacity that is in full accord with its Kantian logical form. This means we must first understand what is involved in a fully *self-conscious* exercise of the capacity. I earlier summarized a point that McDowell makes against the conjunctivist with the following sentence: "Any concept of a capacity, the appeal to which is insufficient to explain the actuality of a form of its exercise that achieves its end, is an altogether useless concept of a capacity." The point I want to make against McDowell now is a substitution instance of this point: Any concept of a self-conscious capacity (such as the capacity for seeing what is so), the appeal to which is insufficient to explain the actuality of a form of its exercise that achieves self-consciousness of its achievement of its end, is a no less problematic concept of a self-conscious capacity.

If this is right, for reasons that structurally replicate the insight underlying McDowell's original argument against the conjunctivist, the relation of the two sorts of seeing that McDowell's use of the verb "seeing" yokes together—the kind of seeing that achieves self-consciousness of its achievement of its end and the kind that can be said to have "succeeded" only from the standpoint of a further perspective "onto" its exercise—can be specified only disjunctively. Their logical relation can be properly elucidated only through a comprehension of how that which is logically constitutive of the primary case (self-consciousness) undergoes a form of privation (self-alienation) in the envisioned logically secondary employment of the verb. Much earlier, we saw the disjunctivist level the following critique of the conjunctivist: What you construe as a highest common factor is a philosophical illusion engendered by your failing to distinguish properly between the cases of merely seemingly seeing and successfully seeing—an illusion that can be dissipated through a grammatical investigation of the relations of logical priority that obtain between these verbs and hence between the correlative (defective vs. non-defective) forms of exercise of a cognitive capacity. This schema may be redeployed. The one sort of disjunctivist may say to the other: What you construe as a highest common factor (namely, the supposedly always logically separable moment of "perceptual experience" to or from which I can give or withhold assent) is a philosophical illusion partially engendered by your failing to distinguish properly between your protagonist's self-alienatedly seeing and someone's self-consciously seeing—an illusion that can be dissipated through a grammatical investigation of the relations of logical priority that obtain between these verbs and hence between the correlative (logically full-blooded vs. logically comparatively attenuated) forms of exercise of a cognitive capacity. Just as there is no highest common factor between merely seem-

ingly seeing and successfully seeing, so too there is no highest common factor between self-alienatedly seeing and self-consciously seeing. Self-consciously seeing is not a form of cognitive capacity one comes to exercise by supplementing an act of seeing with a further act of self-consciousness.

Now what the last two sentences in the previous paragraph are concerned to deny are not claims that McDowell ever formulates in so many words, let alone ones that he would wish, if they were so stated, to affirm. But he does fail sufficiently to distinguish the logical features of self-alienatedly seeing from those of self-consciously seeing. And this is not merely accidentally related to his wanting to be able to hold that there can be two cases of "seeing" that stand to one another as follows: each involves a form of exercise of our perceptual faculty that may be logically univocally characterized as a case of "seeing" *p,* but in the one case it issues in an act of judging *p,* whereas in the other case of seeing (where what "seeing" denotes is logically common across the two cases) it does not. And this is what gives rise to the parallelism in structure between (1) his own account of the relation in which these two sub-variants of (what he calls) "the good disjunct" stand to one another and (2) the Cartesian epistemologist's account of the relation that "the good disjunct" and "the bad disjunct" stand to one another.

Resolute disjunctivism requires that the logically fundamental use of "see" presuppose the unity of apperception that Kant claims holds of any fully self-conscious act of a cognitive power. It presupposes that, just as I am necessarily able to accompany the relevant cognitive act of thinking *p* with a first-person present tense indicative use of *I think,* so too must I be able to accompany the relevant cognitive act of self-consciously seeing *p* with a corresponding first-person present tense indicative use of *I see.* The irresolute disjunctivist's concept of seeing, on the other hand, tolerates a rupture in the unity of apperception: what I can be said (from some other point of view than my present one) to see in seeing *p* is such that the *p* in question no longer needs to be necessarily accompaniable by the full-bloodedly apperceptive first-person present indicative use of *I see.* This leads the two sorts of disjunctivists to give opposite answers to the following question: Should we take the logically fundamental sense of a verb for a rational capacity to be one that tolerates such a rupture in the unity of apperception (and hence regard the logically derivative sense of the verb to be one that effaces such a rupture)? Or should we take the logically fundamental use to be one that requires full-blooded apperceptive unity (and hence regard logically derivative uses to be those that *in any way* rupture the logical fabric of this form of unity)?

McDowell tells us that the protagonist of his version of the parable of the tie shop is able to say in retrospect about herself that she earlier saw the tie to be green, even though she did not then *know* that she saw the tie to be green. I take it that when he tells us this he means to be speaking of the activation back then in his protagonist of a capacity that—qua the general sort of capacity that it is—bears an essentially self-conscious form. For McDowell himself often lays considerable stress in his own arguments with his interlocutors on the self-conscious character of any rational cognitive capacity,[87] while maintaining that (what he ends up characterizing as) this same capacity's logically primary form of exercise is one in which it can be non-problematically in act qua rational self-conscious capacity without she who sees *p* knowing *p*. Resolute disjunctivism, on the other hand, seeks to deploy the concept of a self-consciousness capacity in (what we might term) a more resolutely Kantian manner, one according to which self-consciousness stands to consciousness as form to matter. The fundamental logical differences in the material inferences that self-alienated and self-conscious per-

[87] For example, when it comes to the debate between McDowell and Brandom over whether perceiving could be chicken-sexing all the way down, I do think McDowell is on the side of the angels. (See McDowell, "Brandom on Observation"; and Brandom, "Reply to John McDowell's 'Brandom on Observation,'" in *Reading Brandom: On Making It Explicit*, ed. J. Wanderer and B. Wiess [New York: Routledge, 2010].) But I also think McDowell's conception of perception leaves him with needlessly diminished resources for fully revealing what is problematic in the far more profound form of self-alienation suffered by an observer on Brandom's two-ply account of what the best case of observational knowledge comes to. (I am thinking here, in particular, of the truly mind-boggling degree of disunity of apperception Monique suffers in Brandom's discussion of her in *Making It Explicit* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994], 219–221.) McDowell criticizes Brandom's account on the ground that it is unable properly to cater for the distinction between someone's merely being disposed to make a certain observation report *p* and her having *p* be genuinely perceptually manifest *to her*. But how is the "to her" (upon which McDowell rightly lays emphasis) to be understood here? According to the resolute disjunctivist, it should be understood as follows: for *p* to be in the requisite sense perceptually manifest to her, she must self-consciously see *p*. The crucial formal dimension of the perceptual capacity of a rational animal that Brandom's two-ply account is unable to recover—once it permits itself to rupture the internal logical form of the capacity (so that it can try to piece the relevant whole back together again out of a pair of independently intelligible capacities for sentience and sapience)—is that it is an *essentially* self-conscious capacity. McDowell rightly sees the hopelessness of Brandom's approach here. But the resolute disjunctivist holds that McDowell's account also permits itself to rupture the internal logical form of the capacity—so that it too can try to piece the relevant whole back together again out of a pair of independently intelligible capacities (in this case: a capacity for enjoying successful world-involving perceptual experiences bearing the logical form *p* and a capacity for judging *p*)—and, even if it tears at the fabric of unity of apperception far less than Brandom's account, it still introduces an irremediable moment of self-alienation into every case of *p*'s being perceptually manifest to an observer.

ceivers are respectively able to draw reflect (what Kant and Wittgenstein call) logical (or formal or grammatical) differences in what it is that these two perceivers are actually doing when they each "perceive." As we have shown, the respective sentences they utter when each of them later says "I saw that p" may be verbal twins, but they are not equally full-blooded logical siblings. The non-identity of the propositional symbol expressed by these two uses of the same propositional sign tracks profound differences in the manner in which the rational capacity for perceptual knowledge is respectively in act in each of these two "perceiving" subjects.

McDowell concedes in the passage above: "Certainly one will not *say* one sees that p unless one accepts that p." The way in which this concession must be intended, if it is not to upset his preferred way of parsing the upshot of disjunctivism, turns on a logical separation of the moments of seeing and of accepting—a separation that remains in force even in the formally maximally felicitous act of the power. This requires the truth of the following thought: when I say "I saw p" (in retrospect, regarding how I was earlier circumstanced) I say the same thing regardless of whether or not I could earlier have said (in the present tense, when actually so circumstanced) "I see p"—regardless, that is, of whether what is so described is an exercise of my cognitive power favorably or unfavorably circumstanced. Now if whether one counts as really "seeing" were altogether indifferent to the propitiousness of the circumstances under which one sees, then "seeing" would no longer name a rational capacity. Of course, McDowell does not mean to suggest that what ought to count as successfully exercising a rational power is indifferent to the propitiousness of the *environing* circumstances under which it is exercised. (One needs there to be some lighting in the tie shop to see anything.) The indifference to which he points is meant to pertain only to the relative favorability of the *reflective* circumstances under which the capacity is exercised. Can this distinction (between these two different sorts of circumstances) bear the sort of weight that McDowell needs it to?

On the resolutely Kantian conception, the distinction between favorable and unfavorable circumstances that matters for elucidating the form of a self-conscious power is between those circumstances that fully enable its non-problematic acts and those that enable at best some comparatively more attenuated manner of exercising that same power. If I wish to keep the self-conscious dimension of the form of the power in view—so that when it suffers no attenuation it exhibits full unity of apperception—then at a minimum the following needs to hold for the form of its exercise that one ought to take to be logically paradigmatic:

if I can retrospectively self-ascribe the act (saying of myself "I φ-ed" in the first-person *past* indicative), then I formerly could have self-ascribed it in the first-person *present* indicative. The circumstances under which I exercise the power qualify as suitably favorable for gathering the form of the power only if they admit of at least this degree of accord in logical form. If I am using the verb "see" to mean self-alienatedly seeing, then this will no longer be the case. A reflective circumstance that occasions this modicum of (self-alienated) disunity in apperception is no less unfavorable for allowing one to gather the form of the rational power under investigation here than a non-reflective circumstance that leads it astray in some other way—say, because the lighting conditions really do mislead me as to the colors of things. Explanations of how these two types of unfavorable circumstances each manage in their own way to discombobulate the power admittedly differ, but the reflectively unfavorable one, no less than the other (in encumbering or undermining it some other way), impedes the capacity's operation qua power for *knowledge.*

McDowell's use of the concept of "being in a position to know" is supposed to turn on the idea that perceiving stands to knowing as potentiality to actuality—so that across the cases of the self-alienated and self-conscious acts of the power one and the same potentiality for perceptual judgment stands ready to hand for the perceiving subject to exploit. What seems right is that the following two sets of circumstances have something approximating a highest common factor: (1) a standard straightforward set of circumstances in which someone can know p just by seeing p, and (2) those same circumstances plus some reflectively unfavorable baggage that an ill-starred perceiver brings with her that obstruct what would otherwise be an opportunity for her easily coming to know p by seeing p. From the *third-person* clued-in observer's standpoint the entirety of the circumstances under which the ill-starred perceiver exercises her capacity may be factorized in this way: as (1) plus an additional circumstance (having to do with the perceiver) that yields (2). Hence the difference between (1) and (2) will be specifiable *for the clued-in observer* in merely additive terms. He can say about her situation that it is "just" her additional baggage that keeps her when perceiving in (2) from knowing what he knows when perceiving in (1). But there is no way from within her first-person present indicative point of view that the ill-starred perceiver can factor the circumstances under which she perceives into those that are straightforwardly propitious for seeing and those that are destabilizing. This requires a further point of view onto her situation. This relation of what suffices in (1) for acquiring perceptual knowledge and what does not so suffice in (2) is not a relation

of potentiality to actuality with respect to two logical levels in the characterization of the exercise of *the cognitive power*. It pertains rather to a relation of felicity to infelicity in the characterization of *the circumstances* under which the cognitive power is brought into act. It does not follow that what can thus be apprehended as a circumstantially logically common feature in (1) and (2) from a third-person point of view must correspond to something of common logical structure present in the two distinct forms of exercise of the self-conscious capacity, first in (1) and then in (2). This would require that the exercise of the capacity in situation (2) involve two determinately delimitable sources of error that can be perfectly factorized by the perceiver as such from her first-person present indicative point of view. But she can know (2) stands in the determinate relation to (1) that it does only if she can enclose the perceptual point of view she occupies in (2) in a further point of view of a very particular form—in the form of a point of view that furnishes (what I called) a frame. This requires that she come to occupy (3): a set of circumstances that allows her to retrospectively comprehend the logical relation of (1) to (2) and hence to conjugate the irresolute disjunctivist's verb for seeing in the first-person past form.

With regard to the more delicate issue of what ought to count as someone's being "in a position to know," McDowell holds the following: in being in reflectively unfavorable circumstances I am in a position to know (in the sense that my capacity for "perceptual experience" is fully in act), but I fail to know that I "see" what I do because the presence of reflectively unfavorable considerations interrupts what would otherwise be an effortless default transition from my perceptual thought to my perceptual judgment. Resolute disjunctivism requires a different understanding of the manner in which my capacity for knowledge is here interrupted and correlatively of what it takes for me really to be describable as "in a position to know." In being reflectively unfavorably circumstanced, I am in a position in which I *would* be in a position to have self-conscious perceptual knowledge of what is the case if not for the interruption of my capacity for such knowledge by the aforementioned reflectively misleading considerations. My unqualifiedly being in a position to know would require my actually being otherwise circumstanced than I am—in particular, it would require my being so positioned that the reflectively unfavorable considerations interrupting the exercise of my capacity perceptual knowledge were caused to fall away.

One might try protesting along the following lines: "My being 'so positioned' that I am in reflectively unfavorable circumstances involves a

merely metaphorical use of the concept of a *position*. When McDowell says (of the person in his version of the parable of the tie shop) that she is 'in a position to know,' he is using the expression non-metaphorically: she is *literally* in a perfect position to know." Such a reply only accomplishes its purpose if it can be maintained that this kind of difference in "position" makes for the logically relevant sort of asymmetry in what ought to be counted as germane to a felicitous exercise of the capacity. When it comes to infelicity of position in the comparatively literal sense, the source of interruption lies in the epistemic unfavorability of the layout of the environment. If I just need to move two steps to the right to gain a perfect view of the tie, then my present position affords me an *almost* perfect opportunity to see *p*. Until I make the appropriate minor adjustment to my position in physical space, I will not have the tie properly in view. When it comes to infelicity in reflective standpoint, the source lies in the epistemic unfavorability of what can be compossibly held together in my logical consciousness. Until I make the appropriate minor adjustment to my position in logical space (disarming the set of inferences one of my beliefs erroneously licenses), my reflective constitution will deprive me of the opportunity I *almost* presently have to self-consciously see *p*. The former source of error has to do with the spatiotemporal conditions under which the perceptual capacity operates, the latter with the intellectual conditions. Now there certainly are all sorts of differences in the logical character of these two potential threats to the felicitous operation of a faculty—this I do not want to deny—but the question remains: Are the differences of such a sort as to justify the claim that one of these sorts of "position" (which the subject can be said to be "in") is logically internal to a correct conception of the felicitous operation of the capacity, whereas the other bears only externally on a proper account of its form?

No. The environing material circumstances (under which "I see"), however optimal, *cannot* afford me an opportunity to know if I bring to that so-called opportunity a form of consciousness sufficiently cognitively impaired. Conversely, even if I bring to those circumstances a form of logical unity of consciousness in no way resistant to coming to believe that I am now seeing *p*, then I am still not yet really in a position to know if I am seeing *p*, if the environing circumstances are not conducive to a non-defective exercise of my visual capacity. The totality of the set of conditions (under which I am able felicitously to exercise the capacity) must form the requisite sort of unity for me to be in an unqualifiedly genuine position to know. If they do form this sort of unity—if I really already am in *that* position—then (for the transition from potentiality

to actuality in the exercise of the self-conscious power to be effected) no intervening act of adjustment in position (in either physical or logical space) is required.[88] On this understanding of what it is to be "in a position to know," what McDowell calls (in his version of the parable of the tie shop) having been "put in a position to know" comes to is just this: his protagonist has been put in a position in which she needs to make only a very minor (cognitive) adjustment in order to unqualifiedly be in a position to know—that is, to be in a position that is sufficiently good for her to *self-consciously see* the color of the tie.[89] Once such an adjustment has been effected, if it comes soon enough to afford her the opportunity to self-consciously see the tie, she will no longer find herself in a perceptual situation in which she is straining to get things into perceptual view as a case in which what she self-consciously sees is a tie that merely appears to her to be green due to the lighting conditions.[90] Indeed, once

[88] Moreover, adjustment along one of these two dimensions can help alleviate unfavorability in the other. A merely bodily adjustment can compensate for a mental misapprehension, thereby putting one in a genuine position to know, and vice versa. Perceptual attentiveness to the character of the lighting—rather than a corrective act of reflection—might suffice to allow for the dawning of the insight that my reflective predisposition misled me and hence to realize that green things do, after all, actually appear green in this tie shop.

[89] A further protest: "You are just quibbling over words here. In the case in which one needed to move two steps over, the adjustment that needed to be made was so minor that one essentially already was—prior to making the adjustment—in a damn good position to know." The point here, however, is not to quibble over exactly how optimal a position needs to be in order to count as one that affords a damn good opportunity. The point is just to insist on the following: in order to be in a sufficiently good position to *actually* know, adjustments may need to be made; and for the position to be sufficiently good to afford an opportunity for *self-consciously* seeing, it may require either one of the following sorts of adjustment: to the environment or the spatial position within it from which one contemplates the scene (so that *p* comes properly into epistemic view as something one can take oneself to be self-consciously seeing) or to the intellectual standpoint within and from which one contemplates the scene (so that *p* comes properly into epistemic view as something one self-consciously sees).

[90] Strictly speaking, the perceptual situation she thereby takes herself to be in (in which she is trying to work out the relation of apparent to real color) is actually not at all a perceptually unusual one, but rather a perceptually typical one. When I was not yet discussing McDowell's views, much earlier, I employed the example of a different sort of reflectively unfavorable circumstance—one in which I mistakenly take myself to be looking at a properly executed Müller-Lyer—because I think the Sellarsian tie shop example does not really work, to serve either its original Sellarsian purpose or the additional one to which McDowell seeks to put it. Whenever I look at objects under normal conditions of lighting and shadow—as any impressionist painter knows—the surfaces of even the most uniformly monochromatic objects exhibit tremendous variation not only in apparent shade but even in (what an impressionist painter would call) apparent color. Hence even the most ordinary judgments of the actual color of even uniformly colored objects involve tremendous tacit knowledge of the conditions of lighting. If I were in anything like typical circumstances in which the lighting conditions caused the frontally facing surface of a blue object to look

the adjustment is in place, she will be able self-consciously to perceive things as they are—to see a green tie for what it is.

Where does this leave the idea that seeing p yields an indefeasible warrant for believing p? If an adjustment is required but not made under unfavorable circumstances of lighting—so that they result, for example, in my taking myself (due to my failure to register the yellowish character of the lighting) to be seeing a green tie—then I am certainly not in possession of an indefeasible warrant for believing the tie to be green.[91] Indeed, if I come properly to appreciate the unfavorable character of the lighting, I will regard the warrant I might otherwise have taken myself to have (for believing the tie to be green) as *defeated*. If an adjustment is required but not made under reflectively unfavorable circumstances—so that they result, for example, in my concluding that I am seeing a blue tie under conditions of yellowish lighting—then I am no less properly describable as in possession of an indefeasible warrant for believing the tie to be green than I would be if the lighting conditions were those that Jim initially unwittingly encounters in Sellars's version of the parable to the tie shop.[92] Indeed, what McDowell's protagonist (misguidedly) concludes is that whatever ground she might have to believe the tie to be green (were she otherwise circumstanced, say, in McDowell's Tie Shop) is one that (qua occupant of Sellars's Tie Shop, as she understands herself to be) she does not have. Qua occupant of the disjunct of the self-alienatedly perceiver, the prima facie candidate for a perceptual warrant regarding the color of the tie available to her is one she (misguidedly) takes to be defeated. She concludes at the time that whatever appearances of greenness of tie she registers in the tie shop are not fit to ground a judgment on her part that the tie is green. It is true that retrospective reflection puts her in a position to regard her previous experience in the tie shop as after all providing her with a ground for now believing that tie to then have been green. But does this—that is, a case of

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green, then—assuming a modicum of attentiveness—I would be immediately aware of this. I would be prone to fail to notice this (in the manner envisaged by Sellars) only if the conditions of background lighting were quite extraordinary: the environing lighting would have to be fairly dim and otherwise reasonably normal except for a single perfectly directed beam of yellow light falling upon and uniformly lighting the entirety of a perfectly positioned stationary blue tie, while affecting the apparent color of almost nothing else.

[91] Under those circumstances, the only perceptual warrant that I can take myself to be in self-conscious possession of is one for believing the tie to be a color that someone better circumstanced would not take it to be. Whatever warrant for p that person might take themselves to be in self-conscious possession of (for believing the tie to be blue) is not one that *I* (circumstanced as I am in that same tie shop) am in any position to accompany with the "I think" (precisely because I think that value of p to be false).

[92] *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Section III, 37–39.

self-alienated seeing—present us with an example of someone's being af-forded an *indefeasible* perceptual warrant? Should we say of the envi-sioned case—with its roundabout route via which the protagonist arrives at the truth (where reflection on her past perceptual activity constitutes a necessary step in a chain of inferences that cumulatively license the conclu-sion that the tie she previously saw must have been green after all)—that this constitutes a scenario in which the protagonist's exercise of her percep-tual capacity affords her with an *indefeasible warrant for certain beliefs*? No—at least not if her conclusion remains essentially mediated by that roundabout chain of inference. If having liberated herself from the reflec-tively disenabling assumption, our hero at a later point revisits McDow-ell's Tie Shop and, without need of such reflective heroics, self-consciously sees what is so (when, for example, seeing a green tie), then and there—and *only* then and there—can the concept of indefeasibility recover its rightful foothold in an account of the formal character of her *perceptual* act. But this requires that the exercise of the capacity in question be a logically full-blooded act of self-consciously seeing. As long as the reflectively unfavor-able circumstances cast their shadow over what she understands herself to see in the tie shop, her (misguided) understanding of her cognitive situation will lead her to regard the apparent greenness of the tie as an altogether defeasible warrant. On the other hand, if she does come to be in no way poorly circumstanced in the tie shop and thereby self-consciously sees the tie to be green, then such a self-conscious act of her perceptual capacity will no longer stand to her self-conscious act of knowledge as mere evi-dence stands to conclusion—that is, to something that she might or might not accept.[93] If she self-consciously sees the tie to be green, then she already

[93] To say this, as we saw before, is to deny that the transition from Fregean thought to Fregean judgment properly models the relation of perceptual act to act of knowledge in the logically fundamental case of what it is to self-consciously see *p*. It is not to deny, however, that there can be perceptual circumstances under which the testimony of my senses stands to my final judgment of what is the case roughly as, say, courtroom evidence does to verdict—so that it is only with the aid of intervening acts of judgment (and perhaps reflection) that I am able to move from a cognitive state involving a conclusion about what the evidence *appears* to show to one involving a conclusion about what the evidence *does* show. But notice: in Kantian par-lance this is a transition from one form of judgment to another—from a *problematic* judgment (regarding how things *appear*) to a *non-problematic* judgment (that things *are* as they appear). This is also what the resolute disjunctivist will say to his irresolute counterpart about his con-cept of seeing: in seeing without accepting our capacity for judgment *is* in act. In such a case, however, it qua general cognitive capacity is in act in a very particular manner—namely, in an attenuated and logically derivative one. The resolute disjunctivist thereby targets an aspect of McDowell's "representationalism" (as it has sometimes been called) that some of his other critics have also been concerned to question. Matthew Boyle, for example, asks: "Can we, for

knows it be green: there is no role for an intervening act of acceptance to play here.

There is no way to hold the logical moments of perceptual indefeasibility and non-problematic perceptual self-consciousness apart. There is no way to retain the logical features of one of these two equiprimordial dimensions of the logically full-blooded exercise of the capacity, while prescinding from those of the other. If I move the "warrant" for believing the tie to be green outside the scope of what I self-consciously see, then "it" is no longer indefeasible. If I enclose the indefeasibility of the warrant within the scope of what I self-consciously see, then there is no room for a logical separation of what I accept (in holding the tie to be green) from what I self-consciously see (in seeing it to be green). In the fully non-problematic case, one knows p in and through seeing p.

We can express this last point in a Kantian idiom as follows: the indefeasibility of an act of self-consciously seeing lies in the accord of the form of the act with that of the power—so that seeing and knowing are one. This is a hard thing to think in philosophy. And even if one momentarily succeeds in thinking it, it is even harder to hang onto as soon as one sets out to philosophize further. There is enormous philosophical pressure to uncover something that bears on my self-conscious activity—that is able to discharge the task of underwriting the acts of my self-conscious cognitive

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ordinary cases of perception, specify what plausible content the relevant perceptual experiences could have?" ("The Rational Role of Perceptual Content," unpublished manuscript, 12). For instance, in looking at a cardinal, we may ask: Is the conceptual content of our perceptual experience the one expressed by the sentence "This is a red bird" or the one expressed by "This is a scarlet and crimson bird" or one that is in some specifiable terms more or less determinate in content than either of these? Any set of conceptual contents that we might propose as "the" supposed conceptual content that our perceptual experience offers up to us through a given episode of perceiving will involve an indefinite number of such putative candidates for judgment. The moral that the resolute disjunctivist here draws is that any act of classifying what is "given to us" (as, say, a scarlet and crimson bird) is no less an act of the self-conscious spontaneity of the thinking subject than is the act of endorsing such a content. Perception cannot present the perceiving subject with something to judge without her capacity for judgment itself being in act. He does not conclude from this, however—as some of McDowell's critics have—that we should, therefore, find something else, something less, for perception, qua cognitive capacity, to offer us: some sort of prior self-standingly intelligible layer of content that, while falling short of drawing upon our conceptual capacities is, nonetheless, fully available to apperception and to be regarded as the ultimate epistemic ground of our empirical judgments. Rather the resolute disjunctivist concludes that any conception of perception qua actualization of a capacity that is operative at the personal—rather than the subpersonal level—must be one which draws not only (as McDowell teaches) on our capacity for conceptual classification but also (pace McDowell) in some manner or other on that same capacity which is paradigmatically in act when we judge something to be so.

activity—from outside the sphere of self-consciousness.[94] There is pressure to suppose that an account of the source of the indefeasibility of the successful act of the power must be lodged in an account of something that is not itself a self-conscious act of the power.[95] And once the source of the warrant is located there (at least without assistance from someone whose powers are as incomprehensible as those of Descartes's God), the initial form of philosophical worry that will emerge is the following: whatever this source of warrant is, how can it help but be always and everywhere defeasible? Hence the specter of Cartesian skepticism looms. McDowell appreciates this fully and therefore rightly looks for a way to accommodate an act of the capacity that is indefeasible. For he appreciates as few do—and as Hamawaki seeks to show—how, as long as we are unable to accommodate this logical feature of the concept of knowledge, the initially inchoate (Cartesian) worry will give way to the following philosophically more vertiginous worry: How can that which bears on the form of our mindedness from without ever underwrite the rational credentials of our self-conscious activity?[96] Hence the specter of Kantian skepticism looms.

We have seen that McDowell's version of disjunctivism admits of room for a highest common factor across the following two cases: the case of the veridical perceptual experience that I am having now and to which I give my assent and the case of the veridical perceptual experience that I am having now and from which (due to reflectively unfavorable circumstances) I withhold my assent. On such a conception, what figures here as

[94] A fruitful way of exploring the incoherence of this guise of the Myth of the Given would be to attempt to imagine the sort of being whom it would be (employing a Kantian conception of logical form) apt to call a *logically alien perceiver*—a putatively possible being who, for any *p*, is capable only of self-alienatedly seeing, but never of simply (self-consciously) seeing *p*.

[95] McDowell has labored valiantly to reveal what is philosophically mythological in the Myth of the Given. Here is one way he formulates the Myth: "The idea of the Given is the idea that the space of reasons, the space of justifications or warrants, extends more widely than *the conceptual sphere*" (*Mind and World*, 7; emphasis added). My present aim has been to show that the idea that the space of justifications or warrants extends more widely than *the self-consciousness sphere*—so that something can figure in a certain way in the former space (qua indefeasible warrant for judgment) without yet figuring within the scope of a self-conscious act of knowledge—is yet a further guise of that same myth.

[96] Hence McDowell himself will characterize the relation between (what I call) Cartesian and (what I call) Kantian skepticism as follows: "It is true that modern philosophy is pervaded by apparent problems about knowledge in particular. But I think it is helpful to see those apparent problems as more or less inept expressions of a deeper anxiety—an inchoately felt threat that a way of thinking we find ourselves falling into leaves minds simply out of touch with the rest of reality, not just questionably capable of getting to know about it. A problem about crediting ourselves with knowledge is just one shape, and not the most fundamental, in which that anxiety can make itself felt" (McDowell, *Mind and World*, 2nd ed., preface, xiii–xiv).

an exercise of a capacity to do something called "having a veridical per-ceptual experience" amounts to something that is less than an act of knowledge. The capacity for "perceptual experience" so conceived is not a concept of a self-conscious cognitive capacity. It is at best a concept of a form of exercise of the capacity that could be ingredient in a logically attenuated case of arriving at knowledge through an act of perception mediated by one of reflection. For perceptual experience, so conceived, only eventuates in knowledge if I do something beyond "enjoying" the experience: if I (paraphrasing Frege) advance from a grasp of the content of the perceptual thought to an acknowledgment of its truth-value.[97] This, in turn, yields a conception according to which the exercise of my capacity to gain knowledge via perception stands to my capacity to have veridical perceptual experiences as something logically composite to something comparatively logically simple. On McDowell's version of dis-junctivism, whenever I know via seeing, there are necessarily two logi-cally (though not necessarily temporally) distinct moments: the one in which I see and the one in which I judge what I see to be so.

As we have seen, resolute disjunctivism holds that there is no room for a highest common factor across the following two cases: the case in

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[97] A fundamental obstacle to McDowell's embracing the version of disjunctivism in the philos-ophy of perception recommended here is his commitment to a Fregean version of conjunc-tivism in philosophical logic. On Frege's account, there is a logical act (and a correlatively shared content) that is a highest common factor between thinking p (i.e., the act of merely grasping the content of p) and judging p (the transition to a logically—though not necessarily temporally—distinct act of acknowledging the truth or falsity of p). A clear-sighted commit-ment to this form of conjunctivism (regarding the relation of thought to judgment) in philo-sophical logic places an indefeasible limit on how deeply into the structure of the mind one's disjunctivism in the philosophy of perception may be permitted to penetrate. Conversely, a commitment to the version of disjunctivism in the philosophy of perception recommended here requires that one develop a conception of judgment that does not presuppose the force/content distinction in the form that it has been bequeathed to us in the philosophical logic of Frege and Geach. It requires a philosophical logic that admits of an equally resolute form of disjunctivism in the philosophy of judgment: one in which the case of the logically fundamental exercise of our capacity for judgment (in which in and through thinking I judge) stands to the case of the comparatively attenuated exercise of that same general capacity (in which I withhold a verdict on the truth of what I think) as fully felicitous to less than fully felicitous disjunct. The difference between McDowell and Stroud is interesting here. Mc-Dowell clearly sees the impingement of these issues in the philosophy of perception and the philosophy of judgment on one another. He takes this to be a reason not to allow one's ver-sion of disjunctivism in the philosophy of perception to run into conflict with the truth of Fregeanism in philosophical logic. Stroud does not appear to appreciate the impingement of these issues on one another. This makes it easier for him to endorse the version of disjunc-tivism I recommend in the philosophy of perception, even though—as we shall see—he re-mains sympathetic to the version of conjunctivism I criticize in the philosophy of logic.

which I know in seeing (where the act of assent is not disassociable from the act of seeing) and the cognitively attenuated case in which I know through a logically attenuated act of perception that eventuates in knowledge through the mediation of reflection. On this conception, the difference between the two disjuncts must now be specified in terms of the character of their logical form. The logically primitive form of exercise of the capacity (in which perceiving is, as such, an act of knowledge) stands alone in the first disjunct. Any other form of its exercise that attenuates or disrupts (and hence lacks accord with the form of) the capacity is to be classified as belonging to some further disjunct. Only now, we can no longer hold that there are just two disjuncts: the good and the bad one. To paraphrase Tolstoy: Felicitous disjuncts are all alike in being felicitous in the same way, whereas every infelicitous disjunct is infelicitous in its own way. On this conception, there are many ways to deviate—to lack accord—with the form of felicity.[98]

In the foregoing discussion—in order to bring out the contrast between resolute and irresolute disjunctivism—the focus has been almost exclusively on two ways of departing from felicity: the fully defective exercise of the capacity and the self-alienated one. The focus on the latter was in service of the following point: in a felicitous exercise, there is no room for a Fregean dissociation of the act of perceptual thought from that of perceptual judgment. This means that, as we have seen, cases that qualify for the irresolute disjunctivist as sortable under the good disjunct do not qualify for his resolute counterpart as sortable under the perfectly felicitous disjunct. For in the fully felicitous case, there can be no logical separation of moments between what I see and what I judge to be so.[99]

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[98] The infelicity can be due to a defective exercise of the capacity (i.e., the case that clearly falls into McDowell's conception of what belongs in the bad disjunct). The defect, in turn, can be traceable to infelicity in either the material or formal conditions. Alternatively, it can be due to a suspension of (rather than an error in) judgment. Such a problematic act of judgment might arise from a concern about the adequacy of either the environing or the reflective conditions under which one seeks to vindicate the candidate for judgment. But it may simply be due to insufficient evidence. Then the manner in which the capacity of judgment is in act will have to do with the manner in which one seeks to move from belief to knowledge. It would be no less a fool's errand to attempt to convert the foregoing preliminary list into a complete inventory of possible infelicitous disjuncts than it would be to attempt a complete specification of all of the possible ways in which a human being can fall short of the condition of perfect health.

[99] There are various points in his ruminations on Moore's paradox at which Wittgenstein draws together connections between the points made in our foregoing discussion and his own critique of (what he calls) Frege's assertion sign. These connections depend for him on our coming to appreciate how—in Wittgenstein's phraseology—the sense that the sentence radical "that it is raining" bears when it is the complement of a cognitive verb in the first-person

McDowell's own characteristic criticism of a great deal of modern philosophy is that it turns on a methodological fantasy of the priority of (what he suggestively calls) a *sideways-on point of view* on the relation of knowing subject and known world. Against this, he insists on the fundamental methodological priority of those forms of knowledge that are available to us from *within* our cognitive perspective onto the world. The manner of reconceiving the fundamental insight underlying disjunctivism proposed here grows out of an attempt to execute as resolutely as possible this very methodological turn in philosophy that McDowell himself has so eloquently proposed and deftly defended. The reconception turns on an insistence that the logical priority upon which McDowell himself insists turns on a further dimension of priority that is logically nested within it: the availability to me of *my* first-person present indicative point of view onto my cognitive activity as a prior condition on the intelligibility of any other (third-person, and/or past, and/or subjunctive) point of view onto that same activity.[100]

I have allowed myself to speak throughout the foregoing pages about a supposed difference between different sorts of "perspective" "onto" one and the same cognitive activity: a first-person present indicative perspective and a variety of other perspectives "onto" that activity. Having climbed up a ladder made of sentences whose rungs have largely consisted of employments of this way of speaking, I would now like to kick it away. For this way of speaking, in the end, may itself be revealed as serving to disguise the depth of the actual disagreement that obtains between the irresolute and the resolute disjunctivist. The irresolute disjunctivist is obliged to hold that the difference between self-consciously and self-alienatedly seeing consists in a difference in the character of one's first-person perspective "onto" one and the same thing—onto a certain logically isolable

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present indicative (where it expresses what is the case) differs from the sense that it bears when it is the complement of a cognitive verb in the past tense (where it reports what I formerly believed or judged to be the case) or when it is the complement of a verb of supposition (one that asks us merely to suppose that it might be the case). For an interesting discussion of this region of later Wittgenstein, see the chapter titled "Moore's Paradox," in Joachim's Schulte's *Experience and Expression: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)—especially the discussion of pages 141–142 of MS 132, 6. 10. 46. We will turn to some of the connections between the points made in our foregoing discussion and a critique of Frege's conception of judgment/assertion in the reply to Stroud. We will not fully address the issue of how to understand Wittgenstein's non-Fregean manner of deploying the notion of "sense"—presupposed throughout his ruminations on the paradox—until the reply to Travis.

[100] Avicenna's and Leibniz's respective ways of logically privileging what possibly is over what actually is may begin to come into view here as just a special case of an enormous range of philosophical ways to fail to do justice to the dimension of logical priority here at issue.

and common act of seeing. This locution therefore imports with it the very idea the resolute disjunctivist is obliged to resist: the idea that we have here to do with two perspectives "onto" one and the same thing.

This locution permits one to construe the supposed difference between an optimal and a less than optimal perspective as a function of the degree of reflective transparency, as it were, that the so-called "perspective" affords—hence, as a matter of whether the seeing subject, in seeing p, judges p (so that her perspective "onto" what she sees is one of acceptance), or whether she suspends judgment from or denies p (so that her perspective "onto" what she sees is one of non-acceptance). The resolute disjunctivist, once he has climbed up the ladder of this way of speaking and thrown it away, ought to regard any such use of the preposition "onto" as itself constituting the mark of the introduction of a certain degree of logical alienation into the characterization of the exercise of a rational cognitive capacity. Such a manner of speaking will remain perfectly appropriate if one is speaking of a case of an act of the capacity that does indeed involve some degree of logical privation (such as that which licenses McDowell's protagonist's need for a corrective perspective "onto" her past perceptual activity), but not if one is seeking to characterize the logical form of the full-blooded case of an exercise of such a capacity.

An irresolutely disjunctivist philosophical conception of the capacity of knowledge—one that insists that its every act requires the supplementation of each of its content-furnishing acts with yet a further perspective "onto" the content thereby afforded—fails to grasp the character of the unity formed by the logical moments of self-consciousness and judgment in the logically full-blooded case of its exercise. The irresolute conception—in regarding the first-person present indicative form to express just one among a manifold of alternative perspectives "onto" that which one's own cognitive activity delivers up—reads the form of logical alienation into the logically primitive case of the exercise of that capacity. It requires that even in the logically least compromised act of knowing p, we are still occupying a perspective "onto" p from which we regard p.

The resolute disjunctivist must resist the idea that such a use of the preposition "onto" has a place in the proper characterization of the logical form of the full-blooded act of *self-consciously* seeing p. The self-consciousness (of which such an act of seeing p partakes) consists not in a further perspective "onto" one's act of seeing p; rather it *is* one's act of genuinely and simply seeing p. In comparatively logically attenuated uses of the verb (expressed through the third person, the past, or the subjunctive grammatical forms), precisely what the introduction of at-

tenuation into the form does is open up logical room for a (third-person, past, or subjunctive) perspective "onto" what is "seen" by the subject who is said to see. However, in the full-blooded case (expressed through the first-person present indicative form of the verb), there is no such logical separation—hence no room for a further self-conscious perspective "onto" one's act of self-consciousness. There is no moment of logical alienation: no splitting of the logical I into an "I" who sees and a second "I" who looks upon that which the first "I" sees and judges. The logically primary use of the verb does not express the character of one's perspective "onto" what one sees in seeing p; it itself expresses one's *perceptual judgment* (in seeing p to be so) that p.[101] This does not serve to specify yet "another" perspective "from" which the p ingredient in an act of seeing p is regarded. It expresses *knowledge* that p.

McDowell's original point against the conjunctivist is that we should not read the logical structure of the defective exercise of a cognitive capacity into that of its non-defective exercise (so that we end up conceiving of the successful case of knowledge as consisting of a composite of a factor of mere appearance and a further factor that somehow secures a relation to reality). I suggested earlier that McDowell, in so arguing, seeks to adhere to the following philosophical maxim: Do not try to read the character of the logically primitive phenomenon off the model of its logically alienated counterpart! It is on precisely these grounds that I have been concerned to argue that we should also not read the logical structure of what it is for me to have seen p under reflectively unfavorable circumstances into the structure of what it is for me to see p under fully felicitous circumstances, so that even in our account of the non-problematic case we continue to take it that there is an isolable (albeit veridical and genuinely world-involving) appearance awaiting combination with a logically distinct operation of judgment.

This reconception of the relation between the logically primary disjunct and its comparatively logically privative siblings yields a different—and I contend deeper—diagnosis from McDowell's original one of wherein the seemingly innocent first step in the Cartesian philosophical conjuring trick actually lies. It lies not merely in the philosophically mistaken supposition that there is a logical symmetry across knowledge-yielding and non-knowledge-yielding ways of jointly exercising my cognitive

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[101] The resolute disjunctivist will therefore agree with Sebastian Rödl when he writes: "The self-consciousness of judgment is not a perspective *on* judgment. *It is judgment*" (*Self-Consciousness and Objectivity*, 60).

capacities (though McDowell is absolutely right to think that there is a fundamental asymmetry and hence no highest common factor to be found across these cases). It lies more deeply in the philosophically mistaken supposition that there is a logical symmetry across fully self-conscious exercises of my cognitive capacities and less than fully self-conscious exercises of my cognitive capacities. The recommended conception accordingly holds that there is a fundamental logical asymmetry between those forms of knowledge that can be expressed through the use of a cognitive verb—know, judge, see, hear, and so on—used in its first-person present indicative grammatical form (and hence from the first-person present indicative point of view) and those forms of knowledge that involve some dimension of self-alienation (and hence express a form of knowledge that is in the first instance only available from some other point of view).

Hamawaki's account of how a Kantian conception of experience differs from a Cartesian one helps us to see why we require this deeper diagnosis of precisely where the Cartesian conception first goes awry. And once we see this, we are afforded a perspective from which we can appreciate how the conception of perceptual experience at play in McDowell's version of disjunctivism involves the same fundamental defect that Hamawaki seeks to identify as the crucial problem with Cartesianism in the philosophy of perception—the defect of failing properly to appreciate that the logically fundamental form of perceiving is, as such, an act of self-consciously knowing.

Let us reformulate this last point in a way that brings out how Hamawaki's Kant's critique of Cartesianism bears on the difference between Kant and Frege on the relation of content to act and act to power. The Cartesian conception makes it look as if in every case of perceptual knowing I need to be reflectively entitled to move from a Fregean perceptual thought to an acknowledgment of its truth in order to qualify as knowing. This is because the conjunctivist analysis contrives to make it seem as if the most an exercise of our perceptual capacity might provide is something that has the logical character of a Fregean thought—a judgable content: so that another act (over and above the original act of the power of knowledge) is needed in order to get all the way to knowledge. On the Cartesian conception, my knowledge is grounded not on a perceptual judgment full stop but on (to borrow Frege's terminology) a perceptual thought plus (non-perceptual) judgment. The crucial trick in the Cartesian conjuring game lies in the way it invites us to regard even a best case of perception as if it were just another instance of the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling variant of the infelicitous disjunct. On the Cartesian

conception, every act of perception is disarmed of its cognitive reach in just the manner in which my usual capacity for perception comes to be disarmed in an actual mundane case of the insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario, so that what perception delivers up is a mere Fregean thought about how things are, to which no force has yet been attached—a thought which waits on an additional act of being endorsed by the judging subject in order to issue in knowledge. To reject the Cartesian conception of perception is to take seriously what I have suggested Hamawaki's Kant seeks to show us: namely that, in the basic case of perceptual knowing, one's knowing does not involve any form of passage from a perceptual (Fregean) thought to a (Fregean) judgment.

To appreciate why an exercise of our perceptual capacity for knowledge that issues in a judgable but unjudged "experiential content" is a case of its infelicitous exercise is to become fully clear about what is philosophically required in order not to fall back into the temptation of the highest-common-factor conception of experience that McDowell sought to diagnose and exorcise. This is the point that I take the following series of remarks[102] from Barry Stroud to be making:

> The fact that judgments made in perceptual experience are revisable in the light of reflection or further experience can make it seem that continued acceptance of a perceptual judgment about the independent world cannot be based solely on the original experience that gave rise to it; further reflection or experience serves to support it as well. And this can make it tempting to suppose that the content of that original experience in itself must have implied nothing about the independent world. . . . .[103] But yielding to this temptation is another way of falling

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[102] Stroud, "Sense-Experience and the Grounding of Thought," in *Philosophers Past and Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 273–289. This article of Stroud's is a criticism of the conception of perceptual experience advocated by McDowell in *Mind and World*.

[103] I cannot imagine that Stroud thinks that this sentence can serve as a summary of that conception—that McDowell himself supposes that the content of a perceptual experience, even when it belongs to the happy disjunct, implies nothing about the independent world. For McDowell to think this would require that he completely have lost track of what was right in his original disjunctivism. So I take it that the structure of Stroud's argument against McDowell is supposed to have the form of dilemma—only one of horn of which is concerned with pressing the following worry: If we conceive of the perceptual content presented to us in experience as fully divorced from the exercise of our capacity for judgment, then we fall back into the Cartesian conception. This then allows for the second horn of the dilemma to be an argument along the lines I sketched above—regarding whether even a tiny gap, as it were, may be allowed to open up between the judgable content and the judgment in our characterization of a case without its without falling into the infelicitous disjunct. If this dilemmatic reconstruction of Stroud's argument against McDowell is correct, then I do

into the "highest common factor" view of perception and reasonable belief that McDowell has rightly rejected. . . . [T]he content of an experience alone cannot give a person reason, or be a person's reason, to believe something. . . . It is not simply the content of a person's experience that gives the reason to believe something; it is the person's experiencing, or being aware of, or somehow "taking in" that content.[104]

This last remark could be paraphrased in our earlier idiom as follows: in the logically fundamental case, the perceptual (Fregean) thought, considered as mere judgable content, cannot be the perceiving subject's reason to believe something; rather, it is with the perceiving subject's perceptual *judgment* that such and such is the case that the subject places herself within the space of reasons. Apart from such an act of fully self-conscious spontaneity on the part of a subject, no determinate position in the space of reasons is taken up. This, in turn, is the point at which Hamawaki's interpretation of Kant converges with Stroud's insight regarding where the crucial step in the traditional epistemological conjuring game lies: only if the capacity for judgment can be *fully in act in perception* in the manner (indicated by Stroud above and required by Hamawaki's Kant) can perception be a capacity for knowledge. The moment our description of what perception yields begins to shade into a description of anything less than this—into a description of the mere deliverance of something judgable which the judging subject may hold at a distance and regard as not yet constituting knowledge until a further active step is taken on her part—then what we have offered is a description of an infelicitous exercise of our perceptual capacity for knowledge.

This convergence in Hamawaki's and Stroud's respective philosophical understandings of what is required in order to overcome a Cartesian conception of the restrictedness of sense-experience should interest us. For, as we have seen in this section, Hamawaki arrives at his version of this philosophical understanding by scrupulously following what he takes to be Kant's lead; whereas, as we shall see in the next section, Stroud's most famous criticism of Kant turns precisely on the charge that his conception of transcendental method presupposes a restricted conception of sense-experience.

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think it is less clear than it might be what the precise dialectical role is of a good many of the sentences in Stroud's article—considered not as sentences that figure in a critique of Cartesianism, but as moments that each have a role to play in a critique of McDowell.

[104] Stroud, "Sense-Experience and the Grounding of Thought," 88–89.

Reply to Hamawaki and Stroud on Transcendental Arguments, Idealism, and the Kantian Solution of the Problem of Philosophy

The last part of Hamawaki's paper explores differences between my reading of Kant and Stroud's—the difference between taking a Kantian transcendental argument to be directed at Kantian skepticism (bearing only indirectly on Cartesian skepticism) and taking it to be directed at Cartesian skepticism (addressing that form of skepticism head-on). In this section, we will seek to get a little clearer about Kant's conception of what it is to make progress with a philosophical problem in order that we may later contrast it with Frege's. As Conant, Stroud, and I all employ Kant as a reference point in our readings of Frege, it is difficult to disentangle these various readings of Frege without some overview of the very different readings of Kant that are also in play. So I will preface my reply to Stroud on Frege by concluding my reply to Hamawaki with a reply to both of them on Kant.[1]

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[1] The next section of these replies will take up differences in Conant's and Stroud's respective views of the relation of Frege to Kant. As will become clear there, the three main parties to that discussion—Conant, Stroud, and I—all have different ways of making out how Kant and Frege are most crucially dissimilar from one another. In the next section, I shall focus on the significance of this for the understanding and assessment of Frege's conception of logic. In this section, I will with Hamawaki's help try to make clear how the name "Kant" stands for a very different philosopher on Stroud's and my respective readings of him.

The first obstacle to such a venture is that numerous terms—such as "skepticism," "experience," "objective validity," "transcendental argument," and "idealism"—are deployed in divergent ways by the various participants to the discussion. Hamawaki begins the final part of his paper with the following remark:

> Before concluding, it may be helpful to compare the structure of the line of argument I have presented with how Barry Stroud conceived of a transcendental argument in his well-known paper of that title.[2]

Before we enter into his proposed comparison, let us explore the interrelated senses conferred upon the aforementioned terms in the sorts of readings of Kant that Stroud originally had in mind (and to which he was responding) in that justly celebrated article, "Transcendental Arguments".

Indeed, let us begin with the term "transcendental argument." What, according to that celebrated article, is a transcendental argument supposed to show?

> For Kant a transcendental argument is supposed to answer the question of "justification," and in so doing it demonstrates the "objective validity" of certain concepts. I have taken this to mean that the concept "X" has objective validity only if there are X's and that demonstrating the objective validity of the concept is tantamount to demonstrating that X's actually exist. Kant thought that he could argue from the necessary conditions of thought and experience to the falsity of "problematic idealism" and so to the actual existence of the external world of material objects, and not merely to the fact that we believe there is such a world, or that as far as we can tell there is.[3]

On this conception of a transcendental argument, its job is to build a bridge from the near side to the far side of a Cartesian gap. The bit of firm ground, as occupants of the near side of that gap, on which we may take ourselves already to stand is supposedly this: it is a fact about us that we believe in the actual existence of the external world of material objects. If the transcendental argument were able successfully to discharge its gap-bridging function, then the following is a description of the sort of ground we would occupy upon reaching the far side of the gap: we

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[2] Barry Stroud, "Transcendental Arguments," reprinted in his *Understanding Human Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9–26.

[3] Ibid., 25.

would know that the following material existence claim is true—that the external world of material objects actually exists. So it looks as if the sort of passage the bridge is supposed to effect, if it can be built, is from a psychological fact about us (that we believe in the actual existence of the external world of material objects) to the truth of a material claim (about the existence of outer objects).

Since Stroud takes the deployment of such a form of argument to be Kant's own strategy for answering the skeptic and arriving at this own alternative "Kantian" position with regard to the nature of human knowledge, Stroud is also perfectly happy to talk about this strategy for answering the skeptic as issuing in "transcendental idealism." The term "idealism," for Stroud, more generally names any philosophical position that results from an attempt of this general form to answer the skeptic's guiding question.

If much of anything in either Boyle's formalist or Hamawaki's anti-Cartesian readings of Kant is on the right track, then what Stroud says a "transcendental argument" seeks to vindicate looks to be close not to the sort of idealism that Kant himself endorses but to the sort he seeks to refute, which he calls "material idealism." The transition from the premise to the conclusion of the so-called transcendental argument is a movement from one *material* claim to another.[4] The argument seeks to show that what makes a certain material claim (about the existence of the external world) true is ultimately to be traced to the truth of some further material claim (about our psychological makeup: that we cannot help but think in a certain way).[5] If one thinks that in order for someone to be Kantian, he must be an "idealist" of this sort, then this will inevitably color how one hears a great deal of the terminology used to articulate an ostensibly Kantian philosophical outlook. A pertinent term in this connection (as we shall soon see) is "constitutive." If one thinks that what it is to be a Kantian is to favor an order of explanation in which the necessity of certain truths is be accounted for in terms of the brute fact that we cannot get by without certain ways of thinking, then one will hear philosophical claims (in which X stands for a feature of our mindedness and Y stands for some truth or set of truths we seek to vindicate)

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[4] This, I think, already suffices to show that it is not an exercise in the *Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft,* as Kant understands it—of our capacity for transcendental reflection through which we render some aspect of the *formal* character of our cognitive power reflectively self-conscious.

[5] To represent the necessity of our forms of understanding as being of this sort is, Kant says, "to give the skeptic what he most desires." (*Critique of Pure Reason,* B168, 175).

of the form "X is constitutive of the possibility of Y" as a way of saying that if certain facts about the nature of our mindedness did not obtain, then those truths would not obtain. Any version of such a doctrine is, at bottom, really (as Stroud argues) just a disguised version of skepticism, even if the version in question seeks to represent itself as something else (for instance, as we have already seen is the case with theological voluntarism about the eternal truths, or with psychologism about the laws of logic).

There is an objection that the above understanding of a transcendental argument naturally invites. It has been made famous by Stroud and is explained by Hamawaki as follows:

> According to Stroud, transcendental arguments seek to show that the skeptic occupies an incoherent position. And they seek to do so by arguing that the beliefs that the skeptic subjects to global doubt—for example, beliefs about the external world—are actually a condition of having beliefs about that which the skeptic not only does not, but must not, bring into doubt if he is so much as to formulate his skeptical doctrine—for example, beliefs about his own sensory experiences and thoughts. Stroud famously objected that transcendental arguments, so understood, establish, at best, a psychological claim, a claim about what I must believe, given that I have certain other beliefs. Interesting as such an argument might be as a statement about a kind of necessary interdependence between my beliefs that is not merely logical or inferential in nature, what it shows is a kind of subjective necessity rather than an objective necessity: a necessity concerning what I must believe rather than a necessity concerning what must be the case outside of my mind. Thus, Stroud argued that in order for a transcendental argument to do any anti-skeptical work, it would have to be combined with idealism or verificationism, which would need to be brought in to bridge the gap between what I must believe and what the world must be like.[6]

Now I do not wish to dispute that many commentators have ascribed to Kant the very conception of a transcendental argument that Stroud is criticizing here in the manner that Hamawaki indicates. Nor do I wish to dispute that Stroud's criticisms of such a conception of how a transcendental argument is supposed to work are absolutely devastating. (It is for these reasons that I regard his article as *justly* celebrated.) However,

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[6] Hamawaki, this volume, 167.

before I turn to the task of replying to Stroud's criticisms of Conant, not only do I need to register that this is not at all how either Conant or I have ever read Kant,[7] but I also need to draw attention to how this sort of reading of Kant induces a very particular manner of construing his entire vocabulary—in which the senses of all of his central terms come to be inflected in a Cartesian register.

This way of reading Kant takes him to accede to (what I called above) a Cartesian conception of experience—one that is *restricted* in just the way that Stroud helped us to understand in the previous section—one that holds, first, that the most an exercise of our perceptual capacity as such can yield is something that necessarily falls short of knowledge, and second, that what it thus yields is epistemically prior to what we need to be rationally entitled to (in order to be able to regard it as the basis for a subsequent justification of a claim about the existence of objects without the mind). On such a reading of Kant, is it assumed not only that a restricted conception of experience is intelligible but also that the aim of the transcendental argument is essentially the same as that of Descartes's appeal to a properly clarified idea of God: to furnish us with reflective considerations that entitle us to conclude that things really are as they seem. The dialectical role of the transcendental argument is understood to be one in which we start from the adequacy of the Cartesian conception of experience and attempt to demonstrate why someone whose experience is restricted in just this way is, nonetheless, entitled to regard his experience, so conceived, as affording knowledge of the external world.

The point of the distinction between Cartesian and Kantian skepticism discussed above was to bring out how the Kantian skeptical worry undercuts the Cartesian conception of what can be self-standingly intelligibly available to us as occupants of the near side of the Cartesian gap. The Kantian skeptical worry leads, as we saw, to an even more virulent difficulty: a worry about how we can make sense of the idea that our experience is so much as able to afford us with the sort of content that the Cartesian takes for granted—a sort of representational content that is able to present the world as seeming to be a certain way, as having purport. The purpose of the closest cousin to something one might call a "transcendental argument" (if we do want to call it that) in *The Critique*

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[7] For all of the differences in our respective readings of Kant, Conant and I are in agreement throughout on this much: it is not part of Kant's philosophy to demonstrate, on the aforementioned understanding of what it would mean for X to be constitutive of Y, that some fact about our mindedness is constitutive of the possibility of some category of truth.

of Pure Reason is the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories. It, however, seeks to address this latter sort of skepticism.[8]

If this is right, then we may summarize the bearing of our conclusions from the previous section on the present issue as follows: first, the sort of skepticism that the Transcendental Deduction directly addresses is Kantian skepticism (not Cartesian skepticism); second, it does not presuppose a Cartesian conception of experience (rather such a conception of experience is its eventual target); third, it seeks to show that the *forms* of the understanding have objective validity (this is not to show that some particular material existence claim is true); and, fourth, to show that our cognitive power has such a form is to show that the power of knowledge (and, in particular, the possibility of its non-defective exercise) has epistemic priority over its acts (which is to deny that the acts of that power which the Cartesian singles out, in which the act of perceiving is disjoined from the act of knowledge, are epistemically prior in the way that the Cartesian imagines they have to be).

Hamawaki's contribution to this volume does not purport to offer a summary of the Transcendental Deduction or any other single argument that Kant himself ever calls a "transcendental argument." Rather what it seeks to do is to draw on a variety of Kantian materials to assemble its own "transcendental argument"—one meant to give us a perspicuous overview of some of the crucial moments within Kant's larger critical enterprise. Hamawaki tries to head off certain misunderstandings of his argument by highlighting how the details of its structure diverge from those of the sort of philosophical demonstration—that starts from Cartesian premises and moves to an affirmation of the negation of the Cartesian skeptic's conclusion—that Stroud calls a "transcendental argument." Hence, Hamawaki says,

> The transcendental argument I have given here has a different structure, for it does not regress to a belief that the Cartesian skeptic puts in doubt; for example, the belief that my sensory experience, considered as a whole, is a source of reasons for forming judgments about

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[8] I cannot here go into the details of how the Transcendental Deduction works and what it is supposed to show, but I do so in my article "Why Kant Is Not a Kantian." I also explore there the connection between the considerations adduced in the Deduction and the argument of "The Refutation of Idealism" (which spells out the relevance of the conclusions of the Deduction, especially as unpacked in "The Analogies of Experience") for Cartesian skepticism. Stroud tends to run together these various moments in *The Critique of Pure Reason* as if they jointly formed one argument—from a single set of identifiable premises to a single conclusion—which he then calls a transcendental argument.

the external world from a belief that is supposedly more secure, such as the belief that I have sensory experiences that purport to be of objects outside me. The argument isn't just that in order to have beliefs with a certain content, namely an inner content—beliefs that are directed to my own psychological states—I must have beliefs that have a different content, an outer content—beliefs that are directed to objects in the world. Rather, the argument I have sketched begins from the claim that my relation to my own experiences is not one in which it is merely an object of "internal consciousness," but is constituted by the "I think," and that this is a condition of my sensory experience representing anything "for me" at all. The argument moves from there to the claim that it is a condition of my sensory experience having representational content that I conceive of myself as making judgments about the objects of experience on its basis. And then it moves to the conclusion that I must regard my sensory experience as a whole as a source of reasons for such judgments.[9]

Hamawaki is concerned with bringing out how neither the premise from which his "transcendental argument" begins nor the conclusion in which it culminates in the least resemble those that Stroud ascribes to a Kantian transcendental argument. But Hamawaki's description of Kant's project continues to mirror Stroud's at least in the following respect: in order to properly understand what Kant is up to, we need to identify what the premises of his transcendental argument are, what its conclusion is supposed to be, and how he entitles himself to move from the former to the latter.

I agree that the thing that Hamawaki identifies above as the premise of his argument is quite a good thing on which to focus in order to get clear about how very different Kant's critical inquiry into the nature and reach of our cognitive powers is from Descartes's. The supposed premise has to do with matters we went over in some detail above: how the very idea of something's being an object of sensory consciousness for me, if properly thought through, is not detachable from its being the sort of thing that can figure in an act of my cognitive power in which it is necessarily accompaniable by the "I think." This is a point about how the act of one of the ingredient faculties in my overall cognitive power (the faculty of sensibility) is related to the general form of a further ingredient faculty (the form that Kant calls the original synthetic unity of understanding).

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[9] Hamawaki, this volume, 167–168.

But I do not think this is a premise that Kant simply assumes or is one from which he argues to his conclusion. If it were, then I think his argument would beg the question against the Cartesian conception of experience. For it would treat something as a premise that flatly assumes that the conception to be opposed is faulty.

The passage from the B Deduction about the "I think" to which Hamawaki is here alluding occurs early in the Deduction.[10] To say that it occurs early in that stretch of text does not mean that it must be in the neighborhood in which our author sets out his premises before he starts out in the direction of his conclusion. Rather than saying it is the premise from which Kant argues, I think it would be more accurate to say that it is a guiding thought which he gradually unpacks over the course of the Deduction; a full appreciation of the implications of this idea leads us to see that we cannot make sense of the Cartesian conception of experience.

I also agree that the thing that Hamawaki identifies as the conclusion of his argument is another good thing to focus on to get clear about how very different Kant is from Descartes. The supposed conclusion is this: "It is a condition of my sensory experience having representational content that I conceive of myself as making judgments about the objects of experience on its basis." The supposed conclusion here has to do with a matter to which we devoted comparatively little attention above (but which is certainly no less important to an overall understanding of the Deduction): how the *form of consciousness* in act in my enjoying a sensory consciousness *of* x (in a properly intentional sense of "of") must be internally related to the *form of judgment* in act in the exercise of my cognitive power that has the form *x is F*,[11] and how exercises of such a power are necessarily exercises of a *self-conscious* power. This, too, is a point about how an exercise of our faculty of sensibility (that was the topic of Hamawaki's putative premise) is related to the form of another ingredient faculty (that of judgment) in our overall power of cognition. But I think it would be more accurate to describe the relation of the later point to the former one as a specification and deepening of the significance of the original point than to describe it as a conclusion that we reach from the original premise (perhaps with the assistance of some additional premises).

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[10] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B132, 152–153.
[11] See my "Why Kant is not a Kantian" for an account of how the second half of the B Deduction seeks to show this.

My redescriptions of the roles that the alleged premise and the alleged conclusion of Hamawaki's argument play in the Transcendental Deduction seem also to furnish more accurate depictions of the roles actually played by these two points within the dialectical structure of Hamawaki's own contribution to this volume. More than a few of the things that he himself says about the structure of his "argument" indicate that he ought to think this too. To take just one example, at the end of his paper, he offers the following retrospective characterization of the path he has followed:

> At the beginning of this paper, I raised the question of why answering the Kantian skeptical question might hold out the prospect of showing what is wrong with the familiar Cartesian model of our relation to the world, a model on which I am separated from the object of knowledge by the screen of my own sensory experiences. . . . [O]nce it is seen that a first-person relation to one's sensory experiences is necessary if they are to bring anything before the mind at all, the resources for combatting Cartesian skepticism are ready to hand. . . . Cartesian skepticism questions what we cannot fail to know and treats it as a piece with that with regard to which a failure of knowledge at least makes sense.[12]

This suggests that the right way to describe the movement of his paper's dialectical arc is from a consideration of an attempt to question something we cannot fail to know (an attempt which threatens to issue in a skeptical conclusion) to the adducing of further considerations that bring out that we cannot fail to know what we cannot fail to know, thereby revealing that we can make sense of neither the original skeptical question nor the threatened conclusion. If this is accurate, then the overall shape of such an "argument" is not from a premise to a conclusion but from a questioning of something that has the apparent outward form of a supposed answer to a supposed question to an appreciation of why, if we properly comprehend our topic, we are unable to fully comprehend the initiating skeptical question. If so, then this would suggest that Hamawaki understates the difference between his procedure and the one to which he is comparing it. For this would mean that the problem with Stroud's conception of a Kantian transcendental argument is not that it is wrong about how to spell out the details regarding its starting and end points but that it appreciates neither the depth nor the angle at which

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[12] Hamawaki, this volume, 168–169.

Kant seeks to intervene in the standing controversies between dogmatism and skepticism in philosophy.[13]

More generally, there is an undeniable tension between the relation in which Hamawaki represents the project of his paper as standing to my work at the beginning of his paper and the relation in which he represents it as standing to (what Stroud calls) a transcendental argument at the end of his paper. Recall that Hamawaki begins his contribution by saying that he wants to work out the suggestion offered in "Two Varieties of Skepticism" about how to understand what that paper calls "the Kantian way with skepticism"—namely, that it "involves the ascent up a dialectical ladder that one eventually recognizes as one that is to be thrown away."[14] In that connection, he also quotes (as we saw above) a remark in which I say the Kantian way with skepticism "is a radical following through of the implicit assumptions of a skeptical position up to the point at which the position founders in incoherence."[15] He then asks what these "implicit assumptions" are and how radically following through on them is supposed to lead Cartesian skepticism to founder in incoherence. The aim of his paper, he says, is to attempt to sketch out a fruitful way of understanding this strategy.[16] This is the sketch of a strategy in which we start by taking the implicit assumptions of a certain skeptical position at face value and end up showing that they are unable to bear the philosophical weight that we are originally invited to ask them to carry. The starting point of the demonstration turns out not to be weight-bearing in the way it appears it must be at the outset; rather, it turns out to be a rung on a ladder to be climbed up and thrown away— so that what we end up affirming turns out not to admit of a logical contrary in the way that the outset of our demonstration appeared to require that it must. Our eventual entitlement to the so-called premise flows not from our simply assuming it but from our coming to understand why there is nothing that our denying it could amount to.

Leaving Hamawaki's transcendental argument aside for a moment and turning to its nearest counterpart in *The Critique of Pure Reason:* the aim of the Transcendental Deduction (a text which Hamawaki quotes

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[13] I discuss in sections VIII and IX of "Why Kant is not a Kantian" what the aim of a Transcendental Deduction is for Kant and why it cannot take the form of an "argument," if that means a demonstration that moves from a premise to a conclusion. The next few paragraphs offer a ridiculously brief summary of my discussion there.

[14] Conant, "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 53.

[15] This quote is from a bit later in the paper, cf. "Two Varieties of Skepticism," 63.

[16] Hamawaki, this volume, 149.

several times in his paper) is not to show that some philosophical claim is false but to reveal that it is (what I will call) a philosophical fiction. If an *ordinary* fiction is something that falls within the realm of the possible but not that of the actual, then a "*philosophical* fiction"—as I will employ the expression—involves the attempt to contemplate a scenario that does not even fall within the realm of the really possible. Whereas an empirically fictional scenario invites us to consider something that happens not to be the case, a philosophically fictional scenario invites us to undertake framing the idea of something that falls outside the space of all of the genuine possibilities that there are. When we contemplate the scenario put forward in empirical fiction, we are able to grasp what it would be for it to obtain: its possibility can be grasped in thought. When we engage in the "contemplation" of the "scenario" put forward in philosophical fiction, we only apparently grasp what it would be for it to obtain: its possibility can be only seemingly grasped in thought. To show that a particular scenario *is* a philosophical fiction therefore involves showing that its initially seemingly genuine possibility amounts to nothing more than just that: a *seeming* possibility.

The following passage presents the actual Kantian skeptical worry to which the Transcendental Deduction responds:

> That objects of sensible intuition must conform to the formal conditions of sensibility . . . is evident, because otherwise they would not be objects for us. But that they must likewise conform to the conditions which the understanding requires for the synthetic unity of thought, is a conclusion the grounds of which are by no means so obvious. Appearances might very well be so constituted that the understanding should not find them to be in accordance with the conditions of its unity. Everything might be in such confusion that, for instance, in the series of appearances nothing presented itself which might yield a rule of synthesis and so answer to the concept of cause and effect. This concept would then be altogether empty, null, and meaningless. But since intuition stands in no need whatsoever of the functions of thought, appearances would none the less present objects to our intuition.[17]

This is not a Cartesian worry about whether things are as the senses present them as seeming to be, but rather a Kantian worry about how they can so much as even present things as seeming to be a certain way—how that which is given in mere sense is such that it can be taken up as a

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[17] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A90–91/B122–123, 124.

possible object of thought by the understanding at all. The worry is that the understanding might not be able to make anything of what is given to sense. Kant has many ways of putting this worry: that that which is given to us in sense yields no rule of synthesis; that any formal concept seeking to characterize how sensory appearances are related to one another would be empty, null, and meaningless; or that our experience would lack any form of unity and hence would be less than a dream.[18] What falls within the target of this skeptical worry (to which the Deduction seeks to respond) is how to make sense of precisely the formal features of experience that the Cartesian skeptic takes for granted.

What matters for our present purpose is not to explain how the Transcendental Deduction makes progress with this worry but just to clarify what sort of worry it is and what Kant seeks to reveal about it. One way to read this passage is to take the possibility under consideration here to be a fully intelligible one. Then Kant's task is to show that, though things might be as this passage suggests—the formal conditions of sensibility and the formal conditions of understanding might well be entirely orthogonal to one another in the manner described in this passage (so that in the series of appearances, nothing presented itself which might yield a rule of synthesis)—nonetheless, and most fortunately, that is not how things stand. On this understanding of the task of the Transcendental Deduction, its task is to show that this genuinely intelligible possibility does not, in fact, obtain.

The structural role of this argument in Kant's work, on this reading, is thus not unlike that played by Descartes's argument in the *Third Meditation*. There it seemed possible for a gap to open up between the way things appear to us and the way they are, and then a further consideration is brought in to bridge this gap.[19] Thanks to the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent creator, once we have secured the claim that He exists, we can rest assured that certain items on either side of this gap are appropriately in accord with one another. Similarly, on this reading of Kant, there is a genuine gap between the conditions required for something to figure for us as an item in a series of sensory appearances and the conditions required for it to yield to a rule of synthesis. All that is required for it to meet the first set of conditions is that it be in space and time, whereas what is required for it to meet the second set of con-

[18] Ibid., A112, 139.

[19] In this respect, the role of God for Descartes—like the role of a transcendental argument for Stroud's Kantian—is to bridge the near and far sides of a Cartesian gap.

ditions is something entirely different. But it turns out, on this construal of the task of the Deduction, that Kant can deliver an argument that guarantees that the items on one side of his gap are appropriately in accord with those on the other.[20] I will call this reading of the passage above the "Phew!" reading of the text. It turns on the idea that it makes sense to suppose that we might have been screwed and left with a mere blooming, buzzing confusion of sensory appearances, but Kant succeeds in showing that—Phew!—this turns out not to be the case! To reject the "Phew!" reading is to read Kant as seeking to show that the possibility entertained in the above quotation is to be unmasked as a merely apparent possibility.

It is worth noting in passing that the English translation does not do full justice to the hyperbolic subjunctivity of the mood in which this "possibility" is put forward here. The emphatic iteration of internally nested clauses all thrown into the mood of *Konjunktiv II* is the grammatically single most striking feature of the original German passage. Here is Kant's German:

> *Denn es könnten wohl allenfalls Erscheinungen so beschaffen sein, daß der Verstand sie den Bedingungen seiner Einheit gar nicht gemäß **fände**, und alles so in Verwirrung **läge**, daß z.B. in der Reihenfolge der Erscheinungen sich nichts **darböte**, was eine Regel der Synthesis an die Hand **gäbe**, und also dem Begriffe der Ursache und Wirkung **entspräche**, so daß dieser Begriff also ganz leer, nichtig und ohne Bedeutung wäre. Erscheinungen würden nichtsdestoweniger unserer Anschauung Gegenstände darbieten, denn die Anschauung bedarf der Funktionen des Denkens auf keine Weise.*

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[20] The pairs of sides of these two gaps differ. The Cartesian seeks to bridge a gap between how things appear to me and how things are. The Kantian is here understood to be seeking to bridge a gap between what is merely present to sense and what can be present to sense in such a way that I am able to take it up in thought. To reach the far side of such a Kantian gap is to arrive at the near side of the Cartesian gap—to arrive at the possibility of something's being present to me as a thinkable appearance. This profound difference can obscure from view the parallel between these bridge-building strategies. For such a "Kantian" preserves the most fundamental feature of Cartesianism: namely the desire to vindicate the integrity of his cognitive faculty by seeking a perspective on it from the outside. Descartes seeks such an assurance by looking to God—a being who is in a position to compare how things appear to me with how things are and to guarantee their occasional accord. On this reading of the Transcendental Deduction, Section 13's way of seeking such assurance requires the possibility of a perspective from which it can be ascertained that a relation of accord obtains between the form of that which is merely given in sense and the form of how things appear to me when I take that which is given in sense up in thought. And it seeks to provide for the availability of such a perspective without help from God! No wonder the specter of (what I called above) Kantian skepticism looms.

It would be interesting to know if there is another passage in the history of German philosophy that succeeds in piling up quite as many verbs conjugated in the grammatical mood of *Konjunktiv II* in such a short space. In the passage above, each such conjugation of a verb is in boldface. A short, standard explanation of this grammatical form in a typical German grammar book might read roughly as follows: *"Konjunktiv II verwenden wir hauptsächlich, wenn wir uns etwas vorstellen oder wünschen, das nicht möglich ist."*[21] We have here a grammatical form that can be and often is employed for other purposes (such as stating self-evidently improbable counterfactual possibilities) but that also recommends itself as particularly suitable for the expression of the sorts of "possibilities" in which philosophers are prone to traffic. Kant's strikingly sustained iteration of this grammatical form can be read as signaling a question about the aspect of possibility of which the passage's envisioned scenario putatively partakes—as signaling, that is, whether what figures in it is an instance of (what I have called above) philosophical fiction. My suggestion is that the overall task of the Transcendental Deduction is to show that this seemingly genuine possibility amounts to nothing more than just that: a *seeming* possibility.[22] If this is right, then this "transcendental argument" of Kant's is not one that moves from some psychological fact about us to a material claim about what exists.[23] Another way to put the point of the foregoing remarks would therefore be to say the fol-

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[21] "We employ the *Konjunktiv II* form primarily when we want to imagine or wish for that which is not possible." (I have taken this fairly randomly selected explanation of Konjunktiv II from the website *Lingolia*.)

[22] In his most detailed essay on Kant's Transcendental Deduction to date, Stroud recognizes that this passage takes us to the heart of Kant's deduction. In this connection, Stroud says the following about the supposed "possibility" presented in the passage: "The heart of Kant's 'deduction' is the attempt to explain how this apparent possibility presents no real difficulty" ("Kant's Transcendental Deduction," in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding*, 154). This formulation comes close to proposing (what one might call) a resolute reading of the Transcendental Deduction. I say the heart of Kant's Deduction is to show that this apparent possibility is a *merely apparent* possibility. Kant's dialectical task in the Transcendental Deduction, on my reading of it, therefore has something in common both with Descartes's task in his intervention into the theological debate about eternal truths and with Wittgenstein's task in his treatment of the idea that there might be such a thing as logically alien thought. All three seek to show that a seemingly genuine possibility amounts to nothing more than just that: a *seeming* possibility.

[23] To say this is not to deny that Stroud is absolutely right that there is an entire tradition of Kant interpretation that construes the aim of the Transcendental Deduction to be precisely one of moving *from* some broadly psychological "facts" about the nature of our mindedness (how we "must" think) *to* a claim about the nature of reality (and how it "must" be). It is also not to deny that he is absolutely right that any argument of this shape plays into the skeptic's hands—that this seeming candidate for how to answer the skeptic is nothing more than a disguised form of skepticism. Stroud has made this point over a series of arti-

lowing: the Transcendental Deduction does not advance a "transcendental argument" in Stroud's sense of the term; rather, it seeks to show the hopelessness of any such form of argument strategy and hence the untenability of any doctrine that could form its conclusion. Hence Kant's aim in the Deduction is precisely to show that Stroud is right about the untenability of (what Stroud calls) "idealism." Thus Kant is not an "idealist" (in Stroud's sense of the term). What kind of "idealist" is he then? We will return to this question in a moment.

If one reads the Deduction in the manner just proposed, then one can see Kant through such a philosophical clarification and presentation of the very idea of *forms of understanding* as seeking to show that when we try to think through the idea of the non-applicability of these forms—the idea that there could be a dimension of experience that, due its very form, fundamentally conflicts with and hence necessarily eludes our forms of understanding—that putative idea, the one that we take ourselves to have framed here, falls apart on us. This is relevant to our present inquiry for the following reason: it is arguably the closest that Kant ever comes to an extended philosophical engagement with something approximating the question of the intelligibility of the idea of a form of cognition that is logically alien to our own. As we shall see below—especially in the final section of these replies—with regard to Frege's and Wittgenstein's respective attempts to engage the question of whether we can conceive of beings who have a form of thought that is logically alien to our own, Stroud suggests what we should conclude is that "beyond a certain point in trying to conceive of such beings, they become more and more impenetrable to us."[24] One way to misunderstand Stroud's point would be to understand it as follows: there is no such thing as recognizing the thinking of a logically alien being as a case of (what we, when talking about ourselves, call) "thinking," because their way of doing this involves features that are so very different from the sort of features that our way of doing this bears. The misunderstanding in play here flows from holding in place the idea that we can take a positive measure of the difference between our thinking and theirs. This would require that we can, in some sense, get their "thinking" into view *as* a putative case of thinking. The misunderstanding helps itself to the idea that I can form some non-privative conception of the "features" of their thought—and, hence, that

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cles, many of which can be found in his collection of essays *Understanding Human Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[24] Stroud, this volume, 177.

I am able to apprehend some element of what characterizes their "form of thought" (hence, how it positively differs from that which correspondingly characterizes ours). This entire way of approaching the question presupposes that a proper reflective comprehension of the very notion of a form of thought is consistent with regarding it as bearing the positive marks of a certain familiar logical shape: namely, that its comprehension is a matter of intellectually getting its *features* into view.

Kant would already dig in at this point. From his point of view, this would require that the notion of "forms of understanding" is one that has the same logical shape as a very general material concept—one that can admit of further determination into distinct species concepts—where one so-called form differs from another in virtue of its bearing certain material marks. If this were true, then the philosophical clarification and presentation of the very idea of such a concept could proceed simply by way of (what Kant calls) analysis.[25] Such a conception of what is involved in getting the form of our thought into view would, for Kant, require that we illicitly materialize the notion of form. What is of interest for our present purpose is how this way of misreading Kant involves a misunderstanding of his philosophy that parallels the aforementioned misunderstanding of Stroud's point.[26]

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[25] This point (regarding why we cannot proceed via mere analysis) holds equally for any a priori formal concept in Kant—not merely for that of a form of thought or understanding. The concept of the *form of outer intuition*—space—requires a transcendental *exposition*. The exposition of such a concept cannot be provided simply through conceptual analysis—a mode of mere logical clarification and presentation that may be employed to exhibit the content of a material concept—which consists in the activity of laying out the various marks which jointly constitute the content of that concept. Rather, exposition—as opposed to analysis—consists in "the clear (which is not to say the necessarily exhaustive) representation of that which belongs to a concept" [*die deutliche (wenn gleich nicht ausführliche) Vorstellung dessen, was zu einem Begriffe gehört*] (A23/B38). The laying out of what belongs to a formal concept is not a matter of exhibiting the marks that are contained within it—in the way in which the analysis of a material concept seeks to break that concept down into its comparatively determinate ingredient marks. Here in the Transcendental Deduction, our concern is with a different sort of Kantian formal concept—that of a *form of understanding*. While the reflective clarification and presentation of the concept of a form of sensibility requires a transcendental *exposition,* a reflective clarification of a form of understanding requires a Transcendental *Deduction*. I have just tried to say a bit about wherein such a deduction consists. What matters for our present purpose is that it cannot be a matter of presenting the marks or features of a formal concept.

[26] That such a way of (mis)reading Kant is difficult to avoid can be seen from the fact that even as excellent a reader of Kant as Tyke Nunez can at certain junctures fall prey to it. In arguing for the claim that Kant anticipates Frege and Wittgenstein in rejecting the "possibility" of logically alien thought, Nunez writes the following: "[W]hen I represent a thinking being, I take the being to differ from myself. Nonetheless, there will be other

For Kant, as for Stroud, understanding the form of our thought is fundamentally unlike observing some object or activity from which we might be able to stand back and allow ourselves simply to register its features—those that the object or activity, upon which we thereby fix our intellectual gaze, has *anyway* (i.e., apart from our fixing our gaze upon it). Rather, it is a matter of understanding the character of what we are doing in thinking and judging, in and through the very act of doing it. There is no reflective appreciation of the logical character of our judgments that does not involve an apprehension of their character from within the first-person present indicative form of engagement of the judging subject—from within the activity of exercising the capacity that one thus seeks to comprehend. There is no thinking the form of thought from outside of thought. This yields a very different understanding of why there is no position from which we can do something which can qualify as "apprehending a logically alien form of thought"—where this is supposed to qualify as doing something that is at the same time a case of apprehending that which we do in thinking and a case of apprehending a form of activity that is comprehensible to us, as such, only from outside (only from a position that cannot be available to us in and through engaging in that form of activity).

This brings us back to the philosophical task mentioned above—that of recovering what the term "idealism" does mean for Kant (and, more generally, in German idealism) as well as what a "transcendental" philosophical investigation might be, if it is not one that seeks to confer respectability on the aforementioned argument strategy. It also leaves open the question of whether Stroud himself is (according to that alternative understanding of the term) an idealist, as well as the related question of whether some of the forms of philosophical reflection in which Stroud engages ought to count by Kant's own lights as Kantian—as an exercise of our capacity for (dare I say?) transcendental reflection or investigation.

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features of this being that I take it to share with me. And I take Kant to maintain that it is *in virtue of these features* that I can represent other thinking beings. Among these shared features, there will be those that I take us both to share merely in virtue of being self-conscious thinking subjects. And I will at least substitute these aspects of my own thinking subject, which I take to be necessary in any thinking subject, when I consider the other thinker" [my emphases] (op. cit., 20). Being a self-conscious thinking subject is for Kant not a matter of some "subject" bearing some features. "Self-consciousness" is not a determination of the more general concept of "thinking" and "thinking" is not a determination of some more general substance concept (that of a subject). These terms mark logical differences in the *form* of the concepts here at issue, not certain further particularities that may be introduced into a single general shared form.

Even if one did not already have this question, this passage of Stroud's—in which he characterizes a form of philosophical investigation that he himself favors—might well prompt it:

> [I]t is the kind of (dare I say 'transcendental'?) investigation that could take us to the bottom of, and so put behind us once and for all, the appeal of the traditional restriction of perceptual knowledge to something always less than the world around us. This is where real work is needed: on the conditions of possessing and understanding the concepts needed even to be presented with the traditional epistemological problem.[27]

This passage indicates quite a sound grasp of what it is that makes an investigation "transcendental" in the sense that I understand Kant himself to use that term.[28]

A philosophical investigation counts as transcendental in this sense if it investigates the conditions of possessing and understanding certain concepts—those concepts that articulate our understanding of what sort of capacity it is that we ascribe to ourselves in ascribing knowledge to ourselves. This will involve an investigation into the conditions of possessing and understanding not only the general concept of that capacity but also its ingredient capacities, including perception, thought, judgment, and inference (to name just a few)—that is, all of the concepts implicitly or explicitly required in order to even so much as be presented with the traditional epistemological problem. The investigation will share a further aim with Kant's own philosophy if it seeks to vindicate our en-

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[27] Stroud, "Seeing What is So," 92–93.

[28] Stroud's reasons for thinking it is apt to employ the term "transcendental" in connection with such an investigation—one into the conditions of possessing and understanding the very conceptual capacities required for one so much as even to be able to be in a position to find oneself apparently confronted with the traditional epistemological problem—are related to my reasons below for characterizing any such investigation as committed to the truth of what Kant calls *formal idealism*. (It matters to me—and does not seem to matter much to Stroud when he writes about Kant—to distinguish between the various Kantian terms of art for various species of idealism; in particular, between formal idealism and transcendental idealism.) It is worth pointing out that Stroud himself, in the very same essay in which he describes his form of investigation as "transcendental," also expresses considerable puzzlement at the suggestion that I am about to make—at the idea that just this (i.e., the according of this sort of role to an appeal to our conceptual capacities in one's inquiry into the seeming possibility of the traditional epistemological problem) could possibly suffice to qualify one as occupying a position in philosophical space that is properly termed "idealist" (see "Seeing What is So," 97–99). I will suggest in a moment that Stroud is operating here and elsewhere with an overly restrictive understanding of what should be—and has been—called "idealism" in philosophy.

titlement to those concepts (to offer what Kant calls a deduction of them) by further showing that a full and proper grasp of the conditions of their possession and understanding reveals why they are not subject to the sort of skeptical challenge to which they initially appear to be vulnerable.

Such an investigation, if successfully prosecuted, will yield a negative conclusion that is formally idealist in this sense: there is no understanding the concept of a capacity for knowledge from a standpoint that seeks to comprehend what knowledge is from the outside—that is, apart from the form of self-conscious self-understanding that a subject who possesses the concept of such a capacity exhibits precisely in virtue of her knowing the capacity through its exercise—where the capacity one seeks to understand is the very capacity one must, at the same time, exercise in order to achieve such understanding.[29] To introduce some only slightly less contentious terminology, let us call this insight—that there is no explaining something that belongs to the order of knowledge from outside that order—*the truth in idealism*. For Kant, it is through the articulation of the various aspects of the formal character of our cognitive capacity that we come to see that the concepts we seek to elucidate in philosophy are not detachable from the first-person present indicative, self-conscious form of understanding of the subject who knows what such capacities are through their exercise—through forms of knowing.[30] This point can

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[29] This methodological insight plays a central role in Stroud's most recent book *Engagement and Metaphysical Dissatisfaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), though it tends to figure in that book as a point about the relation in which we stand to our capacity for *thinking* (rather than knowing). We—the beings who seek to understand what thinking is—are ourselves thinkers: we must exercise this very capacity in our effort to understand what thinking is. Stroud's word for this is *engagement*—where this term can be understood to contrast with detachment. In philosophy, an effort to understand our rational capacities from a detached point of view must founder in incoherence: "We thinkers are the very people *engaged* in the thinking that we are reflecting upon. It is *our own* position and engagement in the world that we are trying to understand, and we are trying to understand it from the only reflective position we can occupy" (Stroud, "Metaphysische Unzufriedenheit," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 67, no.1 [February 2019]: 64). This is a beautiful statement of the central methodological commitment of Kant's critical philosophy—a methodological commitment to which (I argue in the replies below) Wittgenstein adheres more resolutely than Frege.

[30] As the previous footnote makes clear, there is much that Stroud could find to agree with in this way of putting the Kantian project. The problem is that, if one reads Kant as Stroud does, then, ironically, it is Kant who is far from entitled (and, indeed, far less entitled than Stroud) to regard himself as practicing the philosophical method of critique, as he himself characterizes it. What concerns Stroud is that Kant's way of elucidating the capacities that we cannot detach ourselves from involves some philosophically dubious understanding of those capacities as somehow "contributing" something to our "knowledge" of the world. It is this supposed feature of Kant's philosophy—that these capacities not only constitute

be generalized to yield further related variants of (what I have called above, following a coinage of Kant's) formal idealism—such that there is no understanding what logically full-blooded perceptual knowledge is from a standpoint external to that of the perceiving subject. (This was the topic of the previous section. The guiding question of the next section will be: Could there be a standpoint "onto" the activity of the thinking subject from which to comprehend what thinking is?) The most fundamental mark of idealism, in this sense of the term, thematized by all of the leading German idealists, is the diagnosis and critique of the deep-seated philosophical longing (one that Kant claims belongs to the very nature of reason) to seek to comprehend knowledge or thought from a vantage "outside" or "beyond" the limits of the order of that which it seeks to comprehend. In this sense of idealism, I think Stroud himself—in his later work, when he seeks to prosecute the sort of transcendental investigation mentioned in the passage above—is an idealist.[31] I mean that in the nicest way.

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the conditions of the possibility of the intelligibility or the world as we know it but also supposedly serve to partially "make up" the world we know—that the word "idealism" is meant to indicate on Stroud's understanding of Kant: "[Kant] does not appear to envisage or even find intelligible any form of idealism in which we do not 'contribute' something to our knowing or experiencing the things we do" ("Kant's Transcendental Idealism," 164). Hence, Stroud can happily concede that Kant should deserve great credit for appreciating that our capacities for rational judgment and propositional thought are essential to the possibility of self-consciousness (and vice versa) and yet still insist that all of this good stuff in Kant is independent of what ought properly to be termed his "idealism." The good stuff in Kant, therefore, according to Stroud, gives us no reason look upon that supposed doctrine with favor: "The indispensability of propositional thought, and therefore our being able to fulfill all the necessary conditions of our being capable of it, gives us no reason to conclude that what we thereby think and know about is a 'mind-dependent' world" ("Judgment, Self-Consciousness, Idealism," in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding*, 140). Given how acute a reader he is of a great many philosophers—including much in Kant—I confess I find it quite disheartening that Stroud is still so much in the thrall of this way of reading him. I think Kant is only open to the sort of charge that Stroud here imagines he is, if one fails to appreciate how fundamentally formal idealism differs for Kant qua philosophical commitment from material idealism. A proper exploration of this topic would require us to return to some of the issues about how to understand the form/matter distinction in Kant, touched upon above in the reply to Boyle. The purpose of the present note is simply to underscore the following point: If one reads Kant as an idealist in Stroud's sense of the term, this makes nonsense of Kant's claim that Critical philosophy seeks to bring to reflective self-consciousness only that which is already present in the healthy human understanding. It turns Kant's thinking into a form of radically revisionary metaphysics.

[31] Why use the term "idealism" in this way if it is not what any analytic philosopher means when she uses it? Simon Blackburn's attempt (in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994]) to define "idealism" starts like this—"Any doctrine holding that reality is fundamentally mental in nature . . ." (184)—and it ends like

I have just suggested—at least on a certain understanding of what it means to be a Kantian in philosophy—that Stroud is a Kantian. Now I want to suggest not only that Wittgenstein is, too, but also that Stroud agrees with me about this. Wittgenstein emerges as an idealist, in the sense of the term outlined above, on the reading of him that Stroud offers in his excellent article on Wittgenstein on meaning and understanding.[32] The variant of the truth in idealism at issue here has to do with Wittgenstein's treatment of the philosophical longing for an explanation of language from a standpoint outside of language. Over the course of his article, Stroud quotes and seeks to explicate the following pair of remarks from *Philosophical Grammar:*

> [A]ny kind of explanation of a language presupposes a language already. . . . I cannot use language to get outside language.[33]
>
> What is spoken can only be explained in language, and so in this sense language cannot be explained.[34]

Over the course of his article, Stroud builds a very persuasive case for how these remarks are to be understood. It suffices for our present purpose, however, simply to note how that article begins and ends. It begins by highlighting the very same passage from the *Tractatus* that figures as the epigraph to Conant's article. Here are the opening lines of Stroud's article:

> The Preface to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* says that the aim of the book is "to set a limit to thought, or rather—not to thought, but to the

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this: "The most common modern manifestation of idealism is the view called linguistic idealism, that we 'create' the world we inhabit by employing mind-dependent linguistic and social categories. The difficulty is to give a literal form to this view that does not conflict with the obvious fact that we do not create worlds, but find ourselves in one" (184). Why don't I use the word like this? First, because it takes a time-honored category and essentially turns it into a term of philosophical abuse; second, because it identifies "idealism" *tout court* with what Kant calls "material idealism"—a position that he and other German idealists reject; third, because there is a tradition of German philosophy (of which Kant is the inception) that understands itself to be idealist in the sense I have tried to sketch above; and, fourth, because the relations between figures in that tradition and the analytic tradition are immediately and systematically misperceived when the two species of "idealism" are conflated—so that it comes to be assumed that the philosophical title that the classical German thinker labors to be entitled to self-ascribe is to be equated with the one that the Anglophone thinker disparagingly ascribes, á la Blackburn, to others.

[32] Barry Stroud, "Meaning and Understanding," in *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein,* eds. Oskari Kuusela and Marie McGinn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 294–310.

[33] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar,* ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Anthony Kenny, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 54; discussed by Stroud on page 297.

[34] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar,* 40; discussed by Stroud on page 309.

expression of thoughts." So "it will therefore only be in language that the limit can be set and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense."[35]

Both Stroud's and Conant's articles seem to have this much in common: (1) they seek, as a whole, to bring out what the philosophical stakes are of this guiding thought of the *Tractatus*; (2) they seek to elucidate what it means to say that it is only *within language* that a limit can be set to the expression of thought; and (3) they both take seriously the final words of this passage—that if we attempt to venture beyond that limit what we end up with is *simply* nonsense.

The next thing Stroud's article does is to point out how, in the following intriguing passage, Wittgenstein connects the topic of Conant's epigraph with "the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy":

> The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact that corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence. (This has to do with the Kantian Solution of the Problem of Philosophy.)[36]

Stroud begins his commentary on this passage by clarifying what it does not say—in particular, it does not claim that there is something you *cannot* do (that there is something you cannot state or describe):

> This claim about the limit of language does not say that you simply *cannot* state or describe the fact that corresponds to a given sentence. It does not say that the relation between a sentence and the reality it represents is something that cannot be expressed in language at all. It allows that you *can* say what that relation is but *only* by repeating that sentence. I take "describing the fact that corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence" to be a matter of saying what the sentence says or what it means.[37]

We will return below to Conant's and Stroud's shared emphasis on the importance of not representing "the problem of philosophy" that concerns us here as turning on there being something you *cannot* do (or

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[35] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus,* trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuiness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 3; Stroud, "Meaning and Understanding," 294.

[36] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value,* trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 10.

[37] Stroud, "Meaning and Understanding," 295.

cannot state, or *cannot* describe). For now, let us simply rush ahead and take a peek at the conclusion of Stroud's article. He concludes by returning to the intriguing passage and closing with a suggestion about how it is to be understood:

> Wittgenstein's remark that it is impossible to describe the fact that corresponds to a sentence without simply repeating the sentence is immediately followed by the observation that "this has to do with the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy". Not the problems of philosophy (plural); "the problem of philosophy" (singular). I take this to be the problem of how there can be such a thing as philosophy—how there can be, or what can be the upshot of, philosophical reflection on such matters as thought, meaning, and understanding. A "solution" is "Kantian", presumably, to the extent to which the facts of human meaning and understanding can be understood and accepted only from *within* whatever meaning and understanding we are already capable of.[38]

This proposal for how to understand the term "Kantian" is the philosophical counterpart of my proposal above regarding how best to understand the term "idealist." A "solution" is "Kantian" (in Stroud's understanding of Wittgenstein's understanding of these terms) to the extent that it vindicates its entitlement to the insight that I dubbed above "the truth in idealism."

The next thing Stroud does, at the close of his article, is to quote the second of the pair of passages from *Philosophical Grammar* given above and to offer the following gloss on what Wittgenstein means by it:

> What he has in mind might then be transposed into something Kant could well have said about thought: "what is thought, in our thinking of it, can only be explained in thought, and so in *this* sense thought itself cannot be explained."[39]

Let us call the above proposal for a variant of the Kantian solution "(T)"—for thought—and compare it with its counterpart variant that figures in Stroud's reading of Wittgenstein's own version of a Kantian solution:

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[38] Stroud, "Meaning and Understanding," 309.
[39] Ibid.

(T) What is thought, in our thinking of it, can be explained only in thought, and so in this sense, thought itself cannot be explained.

(L) What is spoken, in our speaking it, can be explained only in language, and so in this sense, language itself cannot be explained.[40]

Stroud says that (T) is something that Kant could well have said about thought. That seems right. But it still leaves room for the following question: Is (T) the best way to characterize the Kantian counterpart to (L)? We saw at the conclusion of Section VIII that, whereas on Wittgenstein's vision we are fundamentally speakers, on Kant's we are rational knowers—that the capacity for knowledge is to the *Critique of Pure Reason* what the capacity for language is to *Philosophical Grammar* or *Philosophical Investigations.* If so, then this suggests that (K) would be the more apt way to sum up Kant's version of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy:

(K) What is known, in our knowing it, can be explained only within the order of knowledge, and so in this sense, knowledge itself cannot be explained.

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[40] A defense of some version of (L) runs throughout a number of Stroud's recent essays—especially those on Wittgenstein. Here is one expression of his commitment to the idea that all understanding of language must be—as Stroud puts it—*from inside* language: "When you . . . say what a particular expression means, or what a particular person means by an expression he uses, you must *use* some words whose meaning you yourself understand which you take to express what the expression, or the other person, means. And you could not recognize what the expression or the person means if you were not master of the grammar and vocabulary needed to *say* what the expression or the person means. To that extent speakers must share with other speakers they understand a capacity to use the terms or concepts needed to express their shared understanding of those meanings and thoughts" ("Davidson and Wittgenstein on Meaning and Understanding," in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding,* 272). Stroud contrasts this form of understanding with (what he seeks to show is the philosophically confused idea of) trying "to understand the things human beings say and do *'from outside'* language—outside all meaning and intention." He connects this with Wittgenstein's criticism in *Philosophical Grammar* of (what Wittgenstein seeks to show is the philosophically confused idea of) "trying to treat a human utterance or action as a mere 'phenomenon or fact.'" Stroud quotes approvingly in this connection the following passage: "Whatever phenomenon we saw, it couldn't ever be an intention, for that has to contain the very thing that is intended, and any phenomenon would be something that is complete in itself and unconcerned with anything outside itself, something merely dead if considered by itself. Every phenomenon seems dead in comparison with the living thought" (*Philosophical Grammar,* 144). Toward the end of the reply to Gustafsson, we will return to Wittgenstein's idea that we incline in philosophy to a point of view on language and thought in which the linguistic sign, the expression of thought, must appear dead—as something into which life must first be breathed.

Notice that (T) looks to be an apt way to summarize something Frege thinks. This raises the question whether there is a non-equivocal way of understanding (T) such that it expresses a form of philosophical insight that can be attributed to both Kant and Frege.[41] An exploration of this question will take us to the heart of the issues about which Conant and Stroud disagree.

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[41] To anticipate: For both Frege and Kant, a proper account of (T) may be said to depend on (K)—but only on very different understandings of (K). For Frege, our capacity for thought depends only on our capacity for purely logical knowledge; for Kant, it depends on our capacity for knowledge tout court. This, in turn, transforms what a capacity for thought is. For Frege, sense can be made of the idea of a self-standingly intelligible capacity for thought; for Kant, it cannot (indeed, this is the central point of his critique of Leibnizian rationalism).

Reply to Stroud on Kant and Frege: On the Relation of Thought to Judgment

Our topic in the previous reply was how to read Kant. Our topic in this one regards the implications of that reading of Kant for an understanding of Frege and Wittgenstein. We saw in the previous section that if one thinks that in order for some philosopher to be a full-blooded Kantian, he must also be an "idealist" of the sort Stroud criticizes in his celebrated article on transcendental arguments, then that will likely color how one hears certain terms of art if they are employed in an exposition of that philosopher's thought. In this reply, we will explore this topic further.

One example we gave above was the term "constitutive"—and how one might take it to be philosophically freighted in a certain way—hearing it as endorsing an order of explanation in which the necessity of certain truths is to be accounted for in terms of the brute fact that we cannot help but think in certain ways. We saw how this could lead one to hear claims of the form "X is constitutive for Y" as a way of saying that if certain facts about the nature of our mindedness did not obtain, then certain truths about the nature of so-called "mind-independent" reality would not obtain. Given his own reading of Kant, one might fear that this is what Stroud hears when he reports Conant saying things such as this:

> Conant says "Frege inherits the Kantian idea that accord with the laws of logic is constitutive of the possibility of thought" and "therefore inherits (a great deal of) Kant's philosophical conception of the status

of the laws of logic (as constitutive of the possibility of rational thought").[1]

If this is what Stroud hears Conant as saying, then I am sure Conant would reject the relevant sort of "constitutivist" reading of Frege on logic as vehemently as Stroud, but Conant would reject the corresponding reading of Kant no less vehemently. Stroud's apprehensions about Conant's article, however, do not seem to turn on any particular way of construing the formula "accord with the laws of logic is constitutive of the possibility of thought." (Indeed, Stroud rather tentatively canvases various proposals for what Conant might mean by these words.) His apprehensions seem rather to turn on a far more general concern—namely, that whatever Conant's preferred way of unpacking this formula, there is no one thing for it to mean that simultaneously furnishes an accurate description of both Kant's and Frege's conceptions of logic.[2]

Conant sees Kant as having made a beginning on a promising response to the debate that gives rise to a voluntaristic/psychologistic account of logic, regards Frege as having taken a step backward from Kant's attempt to dissolve that debate, and reads Wittgenstein as zeroing in on what was problematic in that backward step. So Conant's big picture of the passage from Kant to Wittgenstein involves a bump in the road that goes through Frege. Stroud, on the other hand, seems inclined, on the whole, to regard Kant as the one offering an answer to a shared question that is comparatively philosophically "problematic," whereas Frege's response to the question comes in for Stroud's praise as appropriately flatfooted, thereby supposedly anticipating that of Wittgenstein. So, for Stroud, the story to be told about how we move from Kant through Frege to Wittgenstein looks to be one of gradual progress in the attainment of philosophical clarity. As should be clear from the foregoing replies, though I disagree with many of the details of both their readings, my big picture remains closer to that of Conant than to that of Stroud.

Stroud's response to Conant begins as follows:

> At the beginning of "The Search for Logically Alien Thought" James Conant tells us that Descartes thought the laws of logic were only contingently necessary, Aquinas thought they were necessarily necessary,

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[1] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 59; Stroud, this volume, 173.

[2] As we have already seen in Section VIII, I, too, think Conant's attempt to develop a reading of these two philosophers that attributes to them a shared conception of logic is vulnerable to such a charge, though not exactly for the reasons Stroud does.

Kant thought they were simply necessary, Frege "wanted to agree" with Kant, but this "raised the worry that there was no way in which to express his agreement that made sense," and Wittgenstein agreed with that "worry."[3] . . . What I find most problematic in this array of views is the idea of the laws of logic as "contingently necessary"—or indeed, the idea of anything's being "contingently necessary."[4]

What Stroud finds "most problematic" is the position represented by voluntarism in the theological triangle and psychologism in the logical triangle. Considering this position in its own right, Conant finds this answer no less "problematic" than Stroud does. Considering it in relation to the others, Stroud says he finds this one to be the *most* problematic in the array of views mentioned at the outset of the article. Here we already glimpse the beginning of a disagreement between Conant and Stroud. For Conant seeks to show that, though the voluntaristic/psychologistic answer may be the more evidently problematic, the strand of Frege's philosophy that aims to account for the special status of the laws of logic in terms of their material generality inherits a problematic feature of the account that he rejects.

Stroud says the following about the question that initiates the dialectic of Conant's article:

> What Conant's question apparently seeks is some explanation of the necessity of necessary truths, or of the impossibility of their being false. What seems to be wanted is some account of "the ground"[5] or "source" of their necessity. This is what the idea of necessary truths as only "contingently necessary" seems to leave room for. It appears to countenance the possibility of explaining how or why something is necessary or holds necessarily even though what explains it is something that could have been otherwise, or could have failed to be so.[6]

Conant would take this to be an accurate observation regarding the kind of answer that voluntaristic/psychologistic accounts of logic aim to give—and thus on the kind of sense such accounts end up conferring on the questions that initiate the debates that give rise to the theological and logical triangles. Stroud's discontent with an answer of this shape is tied to his commitment to (what I mischievously called above) the truth in

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[3] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 28.
[4] Stroud, this volume, 170.
[5] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 48.
[6] Stroud, this volume, 171.

idealism—that there is no explaining something that belongs to the order of knowledge from outside that order. Stroud reads Conant as favoring an interpretation according to which Frege himself pursues an account of the "ultimate ground" of logical laws of precisely this shape. This is a misreading of Conant.

Stroud and Conant do have a disagreement that lies somewhere in this general area—about how to appraise the relation between Frege's conception of logic and the truth in idealism—but it is not quite as straightforward as Stroud imagines. Moreover, Conant (as we have already seen in Section VIII) is hardly very clear about these issues himself. In what follows, I will be less concerned with defending Conant than with getting to the heart of what I take to be the underlying issues that really incline Conant and Stroud to lean in the different directions that they do in their assessments of the philosophical adequacy of certain aspects of Kant's and Frege's respective conceptions of logic. With this aim in mind, the question I would like to raise is the following: How should we assess Kant's and Frege's respective degrees of faithfulness to the insight that I have dubbed the truth in idealism?

In order to have some non-contentious benchmark of what constitutes faithfulness to this insight, the following should be noted: All three of us (Conant, Stroud, and I) share the view that Wittgenstein is an example *par excellence* of a philosopher who is able to do a compelling job of showing why and how the philosophical aspiration to pursue explanations of the aforementioned shape cannot deliver on what they advertise. Where the three of us most differ is in our relative estimations of the extent to which Kant and Frege should each be credited with having anticipated Wittgenstein's penetration in this regard.

A secondary thing on which we three all agree is this: Frege vehemently rejects the idea that a vindication of the laws of thought could proceed from a position outside the order of logic. Stroud seems to think that as long as our account of logic does not involve an illicit attempt to step outside the sphere of the logical, then it retains all the fidelity to the insight in question that one could ask for. Conant and I, in our different ways, each worry that if such an account construes the order of the logical as prior to and independent of the general order of knowledge—so that the formal logical unity of thought may be pried free from the matter of empirical judgment—then it has failed fully to take the measure of the truth in idealism.

Stroud sees Frege as laudably concerned to head off what we might call—borrowing a word that we have seen Stroud employ in a different

context—a restricted conception of the logical. At the end of the quotation (cited in Section IX above) in which he characterizes the sense in which the Cartesian conception of experience is restricted, Stroud remarks, "There is a gap, then, between the most that we can ever find out on the basis of sensory experience and the way things really are."[7] As we saw, such a conception leaves us with the conclusion that even the best case of an exercise of our perceptual capacity is insufficient to yield knowledge of outer objects. We are thereby saddled with a conception of experience in which it comes to look as if we must venture beyond the sphere of the exercise of our perceptual faculty in order to ascertain which of its exercises are justified. Stroud, similarly, seeks to reject—and reads Frege as rejecting—a conception according to which even the best case of an exercise of our capacity for logical thought leaves open the question of whether we judge rightly in so judging. The conception Stroud thereby rejects may also be said to be "restricted" in the following sense: it contrives to make it seem (as psychologism about logic does) as if we must venture beyond the sphere of the exercise of our capacity for logical thought in order to secure an ultimate ground for the justification of its exercise. Stroud seems to read Conant as ascribing to Frege a conception of the logical that is restricted in this sense. It is against such a reading of Frege that I take Stroud to inveigh when he writes,

> Frege does speak of the "ground" or even the "ultimate ground" of certain truths. A truth counts as analytic, he says, if "the ultimate ground upon which rests the justification for holding it to be true" is only laws of logic (and perhaps definitions). Laws of logic alone are the "ultimate ground" of analytic truths, but that says nothing about the "ground" or justification of laws of logic themselves, or even our "ground" for holding them to be true. "The question of why and with what right we acknowledge a law of logic to be true," Frege says, "logic can answer only by reducing it to another law of logic." That leaves the "ground" or justification of those laws themselves so far unexplained. It says nothing to suggest that there even could be such an explanation. Nor does it suggest that the "ultimate ground" of the laws of logic, if there is one, lies in "pure thought alone."[8]

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[7] Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*, 32.
[8] Stroud, this volume, 174–175.

We will come back to the question of what lies in "pure thought alone" a bit later. Let us, for the moment, ignore the last sentence of this passage and focus simply on those that precede it. They do a fine job of articulating Frege's rejection of a restricted conception of the logical. Whatever talk of an "ultimate ground" of logical truths can mean, for Frege, it cannot mean a ground that lies beneath or beyond or outside logic. Conant and I agree with Stroud and Frege about this.[9]

Such an insight into the untenability of a restricted conception of the logical, however, is consistent with either one of two ways of understanding how that insight is related to what we called above the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy. In particular, it is related to two different ways of understanding (T):

> (T) What is thought, in our thinking of it, can be explained only in thought, and so in this sense thought itself cannot be explained.

We saw Stroud suggest above that (T) might be a felicitous way to formulate the Kantian counterpart to the following Wittgensteinian version of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy:

> (L) What is spoken, in our speaking it, can be explained only in language, and so in this sense language itself cannot be explained.

Or to put things a bit more carefully, what Stroud actually suggested is just this: that (T) is something that Kant could well have said about thought. And I said that that seems right, but then went on to suggest that (K) might nonetheless be a yet more apt way to summarize Kant's version of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy:

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[9] Stroud thinks Conant is concerned with disputing this:

> The idea that their "ultimate ground" lies in "pure thought alone" or that they are "constitutive of the possibility of thought" is what seems to lead into the quandary about the laws of logic. It can perhaps make it seem simply impossible to think (or think rationally) without accepting or abiding by those laws, that genuine thought could not possibly violate them. This is the way I think Conant understands Frege's opposition to the so-called psychologistic logicians. Those "logicians" hold that some men or other beings could be capable of judgments contradicting our laws of logic. And I think Conant sees Frege as wanting to argue in opposition that such beings are simply impossible; there could be no such logical aliens. (Stroud, this volume, 175)

> I will turn below to an exploration of what it is that leads Stroud to arrive at this reading of Conant on Frege—according to which Conant sees Frege as wanting to argue in opposition to the psychologistic logician that such beings are simply impossible, that there could be no such logical aliens.

(K) What is known, in our knowing it, can be explained only within the order of knowledge, and so in this sense knowledge itself cannot be explained.[10]

If it is right that (as Stroud put it before) "where real work is needed" lies with an investigation into the conditions of possessing and understanding the concepts which figure in the formulation of the problem of philosophy (which may then admit of the Kantian solution), then this suggests it might help sharpen the issue before us if we reformulate (T) and (K) so that they pertain to the capacities required to possess and exercise the concepts here at issue. This yields the following variant formulations of (T) and (K):

(T*) What is thought, in the exercise of the capacity through which we think it, can be explained only through further exercises of that capacity, and so in this sense thought itself cannot be explained.

(K*) What is known, in the exercise of the capacity through which we know it, can be explained only through further exercises of that capacity, and so in this sense knowledge itself cannot be explained.

For Kant, a properly unrestricted conception of the logical is to be arrived at through an appreciation of how (K*) holds for any sphere in which our general capacity for knowledge operates, be it theoretical or practical, and, within theoretical reason, be it perceptual or intellectual. For Kant, to have properly appreciated the truth of (K*) *is* to appreciate the truth of (T*). For Frege, a properly unrestricted conception of the logical is to be arrived at not—as for Kant—through an appreciation of the character of knowledge as such, where the power of logical thought is to be understood as one form of exercise among others of a general capacity for knowledge and not intelligible apart from its relation to the others. Rather, for Frege, to grasp the truth of (T*) is to grasp something that holds specifically of the laws of logic in virtue of their distinctive sort of generality and priority. As we noted in Section VIII, for Frege, our capacity for logical thought is a self-standingly intelligible capacity; whereas, for Kant, our capacity for

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[10] This could also be put as follows: What is judged, in our judging it, can be explained only within the order of judgment, and so in this sense judgment itself cannot be explained. At one point Stephen Engstrom offers the following comment on Kant's behalf: "Anything that might at first seem to be a radical (non-question-begging) comparison of a judgment with its object turns out to be a comparison of one judgment with another. As Kant says in the first Critique, this is a mere milking of a he-goat (A58/B83)" ("Kant's Distinction Between Theoretical and Practical Knowledge," *Harvard Review of Philosophy* 10, no. 1 [2002], 54).

logical thought is part of a capacity for knowledge, in which each part exists for every other, and all for the sake of each, as in an organized body.

This suggests that the agreement between Kant and Frege here may be less thoroughgoing than it initially appeared. They are each committed to (T) or (T*), but on two very different understandings thereof. We might try to spell out these two different understandings as follows:

(T$_F$) What is thought, in the exercise of our capacity for purely logical thought through which we think it—where that capacity is a self-standingly intelligible capacity—can be explained only through further exercises of that capacity, and so in this sense purely logical thought cannot be explained.

(T$_K$) What is thought, in the exercise of our general power of knowledge through which we think it, can be explained only through further exercises of that general power, and so in this sense thought cannot be explained—that is, apart from its relation to one and the same general power that is exercised in one way in thinking and in, for example, yet another in acts of perceiving.

The first schema requires that our account of thought remain within the sphere of thought; the second requires that it remain within the sphere of knowledge but further requires that we comprehend how both acts of thinking what is so and perceiving what is so can both be acts of one and the same capacity for judging what is so. The first conception individuates capacities in such a way that thinking is a self-standing capacity; the second individuates them in such a way that no cognitive capacity ingredient in rational knowledge is self-standingly intelligible. The "pure" in "pure thought," for Frege, marks the self-standing priority of logic— that which we know through logic alone rests on no ground other than that of pure thought (unlike everything else we know, which rests on a hybrid of logical and non-logical grounds). The "pure" in "pure thought," for Kant, marks an abstraction of the form of thought from its matter—thus is precisely not something that is self-standingly intelligible. Thus, the following specification of (T) in terms of a supposed insight about pure thought makes perfect sense on Frege's understanding of the purity of logic, but it makes no sense at all on Kant's understanding of the purity of pure general logic:

(T$_p$) What is thought, in our thinking of a purely logical thought can be explained only in pure logic, and so in this sense purely logical thought itself cannot be properly explained unless we restrict our

view to what is available from within the perspective of a subject who thinks purely logical thoughts.

Setting aside for a moment what Kant is obliged to think about (T_p), what should Stroud think about it? Should this count as an innocuous variant of (K*)? Or does it seek to account for one of our capacities in a way that severs its internal relation to other capacities in a manner that a properly conducted transcendental investigation ought not to countenance? Below we will consider Stroud's reading of Wittgenstein's famous passages on private language. One of the capacities whose conditions of possession are investigated by Wittgenstein in that context (as well as in the opening sections of *Philosophical Investigations*) is the capacity to fix the reference of a word by pointing at an object and naming it. Let us consider the following variant of (K*), transformed into a thesis about the conditions of the possession of the capacity to fix reference by ostension:

(K_o) What we come to know, in coming to know the name of something through the exercise of our capacity to fix the reference of a word by pointing at an object and naming it, can be explained only through further exercises of that capacity, and so in this sense that capacity cannot be explained.

What capacity cannot be explained? How capacious a conception of "the" capacity is in play here? Could there be a self-standingly intelligible capacity to fix the reference of a word by pointing at an object and naming it, whose exercise depended upon the mastery of nothing other than that one trick? On this way of understanding what (K_o) says, it would express a conception of the capacity in question that would precisely miss the point of Stroud's reading of Wittgenstein. According to the point-missing understanding, the capacity in question is one that we can continue to have in view even as we strip away all of the usual forms of "stage-setting" that Stroud's Wittgenstein seeks to shows us are required for its non-defective exercise. What Stroud's Wittgenstein thereby reveals is that if we try in this way to isolate the capacity from its entanglement in other capacities, what we end up with is nothing more than an empty ceremony of mouthing a sound.

Let us contrast this with another way of understanding what (K_o) says. According to this alternative, a capacious understanding is required of the point in the formulation of (K_o), in which the following words occur: "[O]ur capacity to fix the reference of a word by pointing at an object and naming it." The capacious construal needs to bring within its ambit

everything that is genuinely required in order for a non-defective exercise of this capacity to be genuinely possible. Hence, though the formulation might seem to be concerned with one of our capacities to the exclusion of all others, according to this reading, the way (K_o) is to be understood—indeed, how it *must* be understood, if we wish to regard it as expressing a genuine variant of (K^*)—is so as to include everything that is required for the possession and exercise of the capacity in question: the myriad ways in which the real possibility of the possession and exercise of that capacity involves its intertwined connections with a great many other capacities.

What the first (and arguably more natural) reading of (K_o) shows is that not every substitution instance of (K^*) necessarily expresses a variant of the truth in idealism. This, in turn, raises the question of whether, on certain understandings of (T), (T) should count as a version of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy. More specifically still, it raises the question of whether Frege's conception of purely logical thought (as a self-standingly intelligible capacity) is vulnerable to the same objections that (K_o), on the insufficiently capacious understanding of the conditions required to exercise the capacity, ought to be. Does Frege's conception of logical thought carve out one of our capacities in a manner that strips away intertwined connections with further capacities required for its possession and exercise? The answer to this question should determine the answer to our earlier question about whether Frege's understanding of (T) should count as a genuine variant of (K). The aim of the preceding discussion was to suggest that the differences between the two aforementioned ways of construing (K_o) correspond to the differences in the construal of (T) that figure in (T_F) and (T_K) respectively.

Wittgenstein would want to raise a similar question about whether Kant's understanding of (K) should count as a variant of (L). If (L) is to be understood in the way that Stroud originally wanted to understand it and to ascribe it to Wittgenstein—that is, if (L) is to be sufficiently capacious to include within its ambit all of the capacities whose possession and exercise must figure in a properly conducted transcendental investigation—then how must (K) be understood so that it is a genuine variant of (L)? There is a comparatively capacious understanding of (K^*)—call it (K_W)—according to which a rational capacity for knowledge is essentially tied to a capacity to express what one knows in language. But there is little textual evidence that this is how Kant understands (K^*). On what is plausibly Kant's understanding—call it (K_K)—the rational capacity for knowledge is prior and independent of the capacity

for the expression of knowledge in language. This might bring Kant within the target range of Wittgenstein on the ground that Kant himself, of all people—in taking (K_K) rather than (K_W) to be an adequate variant of (K^*)—had insufficiently appreciated the requirements of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy and hence had infelicitously executed a transcendental investigation into the full set of conditions required for possessing and exercising concepts such as understanding, judgment, and knowledge. Our present concern, however, is with whether Frege belongs—for parallel reasons—within the target range of my Kant or Stroud's Wittgenstein on the grounds that Frege infelicitously executes his investigation into the conditions of (what he calls) "pure thought."

The primary interlocutor in Wittgenstein's sections on private language works with an insufficiently capacious conception of the network of interlocking capacities that are required to set the stage for a non-defective exercise of our capacity to fix reference through ostension. The Wittgensteinian criticism of Kant hinted at above is that he works with an insufficiently capacious conception of the network of interlocking capacities required for non-defective exercises of a rational capacity for knowledge. The virtue of Kant's conception—the virtue that originally qualified it as a genuine variant of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy—is that it aspires to unrestrictedness.[11] What we have now seen is that a conception of a cognitive capacity can qualify as unrestricted in aspiration and yet be insufficiently capacious in conception. A conception of a capacity, in aspiring not to go outside the order to which the capacity belongs so as to explain the capacity, may unwittingly frame its conception of the target capacity in terms that sever it from the conditions required for its genuine possession.[12] The three questions that I would like now to raise are the following: Granting for the purpose of argument that it is genuinely unrestricted in aspiration,[13] should Frege's account of logical

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[11] *Unrestrictedness* here is to be understood as the opposite of what we earlier—two sections ago—saw Stroud call "restrictedness." Restricted conceptions of a cognitive power institute the appearance of a gap bridgeable only through the supplementation of the exercise of the one capacity with another.

[12] This is a difficult balance to strike correctly in philosophy. Frege is concerned with not admitting anything psychological into his conception of the logical. This is the mark of the unrestrictedness of his aspiration—his refusal to admit anything external to the order of logic in his account of logic. But he builds his guardrail of protection against falling into the psychological sufficiently far in from the actual danger point that he severs the unity of our capacity for knowledge. Hence the need for—as I put it in Section VII—a de-psychologizing of Frege's conception of the psychological.

[13] The concession here is temporary. It will be retracted in the final paragraphs of this section.

thought be judged as sufficiently capacious in conception by Kant's lights? By Stroud's? By mine?

We can now return to the last sentence of the passage from Stroud—the one that we set aside for a moment (that ended with the words "pure thought alone"). The subtitle of Frege's 1879 *Begriffsschrift* runs as follows: "[A] formula language, modeled upon that of arithmetic, for pure thought." As we saw in Section V, for Frege, we must distinguish (i) the order within which purely logical truths find their justification and (ii) those orders within which less general truths find theirs, such as those of geometry, physics, etc.—where (i) has a self-standingly intelligible character qua form of knowledge apart from (ii), but not vice versa. The justification of the propositions of *Begriffsschrift,* in resting on logic alone, rest on pure thought alone. In deriving the theorems of a properly constituted logical system from its axioms by logical means alone, we show the theorems of such a system to rest on pure thought alone. We thereby show these propositions to be analytic—where, for Frege, this means that our rational entitlement to them depends upon nothing further than their ground in pure thought alone. In this respect, they contrast sharply with non-analytic propositions—our rational entitlement to which depends precisely upon their dependence on intuitive and/or sensory as well as logical grounds.[14]

This feature of Frege's conception of the priority and independence of logic is perfectly consistent with the point that Stroud wants to insist upon at the end of his most recent quotation above: namely, that the laws of logic are not to be understood as operating within a restricted sphere—one whose ultimate ground lies in something called "pure thought alone," conceived as a ground situated outside the restricted sphere. Even if Conant's reading is not concerned with ascribing to Frege a conception of the logical that is restricted in this sense—even if it is not open to the objection from which Stroud seems most concerned to save Frege—this still leaves room for the question of whether Frege's conception is insufficiently capacious. It leaves open whether a comparison of Kant's and Frege's respective understandings of how (K) and (T) stand to one another brings out something philosophically "problematic" in Frege's overall conception of the place of logic within the order of knowledge.

Frege's understanding of (T) is inconsistent with the following thought of Kant's: namely, that each act of analysis presupposes a prior synthesis—

[14] This is all that Conant ever meant by speaking of logical propositions as having an ultimate ground in pure thought alone. In so speaking, he is echoing Frege's own words.

so that the very intelligibility of a capacity to traffic in merely analytic judgments presupposes prior exercises of a capacity for synthetic judgment. Kant can agree with Frege that there is a logical dimension in which a capacity to recognize the truth of a synthetic judgment depends upon a capacity for logical thought. But, for Kant, unlike for Frege, this does not preclude that there is another logical dimension in which the very intelligibility of a capacity for analytic judgment depends upon its relation to other cognitive capacities.

At the end of the previous section, it was suggested that an investigation counts as transcendental, in a philosophically non-vicious sense of the term, if it investigates the conditions of possessing and understanding certain concepts—namely, those that articulate our understanding of what sort of capacity we ascribe to ourselves in ascribing knowledge to ourselves. The question I have been building up to is the following: To what extent does Frege's own manner of investigating the conditions of possessing and understanding concepts such as "object," "thought," and "judgment" afford an exemplary illustration of what it is to practice philosophy so conceived? In section V, we saw that, for him, an account of a "purely logical" power suffices for an understanding of what "content," "object," "concept," thought," "judgment," and "truth" are, and we can work out from there to an account of how these same notions may be put to further use in the characterization of our other cognitive capacities. As we also saw in Section V, Frege's conception presupposes the adequacy of a very particular philosophical methodology; namely, one in which we can begin on our larger philosophical task, without prejudicing its outcome, by investigating the conditions of possessing and understanding the capacities (such as thought and judgment) as they figure in purely logical thought conceived as a self-standingly intelligible sphere in its own right.

What Kant says about our general power of knowledge—each part exists for every other, and all for the sake of each, as in an organized body—holds for Frege's conception of the internal order of the *logical* power but not for the relation in which that power stands to our other cognitive powers. It holds for everything that belongs to logic: no elucidation of logically primitive notions (such as "content," "object," "concept," thought," "judgment," "inference," and "truth") is possible except in terms of others—a proper understanding of any of them ultimately depends on a proper understanding of all of them. Hence, no logically fundamental aspect of the logical order can be reduced to something non-logical and none can be elucidated except in the light of its place within the unity of that order. This is also why Frege will insist that no fundamental logical

notion can be defined. (Interestingly, this is what Kant claims for *all* of the concepts philosophy employs.[15]) In this respect, Frege's conception of the logical sphere is formally idealist.

In the following two remarks of his about the relation of whole to part in a thought, we can hear Frege insisting that the sort of whole in which logic takes an interest has the logical character of (what, as we noted in Section VIII, Kant[16] calls) a *totum* rather than a *compositum:*

> To be sure, we really talk figuratively when we transfer the relation of whole and part to thoughts; yet the analogy is so ready to hand and so generally appropriate that we are hardly bothered by the hitches that occur from time to time.[17]
>
> But the words 'made up of', 'consist of', 'component', 'part' may lead to our looking at it the wrong way. If we choose to speak of parts in this connection, all the same these parts are not mutually independent in the way that we are elsewhere used to find when we have parts of a whole.[18]

Ryle brings out what is formally idealist in Frege's difficult but crucial point as follows:

> Frege's difficult but crucial point . . . [is] that the unitary something that is *said* in a sentence or the unitary sense that it expresses is not an assemblage of detachable sense atoms, of, that is, parts enjoying separate existence and separate thinkability, and yet that one truth or falsehood may have discernible, countable, and classifiable similarities to and dissimilarities from other truths and falsehoods. Word meanings or concepts are not proposition components but propositional differences. They are distinguishables, not detachables; abstractables, not extractables.[19]

What Ryle here says on Frege's behalf (concerning the relation of part to whole in a thought) nicely echoes what we saw Boyle say on Kant's behalf (about the relation of the capacity of thought to the general power of knowledge).[20] This is what can make it appear as if Frege offers a

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[15] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A730/B758, 587–588.

[16] Ibid., B466, 405.

[17] Frege, *Collected Papers,* 390.

[18] Ibid., 386.

[19] Gilbert Ryle, "Letters and Syllables in Plato," *The Philosophical Review* 69, no. 4 (Oct. 1960), 435–436.

[20] Given that the passage from Kant above compares the relation of the parts to the whole in our power of knowledge to the relation of parts to whole in an organized body, it is perhaps worth remarking that there is also a passage where Frege himself compares the relation

version of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy as it arises as a problem about logic.

What Frege says about the relation of the parts of a thought to the whole holds no less for his conception of the relation of parts to whole in an inferential order: these parts, too, are not mutually independent in the way that we elsewhere find when the unity of the parts is prior to the unity of the whole. Kant would agree with Frege about the character of the unity of a judgment and that of the unity of the inferential order. But for Kant, this is a mark of how the unity of the logical order partakes of the unity of the order of knowledge generally. For Kant, our perceptual and logical powers themselves form part of a *totum;* for Frege, they do not. For Frege, on the contrary, the unity of the logical "part" of our cluster of powers for knowledge is prior to our other cognitive powers. Frege agrees with Kant that the parts of a logical unity are parts of a *totum* not a *compositum;* but he disagrees with Kant about how that logical unity is an ingredient in the overall portfolio of capacities we can draw into operation in order to get to the truth.

The stakes here come somewhat more sharply into focus if we reformulate what Ryle says above so as to transform it into the corresponding claim about the unity of a non-defective exercise of our capacity for perceptual judgment qua act of knowledge. Consider the following variant on the above quotation from Ryle as a way of summarizing the central point of Section IX:

> Kant's difficult but crucial point . . . [is] that the unitary something that is *perceived* in a logically full-blooded exercise of our perceptual capacity for knowledge is not an assemblage of a detachable perceptual part and a detachable judgmental part—of, that is, parts enjoying separate existence and make self-standingly intelligible contributions to the act of knowledge. They are distinguishables, not detachables; abstractables, not extractables.

This is not something Frege holds. On the contrary, one comes much closer to his view of the matter if one transforms the passage in the following manner:

> A perceptual judgment expresses a thought whose justification depends upon two distinct sorts of grounds—logical and sensory. The exercises

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between a thought and its parts to the relation between a living body and its parts; see *Philosophical Writings,* 144–145.

of our capacities for knowledge wherein the recognition of its truth consists are not merely abstractable aspects of a single unitary act. For the knowledge rests on a combination of a logical and a perceptual part, where at least one of these parts makes a separate and self-standingly intelligible contribution to the act of knowledge. It is genuinely detachable and extractable. The order of logical truth is a self-standing order.

Frege's views on perception of outer objects (or, for that matter, any form of knowledge—inner or outer—that involves sensation) are a mess, and I am not proposing to delve into them in any detail. My purpose here is only to raise the question of whether they are not fated to remain a mess, as long as they form part of a conception according to which the conditions of purely logical thought are independent of the conditions of non-logical forms of knowledge in the manner in which Frege's philosophy requires they be.

Stroud (in the passage cited at the end of the previous section) described what the form of an investigation into our cognitive capacities would need to be "that could take us to the bottom of, and so put behind us once and for all, the appeal of" a restricted conception of perception. The question before us now is whether the form of Frege's investigation into our specifically logical capacities can equally take us to the bottom of, and so put behind us once and for all, the appeal of a restricted conception of intellection. Or to put the question more generally, is it a condition of really putting behind us once and for all the appeal of restricted conceptions that we come to appreciate the manner in which they rest upon insufficiently capacious conceptions of the conditions of the non-defective exercise of the capacities they investigate? If so, then even if a philosophical conception has the virtue of aspiring to unrestrictedness, it can fully realize its aspiration only if it is also sufficiently capacious. Leibniz seeks to overcome the restrictedness of the realist and voluntarist alternatives within the theological triangle. Frege seeks to overcome the restrictedness of the realist and psychologist alternatives within the logical triangle. But this leaves them both still vulnerable to Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective forms of criticism of each of them. For the eggshells of the views that Leibniz and Frege each sought to smash cling to their own conceptions.

For all of their differences, Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective ways of philosophizing are equally sharply attuned to the dangers that beset an investigation of the conditions of possessing and understanding a target capacity conceived as one that makes a self-standingly intelligible contribution to knowledge—be it a supposedly purely perceptual one or

a purely intellectual one. What Kant and Wittgenstein equally oppose are philosophical accounts that strip away the conditions actually required for a particular capacity to have the cognitive value that it does, while imagining that the conditions for its possession are still in view. Admittedly, Kant tends to focus on capacities individuated at the level of sensibility, understanding, and reason. Wittgenstein's investigations tend to linger over the conditions of the possibility of the possession of a capacity at quite a different level of individuation of capacities—such as being able to point at a thing, concentrate one's attention on something, give something a name, continue a series. But this should not lead us to overlook what their philosophical procedures share.

As we have seen, in his classic article on transcendental arguments, Stroud reads Kant as at the philosophical mercy of a restricted conception of our perceptual capacity rather than—as I do—reading him as out to show precisely how such a conception involves a stripping away of the conditions that allow that capacity to have its cognitive value. On the other hand, more recently, in his characterization of wherein the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy consists, Stroud offers a view of what it is to be a Kantian that is considerably more in accord with my own reading of Kant—as well as, unsurprisingly, with his own more recent characterization of what a non-impoverished conception of transcendental investigation requires. Moreover, as we have also seen, he reads Wittgenstein as prosecuting such investigations in pursuit of a Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy. This invites a question about to what extent Frege's conception is in harmony with the Kantian moment that Stroud discerns and applauds in Wittgenstein.

Before exploring a further respect in which Conant seeks to contrast Frege and Wittgenstein, let us note why he can agree with Stroud that sometimes they can seem to be very close to one another. Since the disagreement between Conant and Stroud is partly about who gets to count as moving in Wittgenstein's direction, perhaps the most efficient way to articulate the background of agreement here is to consider some further things Stroud has written about Wittgenstein's method. This brings us, as promised, to Stroud's discussion of Wittgenstein's philosophical method, as practiced in his treatment of the seeming possibility that there could be a private language:

> In PI §258 the 'treatment' amounts, more or less, to trying to do it. Wittgenstein tries to imagine a good case of the attempt's being made and then brings out what stands in the way of success, and why. The

'treatment' consists in trying to realize the idea, to make it apply to something. That is a characteristic procedure of Wittgenstein's. He follows it right from the very beginning of the *Investigations,* and later even refers to his procedure as what he calls 'the method of §2' (PI §48). It is the simple expedient of trying to describe or imagine a situation to which the philosophical idea in question truly applies. What happens when we try to make the idea real in that way in this case?[21]

Stroud's characterization, in the pages that follow this passage, of what happens when we try to make the idea real in the aforementioned way involves the description of a series of dialectical stages, in which we first do our best to enter imaginatively into our interlocutor's conception of what it would be to realize the idea in question, and then, step by step, through the very effort to do this, cause its initial appearance of intelligibility to dissolve.

This is very much like what Conant suggests happens in Frege's treatment of (the seeming possibility that there could be) logically alien thought. Conant reads Wittgenstein's sections on private language in the same way Stroud does,[22] and he takes Frege's treatment of the philosophical fiction of the logical alien to have been (already at the time of the writing of the *Tractatus*) Wittgenstein's paradigmatic example of this form of treatment of a philosophical problem. So it is no accident that Conant's reading of Frege on the logical alien parallels Stroud's reading of the passages that precede and follow §258 of *Philosophical Investigations*.[23] What Stroud's reading of this entire stretch of passages reveals is that Wittgenstein is not out to demonstrate that a private language is impossible—as if he already knew what the words "private language" mean and as if his aim were simply one of showing that such a thing *cannot* be. Wittgenstein is not arguing in these passages that there is some deep reason (having to do with the private nature of inner episodes, or the fallibility of memory, or whatever) why it is *impossible* to name our sensations. Rather, Wittgenstein is out to show that the act of naming one's sensation that is supposed to give rise to the supposed question (regarding the possibility of a private language) is an empty ceremony. He

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[21] Barry Stroud, "Wittgenstein's 'Treatment' of the Quest for 'A Language Which Describes My Inner Experiences and Which Only I Myself Can Understand'" in *Meaning, Understanding, and Practice: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 74.

[22] See Conant, "Why Worry about the *Tractatus*," in *Post-Analytic Tractatus,* ed. Barry Stocker (New York: Routledge, 2017), 171–177.

[23] This is the part of Conant's article that Stroud ought to like best. That he does not is due to a misunderstanding that we shall explore below.

is out to show that the appearance of something that cannot be done here—of a deep impossibility—is an *illusory* one. If the task of naming the sensation is envisioned under the supposed circumstances—as proceeding under conditions in which all of the stage-setting that confers reference upon a name have been dropped—then it is true that I will have no criterion of correctness for the application of the expression that I wish to associate with the name. Why not? Stroud writes,

> "I have no criterion of correctness" for the application of the expression . . . that I am trying to introduce. But why not? . . . [N]ot because I would have no infallible or even reliable test for recognizing the same thing again. . . . Rather it is because once all the normal 'stage-setting' or 'grammar' of sensation-words is excluded . . . the original naked ceremony of pointing or "concentrating one's attention does not manage to determine anything as the correct use of the sign "S". There is no 'criterion' of correctness in the sense that there is nothing in what happens in the ceremony so far that brings it about that some particular application of the term is correct and that some other is not.[24]

This act of concentrating one's attention—one of inward ostension, as it were—figures here as a very particular instance of something that the philosophical interlocutor attempts to conceive as a self-standingly intelligible cognitive capacity (in this case, a capacity for fixing a reference). Wittgenstein's aim is to show us that the great difficulty here lies in not representing the matter as if turned on there being something we *cannot* do. The mistake is to represent the seeming possibility that animates the philosophical fiction as if it were a description of something impossible. For this sets one off on the philosophical task of struggling to articulate the nature of this special sort of super-impossibility. It is no accident that Conant is able to take a remark that makes this point and occurs precisely in this region of *Philosophical Investigations* as emblematic for the treatment of the philosophical fiction of logically alien thought that he finds in certain passages in Frege and the *Tractatus*.[25]

We may draw, at this point, an analogy between (what I allowed myself to call) a *standard reading of the logical alien* and a *standard reading*

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[24] Stroud, "Wittgenstein's 'Treatment' of the Quest for 'A Language That Describes My Inner Experiences and Which Only I Myself Can Understand,'" 75.

[25] "The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there was something one could not do" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §374, 123e). Conant cites this remark in "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 93. See pages 1003ff below for further discussion of this topic in connection with the private language "argument."

of the private linguist. A standard reading of the latter tries to spell out exactly what it is that the private linguist is supposed to be able to do and then takes Wittgenstein's question about it to be, Is *that* possible? It involves the assumption that there is something determinate that a private language is supposed to be. It then concludes that Wittgenstein answers his question in the negative, yielding the following thesis: a private language is impossible. A standard reading of the logical alien will involve a commentator trying to spell out exactly what it is that a logical alien, in thinking logically alien thoughts, is supposed to do. It, too, will involve the assumption that there is something determinate that a logical alien is supposed to be. The attempt to specify what a logical alien is will inevitably involve a commentator in coming out with sentences more or less resembling the following:

> It is important to understand what these beings—known in the literature as 'logical aliens'—represent. They are supposed to be beings whose laws of thought flatly contradict ours, and who thus "could execute judgments contradicting our logic laws."[26] Logical aliens, far from representing occasionally illogical thinkers, are beings whose judgments result from "laws" such as the negation of the principle of non-contradiction or of the law of identity; they thus represent the possibility of *radical* and sustained *illogical* thought.[27]

This all but inevitably sets up a reading which concludes that Frege answers his question about the possibility of logical aliens in the negative, yielding the following thesis: logically alien thought, so understood, is impossible. Stroud and Conant are in agreement that such a reading of Frege makes it impossible to appreciate the extent of the philosophical parallel between Frege and Wittgenstein here. Stroud, however, does not seem to appreciate that he and Conant are in agreement on this point.

Conant reads Frege as anticipating the method described above in his treatment of the scenario of a supposed encounter with the logical alien—one that parallels the method Stroud ascribes to Wittgenstein in

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[26] Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* xvi.

[27] Daniele Mezzadri, "Logic, Judgment, and Inference: What Frege Should Have Said about Illogical Thought," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 56, no. 4 (Oct. 2018): 735. In quoting these lines of Mezzadri's, I should not be taken to suggest that he himself has such an irresolute conception of the logical alien. Rather, if I read him correctly, he appears to sympathize with Conant's and Stroud's view of the matter but thinks they are mistaken in ascribing it to Frege—whom he thinks is to be criticized for having an insufficiently resolute conception of the matter.

his treatment of the scenario of the private linguist. As in the latter case, so, too, in the former: in the effort to envision this encounter, an attempt is made in conversation with the interlocutor to retain certain expressions (such as "truth," "judgment," "disagreement," "contradiction," "law," and "logic") while employing them in a way that strips away the conditions that allow them to mean what they usually do. The real problem with the scenario, Conant's Frege seeks to show, is not that it imagines something to be possible that is impossible but that the exercise of envisioning this supposed alternative form of thought threatens to become an empty exercise—one that requires that we remain within our own logical skin while engaging in the attempt to jump outside of it.[28] Peter Sullivan summarizes Conant's account of "Frege's encounter with the psycho-logician" in the foreword to *Grundgesetze*[29] as follows:

> Construed as contributing to a demonstration, the contentions that Frege presents against Erdmann there can easily appear as dogmatic pronouncements that will fail to reach the differently grounded alternative schemes of thought that psychologism envisages. In Conant's fruitful dialogical reconstruction of the episode the psychologician is instead invited to give sense, in his own terms, to his hypothesis that differently constituted beings might disagree over basic logical laws: the upshot is not that such disagreement is proved to be impossible but that psychologism has not thought its way through to an understanding of what could distinguish disagreement here from mere difference. It is because this particular passage responds so well to his quasi-therapeutic reconstruction that Conant gives it prominence as representing (what he takes to be) the better strand in Frege's thought and recommends it as a model for Wittgenstein's later reflections.[30]

Sullivan is here able to follow what Conant is up to in a way that Stroud is not. Sullivan succinctly touches on the following six claims that all play a central role in Conant's reconstruction of Frege's treatment of this case: first, Frege's initial remarks in this encounter can easily *appear* as dogmatic pronouncements; second, as the dialectic unfolds, this appearance is dissolved; third, this comes about through the simultaneous dissolution of the appearance of the sense of the psychologician's contentions; fourth, this is

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[28] Or as Frege elegantly puts it: *den Versuch aus der eignen Haut zu fahren* (Frege, *Grungesetze der Arithmetik*, xvii).

[29] Ibid., xiv–xix; discussed by Conant, this volume, 73–83.

[30] Sullivan, this volume, 190.

effected through a strategy in which the psychologician is instead invited to give sense, in his own terms, to his hypothesis that differently constituted beings might "disagree" over basic logical laws; fifth, the upshot of Frege's treatment is not that the supposed form of disagreement is proved to be impossible; on the contrary, sixth, the method of philosophical clarification practiced here may be taken as a model for Wittgenstein's later reflections. As we shall soon see, Stroud seems not to appreciate that any of these six points—which Sullivan here highlights—is central to Conant's reading of this case, let alone that all of them are.

Let us stay with the last of the six for a moment but run it in reverse—taking advantage of the way in which the perceptive reconstruction that Stroud offers of Wittgenstein's encounter with the private linguist may, as just indicated, be taken as a model for understanding Frege's encounter with the logical alien. Stroud says that what Wittgenstein's treatment of the private language scenario reveals is that "we naturally try to vault ourselves out of our language as it is and aspire to something we find it easy to think must be possible."[31] Similarly, Conant sees Frege's treatment of the logical alien scenario as revelatory of how the psychologistic theorist of logic tries to vault himself out of the space of logical thought, thereby aspiring to frame a conception of "a way of thinking" that he finds it all too easy to think must be possible.

As Sullivan notes, this is the strand in Frege's thought that Conant regards as closest to Wittgenstein. One aim of his article is to bring out how it is in tension with a different strand in Frege—a tension that comes most into view when it is juxtaposed with his conception of the priority of thought over judgment.[32] Stroud seems to miss most of the detail that goes into Conant's effort to distinguish these two strands in Frege's thought and how they should respectively be taken to relate to Wittgenstein.[33] Stroud here misunderstands both *what* in Frege (and his conception of logic) Conant sees as vulnerable to a Wittgensteinian critique as well as *where* in Frege (and in which writings) it is alleged to occur. This leaves Stroud, on the one hand, struggling to work out Conant's criticism of Fregean remarks regarding which Conant seeks to offer no criticism

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[31] Stroud, "Wittgenstein's 'Treatment,'" 75.

[32] Sullivan provides an equally lucid summary of this aspect of Conant's account, before settling down to the main business of his contribution—namely, to challenge the claim that Frege's conception of these matters is to be assessed as standing in the way of an insight shared by Kant and Wittgenstein.

[33] A further aim of Conant's article is to argue that Wittgenstein himself was concerned with exposing this tension in Frege's thought.

(but only praise), and on the other hand, failing to take notice of the parts of the article that do seek to articulate an alleged locus of tension in Frege's conception (one that becomes visible only if we look beyond his treatment of the logical alien and to what he says elsewhere).

Stroud thereby works himself into the position of thinking that Conant's criticism must be directed at some aspect of Frege's treatment of the philosophical fiction of the logical alien. So Stroud ends up trying to read the parts of the article in which Conant contends that Frege comes closest to practicing something akin to Wittgenstein's philosophical method (in the manner sketched above) as if they were ones in which Conant were claiming the opposite. It is thus no accident that when Stroud turns to quote from the article, some of the quotations turn out to be highly selective—omitting not only stretches of prose from within the passages but also any indication of the dialectical context in which they occur. Now I have not generally been concerned in these replies with defending Conant against criticism, and it is not my primary concern to do so here. But, in this case, it is hard to see how to make progress on the supposed disagreement without some prior clarity about what Conant is up to, especially in those moments in his article on which Stroud most fixates.

Before we look more closely at Stroud's misapprehension of *where* Conant's criticism of Frege comes, let us also note his misapprehension of *what* in Frege comes in for criticism. Stroud thinks Conant's Frege holds the opposite of what Conant's Descartes does: where Descartes is committed to the modal claim that it is possible to think otherwise than in accordance with the laws of logic, Frege champions the negation of this modal claim—a claim about what it is impossible for us to do. So Stroud ends up reading Conant as arguing that Frege's response to the scenario of the logical alien culminates in the conclusion that there *cannot* be logically alien beings, on the ground that a being who fits the relevant description (i.e., the one required by the philosophical fiction of logically alien thought) is *impossible*.

After attributing this reading of Frege to Conant, Stroud goes on to marshal textual evidence for this attribution:

> This is the source of the difficulty he [Conant] thinks Frege falls into because Conant thinks it leads Frege eventually to the conclusion that "there cannot be logical aliens . . . beings who fit this description are an impossibility" (p. 149). The difficulty is thus:
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> > This makes it seem as if, following Frege, what we have done is grasped . . . what it would be for beings to be able to think in this re-

markable way—and subsequently gone on to reject this possibility. We think of ourselves as rejecting the possibility of something: illogical thought . . . we take the sentences "illogical thought is impossible" or "we cannot think illogically" to indeed present us with thoughts. . . . The attempt to say that illogical thought is something that cannot be, to say that it involves a transgression of the limits of thought, requires that we be able to draw the limit.[34]

Let us call the above (indented and excerpted) block of prose from Conant the focal passage. As far I can see, it furnishes the most plausible piece of textual evidence that Stroud adduces for his reading of Conant's reading of Frege on the logical alien. Once detached in this way from its original context, it is no longer evident that the focal passage here is concerned with making evident how, at this stage in the dialectical exploration of the scenario of the logical alien, we are inclined take certain sorts of sentences to present us with thoughts. That is, detached from its context, it is no longer evident that what Conant takes Frege to be trying to do here is to describe or imagine a situation to which the psychologistic logician's idea (of the parochial character of the laws of logic) might seem truly to be able to apply, precisely in order to see what happens when we try to think the idea through.

Over the course of reconstructing the dialectical stages of Frege's encounter with the logical alien, Conant occasionally steps back and interjects remarks that would be completely gratuitous if his sole aim were to characterize Frege's treatment of this philosophical fiction. (We will give some examples of this below.) The reason these remarks are there has to do with a larger ambition of the article as a whole—one of seeking to bring out a tension in Frege. Conant wants to claim both of the following:

 (i) Frege's treatment of the scenario of the logical alien (through its practice of a method of philosophical elucidation which becomes central to Wittgenstein's work) reveals, in a series of dialectical steps, how the apparent thoughts with which it presents us are merely apparent thoughts.

(ii) Frege's representation of the axioms of a *Begriffsschrift* (as forceless thoughts to which a judgment stroke can be attached) implicitly commits him to the idea that both they and their negations

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[34] This "quotation" is assembled out of passages that occur on page 83 (this volume) of Conant's article as adduced by Stroud, this volume, 173.

express judgable contents—that their negations do not express merely apparent thoughts but genuinely judgable contents.

Conant argues that (i) and (ii) are in tension with one another and, moreover, that each is representative of a deep strand in Frege's thought. Conant connects (i) with moments in Frege's work where he seeks to offer an elucidation of logically primitive notions—such as his elucidation of what a concept is (and how it differs from what an object is[35]) and his elucidation of the laws of inference (and why they cannot be expressed in the *Begriffsschrift* in the form of thoughts to which a judgment stroke could be attached[36]). And Conant connects what is problematic in (ii) with moments in Frege's work in which he conceives judgable content as explanatorily prior to judgment and the judgable content of logical thought as explanatorily prior to that of non-logical thought in virtue of its generality and purity. Not coincidentally, these are among the aspects of Frege's conception that I focused on in Section V, and that I recharacterized in a manner that allowed me to say what I continue to think worth developing in Conant's initial effort to contrast Frege's conception of logic with Kant's, on the one hand, and with Wittgenstein's, on the other.

One of the features of the focal passage (and the wider context in which it figures) that irritates and distracts Stroud, I surmise, is the manner in which, as it builds the case for (i), it also seeks to assemble the materials that help to highlight the tensions between (i) and (ii). It does not entirely escape Stroud's attention that there is something somewhere in the neighborhood of (ii) that worries Conant. The problem is that Stroud tries to identify what the worry is by focusing on the article's discussion of (i). He is nevertheless right to think that there is something, first, in Frege's idea that the laws of logic are "the most general laws of thought," and, second, in his idea that the theorems of *Begriffsschrift* have their sole ground in "pure thought" about which Conant wants to worry. Stroud comments on a pertinent passage from Frege (in which the first of these ideas comes up) as follows: "I don't see that passage as making a claim about something's being 'constitutive of the possibility of thought.'"[37] Neither does Conant. That idea, for Conant, is tied to a

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[35] For his account on this topic, see James Conant, "The Method of the *Tractatus*," in *From Frege to Wittgenstein: Perspectives on Early Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Erich H. Reck (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 374–462.

[36] Frege, *"Begriffsschrift,"* sect. 13, in *From Frege to Gödel: A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic, 1879–1931,* ed. Jean van Heijenoort (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 28; referred to by Conant on page 71, this volume.

[37] Stroud, this volume, 173.

Kantian understanding of the *formality* of logic. That is the aspect of the Kantian conception that Conant alleges Frege inherits, on the one hand, while, on the other, seeking to supplement it with ideas which spoil what is otherwise allegedly Kantian in his outlook—ideas having to do with the character of the generality and self-standing purity of logic and with the priority of the act of thought over that of judgment in the order of comprehension and acknowledgement of truth.

Before we take up this last topic especially, let us get clear about the relation between the focal passage and (i). For this is what Stroud most misunderstands in Conant's article. Notice that the focal passage begins with the locution "This makes it seem as if. . . ." What comes within the scope of this locution is the appearance of first grasping and then going on to reject a particular possibility. Proposed specifications of the thought in question (which we seem to be able to grasp and then go on to reject) are furnished by sequences of words such as "illogical thought is impossible" or "we cannot think illogically." Admittedly, the qualifying locution ("This makes it seem as if . . .") is immediately succeeded in the focal passage by the words "following Frege." Taken out of isolation, this could suggest that Frege himself thinks that what seems to be possible here is possible. A look at the wider context, however, reveals Conant to be at considerable pains to signal all of the following: (1) Frege's treatment of the logical alien moves us through a series of dialectical *stages*; (2) at the early stages of the dialectic, the possibility in question is treated as *apparently* intelligible; (3) the treatment culminates *only* when that appearance of intelligibility is completely dissipated; (4) Frege's treatment of *this* case is akin to Wittgenstein's treatment of a philosophical problem; (5) the treatment of the logical alien is *representative* of a whole strand of Frege's philosophical practice (namely, his conception of what is involved in the elucidation of logically fundamental notions); and (6) its affinity with Wittgenstein's method is *non-accidental,* for this discussion of Frege's exerted an enormous influence on Wittgenstein. Stroud seems to miss all of this.

Let us now take a look at that wider context. Here is how Conant introduces his overall discussion (of Frege's treatment of the scenario of the logical alien) within which the above passage quoted by Stroud occurs:

> **At first blush,** Frege's thought experiment **appears** to be in service of resolving a *disagreement* between two opposing conceptions of logic. He **appears** to be concerned to show that a particular view (namely,

that of the psychologistic logicians) is *false.* But as we go along, it will emerge that Frege's discussion (of what would be involved in entertaining the falsity of a basic law of logic) has something like the structure of an onion—**one layer gives way to the next,** and something which **begins by looking like** it has the logical structure of a straightforward disagreement increasingly comes to resemble something which has the **elucidatory structure of the *Tractatus* (the structure, that is, of a ladder which one climbs up and then throws away).**[38]

I have boldfaced everything in the above passage that Stroud has to overlook in order to arrive at his reading of the focal passage. Advancing further toward the focal passage and boldfacing other such moments, here is what Conant says in the article as he starts to approach its immediate neighborhood in the text:

Frege's thought experiment **begins** by presenting us with something which has the form of a question: Can there be or can there not be the following sorts of beings? And then we are (**apparently**) offered a description of these beings: they are, we are told, beings who, on the one hand, are able to reason, and on the other, whose reasoning does not conform to the laws of logic (i.e., those laws which govern our thinking). **At first blush it looks as if** Frege is dispensing with this sort of possibility by offering us an argument of the following sort: In order to conceive of such beings, we must conceive of them as able to manifest their rationality (their capacity for reasoning) in some way. But the laws of logic are the touchstones of rationality—they put in place the framework within which it first becomes possible to isolate and adjudicate disagreement.[39]

The way things are here said to look "at first blush" is how Stroud thinks Conant thinks Frege thinks they continue to look *at the end of the day*— as if we really can clearly conceive of such beings and that, having done so, we can then deny the possibility of something determinately conceivable in denying that they are possible.

Conant works throughout his discussion (of Frege's treatment of this scenario of an encounter with a logical alien) with the metaphor of an onion whose layers are gradually peeled away. As he approaches the topic of the focal passage, he develops the metaphor to signal where we are in the dialectic and what apparent conclusion has been reached at this point:

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[38] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 74.
[39] Ibid., 82.

Here, **at the penultimate layer of the onion,** Frege's objection to psychologism closely parallels relatively recent Putnam's claim that "the laws of logic are so central to our thinking" that we cannot entertain their falsity. It places the accent on the idea that there is something that we *cannot* do: we cannot think in a certain way; we cannot think against the grain of logic and still be thinking. Thus, in the end, **it looks as if** we are to arrive at the conclusion; there cannot be logical aliens. For deep reasons having to do with the nature of logic, beings who fit this description are an impossibility. A priori reflection on the nature of logic **seems** to have disclosed a (negative) fact about what kinds of beings are possible.[40]

Where Conant here says "**it looks as if** we are to arrive at the conclusion; there cannot be logical aliens," Stroud takes this to mean not just this is how it looks at this stage of the dialectic, but this is how it continues to look to Frege all the way to the end of his treatment of the scenario of the logical alien. Then comes the bit that Stroud quotes above.

Here is the focal passage presented in exactly the manner that Stroud himself quotes it, with the same omissions:

This makes it seem as if, following Frege, what we have done is grasped . . . what it would be for beings to be able think in this remarkable way—and subsequently gone on to reject this possibility. We think of ourselves as rejecting the possibility of something: illogical thought . . . we take the sentences "illogical thought is impossible" or "we cannot think illogically" to indeed present us with thoughts. . . . The attempt to say that illogical thought is something that cannot be, to say that it involves a transgression of the limits of thought, requires that we be able to draw the limit.[41]

Now here is the focal passage again with the portions originally provided by Stroud underlined, omitted emphases reintroduced, omitted portions presented without underlining, and crucial omitted qualifications boldfaced:

<u>This makes it seem as if, following Frege, what we have done is grasped</u> the content of the thought experiment—<u>what it would be for beings to be able think in this remarkable way—and subsequently gone on to reject this possibility. We think of ourselves as rejecting the possibility</u>

[40] Ibid., 82–83.
[41] Ibid., 83; Stroud, this volume, 173.

of _something_ [Stroud omits this emphasis]: _illogical thought._ So, in considering the thought experiment, **we imagine ourselves to pass through the successive stages of judgment**—first grasping the sense of a thought[42] and then submitting it for a judgment. We experience something that has the phenomenology of judgment. Nevertheless, as we have seen, there is a well-developed strain of thought in Frege, which is committed to the conclusion that what we undergo in such an experience is **an _illusion_ of judgment.** For, if the laws of logic prescribe how one ought to think if one is to think at all, **then Frege must say that what has been proposed here is not a kind of thought:** we are simply not, as it stands, able to make any clear sense of the psychologistic logician's proposal. But where does that leave the conclusion of the argument against psychologism? If the proposal does not add up to sense—does not present a thought, a candidate for judgment—then how can we affirm the negation of the content of the proposal? If we take the sentences "illogical thought is impossible" or "we cannot think illogically" to indeed present us with _thoughts_ (with senses which we can affirm the truth of), then we concede what a moment ago we wished to deny (namely, that the negation of these sentences present us with a genuine content), one which is able to stand up to the demand for judgment). But if we conclude that these words (which we want to utter in response to the psychologistic logician) do not express a thought with a sense, then aren't _we,_ if we judge psychologism to be false, equally victims of an **illusion** of judgment? **This is the problem at the heart of the onion.** The attempt to say that illogical thought is something that cannot be, to say that it involves a transgression of the limits of thought, requires that we be able to draw the limit.[43]

If one reads the focal passage in context, with due attention to the bold-faced bits both immediately above and in the preceding passages, then it

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[42] Conant frequently speaks of judging as involving a prior grasp of "the sense of a thought," and of judging as advancing from "the sense of a thought" to its truth-value. He is not the only commentator on Frege to speak this way. But I wonder whether Frege himself ever really does talk in this way about "the sense of a thought"—or, more importantly, whether he would want to. The passage from Frege that Conant is relying on speaks about judging as advancing from a thought to a truth-value: it is about advancing from a thought, and not from the sense of a thought. This opens out into exegetical issues we need not enter into here. Nothing in Stroud's dispute with Conant hinges on it, as far as I can see—and nothing that I defend in Conant needs to rely on this.

[43] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 83.

should become clear how it fits into a larger discussion in which Conant builds his case for (i).

Many of Stroud's criticisms of Conant turn on his misreading not only of the focal passage but of a range of related passages, equally pried from their dialectical context. This leads to the extraordinarily peculiar phenomenon of there being surprisingly many junctures in his response to Conant in which Stroud comes very close simply to repeating something Conant seeks to say in the guise of disagreeing with him. This means that one could assemble a set of pairs of quotations, one being a passage from Stroud on Conant and the other being the passage from Conant that is under discussion in the first member of the pair, in which the point that each makes about Frege is the same, but Stroud takes himself to be making the point in opposition to Conant's reading of Frege. I will confine myself to adducing just one such pair of quotations.

In the first member of this pair, we have Stroud pointing to Frege's invocation of the idea of "a hitherto unknown type of madness" as evidence that something has gone wrong in Conant's reading:

> In response to the alleged discovery of beings "whose laws of thought flatly contradicted ours and therefore led to contrary results even in practice," Frege tells us he would say, "we have here a hitherto unknown type of madness." I take Frege to be saying that he could make no sense of those beings or of what they are doing. We are familiar with certain kinds of madness, and we think we sometimes have some idea of what those afflicted with it are up to. But to speak of a new and hitherto unknown type of madness suggests that, in this case, we are simply baffled and can make no real or lasting sense of its victims. Conant sees Frege's invocation of "madness" as his reaching for a positive description of those who violate the laws of logic—something about them that might explain the "source" of the distinctive character or authority of those laws, or perhaps even reveal the "ultimate ground" of those laws in "pure thought alone." But Frege's use of the term "madness" does not seem to offer any positive explanation along those lines. In the end it is nothing more than what Conant calls a "philosophically innocuous idea" of "merely lunatic thought."[44]

Those last three words are in quotation marks because they allude to the passage from Conant in which they are to be found and with which Stroud takes himself here to be in disagreement. He takes himself to be

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[44] Stroud, this volume, 176–177.

in disagreement with that particular passage of Conant's—I conjecture—because he has already completely talked himself into the idea that what Conant is saying elsewhere in the article, such as in the focal passage, must mean that their respective understandings of what Frege is up to in his treatment of the scenario of the logical alien are completely opposed. But if we look at the other member of this pair and read it carefully, I think it does not construe Frege's invocation of "madness" as his reaching for a positive description of the sort of being whose form of thought is nowhere in accord with the laws of logic. Here is the other member of this pair—again boldfacing the qualifications that Stroud seems to overlook in his reading of it:

> "Madness" is the notion Frege reaches for **in an attempt to the meet the psychologistic logician halfway.** It is a notion one might reach for when confronted by beings whose capacities for rational thought appear deformed—whose processes of thought remain opaque to us. Frege does not reach for this word in the service of an attempt to characterize the Other of reason, but rather **in the service of trying to find a sense for his interlocutor's words.** Insofar as sense can be made of talk of madness, for Frege, **that sense is not conferred through the idea of logically alien thought** but through some idea of *disturbed* thought. **The closest Frege can come to finding a sense** for the psychologistic logician's idea of an antithetical form of reason (deeply illogical thought) is the philosophically innocuous idea of a degenerate form of reason (merely lunatic thought).[45]

Conant does not see Frege's invocation of "madness" as his way of fleshing out a positive description of the sort of logically alien being that the psychologistic logician imagines to be genuinely conceivable. Rather, he sees it as an attempt on Frege's part to come as close as he can to finding a sense for the idea of logically deviant thought. But it is not a way of making sense of this idea that gives the psychologistic logician what he originally wanted. On the contrary, it is a way of finding a sense for his words that succeeds only by having those words no longer signify a form of thought whose logical character in no way overlaps with ours or whose cogency is in no way assessable by the standards that figure in the assessment of the logical cogency of our thought. Frege's proposal for how to understand these words (which are supposed to characterize what is deviant in this kind of thinking) transforms them into a descrip-

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[45] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 82.

tion of a being whose activity of thinking is recognizable, as such, as thought, precisely because it is sufficiently like ours to be something that we would classify as madness. What we are now imagining is not something that lies completely outside the logical order. What we are now imagining no longer involves an effort to vault ourselves outside of logic. We are taking to heart the idea that the logical sphere is unrestricted. We are relying on *logic* to characterize what deviance in thought comes to in such a case. We are now imagining something that resembles what our thought looks like when it is deeply disturbed.

Stroud rightly senses a deep and important connection here between this moment in Frege's treatment of the scenario of the logical alien and a certain moment in Wittgenstein's later discussion of related issues—namely, the one in which he offers his treatment of the scenario of the mathematically deviant wood sellers:

> In his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* Wittgenstein presents many examples of what appear to be deviant ways of inferring, calculating, weighing things, or even selling wood. He quotes Frege's remark about the apparent madness we encounter in such examples and observes that "Frege never said what this 'madness' would really be like." I think there is good reason for that. When we press the descriptions of those apparently deviant ways of proceeding far enough and try to get a consistent picture of them, I think we cannot really make full sense of such people. Up to a point, we can give them the benefit of the doubt, as we say. Or better, we can give them the benefit of humanity. But beyond a certain point in trying to conceive of such beings, they become more and more impenetrable to us. As Wittgenstein puts it in another connection, "We cannot find our feet with them" [Or perhaps "We cannot find ourselves in them"]. If this is right, it could explain Frege's finding nothing more than a "hitherto unknown type of madness" in beings said to think in accord with laws of logic that flatly contradict our own.[46]

Not only would Conant agree with this, but, interestingly, Jocelyn Benoist—in his response to Conant (which we will consider below)—not only sees this same connection (between Frege's logical alien and Wittgenstein's wood sellers) but takes it that, in developing a reading of the wood sellers along the lines that Stroud proposes, he is thereby developing Conant's original point about what is involved in the treatment of the

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[46] Stroud, this volume, 177. For further discussion of this passage, see this volume, 1015.

philosophical fiction of logically alien thought. Needless to say, I think Benoist has Conant's view of (i) far more clearly in view than Stroud does.

One could also assemble yet a further set of pairs of quotations (from Stroud and Conant respectively) whose members stand in an equally misbegotten relation to one another. In this second set, the passages from Conant would be concerned with drawing attention to how Frege's handling of (i) would appear to be incompatible with his commitment to (ii). The conclusion that each Conant member of such a pair of quotations draws from this incompatibility is the following: So much the worse for Frege's commitment to (ii). The Stroud member in each such pair will allude to the Conant member of the pair—alluding thereby to a passage in which Conant pauses to note how the issues arising in (i) bear on (ii)—as evidence that Conant's reading of Frege's treatment of (i) must both differ dramatically from Stroud's own and be without basis in the text. The Stroud member incorrectly assumes that the conclusion drawn in the Conant member of the pair must be of the following sort: so much the worse for Frege's handling of (i).

Let us look at an example of such a pair of quotations, starting with the Stroud member of the pair:

> Even if we find the possibility of people like that more and more mysterious as the description of their practices is expanded, it does not mean we can make no sense at all of "illogical thought." That is something we can recognize from time to time in particular, isolated, invalid inferences or in someone's accepting the falsity of a logical law. Even the idea that the laws of logic are "constitutive of the possibility of thought" must presumably allow for occasional deviance. So I don't think Frege's attitude to "illogical thought" forces him into the difficulty or "worry" Conant describes. That difficulty is said to arise because if "there isn't any sense to be made of the idea of someone (even God!) entertaining the falsity of a basic logical law," Frege's "account of judgment fails to leave room for anything which could count as judging a basic logical law to be true." But is that really a difficulty for Frege?[47]

Stroud takes himself here to be commenting on a passage in which Conant is concerned with raising a difficulty about Frege's development of (i), and Stroud counters with the question of whether the supposed difficulty

[47] Ibid., 177–178.

really is a difficulty for Frege's manner of developing (i). Here is the Conant member of this pair—the passage from which Stroud quotes at the end of the passage from him above:

> Frege's entire account of judgment depends upon the idea that we can distinguish a stage of grasping a thought which is prior to the judgment and which furnishes the act of judgment with something to bear upon. But as we shall see, other aspects of Frege's understanding of logic suggest that, with respect to the basic laws of logic, such a separation of the stages of understanding (grasping the sense of a thought) and judgment (advancing to its truth-value) is unintelligible. . . . And this, in turn, would mean that Frege's account of judgment fails to leave room for anything which could count as judging a basic law to be true. The demand for judgment, in the case of the axioms of *Begriffsschrift,* would turn out to be unintelligible. Yet Frege's account of logic as the maximally general science requires that we be able to judge the axioms of his system to be true. If we are to conceive of the laws of logic as differing from those of the other sciences only in their order of generality, then they must be able to serve as possible candidates for judgment.[48]

To get the misunderstanding in view, it will prove helpful to view the Stroud member of the pair as consisting of two halves. Here, again, is its first half:

> Even if we find the possibility of people like that more and more mysterious as the description of their practices is expanded, it does not mean we can make no sense at all of "illogical thought." That is something we can recognize from time to time in particular, isolated, invalid inferences or in someone's accepting the falsity of a logical law. Even the idea that the laws of logic are "constitutive of the possibility of thought" must presumably allow for occasional deviance.[49]

Stroud is here making the very point that was at issue in *our first set* of pairs of quotations. In saying what he says in the part of the passage given immediately above, Stroud takes himself here to be expressing disagreement with Conant; but, as we have already seen, there is nothing here with which Conant disagrees. Now comes the second half:

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[48] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 70.
[49] Stroud, this volume, 177–178.

So I don't think Frege's attitude to "illogical thought" forces him into the difficulty or "worry" Conant describes. That difficulty is said to arise because if "there isn't any sense to be made of the idea of someone (even God!) entertaining the falsity of a basic logical law," Frege's "account of judgment fails to leave room for anything which could count as judging a basic logical law to be true." But is that really a difficulty for Frege?[50]

Now things become more complicated. Stroud says, "So I don't think Frege's attitude to 'illogical thought' forces him into the difficulty or 'worry' Conant describes." Conant agrees with Stroud that nothing in Frege's handling of (i) raises such a difficulty. The situation is similar with regard to Stroud's final question: "Is any of this really a difficulty for Frege?" Conant, again, agrees with Stroud that nothing in Frege's handling of (i) raises such a difficulty. But the Conant member of this pair (from which Stroud quotes in the second to last line of the passage immediately above) is not about Frege's handling of (i); it is about the implications of his commitment to (ii) and whether they can be reconciled with (i). The Conant member of this pair, when situated back in its context, turns out to occur much earlier in the article, well before Conant ever gets around to talking about (i), and it is concerned, in the first instance, simply with highlighting Frege's commitment to (ii).

The first part of the Conant member of this pair is about a feature of Frege's conception of logic that has been intermittently under discussion since Section V: the way in which the logical moment of grasping a thought is related to that of the act of judgment. Conant does not ascribe this commitment to Frege in virtue of something he says in his treatment of the scenario of the logical alien. His textual basis for ascribing it lies in numerous things Frege says *elsewhere* (for example, when explaining the need for and the role of a judgment stroke in his notation), and the ascription is hardly controversial. Quite the contrary, Frege's manner of distinguishing between force and content is taken by most contemporary analytic philosophers to be one of the securest aspects of his entire philosophical legacy. Conant raises the question, first, whether Frege's handling of (i) is in tension with Frege's understanding of that distinction, and, second, whether his deeper wisdom does not lie there—in the strand of his philosophy of logic that Wittgenstein is most concerned to inherit, at the expense of the part of Frege's legacy that most

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[50] Ibid.

analytic philosophers regard as Frege's deeper wisdom. Hence, Conant interrupts his discussion of (ii) for a moment in order to mention something "we shall see" only much later in the article:

> But as we shall see, other aspects of Frege's understanding of logic suggest that, with respect to the basic laws of logic, such a separation of the stages of understanding (grasping the sense of a thought) and judgment (advancing to its truth-value) is unintelligible.[51]

Conant is here looking forward to his discussion of the way in which Frege's handling of (i) calls into question the idea that the negation of a logical law could express a judgable content. So when Conant says in the second member of this pair of passages, "And this, in turn, would mean that Frege's account of judgment fails to leave room for anything which could count as judging a basic law to be true," he says this not to raise a difficulty about Frege's handling of (i), as Stroud assumes. Rather, it is to announce a coming attraction. It is to alert the reader that eventually we will come to a worry about how we should assess (ii)—a worry that comes into focus only once (ii) is retrospectively viewed, much later on in the article, in the light of (i). The worry is posed as a worry for Frege, not because it creates any difficulty for his handling of (i) but rather for just the reason Conant gives in the very passage Stroud quotes—because if (i) shows what it seems to show, then

> The demand for judgment, in the case of the axioms of *Begriffsschrift,* would turn out to be unintelligible. Yet Frege's account of logic . . . requires that we be able to judge the axioms of his system to be true.[52]

Frege's logical notation (and, with it, the conception of logic it seeks to render notationally perspicuous) requires that the judgable content expressed by an axiom of *Begriffsschrift*—just like any other judgable content—be something that can figure forcelessly in thought as a mere thought whose content is not judged. The consequences of this commitment, Conant suggests, are what sit awkwardly with the best understanding of the philosophical moral of Frege's handling of (i).

For Frege, the logical unity of that thought—the one expressed by an axiom of *Begriffsschrift*—considered qua mere judgable content, must be able to figure as an argument in any well-formed function/argument nexus. Hence, its negation must equally be able to figure in further

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[51] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 70.
[52] Ibid.

thoughts that can be formed within the logical system; for example, as the antecedents of conditionals. On Frege's conception, any expression for a judgable content that can be formed within the system must be a content which is *judgable* (hence something to which the judgment stroke *can* be attached). Of course, Frege will insist, when commenting on his axioms, that no difficulty with regard to the recognition of their truth can arise as a live question.[53] But our question now is not, faced with such an axiom, how we ought to judge. Our question is this: Can we make sense of the bare idea that the Fregean thought expressed by a basic law of logic antecedently expresses a well-formed thought prior to its figuring in a logical nexus in which a judgment stroke has been attached to it?[54] Of course, there is no live logical question about how to judge here—about whether to regard the content that follows the horizontal (the content stroke) as true or false. But this is to confuse the question of what can be taken up in thought as a forceless (unjudged) content with the question of how it ought to be judged. Conant's question is, *Can* the thought expressed by a basic law of logic be taken up into thought as an unjudged content—as the expression of a mere forceless logical unity—so that what figures in such a grasping of that mere thought forms a highest common factor with that which we judge to be true in recognizing a basic law of logic to be true? Does the expression of a basic law of logic in *Begriffsschrift* notation, unaccompanied by a judgment stroke, express something *merely thinkable:* a judgable content that can figure in judgment but also apart from it? Is the judgable content expressed by a basic law of logic something we can grasp in thought while prescinding from a recognition of its truth?

One of Conant's concerns is to mark the enormous difference here between Frege's conception of logic and those of Kant and Wittgenstein. For Frege, every thought, considered qua mere thought, is a mere logical unity able to face the demand for judgment. Within Frege's notation, what this means is that, qua mere logical unity, both it and its negation are equally logically well-formed expressions of thoughts. Both are equally able to occur as, for example, the antecedents of conditionals. Even if logic itself permits us to recognize only one of those two thoughts

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[53] Hence the source of the worry on his part, even prior to Russell's discovery of the paradox, about whether this really is as clearly the case for Basic Law V of *Grundgesetze* as it is for the first four Basic Laws. For every basic law of logic for Frege is supposed to be self-evident (*einleuchtend*).

[54] As was frequently emphasized in Sections IV and V, expressions such as "antecedently" and "prior" here express (not temporal stages in a *process* of thought, but rather) logically distinct moments in the internal structure of thought.

as true, Frege's conception of his notation nonetheless requires that they both express thoughts equally apt for judgment. Kant and early Wittgenstein each insist, on slightly different grounds, that a proper consideration of the very form of a logical proposition ought to suffice to reveal that no material exercise of our capacity for judgment is required to recognize that the question of falsity cannot arise for the sorts of propositions that Frege wishes to single out as having the status of laws of logic. For both Kant and early Wittgenstein, this is a sign that the recognition of a purely logical truth is not a matter of the recognition of the material truth of judgable content but of the recognition of an aspect of the logical form of judgment. This is not a line that is open to Frege. The laws of logic differ from other propositions, for him, in virtue of their generality but not in virtue of their in any way lacking content. Frege's commitment to a Leibnizian conception of logical generality is a mark of the distance between his conception of logic and that of Kant and Wittgenstein.

Conant's point about the bearing of (i) on (ii) is the following: once (i) is fully thought through to the point where it reveals the emptiness of psychologism, at that very moment, it also reveals that there is no way to step far enough out of our logical skin to make sense of the idea that what we have before us when we strip the judgment stroke off of an axiom of *Begriffsschrift* is a judgable content. There is no way to hold up that supposedly merely *judgable* content and consider it in abstraction from how we *do* judge. The importance of how we actually do judge (for understanding what *judgment* is) is what makes the connection of Frege's treatment of the logical alien to Wittgenstein's treatment of the wood sellers a natural one. But a proper philosophical appreciation of the importance of this connection ultimately threatens all of the Leibnizian features of Frege's conception of logic summarized at the end of Section V.

For Kant and Wittgenstein, there is no serious way to keep in view what is supposed to be left of the idea of a law of logic once it is considered in abstraction from exemplary cases of what it is to exercise our capacity to judge. Frege's conception of logic requires that there can be something that we can continue to keep in view here: a mere logical unity—a content that we can entertain in thought apart from exercising our capacity for the recognition of truth. No such issue can arise either in Kant's conception of logic or in (already early) Wittgenstein's, for neither regards logical propositions as ones that express judgable contents.[55]

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[55] For both Kant and early Wittgenstein, logical propositions are not therefore *Unsinn*; for Kant, they are analytic, for early Wittgenstein, they are *sinnlos*. The parallel is this: for neither do

Once Stroud's various misunderstandings regarding Conant's reading of (i) have been swept away, and the issues that arise about (ii) can come into view as ones that do not presuppose a misreading of (i) but arise directly out of Frege's conception of the relation of thought to judgment, then the interesting question that remains is this: Ought Stroud to share Conant's misapprehensions about (ii)? Conant himself develops the point in his article solely as a problem that arises *within* Frege's conception of logic—as a worry about whether Frege himself can really make sense of his own conception of the relation of thought to judgment as applied to the very specific case of a basic law of logic. In Section VIII, the underlying worry here was developed into a more general question regarding the form of the proper logical characterization of a non-defective exercise of our capacity for judgment—into the question of whether the analysis of the basic case of judgment should be Fregean in form (consisting in two distinct acts: one of grasping the thought and one of judging it) or Kantian in form (a single unitary act). What ought Stroud to think about this?

In our formulation of (T*), we bracketed the question of the relation of thought to the recognition of truth:

(T*) What is thought, in the exercise of the capacity for thought through which we think it, can be explained only through further exercises of that capacity.

We saw at the end of Section IX that what makes the Cartesian conception of perception restricted by Stroud's lights is precisely that it conceives of perception in such a way that it is, as such, insufficient for the recognition of truth. Once the question of the relation of perception to knowledge is properly pressed, it becomes clear that the shape of a Cartesian account of perceptual knowledge is at odds with the basic schema of the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy. For the shape of the Cartesian explanation is the following:

(P$_r$) What is perceived, in the exercise of the capacity through which we perceive it, can be explained as involving the recognition of

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they tell us what is the case. For Kant, this means that they do not amplify or contribute to knowledge but merely explicate the relations in which concepts stand to another. For early Wittgenstein, it means that they do not stand in a projective relation to reality. The great difference between them here is this: for Kant, an analytic judgment is still a *judgment*, even if it involves a logically derivative form of exercise of our capacity for judgment; for early Wittgenstein, an analytic proposition partakes of only the form but not the matter of a judgment. We will return to these issues in the reply to Travis.

truth only through the additional exercise of some further capacity other than the capacity for perception.

We can explain how perception is related to recognition of truth only from outside the order of perception. On this measure of what it is for a conception to qualify as restricted, however, Frege's conception of (what he calls) "thought" might appear to be no less restricted. If we supplement the formulation of (T*) so as to bring into view what, on Frege's conception, is needed for thought to eventuate in the recognition of truth, then the required shape of explanation might appear to be the following:

> (T$_r$) What is thought, in the exercise of the capacity through which we think it, can be explained as involving recognition of truth only through the additional exercise of some further capacity other than the capacity for thought.

It might now appear that we can explain how (what Frege calls) thought is related to recognition of truth only from outside the order of thought qua thought.[56] This is a completely misplaced objection. Seeing why it completely misfires as an objection to Frege will make clearer how very limited the parallel between Cartesian perception and Fregean thought is, while nonetheless—if carefully handled—remaining pertinent for our present purpose.

The order of "thought" as understood in (T$_r$) is not a self-standing order. The logical order, for Frege, is an inferential order. Thomas Ricketts helpfully summarizes Frege's conception of the task of logic as follows: "The task of logic is the erection of principles through inference, principles for the recognition as true of one thought on the basis of the recognition as true of other thoughts."[57] The recognizing of a thought as true presupposes the logical nexus of judging-to-be-true that which can be true or false. Thought and judgment are logically interdependent moments of such a nexus. They belong together as logical moments within a single order. As we saw in Section V, the elucidation of either involves the other. The Cartesian works with a conception of perceptual appearances in which the corresponding logical link between appearances and that which they are appearances of has been severed. On this

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[56] What we are here calling "the capacity for thought" would not count for Kant as a self-standing capacity. It has no form or end apart from that of judgment.

[57] Thomas Ricketts, "Logic and Truth in Frege," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 70 (1996): 135.

conception, an account of the relation between perception and reality must be from outside the order of perception. In sharp contrast, Frege's conception of thought presupposes thought's relation to judgment from the start; this requires that an account of their relation be from within the logical order to which they both belong.[58]

Nevertheless, a moment of parallelism remains in the Cartesian analysis of the internal logical complexity of the non-defective exercise of the capacity to perceive and the Fregean analysis of the internal logical complexity of the non-defective exercise of the capacity to judge—one that a Kantian will trace to a parallel misunderstanding of the relation of act to power. On the Fregean analysis, the act of judgment is always to be analyzed as a logical composite comprising a pair of distinct logical acts: In judging *p,* S thinks *p* and also S judges *p.* For Kant, if the exercise of our cognitive power breaks apart into the two logically distinct moments Frege here describes, then the first of those moments will constitute a case of (what Kant calls) problematic judgment. For Kant, this is a term for an infelicitous exercise of our faculty for judgment—infelicitous precisely in virtue of the need for an additional act in order to arrive at recognition of truth. Its infelicity lies precisely in the fact that the act of the power is not, as such, an act of knowledge.[59] For it to become one requires that

[58] This is a genuine and deep parallel—as indicated above—between Kant and Frege, to which Stroud himself adverts in a number of his other writings; for example, in the following passage: "[T]he Kantian idea that concepts are predicates of possible judgments means that only someone capable of holding or accepting or putting something forward as true—or at least of entertaining or considering something as being true or false—is capable of thought and experience of the appropriate kind. This the Kantian idea at the heart of Frege's conception of thought and of the fundamental role of predication" ("Judgment, Self-Consciousness, Idealism," in *Seeing, Knowing, Understanding* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018], 128).

[59] In highlighting the genuine parallel between them, the passage from Stroud quoted in the previous note elides the crucial difference between Kant and Frege that it is our present purpose to highlight. For Kant, in the fundamental case, to predicate a concept of something *is* to judge (these are two aspects of one and the same act); whereas, for Frege, to predicate a concept of something is to forge the logical unity of a judgable content—a sort of content upon which our capacity for judgment must be brought to bear (in a separate logical act). As we shall see below, in the reply to Travis, early Wittgenstein seeks to criticize Frege on this very point. This difference (between Kant and Frege, on the one hand, and between Frege and Wittgenstein, on the other) requires us to be clear as to whether our capacity *to predicate a concept* is full-bloodedly in act in the case of someone's entertaining or considering something as being true or false, or whether its proper explication requires (as Kant and Wittgenstein hold) that we start from the logically prior case (in which someone holds or accepts or puts something forward as true) and regard such a case as a unitary phenomenon in which our capacities for predication and judgment are coevally in act as two aspects of a single exercise of a unitary capacity.

it become ingredient in something logically composite: that it team up, as it were, with another act. Problematic judgment, for Kant, is an exercise of a power that may also be exercised non-problematically.[60] A logically full-blooded exercise of this power not only does not require such internal logical complexity; its logical full-bloodedness consists precisely in the absence of such internal disunity. In the fully happy case, the logically simplest form of the exercise of the power and the act of recognition of truth are one.

One could rephrase this point by saying Kant has a resolutely disjunctivist conception of the logical asymmetry between non-problematic and problematic exercises of our capacity for judgment. In Section IX, with respect to disjunctivism about perception, I argued that when it comes to the question of what ought to count as a variant of the infelicitous disjunct, the question ought not to be whether I can be said to both perceive and know; rather, it ought to be whether my acts of perception and knowledge form the requisite sort of unity or not. Similarly for a Kantian conception of judgment, when it comes to the question of what ought to count as a fully felicitous exercise of my intellectual power, the question ought not to be whether I can be said to both think and recognize truth; rather, it should be whether my acts of thought and truth-recognition form the requisite sort of unity or not. For Kant, the basic case of judgment is one in which there is no logical separation between grasping and knowing. To say that it is the *basic* case is to say that the proper logical characterization of the sort of case that Frege takes to be logically simpler but insufficient for the recognition of truth (and that Kant regards as logically derivative and problematic) be understood in the light of a sort of case for which Frege has simply no room—a case in which thinking and judging are one. What Frege takes to be the internal logical character of any judgment, viewed from the vantage of (what Kant calls) transcendental logic, is the characterization of a mark of an exercise of our capacity for judgment that exhibits, along one of its dimensions, a degree of privation in (what Conant calls) logical form.

I speak in the previous paragraph of "the basic case of judgment." We need to be clear what this means. It does not merely mean the logically

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[60] Problematic judgment, for Kant, is not an exercise of our faculty for problematic judgment. There is no such faculty. It is an exercise of our faculty for judgment. Grasping a thought, for Frege, is supposed to be an exercise of a distinct faculty from that of judgment—one that always issues in an act distinct from the act of judgment. This is one of the many reasons why Frege's term "thought" cannot serve as a translation for Kant's term "problematic judgment" and vice versa.

additive case in which I both think *p* and judge it to be true. It means the logically unitary case in which there is no room for such a distinction between a pair of acts. The basic case in the aforementioned sense is therefore not one in which, as a matter of empirical fact, there is no temporal or psychological separation between the one act and the other. Rather what makes it basic in the relevant Kantian sense is that it is a single unitary act of a general power. On the resolute version of a disjunctivist account of perception, proposed in the reply to Hamawaki above, we saw that there was no room for an act that can figure as the highest common factor between a fully felicitous exercise of my capacity for perceptual knowledge and an attenuated exercise of that capacity (such as when it is exercised under reflectively unfavorable circumstances, so that the initial act of perception stands in need of a further act of reflection in order to issue in knowledge). The Kantian conception of the relation between judgment and problematic judgment is similarly resolutely disjunctivist: there is no room for an act that is the highest common factor between a fully felicitous exercise of my capacity for judgment and the attenuated exercise of that capacity that figures in the sort of episode of mere thinking that requires supplementation with a further act in order to issue in an acknowledgement of the truth of what is thus thought.

A proposal along the following lines has recently gained prominence as a modification of Frege's way of distinguishing force from content: in the default case, propositions are as such forceful, and the forceless occurrence of a proposition in a speech act in which the content in question is not, as such, asserted (as, for example, when it occurs as the antecedent of a conditional) is to be understood as the result of a *cancelation* of the force that the proposition otherwise would possess in the default case.[61] Now everything depends on how "cancelation" is here to be conceived. To the extent that such a proposal conceives of the default case as a complex involving both force *and* content—and hence conceives cancelation as the mere removal of force from content—it continues to partake of a conjunctivist structure. It continues to conceive of the copresence of force and content as being, even in the logically most basic case, a form of additive unity. Cancelation on such a picture amounts to subtraction. From a Kantian perspective, such an analysis can account at most for how an episode in which I think and judge *p*—one in which

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[61] See, for example, Peter Hanks, *Propositional Content* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 90–92. See also François Recanati's paper "Force Cancellation," *Synthese,* forthcoming.

I logically combine and acknowledge the truth of the resulting logical unity—differs from an episode in which I do not acknowledge the truth of what I thus combine in thinking *p*. We may then say that the second part of what I do in the first episode is canceled in the second. But an account of this form is without resources for distinguishing the way my logical capacity is in act in the former of those two episodes—in which what is thought occurs forcefully (and hence force is not "canceled")—from an exercise of that capacity in which the resultant act is logically simple: one in which I judge *in and through* the act of logical combination. Such a "cancelation account" of how the forceful logical act relates to the forceless one takes a step in the Kantian direction—by attempting to deny the explanatory priority of the latter over the former—while retaining the underlying conjunctivist picture of how the logical dimensions of the act of assertion constitute a nexus.

Let us put the recent cancelation account to one side and return to our topic here: the Kantian account of the logically full-blooded case of an exercise of the capacity to judge. Let us first recall how resolutely disjunctivist Kantian accounts of cognitive capacities differ from Cartesian accounts of those same capacities. As we saw in Section IX, in contrast to the Kantian account, the Cartesian account of the structure of the good perceptual disjunct furnishes an apt characterization of mundane cases of (what I called above) an insufficiency-of-perception-for-telling scenario. There are cases in which I perceive and then, with the aid of a mere act of reflection, I know. The problem with the Cartesian conception of perceptual experience is that it writes not only this order of priority but also the underlying conception of the logically composite character of this additive unity into the very idea of what it is to perceive. The Cartesian conception makes it look as if every exercise of my perceptual capacity requires a logically distinct act through which I reflectively entitle myself to know what I perceive. So when we turn to the best case of perceptual knowledge—the putatively optimal exercise of the capacity—it still looks as if, absent its logical supplementation through an act of judgment, something is missing for it to amount to knowledge.

Similarly, from the Kantian point of view, the Fregean analysis of the internal logical structure of judgment furnishes an apt characterization of the sort of exercise of our capacity that we find in mundane cases of (what we might now call) an insufficiency-of-thinking-for-the-recognition-of-truth scenario—scenarios in which the initial exercise of our intellectual capacity requires logical supplementation through a second act. If one lives in the world of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as Winston

Smith does—where forces are constantly at work to attempt to unsettle his grip on extraordinarily basic truths—then an effort of reflection may be required to hang onto what otherwise would be truisms.[62] Some banal truth that someone who is reflectively favorably circumstanced is able to recognize as true in the very act of comprehending it (to cite the novel's most famous instance of this: two plus two equals four), Winston may be able to know only in virtue of a pair of acts—one of first thinking it, and then, with the aid of a second act of reflection, successfully intellectually resisting the forces that threaten his hold on its truth.[63] There are mundane cases in which this may be true for me, too—cases in which I think and then, with the aid of nothing more than an additional act of reflection, I know. From the Kantian point of view, the problem with the Fregean conception of judgment is that it writes this logically additive structure into its analysis of the basic character of any exercise of our intellectual capacity to apprehend the truth. The Fregean conception requires that the exercise of the capacity that is *in energeia* when I combine the elements a logically unified thought is, as such (qua act of a capacity for combination), insufficient for the recognition of truth—that the act of grasping a thought *necessarily* requires logical sup-

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[62] For further discussion of how the world of Orwell's novels involves the most extreme possible limit version of (what McDowell calls) reflectively unfavorable circumstances, see my "Freedom, Cruelty, and Truth: Rorty vs. Orwell," in *Rorty and His Critics*, ed. R. Brandom (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell), 268–342.

[63] In the world of Orwell's novel, Winston—in the face of the difficulties with which O'Brien presents him—manages to persist for some time in judging things such as "two plus two is four" or "The Party did not invent the airplane." As long as Winston manages to judge such things, we may say that "the element of assertion is not canceled or overridden" in his acts of saying these things to himself and to others. Yet his acts of so judging partake of a form of logical alienation parallel to the one my perceptual capacity would undergo if, in each case of framing a perceptual judgment, I needed to (as Descartes would have it) be able to assure myself that I am not deceived by my senses in order to be fully entitled to so judge. An account that places Winston's cognitive relation to "two plus two is four" in a box with our ordinary intellectual relation to such a proposition—on the mere ground that both cases may be said to be ones in which "the element of assertion is not canceled or overridden"—is an account that partakes of what I characterized in my reply to Hamawaki as a Cartesian, rather than a Kantian, structure. On such an account, the difference between Winston (in his world) and me (in mine) with respect to such propositions comes to look to be nothing more than a psychological difference: in both cases, the force of what is asserted remains uncanceled; it is just that Winston needs to hesitate for a heartbeat before he asserts what is the case, whereas I am able to assert it without hesitation. This is the crucial trick in the Cartesian philosophical conjuring game—in which the cognitively alienated and the cognitively fundamental case come to seem to partake of a homologous logical structure—that is apt to strike us as perfectly innocent.

plementation through a further act in order to achieve acknowledgment of its truth.

When it comes to the proper logical characterization of a non-defective exercise of our *perceptual* faculty, Stroud seems to favor an analysis that is resolutely Kantian over one that is Cartesian in form. Indeed, I suggested (at the end of Section IX) that one could summarize Stroud's central point about the consequences of a restricted conception of perceptual experience in the following terms: the Cartesian conception of perceptual experience makes it look as if the most an exercise of our perceptual capacity could provide is something that has the logical character of a Fregean thought—a judgable content—so that another act is needed in order to get all the way to perceptual judgment. The passage we quoted from him (at the end of Section IX) suggested that Stroud himself thinks that what is required, in order to overcome a restricted conception of perception, is the idea that the capacity for judgment can be *fully in act in perceptual apprehension*. This raises the question of whether what is needed, in order to have a proper conception of a logically full-blooded exercise of our intellectual faculty, is one according to which the capacity for judgment can be *fully in act in the apprehension of logical unity*.

It is worth noting in passing that here, too, we have come upon yet a further moment in which there not only is a significant philosophical affinity between Kant and Wittgenstein but also, again, one in which Wittgenstein's recovery of a Kantian insight turns on his rejection of a fundamental Fregean commitment: in this case, his criticism of Frege's understanding of the logical role of the judgment stroke (or, as Wittgenstein later prefers to call it, his assertion sign[64]). Though this rejection dates back to the *Tractatus*,[65] the terms in which it is expressed in the following passage from *Philosophical Investigations* explicitly parallels the terms of our foregoing discussion:

> Of course, one has the right to use an assertion sign in contrast with a question-mark, for example, or if we want to distinguish an assertion from a fiction or a supposition. It is only a mistake if one thinks that the assertion consists of two acts,[66] entertaining and asserting ([where the latter is understood as] assigning the assignment of a truth-value,

[64] In Wittgenstein's German, *Behauptungszeichen.*

[65] "Frege's 'judgment stroke' '⊢' is logically quite meaningless" (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, 4.442). Wittgenstein here—and not only here—misconstrues Frege's horizontal content stroke as part of the judgment stroke.

[66] Anscombe translates "zwei Akten" here as "two actions." I have corrected this.

or something of that kind) and hence one thinks that we go about executing these acts by following our notation for the sentence, roughly in the manner in which we sing notes from a musical score.[67]

There is nothing wrong with introducing a notation that explicitly distinguishes assertions from questions. An entire philosophical picture is smuggled in, however, when we design our notation in such a way that it invites us to construe assertion as necessarily involving a logically composite intellectual accomplishment, requiring the execution of two logically distinct acts—one of merely thinking something and an additional one of really meaning and embracing that which one thereby thinks.

Would Stroud agree with this criticism of Frege's conception of the logically additive character of the structure of judgment? If so, not only would it turn out that he has no disagreement with Conant about (i); he may even have reason to conclude that Conant is right to be worried about a tension between (i) and (ii). If Conant and Stroud already agree that Frege's elucidation of the philosophical fiction of the logical alien points the way toward an unrestricted conception of logic, and if Stroud can be brought to agree that a properly unrestricted conception of thought should dispense with the lingering parallel between Cartesian perception and Fregean thought, then where does that leave our two disputants? Well, it still leaves Conant with all sorts of problems (as I have tried in indicate especially in sections III–VIII), but it does not leave much room for disagreement with respect to those issues about which Stroud seems to think he and Conant most disagree. Or does it?

[*Postscript, August 9, 2019:* I will never learn the answer to that last question—at least not from Barry Stroud himself. While going over the page proofs to this chapter, the news reaches me that Barry has just passed away. The increasingly Lilliputian island of contemporary philosophy has lost one of its last true giants.]

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[67] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §22, 11e. The translation of this passage is mine and is rendered in a manner that brings out the connections between the parts of the passage in a manner that a more literal translation obscures (such as the connection between the uses of "Zeichen" at the beginning and end of the passage). The Anscombe translation of "zwei Akten" as "two actions" is the only change I have introduced that might qualify as a correction of her translation. This further amendment of her translation is not so much a correction as it is an alteration in the service of highlighting a point that gets lost in the discussions of this passage that I have seen. What is at issue here is not how many deeds an agent performs but rather how many logically distinct exercises—or actualizations—of our overall cognitive capacities are involved in the default exercise of our capacity to judge or claim.

Section XII

Reply to Sullivan: Frege on the Priority of Logic to Everything

The relations of intellectual inheritance and contestation between the same three philosophers—Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein—explored in the previous reply will remain our topic in this one. However, whereas Stroud, as we have just seen, thinks Conant makes far too much of alleged intellectual affinities between Frege and Kant and far too little of real affinities between Frege and Wittgenstein, Sullivan, as we are about to see, is concerned with lodging almost precisely the opposite complaint.

Sullivan's paper shows a very fine grasp of the overall structure of Conant's article. It contains a great deal of accurate summary that I will not comment on. Sullivan remarks that, although he is in agreement with many parts of Conant's discussion, "it is the convention in commentary to emphasize points of difference."[1] And he goes on to do just that. It makes little sense for me to focus on our present points of agreement. Some of the worries that he raises about Conant are ones that I would (now) want to raise in some form as well.[2] The more sensible way of adapting the relevant convention to my present situation is to focus on the continuing points of difference between Sullivan and me. But the situation is complicated by the fact that there are some newly emergent points of

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[1] Sullivan, this volume, 192.
[2] In particular, I think Sullivan's main complaint is fully justified—namely, that Conant's discussion is (as he puts it at one point) "too generic" and hence fails to distinguish a number of philosophical issues that need to be disentangled from one another before they can be adequately treated.

difference—due to ways in which my preceding replies contest matters on which Conant and Sullivan agree. We will come to these later.

According to Sullivan, Conant aims, first, to set up a dialectical opposition between two sorts of position that each purport to vindicate logic by offering an explanatory grounding of it (where the first of these holds that the laws of logic are "only contingently necessary"); second, to indicate the relation between that first position and its dialectical counterpart (which holds that the laws of logic are "necessarily necessary"); third, to portray Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein as advocating three versions of an elucidation of logic that eschews both poles of this opposition; fourth, to trace how they each do so by rejecting the conception of explanatory grounding shared by the first two sorts of position; and, fifth, to trace a tension in Frege's attempt to overcome the opposition that renders it less felicitous than that of either Kant or Wittgenstein. Sullivan's main objections are concerned with this fifth moment—hence, with showing what is inadequate in Conant's reading of Frege. Before we turn to this, we do need to be clear about the precise extent of their agreement as outlined in Sullivan's presentation of the first four moments.[3]

In the first stage of the dialectic, the relevant pole of the initial opposition is brought into view by attending to the parallels between seventeenth-century voluntarist, nineteenth-century psychologistic, and twentieth-century scientistic conceptions of logic. Sullivan accurately summarizes Conant's view of these parallels as follows:

> What all these three have in common, and what makes it reasonable when reflecting on the general shape of the dialectic to count them as different versions of a single view, is the presumption that the laws of logic have some explanatory grounding. Whether the grounding facts have to do with God's creative will, or with the basic structure and operations of the human mind, or those of the natural world described by physics, the shared idea is that the laws of logic are what they are

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[3] A brief terminological caveat is in order. Sullivan refers to positions that hold that the laws of logic are only contingently necessary as figuring (in what he calls) "the first stage of the dialectic" and those that hold they are necessarily necessary as figuring in "the second stage of the dialectic." That is a perfectly accurate summary of the dialectical order in which those two conceptions of logic are introduced and explored in Conant's article. It would be unfortunate, however, if this were taken to imply a certain conception of the order of *historical* priority of these moments—or even a view about how best to think about their order of *philosophical* priority in a full excavation of the underlying dialectic. (I will return to this point below.) Henceforth, I will employ this terminology of Sullivan's but with the caveat that "first" and "second" here denote merely the order of presentation in Conant's exposition of the issues and nothing deeper.

because of the way those grounding facts are. This "because" seems not to amount to anything unless it implies that, if the grounding facts had been different, so too would be the laws grounded in them. In this way the presumption adds to the ordinary or first-level range of possibilities allowed by logical laws a second-level dimension of possibilities for logical laws, possibilities as to what the laws might be.[4]

The "because" involved in such an explanatory grounding of logic seems to require the following thesis: there can be a set of possibilities beyond those for which logic allows. Some such thesis is required in order for an account of this shape to sustain the appearance of explaining wherein logical necessity consists. Conant and Sullivan are in complete agreement that "Frege's rejection of the thesis is completely clear."[5] This then sets up their disagreement about the fifth moment in Conant's account: "The only question is what form this rejection takes."[6] In saying no to such a conception, how does Frege say it, where does this lead him, and how satisfactory is the outcome? These are the points that Sullivan most highlights in his account of his disagreements with Conant.

This disagreement takes place against a notable background of agreement. Conant and Sullivan agree that Frege's way of saying no here is not to be identified with the way of saying no that figures in the second stage of the dialectic. That second pole in the initial opposition requires that the rejection assume a particular shape. It rules out that there are any possibilities beyond those for which logic allows. But it retains the search for an explanatory ground—for a fundamental prior consideration in virtue of which the laws of logic have their standing. In the original *theological debate,* the leading early version of such a dialectical counterpart to the voluntarist account was theological modal realism. Sullivan touches briefly on the parallel dialectical moment in the later *logical debate*:

> Those who suggest that Frege's epistemology enters with the kind of assurance offered by traditional rationalism, that basic laws are self-evident, or clear to rational intuition, threaten to confine him to the second stage of the dialectic. "Dogmatic" was, after all, Kant's word for the stance of pre-critical rationalism.[7]

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[4] Sullivan, this volume, 185–186.

[5] Ibid., 186. Sullivan notes that Frege's rejection of it is completely clear, for example, in his insistence that the most general laws of truth are authoritative "for *all* thinking" (Frege, *Posthumous Writings,* 128; emphasis added).

[6] Sullivan, this volume, 186.

[7] Ibid., 187; he here refers to Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Bxxxv, 32.

This helpfully brings out some of the background of agreement between Kant, Conant, and Sullivan. In Kant's natural history of reason (to which Sullivan here alludes), what we have called the "second" stage precedes the first, and what we have called the "first" figures as a reaction thereto.[8] In Kant, generally, skepticism is triggered by dogmatism, as is logical voluntarism (in the historical generation of the theological triangle) by a certain form of logical realism—and as is psychologism (in the generation of the logical triangle) by a realist construal of the requirements of rationalism. This is tied to what we might call the underlying moment of insight in these forms of skepticism: if our right to affirm a fundamental logical law depends upon its ground in something outside logic, then our claim to that right is only conditionally valid. Neither Conant's nor Sullivan's Frege disagrees with the skeptic about this. Their Frege holds that if the skeptic's question can legitimately arise about our right to affirm a fundamental logical law, then logic itself "can provide no answer."[9] To read Frege as aiming to furnish this traditional kind of philosophical assurance (the sort that the skeptic and the dogmatist both take to be required in order to vindicate logic) would be to mistake his place in the dialectic.

We thereby arrive at something that Sullivan invites us to regard as the guiding maxim of Conant's article. The guiding maxim—let's call it "Conant's maxim"—on Sullivan's reading of the article may be formulated as follows: in order to break out of the stalemate represented by the first two moments in the dialectic and hence reach the third moment, "we must accept that logical laws are simply necessary" and do so in a way that "avoid[s] any positive conception of what this necessity consists in."[10]

Sullivan correctly discerns, in contrast to Stroud, that Conant does not seek to position Frege's response to the psychologistic logician at the second stage of the dialectic. Indeed, Sullivan regards one of the few merits of Conant's maxim to be that it yields a "particularly insightful account" of Frege's encounter with the logical alien.[11] We already had

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[8] This is why the expressions "the first stage of the dialectic" and the "the second stage of the dialectic" should be employed with the aforementioned terminological caveat in mind.

[9] Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* trans. P. Ebert and M. Rossberg, xvii (I have amended the translation); see Sullivan, this volume, 187.

[10] Sullivan, this volume, 190. Sullivan's dissatisfaction with this aspect of Conant's inquiry raises broader methodological issues—ones that cannot be adequately litigated within the confines of a brief reply—regarding what it means "to avoid any positive conception of what logical necessity consists in." I will, however, touch on this question briefly in the latter portion of this reply.

[11] What Sullivan regards here as meritorious in Conant's account depends only upon his commitment to a more general maxim, which I discuss below (that there is no accounting for

occasion to touch on this feature of Sullivan's reconstruction of Conant's argument in the reply to Stroud. Let us now take a closer look at Sullivan's summary of what he takes to be insightful about Conant's account of Frege's encounter with the logical alien:

> Whatever its general merits—I'll indicate shortly that they are few— this maxim yields, I think, a particularly insightful account of Frege's encounter with the psychologician in the foreword to *Grundgesetze*. . . . Construed as contributing to a demonstration, the contentions that Frege presents against Erdmann there can easily appear as dogmatic pronouncements that will fail to reach the differently grounded alternative schemes of thought that psychologism envisages. In Conant's fruitful dialogical reconstruction of the episode, the psychologician is instead invited to give sense, in his own terms, to his hypothesis that differently constituted beings might disagree over basic logical laws; the upshot is not that such disagreement is proved to be impossible, but that psychologism has not thought its way through to an understanding of what could distinguish disagreement here from mere difference.[12]

This is a perfect summary of the upshot of Conant's reading of the encounter.[13] But even if it does yield an insightful account of the encounter with the logical alien, Sullivan has doubts about how it figures within the storyline of Conant's overall narrative. Hence, he goes on to remark:

> It is because this particular passage responds so well to his quasi- therapeutic reconstruction that Conant gives it prominence as representing (what he takes to be) the better strand in Frege's thought and recommends it as a model for Wittgenstein's later reflections."[14]

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the necessity of logic from outside logic), and not upon any of the detail of what Sullivan takes to be misguided in Conant—that is, on the more determinate specification of this general maxim that comes with Conant's commitment to (what Sullivan calls) a "negative" method.

[12] Sullivan, this volume, 190. That is, he finds merit in precisely that stretch of the article in which Stroud finds least to like. This is not because Conant, Stroud, and Sullivan differ substantially about how to read this particular stretch of Frege but because the latter two differ on how to read this particular stretch of Conant.

[13] In fact, it nicely summarizes what Stroud misses. But what would have here pleased Stroud (if he had been able to notice that Conant discerns such a strand of thought in Frege) is related to what displeases Sullivan—due to the misguided emphasis he regards Conant as placing on this strand.

[14] Sullivan, this volume, 190. The term "quasi-therapeutic" here goes with Sullivan's description of Conant as following a "negative" method. Both are tied, in turn, to Sullivan's perception of the absence of "a positive conception"—something Sullivan thinks is required

On the one hand, Sullivan here registers what Stroud misses: namely, that Conant—much like Stroud himself—finds it philosophically illuminating to highlight the extent to which Frege's treatment of the logical alien may serve as a model for understanding certain aspects of Wittgenstein's later reflections.[15] On the other hand, Sullivan disagrees that it should be taken to stand in tension with other strands in Frege's thought.

Sullivan, as noted above, appreciates that Conant thinks that Frege's place comes in the third step of the dialectic:

> The third step in the dialectic aims not to be not a synthesis but an overcoming of the first two. It wants to hold that logical laws are "simply necessary"—or better, it wants to hold simply that logical laws are necessary—and to have no truck with the alleged second dimension of possibilities for logical laws. To reach this goal, it sets out to undermine the picture shared by the thesis and antithesis.[16]

On Conant's telling of the story, Frege is just one of several philosophers who may be credited with such an ambition: Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein all aspire to undermine the picture of logical grounding common to both of the poles in the initial opposition. So why discuss all three together in a single article, rather than focusing on just one? Sullivan explains:

> For Conant, I think, the real importance of his third historical narrative—the one running from Kant to the later Wittgenstein—lies in its showing us how to avoid the familiar problem just outlined,[17] that the third step in the dialectic threatens to be no less burdened with questionable theoretical commitments than the two it seeks to overcome.[18]

Sullivan thinks this makes it look far too much as if Frege can be cast, without inaccuracy, as occupying a philosophical response (to the

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not only for an adequate reading of Frege but for any adequate account of logic. We will return to this.

[15] In yet starker contrast with Stroud, Sullivan thinks there is something right in Conant's claim that the treatment of the encounter represents, at most, one strand in Frege's thought—one that might mislead one about how to read Frege more generally, if it were allowed to serve as a proto-Wittgensteinian model for understanding all aspects of Frege's treatment of the topic of logical necessity.

[16] Sullivan, this volume, 187.

[17] The footnote that Sullivan attaches at this point reads as follows: "In recent times the problem is most familiar from Barry Stroud's classical formulation." He then refers us to Stroud's classic article on transcendental arguments discussed in Section X.

[18] Sullivan, this volume, 188.

problem of how to account for logical necessity) that lies somewhere roughly midway along a continuous line of intellectual inheritance that unfolds from Kant to Wittgenstein.[19]

This brings us to perhaps the most salient newly emergent point of difference between Conant and Sullivan, on the one hand, and me, on the other. Sullivan thinks Conant is right to see Frege as following Kant in holding that the laws of logic are constitutive of thought (or at least right up to a point[20]):

> Conant is right to hold . . . that Frege's is not an "ontological" conception of logic; that it is instead "a doctrine of the form of coherent thought"; and that it is a presupposed framework in all explanation, so itself neither needs nor admits of any metaphysical explanation.[21] . . . I agree that these are the points needed to dislodge the picture shared between the thesis and antithesis that we started with. And I also agree that a comparison with Kant is the best way of discovering what, in Frege, these points amount to.[22]

Sullivan indicates a further aspect of this intellectual affinity between Kant and Frege (about which he and Conant agree) in the following remark:

> In a Kantian phrase very aptly cited by Conant here, logical laws engage with thoughts in virtue of their displaying 'the form of truth'[23]. . . .

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[19] Sullivan's reasons for bristling at this aspect of Conant's narrative are almost the opposite of Stroud's. Sullivan approves of the very aspect of the narrative that most bothered Stroud (namely, the portrayal of Frege as Kantian) and disapproves of making too much of the aspect that Stroud thinks can be pushed much further than Conant does (namely, the portrayal of Frege as a late Wittgensteinian avant lá lettre). Where Stroud laments Conant's making it seem as if Frege's conception of logical necessity is closer to that of Kant than it is, while making it seem further from that of Wittgenstein than it is, Sullivan—as noted already at the outset of this reply—sees things the other way around.

[20] Though he does think that Conant overstates the affinity, he also thinks that Conant is onto something here: "Frege's equations imply that the laws of logic are constitutive of thought: they define what thought is. Conant opens his discussion of 'Frege's Kantianism' by remarking similarly: 'Frege inherits the Kantian idea that accord with the laws of logic is constitutive of the *possibility of* thought'" (Sullivan, quoting Conant, this volume, 198; my emphasis). Sullivan comments: "I think there is a significant difference between these formulations—that the extra words I just emphasized are indicative of a weaker view" (Sullivan, this volume, 74–75). But notice also: the very aspect of Conant's account of which Sullivan approves here is the very one of which Stroud most disapproves.

[21] For further discussion of this point, Sullivan here refers the reader to Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," 47–48.

[22] Sullivan, this volume, 198.

[23] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A59/B84, 98, quoted by Conant on page 147.

More prosaically, logical laws engage with the compositional structure
through which a thought is determined as true or as false. If the laws
are to be formalized, then this structure must achieve a perspicuous re-
alization in syntax. This is what a *Begriffsschrift* aims to provide.

This is a faithful explication of what the term "form" needs to mean
for Conant in order for him to be able to use it in the ways that he
does.[24] In his hands, it serves as a device to read into Kant the Fregean
idea of a structure that characterizes "thoughts," as such, independently
of our "grasp" of them. I have tried to show in my reply to Boyle—
expressing my agreement with Boyle's criticisms of Conant on this
score—that there is no non-equivocal construal of "form" (as well as no
non-equivocal construal of a host of philosophically interrelated terms
such as "thought," "grasp," "judgable content," "judgment," etc.) that
can figure in a textually faithful account of something that Kant and
Frege both hold regarding that which they each call "logic." As I ob-
served in the reply to Boyle, Frege himself seldom uses the term "formal"
to characterize the propositions of logic, only in comparatively early
writings, and even where he does, what he usually means by it is just
that the propositions of logic partake of (what I have called) Leibnizian
generality—that they extend to everything that can be thought. As we
have seen, propositions that count for Frege as "formal" in this sense—
ones that may be seen to be absolutely general in virtue of their logical
structure—do not involve any abstraction from content. On the con-
trary, they have content—a maximally general content. This contrasts
with the way Kant uses the terms "form" and "formal" before Frege, as
well as with how Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* uses them after him.
For both Kant and Wittgenstein—their many differences notwith-
standing—the formality of logic lies in its considering judgments (or ex-
pressions of judgment) solely in regard to their form, abstracting from
their content. As we have seen in the reply to Boyle, in Kant this means
abstracting in pure general logic from all relation to the object (hence all
relation to sensibility) and in transcendental logic from all differences
between objects (hence relation to anything beyond the pure thought of

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[24] More generally, Sullivan has a fairly high estimation of Conant as a reader of Kant: "With
just occasional exceptions (e.g., page 131) the 'Kantian' view Conant describes is the view
that Kant himself actually took of what he called 'pure general logic,'" (Sullivan, this
volume, 199). Whereas I (now) see Conant as usefully epitomizing a way of reading Kant
that one is apt to fall into if one approaches him with a prior familiarity with and partiality
for a Fregean conception of logic.

an object). What this means in the *Tractatus* we will consider below, when we come to the reply to Travis.

Does Frege nowhere employ a notion of "form" in a manner that suggests a conception that bears greater affinity with these Kantian/Tractarian conceptions of form? There is one locus in his work where Frege does, indeed, employ the term "form" in a manner that invites a more thoroughly hylomorphic understanding of the implied contrast between form and content—namely, in his intriguing posthumously published piece titled "Dialogue with Pünjer on Existence," written sometime before 1884. Consider the following passage:

> In the sentence "The sky is blue" the predicate is "is blue", but strictly the *content* of the predicate lies in the word "blue". Leave this out and what remains—"The sky is"—is a predicate without content. In this way we form the quasi-concept—"being"—without content. . . . [H]ere the real content of what is predicated does not lie in "has being" but in the *form* of the particular judgment. Faced with an impasse, language has simply created the word "being" in order to enable the *form* of the particular judgment to be employed. When philosophers speak of "absolute being", that is really an apotheosis of being.[25]

One aim of the "Dialogue" is to argue for a conclusion for which Frege argues elsewhere as well: when we say that something "has being" or "exists" we are not subsuming it under some super-concept—one under which everything (that "is") falls. Unlike when he seeks to make this point elsewhere, Frege here makes a certain sort of use of the notion of "form" to bring the point home. He does so specifically in the service of articulating a very particular diagnosis of what goes wrong in the misunderstanding of the logic of our language at issue. The diagnosis goes as follows: when Pünjer speaks as he does, he is trying to use the word "being" or "exist" to turn something that belongs to the *form* of the judgment into part of its *content*. When Pünjer speaks in this way, he is not bringing something under a concept—he is not engaging in an act of genuine predication—rather, he is trying to round on language and use it to point to one of the logical dimensions of judgment that it is the task of a *Begriffsschrift* to display perspicuously. And, when he does this, Pünjer ends up saying something that is senseless. The propositions he comes out with when he uses the word "being" in this way do not ex-

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[25] Frege, "Dialogue with Pünjer on Existence," *Posthumous Writings*, op. cit., 63–64; emphasis added.

press a judgable content. There is nothing expressible in a *Begriffsschrift* that could correspond to the supposed meaning of such a proposition.

Frege comes close in these remarks—as he does, for example, also in "On Concept and Object"—to the Tractarian idea that the logical character of language/thought is shown in language, as well as to the related idea that any attempt to say something "about" it issues in *Unsinn*. What is unusual in the "Dialogue" is the manner in which, in the context of making this sort of point, Frege here explicitly deploys the term "form" in a manner that can appear to anticipate the Tractarian way of drawing the distinction between the form and content of a proposition. But I know of no other passage in his corpus where Frege deploys the notion of form in quite this way. This is perhaps no accident. As I will begin to argue at the end of this reply, greater clarity on these points would force Frege to have to choose between his own official conception of logic (in terms of substantively contentful generality) and the proto-Tractarian one (in terms of formality) of which we find a glimmer here.

An insight that Frege exhibits in the two texts "On Concept and Object" and "The Dialogue of Pünjer" may be put as follows: the words we use to indicate logically fundamental "notions"—terms such as "object," "concept," "existence," and so on—are not to be thought of as maximally general concepts under which comparatively more determinate concepts or items fall. Thus, for example, the expression "object" as it figures as an elucidatory term of art in Frege does not pick out a maximally general concept that stands to those for more particular sorts of objects as a maximally determinable concept would stand to comparatively determinable ones falling under it. (You could frame a concept under which absolutely all objects fall, but it would have the logical form of a concept expression and therefore a fortiori would not indicate that which the elucidatory expression "object" seeks to elucidate in Frege's writings.) In these writings, we can therefore say that Frege, in effect, rejects a Leibnizian understanding of how fundamental logical terms of art—terms such as "relation," "object," "existence," etc.—(if they are to be properly employed in the elucidation of the signs of a perspicuous logical notation) are to be understood. This is a Kantian strand in his thought—one that is non-accidentally therefore also proto-Tractarian. Nevertheless, Frege's conception of logical laws is such that they are to be understood as articulating maximally general laws—and as such, for Frege, they have content. This is a Leibnizian strand in his philosophy that remains central to his entire conception of logic. One consequence of this is that Frege's overarching conception of logical structure is not

and cannot be a hylomorphic one—one that turns on a contrast between form and content. Hence he does not and cannot hold, as does the author of the *Tractatus,* that a logical proposition expresses a form but is itself without content. At the level of the structure of the proposition, the contrast between the logical and the non-logical is to be understood in Frege not in terms of a contrast between form and content, but rather in terms of contrast that is to be drawn fully within the realm of content.

For Kant and early Wittgenstein the notion of the form of a judgment (or a proposition) plays a crucial role in their account of wherein the logical dimension of judgment (or language) consists. By contrast, the notion of "the form of a particular judgment" that Frege employs in the "Dialogue"—in order to contrast it with "the content of a particular judgment"—is not one that he draws on to mark out wherein the special characteristic of logical propositions lie. So, while it would be an overstatement to claim that Frege's ways of employing terms such as "logical structure" or "form" never bear any affinities with how Kant or Wittgenstein employ them, it nonetheless remains accurate to say that for Frege what marks out the propositions enunciated a Fregean *Begriffsschrift* as purely logical resides not in their formality, but rather in a proper understanding of the source of the generality of their content. What matters for our present purpose is to note, in the order of explanatory priority that matters most to Frege's account, the relevant "structure" or "form" is to be ascribed in the first instance to "thoughts." This original "structure" or "form" or "logical unity" does not undergo any internal logical transformation through the determination of the thought in question as true or false (i.e., through the attachment of a judgment stroke). Hence the "form" or "structure" of the thought is one of which the resulting judgment may also be said to partake. On a strictly logical construal of what an act of judgment is, not only the contents of our acts of judgment, but each act itself (qua act involving such a content) may correlatively be said to be characterized by the "form" or "structure" in question. I have tried to show above how the Fregean conceptions at work here (of logical complexity, generality, thought, the relation of a capacity to its acts, etc.) are all profoundly alien to Kant.

As we have seen, for Kant, the concept of form enters the picture through reflection on the nature of a self-conscious rational capacity (where the capacity for logical thought is itself conceived as an ingredient aspect of a unified rational capacity for knowledge). The "something" which may be said to "have" "logical form," for Kant, is in the first instance the general cognitive capacity at issue—the understanding.

It is through its relation to the form of that capacity that the unity of its manifold of acts is to be comprehended. The notion of form acquires significance in application to a given act only through an account of the character of the relation of each such act to the general form of the capacity. Only through an act of abstraction in which we focus solely on the content of such an act (abstracting out the content from the act considered qua active exercise of such a capacity) do we arrive at something in Kant's philosophy that begins to approximate that which figures as the original logical substrate exhibiting "structure" or "form" in Frege's philosophy. We can designate what we now have in view with a bit of terminology that both Kant and Frege employ: "judgable content." But even here, if we are not careful, we are apt to mislead ourselves: for what we have arrived at through such an exercise of our Kantian capacity for reflective abstraction is still not something that is to be identified with a Fregean thought. To so construe it would be to read Frege's requirement of a sharp dissociation of force from content into the very nature of that which is true or false—a dissociation that presupposes a highest-common-factor account of the relation of contents to acts. Kant's own way of understanding the logical priority of (what he calls) "judgment" over (what he calls) "judgable content" does not allow for such a uniform mode of separation of that which is judged from the exercise of the capacity for judgment. To take Kant's and Frege's respective employments of these various terms (that I have placed in quotation marks in the preceding sentences) to involve synonyms is to utterly miss the depth of their philosophical differences. And this is precisely what Conant everywhere does. As far as I can make out, Sullivan happily follows him in this.

At the beginning of Section V, I remarked that Conant presents a narrative of evolving conceptions of logic according to which there is (a slight hiccup in Frege's conception notwithstanding) a fairly continuous, ever deepening line of philosophical inheritance informing the following trio of transitions: from Leibniz to Kant, from Kant to Frege, and from Frege to early Wittgenstein. In the rest of that section, I sought to raise doubts about even the broadest features of this narrative by highlighting a cluster of parallels in Leibniz and Frege and by contrasting them with an opposed cluster of parallels in Kant's and Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic. On my alternative way of sketching the development, starting with Section V, we were meant to see that the narrative bore an outline more akin to that of a zigzag than to that of a linear development á la Conant.

Now Sullivan is equally critical of the linearity in Conant's account of this series of three transitions. But whereas, beginning in Section V, I took issue with a great many aspects of Conant's representation of Frege as a kind of Kantian, Sullivan—as we have just seen—in no way objects to the very idea of such a casting of Frege. Rather, what he objects to is the suggestion that (at least Conant's) Wittgenstein should be regarded as fruitfully completing some common philosophical project that Kant and Frege may accurately be read as having jointly initiated. Exegetically, Sullivan disagrees with Conant's story because it invites us retrospectively to project an incipiently "quasi-therapeutic" dimension into our readings of Kant and Frege. Philosophically, he disagrees with it because he takes it to involve an excessively deflationary conception of what it is to properly arrive at a final satisfying stage of the overall dialectic. Where Sullivan sees Kant and Frege as each concerned to adumbrate his own distinctive "positive" conception of logic, he sees (at least Conant's) Wittgenstein as not even attempting to make a move in that same game: he is only playing the "negative" game. And Sullivan regards this difference between Kant and Frege, on the one hand, and (Conant's) Wittgenstein, on the other, as marking a far greater intellectual chasm than the various lines of putative intellectual continuity Conant contrives to foreground in his version of the historical narrative.

Here is Sullivan's description of what, according to Conant, we are meant to see at the third stage of the dialectic:

> In Putnam's reflections, and in Conant's retelling of them, Frege and the *Tractatus* represent "stepping stones" on a route from Kant to the later Wittgenstein. The aim in following this route will be to retain the insight in Kant's constitutivity thesis while "stripping away the transcendental baggage."[26] As the baggage is shed we are meant to see how the third stage of the dialectic can be the simple acknowledgement of the force of logic that Conant wants it to be—not a theoretical

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[26] Putnam, "Rethinking Mathematical Necessity," in *Words and Life,* ed. J. Conant (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 246; quoted by Conant, this volume, on page 47. The full passage from Putnam, summarizing the aim of the article of his that is at issue here, runs as follows: "This line is one I believe Carnap hoped to detranscendentalize; and in Carnap's hands it turned into linguistic conventionalism. My strategy in this essay will be to suggest that there is a different way of stripping away the transcendental baggage, while retaining what I hope is the insight in Kant's and perhaps Frege's view, a way which has features in common with the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein rather than with Carnap."

competitor to the earlier stages, but all that is left when the impulse to theorize is dissipated.[27]

Sullivan here seeks not only to describe Conant's position but to indicate what he finds wanting about the final stage of Conant's rendition of the dialectic. The implicit suggestion is this: even if Conant has correctly identified the weaknesses of the previous competitors, what we nonetheless require in this area of philosophy, if the dialectic is to be satisfyingly concluded, is precisely "a *theoretical* competitor to the earlier stages." Much is thereby made to hinge on what it means for a "competitor" to qualify as appropriately "theoretical."

If it were true that it formed some part of Conant's conception that to make progress with a philosophical problem (such as the necessity of logic) one should regard oneself as having arrived at a point in the dialectic where there is nothing more to do than simply pound the table and insist that "we must accept that logical laws are simply necessary," then the right thing to say about Conant's method would be something far more critical than that it is overly negative. In that case, Conant's conception of the third stage could justifiably be regarded as amounting to nothing more than a disguised reversion to some remarkably crude variant of one of the options that figured in the first stage—that is, to a strikingly unhelpful form of dogmatism—and no less likely to elicit a skeptical backlash than its predecessor. But I think such a reading of Conant—as the G. E. Moore of logical necessity, as it were—would not only be unfair; it also would not be Sullivan's primary ground of dissatisfaction with him. His worry that Conant's method is excessively "negative" notwithstanding, Sullivan does seem to discern that Conant is working with a conception of what it is to vindicate one's entitlement to a final resting place in the exploration of a philosophical dialectic—through (what Conant himself calls, following Frege and Wittgenstein) a method of elucidation—that is meant to eschew (what Sullivan himself calls) dogmatism.

Hence it is not because he takes the method to be dogmatic but because he takes it to be philosophically short-winded and insufficiently illuminating about the nature of logic that Sullivan finds Conant's method to be unsatisfying. And, indeed, if the criticism were simply put that way, then I would be happy to agree with Sullivan. I share his general sense that there is much that is unsatisfying about Conant's attempt to make progress with the problems with which he wrestles; but I am not at all

[27] Sullivan, this volume, 188.

sure that I share what seems to figure as Sullivan's primary reason for thinking this (let alone the conclusion he takes it to license).

Sullivan's primary dissatisfaction appears to attach to his understanding of the specification he includes in the concluding phrase of (what he takes to be) Conant's guiding maxim: in order to reach the third step of the dialectic, we must accept that logical laws are simply necessary and do so in a way that *avoids any positive conception* of wherein this necessity consists. A full accounting of my disagreement with Sullivan about where Conant goes wrong would require getting clear on what ought to count as "a positive conception" here. The disagreement between us is more interesting than it might otherwise be (between, say, two randomly chosen contemporary philosophers), since Sullivan and I both agree exegetically that there is some even more general negative maxim to which Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein all subscribe—and we appear to agree philosophically about the soundness of this maxim. It is a maxim that might be put as follows: there is no accounting for the necessity of logic from outside logic. So our shared guiding maxim, if one reformulates it "positively" (and intentionally vaguely, so that we can both seem to agree on it), comes to this: one must account for the necessity of logic from within logic. But what is it to account for the necessity logic in this way? It is really here—offstage, as it were, from the details of Sullivan's reply—that our deepest disagreements come into play. This offstage ground of unexplored disagreement shapes our differing perspectives on the topics occupying center stage in Sullivan's discussion and is everywhere implicated in our exegetical differences about Kant, Frege, and early Wittgenstein respectively.

Let us therefore linger for a moment over the question of what it means to avoid (or not avoid) "a positive conception" of what logical necessity consists in and the related questions of what it means to follow a strictly "negative" conception and thereby eschew the demand to adumbrate a genuinely "theoretical" alternative in philosophy. I do not share Sullivan's confidence that these expressions (that occur in quotation marks in the preceding sentence) serve to articulate the sort of exhaustive disjunction they purport to characterize—one that would allow us to survey the entire space of genuinely available alternatives for making progress with philosophical problems (so that Kant's or Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy may be classified without distortion as belonging to one or the other of these two supposedly exhaustive sorts of conception or method). The tacit implication here would appear to be that the alternative to offering a certain form of theory must be a way of philosophizing that

abjures the aspiration to furnish any positive insight into that which we seek to understand in philosophy.

To what extent is the attainment of insight into (say, what Kant or Wittgenstein calls) "logic" available only to a philosopher who harbors (what Sullivan calls) a "positive" conception of logic? Well, that depends on what it is to have such a conception. To put the question more colorfully, What does it take to render oneself invulnerable to the charge of excessive negativity in philosophical method—a charge to which Sullivan evidently takes Conant to be vulnerable? How much is required in order to ensure that one's conception of logic partakes of the requisite minimum degree of positivity? And how are such issues of "positivity" related to issues of what qualifies one as having a philosophical "theory"? I am inclined to agree with the following claim (though it is not clear to me how important a role it plays in Sullivan's conception of the options here): insofar as we take Frege to represent the third stage in the dialectic, then our occupant of that stage is someone who seeks something aptly termed a *theory* of logic, in the very sense of the term which Wittgenstein deploys when says that is what he seeks to eschew in philosophy.[28] But I do think (and I also think Conant thought) Wittgenstein sought a form of *understanding* through philosophy—and that includes an understanding (of what the *Tractatus* calls) "the logic of our language," and hence of "logic." And I fear that Sullivan's view of what Conant's maxim entails must yield a reading of Wittgenstein sufficiently impoverished so as not even to allow for that.

Words such as "negative," "quasi-therapeutic," and "anti-theoretical" are employed by Sullivan as if they possessed a sufficiently noncontroversial and antecedently understood significance that may be relied upon to indicate roughly what is at issue here without having to delve into it. I do not doubt that, in so speaking, Sullivan achieves a rapport with a certain audience of readers—those that share his general sense of disapproval regarding Conant's way of understanding what is involved in throwing away the Tractarian ladder. We touch here on a topic that has

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[28] Wittgenstein repeatedly insists—both in the book itself and in his remarks about the book—that the philosophical method (for uncovering and clarifying the misunderstandings of the logic of our language to which we are prone) he aims to practice in the *Tractatus* does not rest on "a theory of logic" (at least in the sense in which he thought Frege's and Russell's respective methods each required one). How precisely this is to be understood is a topic that Sullivan and I have had the chance to debate on a previous occasion; see his "What is the *Tractatus* About?" and Conant and Diamond "On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely," both in *Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance*, ed. M. Kölbel and B. Wiess (Oxford: Routledge, 2004).

generated more heat than light in the relevant body of tertiary literature. All I want to say about that literature here is that I am inclined to think that its reliance on such terms ("negative," "quasi-therapeutic," "non-theoretical") in no way helps to clarify or even accurately mark the real site of disagreement. At best, they afford the illusion of a survey of the space of genuine methodological options; at worst, they attempt to a convert a philosophical difficulty into an ideological one.

One comes away with the impression that Sullivan thinks (but is perhaps too tactful to say outright) that Conant's reliance on his supposed maxim commits him to the methodological viability of (what is sometimes called) "Wittgensteinian quietism." And the underlying suggestion seems to be the following: we all already know what *that* is, and philosophically right-thinking readers will already know what is wrong with that; so let us rather spend time and energy on specific topics and matters in Conant's article that are more deserving of serious attention. Sullivan does not use the label "quietism." He puts the matter more guardedly. And this is not the place to explore, let alone contest in detail, what it is that readers of Wittgenstein who label him a "quietist" (or the proponent of a negative or therapeutic or an anti-theoretical methodology) imagine they are precisely charging him with. Accordingly, I will simply permit myself the following blanket assertion: whenever the claim that Wittgenstein is a "quietist" (or employs a merely "therapeutic" method, or whatever) involves the assumption that we can understand the character of Wittgenstein's responses to philosophical problems by first understanding what the label in question is supposed mean, thereby sparing ourselves the philosophical difficulty of entering into the details of Wittgenstein's responses to philosophical problems, then the resulting understanding of the label always issues in a gross misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, be it early or late.[29]

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[29] The point of that last remark is not to refuse any such label per se on the grounds that qua form of words it necessarily mischaracterizes Wittgenstein's philosophy. For to think that would also be to engage in the pretense that one understands what the label means in abstraction from any real appreciation of the form of philosophical method it purports to characterize. On a particular understanding of any such label, it may no doubt be reinterpretable so as to capture a truth about some aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophical procedures. Though I am inclined to think that is no less true of most of the contraries of such labels. Thus, for example, as I will indicate further below, on a certain understanding of what it is to have "a positive conception" of logic, I would be happy to say that Wittgenstein has such a conception. It all depends on what that means. The point is simply that absent a proper elucidation of the supposed meaning of such a label, its employment confers upon a reader of Wittgenstein (or Conant, or anyone else) at best an illusion of philosophical orientation. I take the trouble to say this here because I think the most interesting

There is, however, no denying the historical fact that a bloated and unproductive body of tertiary literature on Wittgenstein—and especially on the *Tractatus*—has proliferated in the journals. It is this body of literature that forms the background against which Sullivan speaks and which he takes to confer some reasonably determinate sense on the various critical terms of art that he deploys. The following four sets of terms play a particularly fateful role there in distinguishing what are taken to be two basic interpretative options available to a reader of Wittgenstein: on the one hand, a reading that is "theoretical," is "constructive," "affords insight," and is "positive"; where this is opposed to a reading that is "therapeutic," is "quietist" (or purely "deflationary" or "deconstructionist"), "affords no insight," and is "negative." The aforementioned terms that figure on a given side of this single supposed divide are often treated as if they were synonyms. More worrisomely, the oppositions here are often taken to be *exhaustive*. Socrates, Augustine, or Freud—to mention only three relevant cases—would have been astonished to learn that a therapeutic conception of their respective undertakings excludes a place for theory, and that it does so on account of the mere fact that it involves a therapeutic dimension. They would have been even more astonished to learn that the forms of therapeutic change that they seek to effect not only depend on but require that the subject who undergoes such change attain no insight into anything. (That might be true of certain forms of shock therapy or muscle therapy, but hardly of any case of therapy that ought to invite an analogy with philosophy.) To the extent that Sullivan is allowing himself to rely on a whole range of unquestioned assumptions in that body of tertiary literature to inform his reading of Conant, the obstacles that stand in the way of understanding are as formidable as they are tiresome. I would like, as far as possible, simply to circumnavigate this entire dimension of Sullivan's misunderstanding of Conant, in the interest of keeping our present focus on the issues that stand at the center of this volume. I will therefore restrict myself to the following remark about the body of tertiary literature that here casts its shadow over our exchange: all of these terms ("theoretical," "constructive," "affords insight," and "positive") and their supposed opposites ("therapeutic," "quietist," "deflationary," and "negative") are so

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philosophical issues that remain (between Sullivan and Conant, on the one hand, and Sullivan and me, on the other) are largely obscured through Sullivan's reliance on the rhetoric of "positive conception," "negative method," "theoretical competitor," "quasi-therapeutic reconstruction," and so on.

overused and so seldom clearly defined as to be useless in clarifying the issues here at stake, unless, in using them, we first say as clearly as we can what we want to mean by them in this context.

Such labels are bandied about so frequently in interpretative disputes about Wittgenstein that it is easy to suppose that by now all the parties in those debates must have arrived at some reasonably wide degree of consensus as to what the terms in question are supposed to mean.[30] It might therefore also be advisable—in order to free ourselves from certain habits of mind that have arisen in connection with their deployment in that body of literature—first to be sure we understand what we might mean in applying each of these terms to some philosopher who is not Wittgenstein and then to work our way out from there to an understanding of the conditions of its further projectibility. In particular, it may help to alleviate one's inclination to suppose that one already knows what is here at issue if one starts with Kant and works forward from there. Picture a brief imaginary dialogue that begins with my asking Sullivan the following: Is the sort of conception of logic that one finds in Kant something that qualifies as "a positive conception" in the relevant sense (so that Kant would not be open to the charge of pursuing a mere *via negativa* in his elucidation of logic)? In answer to this, Sullivan—I suspect— would say, "Yes, Kant has a positive conception of logic." And if I were to ask him the same question about the conception of logic that Conant finds (or for that matter, perhaps also the one *I* find) in Wittgenstein, I suspect that Sullivan will want to answer, "No, Wittgenstein (certainly on Conant's reading of him) has a merely negative conception of logic." Finally, if I ask Sullivan about Frege, he will say, "Frege resembles Kant and differs from (at least Conant's) Wittgenstein in having a positive conception of logic." So we now know at least this much about what it is to have a positive conception of logic for Sullivan: at least Kant and Frege each have one, and (at least Conant's) Wittgenstein does not. I am not sure how much more I really know now than before I entered into that little exercise. But it is already enough to raise certain worries.

A reader of the preceding and subsequent sections of these replies need not enter any more deeply than this into this question (of what it is for a given philosopher to have "a positive conception" of logic) to appreciate the pertinence of the following reminder: it has been a central concern

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[30] For some evidence to the contrary, see Silver Bronzo and James Conant, "Resolute Readings of the Tractatus," in *A Companion to Wittgenstein*, ed. H. J. Glock and J. Hyman (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017), 175–194.

of all of the preceding replies cumulatively to contest the soundness of the sharp disparity in the pair of answers that "Sullivan" gives in the imaginary dialogue above to the first two questions (where Kant and Wittgenstein seem to represent opposite philosophical poles). Moreover, an additional concern of these replies has been to contest the adequacy of the answer given in our imaginary dialogue to the third question, at least insofar as it seems to license the claim that Frege is philosophically closer to Kant than Wittgenstein. It is not that I doubt that Sullivan would, in so answering the three questions in our imaginary dialogue, be answering them just as he ought to in the light of his own understanding of the relations of similarity and difference that obtain across Kant's, Frege's, and (at least Conant's) Wittgenstein's conception of logic. But throughout my replies to the other contributors to this volume, I have striven to make it plausible that the relations between these three figures may be seen in a rather different light.

More specifically, I in effect suggest—to summarize a great many points quickly—that Sullivan's way of answering the three questions in the imaginary dialogue rests on a failure to appreciate the following four pairs of points: (1a) Kant is committed to a method of philosophy that turns on an exercise of our capacity for knowledge that takes its methodological point of departure from what the judging subject is able self-consciously to know of that capacity through her first-person present indicative form of exercise of it, and (1b) the practice of such a method delivers a critique of a Leibnizian conception of the priority of logic; our capacity for logical thought is revealed to be internal to and dependent on our capacity for empirical thought. (2a) Early Wittgenstein is committed to a transformed successor of Kantian critique—a critique of language:[31] a method that relies on nothing more than the power of language's knowledge of itself from the inside, through its exercise, and (2b) what the practice of such a method reveals is that our capacity for forming (propositional symbols of the sort that Frege and Russell call) "logical propositions" is internal and dependent on our capacity to express thoughts about what is empirically the case. (3a) Though Frege attempts to incorporate into his conception of logic something analogous to the fundamental role that Kant assigns the first-person present indicative standpoint of the judging subject in the comprehension of thought, the attempt introduces a Kantian commitment into his conception that sits awkwardly with his equally deeply held commitment to a Leibnizian

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[31] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, §4.0031, 39.

conception of the nature of the priority of logic, and (3b) this results in a need, on the one hand, to find a privileged role for the judging subject's first-person present indicative perspective onto her own exercise of the capacity, while, on the other hand, requiring a conception of the act of judgment as attaching to an antecedently available, independently intelligible logical unity of thought. This requires that (4a) Frege's conception of logic reject a Kantian conception of the unity of our power of knowledge; hence (4b) Frege's conception of logic tacitly presupposes a conception of logical thought as a self-standingly intelligible power—one whose fundamental nature is, as such, prior to and independent of any exercise of our other cognitive powers (including our power to know matters of empirical fact or to say what is so).

It follows from this last point that our power for logical thought is a power that we can share with purely intellectual beings that have neither need nor use for our other cognitive capacities, and, hence, no need for a body, for a power of sensible apprehension, or for a system of linguistic signs "by means of which" they express their thoughts. Of course, Frege will readily concede that *we* require embodiment, sensible receptivity, and notation: we must avail ourselves of such "instruments" if *we* are "to do logic." But *logic itself,* on a Fregean conception, pertains to *the order of inferentially related thoughts themselves*—conceived not as an order of actualizations of a finite cognitive power but as, in the first instance, a self-standing order of *Gedanken*—judgable contents that (as it happens, due to our finitude) we are able fully to grasp, assess, and judge only through the additional "auxiliaries" of sensible apprehension and linguistic notation.

If this is what it means to give a "positive" answer to the question "What is logic?"—to have a conception of the self-standingly intelligible nature of that which is known through logic alone—then I would claim that neither Kant nor Wittgenstein seek to furnish competing answers to that question. It follows from this that they also do not seek to give answers that are "theoretical" competitors to such an account. But what really makes for the difference here between them and Frege is not some indiscriminate prior general refusal of "theory," but rather a pointed, principled, philosophically motivated refusal simply to begin from the assumption that an elucidation of our capacity for logical thought necessarily requires a certain conception of the priority of logical over empirical thought. What makes it principled is that they seek to bring out, first, that such an assumption has been laid down in advance without proper vindication; second, that it leads directly to many of the philosophical perplexities that most concern Kant and Wittgenstein; and third,

that a proper resolution of these perplexities requires the abandonment of this assumption.

This, of course, hardly constitutes the last word on the question regarding which of our authors should be said to have "a positive conception" of logic. At most, all it tells us is that, assuming both the soundness of my readings of these three figures and having fixed on one possible construal of what that expression means, what we should now say is, "Frege has one and neither Kant nor Wittgenstein has one." One can introduce a more liberal construal of what ought to be meant by having "a positive conception," such that it would be possible to bring Kant and Wittgenstein within its fold. For example, over the course of these replies, it is argued that both Kant and Wittgenstein seek to show us that a philosophically satisfying response to the question "What is logic?" involves coming to *understand* the form of a general capacity (the capacity for rational knowledge for Kant, and the capacity to say that such and such is the case for Wittgenstein)—where the understanding is of such a sort that it can be achieved only through acts of that very capacity: through a reflective exercise thereof involving the exploration of specific varieties of self-misunderstanding, to which any such effort at reflective self-understanding inevitably gives rise and through which it must work. Does someone who has such a conception of what it is to achieve an "understanding" of "logic" subscribe to "a positive conception" of logic? I have no investment in such a way of speaking—and hence no account of my own of the threshold conditions for awarding such a title to a philosopher. What I do mean to bring out, however, is that it is a reliance on suppressed features of his own conception of the space of alternative philosophical possibilities that enables Sullivan to be so confident in advance (without further determinately specifying the sense of such an expression) that the pair of questions "Does Kant have one?" and "Does Wittgenstein have one?" yield opposed answers; whereas, on my readings of these two philosophers, the answers to these questions will be the same (either both positive or both negative) for a very wide range of ways of specifying its sense—including any, as far as I can make out, that Sullivan himself works with.

At the end of Section III, I observed that there is a grand tradition of (what I called, following Irad Kimhi) *philosophical logic*—running from Aristotle through Kant to Wittgenstein—in which the conception of the relation of logic to philosophy contrasts with the contemporary one. I also observed there that Frege is a fascinating liminal figure with one foot still in the grand tradition (in which logic is as inseparable from

philosophy as philosophy is from logic), while with the other foot he takes a step in the direction of hiving logic off from the rest of philosophy (so that it can come to be conceived as a discipline with its own narrowly specialized set of concerns). If one emphasizes the philosophical ambitions underlying Frege's project, as Sullivan properly does, then the step might seem a small one. Yet it already suffices to open up room for a very particular sort of "positivity" of which an account of logic may now partake—hence a new conception of a wider space within which alternative accounts may stand to one another as theoretical competitors. For Frege, the task of providing an account of logical knowledge (i.e., knowledge of that which can be known through logic alone) must be discharged in complete independence of any reliance on an account of our knowledge of anything whose justification as a possible content of knowledge requires going beyond logic. If this is what it is to have "a positive conception" of logic—one that presupposes such an understanding of *the priority of logic over everything else*—then I can agree with Sullivan that Frege has such a conception.[32] I can also agree with Sullivan that Conant does not properly appreciate what this difference between Frege and (Conant's) Wittgenstein comes to. But I disagree with the implication that *Kant* has anything approximating such a conception of logic. I therefore disagree with Sullivan that one may read Frege's relation to Kant as one in which there is a genuine engagement between two theoretical competitors who share anything like a common conception of what it is to give an account of logic. Such a way of construing Frege's relation to Kant requires that we first learn to read Kant through Fregean spectacles—a way of reading Kant that comes naturally to both Conant and Sullivan.

Sullivan makes Frege's degree of Kantianism seem less superficial than this by suggesting that Frege is best regarded as realizing a crucial aspect of the ambition of Kant's critical philosophy: namely, the ambition to articulate in a single conception both the a priori structure of the inferential order and the a priori conditions on genuinely object-related thought. Admittedly for Kant, in order to do this, we require both pure general and transcendental logic. Thus, looking back at Kant from Frege's

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[32] As I will indicate below, I think Sullivan is correct to highlight how fundamental a certain conception of the priority of logic is to Frege's overall account. Directly after Sullivan's most eloquent attempt to summarize what this conception comes to, he goes on to remark that it affords "only the barest sketch of a view, but the view sketched is the more positive conception I think we need if we are genuinely to dislodge the ontological picture shared by the thesis and antithesis we started with" this volume, 200. This is not all that bare a way of specifying what it means to have a "positive" conception, if it suffices to exclude Kant.

point of view, one may be tempted to say, "Kant's own conception of the inferential order is simply too meager to deliver such a joint articulation—this is why Kant mistakenly thinks that the labor must be distributed over two separate branches of logic: pure general logic and transcendental logic. However, once Frege has suitably enriched our account of the inferential order, we are able to see that these two sets of conditions may be accommodated within a single unitary conception of logic—one that no longer requires Kant's awkward division of logic into two branches. So Sullivan's suggestion here is that Frege's conception of logic presents us with something that Kant, on the one hand, would have good reason to regard as "pure logic," while on the other, he would have to concede successfully discharges the putatively separate task that he had assigned to transcendental logic. Frege shows that a suitably enriched theory of the inferential order suffices to articulate transcendental conditions of just the sort Kant mistakenly thought could be brought into view only through supplementing pure logic with an account of the categories of the understanding.

Here is Sullivan's formulation of the respect in which Frege's view of logic has a claim to being even more Kantian than Kant's own:

> A Kantian view of logic, in contrast to Kant's own view of the meager logic at his disposal, should capture logic's transcendental role, representing it as an a priori structure simultaneously determining knowledge and its object.[33]

Deferring for a moment the real question at issue here (i.e., "What makes one view of logic more Kantian than another?"), what is true in this remark is that Frege's version of "pure general logic" (if I may call it that) differs from Kant's in not being "merely formal." What pure logic alone yields, on such a Fregean conception, is an account of the conditions of something that, on the one hand, can count as genuine knowledge and, on the other, rests on pure logic alone. What it thereby yields, however, is an account of knowledge of those objects that are proprietary to logic, along with knowledge of those general truths that are (supposed by Frege to be) indifferent as to whether one is quantifying over marshmallows, numbers, musical notes, Tuesdays, spatiotemporally located objects of empirical cognition, or whatever. Admittedly, such a Fregean conception of logic is unable to articulate the conditions of thought's attaining specifically *empirical* content. What Frege calls logic neither can nor should

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[33] Sullivan, this volume, 200.

attempt *from within logic* to vindicate its entitlement to that with which it must be supplemented in order to yield an account of how human thought achieves the determinate varieties of empirical content that it does. But Sullivan, in effect, suggests this should not be taken to mean that it is unable to articulate (what a "Kantian" ought nonetheless to regard as) transcendental conditions on objectively valid judgment.

The blithe employment of the word "varieties" above (in that last sentence but one) allows one to gloss over the crucial point on which Kant and Frege disagree: What "more" is required in order for thought to "acquire" empirical content?[34] Does it require only the introduction of additional indices into our logical notation so that it may be enriched with further content? Or does it require an appreciation of dimensions of difference in the character of thinking that turn on discriminating varieties of (what Kant would regard as) "logical form"? Frege would, of course, have no difficulty answering this question. "Varieties" of empirical content can amount to nothing more for him than mere differences in content—never differences in logical "form" or "structure." No further appreciation of such differences need be in view on a Fregean conception in order to achieve substantive generality in thinking. We achieve it in our thought whenever we truly think that for every x, if x is F, then x is G—regardless of whether the Fs and Gs in question are such that the Fs range over types of substances and the Gs over their properties, or the Fs over types of causes and the Gs over their effects (or, for that matter, the Fs over types of capacities and the Gs over their actualizations).[35] All that is required in order to live up to Frege's ambitions for a logical theory is such an intuition-free, content-neutral account of the "form" of logical generality. Almost everything "logical" that is to be specified in Kantian transcendental logic (on the ground that it involves a formally distinct mode of logical nexus) must be shoehorned by Frege into a single form of logical nexus—that of function / argument structure[36]—one whose logical structure may be fully, determinately specified in complete

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[34] This formulation already privileges a Fregean way of understanding what must be here at issue and what the order of explanation ought to be.

[35] The word "type" as employed here is a weasel word designed to gloss over whether the Fs and Gs at issue here are mere logically possible instances of Fregean concepts or really possible schematizations of Kantian categories.

[36] This claim requires qualification. Frege's desire to accommodate every form of logical complexity displayed by his *Begriffsschrift* within the framework of a function / argument structure confronts a limit when it comes to the relation between the judgment stroke and that to which it attaches. As Kimhi notes in this connection, "by admitting the judgment / assertion stroke into his logic" ("since its role is to manifest the actual act of assertion"), Frege

abstraction from any consideration of the real possibilities of material content over which it can range. This is just another way to say that the deeper philosophical motivation behind the Aristotelian/Kantian notion of *categories*—the notion of formally distinct modes of predicative unity—is alien to Frege.[37]

Frege stands equally far here from both Kant and early Wittgenstein. For Frege, from a logical point of view, there is just one kind of object, hence only one logical kind of name or object-expression—namely, that which refers to an object in virtue of figuring as the argument of a first-level function. Hence, for Frege, there is only one form of possible logical nexus within which a singular referring term can be joined with a predicative expression. For Kant, there are as many logically distinct fundamental forms of predicative nexuses as there are distinct forms of categorial unity. For early Wittgenstein—in his case, in fully self-conscious and dramatic departure from Frege—the notion of logical form is to be elaborated in a manner precisely intended to admit of dimensions of internal logical diversity that reach down into the very form of the object, allowing for just that for which there can be no room on Frege's conception: namely, a genuine logical diversity of *forms of objects*.[38] In the *Tractatus*, the form of generality goes with the form of the object—hence the form of the propositional variable.

The following three observations about Frege's conception of logic do not register three distinct features of it, each of which represents a distinct point of disagreement with Kant and Wittgenstein: (a) all generality is (what we have called above) Fregean generality (exceptionless universally quantified generalization), (b) the only genuinely logical forms of nexus are those that can be represented through a function/argument

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admits something into his notation that "is external to the significant functional composition of a proposition" (*Thinking and Being*, 46).

[37] This, in turn, points the way to the most fundamental affinity between the philosophies of Aristotle, Kant, and Wittgenstein: namely, the idea that the source of the generality of philosophy—if it is to comprehend why each such distinct mode of predicative unity is a distinct mode of speaking of what is—cannot itself partake of the generality of something that is merely a higher, maximally general, schema for such a mode of unity (the generality, as Aristotle puts it, of a genus).

[38] About logical form, for example, it is said that "Its possibility of occurring in elemental facts *(Sachverhalte)* is the form of an object" (*Tractatus,* 2.0141) and that "Space, time and color are forms of objects" (*Tractatus,* 2.0251). For an interesting discussion of how this dimension of early Wittgenstein's philosophy is connected with his later idea that "essence is expressed by grammar" (*Philosophical Investigations*, §371), see G. E. M. Anscombe, "Grammar, Structure, Essence," in *Logic, Truth and Meaning: Writings of G. E. M. Anscombe,* eds. M. Geach and L. Gormally (St. Andrews: St. Andrews University Press, 2015), 212–222.

nexus (a Fregean first-level concept that takes a Fregean object as its argument, a second-level concept that takes a first-level concept as its argument, etc.)[39], and (c) there is no room for the traditional philosophical

[39] The point I am making here may appear to have certain affinities with Barry Smith's point that the widespread adaptation of a broadly Fregean form of logical notation has contributed to the rise of what he calls Fantology, or *Fa*-ontology, where "F" stands for a predicative expression and "a" stands for an object expression. This is the ontological doctrine according to which reality contains only those items whose logical shape is of a sort that allows them to be picked out by the variables and predicate letters employed in such a notation. Smith summarizes the doctrine as follows:

> "[T]he key to the ontological structure of reality is captured syntactically in the 'Fa' (or, in more sophisticated versions, in the 'Rab') of first-order logic, where 'F' stands for what is general in reality and 'a' for what is individual [or particular]. . . . Because predicate logic has exactly two syntactically different kinds of referring expressions—(F), (G), (R), etc., and (a), (b), (c), etc.—so reality must consist of exactly two correspondingly different kinds of entity: the general (properties, concepts) and the particular (things, objects), the relation between these two kinds of entity being revealed in the predicate-argument structure of atomic formulas in first-order logic." (Barry Smith, "Against Fantology," in *Experience and Analysis,* eds. J. Marek and E. M. Reicher, [Vienna: HPT & ÖBV, 2005])

Smith claims that the "classical fantologists were Frege, Russell and the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*." Six quick observations are in order about how what I claim in these pages diverges from Smith's account of these matters. First, insofar as one wants to attribute to Frege the idea of "a syntactically distinct kind of referring expression," there are arguably many more than two such kinds of expression in Frege's logic. In principle, there are indefinitely many, even if finite minds such as ours mostly have use for only the lower reaches of the logical hierarchy. The crucial point is not how many such expressions there are but that they all must fit into a function/argument form of notation. Second, Smith appears to work (as do many post-Fregean philosophers) with a uniform notion of "reference" where the nature of that to which we refer determines only the logical character of the referring expression but not its *mode* of reference. The only logically strict use of notion *reference* for which Frege's logical system allows is the following: two expressions have the same reference if each can be substituted for the other without affecting the truth-values of the propositions in which they occur. It follows that there is no formally specifiable notion of what it is for a syntactic kind to "pick out" its "referent" within the system of Frege's logic such that concept- and object-expressions each can be said to do the same thing in "referring." (As Irad Kimhi puts this point: "There is no univocal sense of 'reference' according to which both names and predicates can be described as referring" [*Thinking and Being,* 80n].) The sort of free-standing conception of how a concept-expression picks out a concept with which Smith casually operates would render Frege's struggles with the Kerry Paradox otiose. Third, according to Smith, "the early fantologists argued explicitly that first-order predicate logic *mirrors* reality" [my emphasis]. For Smith, for something to be an *ontological* doctrine just means that it is committed to this idea: There are certain antecedently given kinds of self-standingly intelligible truth-makers. Fantologists arrive at their special version of an ontology by holding that the distinct kinds of referring expressions in their preferred logical notations are the only ones suited to refer to these entities and that they do so in virtue of "mirroring" their antecedently given logical shapes. Fourth, according to such a doctrine, the logical supervenes on the ontological, whereas in Ricketts's interpretation of Frege, "ontological categories are wholly supervenient on logical ones" ("Objectivity and Objecthood," 66).

notion of diversity of categorical forms of object-involving logical nexus. Rather, these are three ways of drawing attention to one and the same fundamental respect in which Frege's logic does not offer anything that Kant would be able to recognize as compatible with his own aspirations for transcendental logic[40] (or, for that matter, anything that Wittgenstein would be able to regard as compatible with his conception of logic[41]).

Now our question was this: To what extent does what Frege delivers in achieving *his* ambition have a claim to fulfilling what *Kant* regards as logic's transcendental role? An account of the conditions of the further

This difference between Smith's picture of Fregeanism and Frege's own conception of logic is, in turn, tied to a topic to which we will soon turn, nicely encapsulated in the following remark of Sullivan's: "Logic, in Frege's conception, is prior to any notion of the world." Fifth, Smith takes the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* to be one the three preeminent examples of a "classical fantologist." A fantologist is someone who has no room for the idea that there are logically distinct forms of objects and hence a logical diversity of forms of singularly referring expressions. As indicated immediately above, this means that—*pace* Smith—the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* is a critic, not a proponent, of fantology. (We will see further, in the reply to Travis below, that the doctrine that logic "mirrors" reality—far from being part of its teaching—is a central target of the *Tractatus*.) Sixth, according to Smith, "fantology is a twentieth-century variant of linguistic Kantianism, or in other words of the doctrine that the structure of language (here: of a particular logical language) is the key to the structure of reality." It is not clear how this conception of fantology (qua kind of "linguistic Kantianism") is a conception of the same thing as the doctrine that logic mirrors reality. Indeed, this formulation of Smith's makes it sound as if he thinks that the problem with fantology is that it rests on an overly uncritical form of logical idealism rather than on an overly uncritical form of logical realism. Either way, for reasons given above, Smith's idea of "Kantianism" bears about as much resemblance to my account of (a genuinely critical) Kantianism as does his "Frege" or his "Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*" do to mine.

[40] Indeed, insofar as one thinks that there are Kantian grounds for thinking that a Fregean logical notation is, in principle, unable to express the form of generality that characterizes statements such as "Water boils at 100 degrees centigrade" (the generality of talk about the nature of inanimate material substances: a topic of the *First Critique*), "Rational autonomous agents are obligated to keep their promises" (the generality of categorical imperatives: a topic of the *Second Critique*), or "Horses have four legs" (the generality of talk about the general character of living substances: a topic of the *Third Critique*), one will be forced to conclude that no form of generality Kant seeks to elucidate in any of his three critiques is Fregean in form. For a relevant discussion of how any broadly Kantian conception of the first topic must be unFregean, see Sebastian Rödl's *Categories of the Temporal* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); for the second, Stephen Engstrom, *The Form of Practical Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); for the third, see the first chapter of Michael Thompson's *Life and Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[41] In the *Tractatus,* the logical form of (that which was traditionally conceived of as) a categorical proposition is to be analyzed as an assertion about an object (rather than as the predication of a concept of an object). An important resulting difference between Kant's and early Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logical unity is nicely brought out by Jean-Philippe Narboux in his account of the latter as involving a form of categoriality that dispenses with categories; see his *"Unité propositionnelle et unité aspectuelle dans le* Tractatus *de Wittgenstein,"* in *Proposition et état de choses,* ed. J. Benoist (Vrin: Paris, 2006), 171–198.

capacities required for relating oneself to (what Frege calls) *Wirklichkeit*—and hence for thought to determine "varieties" of knowledge involving empirical content—must involve introducing into (what Frege conceives of as) "logic" something wholly external to logic. Is this compatible with what it means, on a properly Kantian conception of transcendental philosophy, to "capture" *logic*'s transcendental role?[42] My disagreement with Sullivan over how to answer this question is more delicate than the preceding paragraph might suggest. For I agree with Sullivan that it may enhance our understanding of the philosophical side of Frege's overall project to appreciate the degree to which that project is accurately and illuminatingly characterized in just the terms Sullivan presents it: namely, as one of seeking to vindicate "logic's transcendental role" in the sense of securing a relation between a theory of the conditions of valid inference and a theory of the conditions of the object-relatedness of thought, without having to divide logic into two branches as Kant does: into a maximally general theory of inference (pure general logic) that involves abstraction from all relation to objects and a theory of content (transcendental logic) that requires distinctions between forms of logical nexus from which a maximally general theory of inference must abstract.

In assessing the depth of Frege's Kantianism thus characterized, it may provide a helpful object of comparison if we consider for a moment the extent to which early Wittgenstein's project might be brought under a similar-sounding characterization. It, too, seeks to furnish a form of understanding that captures logic's transcendental role, though it seeks to do so in a very different way (through conferring upon self-conscious linguistic beings such as ourselves a proper understanding of the "logic of our language")—and it does so arguably in a way that is far less out of tune with Kant's central philosophical concerns. For one can read Frege as fulfilling Kant's philosophical ambition only if one reads back into Kant the Fregean idea that the pair of philosophical tasks of elucidating the nature of logical thought and of elucidating the nature of empirical thought are best conceived as two distinct enterprises. Or, more specifically, that

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[42] Moreover, Frege assumes that the introduction of any such further content may be accommodated within the forms of generality expressible within his *Begriffsschrift*. As discussed in the reply to Boyle, this is something Kant must deny—notably, for example, with regard to the form of generality displayed in the relation of a capacity and its acts. Hence, from a Kantian point of view, not only does Fregean logic not attempt to deliver what Kant seeks in logic, but its very conception of generality obstructs the possibility of a proper self-understanding of the form of generality of the very capacity we exercise when we seek to characterize the difference (as it falls to philosophy to do) between successful and unsuccessful exercises of our cognitive capacity.

the following pair of tasks are disjoint: (1) that of providing an account of how the a priori structure of pure logic determines knowledge and relatedness to objects, and (2) that of providing an account of how the "a priori" conditions on "thought" determine empirically contentful "varieties" of "knowledge" and their more determinate "varieties" of "relation" to "objects."[43] From a Kantian perspective, Frege overcomes one division (one within logic: between pure general and transcendental)—so that what we call "logic" is no longer riven from within—by substituting in its place another division (one within the activity of knowing: where logical thought is a self-standing source of knowledge, distinct from those additionally required for non-logical knowledge). The result is that that which Kant wishes to regard as our *Erkenntnisvermögen* is now riven from within.[44] Early Wittgenstein's aim is to overcome both of these sorts of division at once.

What causes the need for such a division within logic, in Kant, is his doctrine that thought itself can achieve relation to objects only through its being given content from outside thinking. (Hence, Kant will hold that without sensibility, no genuine relation to a *Gegenstand* can be secured.) What causes the need for the counterpart division within knowledge, in Frege, is his Leibnizian conception of the priority of the logical over the empirical. (Hence, Frege will protest against Kant's dictum that without sensibility there is no relation to an object, holding instead that reason can secure, on its own steam, a cognitive relation to an objective yet non-empirical order of content-involving thought). What would it mean to overcome both of these divisions (the one that arises for Kant within an account of logic and the one that arises for Frege within an account of our *Erkenntnisvermögen*) *simultaneously*—without having to trade one off for the other?

Early Wittgenstein's attempt to realize such an ambition requires the simultaneous rejection of Kant's and Frege's respective conceptions of "pure thought" and "pure logic." It requires a critique of the Kantian

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[43] Part of my point here is that it is a condition of being able to regard (1) and (2) so formulated as characterizing two separate tasks—in the ways that Frege would—that one employ all of the words placed in quotes in the above specification of (2) in accordance with Frege's understanding of those terms. There is no non-equivocal understanding of this set of terms that can express in an idiom common to both thinkers what I am here claiming Frege assumes and Kant rejects.

[44] This is to reintroduce into one's account of knowledge the very feature which Kant struggled most to avoid in his—the very one which he regarded as the crucial shared underlying assumption of empiricism and rationalism. For further discussion, see my "Why Kant is Not a Kantian."

idea that empirical content is external to the nature of thinking as such, coupled with a critique of the Fregean idea that the grasp of the logical unity of an empirical thought (a grasp of it qua true or false judgable content) is in every case necessarily epistemically prior to an understanding of its projective relation to empirical reality (and hence prior to empirical judgment: to an appreciation of which member of the contradictory pair of that thought and its negation constitutes an assertion of what is empirically the case).[45]

So, to conclude, I think Sullivan is no better a reader of Kant than Conant, but he is a much better reader of Frege. Indeed, he is a terrific reader of Frege. In the following passage, he sums up how Frege's conception of pure logic is tied to a broader understanding of the *priority* of logic—one according to which logic is prior to any notion of the totality of facts, world, or mind:

> Logic, in Frege's conception, is prior to any notion of the world, which emerges from it as the totality of facts, of thoughts that are true. It is likewise prior to any notion of mind, since it defines what it is for mind

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[45] Commentators on the *Tractatus* sometimes operate with the assumption that early Wittgenstein deploys a terminology that he not only shares with Frege but seeks to deploy in a Fregean manner. If this assumption is in place, then what early Wittgenstein says (in *Tractatus*, §4) when he writes, *"Der Satz ist der sinnvolle Gedanke"* will look to be something rather banal by Frege's lights (to which Frege would happily agree). Such points of apparent agreement between Frege and early Wittgenstein will seem pervasive as long as one fails to appreciate the extent to which terms such as *"Sinn"* and *"Gedanke"* acquire a profoundly un-Fregean significance over the course of their elucidation within the *Tractatus*. What Frege calls "the sense" of an empirical "thought" (on Frege's understanding of *Sinn*) may be grasped independently of a projective relation to empirical reality (as a judgable content that is either true or false); what early Wittgenstein calls a "sense" cannot come into view in this way. To grasp the sense of a thought for early Wittgenstein is to appreciate the asymmetry in how its true and false poles respectively bear on reality. Hence logical propositions (whose truth value may be determined apart from how things empirically are) may be said to have "senses" for Frege; whereas for early Wittgenstein they may not. There is no room in early Wittgenstein for a kind of thought that both has a sense and yet is such that we may comprehend it as necessarily true. (The closest thing is a tautology—which is *sinnlos*.) Hence, even though one it is not wrong to say that for both Frege and Wittgenstein it is a condition on something's being a genuine thought that it "have a sense" (or be *sinnvoll*), this expresses a merely verbal agreement. For what the *Tractatus* calls a "sense" already brings with it the forceful relation to empirical reality that Frege thinks must enter in with the further step from thought to judgment. As we shall see in the reply to Travis, what early Wittgenstein is concerned with bringing out (in *Tractatus*, §4) when he writes *"Der Satz ist der sinnvolle Gedanke"* turns on a rejection of what Frege would be concerned with affirming in availing himself of those very same words. Once again, there is no non-equivocal terminology common to Frege and early Wittgenstein that permits one to state what I am here claiming Frege assumes and that early Wittgenstein rejects.

to be answerable to the world it represents. Given this priority, logic can be answerable to nothing at all.[46]

This is beautifully put. And I think it has Frege completely right. But it is connected to (what I have called in Section V) Frege's Leibnizianism and hence to where Sullivan and I most differ in our respective readings of Kant—and I suspect Wittgenstein.[47] Frege seeks to adumbrate a realm of sense that is prior to what is empirically the case, and that requires that our capacity for knowledge of logical truths be independent of our capacity for knowledge of empirical reality. In my other replies, I seek to show that such a Fregean conception of the priority of logic is completely alien to Kant (though not to Leibniz) and that it serves as a central target of early Wittgenstein's criticisms of Frege. For neither Kant nor early Wittgenstein is logic prior to the totality of facts, world, or mind. For Kant, transcendental logic (the branch of logic that articulates the conditions of genuinely world-related thought) exhibits forms that are at one and the same time forms of mindedness and forms of worldhood; and they only are either because they are both. For early Wittgenstein, logic articulates a dimension of form common to thought, language, world, and the logical "I." Hence what Kant and early Wittgenstein each call "form" (for all of the differences in their respective conceptions thereof) is never prior to the world-involving matter of thought,[48] but always only internal to it.

Conant certainly helps to confuse issues when he declares that, for the *Tractatus,* "logic is barren."[49] This unqualified way of putting things invites a conflation of the question of the status of "logic," understood as the logic of our language (as that which characterizes the form of any material thought, propositional symbol, or state of affairs), with the question of "logic," understood as a self-standingly intelligible body of non-tautologous, substantively general truths. It is the latter conception that early Wittgenstein rejects—thereby rejecting anything like "the more positive conception" that Sullivan says he thinks "we need" in order to make

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[46] Sullivan, this volume, 200.

[47] I have the impression (from his other writings on Frege and Wittgenstein) that Sullivan is not only deeply attracted to certain aspects of Frege's conception of the priority of logic but might also be inclined to read certain aspects of that Fregean conception into the *Tractatus* in a way that I would not. If this is true, then it is a further, not unrelated, major point of disagreement between us that needs exploring on another occasion.

[48] More specifically, for the *Tractatus, die Welt* (everything that is the case) and *die Sprache* (the totality of propositions) are no less pervaded by logic than *Gedanken* (the totality of propositions that are *sinnvoll*); there is no logically prior Fregean order of "thoughts."

[49] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 69.

progress in this area of philosophy.[50] As a matter of mere terminology, this then renders the former conception the member of the pair that counts as "more negative." If the point of the labels is to imply that the latter conception stands to the former as something stands to nothing, then this is philosophically astute in one respect and potentially question-begging in another. What is sound is the implication that the latter conception ascribes to logic a sort of self-subsistence that the former denies. What would be question-begging is an implication to the effect that any conception that fails to be "positive" in this respect is *a fortiori* one whose philosophical vindication requires less rigorous or painstaking reflective effort.

Sullivan does not deny that Kant regards logic as merely formal and that this sets up a parallel to early Wittgenstein's account of (what the *Tractatus* calls) "logical propositions." But he thinks Conant (following Putnam) makes far too much of this, while making far too little of the far more interesting parallel that may be discerned in Kant's and Frege's shared ambition to capture logic's transcendental role—an ambition Sullivan thinks must be absent from the *Tractatus* if it holds that "logic is barren." Hence, he concludes:

> But the right response to this is not to retreat—as Conant, enlisting the spurious authority of the *Tractatus*, urges we should—to the pre-Fregean consensus that "logic is barren." Instead, we should consider what a properly Kantian view of Frege's logic might be.[51]

That is precisely what I have attempted to do. And I have tried to show that Sullivan's attempt to do this rests on a threefold failure to appreciate (1) what it means, on a Kantian view of logic, to say that logic is merely formal, (2) the depth of the parallel in this regard between Kant's and early Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of how logical form relates to material content, and (3) how deeply opposed these both are to Frege's conception of the priority of logic. For Wittgenstein, like Kant, logic characterizes not a structure prior to or independent of our activity of thinking, but rather its very form. In the words of *Tractatus*, §3.03: "*Wir können nichts Unlogisches denken, weil wir sonst unlogisch denken müssten.*" This shift, onto the *we* who must *do* the thinking and saying, will form the topic of my final three replies.

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[50] Sullivan, this volume, 200.
[51] Ibid., 201.

Reply to Gustafsson: Wittgenstein on the Relation of Sign to Symbol

In the reply to Boyle, we saw that Kant opposes an empiricist conception of perception as contributing a self-standingly intelligible first-layer of experiential matter upon which a logically subsequent act of the understanding exogenously acts (thereby conferring upon something merely sensible a determinate cognitive content), as well as a rationalist conception of the intellect as constituting a self-standing capacity for forming fully determinate truth-apt thoughts (prior to its logically subsequent intentional bearing on a manifold of empirical content). For Kant, mere intuitions without concepts must remain blind: without some understanding of its internal relation to a possible concept, there would be nothing that could constitute the apperceiving subject's self-consciously recognizing some putative "intuition" as a re-occurrence of the "same" intuition in consciousness. And mere concepts without intuitions must remain empty: without some internal relation to intuition, there would be nothing that could constitute the apperceiving subject's self-consciously taking herself to be employing the same concept across a series of objectively valid acts of judgment. And we saw that Kant's opposition to both empiricism and rationalism flows from a single source: his conception of the interrelation of the perceptual and intellectual dimensions of our single unitary capacity for knowledge.

In the present reply, we shall see how Wittgenstein opposes a related pair of conceptions of the power of language: an empiricist conception of the linguistic sign as constituting a self-standingly intelligible first-layer

of linguistic matter upon which a logically subsequent act of interpretation exogenously acts (and thereby confers upon a mere sign a determinate meaning), as well as a rationalist conception of the logical symbol as antecedently determining the logical relations of content-involving thoughts to one another (prior to their logically subsequent expression in a manifold of sensibly apprehensible written or spoken signs). For Wittgenstein, mere signs without symbols must remain blind: without some understanding of its internal relation to a possible symbol, there would be nothing that could constitute the competent speaker's self-consciously recognizing some putative "sign" as a re-occurrence of that "same" sign. And mere symbols without signs must remain empty: without some internal relation to the sign, there would be nothing that could constitute the competent speaker's self-consciously taking herself to be employing the same symbol across a series of genuinely intelligible occasions of its use. And we shall see that Wittgenstein's opposition to both such a form of empiricism about the nature of the sign and such a form of rationalism about the nature of the symbol flows from a single source: his conception of the interrelation of the perceptual and intellectual dimensions of our single unitary capacity to speak a natural language.

In order to be able to take this step—from a critique of knowledge to a critique of language—Wittgenstein needs to combine an insight of Kant's with one of Frege's. We saw, starting in the reply to Hamawaki, that for Kant there is no form of rational cognitive consciousness without self-consciousness. And we saw that for Frege—though perhaps there could be disembodied intellects who could grasp thoughts without language—there could be no critical assessment of judgment, and hence no self-consciousness, without the aid of a perspicuous notation, and hence without language. Wittgenstein puts these insights together and thus seeks to show the following: that even the most rudimentary form of consciousness in a being such as ourselves is a form of mindedness of an essentially linguistic creature.[1]

Section V concluded with a brief discussion of the following Fregean triad:

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[1] These three thoughts about Kant (and the dependence of rational consciousness on self-consciousness), about Frege (and the dependence of the assessment of judgment on notation), and about Wittgenstein (and the dependence of all of the above on a sufficiently capacious conception of the power of language)—though developed very differently from the manner in which they are in this volume—play an equally central role in Irad Kimhi's book, *Thinking and Being*.

(1) the apprehension of a thought: *thinking;*
(2) the recognition of the truth of a thought: *judgment;*
(3) the manifestation of this judgment: *assertion.*[2]

We saw there that, for Frege, (1) is prior to (2) and (2) is prior to (3) in the following sense: for any case of (2), there are a pair of instances of (1) and (2) for which a case of (1) is a highest common factor; and for any case of (3) there are a pair of instances of (2) and (3) for which a case of (2) is a highest common factor. We saw in Section VIII that, for Kant, the general capacity for (2) is logically prior to the sort of exercise thereof required for (1). In particular, we saw that, for Kant, a fully successful exercise of the capacity (one that achieves recognition of truth) is formally distinct in character from an unsuccessful one (one that aims at but fails to achieve recognition of truth) or an attenuated one (one that does not even so aim).[3] And we saw in Section XII, despite other respects in which such a conception of logic might qualify as Kantian, that Frege replaces a Kantian conception of the priority of our *Erkenntnisvermögen* to its exercises and their contents with his own very particular way of conceiving the priority of logic to world and mind.

This brings us to the topic of the present section: these profound differences in their respective conceptions notwithstanding, Kant and Frege both assume that, at least at the level of their individuation qua rational capacities, (2) must be logically prior to (3) (i.e., the capacity for judgment per se must be prior to a capacity to express judgments in language) so that at least there is no contradiction in the very idea of a rational being's possessing the former without the latter, in the idea of her being a fully rational thinker without her being a speaker. Though they would readily concede that without the assistance of language, finite beings would not get very far in life as thinkers or knowers, neither Kant nor Frege conceives of the capacities that rational beings have for thinking and knowing as *essentially linguistic;* whereas Wittgenstein (starting already in the *Tractatus*) does. This is the hitherto neglected topic that Martin Gustafsson's contribution to this volume helpfully introduces into our mix of topics. In so doing, he especially invites us to consider how *later* Wittgenstein's treatment of it fits into the dialectical landscape

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[2] Frege, "The Thought," 294.
[3] So, for Kant, there is no highest common factor—an act of our cognitive capacity bearing the same logical form—across a case of (1) and a case of (2) as Frege understands them—across a case in which our capacity for judgment is merely problematically in act and one in which it is logically full-bloodedly in act.

in which my previous replies have positioned Kant, Frege, and early Wittgenstein.

The aim of this section will be to bring out how a Wittgensteinian treatment of how the third moment stands to the second in the Fregean triad is related to a Kantian treatment of how the second stands to the first—hence how Wittgenstein further advances the dialectical unraveling of the triad as a whole. On the Kantian conception, our capacity merely to entertain judgable content in thought—keeping to (what Frege calls) "the logical unity of the thought"—to refrain from passing judgment on its truth or falsity, is logically parasitic on those capacities which the triad represents as logically downstream from it. Our capacity to merely think without acknowledging the truth of what we think, for Kant, not only presupposes our capacity for judgment but, indeed, constitutes a very particular, logically derivative actualization of what is an essentially truth-acknowledging capacity. On the Wittgensteinian conception, our capacity to think something merely to ourselves—keeping it (as philosophers say) *in foro interno*—hence refraining from speaking it out loud, is again logically parasitic on that which is presented in the triad as logically downstream. It not only presupposes our capacity for linguistic expression but, for Wittgenstein, constitutes a very particular, logically derivative actualization of what is an essentially linguistic capacity. Hence the shape of the criticism that we have seen mounted by Kant *avant la lettre*, and by Wittgenstein *après la lettre*, of the Fregean conception of the relation of thought to judgment takes on an ever sharper edge through the manner in which it is taken up and folded within the criticism that we now aim to show that Wittgenstein mounts of the philosophical tradition's (including Kant's and Frege's) conception of the relation of judgment to language.

The prosecution of this aim will proceed in four steps. In the first quarter of this reply, I will seek to bring out what Kant and Wittgenstein have in common in this regard (i.e., what is un-Fregean in their respective conceptions of how the first two moments of the triad are related). This will lead us to explore what is Kantian in Wittgenstein's conception of that which we will variously describe below as a "logical capacity," a "capacity for thinking," or a "capacity for making sense." In the second quarter of this reply, we will attend to how the topic undergoes a further transformation when we characterize the capacity in question as an essentially linguistic one. In the third quarter, the concern will turn to what sets Wittgenstein apart from Kant and Frege in his account of such a capacity; it will turn to what is both un-Kantian and un-Fregean in his

conception of how the latter two moments in the triad are related to one another. Finally, I will highlight an aspect of what I think is fundamentally right about the manner in which Gustafsson—probably to the annoyance of many Wittgenstein commentators—weaves back and forth between texts from early and later Wittgenstein, uncovering a continuity of philosophical concern in these writings regarding the internality of rules to what they govern.

Over the course of this four-step reply, I will alternate between expressions of admiration and ones of disapprobation regarding how Gustafsson puts his points. I will begin with the former—offering, in the first quarter of this reply, some alternative formulations of points that Gustafsson makes, without yet disagreeing with him. In the second quarter, I will point to a bit of a wobble in how Gustafsson understands Wittgenstein on the relation between signs and symbols. Only once we reach the third quarter, and hence the topic of how our rational capacities are essentially linguistic, will I criticize some of Gustafsson's own formulations about what a sign is and how it relates to a symbol. The topic of the internality of sign to symbol and how this is exhibited in "logical syntax" (in the terminology of the *Tractatus*)—or in "grammar" (in Wittgenstein's later idiom)—is the guise in which the topic of the internality of thought to language arises here. The reply concludes with some reflections on what is involved in a fully resolute rejection of the very idea that the relation between sign and symbol is external.

Conant's treatment of these topics leads him to a number of subsidiary exegetical claims that have proven controversial. It is with these, and with Gustafsson's defense of them, that this reply takes its point of departure. Perhaps the most contested of these is that the *Tractatus* aims to show us, if we attempt fully to think it through, that we cannot make sense of the idea of logically distinct kinds of nonsense—mere nonsense and substantive nonsense. As Gustafsson notes, this subsidiary rejection of the idea of substantive nonsense itself constitutes yet a further point of continuity "between the Tractarian notion of syntax and Wittgenstein's later notion of grammar."[4] It also leads to a subsidiary controversy between Hacker and Conant regarding how to read Wittgenstein—a debate to which Gustafsson intermittently alludes. The question at its center is about how to understand what is logically defective about the utterances that Wittgenstein thinks attempts at philosophizing characteristically gives rise to, and hence, how to understand the logical character of

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[4] Gustafsson, this volume, 204.

"the fundamental confusions (of which the whole of philosophy is full)."[5] Starting with the *Tractatus,* what is broadly Kantian in Conant's and Gustafsson's shared reading of this text might be put as follows: For the *Tractatus,* a proper characterization of the logical status of nonsense requires an appreciation of the priority of our general capacity for making sense—our capacity to understand what a propositional sign says. According to this reading, part of what the author of the *Tractatus* seeks to show us about a nonsensical sentence is—as he later puts it—that it is not as it were its sense that is nonsensical.[6] Or, to reformulate this again in Kantian terms: an unwitting lapse into nonsense involves a defective exercise of our logical capacity but not one that issues in a determinately defective sort of logical content. Such failures to achieve sense result from the capacity's failure to achieve determinacy of content (rather than from its recognizing that it has come into contact with fully logically determinate, yet nonetheless flawed content).

The outbreak of this sort of disturbance (in the relation between capacity and act) in an attempt at thinking is far more extreme than the sort of defect involved in a case of simply thinking falsely. When we think something false, we achieve determinacy of sense; we think something determinately false. Gustafsson follows Conant in holding that in the case of the more extreme breakdown of our logical capacity (involved in what the *Tractatus* calls *Unsinn*), it is a mistake to account for what is defective in the exercise of the capacity through any appeal to the character of the content of the supposed act. Yet this is the picture that Hacker's reading presupposes: that what renders a thought nonsensical is the logically defective character of its content. For Conant, the term "nonsense" indicates a failure of our logical capacity to become properly engaged; for Hacker, it indicates a kind of thought—a logically flawed one. On Hacker's picture, we succeed in engaging our logical capacity insofar as we may be said to "grasp" that what we come out with in such cases is a substantially nonsensical thought. The failure is made to appear to lie with a structure that characterizes the nature of the thought considered on its own (rather than in some failure on our part to properly bring the capacity in question into engagement). Due to *its* logically internally flawed nature—on the grounds that *it* "violates" the rules of logical syntax—*it,* the thought, is nonsense. So, on Hacker's account, our capacity

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[5] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus,* §3.324, 36.

[6] I am here paraphrasing *Philosophical Investigations,* §500; but see also *Tractatus,* §5.4732, 65.

for grasping logical symbols is qua capacity fully in act in recognizing philosophical confusions as nonsense.[7] Indeed, it is precisely through its operation that we equip ourselves with the entitlement to reject certain propositions as inherently nonsensical qua the propositions that they are.

Both Conant and Gustafsson are concerned with criticizing any account of the recognition of nonsense that models it this closely on the recognition of sense but then tries to account for the difference between sense and nonsense through an appeal to the internally flawed character of the latter sort of content. Insofar as it places all of the blame on the internal logical character of the content of the thought, Hacker's reading of the *Tractatus* tacitly presupposes a commitment to an extraordinarily strong version of the thesis that the assertoric force of the judgment is to be sharply disassociated from the logical unity of the content to be judged. For in the case of Hackerian nonsense, it becomes the logical *disunity* of the content that is to be subjected to and then fail the demand for judgment.[8] The requirement that the logical unity of thought

[7] In contrast to Hacker's account—according to which a capacity to recognize logical signs *as* (albeit illegitimately combined) *symbols* is fully in act in recognizing philosophical nonsense as nonsense—according to the account offered here, it is a more limited dimension of our linguistic capacity that is fully in act in such cases: namely, our capacity to recognize linguistic signs *as* (recurrences of) *signs*. It is common for interpreters of the *Tractatus* to identify the distinction between sense and nonsense with a distinction between what can be said "in" language and what lies "outside" or "beyond" language. This makes it difficult for them to do justice to a remark such as the following:

> *Die Grenze wird also nur in der Sprache gezogen werden können und was jenseits der Grenze liegt, wird einfach Unsinn sein.*

> The limit can therefore be drawn only in language, and what lies beyond that limit is simply nonsense. (*Tractatus*, preface, para. 2)

To say that in distinguishing between sense and nonsense (and hence between that which is a genuine symbol and that which merely appears to be one) the limit will be drawn *in* language is to say that it is to be drawn from *within* the order of the sign, where the order of the sign is not merely externally related to that of the symbol. Hence to say that the limit will be drawn in *language* is to say that the capacity to recognize signs as signs is an exercise of an *essentially linguistic* capacity—one that presupposes our capacity to recognize symbols through and in the use of signs. To say that that which is to be drawn here is a *limit* is to say that there are forms of its exercise that stand to its full-blooded exercise as *limiting cases*. Though it is one and the same capacity in act, in both the full-blooded and the limiting case, the latter is a form of exercise in which a speaker (wittingly or unwittingly) no longer deploys signs so that they, in and through their deployment, symbolize.

[8] The disassociation of the assertoric force of the act of judgment from the logical unity of the thought is not nearly as drastic in Frege as it putatively becomes in the *Tractatus,* on the interpretation of that book advocated by readers such as Hacker. For Frege, the two dimensions of judgment thus disassociated are internally related aspects of a single logical whole.

(or the proposition) be conceived to be as such *forceless* is an aspect of Frege's overall conception that Wittgenstein, already in his early writings, is centrally concerned with criticizing. In the conclusion of the reply to Sullivan, we touched on how early Wittgenstein operates with a more demanding account of what "thought," "sense," and "the unity of the proposition" each require than does Frege. The homonymous equivalents of these three notions in Frege stand to their Tractarian counterparts in much the same manner that problematic judgment stands to judgment in Kant.

Frege thinks the logical unity of the proposition—its character as a thought that is *true or false*—characterizes the unity of thought qua thought apart from any recognition of its forceful relation to reality. In a simple categorical judgment, this unity is that through which subject and predicate, object and concept, are logically united. It corresponds to the merely copulative "is" in "Socrates is a man." And for Frege, it must be sharply dissociated from the assertoric "is"—a further logical dimension that is brought into play when I judge that "Socrates is a man" *is* the case. Already early Wittgenstein rejects the idea that we should read such a dissociation back into the very structure of the most basic case of a non-defective exercise of our logical capacity.

To grasp "a proposition that has a sense" *(ein sinnvoller Satz),* for the *Tractatus,* is to grasp, at one and the same time, its internal logical multiplicity (its syntax) and its projective relation to reality. It is what is meant here by the weasel words "at one and the same time" that will be difficult to get into view if one reads the *Tractatus* through Fregean spectacles. For Wittgenstein, Frege seeks to distinguish (with his distinction between force and content) not two distinct logical moments in judgment, of which one is somehow simultaneously aware in a non-problematic exercise of one's capacity for judgment, but rather, two sides of one coin. In the basic case of the non-defective exercise of our capacity, Frege's supposedly two distinct kinds of "is" are for Wittgenstein two interrelated logical aspects of one and the same verb—of one and the same form of unity. To put the point in an idiom of Russell's (one that goes all the way back to Aristotle) with

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The disassociable logical unity of any thought is always, as such, a *judgable* content: logically suited to face the demand for judgment. Whereas, on the proposed reading of the *Tractatus,* one is now supposed to be able to wrap one's mind around the idea of a species of the genus *thought* that, due to its internally flawed character, is qua thought logically unsuited to face the demand for judgment. Such a reading retains from Frege what Wittgenstein is most concerned with criticizing (the disassociation of assertoric force from logical unity), while discarding what he is most concerned with retaining (the inextricability of logical unity and judgable content).

which Wittgenstein works: Frege thinks there must always, even in the basic case, really be two verbs at work in any judgment: the verb of thought and the verb of judgment. There is the verb that corresponds to (what Frege calls) "the logical unity" of the proposition (the "is" of predication), and there is the verb that corresponds to (what Frege calls) "assertoric force" (the "is" that appears to have its logical home outside the nexus of the unity of the proposition in locutions like "Such and such *is* true" or "Such and such *is* false").[9] Wittgenstein wants to show that in the most basic case, there is just one verb—just one act of thinking the sense of the proposition. What Frege takes to be a logically misleading feature of the surface grammar of ordinary language—namely, that in the default case, one and the same verb expresses both the logical unity of the thought and the assertoric force of judgment—early Wittgenstein regards as a respect in which ordinary language is *begriffsschriftlicher* than Frege's own *Begriffsschrift*.

In his contribution to this volume, Gustafsson does not explicitly touch on this criticism of Frege by Wittgenstein. But, perhaps unsurprisingly, given his concerns, he does devote an entire recent paper to the topic.[10] In this connection, he points out a further respect in which ordinary language might qualify by Wittgenstein's lights as *begriffsschriftlicher* than Frege's own *Begriffsschrift*. For ordinary language goes to some trouble to mark those cases of problematic judgment (in which the possibility of assertion is displayed[11] while refraining from assertion), but it treats non-problematic cases of judgment as requiring no marking of a distinction between force and content. Gustafsson comments:

> [W]hen we talk about marking or making explicit assertoric force, what we mean is to mark or make explicit the *distinction* between asserted

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[9] "[T]he verb of the proposition is not "is true" or "is false"—as Frege thought—but that which is true must already contain the verb" (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus,* §4.063, 43). I will return to this remark in the reply to Travis.

[10] Martin Gustafsson, "Why Is Frege's Judgment Stroke Superfluous?" in *New Essays on Frege: Between Science and Literature,* eds. G. Bengtsson, S. Säätelä, and A. Pichler (Cham: Springer International, 2018), 87–100.

[11] For more on what it is to *display* content without judging it, see Irad Kimhi, *Thinking and Being,* 40–44, 50–51, 56–59: "[W]e do not have to say that a thought can be conveyed without assertoric force. The actors in a play do display assertions. The actor who says, 'I am thy father's spirit,/Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,' displays the assertion that he is Hamlet's father's spirit. It is just that, by convention, the display of assertion in a play is not an assertion but a mock assertion. . . . [A] similar point applies to logic. In the theater the display of force is not an assertion; the setting upsets the force-form. In a compound proposition too, the display of force is not an assertion. Here too . . . the setting upsets the force-form, which is nonetheless displayed. If that is right, then . . . [w]e can say . . . that predicative form does display force—but that not all such displays are in fact assertions" (44).

and non-asserted judgable content. However, to make a distinction explicit, it suffices to mark *one* of the two things that are being distinguished. It follows that even if we agree with Frege that we should have a notation that marks explicitly the distinction between asserted and non-asserted content, we could instead introduce a special sign for the latter—that is, a sign that marks a content's *lacking* assertoric force. Indeed, something like this seems to be what we have in ordinary language: if we put forward a sentence without asserting it, we prefix it with constructions such as "let's assume," "suppose that," "let us hypothesize," and so on.[12]

But now we can ask this: Does ordinary language treat the case of non-problematic judgment as requiring no marking of a distinction between force and content because it passes over in silence what is really there (an internal duality of force and content) beneath the surface? Or is it because there is nothing of that sort in such a case to mark?[13] Insofar as the overall drift of Gustafsson's discussion is to suggest—as I have put it above—that ordinary language is at least in this one respect *begriffsschriftlicher* than Frege's own *Begriffsschrift,* I understand Gustafsson to be correctly as-

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[12] Gustafsson, "Why Is Frege's Judgment Stroke Superfluous?" 96–97. The *Tractatus* treats "S judges *p*" as such a construction—one that displays force without itself being an assertion of force.

[13] In our next reply—to Travis—we will explore further what this could mean. For now I will simply point out that in Ryle, a much finer reader of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* than is usually appreciated, we find this:

> Assuming, supposing, entertaining, toying with ideas and considering suggestions are all ways of pretending to adopt schemes or theories. The sentences in which the propositions entertained are expressed are not being ingenuously used; they are being mock-used. There are, metaphorically speaking, inverted commas round them. . . . Logicians and epistemologists sometimes assume, what I for a long time assumed, that entertaining a proposition is a more elementary or naive performance than affirming that something is the case. . . . This is a mistake. The concept of make-believe is of a higher order than that of belief. (*The Concept of Mind*, op. cit., 263–264)

To fully make good on this suggestion of Ryle's one needs to come to see: first, how cases of assuming *p*, supposing *p*, entertaining *p*, toying with the idea that *p*, considering *p*, etc., are logically derivative upon the prior case in which in saying *p* one self-consciously asserts—and therefore, in the first person present indicative, *judges*—*p*; second, how in the logically derivative cases one's capacity to assert *p* is (as Kant might say) problematically in act—in each case in a particular and distinct manner—through a mode of holding *p* at a certain logical distance, allowing it to be logically *displayed* for a purpose without being asserted; third, these logically derivative forms of use are themselves forms of *use* (*pace* Ryle, not merely mock-use), each involving a language game of its own, even if none of them are intelligible apart from their relation to a logically more primitive form of use.

cribing the second of these answers to Wittgenstein.[14] However, some of Gustaffsson's ways of putting matters in the above passage makes it sound a bit too much as if there are two logically distinct dimensions of judgment which just happen to go unmarked in the non-attenuated case—as if what ordinary language shows is simply that we take the trouble to mark the distinction only when these two dimensions fail to co-occur.

Or to put the same point differently, the passage makes it sound too much as if Frege and Wittgenstein had a shared conception of "the distinction between asserted and non-asserted judgable content" and differed merely over the priority of the two elements thereby distinguished. But what Wittgenstein wants to show us is that in the default unmarked case, where Frege thinks there must be an internal duality, there is no division into two orthogonal logical dimensions of the sort that his account requires. For Wittgenstein, when we say "let's assume," or "suppose that," or "let us hypothesize," etc., our capacity for judgment is in act in a very different and logically far more reticulated way than when we judge. In the problematic cases, we refrain from judgment. This is a very particular manner of exercising the capacity whose logically fundamental form of exercise is simply to judge. To put the matter in an intentionally paradoxical manner: ordinary judgment does not involve two logically discrete moments: one which is the entertaining of judgable content and a further one in which a prior suspension of judgment is canceled. Or to put the point in a manner that is closer to Wittgenstein's later idiom: the language games of assuming, supposing, hypothesizing, etc., all presuppose the far more basic language game of saying what is so—not the other way around.[15] A child can learn to play any one of the former games only after

[14] It is in just this spirit that one can hear Wittgenstein criticizing Frege's conception of assertion in a passage such as the following: "It would produce confusion if we were to say: the words of the communiqué—the proposition communicated—have a definite sense, and the giving of it, the 'assertion' supplies something additional. As if the sentence . . . belonged to pure logic; as if here it had the pure logical sense; as if here we had the object which logicians get hold of and consider—while the sentence as asserted, communicated only what it is when it is engaged in a bit of business. . . . The sentence, I want to say, has no sense outside the language-game" [modified translation] (Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology,* vol. I, §488). What Wittgenstein means when he says "the sentence has no sense outside the language-game" is the topic of my "Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use" (*Philosophical Investigations* 21, no. 3 (July 1998); 222–250.

[15] In the interest of keeping things from becoming too complicated, I am papering over here a central criticism in Wittgenstein's later work of his early philosophy—namely, the fixation on certain uses of language (stating, reporting, describing) and the philosophical distortions that flow from such a fixation. Later Wittgenstein therefore departs from much of the detail of both Kant's and early Wittgenstein's understandings of what are the logically basic (and

she has learned to play the latter, very basic game. To Frege, this will seem a logically misleading feature of our developmental psychology. To later Wittgenstein, it is enormously logically revealing about (what I have called in earlier replies) the form of our overall logico-linguistic capacity—and hence about which of its more local forms of exercise are logically (or grammatically) prior to which.

Thus far, in the first part of this reply, we have formulated what is broadly Kantian about the reading of Wittgenstein that Conant and Gustafsson both endorse by bringing out how Wittgenstein may be said to share Kant's conception of how the first two moments in the Fregean triad are related and how this is connected to some of Wittgenstein's criticisms of Frege. The discussion so far has been conducted through the employment of terms such as our "logical capacity," our "capacity for thinking," or our "capacity for making sense." Now, in the second part of this reply, we want to deepen the above account by seeing what happens when the capacity in question comes into view as an essentially linguistic one. Only once we have done this will we be able to turn—in the third part of this reply—to an examination of the question of how Wittgenstein is concerned with criticizing Kant's and Frege's shared conception of how the latter two moments in the Fregean triad are related.

In his contribution to this volume, Gustafsson is particularly interested in one particular aspect of Conant's strategy for bringing out what is con-

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hence logically derivative) cases of language use in a manner that would require delicacy and care to develop properly. The following few remarks must suffice as a preliminary way of indicating what later Wittgenstein keeps and discards from his early thought here. He discards the idea that the assertion of a categorical proposition ("The ball is here.") is logically more basic than, for example, the expression of desire ("Ball here!"), or the expression of an order (Ball here!"), or a good many other cases in which a subject seeks in communication to register or alter some region of reality through the use of language. Indeed, one can imagine a primitive language—or a primitive phase in a child's acquisition of words—in which expressive, optative, and injunctive uses of words ("Ball!") drown out reporting uses of those same words. What later Wittgenstein keeps, however, from his early thought is his insight into the logical priority of the family of those cases which we might call *committal* uses of words to the family of those which we might call *merely entertaining* uses of words—for example, those in which a speaking subject displays through her use of words a candidate for something that could be desired, commanded, enjoined, or asserted without herself in that context, in so speaking, thereby expressing theoretical or practical commitment. Notwithstanding the abiding concern of his later writings to reveal how previous philosophers (including, especially, the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) have sublimed the assertoric proposition (and, along with it, the supposedly basic "saying what is the case" form of words), it is still right to say that, for later Wittgenstein, the language games in which one merely displays something claimable (say, as a hypothesis) or doable (say, as a proposal) are grammatically parasitic on those in which the judging subject does not thus hold herself at a distance from that which her words express.

fused in Hacker's idea that certain propositions can be inherently non-sensical qua the propositions that they are. Conant argues that this idea involves an equivocation on sign and symbol—a hovering between regarding a "proposition" as a sign and regarding it as symbol. If we are clear about this distinction, there will be no room left for the supposedly intelligible idea of a propositional symbol whose very internal logical structure "violates" the rules of logical syntax.

In seeking to uncover such a case of "hovering," Conant takes himself to be exemplifying a feature of Wittgenstein's own philosophical method. Gustafsson nicely brings out the more general methodological dimension of Wittgenstein's conception in the following passage:

> Philosophical confusions of the sort Wittgenstein is talking about here are not due to the mere transgression of some grammatical rule. Rather, they are due to the tacit hovering between different forms of use—uses that by themselves are perfectly all right. Now my thought is that in order to treat such confusions, grammatical rules can be quite useful, despite—or even precisely because of—their circular character. For the use of these rules in such cases is not to prescribe particular uses and proscribe others. Indeed, such attempts at prescription and proscription would be counterproductive: for the problem is not that there are correct and incorrect ways of using the relevant words. Rather, the trouble is that two different uses are being conflated—so what we need is to get clear about the differences between them. What we need the rules for is to capture the relevant patterns of use, describe them, and thereby make it clear that the confusion is due to an attempt to play two different games at the same time.[16]

The specific hovering maneuver with which Conant is locally concerned in the passages that Gustafsson focuses on has to do with a waffle between sign and symbol. Gustafsson adduces, in this connection, the following passage from Conant:

> [L]ogical syntax is concerned neither with the proscription of combinations of signs nor with the proscription of combinations of symbols. It is not concerned with the proscription of combinations of signs, because Tractarian logical syntax does not treat of (mere) signs; it treats of symbols—and a symbol only has life in the context of a significant

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[16] Gustafsson, this volume, 221. For further discussion of this point, see Alexander George, "Anatomy of a Muddle: Wittgenstein and Philosophy."

proposition. It is not concerned with the proscription of combinations of symbols because there is nothing to proscribe—"Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed."[17]

Gustafsson cautions that the notion of symbol here at issue is tied to a specifically Tractarian conception of logic, and then remarks:

> But the similarity I am interested in [between early Wittgenstein on rules of logical syntax and later Wittgenstein on rules of grammar] is still there: like rules of logical syntax, grammatical rules are not in the business of proscribing anything, since they are constitutive of the very entities whose employment they capture. If what we are interested in is the line between meaningfulness and nonsensicality, breaking a grammatical rule should not be conceived as a transgression of that line. "Breaking" a grammatical rule just means no longer playing the game defined by it.[18]

This is an elegant summary of a central line of thought in Conant. According to the reading of the *Tractatus* that Conant recommends and Gustafsson here accepts, there is nothing that can count as "grasping" or "recognizing" the illegitimate content of a nonsensical sentence. Rather, in this sort of defective exercise of our capacity for making sense, we unwittingly fail to actualize the very capacity we imagine ourselves to be engaging—that of conferring a method of symbolizing upon the sign—"even if we believe that we have done so."[19]

But problems remain. For even in this sort of case, we still exercise our capacity for language—not qua capacity for grasping what a propositional symbol says to be sure, but still qua capacity for deploying and recognizing linguistic signs. I worry that Gustafsson's ensuing way of spelling out Conant's insight makes it very hard to see how this can be so. The difficulty here, as we have already seen, is to avoid unwittingly waffling between different registers. The waffle that Conant and Gustafsson do a good job of diagnosing is the aforementioned one between sign and symbol. But Hacker's confusions go deeper than just this. For they involve conflating a pair of conflations: the conflation of a waffle between sign and symbol with yet a further waffle between sign and mere mark. And Conant and Gustafsson themselves each continue to fall prey at moments in their discussions to the second confusion.

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[17] Conant, "The Method of the Tractatus," 414. The final quoted remark is from *Tractatus,* §5.4733, 65. This passage from Conant is quoted by Gustafsson, this volume, 218.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See again: *Tractatus,* §5.4733, 65.

In order to understand Wittgenstein, we need to be able to draw a clear distinction between these two different ways in which our linguistic capacity can be in act: qua capacity for making and apprehending sense (and hence for recognizing the symbol in the sign) and qua capacity for wittingly or unwittingly putting language to use in ways other than in making or apprehending sense (where these other ways still require that we take ourselves to be employing signs). This becomes especially clear if we consider the author of the *Tractatus*'s account of his own elucidatory activity—one in which he deploys signs with full awareness that, in so doing, he is speaking nonsense. An account of such a case of language use is crucial to a full story about what the author of the *Tractatus* is up to—about his wittingly elucidatory employment of nonsense.[20] In such a case, one in which the author of the book self-consciously exercises his linguistic capacity with an intention to do something other than say something (thereby intentionally refraining from conferring a method of symbolizing upon the sign), he still relies upon his and our capacity to recognize signs as signs. Or to put the matter more precisely, in such an employment of a linguistic capacity, one still engages in a form of employment of linguistic signs that logically presupposes the internality of the relation of sign to symbol, while self-consciously severing the default relation of sign to symbol (i.e., that which is required for a propositional sign to say something).[21]

This can be more difficult to understand than it might at first appear. We need to be able to hold all of the following three thoughts together at once:

(1) The relation between sign and symbol is an internal one.
(2) Every possible propositional symbol is logically in order.
(3) One can recognize a series of occurrences of a sign as involving the same sign, even when the sign in question fails to symbolize anything.

On the one hand, (3) can appear to be a mere truism. On the other hand, what one commits oneself to in affirming it can seem to require that (1) is false. Hence, Hacker thinks affirming (3) requires that we deny (1). Gustafsson sees that this makes it impossible to achieve a proper understanding

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[20] Of the sort described in *Tractatus,* §6.54.

[21] Hence, the author of the *Tractatus* in §6.54 does not call upon his reader to understand the propositions put to such a use but to recognize how they serve to elucidate the distinction between saying and failing to say something (between an employment of signs that is *sinnvoll* and one that is *Unsinn*).

of (2). So he rightly insists upon (1), but his way of developing the point has the unfortunate tendency of making it appear as if a joint affirmation of (1) and (2) must entail the falsity of (3). How can our capacity to recognize signs, on the one hand, depend upon an internal relation of sign to symbol and, on the other hand, be a capacity that is in act even in cases of sign-employment in which we traffic in signs but no symbols? I think the specifics of Gustafsson's ways of spelling out (1) and (2) make this question seem hard to answer—thereby rendering (3) unnecessarily mysterious.

Though these topics are touched on *en passant* in the closing pages of "The Search for Logically Alien Thought," they receive considerably more elaboration in a series of subsequent articles by Conant. It is with the details of that elaboration and the controversies they have sparked that Gustafsson is concerned.[22] Hacker argued that more careful reflection on the analogy between the cases of chess and language—analogies that interested Wittgenstein himself—ought to lead one to philosophical and exegetical conclusions very different from Conant's. In particular, Hacker argued that a proper consideration of the analogy allows one to see that signs stand to symbols in the same way that chess pieces qua mere pieces of wood stand to the rules of chess, and that a proper appreciation of this point reveals what is misguided in Conant's interpretation of Wittgenstein on logical syntax and grammar.[23]

It is in this debate that Gustafsson intervenes, with the aim of challenging the idea that the relation of sign to symbol can be as thoroughly external as Hacker imagines. Gustafsson is by no means unsympathetic to the initial suggestion (as long as one does not push it too far) that signs stand to symbols as chess pieces stand to the rules of chess. But he denies that an account of chess pieces conceived as *mere pieces of wood* can furnish the concept we require if its role in the analogy is to correspond to the concept of a linguistic sign. Gustafsson's discussion seeks to bring out (1a) why Hacker's notion of "chess piece" fails to provide what is required for an adequate philosophy of chess (i.e., in order to account for the relation between rules of chess and what they "govern"), and (1b) how it does so for many of the same reasons that the attempt to conceive of a linguistic sign as initially nothing more than a mere

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[22] Gustafsson draws here primarily on the account offered in Conant, "The Method of the *Tractatus*."

[23] P. M. S. Hacker, "Wittgenstein, Carnap, and the New American Wittgensteinians," *Philosophical Quarterly* 53, no. 212 (April 2003): 1–23; see also the response on Conant's behalf by Cora Diamond, "Logical Syntax in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," *Philosophical Quarterly* 55, no. 218 (January 2005): 78–89, on which Gustafsson builds.

"mark" or "noise" fails to yield what we need for an adequate philosophy of logic and language (i.e., in order to account for the relation between logical syntax or grammar and what such rules "govern"). Gustafsson then argues that reflection upon the points at which the analogy between chess and language breaks down reveal (2a) further considerations peculiar to the relation between specifically linguistic signs and symbols and (2b) further exegetical and philosophical reasons for preferring Conant's account over Hacker's.

I will not comment directly on Gustafsson's elegant development of the topic as it pertains to the philosophy of chess (though some of what I will say below will, indeed, bear on it). I will confine my attention to the moral he wishes to draw from his investigation into chess on behalf of philosophical logic and the interpretation of Wittgenstein. My main complaint, in effect, will be that he is too nice to Conant. More specifically, I will argue that taking the full measure of Gustafsson's moral requires achieving an appreciation of the lingering degree to which Conant's reading of Wittgenstein still mishandles aspects of the sign / symbol distinction. To adapt a remark of Wittgenstein's: "Conant's reading still has eggshells from Hacker's reading sticking to it."[24]

Since, throughout much of his contribution, Gustafsson does a faithful job of spelling out the implications of Conant's original account of how sign and symbol are related, I can bring out the difficulties I have in mind here by attending to the ways in which those same eggshells stick to Gustafsson's ways of putting matters. This brings us to the third part of the reply.

Gustafsson writes,

> [O]n the view I am going to recommend, Wittgenstein . . . thinks rules of grammar are fruitfully seen as constitutive of the expressions themselves. He is suggesting that there is a philosophically relevant notion of linguistic expression such that expressions qua expressions are not identifiable independently of their meaning or use.[25]

I think Gustafsson has two insights here. But he tends to treat them as if they amounted to one insight. He makes it sound too much as if the following two thoughts are two ways of making one and the same point on Wittgenstein's behalf:

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[24] "My account will be hard to follow: because it says something new but still has *egg-shells* from the old view *sticking* to it" (Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value,* 44).

[25] Gustafsson, this volume, 205–206.

(i) The rules of grammar are constitutive of the expressions qua symbols.

(ii) There is a philosophically relevant notion of mere linguistic expression such that mere expressions [expressions qua signs] are not identifiable in complete abstraction from any possible occasion of use.

Gustafsson's failure clearly to distinguish (i) from (ii) makes it look as if there is no equivocation on the term "expression" as we move from (i) to (ii)—as we move from a consideration of the truth of (2) above (which Wittgenstein puts this way: "[E]very possible proposition is legitimately constructed") to the truth of (3) above (which one could put this way: sometimes a sign can fail to symbolize, even if its conditions of identity depend upon its internal relation to meaning or use).

There are two points here that need to be held apart if we are to achieve a proper understanding of either:

(i*) The rules of logical syntax or grammar are constitutive of expressions qua symbols.

(ii*) There is a philosophically relevant notion of linguistic expression—the expression qua sign—such that expressions qua expressions are not identifiable independently of their capacity to symbolize.

Once one develops an ear for how the truth of (i*) and (ii*) are respectively concerned with two interrelated but non-coinciding sets of identity conditions—the conditions of the identity of the expression qua symbol versus the conditions of the identity of the expression qua sign—then one may begin to notice how we tend, in our philosophizing, when we try to talk about the "expressions themselves" or "expressions qua expressions," unwittingly to hover between different notions of "expression."

Once one develops an ear for this, bits of philosophical eggshell may then also become discernible throughout the following passage from Gustafsson:

> For Wittgenstein's way of drawing the analogy [between chess and language] suggests that what the rules constitute are not just the acts or behavior that they govern but also, somehow, the very units that we employ in linguistic behavior—the words or expressions. Wittgenstein's suggestion seems to be that, in philosophy, it will be useful to treat words not just as sounds and shapes externally related to their use but

as units, the very identities of which are determined by how they are to be employed. Just as a pawn is a pawn in virtue of its being subject to rules that lay down its permissible moves, so, Wittgenstein seems to be arguing, we can fruitfully treat expressions as owing their very identity to their grammar.[26]

This points us in the right direction for understanding Wittgenstein, but—to borrow a phrase—it is insufficiently resolute. On the one hand, the first part of the following sentence of Gustafsson's is too weak: "Wittgenstein's suggestion seems to be that, in philosophy, it will be useful to treat words not just as sounds and shapes externally related to their use but as. . . ." First of all, what Wittgenstein seeks to show us at this specific juncture is not that it is somehow less "useful" to "treat" what we are here calling "words" one way rather than another. Rather, he seeks to show how the very idea of "treating" linguistic signs as mere sounds and shapes—if we are philosophically resolute, if we think it all the way through—turns out to be empty, to be a piece of nonsense. Such a supposed concept of "word" equivocates on a concept of a *mere* sound or shape (something that has mere acoustical or geometrical properties) and on a concept of a properly linguistic phoneme or grapheme (something that is identifiable in self-conscious apperception as a recurring element in a systematically structured phonological or graphematical field of signs). The first is a perfectly adequate concept, but it is not a concept of "word" (of anything linguistic). The second is also a perfectly adequate concept, but, unlike the first, it cannot be explicated apart from an understanding of its internal relation to more demanding logico-linguistic concepts. The bit of nonsense we are apt to fall into in this area of philosophy comes from hovering between these two concepts, without clearly appreciating the conditions of the application of either. We can talk about *mere* sounds and shapes, if we like, but Wittgenstein aims to show us that we are then outside of language, with no way in. Or we can talk about "words" as the sensibly apprehensible aspects of spoken or written linguistic activity, but then we need a concept of something whose internal relation to the rest of language is tacitly assumed. Finally, if we want to take that step into language while continuing to talk about "words" or "expressions," then we need to clarify at each moment in our subsequent reflections whether our topic is the word qua sign or the word qua symbol. For they are both internally related to the rest of language in *some* way, but each in a different way.

[26] Gustafsson, this volume, 205.

If we are talking about signs (as we seemed to be in the first part of the sentence), then the last bit of Gustafsson's sentence quoted above is too strong: ". . . as units, the very identity of which is determined by how they are to be employed." For what is said here is true for Wittgenstein only of symbols but not of signs. A sign can be identified as a recurrence of the same sign even if on a particular employment it fails to symbolize. If we are interested in the Wittgensteinian notion of the sign—the closest thing in early Wittgenstein's philosophy of symbolism to Hacker's chess piece qua mere piece of wood, or the word qua mere mark or noise—we need to have a better understanding of how it is the concept of a sort of thing that we might, in philosophizing, mistake for the concept of a mere shape or sound, without falling into the trap of so mistaking it. The reason this mistake is so tempting is precisely because the identity conditions of a sign (in contrast to those of a symbol) are not simply *determined* by its use. Nonetheless, they are *dependent* on the logically prior availability of genuine possibilities of significant use. It is via the logical space of real possibilities of its employment qua symbol that a sign acquires its identity qua sign, even if its identity qua sign may (unlike the identity of a symbol) persist outside that logical space.

There is an excellent philosophical point in the neighborhood of each of the two parts of that sentence of Gustafsson's that I split in two—both are points that matter to Wittgenstein. But it requires some delicacy to state each of them without having them melt into each other in a manner that falls back into the very misunderstandings we are here trying to avoid. There is no way to hold what is right in the first half of that sentence of Gustafsson's, as it stands on the page, together with what is right in its second half, as it stands on the page, without equivocating twice over on what we mean by "expressions." The first equivocation is between something that has merely acoustic or geometrical properties and something that partakes of the formal features of an element of a system of linguistic notation. The second equivocation is between something that is discernible as involving elements of that sort of notation (a sign: something that has real possibilities of use) and something that is an employment of the notation that makes a significant *(sinnvoller)* linguistic move.

Before we go any further with this, let us first note some ways in which the blame for a certain wobbliness in the account goes all the way back to Conant—not so much because what he says is, on any understanding of it, necessarily wrong, but because his account of what a "sign" is wavers between the sort of account that comes more naturally to many contemporary

analytic philosophers and one that thinks all the way through Wittgenstein's teaching in this area of philosophy.[27] Here is how Conant explains the Tractarian distinction between sign [*Zeichen*] and symbol [*Symbol*]:

Sign: An orthographic unit, that which the perceptible expressions for propositions have in common (a sign design, inscription, icon, grapheme, etc.)

Symbol: A logical unit, that which meaningful propositions have in common (an item belonging to a given logical category: a proper name, first-level function, etc.)[28]

Conant's initial characterization of what a "sign" is does not, taken on its own, yet betray any obvious misunderstanding of the *Tractatus*. But the implicit suggestion that the further parenthetical glosses here jointly insinuate—namely that they constitute an adequate set of alternative equivalent explications of one and the same notion—indicates a tenuous grip on what is really at issue.[29] Let us just focus on one such gloss: "inscription." Well, what is it to *inscribe* something on something? It could mean to write or carve *words* on something. If this is what is meant, then it perhaps will do—depending upon what one thinks "words" (especially "mere words") are. Or it could just mean to carve, engrave, etch, cut, incise, or otherwise cause a series of mere marks or shapes to appear on stone, paper, wood, or some other surface. I think it is no accident that

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[27] Whether the sort of account of a sign that I criticize below will come naturally to a contemporary analytic philosopher or not will depend on what she has read and been influenced by. For example, if she has read David Kaplan's "Words" (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Suppl. Vol.* 64 [1990]: 93–119) or some of his related papers, then she may already be quite aware that there are a whole lot of pretty deep problems that arise in philosophy as soon as we try to say what "a word" is.

[28] Conant, "The Method of the *Tractatus*," 400.

[29] A similar wobbliness is to be found in the alternative glosses that Gustafsson offers at various points. Here is one example: In explicating what is involved in drawing the Hacker-like conclusion "that grammatical rules regulate the use of expressions understood as entities that are individuated *independently* of the rules" [my emphasis], Gustafsson says that what we will end up with is a principle of individuation for expressions that turns on "some version of the idea that expressions are individuated according to what Carnap calls their 'sign-designs'—roughly, according to their orthographic or acoustic properties" (258). Carnap himself would not mind that way of putting things, because he is a victim of the very confusion that is here at issue. But Gustafsson, like Conant, needs to be far more sensitive to how "orthographic" and "acoustic" belong to different registers. Written signs do have orthographic properties, but spoken signs are not elements of a merely acoustic order. The formal counterpart of the acoustic sound is the visible shape; the formal counterpart of the orthographic is the phonemic. The concept of a sign-design, as employed by philosophers, usually hovers unclearly between these registers.

Conant is drawn to reach for a word (such as "inscription") that is able to hover ambiguously between these two registers.

Imagine, while working my way from left to right, I gradually incise something roughly resembling the following pair of decorative patterns onto a stone surface—only to learn later that, much to my surprise, it looks to a native speaker of Arabic as if the lower of the two belongs to a different order of pattern than the other—one that he scans in the opposite direction from that in which it was inscribed:

Or to render essentially the same example somewhat easier to deploy for our purposes, imagine that a native Arabic speaker who knows no English incises something roughly resembling the following pair of decorative patterns onto a stone surface only to learn later that, much to his surprise, it looks to a native speaker of English as if the lower of the two belongs to a different order of pattern than the other:
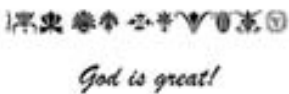
Let us call the following the *mere-sequence-of-marks conception* of the sign: a "sign" is the highest common factor in the following two ways of characterizing the resulting lower pattern: (1) the mere marks that constitute the design sequence that the "inscriber" "inscribes" and (2) the letters that constitute the sentence that the native speaker reads and understands.[30] And let us contrast this, without yet further clarifying it, with what we might call the *essentially linguistic conception* of the sign: there is no highest common factor across these two cases of what the inciser may be taken to have incised.

On the first of these conceptions, the logically simpler and more fundamental case is that of the sign. The nature of the symbol is to be explained through enhancing our prior conception of the sign: it is the sign plus

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[30] Many commentators ascribe the mere-sequence-of-marks conception of the sign to the *Tractatus* itself. This is partly due to a very widespread misunderstanding of what *logical syntax* is for the *Tractatus*. The latter notion is often construed along Hilbertian or Carnapian lines—as involving *uninterpreted* syntactic structures—thereby automatically requiring that the author of the *Tractatus* regard the mere-sequence-of-marks conception of the sign as fully viable. That is to say, what the *Tractatus* calls a "propositional sign" is standardly understood to be such a merely uninterpreted item, and what the *Tractatus* calls a "propositional symbol" is standardly understood to be such an item supplemented with an interpretation. One commentator who is gratifyingly more circumspect in his account of sign and symbol is Michael Potter, see his "The Logic of the *Tractatus*."

something—say, the sign used in accordance with certain rules.[31] Assuming that the pattern "inscribed" by the "inscriber" in our anecdote does not belong to some standardized preexisting repertoire of decorative patterns (but rather is one that the "inscriber" takes himself to have invented on his own), then it looks as if we ought to say—on this conception of the sign (in which it is constituted by nothing more than mere marks)—that any variation in the shape or size of the pattern automatically brings about a change of sign(s). If we alter it in any way, then what we have is a *new* sign (or sequence of signs). On this conception of the sign qua mere inscription, a sign is nothing more than a *particular*—a physical entity in space and time with a determinate set of geometrically or physically characterizable properties. On a sufficiently literal version of this conception, there are no principles for even determining what counts as the *repetition* of a sign or for determining where one sign leaves off and the next begins, or even for what counts as merely belonging to the underlying or surrounding surface on which the signs are inscribed as opposed to belonging to the signs themselves. Look at a freshly cut piece of wood or a carpet with an arabesque pattern and ask yourself, How many distinct signs or patterns of signs are there on that surface? It is not that you might not be able to make up some way of answering this question. But there is no sense in which, apart from the introduction of some arbitrary stipulations, the question already has a correct answer. One reason the question as thus posed has no correct answer is the absence of a principle for determining where one sign ends and the next starts; another is the absence of a principle for counting the recurrence of a roughly similar shape *as* a recurrence of the *same* sign.

What this helps to bring out is that the concept of a linguistic sign partakes of a form of generality that a mere mark or pattern of incision does not. In learning a language or form of notation, one learns what counts as a significant repetition—and actually, we learn a great deal more. For example, we learn answers to the following questions: What belongs to the signs themselves and what belongs merely to "the space" within which they are inscribed? What constitutes the end of one sequence and the beginning of another? Therefore, also: What sorts of further "marks" or forms of arrangement or intervening micro-spaces punctuate or schematize or otherwise structure a "sequence"?

There is a wrong way of understanding the point just made. On this misunderstanding of Wittgenstein on the relation of sign to symbol,

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[31] We can recognize in this way of putting things a resurfacing of the problem about chess pieces that Gustafsson seeks to elucidate.

whenever we speak, we bring our mastery of the elements of the properly logical order (and, with it, judgable content) and our mastery of the elements of the merely linguistic or notational order (and, with it, the means of expression of that content) simultaneously into play.[32] According to this picture, if we have a proper appreciation of two such orders, then we will be able to correlate the former with the latter in the appropriate ways. This involves two assumptions, each of which Wittgenstein seeks to show depends on the other: (1) that language is an essential condition merely of the expression of thoughts and not of their individuation and determinacy qua thoughts, and (2) that the use of linguistic signs for assertoric or communicative purposes is not a condition of their discrimination and individuation *qua signs*—where this is understood to mean the discrimination and individuation of merely physical entities into perceptible tokens of signs (particular shapes or noises) and their corresponding types (generic sorts of shapes or noises).

The problems that arise here tend to seem to philosophers to be easier to solve than they really are. For example, on a less literal version of the same conception, say, one according to which perhaps shape matters but size does not to the identity of an inscription, one can make some room for a rudimentary idea of what might constitute a principled degree of insignificance in the variation in the appearance—and hence what could count as a "repetition"—of the sign. We could then allow for the possibility, say, that the same merely decorative pattern recurs throughout a series of incisions roughly resembling the following three cases:

أكبر الله

أكبر الله

أكبر الله

The possibility for which we thereby allow is of the same sort as the one for which we would allow if we were to stipulate that the following three cases involve repetitions of the same "signs":

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[32] The idea of language at work in this misunderstanding of Wittgenstein turns on what one might call a *merely linguistic conception* of language. This involves the idea that philosophy of language has its own specialized parochial subject matter of inquiry, apart from that which is the proper concern of other areas of philosophy. If this is any part of what it means to do (or have a) "philosophy of language" then it is not something Wittgenstein ever does (or has). We will return to this point at the conclusion of the reply.

But this will not yet furnish us with the conceptual resources required to account for the sense in which the same "sequence of signs" is common to the following three cases:

GOD IS GREAT!

God is great?

GOD IS GREAT!

Appeals to supposedly merely outward forms of resemblance or shared geometrical properties will no longer do the trick. The *Tractatus* teaches that a coherent conception of the unity of the relevant manifold of cases here—one that encompasses not only those three cases but also their non-typeset counterparts, be they written with a pencil by hand on paper or with smoke by an airplane in the sky—requires a conception of "sign" that allows us to recognize certain variations in configurations of signs as recurring expressions of *the same propositional symbol.* This is to reject the idea that the logically simpler and more fundamental case is that of the sign—and, hence, that what a symbol is may be explained on an appropriately supplemented conception of the sign: the sign plus something. Rather, for Wittgenstein, the sign, in the logically fundamental case of its mode of occurrence, *is* an internal aspect of the symbol: "The sign is that in the symbol which is perceptible by the senses"[33] Conversely, this means that it is essential to a symbol—to what a symbol *is*—that it have an essentially perceptible aspect.[34] There is no privileged direction of explanatory priority between symbol and sign: without signs, there are no symbols (hence, without language, there is no thought), and without some sort of relation to symbols, there are no signs (hence, the philosopher's concept of the "mere *linguistic* mark" tacitly presupposes an internal relation to symbols). The possibility of the projectibility of the sign (e.g., that of an English phoneme across different accents or dialects of spoken English) depends upon the actuality of symbols; and the possibility of the projectibility of concepts (e.g., that of *feed* across the different contexts of its occurrence from "feed the kitty" to "feed the meter" to "feed his pride") depends on the actuality of signs. But these two forms of dependence are not of the same sort.

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[33] *"Das Zeichen ist das sinnlich wahrnehmbare am Symbol"* (*Tractatus,* §3.32). The German *"am"* is hard to translate here. A less literal translation that helps bring out the point of the passage would be, "The sign is the sensibly perceptible aspect of the symbol." (For a related passage, see also *Tractatus,* §3.1.)

[34] This is a point that is brought out beautifully in Gustafsson's discussion of the indispensability of some form of notation as a condition of the possibility of playing a game of chess.

Wittgenstein does not seek to invert the order of explanation with which the mere-sequence-of-marks conception works. Rather, he seeks to bring out how it is essential to our understanding of the logically fundamental case of the occurrence of the sign that we recognize it as an *aspect* of a symbol. This requires that the sign partake of the order of generality—or repeatability—of the symbol. The concept of the sign required here is one of something whose identity is retained across extraordinary variation in shape, size, font, style, etc. For its determination qua the sign it is, in its logically primary mode of occurrence, does not depend on our mere capacity to recognize visible or acoustic appearance properties of something merely physical, but rather on our capacity to recognize reoccurrences of something that is essentially related to the order of the symbol. When we have difficulty reading someone's handwriting, we are not mastering a new notational system that involves twenty-six somewhat different but fixed tokens for the letters of the alphabet. This is not only because, in most cursive writing, each letter of the alphabet in a particular individual's handwriting assumes many physically differing guises (so that how closed a given occurrence of the "o" is and how open a given occurrence of the "u" is may be such that the "o" and the "u" qua mere marks appear to the untrained eye to be indistinguishable[35]). This is because in the normal case we apprehend the identity of signs by recognizing the symbol in them.

The conception of the sign that Wittgenstein is concerned with criticizing here is usefully epitomized in the following slogan of David Hilbert's: "In the beginning was the sign."[36] That slogan is meant to summarize a central commitment of Hilbert's formalist conception of mathematics: namely, that the signs qua objects are simply given to us in perceptual apprehension. Here is one of his many attempts to spell out exactly what the commitment in question involves:

[35] If this seems implausible, take a pencil and write, as briskly as you can while remaining within the limits of the legible, the sentence, "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." Then review your performance, focusing on each of the four occurrences of the letter *o* in that sentence, and notice how they differ in literal shape. Then do the same for another sentence with at least four occurrences of the letter *u* and compare their literal shapes with those of the four occurrences of *o* in the first sentence. Qua mere shapes, some occurrences of *o* are more likely to resemble some of the (more closed) occurrences of *u* than certain of the other (comparatively perfectly rounded and closed) occurrences of *o*.

[36] The slogan alludes to Goethe's "In the beginning was the deed" ("*Im Anfang war die Tat*"), *Faust. Erster Teil,* Kapitel 6; it can be found in Hilbert's 1922 paper "The New Grounding of Mathematics: First Report," in *From Kant to Hilbert: A Source Book in the Foundations of Mathematics, Vol. II,* ed. W. Ewald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1122.

[A]s a condition for the use of the logical inferences and the performance of logical operations, something must already be given to us in our faculty of representation [*in der Vorstellung*], certain extra-logical *concrete* objects that are intuitively [*anschaulich*] present as immediate experience *prior to all thought*. If logical inference is to be reliable, it must be possible to survey these objects completely in all their parts, and the fact that they occur, that they differ from one another, and that they follow each other, or are concatenated, is *immediately given intuitively*. . . . And in mathematics, in particular, what we consider is the concrete signs themselves, whose shape . . . is immediately clear and recognizable.[37]

The commitment in question, as stated here, involves the following three presuppositions: (a) the sign qua object is immediately given to us through mere perception in a manner that is prior to all thought, (b) it is possible to survey these objects completely in all their parts as given in such a purely perceptual act, and (c) a successful exercise of this capacity of perceptual intake suffices to allow us to apprehend how signs differ from one another and hence to recognize re-occurrences of a sign *as* occurrences of the *same* sign. We will return to these various presuppositions below. Suffice it to note for now that, in criticizing such a conception of the sign, early Wittgenstein builds on Frege's criticism of Hilbert's formalism.[38] He develops Frege's insights, however, in a manner that eventuates in an essentially intralinguistic conception not only of the sign, but also of the symbol—one that strikes at the heart of Frege's own conception of the relation of language to thought.

Frege, in his critique of Hilbert's deployment of the term "sign," charges him with equivocating between the concept of a mere blot or mark and that of a genuine sign (something that forms a part of a notation).[39] At one point, this leads Frege to remark, [A]n empty sign

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[37] Hilbert, "The Foundations of Mathematics" (1927), in *From Frege to Gödel,* ed. J. van Heijenoort (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 464–465 [emphases added].

[38] The writings of Hilbert that Frege first criticizes in this connection—and that were known to Wittgenstein at the time of writing the *Tractatus*—stem from an earlier period than those quoted by me immediately above.

[39] For the Fregean background of the Tractarian conception of the sign, passages such as the following are relevant: "What are signs [*Zeichen*]? I will limit my considerations to structures created by writing or printing upon the surface of a physical body (blackboard, paper). . . . But we shall not call every such structure a sign—a blot, for instance, would not generally be held worthy of this honor—but only such as serve to designate [*bezeichnen*], express [*ausdrücken*], or assert [*behaupten*] something" (Frege, *Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* §§98–100; emphases added; translation modified); see also *Kleine Schriften,* 105, 295–296, 381; *Schriften zur Logic und Sprache,* 34.

[*leeres Zeichen*] . . . without some content . . . is merely ink or print on paper. . . . Really, it would not be a sign [*Zeichen*] at all."[40] Though his treatment of the concept of the sign takes its departure from passages in Frege such as this one, what Wittgenstein will want to mean by an expression such as "mere sign" or "empty sign" (or, more notoriously, "dead sign") is something that goes beyond what Frege allows for here. For Wittgenstein, unlike for Frege, "empty sign" need not be an expression that stands for a philosophical confusion—an equivocation on the concept of a mere mark and that of a repeatable element of a notational manifold. There is a phenomenon that it can stand for and to which we need to be able to refer in philosophy, but the phenomenon in question may come properly into view only if we are able to appreciate how it stands for something that is the result of some degree of defect or attenuation in the exercise of our linguistic capacity. Empty signs, for early Wittgenstein, are what we end up with when we unwittingly or wittingly speak (what he calls) nonsense—that is, when we unwittingly fail to confer or wittingly refrain from conferring a method of symbolizing upon something that we, as speakers of language, find it natural to strive to apprehend as the outwardly apprehensible aspect of a symbol.

Yet Wittgenstein will also want to show us that what the expression "mere sign" or "empty sign" thereby stands for partakes of the wrong sort of logical generality to comprise a highest common factor across two cases, one of which is a case of something that is not (yet) related to the order of the symbol and one which is—the highest common factor between a kind of thing whose re-occurrence may be registered through the exercise of a faculty of "mere perception" and a kind of thing whose re-occurrence may be discerned only against the background of an appreciation of how it already forms a part of language.[41] The sign for Witt-

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[40] Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic,* §95; translation modified.

[41] Silver Bronzo seeks to make a similar point about the absence of such a highest common factor. He writes:

> It is possible to hold that signs are conceptually dependent on symbols, but in a manner that allows signs to be common to different symbols and leaves room for occurrences of signs that are not occurrences of any symbol. . . . [T]he notion of mere sign is defined as what merely appears to be a symbol, and the generic notion of sign is defined disjunctively as what is either a symbol (i.e., a sign in use) or a mere sign. Symbols and mere signs are species of the genus comprising all signs, but such species are not defined in terms of the genus and an independently intelligible differentium. (Silver Bronzo, "Wittgenstein, Theories of Meaning, and Linguistic Disjunctivism," *European Journal of Philosophy* 25, no. 4 [2017]: 1348)

I think it is an unhelpful overstatement to say that a generic notion of the sign is introduced

genstein partakes of a logical dimension that cannot simply be taken in through an act of Hilbertian immediate perceptual apprehension that is prior to all thought or language. To put this dimension of Wittgenstein's teaching in our earlier Kantian idiom: an employment of language in which no symbol is to be recognized in the sign—so that we're confronted with the occurrence of a mere sign—involves a kind of exercise of our linguistic capacity whose very possibility presupposes the prior capacity successfully to employ signs as the sensibly perceptible aspects of symbols. In this area of philosophy—as in some of the others explored earlier in these replies—contemporary philosophers are prone to assume that the order of logical priority must be the other way around. They are inclined, with Hilbert, to regard the (to borrow Kant's term) problematic mode of occurrence of the sign as the logically simpler phenomenon and the comparatively less problematic case as the product of an enhancement of the "mere sign"—an enhancement that breathes life into a sort of something that is, regarded in and of itself, logically mute and inert.

The conception of written signs that Wittgenstein here rejects holds equally of spoken ones.[42] Before we explore how and why this is so, it

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by Wittgenstein here such that what it is to be a sign for him is disjunctively defined in a certain way. This should seem no less strange than saying that the concept of an animal is really the notion of a sort of being that is properly defined disjunctively as either something that is living or dead. What is right in the thought that the disjunctivist schema may illuminate something here does not turn on the claim that Wittgenstein is operating with some logically complex form of definition. What is right is that the sign-in-use is the logically prior notion. Cases of the employment of a sign that are characterizable in such a way that we are entitled to speak of the occurrence as involving a "mere sign" are always ones that indicate something attenuated or defective in the employment of the sign. A sign in its logically full-blooded employment is a sign-in-use. Hence, a mere sign is a sign occurring apart from the sort of context in which it properly has its life.

This is all we need to entitle us to Bronzo's central insight:

The sort of use that belongs to a purely formal symbol cannot be specified independently of the notion of a sign that is used to characterize the form but not the content of significant propositions, which in turn is just an abstraction from the notion of a sign that is used to characterize both the form and the content of significant propositions. (1350)

[42] For a variety of reasons, it is actually somewhat easier to gain a perspicuous philosophical overview of the relation of sign to symbol in the case of the spoken sign. This is because machine-generated counterparts for the spoken sign have not penetrated our form of life to even remotely the extent that the mechanization of print has. (There are plenty of indications, however, that it is just a matter of time before this changes.) The depth of the parallels between the case of the written sign and that of the spoken sign would remain more evident if all written signs were still—as they were prior to Gutenberg—the products of a competence in generating signs through cursive handwriting. The existence of typographical print—insofar as it allows the identification of the sign to be reduced to a mechanical procedure—can foster

will prove helpful to introduce some terminology. Roman Jakobson explains the principles in accordance with which phonetics and phonology each individuate their respective objects of study as follows:

> Phonology is a part of linguistics dealing with speech sounds with regard to the functions which they fulfill in a given language, whereas phonetics has for its task the investigation of speech sounds from a purely physiological, physical, and psycho-acoustical point of view. . . . The basic linguistic function of sound differences is the distinction of meanings. A sound difference which, in a given language, can be used to distinguish meanings is viewed as a phonological opposition. The inventory of phonological oppositions proper to a given language constitutes its phonological system.[43]

On this way of denominating two different approaches to the investigation of the spoken dimension of natural language, phonetics has for its task the investigation of the sound of speech from a purely naturalistic (physiological, physical, and psycho-acoustical) point of view, irrespective of the role (if any) that a particular sound may play in a particular language. It contrasts with phonology, where the latter is obliged to parse the field of the sound of speech with an ear finely tuned to the dimensions of difference in the field of spoken sound that make for dimensions of difference in meaning. Phonetics is therefore the generalized study of speech sound, whereas phonology is the comparative study of the particular systematic structure of significant sound in a given language, of a given community, and at a given point in its history. While phonetics as-

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the illusion that the order of the written sign, qua linguistic element, is self-standingly intelligible apart from its internal relation to the symbol. Once typographical print-setting mechanisms are in place, neither the generation nor recognition of such signs, per se, requires genuine linguistic competence. The production of such signs can be effected simply by pushing a button; and the capacity to cognize such signs as recurring within a particular font and typesetting can be reduced to an ability to recognize the internal geometrical features of the sign. Hence, a monkey can hit the keys on a keyboard and generate signs without any comprehension of their real possibilities of use; and a non-speaker of Chinese can recognize a series of Chinese ideographs set in type as linguistic signs without knowing anything about their use. Moreover, she can recognize a case of such a sign as recurring simply by inspecting its internal geometrical properties without needing to master its possible range of variation across other forms of typographical font in which it might also be set, let alone across the range of its occurrences within Chinese handwritten calligraphy. The capacity, however, to recognize a physically indistinguishable string of characters *as* Chinese rather than Japanese, or string of letters *as* German rather than English, requires an entirely different degree of linguistic competence—one whose logically primary form of exercise cannot be comprehended in accordance with Hilbert's dictum that "in the beginning there is the sign."

[43] Roman Jakobson, "Phoneme and Phonology," in *Selected Writings, Volume I: Phonological Studies* (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), 231.

pires to frame forms of characterization apt for the description of spoken elements across the full variety of known natural languages, phonology investigates the system of elements of the spoken dimension of a given natural language conceived as an internal system.

Phonetics aims to provide forms of description that characterize aspects of the antecedently given *continuum* of phenomena qua pattern of sound; whereas phonology is concerned with the characterization of *discreta,* whose individuation permits the characterization of the structural features induced in such phenomena qua pattern of significant human speech. The former sort of pattern is *gradient,* whereas the latter is *categorical.*[44] The gradient pattern characterized through phonetic concepts is determined by the statistical distribution of measurable physical and psychological quantities, where the determination of that distribution through measurement does not always require fluency in the language thus to be characterized on the part of the measurer. The classes of speech pattern codified through phonological concepts, on the other hand, are discrete (any entity either belongs to a given class or it does not: there are no gradations between phonological categories), where such discreta are perceptible only to someone with a high degree of fluency in the language whose speech patterns are thus to be codified. For the latter study is concerned with identifying significance-bearing oppositions in the sound of a given language. Such oppositions are only so much as discernible if apprehended from the self-conscious point of view of a fully competent bearer of that language.[45] Phonetics describes a given

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[44] See Scott Myers, "Boundary Disputes: The Distinction between Phonetic and Phonological Sound Patterns," in *Phonological Knowledge: Conceptual and Empirical Issues,* eds. N. Burton-Roberts, P. Carr, and G. Doucherty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 245–272.

[45] The question of how best to conceive of the unity of the phonological field becomes helpfully focused in historical phonology—the discipline in which changes over time within such a system are investigated. In what Jakobson calls "traditional historical phonology," the field is, however, often treated as an array of isolable oppositions, such that even if the unity of each such opposition must be conceived as prior to its phonetic parts, the unity of the field as a whole may still be treated as a mere composite of such oppositions. A step in the right direction—toward a conception of the phonological field as bearing *unity of Gestalt*—is thereby, in Jakobson's view, undone by a creeping empiricism that reintroduces into linguistics the idea that the global structure of the field can still be conceived as a mere aggregate of local clusters of phonetic Gestalt. This has the consequence that the unity of the phonological system remains in the thrall of a purely additive conception—a mere *Und-Verbindung* conception—according to which the field as a whole comprises this opposition, *and* this one, *and* this one, and so on. Jakobson opposes such an additive conception of the unity of the phonological field:

> In traditional historical phonology, it was characteristic to treat phonetic changes in an isolated manner, without taking account of the whole system that undergoes these modifications. This kind of methodology went hand in hand with the world view that

language from *outside*—not apart from a comprehension that what is to be described is language, but in abstraction from what is structurally peculiar to the patterning of sound in any particular language. Phonology seeks to describe a given language from the *inside*, comprehending the order of the sign in a manner that requires an understanding of its relation to that of the symbol.

This yields two very different orders of elements. Wittgenstein would not only concur with what is said here but would also seek to extract a philosophical moral from it. For he seeks to teach that the comprehension of any aspect of language requiring an appreciation of its relation to *use* is itself subject to what Kant seeks to teach is the condition of philosophy. This is why, for Wittgenstein, a critique of reason must become a critique of language. Just as a critique of reason had as part of its task to show that any genuinely self-conscious form of sensible apprehension of objects presupposes a dimension of logical form that is not merely given to the perceiving subject, so too a resolute critique of language will have as part of its task to show that a comprehension of even the phonological dimension of language is no less subject to the Kantian critical insight. The manifold of elements that comprise this dimension can come into view only through their first-person present indicative self-conscious apprehension by a subject exercising her capacity to apprehend the logically sui generis form of the linguistically repeatable that Wittgenstein calls *the sign*. Such a critique of language will reveal that previous philosophy—in this "area" of philosophy, as in each of the others we have surveyed in the preceding pages—finds it difficult to remain faithful to the following maxim: Do not read the character of the logically primitive phenomenon off the model of its logically alienated counterpart! Here, too, the

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reigned at that time: the creeping empiricism of the Neogrammarians, which viewed any system, and in particular the linguistic system, as the mechanical sum of its parts *(Und-Verbindung)* and not at all as a formal unity *(Gestalteinheit),* to use the terms of modern psychology. Phonology opposes an integrating method to the isolating method of the Neogrammarians. Every phonological fact is treated as a part of the whole, which is related to other parts at higher levels. The first principle of historical phonology will be that *every change must be treated as a function of the system within which it takes place.* A phonological change (modification) can be understood only by elucidating its role within the system of language. (Roman Jakobson, "Principles of Historical Phonology," in *On Language,* eds. L. Waugh and M. Monville-Burson [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990] 185)

The terms "phonology" and "phonological" in this text will henceforth be used—as they must be if their purpose is to articulate Wittgenstein's conception of the relation of sign to symbol—in accordance with Jakobson's (rather than a merely additive empiricist) conception of the unity of the phonological system of a given language.

resulting philosophical notion—in this case, the notion of "the dead sign"—is the product of a confused attempt to assimilate the logical conditions of identity of something only knowable from within self-consciousness with something knowable from a further alienated perspective "onto" self-conscious activity. More specifically, our concern here is with a confused attempt to assimilate a kind of mark or noise (whose logical conditions of identity may be determined apart from the linguistic self-consciousness of someone who has some inkling of the real possibilities of use of the relevant form of sign) with a form of repeatable phenomenon that genuinely belongs to language (and hence is apprehensible only from within the scope of the self-consciousness of a speaker).

We may garner a preliminary sense of how these two sets of logical conditions for identifying the recurrence of a "sign" must diverge from one another by considering what Jakobson says about how phonetics and phonology respectively yield two very different orders of elements:

> [There is a] . . . fundamental difference between the strictly *phonetic* point of view, which aims only at drawing up an inventory of the sounds of a language considered only as motor or acoustic phenomena, and the phonological point of view, which requires that we examine the linguistic value of the sounds and that we list the phonemes—the system of sounds considered as elements which serve to distinguish the meanings of words.[46] If we compare these two inventories, it will be seen that they are quite different, and that of the two, the collection of phonemes is at once very much more restricted, more clear-cut, and more discrete in the mathematical sense of the term. It reveals to us a coherent and coordinated system.[47]

Phonological discreta are not determinable—hence, a revelation of the coherent and coordinated system of the spoken sign is not possible—apart from an appreciation of "the linguistic value" of such signs, and, hence, not apart from attention to how spoken signs actually are put

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[46] I will follow Jakobson's manner of regimenting terms here, using the expression "phoneme" to denote that which belongs to a system of sounds considered as elements that serve to distinguish the meanings of words; whereas I will use the term "phone" to denote the speech sounds classified in phonetics. So, too, for the terms "phonemic" and "phonic": the distinction between vowel and consonant belongs to the phonic level of characterization of speech—that between the proper pronunciations of the English *l* and *r* to the phonemic.

[47] "The Concept of Phoneme," in *On Language,* 223.

to communicative use in the given language. Jakobson formulates this point as follows:

> Modern specialists in the field of acoustics wonder with bewilderment how it is possible that the human ear has no difficulty in recognizing the great variety of sounds in language, given that they are so numerous and their variations so imperceptible. Can it really be that it is a purely auditory faculty that is involved here? No, not at all! What we recognize in spoken language is not sound differences in themselves, but the different uses to which they are put by the language, i.e., differences which, though without meaning in themselves, are used in discriminating entities of a higher level (morphemes, words) one from another. The minutest phonic differences, to the extent that they perform a discriminative role in a given language, are accurately perceived by all the native speakers of that language without exception, whereas a foreigner, even a trained observer, or even a professional linguist, often has great difficulty perceiving these differences if they do not perform this discriminative function in his native language.[48]

Adopting Jakobson's terminology, we may now reformulate the aspect of Wittgenstein's conception (of the relation of sign to symbol) under discussion, as it bears on the spoken signs of a language, in terms of the following two points: (I) the significant elements of a phonological (rather than a merely phonetic or acoustic) manifold are what constitute (what the *Tractatus* calls) the "spoken signs" of language—for these are the sensibly perceptible aspects of the symbol; and (II) the elements of a phonological manifold (phonemes) are not reducible to those of the merely phonetic manifold (phones). The conception of the linguistic sign that Wittgenstein is concerned with criticizing imagines that elements of the phonological order can be unproblematically identified with those belonging to that of the merely acoustic or phonetic. It fails to appreciate that most merely acoustic differences are phonological noise, not differences in sign, and that every phonological unit both admits and requires a range of acoustic variation across its permissible modes of combination with other such units.

Let us begin with (I) and work our way up to (II). An anecdote may help to launch us in this direction. When I was a teenager, I worked as an English teacher in Japan. My students had all studied the language

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[48] Ibid., 233–234. We will return below to why it is so difficult to perceive differences in phoneme that perform no expressively discriminative function in one's native language.

for at least a decade and were fairly adept at reading it but not the least adept at listening to or speaking English. They were neither able to follow a simple conversation between native speakers nor able to say something that a native speaker could recognize straight off *as* English. I realized that I had no chance of teaching them to *speak* the relevant "sounds" until they first acquired the ability to *hear* them. I developed various techniques to help them with this. Here is an example of such a technique. I would write the following four words on the blackboard:

   (1) roll
   (2) roar
   (3) loll
   (4) lore

The exercise was this: I would say one of the words and the students had to guess which one I was saying. So I would say one of the four and then ask, *"Ichiban desu ka?"* ("Is it number one?"). Those who thought it was number one would raise their hands, and so on for the subsequent three numbers. For the first hour or so, it did not matter which one of the four I said: 25 percent of the students thought it was number one, 25 percent thought it was number two, 25 percent thought it was number three, and 25 percent thought it was number four. This exercise alternated with exercises in which I showed them the difference in the position of my tongue when saying an *l* (up against the back of my upper teeth) from saying an *r,* then asking them to say each of the four words attending to the position of their tongue as they did so. Then I returned to the exercise of saying one of the four words on the blackboard and asking them to vote. And so on. After about an hour, the word I was actually saying gradually began to garner a somewhat higher percentage of the students' votes than the other three. Over the course of this exercise, certain recurring elements in the phonological manifold of spoken English gradually became audible to my students. Those elements of the manifold gradually came into phonological focus for them, resolving themselves as audibly distinct from one another out of an acoustic space within which they had initially been indiscernible. Prior to this, my students had been able to discern only those phonemes that they themselves had some idea how to produce. To learn to make the requisite discriminations—and eventually to learn to produce those phonemes themselves—my students first had to learn to master a phonologically alien dimension of English.

    The following detail in my anecdote about teaching English in Japan might mislead: the exercise that involved those four English words

written on the blackboard was one that could be engaged in without teaching the students what those four English words mean (or even what kinds of logical symbols, or grammatical parts—verbs versus nouns, etc.—they belong to). But it is crucial that this is the exception and not the general rule in language acquisition. And the possibility of such an exception presupposes that certain background conditions are in place. Among the necessary background conditions that were in place in this case was the presence of a teacher assuring them that there was a phonemic distinction to be discerned, where the students were initially able to apprehend only phonic noise. For there is no independently available merely acoustic measure of the required degree of discrimination—the degree required to properly phonemically parse a region of the phonological topology of a spoken language—one available apart from an appreciation of the possible relation of the spoken sign to the communicatively significant symbol. The degree of phonemic discrimination required in this case is precisely the one that allows one to understand spoken English in those communities with whose members one seeks to communicate.[49] In participating in this particular exercise, my Japanese students were learning to discern certain dimensions of phonological variation within the field of the spoken English produced by a language teacher—that is, someone striving to pronounce words as clearly and distinctly as possible and with as bland an accent as he was able to muster—seeking to enable them to appreciate additional phonemic nuances in a language that they had already at least partially mastered as a second language. We will turn below to the question of how such a case of language learning formally differs from that of learning one's first language.

Let us first attempt better to characterize the challenge my Japanese students faced. Here is a first (and in certain respects inadequate, as we will later see) attempt to say what made the exercise especially difficult for these students: they could not hear the difference between an English *l* and an English *r*. That description of what was defective in the linguistic competence of my students is formulated from the point of view of the

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[49] This is why it is important that a teacher of a language at the introductory level do her best to free her speech of the marks of regional accent and dialect. This means that the non-native instructor must (unlike those in this video: youtu.be/ETn-6peOwJ8) take pains to liberate her pronunciation from the phonemic patterning of her native tongue. For the aim, initially, is to facilitate comprehension of as wide a range of spoken English as possible. The mastery of the full range of possible phonemic variation over all of the spoken dialects of a major modern language is, however, a practically infinite task. If, for example, a native speaker of English unfamiliar with a certain sub-dialect of African-American English wishes to follow the spoken dialogue of an episode of, say, *The Wire,* then she may discover that yet further disciplining of even her own powers of phonetic discernment may be required.

competent speaker of English—that is, from a sideways-on perspective onto their linguistic activity. This is not a description that my students would naturally have been inclined—at least initially—to offer of their own experience of the difficulty. It is only on the authority of their teacher, who tells them that they are failing to hear a difference that is there to be heard, that they have reason to conclude that there is something in the speech behavior of their teacher that is inaudible to them.

The students tried to hear the differences in accordance with the only scheme of phonemic differences they had ever mastered. Hence, from their point of view, the task I seemed initially to have set them might be more aptly characterized as follows: the task of "hearing" or "saying" each of the four words written on the board, while attempting to schematize them as elements of a phonological field they were unable so much as to apprehend. (A more precise description of the task in which many of the students might well *in fact* have been mentally engaged is the following: the task of transcribing those four English spoken signs into the Japanese written phonetic alphabet employed for transliterating foreign words.) This led the students to hear those four words as four phonetically indistinguishable signs (or in the case of a tacit reliance on their written phonetic alphabet for foreign words, it led them to represent them in their mind's eye as four graphematically identical signs).[50]

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[50] I am referring here to one of two phonetic alphabets employed in modern Japanese: namely, to *katakana*—the syllabary used in written Japanese in tandem with *kanji* and *hiragana*. *Katakana* is used for transliterating (among other things) the sound of mere noises, the vocalizations of animals, onomatopoeia, and the sound of foreign words into the framework of a fifty-letter alphabet comprising the basic phonemic units of spoken Japanese. If the four English words that I wrote on the blackboard, upon a first hearing, were transcribed by the students into *katakana,* they might well come out as—if one employs a merely graphematic criterion of what a "word" is—the very same word. Once they worked harder to hear the differences in what I was saying, the four would come out, transcribed into *katakana,* as follows:

(1)   ロ ー ル   roughly: ro—ru
(2)   ロ ー   roughly: ro—
(3)   ロ ル   roughly: roru
(4)   ロ ー   roughly: ro—

In the transliterations of *katakana* above, the Japanese phoneme represented by *r*, though closer to the English *r* than the English *l*, is neither. The long dash indicates a prolongation of the vowel sound. So (2) and (4)—the transliterations of *roar* and *lore*—remain identical (with the intermediate vowel correctly registered as long but the final consonant unregistered); whereas (1)—the way they hear *roll*—comes to differ from (2) and (4) (in being awarded an additional syllable), as does (3)—the way they hear *loll* (where the intermediate vowel is now correctly registered as comparatively short). So they are able to make some initial progress in discerning phonemic differences, while remaining nowhere near able to discern the difference the teacher is trying to get them to hear.

From a phenomenological point of view, what each of my students initially experienced, when she attended to my respective pronunciations of these four words, was at best a frustratingly uncooperative speaker: someone who seemed to speak very indistinctly—indeed, so indistinctly that it was hard for the student even to make a reasonable guess at which syllabic units he was attempting to emit. At worst, she seemed to be confronted with a case of the emperor who had no clothes—in the guise of the English teacher unable to pronounce four putatively different English words differently. For insofar as she could make anything of what he was saying at all, the teacher just seemed to repeat *the same inarticulate pattern of sound* four times as he allegedly modeled for the class how to say (1), (2), (3), and (4) respectively. Then he would repeat that same inarticulate pattern yet a fifth time and ask them whether he had just said (1), (2), (3), or (4). That is the description of a game that only the teacher can win and in which the student can only fail.

Indeed, the more the phonology of an unfamiliar language differs from that of the languages with which a person is previously familiar, the greater the degree to which the speakers of the newly encountered language are likely to seem to the linguistic outsider to fail to manage to speak distinctly: they will seem to fail to make fully distinct determinations within the field of the phonologically determinable. In such a case, what is in fact defective in the listener's capacity for linguistic apprehension is experienced as a defect in the linguistic production of speech.[51] Franz Boas reports the following about some of the early twentieth-century anthropologists who first began systematically studying American Indian languages:

> [E]xamples of American languages have often been brought forward to show that the accuracy of their pronunciation is much less than that found in the languages of the civilized world.[52]

In his diagnosis of the source of this (mis)perception, Boas first observes:

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[51] One of the German directors of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin—who happened himself to speak English with a British accent—remarked to me that he simply could not understand why it was the case that *all* of the British fellows at the Kolleg were able to speak clearly and distinctly, while *all* of the Americans, for some reason, were prone to slur and swallow their words.

[52] Franz Boas, "Introduction," *Handbook of American Indian Languages, Vol. 1,* in *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 40* (Washington: Government Print Office; Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1911), 16.

It would seem that this view is based largely on the fact that certain sounds that occur in American languages are interpreted by observers sometimes as one European sound, sometimes as another.[53]

Boas then presents a far more perspicuous example of what is really going on in such a case of learning to hear a phonologically alien language than afforded by the sort of artificial classroom exercise I cite above (about teaching English to native Japanese speakers). His example illustrates far more accurately the sort of difficulty involved in learning to enter the phonological field of a language that is very different from one's own:

> [T]he Pawnee language contains a sound which may be heard more or less distinctly sometimes as an *l,* sometimes an *r,* sometimes as *n,* and again as *d,* which, however, without any doubt, is throughout the same sound, although modified to a certain extent by its position in the word and by surrounding sounds. It is an exceedingly weak *r,* made by trilling with the tip of the tongue at a point a little behind the roots of the incisors, and in which the tongue hardly leaves the palate, the trill being produced by the lateral part of the tongue adjoining the tip. As soon as the trill is heard more strongly, we receive the impression of an *r.* When the lateral movement prevails and the tip of the tongue does not seem to leave the palate, the impression of an *l* is strongest, while when the trill is almost suppressed and a sudden release of the tongue from the palate takes place, the impression of the *d* is given. The impression of an *n* is produced because the sound is often accompanied by an audible breathing through the nose. This peculiar sound is, of course, entirely foreign to our phonetic system; but its variations are not greater than those of the English *r* in various combinations, as in *broth, mother, where.* The different impression is brought about by the fact that the sound, according to its prevailing character, associates itself either with our *l,* or our *r, n,* or *d.*[54]

The recurring phoneme in Pawnee at issue here initially strikes the anthropologist as lacking phonetic determinacy: it seems to hover between the variety of available phonetic options discernible to him—alternating between our *l,* our *r,* our *n,* or our *d*—without itself appearing to be any recurring phonetic element. The relevant recurring phonological unit is, at first, therefore *simply inaudible* to the anthropologist as a phonetic

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[53] Ibid., 16–17.
[54] Ibid., 17.

repeatable—a unit that *recurs* within his auditory field of sensory apprehension.[55] Yet its actual degree of merely phonic variation is not any greater than that of standard English pronunciations of *r* in various combinations such as in *broth, mother, where*—that is, no greater than the degree of variation that constitutes the unity of one of the two recurring units of spoken English that was, at first, simply inaudible to my Japanese students as a distinct phoneme.[56]

Boas's examples (both of the elusive Pawnee "sound" and of the English "r") indicate a formal feature of spoken language that already interested Plato: namely, that the audible elements of spoken language are themselves subject to their own version of a context principle.[57] Plato

[55] It may help to bring out how the inaudibility of the sign here is not due to a mere failure in sensory acuity by considering the case of what Roman Jakobson calls *the zero phoneme*—a case in which a phonetic non-presence is not a mere absence but rather bears significance by marking a linguistically significant contrast to what would be expressed by a possible phonemic presence in its stead. The point is developed in his article "Zero Sign" (collected in Roman Jakobson, *Russian and Slavic Grammar: Studies 1931–1981* [Amsterdam: Mouton, 1984], 151–159). The article is a tribute to Charles Bally. In his paper *"Signe Zéro"* (*"Copule Zéro et Faits Connexes," Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 23 [1922]: 1–6), Bally argued that the absence of a sign can be a determinate, and hence a significant, absence, and he goes on to distinguish the *signe zéro* from two other modes of determinate absence: ellipsis and tacitness. A zero phoneme is the phonological counterpart to these notions: a determinate and hence significant phonemic absence. It constitutes a particularly clear example of something that could not possibly be so much as audible to a perceiving subject, no matter how formidable her auditory powers, except as the perceptible aspect of a symbol. The point of the present discussion might therefore be reformulated as follows: The manner in which any sign is inapprehensible (as the recurring phonemic element it is) to someone who is not a master of the relevant phonological space does not differ in principle from the manner in which zero phonemes—which to a certain kind of empiricist are classifiable only as cases of mere silence—are inaudible (as the significantly recurring elements they are) to a non-speaker of the language in which such a phoneme bears its significance.

[56] Unlike Boas's colleagues first studying Native American languages, my Japanese students, due to their prior proficiency as readers of written English, go into the exercise with which I present them already equipped with the knowledge that (1) through (4) on the blackboard are four different English words. To say that they know that these are four distinct words is to say that they have (through their familiarity with the written form of English, as well as with a certain amount of spoken English) acquired the general ability to identify recurring units of significance within the language and to discriminate the four words on the blackboard as written signs—as the graphematic counterparts of the four phonetically indistinguishable words. They already knew all this—and hence a great deal—well before they were able to distinguish these four words phonetically. This is because my Japanese students were neither learning a first language nor just beginning to learn a second. This means that though the example drawn from my experience of teaching English in Japan can help to uncover certain philosophical assumptions to which we are prone, in no way does it provide an adequate model from which to derive general truths regarding what it is involved in the first actualization of a linguistic capacity in comprehending the relation of sign to symbol and vice versa.

[57] The *Cratylus* (especially 424–427 and 434–435) contains Plato's most extensive discussion

introduces the topic in the *Theaetetus* by drawing a distinction between mere totalities and organic unities and then goes on to suggest that the unity that characterizes a manifold of syllables may be of this latter kind.[58] It is this discussion of Plato's that Ryle draws on (in the passage that I quoted from him above in my reply to Stroud) in order to elucidate "the crucial but difficult point" that he finds in Frege and early Wittgenstein. For Ryle, following Plato, it is the unity of the phonological field that provides the "almost perfect model" for understanding the logical unity of the proposition:

> [T]he phonetic model of letters and syllables . . . [is] . . . an almost perfect model by means of which to express Frege's difficult but crucial point that the unitary something that is said in a sentence or the unitary sense that it expresses is not an assemblage of detachable sense atoms. . . . They are distinguishables, not detachables; abstractables, not extractables.[59]

It might seem as if Plato's—and, following him, Ryle's—discussion simply proceeds in the opposite direction from this reply. On the one hand, this reply is concerned with highlighting how the identity of linguistic signs depends on a wider context in a manner that scholars of Frege or early Wittgenstein usually associate with the conditions of the identity of logical symbols; while Plato, on the other hand, is happy to regard the context-dependence of the phonetic element—and hence the dependence of phonetics on phonology—as the more intuitive case of the sort of unity here at issue. That is, Plato aims to show that a correct account of the

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of the phonetics of letters and syllables, but the topic figures in the manner most relevant for our present purpose in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* as well as briefly in the *Statesman*.

[58] Starting from *Theaetetus,* 202e. Notice that Plato's distinction here is akin to that which Kant draws between a *compositum* and a *totum*.

[59] Gilbert Ryle, "Letters and Syllables in Plato," *The Philosophical Review* 69, no. 4 (October 1960), 435–436. Three pages later, Ryle further elaborates on how the one is a model for the other as follows:

> [W]hat characters stand for are not noises but noise functions, that is, abstractable noise features or noise differences. We learn what they stand for not by meeting them on their own, since they are not there to meet on their own, but only by comparing partly similar, partly dissimilar, integral monosyllables which we do hear and pronounce on their own. Similarly, what isolated words convey are not atomic thoughts, but propositional functions, that is, abstractable thought features or thought differences. We learn what they convey not by apprehending their meanings on their own, but only by comparing partly similar, partly dissimilar, integral truths and falsehoods. In both cases abstraction is possible, extraction impossible and the abstracting requires noticing the constancy of something through ranges of variations in its settings.

linguistic being of a phonological element provides a helpful model for understanding that of the logical element—where the very being of either element depends upon the mode of its occurrence in a wider context. Plato does this by carefully developing an analogy between the logical and phonological orders. He explores one dimension of the overall parallel in the *Theaetetus*—starting with how the pronunciation of the latter sort of element varies depending upon its immediate phonological neighbors—in order to throw light on the differences between what is said in a *logos* and what is named by a separate word, where the identity of the name can be discerned only via its mode of occurrence in the *logos*. In the *Sophist,* he starts with a slightly different observation—concerning the necessity of the presence of at least one vowel as a condition of the very possibility of the phonological combination of consonants—in order to furnish us with a model of how the conditions of the identifiability of the parts of a *logos* depends upon their relation to the larger whole of what is said.

In this reply, I may seem to be concerned to explicate Wittgenstein's conception of the linguistic sign simply by proceeding the other way around, in order to arrive gradually at the conclusion that serves as Plato's starting point. There is something right and something wrong in this way of summarizing the aim of this reply. What is right is that one aspect of Wittgenstein's teaching regarding the sign may be accurately summarized (in the idiom Ryle employs above) as follows: the elements of the phonological order are not an assemblage of detachable phonetic atoms; they are phonologically distinguishable but not truly phonologically detachable; abstractable but not truly extractable. What is wrong in the foregoing way of summarizing the aim of this reply is the assumption that the main difference between this reply and Plato's and Ryle's respective discussions of the relation of the phonological to the logical may be put simply like this: what figures in their accounts as the left-hand side of the analogy between the two orders figures in my account as the right-hand side and vice versa. To conceive of matters in this way would be to mistake the main point of this reply. This would be to miss Wittgenstein's conception of the *interdependence* of sign and symbol. For what figures in Plato's and Ryle's respective accounts as *a mere analogy* between two different orders of speech figures in Wittgenstein's treatment of these topics as two aspects of *a single integral capacity*—a capacity, at one and the same time, for apprehending the elements of a manifold of phonologically structured speech and written notation and for saying what is true through logically structured expressions of judgment.

In the light of these considerations, Boas's diagnosis of why his colleagues were inclined to regard speakers of American Indian languages

as failing to properly pronounce the words of their own language allows us to see a little more clearly the real difficulty that afflicted my Japanese students. A native English speaker, as we saw, is initially prone to characterize their difficulty this way: they cannot tell the difference between *l* and *r*. Though not false, this misses the deeper problem: they are unable to discern the unity of the bandwidth of phonological variation in the range of admissible pronunciations of either *r* or *l*. The main reason the students were initially unable to discern such a form of unity within the manifold of spoken sounds is that they were unable to apprehend the unity of phonology and significant usage. The unity of the phonological manifold, along with the correlative difference of *l* and *r* respectively, is as phonologically alien to them as a great many of the units of spoken Pawnee initially are to Boas's anthropologists. That which is apparently alien in the other language in such a case can be overcome only if we first learn to apprehend and master what is initially inaudible (or invisible) in the dimension of what is genuinely alien in the sign—where part of learning this requires developing an appreciation for how phonetic differences between languages are functions of phonemic differences, where these, in turn, are to be discerned only if one appreciates how phonological variation may bear on linguistic significance and vice versa. Just as there could be no apprehension of the symbol qua symbol apart from its sensibly apprehensible aspect qua sign, so too the sign cannot be apprehended *as* sign apart from an apprehension of it qua that which *can* symbolize. Signs without symbols are blind; symbols without signs are empty.

Boas's example raises the question of whether the following case is a possibility: a speaker of a language, *all* of whose phonemes strike—or rather fail determinately to strike—our ear in the manner in which the aforementioned Pawnee sound strikes—or fails determinately to strike—the ears of Boas's colleagues. The thought-experiment may be fully radicalized and brought into relation with the problematic of the logical alien if we embellish it with a further detail: the alien phonemes are such that we will never be able to make out any of them. No way of actualizing our linguistic capacity will ever allow us to discern the phonological unity of any element of the spoken manifold of such a language. We are so constituted that we, in principle, are never able to discern the "sounds" of that language as the repeatable linguistic signs that they are. Let us call the sort of linguistic stranger who figures in this thought-experiment *the phonological alien*.[60] Reflection on such a case may help

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[60] Perhaps the closest Wittgenstein ever comes to enjoining us to try to enter into this particular thought experiment is *Philosophical Investigations,* §207. But there, the difficulty of

to bring to the surface some assumptions that have remained unexcavated in our previous deliberations.

If Frege's logical alien is someone whose utterances are such that we are never able to discern *logical* unity in or among them, then the phonological alien is someone whose "utterances" are such that we are never able to discern even any trace of *phonological* unity in or among them. The usual way of (at least initially) framing the hypothesis of the logical alien is as if he were not a phonological alien—as if his utterances involved apparent attempts to say things whose phonological structure is fully discernible to us, even if anything that his combinations of phonemes might fleetingly appear to say fails logically to cohere with most of the other things he says—fails to cohere in the way that utterances need to hang together in order to afford an interpreter confidence in her comprehension of how the apparently semantic dimensions of a speaker's performances interrelate with one another so as to admit of coherent interpretation. That is to say, the standard way of understanding the hypothesis of the logical alien builds into the thought-experiment the idea that the following assumption is perfectly intelligible: we can fully master the spoken signs of their language without ever being able to achieve agreement in judgment with them—we can learn to fully make out "the words" without ever being sure what meanings to assign to those words or what beliefs to ascribe to the speakers of the language to which those words belong.

If Wittgenstein is right—if the capacity to employ and discern signs, on the one hand, and the capacity to employ and discern symbols, on the other, are two aspects of a single capacity—then strictly thinking through the thought-experiment of the logical alien should leave us with someone who is not only a logical alien but also more of a phonological alien than, in initially framing such a thought-experiment, one might at first suppose. Moreover, if Wittgenstein is right, there should be limits

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making out what is up with the tribe in question is initially described as appearing to be of the following sort: "[T]here is no regular connexion between what they say, the sounds they make, and their actions." This might suggest that our task is to imagine a tribe whose speech behavior is sufficiently non-alien to us that we can, without too much difficulty, apprehend (something describable as) "what they say." This would mean that the trouble is supposed to set in only when we try further to make out a requisite form of connection between "what they say" and "what they do." But I take it that part of the ultimate aim of the thought experiment—as well as that of the sections from §206 to §242—is to urge questions upon us about what it could so much as mean to be able to discern the one form of agreement without the other: the requisite form of agreement in the linguistic sign apart from that of agreement in judgment and behavior, and vice versa. In a similar spirit, Sören Stenlund remarks: "If we accept Quine's naturalistic perspective . . . one could argue—with a thought-experiment similar to Quine's—for . . . indeterminacy not only of translation, but of identification of expressions" (*Language and Philosophical Problems*, 94).

on how far either one of these two dimensions of what can be alien in the language of another can vary independently of the other—how far the possibility of the discernment of the repetition of utterly alien signs can come into view apart from some discernment of the actuality of their intelligible use as the sensibly apprehensible aspects of meaningful symbols. Philosophical efforts to imagine the possibility of a logical alien often involve a peculiar combination of intimacy and strangeness: they imagine the logical alien as saying things that, on the one hand, we are in one sense able to understand without difficulty (in the sense of phonemically parse, we are supposed to be able to report straight off—verbally repeat—the utterances of the alien), but that, in another sense, we are unable to understand at all (inasmuch as we are supposed to be unable to make sense of how the different things the speaker says hang together as a coherent logical whole).[61] This requires imagining the logical alien as having mastered the phonological space of our language or our having mastered the phonological space of his, while each of us remains an outsider to the logical space of the other. It requires imagining us as standing in the relation of being logically alien to one another without our being in the least phonologically alien to one another. Can we imagine that? Or does our inability to find a logical foothold in the linguistic behavior of the being with a supposedly logical alien form of thought have the consequence that we should be equally unable to find a phonological foothold in his supposedly linguistic behavior?

What is a radically phonologically alien being? The concept of such a being as introduced above simply helped itself to the stipulation that the "sounds" that such a being emits are in fact repeatable linguistic signs (without saying how this fact about him comes to be known), even though the signs in question are also said to be *in principle* indiscernible to us as such. But if we can have no access to a perspective from which such a "speaker" can ever come into view as *speaking,* then it should remain a live question for us whether the being in question is speaking at all rather than just emitting noises. If he is just alternating between different elements in a manifold of sounds, none of which ever comes into view as having any linguistic value, then it is unclear why the question should even arise for us as to whether he is speaking a language—why the noises

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[61] As we shall see below (in the reply to Benoist), this is how Wittgenstein's own attempt to think through Frege's thought-experiment of the logical alien (in his thought-experiment about the wood sellers from the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*) proceeds— by imagining us as able to repeat and hence report the aliens' utterances (e.g., "Yes, now it's a *lot* of wood and costs more!") but as unable to understand what they mean by their words (in what sense of "more" does *that* count as *more* wood?).

in question should be regarded as elements of a phonologically structured manifold that elude us rather than as just a sequence of barks, grunts, or squeaks altogether lacking phonological structure.[62] What one hears when one hears, for example, a sequence of animal sounds is formally distinct in character from what one hears—and recognizes oneself as hearing—when one hears humans speaking a language one does not understand, even when that language is as different from our own as English is from Japanese. A speaker of such a language is not (in the sense indicated above) radically phonologically alien to us. One is eventually able to distinguish at least some recurring phonological elements in her speech (even if, at that point, many others still elude us), where the refinement of that ability non-accidentally goes hand in hand with the refinement of the ability to discern at least some recurring forms of use among the combinations of recurring phonological elements in her speech. Over time, we are gradually able to begin to find our feet with that speaker—and hence not only to listen, but also to speak to and with them.

Learning to hear and speak a foreign language in this way is not merely a matter of mastering the spoken units of something like a collection of one-syllable sounds. It is a matter of acquiring an appreciation of the range of phonic dimensions within which variation of sound makes a dif-

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[62] Thomas Ricketts is the rare commentator who, at least at certain points, appears to appreciate that Frege's thought-experiment, if strictly thought through, has this consequence— that the logical alien must also be phonologically alien to us. Ricketts suggests that the psychologistic account of judgment leaves us with an account in which we can no more make sense of the idea that we and the logical alien disagree with one another than of the idea that we stand in logical relations of disagreement with the groans, sighs, and cries of pain of another ("Objectivity and Objecthood," 70). Ricketts's characterization of the problem here—that the most we could discern in the speech behavior of the logical alien are performances that partake of the sort of intelligibility that groans, sighs, and cries of pain do—entails that we not even become able to schematize the alien's behavior as partaking of the form of *speech*. It is this moment in Ricketts on which Conant builds in his account of the second horn of the psychologistic logician's dilemma:

> The psychologistic logician . . . wants to arrive at the discovery that our idea of 'logical disagreement' and that of the aliens disagree. This latter employment of the notion of 'disagreement,' if it is to be purged of any partiality toward 'our' logic, is one in which the ordinary notion must be drained of virtually all its sense. The psychologistic logician . . . must restrict himself to a notion of 'disagreement' . . . that is a species of difference which does not in any way involve 'our' idea of 'logical' conflict. But if the noises we and the aliens make merely differ from one another (and nothing further concerning their logical relation to one another can be said), then they are no more in disagreement with one another than the moos of two different cows or the shapes of two different snowflakes. . . . If . . . the psychologistic logician . . . grasps this horn of the dilemma, the most he will be able to show us is creatures who make noises and movements we do not make. (Creatures who moo and eat grass are not manifesting a logically alien form of thought.) (Conant, this volume, 79–80)

ference to meaning—as well as which variations in stress, intonation, aspiration, etc. portend shifts of meaning in grammatical mood, aspect, tense, etc. In many European languages, a slight shift in intonation can convert an indicative statement into an interrogative utterance. In Mandarin Chinese, what a speaker of English will experience as "the same syllable" is actually something that changes its meaning according to variation in tone. Or, to take as an example a dimension in spoken language that a native speaker of English can appreciate, consider this case: subtle shifts of stress from the first to the second syllable in the pronunciation of "a word" can alter "its" meaning. Such shifts are initially inaudible to the native speaker of some other language (such as Japanese) in which intonation plays almost no role—let alone such a fateful role. Consider the differences in pronunciation and concomitant shifts of meaning in the following pairs of examples of English words:

produce	PRO-duce	fruits and vegetables
	pro-DUCE	bring forth, create
recall	RE-call	remove from circulation, invite for a second audition
	re-CALL	remember, call back to mind
console	CON-sole	computer or stereo screen and/or control panel
	con-SOLE	confer solace
content	CON-tent	as opposed to form, wrapping, container
	con-TENT	as opposed to discontent, unhappy, dissatisfied
converse	CON-verse	"No P is S" is the converse of "No S is P"
	con-VERSE	speak, talk, chat
default	DE-fault	setting, position, or option to which things revert
	de-FAULT	fail to meet an obligation
desert/dessert	DES-ert	e.g., the Sahara
	des-SERT	best part of the meal
invalid	IN-val-id	person who is not well
	in-VAL-id	not valid
object	OB-ject	thing, item, entity
	ob-JECT	complain, protest
refuse	REF-use	rubbish, garbage
	re-FUSE	decline, say no
subject	SUB-ject	area of knowledge, person, or thing under discussion
	sub-JECT	force someone or something to undergo some treatment

Such fateful shifts in stress in English almost always occur from the first to the second syllable of a word or vice versa.[63] That means that shifts in stress, as occur sometimes in modern Greek, from, say, the fourth to the fifth syllable of a "word," may initially go unnoticed by a native English speaker—that is, until she has trained her ear to attend to differences in significance that are a function of *those* sorts of differences in stress.

As my anecdote about teaching English in Japan and the examples displayed in the above table may both be taken to illustrate, even just the bare recognition of some bit of speech behavior *as* phonologically alien often requires a considerable degree of discernment and general linguistic sophistication on the part of the listener. Depending upon the circumstances under which the fragment of alien language is encountered, its character as phonologically alien may altogether elude the notice of the one who hears it, even when it is directly addressed to her and she takes herself to have both heard and understood all that there is to hear and understand. For the phonological contours of what is said are, in the default case, simply assimilated to the phonological contours of what the addressee is inclined, as a matter of linguistic habit, to hear.

It will perhaps serve to make this dimension of our topic more vivid if we flip the scenario around again, so that it is now the native English speaker who is the one who fails to apprehend what is phonologically alien in what is said to her. Jakobson and Halle give the following example:

> Family names such as *Bitter, Chitter, Ditter, Fitter, Gitter, Hitter, Jitter, Litter, Mitter, Pitter, Ritter, Sitter, Titter, Witter, Zitter* all occur in New York. Whatever the origin of these names and their bearers, each of these vocables is used in the English of New Yorkers without colliding

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[63] One way of summarizing what the chart shows is as follows: the same (written) sign can be pronounced in English in two different ways, where these two different pronunciations correlate with entirely differently ranges in what "the" "word" means. Actually, however, these are subtle differences in sign that even a competent non-native speaker may mistake for cases of the same sign symbolizing differently. The logical identity of the written sign in such a case achieves determinacy through its relation to its phonemic counterpart in a further dimension of sign-form. As we shall see in a later footnote, what we encounter here in English—in the examples given in this chart—is a phenomenon that is far more pronounced in other languages, such as modern Japanese. This means that the logical identity of the sensibly apprehensible symbol is not necessarily fixed through a single dimension in the form of its sensible apprehension—through merely its written or merely its spoken guise. It often depends on the mutual interrelation of these two dimensions in the form of the sign.

with their linguistic habits. You had never heard anything about the gentleman introduced to you at a New York party. "Mr. Ditter," says your host. You try to grasp and retain this message. As an English-speaking person you, unaware of the operation, easily divide the continuous sound-flow into a definite number of successive units.[64]

The successive units into which the unilingual English-speaking New Yorker thus divides up the continuous sound-flow are ones that comprise the only phonological field in which she knows her way about. Let us further specify that "Hitter" is a Hebrew name, "Pitter" a Ukrainian one, and "Ritter" a German one. Let us further stipulate that the gentlemen to whom our unilingual native New Yorker is introduced is, in each case, a recent immigrant, that his name is correctly pronounced by the introducer as it would be in the country of origin, and that, over the course of the evening, the native New Yorker is introduced to Mr. Hitter from Israel, Mr. Pitter from the Ukraine, and Herr Ritter from Germany. As she hears these names, all but the first of the name's successive units into which she, in each case, divides the continuous sound-flow will be the same—that is to say, these names will appear to her to rhyme perfectly with one another. To a trilingual speaker—equally fluent in Hebrew, German, and Ukrainian—those successive units will not appear to perfectly coincide phonemically. Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle mention the following three sorts of phonemic structures unknown to English speakers that may occur across such names: one of the them contains a manner of immediately clustering phonemes that cannot occur in English, another contains only phonemic features that do occur in English but are never quite bundled and enunciated in just that way, the third contains a phoneme that has a distinctive feature foreign to English:

> [T]he unilingual speaker of English when hearing a name [of one of these sorts] identifies and assimilates it without difficulty even if he has never heard it before, but either in perception or reproduction he is prone to distort, and distrust as alien, a name [such as the one] with its unacceptable consonantal cluster, or . . . [the one] that contains only familiar features but in an unfamiliar bundle, or, finally, [the one whose] . . . second phoneme has a distinctive feature foreign to English. . . . The case of the man faced with family names of people entirely unknown to him was deliberately chosen because neither his vo-

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[64] Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, "Phonology and Phonetics," in *Selected Writings, Vol. I: Phonological Studies,* ed. Roman Jakobson (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), 464.

cabulary, nor his previous experience, nor the immediate context of the conversation give him any clues for the recognition of these names.[65]

The unilingual speaker of English under these circumstances is generally able to hear the name only in accordance with some manner in which she herself is also able to say it.

In the light of this example, it can suddenly strike one as a philosophically neglected fact that children learn to become fluent babblers in their mother tongue—and thereby to exhibit a remarkably high degree of phonological competence—well before they acquire a high degree of semantic competence in that language.[66] They thereby learn to acquire a form of competence that it is extraordinarily difficult for an adult non-native speaker of that language to acquire, without ever being overtly taught how to do it. Moreover, they pull off this seemingly prodigious feat of learning while they are still very young children. Morris Halle seeks to bring out this point as follows:

> The native speaker of a language knows a great deal about his language that he was never taught. An example of this untaught knowledge is

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[65] Ibid., 466. I have slightly altered the example, omitting and simplifying the precise phonetic and phonemic details of their original discussion in order to facilitate and streamline presentation of the main conceptual point.

[66] The seemingly oxymoronic concept I am here employing, of becoming *a fluent babbler* in one's mother tongue, marks the last phase in a process of development whose stages all constitute some form of "babbling"—a development over which initially comparatively inept and inarticulate phonic production gradually gives way to a form of production that exhibits the highly articulated phonological contours of the speech of an adult speaker of the language. The technical term in linguistics for the attainment of this competence is *canonical babbling*. It is succinctly explained by Sophie Kern and Barbara Davis as follows:

> Canonical babbling marks a seminal step into the production of syllablelike outputs in infants. Canonical babbling is defined as rhythmic alternation between consonant and vowel-like properties, giving a percept of rhythmic speech that simulates adult output without conveying meaning. (Sophie Kern and Barbara L. Davis, "Emergent Complexity in Early Vocal Acquisition: Cross Linguistic Comparisons of Canonical Babbling," in *Approaches to Phonological Complexity,* eds. F. Pellegrino, E. Marsico, I. Chitoran, and C. Coupe [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009], 353)

D. K. Oller notes, "Parents often report at this stage [the canonical stage] that their children have begun to talk even though there may be no evidence of denotative meaning associated with [the syllables they successfully reduplicate]" ("The Emergence of the Sounds of Speech in Infancy," in *Child Phonology 1: Production,* eds. G. Yeni-Komshian, J. Kavanagh, and C. Ferguson [New York: Academic Press, 1980], 98). For a linguistically rigorous discussion of canonical babbling, see Barbara L. Davis and Peter F. MacNeilage, "The Articulatory Basis of Babbling," *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research,* 38, no. 6 (Dec. 1995): 1199–1211.

illustrated in (1), where I have listed a number of words chosen from different languages, including English. In order to make this a fair test, the English words in the list are words that are unlikely to be familiar to the general public, including most crossword-puzzle fans:

(1) ptak thole hlad plast sram mgla vlas flitch dnom rtut

If one were to ask which of the ten words in this list are to be found in the unabridged Webster's, it is likely that readers of these lines would guess that *thole, plast,* and *flitch* are English words, whereas the rest are not English. This evidently gives rise to the question, How does a reader who has never seen any of the words on the list know that some are English and others are not? The answer is that the words judged as not English have letter sequences not found in English. This implies that, in learning the words of English, the normal speaker acquires knowledge about the structure of the words. The curious thing about this knowledge is that it is acquired although it is never taught, for English-speaking parents do not normally draw their children's attention to the fact that consonant sequences that begin English words are subject to certain restrictions that exclude words such as *ptak, sram,* and *rtut,* but allow *thole, flitch,* and *plast.* Nonetheless, in the absence of any overt teaching, speakers somehow acquire this knowledge.[67]

Halle focuses on cases of permissible versus impermissible consonantal clusters in order to bring out the point. But this is by no means the only dimension of the phonological field that comes to be mastered by a child who learns to babble fluently in her mother tongue. For example, European children learn to babble in ways that involve the utterances of nonsensical strings of phonemes that exhibit the difference between indicative and interrogative intonation. The nonsensical strings of phonemes that Chinese children learn to babble exhibit a sophisticated mastery of the Mandarin scale of tones. Greek children learn to babble five-syllable strings of phonemes, some of which involve a strongly stressed final syllable. British and American children learn to babble in ways that manifest the capacity to sharply differentiate the strings of phonemes (involving *l* and *r*) that figure in my teaching exercise—for example, those that my Japanese adult students of English were unable to differentiate. Indeed, these children master such forms of phonological competence and many others long before they are anywhere near able to master uses of words

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[67] Morris Halle, "Knowledge Unlearned and Untaught: What Speakers Know about the Sounds of their Language," in *From Memory to Speech and Back: Papers on Phonetics and Phonology, 1954–2002* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 95.

requiring discriminations of meaning as finely grained as those required to understand the four words that figured in my teaching exercise for my Japanese students—hence long before children learning English as their first language are able to grasp shades of meaning such as those involved in the differences between *roll* and *rotate, loll* and *linger, lore* and *myth,* or *roar* and *growl.* Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to conclude from this that children acquiring mastery of a first language are just learning their way around a self-standing phonemic space before they engage in any genuinely competent acts of linguistic communication or uptake. Rather, in the typical case, they learn to discriminate the topography of the phonological field as they learn to recognize patterns of significant use in the manifold of recurrences of words such as "mama," "kitty," and "peekaboo" and as they then, in turn, learn to employ these words recurrently under various circumscribed primitive occasions of use. It is this relation to use that induces the dimensions of stability and unity required for the constitution of the contours of the phonological field.[68] It is a relation to use that is already encoded in the speech behaviors of their elders, from whom they learn the language.

What does it mean that the learner of a first language (unlike a learner of a second language) is initially restricted to the mastery of *primitive* forms of use? It means, for example, that a child can learn to announce to her parents at an appropriate moment in the day that it is time to "feed kitty" (and, in that sense, to use the locution correctly), without her having yet learned fully to master the use of either of those two words—hence, how systematically to distinguish kitties from non-kitties or how intelligibly to project the concept *feed* into contexts bearing on the feeding of non-kitties (or possibly even kitties other than hers), let alone on the feeding of things that are not animals (parking meters, human pride, etc.).[69] Becoming a full master of concepts such as *kitty* and *feed* is a matter of the child's learning to project these words into a remarkably wide range of new contexts and learning to do this on her own—where

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[68] "To the [child's] desire to communicate is then added the desire to communicate something. It is precisely these first distinctions, aiming at becoming significant, which necessitate simple, clear-cut and stable sound oppositions, capable of being engraved in the memory and implemented at will" (Roman Jakobson, "The Sound Laws of Child Language," in *On Language,* 296). What the child thereby desires to communicate need not be a thought; see R. J. Collingwood on "hattiaw" (*The Principles of Art,* 227–228).

[69] Nothing I say here, therefore, should be taken to imply that, for example, through the incipient achievement of joining sign with symbol in an exclamation produced under suitable circumstances—say, by exclaiming "kitty" as the cat walks by—that the child thereby has already mastered the meaning of a word.

not every case of such a projection is itself an act of mere imitation.[70] This capacity that the child seeks to actualize in order to become a speaker has a ground or source that is not merely "inside" the would-be speaker herself but also "outside" of her: in the community of competent adult speakers around her. However, as in her acquisition of moral character, so, too, in the education of the child's capacity to speak, what begins and must begin as mere imitation—as the first determination of the capacity— must not end there. The sign of mastery, with regard to some aspect of its determination, is that the capacity in her becomes the source of a form of use that is no longer a case of mere mimicry. Mastery of a word essentially requires the realization of the capacity for creative projection and hence for acts of genuinely autonomous linguistic activity—acts that are not merely in conformity with prior usage but have their ground of intelligibility in the speaker's own understanding of the word's possibilities for further projection. The acquisition of such powers of projection— and hence the acquisition of concepts—is not a piecemeal process. When it comes to acquiring a first language, this is not a matter of the child just learning (what philosophers call) "the meaning of a word" and then going on to learn the meaning of another. Rather, learning to expand her appreciation of the uses of any of words proceeds through the child's ever-expanding appreciation of how their joint possibilities of use bear upon one another.[71]

Just as the child masters the meaning of a word by learning to recognize different occasions of its use *as* recurrences of the same word and then to project it into novel situations, eventually in combination with other words, on her own (thereby grasping the form of generality it expresses)—so, too, in one and the same act, does she master the identity of the sign by learning to recognize different occasions of its employment *as* recurrences of the same sign and then to project it into novel situations, eventually in combination with other signs, on her own (thereby grasping the form of generality that governs its identity). This is not merely a matter of the child's expanding her sense of the full range of the meaning of a word and then in parallel also learning to expand her capacity to recognize the full range of cases in which the pronunciation of a sound counts, say, as a case of *r* (rather than *l* or something else). For

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[70] On this, see Cavell's illuminating discussion of the example of a child acquiring the concept "kitty" in *The Claim of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 171.

[71] Cavell remarks, "We learn the use of 'feed the kitty', 'feed the lion', 'feed the swans', and one day one of us says 'feed the meter', or 'feed in the film', or 'feed the machine', or 'feed his pride', or 'feed wire', and we understand, we are not troubled" (ibid., 181).

the more the child who is first actualizing her capacity to speak comes to appreciate the full range of possible uses of a word such as "feed," the more she comes to appreciate what it means to say the very thing she had already been saying for some time—for instance, each time she then goes on to announce again that it is now time to "feed kitty."[72] As her comprehension of the projectiblity of the word expands through her grasping its bearing on further whole ranges of possible occasions of use, her capacity to appreciate nuances and depths in meaning present in earlier occasions of use thereby concomitantly expands. She comes to be able, retrospectively, to more fully appreciate the significance of her own past uses of language. In one and the same set of acts, as her comprehension of the projectibility of the sign expands, so, too, does her appreciation of what *that* sign is.[73] Hence, her mastery in the employment of signs and her ability to discern a word's possibilities of meaning grow together—each modifying and deepening the other. These two forms of projectibility—that of the sign and that of the symbol—expand and mutually condition one another, not merely in parallel, but as internal aspects of the actualization of a single integral capacity.[74]

[72] Gustafsson explicates this aspect of Cavell's point (developed in *The Claim of Reason,* 181) as follows: "[P]rojections are not just secondary outgrowths on an independently identifiable stem of primary literal, non-projective uses of words. The step from 'feed the kitty' to 'feed the meter' may be bigger than the step from 'feed the kitty' to 'feed the swans'. And yet . . . the possibility of taking that bigger step must already be foreshadowed by the other, smaller, and apparently non-projective step. So, it is not just that the possibility of taking such a bigger step depends on the possibility of taking smaller ones. The dependence goes in the other direction as well: the smaller steps can be taken only if the bigger ones are also possible. According to Cavell, a language intolerant of projections like the one from 'feed the kitty' to 'feed the meter' would also be intolerant of the step from, say, 'feed the kitty' to 'feed the monkey'. Indeed, such a language would not allow any uses of words in different contexts—and, hence, would not be a language at all" (Gustafsson, "Familiar Words in Unfamiliar Surroundings: Davidson's Malapropisms, Cavell's Projections," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 19, no. 5, 657).

[73] As the next note makes clear, the notion employed here has nothing to do with Humean projection—with that "great propensity [of the mind] to spread itself on external objects, and to conjoin with them any internal impressions, which they occasion, and which always make their appearance at the same time that these objects discover themselves to the senses" (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature,* I. iii. XIV). The capacity here at issue—which Wittgenstein calls projection—is just as much a condition of our capacity to recognize two occurrences of an "internal impression" as being the same as it is of our being able to recognize two occurrences of an "external object" as being the same. In this respect, Wittgenstein, like Kant, is concerned with investigating the conditions of a form of awareness whose conditions of possibility Hume simply takes for granted, while also contesting Hume's construal of the form in question as a kind of matter (albeit one that is merely inner).

[74] The notion of *projectibility* employed here will take on even greater significance below, in the reply to Benoist, when we inquire into the question of what is involved in finding our

When it comes to learning a first language, just as learning to hear the differences between certain phonemes is not a matter of the child's simply registering certain phonic differences in a merely acoustic field and then reproducing them, so, too, mastering a concept is not a matter of the child's merely registering a certain merely outward pattern in the use of a word and then (in a sudden and happy leap of interpretation) latching onto "the meaning" of the word. The capacities that the child passively draws on in discriminating the phonological structure and grasping the point of the use of a word presuppose that the child also autonomously participates in the activities of attempting to pronounce and use such words herself. Just as learning to produce phonologically contoured speech and learning to hear it as such are interrelated aspects of a single task, so, too, learning to creatively project words into new contexts and to grasp the projections of those same words by others into new contexts are two aspects of a single task. What can be hard to see here is that these two pairs of interrelated capacities—to hear and produce potentially significant phonemes, on the one hand, and to detect and to project a pattern of use, on the other—are themselves no less intertwined. The capacities one passively draws on in hearing and understanding presuppose that the child actively learns and autonomously participates in the linguistic practice in question: these two dimensions in the acquisition of linguistic autonomy—the attainment of autonomy qua master of

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feet with those who exhibit a comparatively alien form of life. The origins of the notion are to be found in the *Tractatus:* "We use the sensibly perceptible sign (sound or written sign, etc.) of the proposition as a projection of the possible state of affairs. The method of projection is the thinking of the sense of the proposition" (3.11). Wittgenstein's early employment of the term involves a metaphorical extension of the geometrical notion (in which points and lines are transformed from one plane onto another through connecting the corresponding sets of points on the two planes via parallel lines). Later Wittgenstein will occasionally hark back to his earlier term *Projektionsart*. In at least some of the passages where he does so (see, for example, *Philosophical Investigations,* §§139, 142, and 366), I take it that he intends his reader to be able to detect an explicit allusion to and inheritance of the earlier Tractarian notion. This is not to deny that the character of the further projection of the term "projection" by later Wittgenstein and his followers (starting with Waismann) is not altogether straightforward. In particular, "projection" as a useful term for explicating Wittgenstein's later meditations (on what it is to be able to employ and recognize uses of a sign as the same across a variety of contexts) requires each such act involve the possibility of an essentially *innovative* aspect—a point emphasized by Cavell and taken up by Gustafsson. In my discussion here, I have glossed over some the differences between what we might call Tractarian and Cavellian projection respectively. For an interesting discussion of the latter topic, along with some of the surprising connections between Kant and Wittgenstein to which it points, see Eli Friedlander, "Meaning Schematics in Cavell's Kantian Reading of Wittgenstein," in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 2011/2, no. 256 (2011): 183–199.

the production of the sign (the sensibly perceptible aspect of the symbol) and attainment of autonomy qua master of the symbol (the sign in use)—are two dimensions of the actualization of a single capacity.

Children first learning to discriminate comparatively primitive instances of linguistic usage ("kitty," "feed") are at the same time also first learning to discriminate the contours of the phonological field of the spoken vernacular of the fellow speakers of that language in their immediate environment—and vice versa. The manner in which these powers of phonological and semantic projection mutually condition one another and gradually expand together can differ in individual cases—as well as systematically, in how they unfold in the learning of different languages. Using the rather Eurocentric unit of the syllable as a measure, the following description is reasonably accurate: Japanese has a spoken alphabet of fifty one-syllable sounds; whereas English has well over ten thousand.[75] So Japanese children will become proficient babblers, exploring the full range of the phonological field of their native tongue far more quickly than their American counterparts. Such differences notwithstanding, certain generalizations will hold across languages and cultures. Both American and Japanese children, long before they learn to say very much in either American English or Japanese, will learn to master the pronunciation of a handful of words together with learning to negotiate certain primitive forms of their use. Some of these uses will invite and eventuate into patterns of projection that will perhaps have no equivalents among the concepts of the other language—so too, the actualization of the one child's capacity to pronounce words properly in her language will require her to learn to babble in ways that a child belonging to the other linguistic community will neither learn nor need in order to achieve fluency in his mother tongue. Across the countless differences in just how they come to reach this point, the American children and the Japanese ones will each eventually become equally adept at learning to distinguish the difference between cases of someone merely babbling and cases of someone speaking—saying something—in their mother tongue.

Nevertheless, first learning to discern and produce instances of canonical babbling in the aforementioned ways (in normal infant language learning) is part and parcel of acquiring the power of the sensory discrimination of the linguistic sign that philosophers such as Dummett and Davidson think comes simply for free with the mere power of hearing. Philosophers are

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[75] The highest estimate I have seen is 15,831, with a little under a fifth (around 3,000) of these being actual one-syllable words.

prone to underestimate what an enormous and specific (though by no means linguistically self-standing) achievement this is on the part of children—how learning to babble in the tongue of one's first language is a sophisticated achievement, a highly differentiated actualization of the child's general linguistic capacity. The child that has learned to do this has taken an enormous and important step. This achievement is one of a whole range of preconditions that, in the typical case, must be in place for the actualization of the capacity to *hear* language—a capacity that philosophers such as Davidson and Dummett think we start with and whose exercise constitutes step one in the task of language learning.

The latter philosophers tell us that a child begins to learn language by hearing mere sounds (or seeing mere marks) and then assigning interpretations to them.[76] (They will sometimes remark in passing that "it is obvious" that the interpreter has nothing to go on but a mere pattern of sound.[77]) The examples above about teaching English and learning Pawnee help to bring to the fore the crucial unstated assumption here: namely, that the relevant power (to discriminate among significant units of sound or shape) comes for free with our non-linguistic powers for hearing and sight—and hence comes with the mere capacities to hear sounds and detect shapes—capacities with which we are naturally endowed, simply through the proper maturation of our sensory organs.[78]

[76] Jaakko Hintikka offers a particularly clear statement of the assumption in question in the following passage: "Let us assume that someone addresses a well-formed English sentence to you, which you (usually unreflectively) understand. . . . What was given to you when you received the message was a physical (acoustical or optical) structure, a sequence of noises or scratches on paper. . . . Somehow from this structure you managed to derive a semantical representation of the sentence in question" ("Logical Form and Linguistic Theory," in *Reflections on Chomsky,* ed. A. George [Oxford: Blackwell, 1989], 41).

[77] ". . . [I]t is . . . obvious that the interpreter has nothing to go on but the pattern of sounds that the speaker exhibits in conjunction with further events . . ." (Donald Davidson, "First Person Authority," in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 13–14). Davidson might appear to be immune to the sort of criticism I offer below, on the ground that he distinguishes sharply between the task of answering the empirical question of how we actually go about understanding what others say and the strictly philosophical task of constructing a theory of knowledge which would make such understanding possible. But, as Gustafsson points out, "Even if Davidson is agnostic with regard to the question of what actually enables us to understand what others say, he takes for granted that this capacity consists in the ability to move from an identification of utterances qua productions of sounds to an understanding of what the utterances mean" (Gustafsson, *Entangled Sense* [Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2000], 144). For a penetrating criticism of Quine's version of an account of how we move from the one to the other, see Alexander George, "Quine's Indeterminacy" (*The Harvard Review of Philosophy,* Vol. XXI [2014]).

[78] Interestingly, Quine—the pioneer of radical interpretation in the philosophy of language—is far more sensitive than his philosophical progeny to the need to educate our powers of

The assumption therefore is that hearing or seeing linguistic signs involves nothing more than the exercise of an unacquired sensory capacity—hence one that is in no way an essentially linguistic capacity. On this conception, no determination of our powers of sensory apprehension into specifically linguistic capacities (for recognizing the sensibly percep-

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sight and hearing in order to achieve the power to discriminate phonemes. The following is a more careful statement from Quine than any one finds in Davidson or Dummett—one that allows that we need, in learning to understand a spoken language, to develop the ability to separate phonetic signal from acoustic noise: "We form the habit, in hearing the myriad variations of spoken sounds, of treating each as an approximation to one or another of a limited number of norms—around thirty altogether—constituting so to speak a spoken alphabet" (W. V. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized," in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1969], 90). But statements such as this still leave the impression that the following ideas may remain in place: (1) that the thirty or so phonetic signs that allegedly constitute a spoken alphabet are delimited by a set of exclusively phonetic norms, so that their range of permissible variation may be discerned apart from any appreciation of their use in communication, (2) that the identification of such phonetic units is prior to the comprehension of their phonologically significant modes of combination (so that a full comprehension of the phonetic contours of such an "alphabet" is prior to the idea of significant speech in the order of comprehension), and (3) that language learning is a matter of first learning one's way around such an alphabet prior to entering into genuinely communicative relations with others. However, in his neglected essay "Meaning in Linguistics" (*From a Logical Point of View,* 47–64), Quine candidly admits that most linguists work with the following criterion for the identity of a phoneme: "Two subtly differing sounds count as the same phoneme unless it is possible, by putting one for the other in some utterance, to change the meaning of the utterance" (50). He then wryly observes that "the notion of phoneme, thus formulated, depends obviously and notoriously on the notion of sameness of meaning, or synonymy" (50). In the rest of the essay, he attempts to offer an account in which the concept of a class of significant sound sequences of a language could be delimited "without the help of a notion of a phoneme so defined." To his credit, Quine appreciates (at least in this essay) how extraordinarily difficult it is going to be to surmount this problem within the constraints that he wishes to set for its solution: "[For it [the problem] turns on a prior notion of significant sequence, or possible normal utterance. Without this notion, or something to somewhat the same effect, we cannot say what the grammarian is trying to do . . . nor wherein rightness or wrongness of his results might consist. . . . We are thus squarely confronted with one of the twin offspring of the problem of meaning, namely, the problem of defining the general notion of significant sequence" (52–53). Quine here at least appreciates—as few post-Quineans do—that any attempt to offer criteria of identity for the sequences of noises that a radical interpreter apprehends as interpretable faces the following dilemma: on the one hand, it is not going to be able to isolate what requires interpretation unless it has an account of what constitutes a *significant* sequence of sounds; on the other hand, it is hard to see how it can fund the relevant notion of significance if it is debarred from appealing to any notion of meaning. The essay "Meaning in Linguistics" does a far more impressive job of taking the measure of the difficulty of this problem than it does at offering a solution to it. What is not to be found in that essay, or anywhere else in Quine, are either of the following two ideas: (1) that children actualizing their linguistic capacity need to learn to pronounce for themselves the relevant phonemes in order fully to acquire the power to discriminate them properly, and (2) that this takes place in a context of their learning to employ them in contexts of significant use. The

tible aspects of symbols) is required in order to apprehend the relevant shapes and sounds that constitute the perceptibly apprehensible dimension of language. Another way of putting the crucial assumption at work here—to which we will return below—is that there is a highest common factor at the level of the linguistic sign between what a child can hear employing a linguistically uncultivated power of discriminating mere sound, on the one hand, and a linguistically informed capacity to discriminate the recurring elements of the phonologically articulated manifold of speech, on the other. Wittgenstein's vision of the unity of sign and symbol is one we can claim to have embraced only if we have fully come to terms with what it means to reject such a conception of the linguistic sign—and hence the very idea of there being something that is a highest common factor between an order of mere noise and one of genuine speech.[79]

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absence of the latter idea is unsurprising inasmuch as it is hard to reconcile with the overall shape of Quine's project. An enlightened Davidsonian might concede that, as a merely epistemological matter, perhaps it is true that humans are not able to fully learn to discriminate utterances qua sequences of sounds without also learning to discern what some utterances mean. As long as what is at issue here continues to appear to turn on a merely epistemological question—on what it takes to be able to effect certain acts of recognition—it remains open to a certain sort of Davidsonian to concede that, perhaps, it is more difficult than some theorists of language may have originally supposed for a prospective speaker of a language to learn her way around the phonological order without some exposure to a logical order. But such a concession would miss the real target here: namely, the very idea that there are two distinct and self-standingly intelligible *ontological* orders, so that the one (the level of description of our behavior qua deployers of mere signs) may constitute a "theoretically uncontaminated" source of evidence for claims about the other. Some of our foregoing reflections—such as those regarding my Japanese students' inability to hear a phonemic difference where they know there should be one, or those regarding Boas's anthropologists' hastiness in insisting upon phonemic difference where there is phonemic unity—may appear to turn on merely epistemological considerations. But the epistemological ladder that these reflections invite us to climb is to be thrown away once we reach its top. The difficulty to be overcome here may appear at first to be one of being able to *tell* a mere *l* from a mere *r*—or one of being able to *tell* that a given sound of Pawnee recurs across what appears to be a spectrum of phonic disunity. But my aim is to show that the initial problem here—which appears to partake of a Cartesian form (one of knowing how to tell an *x* from a *y*)—is Kantian in form (one of being able to make sense of the very possibility of there being anything here to tell). The aim of these thought experiments, if they succeed in leading a reader to their intended destination, is to show that there is nothing to discern at the level of the sign without the real possibility of there being logically basic cases of language use in which what one *hears* (in hearing such differences in spoken sign) and what one *understands* (in understanding different things to have thereby been said) form two aspects of a logically unitary exercise of a single linguistic capacity. In the logically basic case, the act in question is at one and the same time one of hearing and one of understanding—and it is only the one because it is the other.

[79] The point made here—about the relation of the elements of a seemingly language-like order and those of a genuinely linguistic order—holds also of the relation between the signifying

The artificiality of my above example of a classroom exercise for learning to distinguish four English words may now come into view as involving some rungs on a ladder of elucidation that need to be thrown away. We have already thrown some of them away, beginning with our reflections on the superiority of Boas's example to my own. Throwing away one such rung allowed us to see that the difficulty that my Japanese students encountered turned out be much more profound than that of merely being unable to distinguish *l* from *r*. Here was another rung: the idea that the example involved a merely *local* difficulty in discrimination—not the difficulty of acquiring *a general power* for a certain form of linguistic discrimination. Boas's anthropologists, at first, had no way of isolating anything as a recurring unit of significance in the Pawnee language, whereas my students already had acquired a rich set of principles for isolating and identifying recurring elements of significance in English. But even Boas's anthropologists speak at least one (other) language before they attempt to learn Pawnee. So now we need to throw away some more rungs.

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elements of a sign-manifold belonging to an instance of what is sometimes called *home sign* and some physically similar gesture belonging to a genuine sign language. (For an interesting discussion of the differences between these cases of sign "language," see Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008], especially 263–264.) In order to avoid possible misunderstanding here, let us stipulate that what is meant by "home sign" is a set of gestural communicative routines developed by a single deaf child to communicate with her family members in cases in which all four of the following conditions hold: (i) she is the only deaf member of the family, (ii) she is wholly isolated from the ongoing practice of a sign-language community, (iii) she is without a model for the attainment of any nuance in the "correct" use of signs, (iv) no interesting forms of complexity ever develop in the "syntax" of her employment of such isolated signs. As Tomasello suggests, such children may be said to "learn" and "have" "language" in much the same sense that these same expressions can also be used to describe the achievements of certain highly trained chimps or bonobos. One can say of such children or such animals that they "have language" (no one owns these terms), as long as one is clear in what one means in saying this. But the capacity they exemplify is not the one that Wittgenstein seeks to investigate in his philosophical writings (for example, when he says that to imagine a full-blown exemplification of it is "to imagine a form of life"). Hence, it is also no argument against Wittgenstein's understanding of these matters that the field of "linguistic" signs in such a case of so-called "language" does not exhibit the sort of logical features to which I have been concerned to draw attention here. (For related reasons, from Wittgenstein's point of view, it is bound to mislead if we employ the term "syntax"—as Tomasello does—to cover both the mere patterns in an individual's use of a series of home-sign gestures and the shared linguistic conventions that characterize the practice of a full-blown community of sign-language speakers.) One such logical feature is the following: An incipient member of a genuine community of sign-language speakers can learn to babble canonically—and, indeed, such canonical gestural "babbling" is commonplace among deaf infants whose family members can be seen by the infant to be communicating with one another in sign language.

My example of teaching Japanese adults English is folded within the larger enterprise of imparting and learning a *second* language.[80] The anecdote helps to bring out certain logical points. It is bound to mislead, however, if certain peculiarities of the structure of *that* task are read back into the very concept of what it is to acquire language *überhaupt*. In particular, the philosophical morals that may be drawn from the anecdote about teaching English in Japan will mislead if we continue to make a further assumption—one that Dummett and Davidson also make. However, in this case, what is at issue is an assumption that is retained by many of their philosophical critics as well. The further assumption is this: that the character of that which we sensuously apprehend in learning a second language is essentially the same as that which figures in the task of learning a first. To express Wittgenstein's opposed conception in our Kantian idiom: learning a first language involves the actualization—the dawning and maturing—of a power that characterizes the very sort of being that we are, while learning a second involves making a new sort of use of that power once it has already achieved actuality in us.

Here is Wilfrid Sellars summarizing what he takes to be one of the important lessons of the opening sections of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations:*

> [W]hen we picture a child—or a carrier of slabs—learning his *first* language, *we,* of course, locate the language learner in a structured logical space in which *we* are at home. Thus, we conceive of him as a person (or, at least, a potential person) in a world of physical objects, colored, producing sounds, existing in Space and Time. But though it is we who are familiar with this logical space, we run the danger, if we are not careful, of picturing the language learner as having *ab initio* some degree of awareness—"pre-analytic," limited, and fragmentary though it may be—of this same logical space. We picture his state as though it were rather like our own when placed in a strange forest on a dark night. In

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[80] The expression "learning a second language" in the pages that follow will be employed as shorthand for indicating the sort of task with which my Japanese students are faced: one in which the learner of the language has already achieved fluency in a native tongue and then as an adult seeks to acquire competency in a second language. There are, of course, many situations in which one might employ the expression "learning a second language" to indicate a task of a very different sort than this: for example, that of children who grow up in circumstances in which they acquire more than one language at once, or that of a child who is ripped from her homeland and suddenly faced with the task of having to learn a new language without having yet properly acquired her incipient mother tongue, and so on. These raise further difficulties that are not in view in the comparatively more straightforward case of "learning a second language" that intermittently recurs as a topic below.

other words, unless we are careful, we can easily take for granted that the process of teaching a child to use a language is that of teaching it to discriminate elements within a logical space of particulars, universals, facts, etc., of which it is already undiscriminatingly aware, and to associate these discriminated elements with verbal symbols.[81]

Sellars is right: Wittgenstein thinks that there is a philosophical danger of picturing the child learning her first language in such a way that we ascribe to the child—or a carrier of slabs—the capacity to make the categorial discriminations that come naturally to us in virtue of our familiarity with a space whose logical topology we master in learning a language. Sellars dubs philosophical views that fall prey to this particular guise of the myth of the given—the fantasy that the topology of logical space could simply be given—*Augustinian*.[82] In so doing, he is thinking of passages from *Philosophical Investigations*, such as the following:

> Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only not yet speak.[83]

Sellars identifies the underlying philosophical error of Augustinianism with the idea that there could be "any awareness of logical space prior to, or independent of, the acquisition of language."[84] To picture the child learning her first language this way is to picture her mastery of the relevant logical space as a highest common factor in her repertoire of capacities prior and posterior to her learning language. But the philosophical rejection of this picture often involves a retreat to a picture in which the idea of a highest common factor still has a role to play. One simply strips down what is taken to comprise the highest common factor in question across the repertoire of capacities already active in the child prior and posterior to her learning her first language.

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[81] Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, sect. 30, 65.

[82] Ibid. In following Sellars in his employment of the label "Augustianian," I do not mean to thereby endorse any exegetical claim about the writings of St. Augustine. On the contrary, I am inclined to assume that "Augustinianism" in the philosophy of language has roughly as much to do with Augustine as (what gets called) "Cartesianism" in the philosophy of mind does with Descartes or "Kantianism" in epistemology does with Kant.

[83] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §32.

[84] That is, he identifies it with the denial of what he calls "psychological nominalism"; *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, sect. 31, 66.

If "Augustinianism" is to be employed as a general term for classifying the full range of mythological ways of thinking about language that constitute Wittgenstein's concern above, then a proper characterization of the overall shape of the Augustinian myth needs to be formulated in more capacious terms. It is the myth that any significant aspect of actualizing the capacity for language *as such* could in this way resemble the further activation of that capacity in the learning of a *second* language. In the broadest outline, it is the myth that the child *first becomes a speaker at all* in just the same way that she might come to be *a speaker of a second language*—say, that of a strange country, in contrast to the one where she is at home—as if, in acquiring her mother tongue, she were already inwardly familiar with a language native to her that she had never spoken and was now simply learning how to give it outward expression. Once we have that broader construal of Augustinianism in place, we may relabel the target of Sellars's passage above *Augustinianism about the givenness of logical space*.[85] This allows us to distinguish it from a further species of philosophical confusion that also belongs to the genus Augustinianism— call it *Augustinianism about the givenness of the space of the linguistic sign*. This is the myth that the acquisition of the very capacity to recognize spoken or written signs *as* signs could resemble the process of learning the spoken or written signs of a second language—as if the child comes by an understanding of what a sign, as such, is, in just the way she acquires the capacity to discern the signs in use in a strange country—as if she were already familiar with one whole space of linguistic signs and were now learning her way around a second such space.

Sellars's way of ending the passage quoted above might suggest to a reader that although it is a mistake to ascribe our *logical* powers of discrimination to the child, it is not a mistake to ascribe our *phonological* powers of discrimination to the child. If *per impossibile* the child were able *ab initio* to make all the relevant discriminations, then—on this picture— in order to learn language, her only remaining task would be to associate the various possible things that words can mean with a set of (what Sellars calls) "verbal symbols" (i.e., phonological signs).[86] This is to miss yet a further danger in this philosophical neighborhood: namely, that we fall into picturing the child learning her first language in such a way that we ascribe to the child—or a carrier of slabs—capacities for discriminating

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[85] Or, as I would prefer to call it, employing the terminology introduced above: *Augustinianism about the givenness of the logical space of the symbol.*

[86] Note: Sellars is here using "symbol" to mean roughly what the *Tractatus* means by "sign."

signs that we have in virtue of our familiarity with a space of signs that we have acquired through our having learned to speak a language. The implications of this particular philosophical fantasy (about what might be merely given to a learner of language in the way of "mere signs") come in for sustained exploration in *Philosophical Investigations* only once Wittgenstein turns his attention to the rule-following considerations.

One has not fully grasped Wittgenstein's teaching if one does not appreciate that the following pseudo-Sellarsian counterpart to the paragraph from Sellars just quoted also forms a part of the entirety of the lesson:

> When we picture a child—or a carrier of slabs—learning her *first* language, *we,* of course, locate the language learner in a structured phonological space in which *we* are at home. Thus, we conceive of her as a person (or, at least, a potential person) in a world of recurring phonemes, hearing and producing a spoken alphabet of auditory signs. Though it is we who are familiar with this phonological space, we run the danger, if we are not careful, of picturing the language learner as having *ab initio* some degree of awareness—"pre-linguistic," limited and fragmentary though it may be—of something akin to this phonological space. We picture her state as though it were rather like our own when we struggle to make out strange words in the midst of a lot of background noise. In other words, unless we are careful, we can easily take for granted that the process of teaching a child to discriminate linguistic signs is that of teaching it to discriminate elements within a phonological space of signs of which it is already undiscriminatingly aware.

Many a philosopher who has digested the first Wittgensteinian lesson (that of the paragraph above that Sellars actually wrote) has failed to appreciate how it figures in the *Philosophical Investigations* as a prelude to this second lesson (that of the pseudo-Sellarsian paragraph immediately above). The idea that the phonological order can be simply given to us through the mere exercise of our unacquired capacity to hear phonemes is another guise of the myth of the given.[87]

What is of interest here, for our present purpose, is the underlying picture of the self-standing intelligibility of the order of the sign. We can now make more explicit the underlying logical structure of the above assumption—and thereby notice how it marks a variation on a theme that

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[87] I am not here claiming that Sellars falls prey to the myth of the givenness of the linguistic sign, but only that an exposition of him—or of Wittgenstein—falls prey to it if it proceeds as if Augustine's child's capacity to know its way around phonological space comes for free.

runs throughout these replies. What Quine and Davidson assume—in holding that we first learn to discriminate the elements of (what Quine calls) "the spoken alphabet" of a language and only then, in a second step, start assigning meanings through interpretation—is that the following two cases have a highest common factor: (i) the case of someone who knows the mere spoken signs of a language and (ii) the case of someone who knows those signs but has also started learning how they symbolize (hence, how certain strings of phonemes can be combined in certain recurring ways to constitute units of communicative significance). The "mere sounds" (or in the written analogue of this case, the "mere marks") alleged to be, in this way, common to cases (i) and (ii) comprise, on this picture, *a self-standingly intelligible domain of the sign*—a domain whose topology is fully fixed apart from the use of those signs and, hence, apart from any degree of actualization of a capacity to see the symbol in the sign. According to this picture, the standard elements of a natural language then must be construed as logical composites, comprising the mere element of the sign common to scenarios (i) and (ii) plus a further symbolizing or signifying factor with which a sign subsequently comes to be imbued. The logically most basic case of a word of English, on this picture, is therefore to be understood as comprising two factors: the first factor is the semantically inert acoustic (or graphematic) element, and the second factor is the further element that confers semantic significance on the initially semantically inert element. This picture commits the philosopher to an underlying picture according to which there is a self-standingly intelligible set of terms through which we can characterize the field of "mere signs" of a natural language.[88] In

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[88] Though most philosophers will provide few details concerning exactly what this set of terms is supposed to involve. The two main original candidates for spelling out such a picture at the level of speech were acoustic phonetics or motor-phonetics. The former turns on the idea that one can characterize the relevant field of significantly recurring units in merely physically acoustic terms; the latter on the idea that one can do this merely in terms of a set of instructions governing the disposition and behavior of the human mouth, larynx, tongue, etc. (Quine toys with the idea that assent could be identified with a set of "activated fibers in the motor muscles." See, for example, his "In Praise of Observation Sentences," 418.) For Roman Jakobson's insufficiently influential critique of both of these candidates—and hence for the non-reducibility of phonology to either acoustics or phonetics—see his *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978). The demise of the original versions of these candidates did little to upset the picture that it must somehow be possible—even if we do not yet know how to do it—to achieve some sort of total reduction of the phonological dimension of speech to some form of account that can be spelled out either in purely acoustical/physicalistic terms or at least some sort of language-neutral phonetic terms. Two assumptions on which this picture depends were subjected to a scathing

his exploration of this picture of language, Wittgenstein's favorite term for the second factor that is supposed to be added to the first is "interpretation." When Wittgenstein says that there is a way of grasping the sign that is not an interpretation,[89] he is denying that every act of understanding language or grasping a rule is properly conceived as factorizable into two such separate acts of our linguistic capacity: one of recognizing the sign or expression of the rule (qua mere sign or expression) and one of grasping its meaning. Rather, in the logically basic case, recognizing the sign and appreciating its significance are two aspects of a single unitary act. In the most basic case of a fully competent speaker's exercise of her linguistic competence in understanding an utterance such as "Please pass the salt," her understanding consists not in a manifold of acts—first one of "merely perceiving" the perceptible contours of the sign and then one of interpreting it as this symbol rather than some other one; rather, it comprises a single unitary act: one in which, in one and the same logical moment, the

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critique based on empirical research by the Swedish linguist Björn Lindblom; see his "On the Origin and Purpose of Discreteness and Invariance in Sound Patterns," in *Invariance and Variability in Speech Processes*, eds. Joseph S. Perkell and Dennis H. Klatt (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986). As the title announces, the two assumptions in question have to do with what is discrete and what is invariant in the sound pattern of a natural language. Lindblom challenges the assumptions in light of what he calls the segmentation issue and the invariance issue. Taking these in reverse order, he formulates them as follows:

> *Invariance issue:* For a given language there seems to be no unique set of acoustic properties that will always be present in the production of a given unit (feature, phoneme, syllable, etc.) and that will reliably be found in all conceivable contexts.
>
> *Segmentation issue:* The speech signal cannot be unambiguously segmented into temporally non-overlapping chunks corresponding to linear sequences of phonemes, syllables, and words. (504)

The philosophical implications of Lindblom's work for the state of the art of philosophy of language circa the mid-1980s were spelled out by Sylvain Bromberger and Morris Halle in their "On the Relationship of Phonology and Phonetics" (also in Perkell and Klatt, *Invariance and Variability in Speech Processes* and in Halle's volume of collected papers *From Memory to Speech and Back*, op. cit., 137–149), though it does not seem to have made much impression on subsequent mainstream Davidsonian philosophy of language. Additional difficulties faced by such a reductionist project are explored in the following two later publications by these same co-authors: "The Contents of Phonological Signs" (in *Derivations and Constraints in Phonology*, ed. Iggy Rocca [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], 93–123) and "The Ontology of Phonology" (rev. ed., in *Phonological Knowledge: Conceptual and Empirical Issues*, eds. Noel Burton-Roberts et al. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]). See also their "Why Phonology is Different" (reprinted in *From Memory to Speech and Back*, 150–175).

[89] *Philosophical Investigations*, §201.

sign is apprehended through the comprehension of the symbol and the symbol is apprehended through its discernment in the sign.[90]

If Wittgenstein's critique is on the right track, this means the following reformulation of the two above scenarios would already involve a misunderstanding of what it means for a child even to learn to babble: (i*) the scenario in which child learns to babble and thereby acquire "the mere spoken signs" of Japanese, and (ii*) the scenario in which the child, having mastered the spoken alphabet, assigns meanings to strings of phonemes. But the alternative to thinking of matters in this way is not easy to get into view, for it offers us no way to view language from the outside and see what would be involved in securing one's relation to one of its dimensions (the supposedly—comparatively—easily apprehensible dimension) fully independently of the other (the supposedly less readily apprehensible one). For, even though the sign is an aspect of the symbol, we must nonetheless learn to recognize the symbol in and through the use of signs. (About this, the *Tractatus* says, "In order to recognize the symbol in the sign we must attend to the context of significant use."[91])

[90] This parallels what we saw above, in the reply to Hamawaki, to be the proper way to understand the most basic exercise of our perceptual capacity for knowledge. We saw there that in such an exercise of the capacity, the act of perception and that of knowledge are one and the same. We see here that in the most basic exercise of our capacity for following rules and understanding language, the act of perceiving the sign and that of understanding it are one and the same. This parallel should not be construed as an identity. As we shall see below, understanding another's utterance is not simply a further case of exercising one's capacity for seeing what is the case—of exercising one's capacity for theoretical knowledge. Rather it is a case of understanding the act of another mind through an act of one's own. This complicates matters in ways that I can afford to touch on below only briefly.

[91] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus,* §3.326; in this passage "significant use" translates *"sinvoller Gebrauch."* A proper understanding of this passage—and its relevance for what follows—requires that we continue to bear in mind how much more demanding a notion *"Sinn"* is for the *Tractatus* than for Frege. But the point of the present note is to emphasize the parallel between the topics of this reply and that of the reply to Hamawaki. Here, too—as was the case there—we are struggling against the philosopher's proclivity to read the structure exhibited by the alienated condition of the phenomenon (in which two logical moments can come apart) into his conception of the logically primitive form of the phenomenon. This, of course, is not to deny that there is a wide range of cases in which sign and symbol do come apart, so that the task of understanding takes the form of bringing them into alignment. What is at issue is not whether there are such cases but whether this provides us with the proper logical model for all acts of understanding. In this context, to assume that the logically alienated phenomenon exhibits the structure of the logically primitive case is to assume that, even in the logically most full-blooded cases of an exercise of a capacity for linguistic understanding, the structure of the act remains essentially logically composite, comprising an apprehension of a sign (as the sign that it is) and a further apprehension of a symbol (as that which that sign here and now symbolizes). According to such a picture, the very task of understanding requires, in every case, bringing something that belongs to one

Mastering some primitive aspects of the uses of at least some words is a condition of mastering the determination of the contours of the sign, while learning to recognize a repetition of a given sign as the same sign again (notice that this already is a case of rule-following) is a condition of mastering any aspect of the use of a word. It is philosophically difficult to grasp that there can be dependence relations here in both directions— from sign to symbol and from symbol to sign. We merely exchange one philosophical misunderstanding for another if we represent the issue as involving a forced choice between the following two options: (a) Japanese children first learn their way about the field of merely phonemic signs before they begin on the independent task of making sense of the uses of Japanese words, or (b) those children must fully acquire a mastery of the full semantic significance of at least some Japanese words in order to learn even to correctly pronounce anything in Japanese. These are equally hopeless models. Rather, children learn (a) through learning (b) and vice versa. Once one has acquired these two forms of capacity in tandem with one another, then they can, in a given exercise of our capacity to speak, come apart. In learning to speak, one also becomes able on a given occasion, wittingly or unwittingly, to produce linguistic strings that mean nothing—that are what Wittgenstein calls "mere nonsense"— strings that fully exhibit the form of the sign but not that of the symbol.

The reply to Boyle above ended with the following claim: the formal role that a capacity for rational knowledge plays in Kant's philosophical vision is taken over in Wittgenstein's by the capacity to speak. The point of this reply has been to bring out a consequence of that parallel: just as Kant rejects an uncritical empiricism about what could already be given to us in mere sensory experience without our actualizing further reaches of our unified capacity for knowledge, so, too, Wittgenstein rejects an uncritical empiricism about what could be given to us in a mere sensory

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order (that of the mere sign) into proper relation with something that belongs to an order of a fundamentally different sort (that of the symbol). Putting the point in this way, in turn, sets up the parallel between the topic of this reply and the next. For already, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein seeks to show that this misconception is tied to a further one, according to which the task of judgment requires, in every case, bringing something that belongs to one order (that of thought—or what Frege calls *sense*) into proper relation with something that belongs to an order of a fundamentally different sort (that of the world). For the *Tractatus*, thinking through the emptiness of a wholesale separability of sign and symbol is an essential step in appreciating why, once strictly thought through to their end, *realism* (understood as the doctrine that the form of true thought reflects the prior and independently intelligible order of the world) and *idealism* (understood as the doctrine that the form of reality reflects the prior and independently intelligible order of properly constituted acts of thinking) can be seen to *collapse into each other*.

experience of the linguistic sign without our actualizing further reaches of our overall capacity for language.[92] The reply to Boyle was concerned with rejecting a certain reading of Kant: one according to which our cognitive faculty is to be understood as essentially a composite of two separate capacities—a self-standingly intelligible power for the sensory apprehension of particulars along with a further power (one which brings those particulars under concepts) that may or may not kick in and begin

[92] It is interesting to note that John McDowell—the author of an agreeable interpretation of Kant's criticism of empiricism—equally opposes an uncritical empiricism about what could be given to us in a mere sensory experience of the linguistic sign. As McDowell puts his alternative conception of what we perceive in hearing a language with which we are familiar, "[W]e have perceptual access to the concepts expressed in performances of a familiar language" ("Another Plea for Modesty," in *Language, Thought, and Logic,* ed. R. G. Heck [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 114). Dummett takes McDowell's point here to be that the perceptual development involved in acquiring familiarity with a language must be something "like acquiring a new pair of spectacles." In reply, Dummett insists that it is not in the least like this: "[I]t is, rather, that the operation of deriving the sound from the written or printed word is continually speeded up until it becomes instantaneous . . . and fused with the visual impression," ("Reply to John McDowell," in *Michael Dummett,* ed. B. M. Taylor [Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987], 257). But this response misses the depth at which McDowell means to pitch his point: the actualization of the capacity to hear a language in which one is fluent requires not merely a brute improvement in one's capacity for apprehending a manifold of mere sound (however instantaneously) but also a *transformation* of it—into a perceptual capacity of a wholly different *form*—one of apprehending a manifold whose elements are now linguistic through and through. Or, as McDowell puts it, "Command of a language is partly constituted by . . . such a perceptual capacity . . . one whose acquisition makes a new range of facts, not hitherto within one's perceptual ken, available to one's awareness" ("Anti-Realism and the Epistemology of Understanding," in *Meaning and Understanding,* ed. H. Parret and J. Bouveresse [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981], 239). Admittedly, "new range of facts" underspecifies the degree of transformation of the auditory field here required. For when one learns to understand a language, it is not just that one hears concepts rather than mere sounds. For even where one does not understand what is said (and hence fails to apprehend the symbol in the sign), nevertheless, in properly apprehending which language is being spoken, one exercises one's acquired capacity to apprehend the sign—thereby apprehending phonemes specific to that language— and not just one's unacquired capacity to hear mere sounds. Nevertheless, the parallel between this moment in McDowell's corpus and his reading of Kant is worth noticing even if the logical character of the transformation of the perceptual capacity here required is not as clearly articulated in connection with linguistic perception (and the relation specifically between hearing the sign and understanding the symbol) as it is in McDowell's exposition of Kant (and the relation our sensibility bears to our power of understanding). An alternative way of putting the broader parallel between Kant and Wittgenstein to which I seek to draw attention in the paragraphs that follow would be to say that these two moments in McDowell's corpus—his Kant-inspired criticism of the Myth of the Given in the philosophy of perception and his Wittgenstein-inspired criticism of Dummett's conception of the supposed givenness of the mere linguistic sign in the philosophy of language—are twin applications of a single overarching philosophical insight. But, as I shall indicate in a moment, this does not mean that perception of speech is simply an act of theoretical knowledge.

to operate on the manifold of mere sensory impressions afforded us by that first power. This reply suggests Gustafsson's contribution to this volume may be read as being concerned with rejecting a related reading of Wittgenstein: one according to which a capacity for language is to be understood as essentially a composite of two separate capacities—a self-standingly intelligible power for the sensory apprehension of mere signs along with a further power (one which assigns interpretations to those signs) that may or may not kick in and begin to operate on the manifold of signs afforded us by that first power.

Here is another way of putting an aspect of that same parallel: just as *The Critique of Pure Reason* seeks to show us that the formal conditions of sensory consciousness of an object presuppose a form of synthesis that belongs to the understanding, so, too, the *Tractatus* seeks to show us that the formal conditions of sensory consciousness of the identity of a sign presupposes linguistic self-consciousness of the logical nexus of the symbol. Just as Kant seeks to show how, on the one hand, the understanding must bear on sensibility in order to have content (for it to represent anything), and how, on the other, the sensible manifold requires conferral of unity through the activity of the understanding to be more than merely blind (for it to amount to more than mere sensory noise); so, too, later Wittgenstein aims to show how, on the one hand, the symbol must find expression in the sign to be more than nothing (for it to say anything), and how, on the other, the form of the sign (in spoken language—its phonological form) presupposes the apprehension of its real possibilities for symbolizing (its logico-grammatical uses in acts of speech) in order for it to come into view as having the form that it does.

According to the empiricist conception of the sensible manifold that Kant rejects: apprehension of the unity of the sensory manifold is prior to any activity of understanding (and hence the deployment of concepts) and suffices for a bare sensory apprehension of the object. According to the empiricist conception of the linguistic sign that Wittgenstein rejects: apprehension of the unity of the sensory manifold of the sign is prior to all other linguistic activity (aimed at understanding or communication) and suffices for a bare sensory apprehension of the sign. Where Kant seeks to show that the sensory dimension of our cognitive life is reflectively *ab*stractable, but not *ex*tractable in the way the layer-cake picture of human mindedness assumes it must be, Wittgenstein seeks to show that the spoken or written signs that figure in our lives with language are reflectively *ab*stractable, but not *ex*tractable in the way the layer-cake picture of language assumes they must be. Just as on a proper Kantian formal char-

acterization of what it is to have a faculty of receptivity, qua cognitive capacity, there is nothing which may figure as a highest common factor across the capacities of two creatures, only one of which is a rational creature; so, too, for Wittgenstein: there is nothing which may figure as a highest common factor in the formal character of the apprehension of the sign across the capacities of two creatures, only one of which is a speaking creature. We may reformulate Wittgenstein's insight about the relation of sign to symbol in Kant's hylomorphic terminology as follows: the matter of the linguistic sign cannot be given apart from its form, and its form cannot be merely given, but requires the actualization of a capacity in which the speaker herself becomes a bearer of the form in question.[93]

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[93] I am here assuming, without having entitled myself to this claim, that in modern natural languages (such as English, Japanese, Greek, etc.) the phonetic and graphematic are themselves two dimensions of a single unitary form—not two independent formal spaces of signs between which someone who has knowledge of the language may alternate without the formal contours of the one in any way conditioning or presupposing the other. A fascinating topic that we cannot afford to explore here would involve a further application of the central point of this reply to the following question: What is the relation between (i) the case of a language that has only a spoken form and no written form and (ii) the case of a language that has both a spoken and a written form? It might seem possible that there be two living languages that differ only in the single respect that one lacks the written counterpart possessed by the other. On such a conception, the supposedly single spoken actuality shared by these two languages would represent a highest common factor. This, too, involves a yet more subtle and nuanced version of the very same confusion regarding the relation between sign and symbol under discussion here. The introduction of a written system into the evolution of a linguistic practice *transforms the practice as a whole,* including the very criteria that constitute and shape a speaker's understanding and control over what counts as "the same word" and what does not, even when the speaker is engaged in verbal behavior. Notice that cases (i) and (ii) should not be identified with this pair: (I) the case of an analphabetic/illiterate speaker of a language that has both a spoken and written form, and (II) the case of a fully literate speaker of that same language. In this pair, unlike in the relation of the competence of a speaker of language (i) to that of a speaker of language (ii), a proper description of the competence of sort (I) must bring it into view as the possession of a partial competence of language (II). For an understanding of (I)—unlike (i)—the concepts of defect and attenuation must be brought into play to account for the relation of that case to its proposed counterpart. In most spoken dialects of modern English—to cite just one of countless possible examples—the pronunciations of the words "hole" and "whole" are indistinguishable. This can also hold for homophonic or nearly homophonic stretches of discourse that require, on different understandings of them, distinct forms of logical segmentation—such as "the cross-eyed bear" and "the cross I'd bear." The criteria of identity most speakers self-consciously employ in disambiguating such homophones involves recourse to their knowledge of the written form of the language. (This the converse of the point illustrated by our chart above.) What is here a homophone in the language is not a homonym. It is easy to underestimate how this intertwining of the spoken and written form of a language affects what a language is—how these two dimensions in the sensible apprehension of the symbol unite to form a single interrelated two-dimensional manifold in the very form of the sign. This transforms a mature speaker's comprehension of the very logical

Even if we restrict ourselves to the comparatively limited conceptual repertoire for talking about such matters that early Wittgenstein makes available, we may already say this: in order to learn a first language, the potential speaker needs not only to learn to see the symbol in the sign, she needs *the very idea* of language to become actual in her. This formal aspect of what it is to be human—the linguistic capacity as such—is something that dawns with the learning of one's first language, with one's becoming the bearer of a linguistic practice. We touched above, in the reply to Sullivan, on how the *Tractatus* inherits and adapts yet a further feature of the Kantian enterprise of critique: it starts with the assumption not only that we already have the very faculty we seek to elucidate in philosophy, but also that the prosecution of the philosophical inquiry must everywhere involve the exercise of the very capacity it seeks to elucidate. The *Tractatus* does not seek to confer the power of language on us: we already have this and bring it to our encounter with the book. Hence, it does not seek to explain what language is (as it is sometimes put) from sideways-on—from a position outside language—but rather from the self-conscious perspective of someone who already, in seeking philosophical clarity about what language is, seeks clarity about herself qua linguistic being. Through its exercise, however, the book does seek to confer a heightened mastery of that capacity on us—a reflective self-understanding of its logic and its limits, and of the philosophical confusions that arise from misunderstandings thereof. This heightened mastery (like the general power itself) can be acquired only through forms of further exercise of that same capacity. What I just said about the *Tractatus,* at this level of methodological abstraction, is no less true of the

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identity of what a linguistic sign is in that language. Nowhere is this clearer than in modern Japanese, where most Kanji have at least two "readings"—two completely different spoken forms. Of the 2,136 Kanji designated for daily use—the non-esoteric ones, as it were—1,243 have multiple readings and 138 of them may be read in more than at least three ways. It is their relation to the written form of the language that anchors their respective clusters of identities as ways of speaking the same word. Moreover, countless Kanji admit of the same reading. For example, the phoneme *ro*—or more precisely: ろ—is an available reading of twenty different Kanji, each of whose semantic fields include one of the following meanings: path, hearth, captive, dew, spine, a kind of rhubarb, reed, sumac, companion, the prow of a boat, a kind of quince, salt, fireplace, carriage, bribe, silk, brine, backbone, foolish, Russia. Absent a fully disambiguating context, rapid disambiguation of an occurrence of this phonemic sign involves recourse to the written form of the sign (in this case: to a non-phonetic—logographic—character). The identity of the spoken word is lodged in its dual relation to these two dimensions in its sign-structure. What is here evident in Japanese, however, holds to some degree of any language of a literate culture of speakers possessing dual mastery of interrelated written and spoken dimensions in the form of the sign.

method of the *Philosophical Investigations.* The author of the *Tractatus,* however, unlike later Wittgenstein, never pauses for even a moment to reflect upon what it means to *learn* to recognize the symbol in the sign through attending to contexts of significant use. Nevertheless, early Wittgenstein would certainly agree with his later self on this point: for the learner of language, light must gradually dawn over the whole—over sign and symbol together.[94]

For example, one must learn that certain sorts of variations of degree in sound or shape make a difference in the significance of what is said, while other sorts of variations do not. One thereby learns one's way around the order of the sign and that of the symbol at the same time, by everywhere attending to how each is related to the other. The unity of language is that of (what we called, following Kant, in the reply to Boyle) a *totum*—not that of a *compositum:* its division into two ingredient capacities (for recognizing signs and understanding symbols) presupposes the prior unity of the power here under investigation. One does not learn to discriminate the point at which this phoneme shades into that one simply by attending to merely acoustic differences. For the differences that matter are not merely acoustic in nature. One needs to be able to recognize a given phoneme as the same again across, for example, differences in regional dialectic or accent—to mention only one of a whole range of considerations that give rise to variation in the acoustic character of the recurring spoken sign.[95] One acquires the relevant powers of phonological schematization by caring about how and when such differences matter (and how and when they do not) to understanding *what* one hears and says. It is only through exercising such a form of interest—in the communicative dimension of language—that one can so much as acquire an ability to hear and speak genuinely linguistic signs. In learning one's first language, the transformation of our general power merely to hear and see into a form of its actualization that enables us to discriminate differences at the level of the linguistic sign is, on the one hand, a condition of understanding what others say. On the other hand, an interest in and attention

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[94] See Wittgenstein, *On Certainty,* §141; the point that Wittgenstein makes here about the symbol holds equally for the sign.

[95] Differences in accent and spoken dialectic constitute merely the tip of the iceberg of dimensions of variability in phonological speech data: "The speech code varies with language, dialect, age and sex and specific physiological constraints of the speaker. Even within the frame of a single speaker the contextual constraints, such as immediate phonetic context, stress, intonation, place within a sentence, speaking tempo, and voice effort condition large variations" (Gunnar Fant, "Vowel Perception and Specification," in *Speech Acoustics and Phonetics: Selected Writings*, ed. Gunnar Fant, [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004], 201).

to how such signs can be the perceptible aspects of symbols is a condition of the relevant form of cultivation of that general power that enables one to so much as be able to recognize signs as signs in the first place.

Only once one has acquired the very idea of an interdependent system of signs and symbols may aspects of the task of language learning become ones that formally differ from those in which a learner of a first language ever engages—such as the rather artificial task illustrated in the anecdote about teaching English in Japan. In knowing one language rather than another, my Japanese students already possessed the very idea of language. They thereby already possessed practical knowledge of a great many general linguistic concepts—including the non-trivial concept of what it is for something to sound or look like a part of language. They therefore had practical knowledge of the real possibility of a linguistic system of such mutually interrelated signs and symbols. Their task in learning English as a second language differed in formal character from that faced by a North American child acquiring English as her mother tongue. Their task, unlike hers, is to apprehend how the language they are trying to learn differs from the one they already know in unsuspected—and, indeed, initially unfathomable—ways.

To illustrate the significance of this point merely for the phonological aspect of language-as-sign: even if what is said in an unknown language is unintelligible to one, and even if one does not know at which points in that language a particular phonological unit tapers off and the next begins; nevertheless, one already knows a great deal about what one is attending to, simply in virtue of having the capacity to apprehend it as belonging to a language one does not understand. For instance, one already possesses a general conception of how a phonological field of language comprises a manifold of signs whose dimensionality is internally related to possibilities of saying something significant.[96] As one learns a second language, the character of the endeavor thereby becomes altogether different from what it was in learning the first, precisely because the interrelated tasks of mastering the phonological and semantic fields of the new

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[96] This was not a form of understanding I needed to impart to my Japanese students. Indeed, they had already mastered a system of interrelated phonetic and graphematic signs considerably more complicated than that of English. They knew the difference between a phonetic alphabet and *kanji*—the pictographic characters adopted from Chinese and adapted to the Japanese system of writing in tandem with the two Japanese phonetic alphabets. Compared to those of the child entering into the field of language for the first time, my students' difficulties were specific to the further determination of a general power they had already acquired—pertaining merely to the achievement of full mastery of the phonetic field of a second language.

language now assume the form of cultivating an appreciation for how the topologies of those new spaces respectively differ from those in one's mother tongue. Indeed, the degree of difficulty is now largely a function of how much or little the second language resembles the first (a consideration that has no relevance in acquiring a first language). The task is now a matter of appreciating and discerning new dimensions of phonological difference (or, indeed, whole new possibilities of dimensionality—in intonation, tonality, accenting syllables, etc.), new grammatical differences, new relationships between linguistic and social categories, new relationships between the written and spoken forms of the language, new relationships between standardized and vernacular forms, or all of the above. Notoriously, for these reasons and many more, the older you become, the harder it becomes to learn a second language for the first time. It requires learning not only to hear and think but also to speak and live in new ways. This is a matter not just of being able to observe certain things but also of being able to act and respond in certain ways.

The importance of this last remark is tied to a dimension of Wittgenstein's understanding of these matters that is quite foreign to contemporary analytic philosophy: for Wittgenstein, understanding someone as a speaker is not an act of merely theoretical knowledge—at least not if everything that is to qualify as theoretical knowledge must be conceived as resting on merely observational knowledge. The guiding methodological assumption of the sort of theory of language that we find in thinkers such as Quine, Davidson, and Dummett is that understanding another speaker is fundamentally nothing more than an exercise of a merely theoretical capacity—an interplay of observation and theory. We observe the speaker's noises and apprehend or interpret them in accordance with a proper theoretical understanding of how they cohere. The blind spot in contemporary analytic philosophy to which I seek to draw attention here is by no means limited to the philosophy of language; it is equally endemic to most writing on the philosophy of action. Even as it has gradually become increasingly fashionable to concede that perhaps the concept of the first person has a special role to play in an account of practical agency conceived as the topic of *my* knowledge of what *I* am doing, most knowledge of the action of others continues to be construed as involving the exercise of a capacity for theoretical knowledge conceived along the above lines. That is to say, the topic of *my* knowledge of what *someone else* is doing still tends to be conceived as if it were merely so-called third-personal theoretical knowledge of the activities of the other—as if my knowledge of another mind here involved nothing more than some further etiolation of roughly the same

set of capacities for observation and theory that Quine et al take to be required for my knowledge of the linguistic utterances of others. That is to say, even as the concept of the first person has increasingly been allowed to find a proper philosophical home for itself within a limited region of practical philosophy (understood as an investigation of the form of a certain sort of first-personal knowledge of my own doings), that of the third person remains relegated to the province of theoretical philosophy (even when it has to do with the form of my knowledge of the doings of other agents).

To inherit Wittgenstein's conception of these matters requires appreciating that a proper conception of language is not possible if it remains hostage to this way of conceiving my knowledge of others. One thing that is required here is a conception according to which my knowledge of what the other is doing partakes of the same practical form as my knowledge of what I am doing. Once we appreciate this, we can already begin to see that a fully perspicuous representation of the grammatical categories of the first person and the third person requires allowing for one dimension of contrast between these categories, in which they partake of a single form as interrelated moments of theoretical knowledge, and another dimension in which they partake of a single form as interrelated moments of practical knowledge—so that *both* of the poles of the theoretical opposition are to be contrasted with both of the poles of the first person/third person contrast as it arises within practical understanding.[97] It forms no part of a proper comprehension of the movements of particles of matter that one engage in an effort to understand how they understand themselves to be moving. There is nothing answering to such a form to be understood in the behavior of mere particles of matter. Yet an ineliminable part of what I understand, if I understand what another is doing, is something of such a form that I am able to understand it only because I am able to enter into a formally related conception, from within the practical first-person point of view, of what it would be for an agent such as myself to *do* that.[98] This sort of understanding of what another is up to cannot be merely theoretical in form. Yet, on the currently standard conception of how to draw the distinction between theo-

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[97] I prescind here from the no-less-urgent topic of a proper conception of the category of the second person. For a brief overview of this topic, see the remarks in James Conant's and Sebastian Rödl's introduction to the issue titled "The Second Person," *Philosophical Topics* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 1–12.

[98] We encounter here, once again, a recurring theme in our investigations: the logically fundamental role of the first-person present indicative form in the characterization of any self-conscious rational capacity.

retical and practical knowledge, it is conceived as something that I arrive at merely by exercising my capacity for theoretical knowledge.

On a proper way of conceiving what is involved in the comprehension of another mind, the form of understanding another mind cannot be merely practical either—at least not on the standard way of understanding the contrast between theoretical and practical knowledge—for it must be able to span my comprehension of both the other's actions and her judgments. This should not come as a complete surprise. In a way, nothing could be more obvious that that the statements "I judge p" and "S judges p" have a common form. But to do philosophical justice to this truism requires that a further distinction be sharply marked within the scope of all that is currently lumped together in philosophy as cases of what supposedly comes into view from a single unitary perspective known as the "third-person point of view." In order to dissolve this indiscriminating conception of the third person, we need to come to appreciate the depth of the grammatical difference between my so-called third-person knowledge expressible in judgments of the form p (that is, my theoretical knowledge of how things are) and my third-person knowledge of another knower and judger expressible in judgments of the form *S judges that p* (that is, my knowledge of other knowers and judgers qua knowers and judgers—and not merely of their noises and movements qua empirical phenomena in my environment). Just as there is a formal, and not merely material, difference in the character of the so-called third-person theoretical knowledge that I have *that p* and the genuinely first-person knowledge that I have (in knowing p) *that I judge p*—so, too, there must be a related difference in form between my judgement that p and my knowledge (in connection with another human judger) *that S judges p*. Only once we comprehend the character of that difference will we be in a position properly to acknowledge the character of the dimension of form common to what I know first-personally in making a theoretical judgment and what I know third-personally in knowing of a third person that she so judges.[99] What I thus

[99] As we saw in a much earlier footnote, Maria van der Schaar (in her article "Frege on Judgment and the Judging Agent," op. cit.) appreciates that the purpose of the judgment stroke in Frege's notation is to mark a form of essentially first-person engagement with the content of that which is judged. Judgment, so understood, is a *logical,* and not merely psychological, notion. Everything that is not categorized as first-personal on this Fregean understanding of the scope of that which falls within the purview of the first person is to be consigned to a single all-encompassing alternative category of the third person. She goes on to contrast the first-person logical perspective with a third-person perspective according to which judgment is to be understood as an essentially empirical, psychological phenomenon. On her reading of Frege, there is no room to draw a further distinction between a third-person perspective on

understand when I understand *that S judges p* is something of such a form that it can be understood by me only because I am able to enter into a conception of what it would be for a judger such as myself to *judge* that, where the characterization of the logically fundamental form of this act must bear the first-person present indicative form.[100] Similarly, to understand what someone is doing with language in saying something requires my being able to understand what it is for someone, in an act of self-consciousness bearing the same form that such an act of mine would bear, to *say* that.

As noted above, early Wittgenstein nowhere discusses what is involved in language learning—and the way it implicates us as agents even where and when our task is one of passively attending to, rather than actively addressing, the other—whereas Wittgenstein's later investigations everywhere display a sensitivity to this dimension of our lives with language. This is a difference of great significance, to which we will return in a mo-

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other judgers (which is internally related to the first-person perspective of the logical subject) and a so-called "third-person" perspective on matters of mere empirical fact (including matters of mere psychological fact). This makes it seem as if there is no room for a perspective that, on the one hand, is third-personal (in the sense that it is concerned with another judging subject) yet, on the other hand, remains fully within the purview of the logical. This has the consequence that the logical treatment of "S judges *p*" must be of an entirely different sort than that of "I judge *p*." I think van der Schaar is largely right about how to read Frege. The way in which such a conception makes it appear as if the respective contrasts between the logical/psychological and first-person/third-person simply coincide with one another is highlighted by Wittgenstein as a symptom of confusion—one which permeates Frege's entire conception of judgment and is already targeted in the *Tractatus* (for example, in its treatment of propositions of the form "S judges *p*").

[100] This is a point Kant insists upon: "[I]t is obvious that if one wants to represent a thinking being, one must put oneself in its place and thus substitute one's own subject for the object one wants to consider (which is not the case in any other species of investigation)" (*CPR*, A353–354). A little earlier he writes: "I cannot have the least representation of a thinking being through an external experience, but only through self-consciousness." So far, so good; but he then continues: "Thus such objects are nothing further than the transference of this consciousness of mine to other things, which can be represented as thinking beings only in this way" (A346–347/B404–405). It goes spectacularly undertheorized in Kant what form of knowledge this is supposed to be—given that it is evidently neither a species of Kantian practical knowledge nor one of Kantian theoretical knowledge of mere empirical fact. Kant has a lot to say about how I should regard another practical agent—as a fellow free being and source of practical demands. But what is it to apprehend another judger as another oneself—as a fellow spontaneous judger and source of theoretical demands? It is hard to be happy with the little that Kant says about this question—to feel that the idea of "transference of this consciousness of mine to other things" takes the measure of the problem here. What is the character of the nexus that joins a manifold of thinking subjects? Arguably, this was the central suppressed question in the Critical Philosophy on which first Fichte and then Hegel each, in turn, focus in their respective attempts to inherit and transfigure that philosophy.

ment. But this difference often causes readers to overlook how the later reflections partially serve to unfold implications already present in his early conception of the relation of sign to symbol. In bringing this out, I have sought to make clear that Gustafsson is completely right about the following: there is an important continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations* that comes to the fore if we attend to what becomes of his early distinction between sign and symbol over the course of its development in the later writings. In order to amplify, and not merely recapitulate, Gustafsson's discussion, I have foregrounded the following flipside of his central point about the internality of signs and symbols: namely, the extent to which there is a conception of the externality of the "mere" sign that remains throughout a central target of philosophical criticism across the entire trajectory of Wittgenstein's development, from early to late.

My desire to foreground this continuity should not be taken as a denial of the depth of the differences between early and later Wittgenstein touched on immediately above. Early Wittgenstein's understanding of what it means to say that light must gradually dawn over sign and symbol together—that we acquire our capacity to discern the contours of the sign through a capacity to recognize the symbol in the sign—is shaped by his conception of what a symbol, what a sign-in-use, is. For early Wittgenstein it is, in the first instance, that which figures in the assertoric expression of propositions that state what is the case. His later understanding of what it means to hold that sign and symbol dawn together undergoes an evolution, one that goes hand in hand with his increasingly capacious conception of the ways in which language forms the medium within which we live and act—within which we so much as have our form of being. Often the point here is unhappily reduced to the merely quantitative idea that later Wittgenstein allows for a great many more kinds of language games than does early Wittgenstein. Unlike his early self, he later attends to uses of language such as the following: to solicit or reject attention or intimacy; to greet or take leave; to acknowledge or admonish; to express pleasure or pain, boredom or surprise, despair or contentment; to console or seek consolation; to warn; or to surprise. The crucial difficulty here, however, is to appreciate the qualitative transformation of the conception of language that this precipitates—the transformation of his early conception of the logical conditions of human intelligibility into his later conception of the grammatical conditions of our forms of mutual attunement and agreement in language. To employ language in non-constative ways is not—as Frege imagines—to

place oneself outside the sphere of the logical (or outside what later Wittgenstein calls the grammatical) and to retreat to the privacy of the realm of the merely psychological. For me to seek consolation or express pain (or to do any of the other aforementioned things with language) is not to assert *p*—it is not (or at least not necessarily) to express a judgment (i.e., something that is engaged by the communicative acts of others through their standing in relations of logical agreement or disagreement with my suffering). If our conception of logic were restricted to such a space of possible agreement and disagreement, we would fail to discern the depth of language in our lives that everywhere concerns later Wittgenstein. For the aforementioned uses of language cannot be comprehended if we place them on the psychological side of a Fregean divide between the logical and the psychological. Our diverse ways of soliciting and expressing the acknowledgment of the other all have their—later Wittgenstein will say—*grammatical* conditions of intelligibility. They presuppose a whole background of further uses of language—ones in which others can and will accept or refuse, or otherwise engage or deflect, that which is solicited or expressed in such uses of language.[101] If a psychically unimpaired child's capacity to discern the contours of the sign could advance only in lockstep with her capacity to articulate propositions that display the logical form of judgments, her entrée into the space of linguistic community would be far less rapid, and far less loquacious and voluble, than it initially generally is.

Even though both the author of the *Tractatus* and that of the *Investigations* are equally concerned with insisting that the very idea of a capacity for judgment presupposes language, viewed from Wittgenstein's later vantage, the conception of the linguistic that we find in the *Tractatus* still bears many of the earmarks of the philosophical tradition's prior privileging of judgment. This leads the author of the *Tractatus* to think that, armed with the proper conception of judgment, we should simply be able to see straight through language to the essence of the

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[101] Stina Bäckström puts this point beautifully: "In expressing pain, I am not (primarily) making myself vulnerable to objections or dispute. But I am making myself vulnerable to rejection, to dismissal, and to indifference. I am responsible for the claim my pain makes on others and my pain and its expression exhibits an understanding of that responsibility. This is 'the kind of rationality' that pain and its expressions have. To properly appreciate this thought, we need, however, to avoid assuming that empirical judgment . . . is our paradigm of rationality" ("What is it to Depsychologize Psychology?" *European Journal of Philosophy* 25, no. 2 [2017]: 371). To properly appreciate this thought, we also need to avoid assuming that the expression of judgment is the paradigmatic use of language. A full discussion of this point would require going far beyond the confines of these replies.

sign—we should be able to grasp the essence of the sign without having carefully to attend to the sorts of differences that obtain between the cases of non-constative language use touched on above. Wittgenstein's remark "Back to the rough ground!" finds its point here.[102] It speaks to the need for an examination of precisely this dimension of grammatical differences that the author of the *Tractatus*—along with Kant and Frege—imagined one ought simply to be able to look past or through in order to get at the essence of thought, judgment and/or language.[103]

One can fully acknowledge the truth of what has just been said in the previous paragraph without thereby gainsaying the following: both early and later Wittgenstein equally ardently reject the idea that (as Hilbert puts it) "in the beginning there is the sign"—that the mere sign can be logically prior to the sign-in-use. In Wittgenstein's later work, the central term for the sort of something with which the "mere" sign is supposed to be supplemented, in order to redeem it from its supposed condition of semantic inertness, is an "interpretation." The dialectical exploration of this idea culminates in a famous regress and an associated paradox[104]—the significance of which has been variously construed by readers of Wittgenstein. It is not infrequently claimed by commentators that the central question that animates the relevant stretch of sections in *Philosophical Investigations* (sometimes referred to as rule-following considerations) is the following: What breathes life into dead signs? Later Wittgenstein does, indeed, present us with various interlocutors who give voice to just such a question, phrased in this way. In this respect, these commentators are not wrong. But as long as they attempt to schematize the dialectic that unfolds in these sections as one that is supposed to culminate in Wittgenstein's *answer* to this question, they will fail to discern the dialectical structure and aim. The interlocutor assumes that what is required for one to be able to recognize a re-occurrence of "it" as a case of "the same sign" (qua dead sign) can be put into place apart from a conception of the possibility of its correct use. Wittgenstein's aim is to bring out the confusion contained in the interlocutor's very way of posing the question that initiates the ensuing dialectic. Hence, a fundamental target in these sections—a crucial moment in the philosophical conjuring trick that is apt to strike us as perfectly innocent— is precisely the idea that there is a highest logical common factor across a

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[102] *Philosophical Investigations*, §107. I offer a fuller reading of this passage in "Kant's Dove and Wittgenstein's Ice-Walker" (unpublished manuscript).

[103] See Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), especially 18–36, for further discussion on this point.

[104] *Philosophical Investigations*, §§198, 201.

field of incised marks and squeaked-out noises (mere phenomena: marks and noises that are not yet language) and a field of genuine linguistic activity (which requires not just observation of mere phenomena but an understanding of what someone is doing and saying)—that is, the idea that there is a highest common factor across the case of the dead sign qua mere sound or shape and the case of the sign qua that which has its life in use.

In other cases in which we speak about something's being dead (say, a corpse), we presuppose a prior comprehension of the category of life— of the logical priority of an understanding of its being alive to the case in which we take ourselves to apprehend that "it" is now in the unhappy condition of no longer being alive. This is crucial to what Wittgenstein seeks to bring out with his paradoxical rhetoric about dead signs, breathing life into them, use as the life of the sign, etc.[105] It is altogether striking how readily the contemporary analytic philosopher will adopt this rhetoric without the slightest sense of paradox. Wittgenstein has taught us, they will say, that the fundamental problem of the philosophy of language (or of rule-following, or of normativity, and so on) is the problem of how it is so much as possible to breathe life into dead signs. The happy acquiescence in this idiom appears to allow for the idea that a sign is the sort of thing for which an understanding of what it is for it to be dead is logically prior to an understanding of what it is for it be alive.[106] Theologically speaking, an understanding of what it is to turn a dead body into a living one is not an inquiry into the general concept of life but is a departure into a very specialized non-biological field of inquiry. It presupposes the rather remarkable (and—apart from portrayals of the miracle of Lazarus or the fate of the righteous on judgment day— seldom instantiated) concept of *resurrection*. Therefore, we can reformulate the main point here as follows: standard readings of Wittgenstein seek a theory of the resurrection of "meaning" (or "normativity" or "guidance" or "agreement in judgment"), without first inquiring into (as Wittgenstein himself seeks to do) what it is about their own starting assumptions in philosophy that appear to have given rise to its death.[107]

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[105] See, for example, *Philosophical Investigations,* §432: "Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? In use, it *lives*. Is it there that it has living breath within it? Or is the *use* its breath?"

[106] If a use-theory of meaning is a theory that seeks to answer the question "What breathes life into the dead sign?" the idea of such a theory figures in Wittgenstein's work as a target, not—as is often contended—as part of his doctrine.

[107] Ed Minar is after a similar point when he writes, "[Wittgenstein] is not thinking of life as a force that closes the gap [between sign and application]; rather, he questions what one has to have done to the sign—as the sign it is, in its use—to have killed it, to have come to think

The expression "the linguistic turn" is often used to gesture at the idea that language, over the course of the twentieth century, acquired a new and central significance for philosophy. What kind of significance? If the expression is understood to denote an intellectual revolution through which a specialized subfield of philosophy moved to its center (replacing epistemology or metaphysics or something else)—and hence "language" (instead of "knowledge," "thought," "being," or something else) became philosophy's foremost, or at least first, object of investigation—then such an understanding (of what constitutes the supposed "turn") accurately reflects a widely disseminated narrative regarding a putatively continuous line of historical development within the analytic tradition of philosophy. It, no doubt, accurately portrays *a* line of development within that tradition. Wittgenstein is often to be taken to be one of the main figures spearheading *that* development. Such an account of Wittgenstein's place in the history of analytic philosophy is incompatible with a proper appreciation of what he means when he says that the life of the sign can be seen only in its use—and hence what he means when he says that to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life.

The purpose of the final reply (to Benoist) will be to bring out what Wittgenstein means when he says such things. The purpose of this reply has been to indicate, if one wants to use the expression "the linguistic turn" to indicate a revolution Wittgenstein himself seeks to effect in our understanding of the centrality of language to philosophical reflection, why it needs to stand for something very different than what was suggested in the previous paragraph. It needs to be understood as standing for the idea that we who do philosophy are *au fond* speaking beings—so that the capacity that we exercise in doing philosophy is an essentially linguistic one.[108] On this conception, language forms both the essential medium of philosophical activity and a non-accidental obstacle to the self-understanding that it seeks, but never its mere object.

Such a linguistic turn does not seek in any way—even provisionally—to narrow the *scope* of philosophy's concern, but always only its *mode*. Just a

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that it must be resurrected. In other words, he questions the role that the life-giving ingredient would play." (Edward Minar, "The Life of the Sign: Rule-Following, Practice, and Agreement," in *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein,* eds. O. Kuusela and M. McGinn [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 288.)

[108] The question of what it means fully to take the linguistic turn in philosophy—and why the one to be found in Frege is only partial—constitutes a longstanding topic of shared interest and conversational exchange between Irad Kimhi and me. For his own treatment of it, see his *Thinking and Being.*

few pages into his *Metaphysics,* Aristotle raises the question of whether "philosophy" and "logic" name two distinct (if perhaps interrelated) forms of inquiry, as may initially appear to be the case, or whether they really constitute two aspects of *one* inquiry. Early Wittgenstein seeks to recover a version of the latter vision—one according to which "philosophy" and "logic" and "language" name three aspects of one investigation—through his manner of identifying *logic* with "the logic of our *language*" and misunderstandings thereof with a certain deformation of philosophy. An expression such as "linguistic philosophy" on a properly post-Wittgensteinian understanding of what it ought to mean, ought never to indicate an effort to restrict what initially falls within philosophy's purview (to, say, primarily "linguistic matters" as opposed to primarily epistemological or logical or ethical ones), but rather ought to indicate a radical transformation in the understanding of what language is, so that it comes to permeate every aspect of any investigation in which we seek philosophical understanding.

On this understanding of language's centrality to philosophy's ends, philosophical reflection remains no less focally concerned than before with difficulties that arise when we investigate what *knowledge, thought, self,* and *world* are, but its mode of concern with these problems, through its mode of concern with language, is transformed. We come to appreciate how any act of philosophical comprehension involves a self-reflective exercise of an essentially linguistic capacity. Linguistic signs do not figure in Wittgenstein's philosophical writing as a self-contained realm of phenomena we look *at*—by looking at, say, mere sounds and marks—and, in so doing, *away* from ourselves or the world and hence away from our forms of thought, agency, and life. Rather getting our forms of mindedness, practice, and vital activity into view requires getting our life with language—our everywhere linguistically shaped life, permeating even our powers of perception—into view. This sort of a linguistic turn implicates a struggle against confusions regarding knowing, thinking, and being that have their source in our confused relation to the very signs that we cannot help but call upon in philosophizing. On this conception of what "the turn" involves, the attainment of philosophical clarity turns on the achievement of a perspicuous representation of the relations of signs to symbols and vice versa—hence, the task becomes one of displaying the true dimensions of logical identity in signs qua symbols across the varieties of contexts of use from which they draw their life.

For all of the differences between early and later Wittgenstein, they each seek to initiate the latter sort of linguistic turn in philosophy (in which the limits of language and those of philosophy coincide), and never

the former (which gives pride of place to the philosophy of language conceived as a specialized field of inquiry within philosophy as a whole).[109] No version of Wittgenstein, properly understood, ever evinces any interest (except as an intermittent target of certain sorts of criticism) in a conception of philosophy according to which "language" constitutes a privileged self-contained object of philosophical investigation—one whose workings and nature may be brought into view before and apart from the struggle to attain clarity regarding the fundamental problems (surrounding thinking and being, self and world, activity and passivity, sensation and thought, assertion and expression, the first person and the third person, I and you, and so on) with which philosophy has long struggled.

If the expression "linguistic turn" is to be put to use in order to signify some sort of new turn in philosophy that Wittgenstein may properly be said to seek to accomplish, then that turn will be misunderstood as long as it is taken to be one away from philosophy—or away from one part of philosophy and toward another. Rather it is one that seeks to transform our conception of philosophy as a whole, by showing us that in philosophizing we always remain within language. To show us that we so remain even (or especially) when we imagine we have found a way to separate ourselves from language—to contemplate it from the outside—so that we are (or the world is, or the object of reference is) over here and language is over there. Language for Wittgenstein stands to his investigations as reason does to philosophy for Kant. It is both everywhere and nowhere in particular.

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[109] This is not to say that there is no such thing as philosophy of language so conceived, or that there should not be such a thing, or that one should preferably not pursue it, or that there is not much one can learn from it, or that it cannot draw on things Wittgenstein says for its own purposes—it is only to say that Wittgenstein never pursues a form of inquiry that he himself thinks of as belonging to "philosophy of language" so conceived.

Reply to Travis: Wittgenstein on the Non-Relation of Thinking to Being

In this reply, as in the previous one, we will be concerned with the relation between the following three thinkers: Frege, early Wittgenstein, and later Wittgenstein. However, where Gustafsson takes a friendly view of the central continuities that Conant sought to show persist, especially across the transition from early to later Wittgenstein, Charles Travis does not. This requires that we broach a new question: What did later Wittgenstein regard as the gravest misconceptions of his early philosophy? Travis's contribution provides an answer to this question. At the end of this reply to him, I present an alternative answer, thereby carving out a space also for an altogether different view of wherein the fundamental continuities and discontinuities between his early and later philosophy might lie.

Of the contributions by Conant's critics in this volume, Travis's is both the densest and the longest. This reply will have to be selective, deferring much that is worthy of discussion for another occasion. As in the other replies, I will concentrate here exclusively on the issues bearing directly on the themes that run throughout the volume as a whole.

The overall shape of Travis's criticism of Conant is a variation on a theme that we have encountered already three times before—in Sullivan's, Stroud's, and my criticisms of Conant. All of these critics charge Conant with representing the historical evolution (of conceptions of logic from Kant to later Wittgenstein) as more linear than it is. Stroud objects to Kant's place in the story while insisting that the line of development from Frege to early and later Wittgenstein is actually even more continuous

than Conant is willing to allow. Sullivan, on the other hand, is happy to pair Frege together with Kant but not with any Wittgenstein. In my replies to both, I have suggested that there is more truth to a pairing of either early or later Wittgenstein with Kant than of either with Frege. Travis disagrees with all of us. His preferred candidate for the philosophically most illuminating pairing is yet another: that of Frege with later Wittgenstein. Travis thinks there is a line of philosophical inheritance between them that was for a time fatefully obstructed by the *Tractatus*'s intervention, so that later Wittgenstein's overcoming of his earlier confusions is essential to his achieving an appreciation of what is most interesting in Frege.

This leaves Travis with a number of complaints about Conant's article. It represents early Wittgenstein as sympathizing with things in Frege for which Travis thinks we should have no sympathy (for example, Frege's supposed appreciation of the depth of the difficulty posed by the Kerry paradox), and the article criticizes Frege where Travis thinks we should not (for example, by endorsing the Tractarian rejection of the idea that the laws of logic represent a substantial body of truths about how things are). The overarching aim of Travis's contribution is to show us that Young Wittgenstein (whom Travis calls YW) is off-target both times—both in his sympathies and in his criticisms. Travis is not concerned with contesting Conant's account of the *Tractatus*'s differences with Frege in either respect but with disputing its (and Conant's) philosophical sympathies and, above all, rejecting the suggestion that these Tractarian interventions should be viewed as steps either toward philosophical progress or toward the later Wittgenstein—which Travis regards as being steps in the same direction.

According to Travis, in his central moment of sympathy for Frege (regarding the difficulty with the nature of concepts and how to talk about them), YW misses Frege's real insight about concepts and objects. In his central moment of criticism of Frege (and in his alternative conception of the propositions of logic as saying nothing), YW takes a second wrong turn from Frege. A proper understanding of the transition to Mature Wittgenstein (whom Travis calls MW) turns, to a considerable degree, on a later diagnosis of precisely these two moments in YW as "grave mistakes" as well as on an appreciation of how these two mistakes are interrelated. Here is how Travis sums this up:

> I will argue that YW's reactions were off-target both times. They are, I will suggest, among what mature Wittgenstein (henceforth MW) came

to see as among the Tractatus's "grave mistakes." Further, to see how YW's critique of Frege's view of logic misses the mark, it will emerge, is also to see what is wrong with Frege's "insight" about concepts and objects. It is the same thing which goes wrong in each.[1]

In the second half of this reply, I will offer an alternative account of these various relations in which YW may be seen to stand to Frege and MW respectively. Before I do, it will be helpful to have in view some of what Travis takes to be most insightful in Frege. An exploration of our points of agreement and disagreement about what is alleged to be most insightful in Frege will help to illuminate why we are bound to diverge so sharply in our respective understandings of how certain passages in YW bear on Frege and in MW on YW.

At the end of Section V, I offered an overview contrasting the fundamental differences between a broadly Fregean/Leibnizian conception of logic, on the one hand, and a broadly Kantian/Wittgenstein one, on the other. The first aspect of the former conception was the following:

(1i) Thought is prior to and logically simpler than judgment: to judge is to advance from the thought to an affirmation or denial of its judgable content, where thought is conceived as the highest common factor of a mere thought and a judgment.

And I have been concerned with arguing throughout these replies, starting in Section V, that Wittgenstein's opposition to this aspect of Frege's conception may be traced to his commitment to the following aspect of a broadly Kantian conception of logic:

(1ii) Judgment is prior to the judgable content of thought and the logically more basic notion.

Travis takes a certain way of specifying (1i) to be a central achievement on Frege's part—one that is in place by 1891 and that fully enters his philosophy when he distinguishes *Sinn* from *Bedeutung*. Most commentators who undertake to explain that latter distinction in Frege generally prefer to begin by spelling out how it applies to proper names, then to singular expressions more generally, then to concept expressions, gradually working their way up to how, on a univocal understanding of it, that very same distinction may finally also be applied even to the entirety of the thought. Travis, to his credit, starts the other way around. He ap-

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[1] Travis, this volume, 224.

preciates how this distinction forms part of a unified account, the purpose of which is to distinguish sharply between the way thought presents things *as* being (which is a matter of representing the world) and the way things *are* (which is a matter of how the world is).

Travis develops an account of the relation of *Sinn* to *Bedeutung* that presupposes the systematic priority of the former over the latter. Insofar as Frege is committed to (what I, following Sullivan, have called) *the priority of logic,* there are deep pressures in his philosophy that require that their relation be conceived in just this way. So I do not think Travis's reading of Frege is by any means simply off-base. But before we explore that reading, it is worth noting in passing that Travis does not seem to have noticed that there is a brief discussion of this issue in Conant—indeed, even one that takes up the question of its bearing on an understanding of the development from Frege to early Wittgenstein. Conant, citing interpretive proposals put forward by Evans and McDowell,[2] points out that there are pressures in Frege's philosophy that militate in the opposite direction as well: in the direction of the priority of *Bedeutung* over *Sinn,* insofar as the *Sinn* of an expression is supposed to be the mode of presentation [*die Art des Gegebenseins*] of a *Bedeutung*—the manner in which the *Bedeutung* is presented or given to thought.[3] Indeed, Frege suggests that where there is no *Bedeutung,* there is only the illusion of *Sinn*—that the alleged thought in such a case is a *merely apparent* thought—and hence that such a "thought" stands to thought as stage thunder stands to thunder.[4] The underlying insight in these passages admits of a form of development that does not simply reverse the order of explanation we find in Travis's reading but issues in an account that is committed to the mutual interdependence of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. On this account, to paraphrase a Kantian dictum, *Sinn* without *Bedeutung* would be empty, and *Bedeutung* without *Sinn* would be blind. This is the point behind the Conant remark, "Frege shrinks here from a consequence of his own doctrines which the *Tractatus* goes on to unflinchingly embrace."[5] When we turn below to the *Tractatus,* we will

[2] See Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 65n78, for details.

[3] Conant goes on to suggest that this tension in Frege's philosophy is connected to a number of the other tensions in Frege, which are explored above in my reply to Stroud.

[4] Frege, *Posthumous Writings,* 130; for Conant's discussion of this, see this volume, 64–65. The focus of that discussion is the *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* of singular referring expressions.

[5] Conant, this volume, 65n78. The shrinking from consequences on Frege's part that Conant has in mind here has to do with the grab-bag category of "the realm of fiction" to which Frege simultaneously relegates a remarkable variety of cases that his account of "thought" is unable to accommodate, making it appear as if the novelist and the sophist

see why there is some truth in what Conant says here—why it is not wrong to say that, for early Wittgenstein, a thought's having a *Sinn* presupposes a determination of the *Bedeutungen* of its expressions.

My main concern in this reply will be with highlighting what I think Travis misunderstands in Wittgenstein, both early and late—and how great the gulf here is between Frege and *any* Wittgenstein. I will therefore, for the remainder of this discussion, simply set aside these finer points of Frege exegesis and will present Travis's reading as if it were a fully adequate account of the relation of *Sinn* to *Bedeutung* in Frege. Travis first broaches the matter in this passage:

> "Judgable content" is Frege's early term for that by which truth can come into question at all. His first try at capturing just this, he came to see, built more into it than really belonged there. So, by 1891, he split off what did no work in bringing truth into question, leaving behind *Sinn* and dubbing what was split off *Bedeutung*.[6]

It is the job of the *Sinn* of a thought to bring truth into question. It is the job of its *Bedeutung* to settle that question. The point of the distinction (applied to whole thoughts) is to split off what must come into play in order to settle the question. Having split that bit off, we may concentrate our attention on what is left—namely, on that which is simply thought and must be thinkable, so that we may exercise our capacity to raise the question of truth without yet answering it.

Why is such a splitting off of the truth-value of the thought essential to an adequate account of thought? Or as Travis nicely puts the question, "[W]hy does truth-value need to be excised from judgable content?" He gives a simple answer first and then a more complicated answer. Here is the simple one:

> A simple answer: There are no two thoughts which are distinguished from each other precisely in the one being true, the other false. There are not, for example, two thoughts, the true one that Sid smokes and

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were engaged in logically parallel forms of enterprise. A proper account of what belongs to a full-blooded exercise of our logical capacity should allow for an account of the enormity of the difference in how the novelist and how the sophist engage this same capacity—the enormity of the difference between the sort of freedom from our ordinary relation to reality that literature (and its sui generis form of imaginative relation to a fictional world) enables and the sort of defect in thinking that sophistry (and its illusions of thought) apparently enables while actually disabling the capacity in question.

[6] Travis, this volume, 225.

the false one that he does. Being true or false is thus not part of precisely that by which truth can come into question at all.[7]

Let us break this up into two steps:

(1) There are not, for example, two thoughts—the true one that Sid smokes and the false one that he does.
(2) Being true or being false is not part of that by which truth can come into question at all.

According to Travis, (2) follows directly from (1). It is important that (2) be understood here as articulating a general account of what thought is. The claim is not just that there are certain specialized exercises of our general capacity for judgment, for which we can distinguish between two such dimensions: that of raising a question and that of settling it. The claim is that such a partitioning of every possible case of its exercise in this way allows us to characterize the general structure of the capacity. This is how Travis understands (2), and he thinks that this general account of the nature of thought and judgment follows directly from (1). It is just this move that (already) early Wittgenstein, as we have seen throughout our above replies, is particularly concerned with challenging. To hold (2)—we may say in the Kantian idiom introduced above—just *is* to hold that the capacity for problematic judgment is prior to that of judgment. The validity of the move from (1) to (2) presupposes the soundness of (1i) as a general conception of the relation of thought to judgment and the unsoundness of (1ii). This is a crucial aspect of what is really at stake in the disagreement between Frege and early Wittgenstein.

The author of the *Tractatus*, however, will not deny (1). There are not two thoughts—the true case of "Sid smokes" and the false case of "Sid smokes." There is just one thought: "Sid smokes." Early Wittgenstein employs in this connection the rhetorical figure of one thought's having two poles: a true pole and a false pole. On a proper understanding of what he thereby means by this, however, the whole point of this rhetorical figure will be to block the move from (1) to (2)—where the latter is understood as a general claim about the structure of thought. For Travis's Frege, the move is every bit as straightforward as Travis suggests it is, precisely because "Sid smokes" qua thought does not yet require a footing in reality in order to have a (Fregean) *Sinn*. Its *Sinn* is, if you will, merely true or false. Only once the split-off dimension of the story is re-introduced

does a determination of truth or of falsity so much as come into play—only then does the thought come into a fully clarified relationship with reality. With this reintroduction of that which we split off, we move from a consideration of that which is merely true-or-false to a recognition of its truth—or its falsity.

Early Wittgenstein, on the other hand, as we saw in the previous two replies, will insist that grasping (what he calls) the *Sinn* of (what he calls) a *Gedanke* requires a concomitant appreciation of which of its possible true/false poles is the one that has priority in the manner in which its projective relation to reality is thought. To make this work requires an entirely different philosophical treatment of negation (and, indeed, of the logical constants generally) along with a rejection of Frege's understanding of the relation of the denial of *p* to the affirmation of *not-p,* which rejection, in turn, is itself part and parcel of an overarching rejection of the force/content distinction—all of which, in turn, requires a radical rethinking of the notions of "sense" and "thought" touched on above.[8] The ensuing challenge to Frege's entire conception of matters could not be more fundamental. My concern about Travis's account of the differences between the ideas of Frege and those of early Wittgenstein is that it fails to register either the depth or any of the details of this challenge.

Sometimes early Wittgenstein's rhetoric of a thought's having two poles is construed in a manner that makes it seem as if it were merely a notational variant on the Fregean "insight" that Travis celebrates: namely, that a thought qua thought has had its truth-value excised from its judgable content—it is merely true-or-false. If one understands Wittgenstein's rhetorical figure in this way then it, too, will seem to license the step from (1) to (2). But this is a total misunderstanding of early Wittgenstein. It is essential to the Tractarian conception of what a logically full-blooded thought is that it comes together with its projective relation to reality. (Anything that lacks what he calls *Sinn* stands for early Wittgenstein in a logically parasitic relation to full-blooded thought.) The two poles of a thought for the *Tractatus* are *p* and *not-p;* where, in the logically fundamental case of thinking, to grasp some thought *p* is to grasp, at one and the same time, that *p* is true and *not-p* is false—or that *not-p* is true and *p* is false. It is actively to affirm one member of such a contradictory pair of judgments and, in the same act, thereby to deny its negation. For

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[8] A full discussion of these topics would take us too far afield. But for a suggestive account of how great the gulf here between Frege and the *Tractatus* is, see Irad Kimhi, *Thinking and Being.*

Wittgenstein, in the basic case of thinking, grasping the logical unity of a thought and determining which of its poles *(p, not-p)* has a footing in reality are twin aspects of a single act. That is to say, in Frege's terminology, what the *Tractatus* calls "a thought" (at least in the logically fundamental case of thinking) is closer to what Frege calls "a judgment," but—as indicated above—on a conception of judgment that must reject an enormous amount of the logical detail that goes into underwriting Frege's own account of the general character of the relation of judgment to thought.[9]

Travis suggests that early Wittgenstein's failure to embrace Frege's conception of logic is due to his blindness to Frege's central insights. It has been the burden of the previous handful of paragraphs to suggest that perhaps it is the other way around: that Travis is blind to a philosophical option—and that this blindness renders him unable to read the *Tractatus*. The first step in overcoming this blindness would be to see how exchanging (1i) for (1ii) opens up a way to reject (2) (qua general account of the structure of thought) while endorsing (1).[10] Further steps in overcoming this blindness would require also appreciating the interrelated differences in the overall conceptions of logic here involved—hence, the differences discussed in Section V between (2i) and (4i), on the one hand, and between (2ii) and (4ii), on the other. The mere registering of these fundamental differences in conceptions, of course, hardly suffices to show that the Kantian/Wittgensteinian conception is in any way philosophically superior to that of Frege and Travis. But it does suffice to suggest this: if one lacks a proper understanding of how these two conceptions differ, one will be in no position to adjudicate which is superior.

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[9] This is why any attempt to state early Wittgenstein's views while continuing to employ the terms "sense" and "thought" in accordance with Frege's understandings thereof will simply fail to locate the sources of the fundamental differences that separate these two philosophers. If one reads the *Tractatus* in accordance with such a scheme and then compares the views thus ascribed to those of Frege, then one will inevitably conclude that the former represent a comparatively inept variation on the latter. This seems to me to be what is happening in the latter portion of Travis's contribution. We will return to this topic below.

[10] This requires following Kant and Wittgenstein in rejecting the idea that the "content" that a non-attenuated and attenuated member of a pair of acts—say, the logically full-blooded act of judging *Socrates is a man!* and the correlative act of asking the question *Is Socrates a man?*—may be said to "have in common" is properly conceived on the model of a highest common factor.

The foregoing was in response to Travis's simple answer to the question "[W]hy does truth-value need to be excised from judgable content?" Now let's look at the more complicated answer:

A more complicated answer: having the truth-value it does cannot be part of what identifies a thought (or its question of truth) as the one it is. Truth cannot belong to what brings itself in question. Otherwise, it would not be fixed what thought was at issue until it was fixed whether what was in question was a true thought or a false one. In a thought, something is represented as being something: the way things are as being some way there is for things to be (e.g., such that Sid smokes). Truth now enters the picture with the question of whether things are as thus represented. A thought is identified by what is thus variable: the second factor. Where truth belonged to bringing itself into question, how a thought represented things as being would not be fixed until it was fixed whether such was representing truly.[11]

The complicated answer comes, at one point, remarkably close to touching on a key aspect of the philosophical option that interests Wittgenstein. But it does so in such haste as not really to allow for the exploration of it as a genuine philosophical alternative. The moment in which that alternative almost comes into view is with this remark: "Otherwise, it would not be fixed what thought was at issue until it was fixed whether what was in question was a true thought or a false one." This comes close to being a quotation of certain things that Wittgenstein actually says. Indeed, the following is not a bad way of characterizing the logical character of the full-blooded default case of grasping what the *Tractatus* calls a thought: we grasp both its logical unity and its projective relation to reality together; and we grasp either only in grasping both together.

Travis's exploration of such a challenge is decidedly halfhearted, precisely because he construes the sentence that follows the "otherwise" in the passage above as a claim about "thoughts" understood just as Frege understands them—thereby immediately disarming the threat of any real challenge. If we build it into our very terminology that grasping a thought, as such, must always amount to something less than grasping that such and such is the case, then thinking, as such, will always amount to nothing more than "representing" things as being a certain way (where the question of their *being* that way is always still left open). If our options for deploying philosophical notions such as "thought" are restricted in this

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[11] Travis, this volume, 228–229.

way, then Travis's apparently more patient and complicated answer inevitably leads straight to the same conclusion as the simple answer.

This Fregean understanding of the relation between thought and judgment reads the partitioning of tasks that properly characterizes the relation
between question and answer into the very structure of even the simplest
act of judgment. This is something that comes beautifully to the fore in
Travis's account of what it means to reintroduce the initially split-off element in Frege's story back into the description of the full act of judgment—
hence, what it means to advance from a thought to a recognition of its
truth-value:

> To assign a thought a truth-value is to suppose the way things are to
> have delivered an answer to the question thus posed; for truth to have
> turned in that way, how things are then delivering a given outcome.
> So, we might say, for a given thought to have a given truth-value is for
> the way things are to have delivered that answer to the question posed.
> So, substituting "the world" for "how things are," for the truth-value
> to be the *Bedeutung* of the thought, is for it to be the world's answer
> to the question posed.[12]

This requires that we can distinguish sharply and generally between two
different orders: the order of thinking (a matter of how thought represents how things are) and the order of being (a matter of how things are).
Fregean thinking concerns the disposition of elements in the first order;
Fregean judgment concerns determining thinking's relation to "how
things are" or "the world." This is a helpful notational variant for (what
I call in the previous reply) the duality that Frege inscribes into the very
nature of judgment: in its first logical dimension, thinking raises the question of truth; in its second, the world answers it.

In the previous reply, we distinguished, on Frege's behalf, between the
merely copulative "is" in "Socrates is a man" and the assertoric "is" of
"'Socrates is a man' *is* the case." Adapting Travis's terminology, we can
relabel these terms as follows: as the "is" that raises the question of the
truth of Socrates's manhood and the "is" that settles the question of its
truth. And, over the last two replies, we have seen that this involves a
conception that early Wittgenstein is out to challenge. So, for example,
in the previous reply, when it comes to the logically most basic case of
(thinking/judging/saying) "Socrates is a man," the *Tractatus* teaches that
there is only one "is." What Frege takes to be the extra contribution of

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assertoric force must already be present in the very act of joining con-
cept to object in a logically full-blooded exercise of our capacity for
thought. In my grasping that "Socrates is a man" has *that* sense (in Witt-
genstein's, not Frege's, sense of "sense"), I grasp the internal logical mul-
tiplicity of the thought through an appreciation of its projective relation
to reality (through an appreciation of whether it or its negation is the
case), and I grasp what is the case through the thinking of the sense of
the proposition. There is no priority in the order of explanation here be-
tween the order of thinking and the order of being. There is no gap in
the most fundamental exercise of the capacity between thinking and
being—one that must be closed in a second step.

When I hold possible judgable content at a distance and suspend judg-
ment, a gap is indeed opened up between thinking and being, between
the floating of a candidate for truth or falsehood and the settling of the
question of its truth. The proper characterization of such cases for Witt-
genstein must reveal how they are logically parasitic on exercises of the
capacity for judgment for which no such gap arises.[13] If this is right, then
the moment in Frege's philosophy that Travis thinks represents great in-
sight is the very one that early Wittgenstein thinks is the real source of
Frege's philosophical difficulties. As indicated above, this introduces not
only a very different diagnosis of where the trouble comes in Frege but
also a very different portrait of early Wittgenstein than the one presented
in Travis's reading of him.

Travis quotes the following passage from Conant:

> The central source of confusion in Frege's thought about logic is lo-
> cated by the *Tractatus* in the one assumption that it shares with psy-

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[13] Travis, in other writings, has argued forcefully against representationalism in the philosophy
of perception—against the view that perceptual "seems" talk is prior to "is" talk. See, for
example, his "The Silence of the Senses" in *Perception: Essays after Frege* (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2013), 23–58. In the reply to Hamawaki, it was urged that a proper ac-
count of our perceptual capacity must reject the following tenet of representationalism: that
exercises of the capacity that reveal how things merely perceptually seem are logically prior
to those that reveal how things are. We may also put this as follows: that exercises of the
capacity to perceive that fall short of full-blooded acts of knowledge are logically prior to
those that are acts of knowledge. The suggestion now is that the real underlying insight in
Travis's work in the philosophy of perception is in tension with the general "insight" he as-
cribes to Frege. We can slightly reformulate the conclusion of the reply to Stroud above in
order to highlight its bearing on the topic under discussion. A proper generalization of the
insight underlying a rejection of representationalism in the philosophy of perception re-
quires that we reject the following idea in the philosophy of thought: that exercises of the
capacity to think in a manner that falls short of judging are logically prior to those that are
full-blooded acts of judgment. A fuller discussion of what I am thereby obliged to regard as
a wrong turn in Travis's philosophy of perception will have to await another occasion.

chologism (that "widespread philosophical disease"): that logic is a science. It is only once one has broken with the idea that logic is a science that one is free of the disease.[14]

He then goes on to comment,

> I do not disagree with Conant as to what YW thought was Frege's crucial mistake. Rather, what follows is a case that what YW saw as Frege's crucial misconception about logic and what (if Frege held it) was the crucial point are two very different things. There is a good idea of Frege's (set out below), which YW, if not blind to it, simply rejected. The absence of that good idea (in its entirety) inevitably blinds one to what is crucial here. The trajectory from YW to mature Wittgenstein (henceforth MW), seen one way, is just slow in coming to see the value of this crucial point. One might, not for this alone, see the path Wittgenstein followed from 1929 on as a return to Frege.[15]

The truth in the idea that logic is a science that Travis is concerned with saving is the idea that the task of logic is just what it should be on a Leibnizian/Fregean conception: to articulate substantive truths about the world that are maximally general and neutral with regard to their subject matter.

Travis begins his sketch of Frege's conception of logic with the following remarks:

> [L]ogic . . . is about any thought only insofar as it is about all. So the features of a thought to which it is sensitive—those by which a logical relation holds or fails to—are features one might find in a thought regardless of its subject matter. Hence, on the conception, *logic has no special subject matter*. Such thoughts, the idea is, would have nothing but their structure to make them true; something their structure would oblige with in the case of truths of logic. *Such structural truths . . . reflect a structure intrinsic to a domain of things structured . . . by those features* which, combined as they are in a truth of logic, make for truth per se. The relevant features are ones on which the truth of thoughts depends—on which it alone depends in logical truths and falsehoods. So they are, too, ones on which the holding of relations such as logical entailment depends. So the structure these features impose on the

[14] Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 71; quoted by Travis, this volume, 253–254.
[15] Travis, this volume, 254.

domain in question, or on that reflected in logical truths, is the most general intrinsic structure of truth-preserving paths. The nodes on such paths are, then, truth-bearers—those which bring truth into question—and so thoughts, on Frege's notion of this. So the domain is a domain of thoughts. So *logic contains . . . logical truths.* But *logical truths . . . are thoughts stripped of all but their structure. Such thoughts would belong to a special region of the domain: that of the most general thoughts.*[16]

Let us extract the following five moments from the passage (corresponding to the bits italicized above), displaying them as a series of intertwined theses, slightly rephrasing here and there to highlight their connections to the issues discussed in the previous replies:

(a) Logic has no special subject matter.
(b) The structural truths logic articulates reflect a structure intrinsic to a domain of things.
(c) Logic contains logical truths.
(d) Logical truths are thoughts stripped of everything but their structure.
(e) Logic has its own proprietary domain—namely, that of the most general thoughts.

This is a fine alternative summary of the very conception of logic that I, too, have been concerned with attributing to Frege, starting in Section V. The last of these five theses—(e)—is the one that figures in my summary there as (2i) in my initial summary of differences in Frege's and Wittgenstein's respective conceptions of logic. The first of the five—(a)—is a corollary of it. Two of the other three—(b) and (d)—involve forms of words that can capture something that early Wittgenstein will more or less also say, but he will mean something very different by those words than Frege. (In the discussion below, we will need to take up (c) last.)

We saw in the reply to Boyle that Conant takes the affirmation of some version of (d) to represent a common commitment of Kant, Frege, and early Wittgenstein. Conant's preferred paraphrase of (d) tended to be reformulated as follows:

(d') Logical truths are thoughts stripped of all but their form.

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[16] My emphases; ibid., 254–255.

I have suggested that Sullivan inherits a mistake from Conant in following his thinking that there is some thesis in this general neighborhood held by both Kant and Frege. Travis inherits a version of the same mistake from Conant, but whereas Sullivan follows Conant in taking it that (d') represents a non-equivocal statement of a thesis jointly held by Kant and Frege, Travis follows him in taking it that (d') represents a non-equivocal statement of a thesis jointly held by Frege and early Wittgenstein.[17]

We saw (in the replies to Boyle and Sullivan) that the illusion that there is some single philosophical commitment here that is common to Frege and Kant (as Sullivan claims) or to Frege and early Wittgenstein (as Conant claims) turns on an equivocation on terms such as "form" and/or "structure."[18] The very different significance these terms have in Frege, on the one hand, and in Kant and Wittgenstein, on the other, is a function of the very different senses conferred on them through their respective locations within conceptions of logic systematically shaped by the full complement of differences highlighted in my summary of contrasts at the conclusion of Section V.

We also saw Sullivan argue that some version of (b) can be attributed to both Frege and Kant, but whereas it characterizes the truths of pure logic for Frege, it holds only of those of transcendental logic for Kant. I argued in my reply to him that once we have a properly Kantian reading of (b), then early Wittgenstein is the better candidate for someone who may be seen as attempting to vindicate a broadly Kantian conception that rejects the division of logic into pure and transcendental stems. But, as we have also seen, a proper appreciation of the depth of this difference between Frege and early Wittgenstein turns on a broader appreciation of the difference between a conception of logic as formal and as general. A Tractarian reformulation of (b) therefore would sound more like this:

(b') The forms of thought and language that logic articulates are, at one and the same time, forms of states of affairs.

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[17] Certain remarks might seem to suggest that Travis does not follow Conant's lead here after all. For example, Travis speaks of "a conception of logic which Frege (by repute) and young Wittgenstein share"—qualifying the claim with the insertion of the words "by repute" (this volume, 277). Yet Travis still allows that, within a roughly shared conception, the *Tractatus* arrives at the idea that "logic's dicta say nothing" on the ground that "logic's dicta are too general" (ibid.). This is something one can say only if one fails to register the depth of difference in the Fregean conception of logic as general and the Tractarian conception of it as articulating the form of our capacity for thought. In this respect, Travis remains much closer to Conant's reading of the *Tractatus* than to mine.

[18] Travis, like Sullivan, in articulating his preferred variants of the supposedly shared thesis, generally prefers to employ the word "structure" (rather than "form").

But there is no room in a properly Tractarian reformulation of this idea for a word such as "reflects." The idea that figures in Travis's formulation—that the truths of logic "reflect" a structure "intrinsic to" a domain of things—presupposes the Fregean separation of the orders of thinking and being that the *Tractatus* rejects.

Before we turn to the Tractarian treatment of logical propositions, it is worth pausing to consider what becomes in that book of the philosophical idea that what makes some set of statements true (be they logical or empirical) is that they "reflect" a structure intrinsic to a domain of things. If one misunderstands the Tractarian comparison of a picture with a proposition, then one may think its very point is to encourage such an idea. Some commentators tell us that the crucial idea here is that there are two isomorphic "structures"—there is a structure in the world and a structure in language (or thought)—and in order to say (or think) what is true, one of the two structures must "reflect" the other.[19] This is hopeless both as a reading of the *Tractatus* and as a conception of truth. As a reading of the book, it is hopeless, since the *Tractatus* says that it is the proposition that is a logical picture—where, on the conception of the proposition here at issue, it is essential that it be true or that it be false; hence, being true cannot itself be a matter of mere depiction. As soon as we focus on the question of what it is that I am right "about" if I affirm a true negative statement (e.g., "There are no elephants in this room"), it should become clear that the proposed conception is equally hopeless as an account of truth. For if the difference between true and false propositions were simply a matter of "reflecting" or "mirroring" what is the case, then the idea of speaking truth by affirming a negative statement would seem to require something very mysterious: a peculiar "negative" region of reality to which the truth of a negative statement may correspond. It is no small part of the point of the Tractarian deployment of the elucidatory comparison of a proposition with a picture to bring out the hopelessness of any such conception of truth—any one, that is, that tries to explicate the difference between true and false thoughts by ap-

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[19] One of these two "structures" is usually held by such commentators to be intrinsic to the world and the other to thought and/or language. If one takes the former to be the prior structure and the latter the reflecting one, then one will take oneself to be defending a realist reading of the *Tractatus;* if one thinks the order of explanation flows in the opposite direction, one will take oneself to be defending an idealist (or perhaps linguistic idealist) reading. On the reading proposed here, the book is equally concerned with criticizing either such order of explanation.

pealing to the idea that the true ones "reflect" what is the case and the false ones do not.

This means that even though Travis is perfectly correct in claiming that early Wittgenstein will reject the idea that the truths of logic "reflect" a structure "intrinsic to" the domain of things, he is wrong to construe that as flowing from his independent desire to downgrade logical propositions; for the *Tractatus* is no less concerned with rejecting such a conception as a viable account of the truth of non-logical propositions. The difference drawn in that book between propositions that have *Sinn* (empirical propositions) and ones that do not ("logical propositions") is consequently not to be equated with the distinction Travis here reads into the *Tractatus*—namely, between propositions that reflect a structure intrinsic to a domain of things and ones that do not. Travis draws on the latter distinction in order to explain to us why the *Tractactus* holds that logical propositions lack content in a way that empirical propositions do not. But, in so doing, he mischaracterizes not only its conception of logical propositions specifically but also its more general understandings of what a proposition or thought is, what is involved in grasping the sense of a proposition or thought, and hence what belongs to the characterization of the logical form of a proposition or thought. Once it is clarified how the *Tractatus* deploys these terms—"proposition," "thought," "sense," "logical form," "logical proposition"—it comes into view that the Tractarian doctrine that Travis wishes to contest (namely, "the propositions of logic are senseless") follows trivially. That is, it follows trivially if one accepts Wittgenstein's very different way of redeploying all of this terminology. Travis, of course, may well still wish to resist the conception of logic to which Wittgenstein gives expression in so redeploying this terminology. But then, were he to do so, Travis would be resisting a very different conception from the one to which he takes himself to be resisting in his contribution to this volume. To criticize the conception of logic actually in play in the *Tractatus* requires appreciating Wittgenstein's reasons for wanting to shift the significance of all of Frege's central terms of art and then criticizing the philosophical considerations that motivate the demand that our entire philosophical terminology be thus retooled.

Though I will not argue the point here, it is perhaps also worth remarking, in passing, that I take it to be no less a mischaracterization of Frege to construe him as relying on an appeal to such a relation of "reflection" or "mirroring" between true thoughts and reality. What Frege does require for his account, however, is a sharp disassociation of force

from content—of the act of grasping logical content from that of acknowledging its truth—and that already suffices to bring Frege within the target range of the point of the Tractarian deployment of the comparison of a proposition with a picture; because a far more central part of the point of that elucidatory comparison is to bring out the inadequacy of just this Fregean idea and some of its philosophical equivalents.

Let us start with something that the *Tractatus* takes to be one of its philosophical equivalents. Let's call it the *obtaining theory of truth*. It is a conception of truth one might arrive at by seeing what is wrong with the idea that a bare appeal to a supposed correlation between two independent isomorphic structures could suffice to deliver an account of truth. Some commentators on the *Tractatus* take on board the point that a proposition and its negation each picture one and the same reality (even though at most one of them can be true) but then conclude that the point of the comparison must be to reveal that the idea that there is a common structure to world and language (or thought) does not suffice for an account of truth without further supplementation. A further element must be "added" to the account that decides what makes it the case that, of the two members of such a contradictory pair (that both depict the same state of affairs), one is true and the other false. We are told—on this only slightly less disastrous account—if the depicted state of affairs "obtains," then *p* is true; if not, then *not-p* is true—where the "obtaining" or "non-obtaining" is understood to hold or not hold in a dimension that is orthogonal and external to the logical nexus that confers on the picture its power to depict a possible state of affairs. On this reading, what it is to say (or think) what is the case is for the pictured state of affairs not only to be pictured but *also* to obtain—not only for it to have the requisite logical unity but for it moreover to *be* the case. On this reading, the job of logic is to map the entirety of logical space, understood as a realm that is logically prior to an understanding of what is and what is not the case. The office of logic is antecedently to specify the contours of the realm of all possible states of affairs, that of the world to determine which of these possibilities obtain and which do not. On this reading, the first sentence of the *Tractatus* (in which "the world" is glossed as "all that is the case") requires that the "is" be (what one might call) *the mere "is" of obtaining*—that it be exogenous to the logical unity of each such possible state of affairs.[20]

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[20] Notice that we have here another highest-common-factor conception—a possible state of affairs *p* and that same state of affairs conceived as obtaining share the logical nexus

The *Tractatus* invites us to consider such a conception in order to criticize it. It is worth comparing the proposed conception of logical space with (what Stroud calls) the "restricted" conception of perceptual experience discussed in Section IX. The foregoing account of the Tractarian conception of logical space is restricted in a structurally parallel way: the reach of logical thought, insofar as it grasps a possible state of affairs, never as such involves a determination as to whether that which is thereby thought obtains or not. A determination of obtaining would appear to require that our capacity of logical thought in every case await the further assistance of some additional cognitive faculty—one that steps in and closes the gap between thought and world. Moreover, on the restricted conception of logical space, this gap is always there, looming between what we think (through the exercise of our power of logical thought) and what is the case (to be determined through the exercise of some further non-logical power to ascertain the relation between thought and world). As on the previous version of a restricted conception, here, too, our capacity to represent things as *possibly* being a certain way is conceived as comprehending an entire realm ("logical space") whose limits and contours are fixed prior to our capacity to grasp how things *actually* are. A conception of logical space qualifies as restricted, in this manner of speaking, whenever its topology may be fully mapped without ever entering into the question of which of the possible states of affairs thereby circumscribed obtain and which do not—or which of the total stocks of thoughts thereby circumscribed are the ones that are true and which are false.[21]

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expressed by *p* as a highest common factor. And notice that the "obtaining" theory of truth is essentially a variation on Avicenna's conception of the relation of essence to existence: what "is" the case is conceived as a further determination—a conferral of being—on something whose logical character qua possibility is fully determinate, independently of its being or not being the case.

[21] In contrast to the prior theological conception, this secular version of a restricted conception of logical space is necessarily much less illuminating when it comes to the question of how to move from such an actuality-free conception of logical space to one in which some possibilities obtain and some do not. Absent a divine creator, we need something else that forges a connection with a logically exogenous dimension of actuality. Some *Tractatus* commentators, as well as some contemporary analytic philosophers, see no problem here. They will tell us we forge this connecting by simply fixing the reference of certain expressions through a baptismal act of naming. Such a simple-minded conception of the logically self-standing power of a name to enter into a relation of "directly referring" to an object—one that can be put in place without any appreciation of the expression's role within a wider logical space—is just as much a target of criticism in Frege and the *Tractatus* as it is in the opening sections of the *Investigations*.

Wittgenstein seeks to teach that once we allow such a gap to open up in philosophy, any attempt to close it will come too late. The only way to overcome the philosophical problems with which it saddles us is to identify the crucial trick in the philosophical conjuring game that allowed this seeming gap to open up in the first place. For all of their differences, one of the most striking points of continuity between early and later Wittgenstein is their common concern to diagnose and isolate the character of this crucial step in our philosophizing—one that repeatedly gives rise to the appearance of such a gap.

A reading that ascribes the restricted conception of logical space to the *Tractatus* mistakes its philosophical target for its doctrine. It saddles the work with a commitment that early Wittgenstein wants to unmask as the philosophical equivalent of Frege's disassociation of the "is" of logical unity from that of a judgment regarding whether some such judgable content "is" the case.[22] The obtaining theory of truth conceives the being or non-being of a possible state of affairs as exogenous to the logical unity of the proposition that logically pictures it. Frege's theory of judgment conceives the moment of affirmation or denial of judgable content as exogenous to the logical unity of that which is judged.[23] This is why, in its dialectical dismantling of the obtaining conception of truth, the *Tractatus* moves directly from a discussion of how a proposition qua logical picture asserts something [*sagt etwas aus*] to a discussion of what is problematic in Frege's conception of the relation between a proposition and its truth-value. We may characterize the dialectical move here negatively as follows: the book moves from a rejection of the idea that assertoric force is external to a proposition conceived as a logical picture (rather than internal to its so much as being able to picture what is the case) to a rejection of Frege's idea that the "is" of "*p* is true" is ex-

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[22] For a much more careful treatment of this issue than present space allows for, see Kimhi, *Thinking and Being;* for specifically how such a pseudo-Tractarian "obtaining" account of truth is related to a Fregean account of judgment/assertion, see especially pages 102–103. In saying that it is "pseudo-Tractarian," I do not mean that such an account plays no role in the unfolding of the Tractarian dialectic; what I mean is that it forms one of the rungs of the dialectical ladder that we are to climb up and throw away.

[23] In *Begriffsschrift,* Frege offers a proposal (which he later abandons) for how to paraphrase into ordinary language what the judgment stroke stands for that trades on the central idea behind the obtaining theory. He suggests that the judgment stroke may be understood to signify "is a fact." He goes on to propose that when the vertical judgment stroke is attached to the horizontal content stroke, the resulting complex in his notation may be paraphrased as "The proposition that '_____' is a fact"—remarking that this is "the common predicate for all judgments" ("*Begriffsschrift,*" §§2–3, in Michael Beaney, *The Frege Reader* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 53–54).

ternal to the logical unity of *p*. Or to characterize the same movement positively, we may say the following: the book moves from a discussion of why a proposition's logical unity must be *essentially* (and not merely accidentally) *connected* with the state of affairs it depicts to a discussion of why the verb that expresses truth (the "is" of "is true") or being (the "is" of "is the case") must in the logically fundamental case be internal to the verb that expresses the logical unity of the proposition.[24] In opposition to Frege, the *Tractatus* takes the basic logical act (in relation to which any other must be understood) to be an assertion of what is the case. Frege's context principle governs a *Zusammenhang* whose logical contours are fully determinate even if no judgment stroke is yet attached thereto;[25] the

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[24] What Ogden translates as "connected with" in *Tractatus* §4.03 is Wittgenstein's *zusammenhängt*. The *Zusammenhang* is the proposition's being a logical picture of a state of affairs. It is in the discussion that follows up this remark in which the topic of the internality of a proposition's sense to its relation of reality is unfolded.

[25] Prior to drawing the *Sinn/Bedeutung* distinction, Frege explicates the context principle in such a way as to characterize the unity of that which it governs as simply being that of the judgment. This is how it is formulated, for example, in *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (see, for example, §60), and it is certainly not clear that what he understands by the principle when he formulates it there applies to anything but judgments. Once the *Sinn/Bedeutung* distinction is firmly in place, however, it becomes difficult to avoid the conclusion that there ought to be a version of the context principle that operates solely at the level of *Sinn* and that that version of the principle is now to be understood as governing the logical unity of the thought qua judgable content. This is not to deny that there is perhaps also room for a version of the principle in Frege's later philosophy that operates at the level of *Bedeutung*. Yet this latter version of the principle will not meet with any more approval from the *Tractatus* than the former, since it must now rest on the following feature of Frege's way of drawing the *Sinn/Bedeutung* distinction (one that the *Tractatus* regards as symptomatic of the same underlying confusion as is present in Frege's way of drawing the force-content distinction): namely, that Frege now treats sentences as complex names of truth-values. Dummett suggests that the version of the principle that operates at this latter level ought perhaps to be regarded as the primary successor of the context principle in Frege's later philosophy. For example, in *The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 11, he argues that, after the assimilation of sentences to proper names, Frege is not in a position to give sentences their previous, special role in language. (He cites *Grundgesetze*, vol. I, sect. 10, as giving a later and generalized version of the context principle, applicable to contexts of completed function-expressions and completed relation-expressions, hence giving no special significance to sentential contexts.) Yet Dummett also acknowledges that there remain other features of Frege's later philosophy that may lead us to continue to regard sentence-sense as of fundamental significance and as requiring something resembling a context principle (see, for example, the discussion on page 374). Indeed, Dummett's discussions of some passages (see especially his discussion on page 400 of a passage from *Grundgesetze*, vol. II) appear to support the claim that, even once the *Sinn/Bedeutung* distinction is firmly in place, the context principle ought perhaps still to be regarded as governing the logical unity of the thought qua judgable content. I point out the hesitancy and backpedaling in Dummett's discussions of these issues not in order to criticize him, but as a useful way of bringing into perspective how difficult it is to understand just how

Tractarian context principle governs a *Zusammenhang,* a form of unity, that presupposes that the logical I actively think (what the *Tractatus* calls) the sense of the proposition: the conditions under which one member of a contradictory pair (*p* and *not-p*) *is* true and hence the other false.[26]

This is the difference between a logical picture and a mere picture (something whose bearing on reality, if any, remains up in the air). A picture of Sid smoking could be a picture of what Sid is doing, and it could be a picture of what Sid is forbidden from doing. A mere picture does not determine its relation to reality.[27] The comprehension of a logical picture (say, a picture of Sid smoking) for the *Tractatus* brings with it an understanding of whether it bears positively or negatively on reality (and hence an understanding of whether it is a picture of what is the case or of what is not the case). On this conception, the application to reality, in the default case of judgment, is inscribed within the logical nexus that unites smoking and Sid. This is what the *Tractatus* means when it says that a logical picture stands in a *presenting relation* [*in einer darstellenden Beziehung*] to reality.[28] Only one member of the pair, *p* or *not-p,* can stand in such a presenting relation to reality. We think the sense of the proposition by using it, as we might use a picture to think, "*This* is how things are" or "*This* is not how things are." But to think the (Tractarian) *Sinn* of a logical picture is precisely to think its sense in one of these two ways in opposition to the other.[29] Anscombe attempts to mark the difference here between the Fregean conception of sense (with which Travis

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Frege's context principle is to be construed—and what it should be taken to govern—once the distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* is firmly in place.

[26] Hence the Fregean notion of *Sinn* attaches to the proposition as a whole as well as to each of its logical parts, whereas the Tractarian notion of *Sinn* only to the proposition as a whole in its projective relation to reality: "only the proposition has sense" (§3.3).

[27] As Anscombe puts it, "The correlating [to reality] is not something the picture itself does; it is something we do" (*An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus,* 68). Or as the *Tractatus* puts it: "*We* picture facts to ourselves" ([my emphasis], §2.1).

[28] And this is what he denies tautologies do when he says they stand in no *presenting relation* to reality (§4.462). His complaint is not (as Travis suggests) that they are "too general."

[29] It is at §4.063 that the Tractarian discussion first explicitly invokes Frege (and his separation of the verb of the judgable content from the verb of assertion): "[T]he verb of the proposition is not 'is true' or 'is false'—as Frege thought—but that which is true must already contain the verb." Kimhi helpfully spells out how this passage seeks to highlight the difference between the Tractarian conception of sense (as involving judgment of what is the case in a grasp of the sense of "S is F") and the Fregean conception of sense (as involving a mere logical unity—something true or false—in a grasp of the sense of "S is F"). Kimhi writes, "The horizontal (or its negation) can be seen as the sole verb of a *Begriffsschrift* proposition, for it is the locus of assertability in a proposition. Frege splits the ordinary predicate into a locus of assertability and a locus of truth/falsity" (*Thinking and Being,* 41n).

works) and the Tractarian one (which Travis fails to realize constitutes a repudiation of the Fregean conception) in this way: "Wittgenstein concedes to assertion a role in determining sense."[30] This way of putting things still bears the eggshells of the Fregean conception. But what is right in it may be put as follows: there is nothing that counts for the *Tractatus* as a way of thinking the sense of a proposition that severs it from its method of projection to reality[31]—that allows an act of thinking its sense to remain indeterminate with respect to these two possible ways of thinking its (Tractarian) sense. In explicating what it is we think in respectively thinking the members of the contradictory pair of sentences *p* and *not-p*, Anscombe correctly says that "which sense each has is a matter of what *we mean to assert* in using them."[32] For the *Tractatus,* the logically simplest case of "S thinks *p*" is a case in which, in thinking *p,* S thinks one member of a contradictory pair of options for thinking the sense of a logical picture—one understands it to stand in a determinate presenting relation to reality.[33] In thinking it thusly, one thereby, in one and the same act of thought, actively repudiates the other possible option for thinking its sense as standing in *that* presenting relation to reality. For early Wittgenstein, unlike for Frege, the projective relation to reality (that, for Frege, enters the picture only with the act of judgment) is already internal to the logical unity of that which we think in the logically most basic exercise of a capacity for thought. Assertion is, in this

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[30] "Truth, Sense, and Assertion," in *Logic, Truth, and Meaning,* eds. Mary Geach and Luke Gormally (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2015), 269. Her explanation of what she wants to mean by this shows that since writing her book on the *Tractatus* she had gained a further appreciation of the point here at issue; see the entirety of §17 of that essay, 269–270.

[31] "The method of projection is the thinking of the sense of the proposition" (§3.11). And this is what a (full-blooded) proposition is: the sign so thought in its relation to the world (§3.12).

[32] Ibid., 270. In putting things this way, I take it Anscombe means to highlight a continuity between Wittenstein's early and later philosophy—the very one to which Gustafsson sought to draw attention in his contribution to this volume. The Tractarian critique of the Fregean conception of sense is therefore tied to a theme in later Wittgenstein's philosophy that Travis is famous for drawing attention to: the use-dependence of sense. The author of the *Tractatus,* however, already sees that the theme in Frege's philosophy that Travis so likes (the Fregean conception of sense) and the theme in later Wittgenstein's philosophy that Travis so likes (that we must look to the context of significant use to determine the truth-aptness of the manner in which the signs in a proposition symbolize) are in tension with one another.

[33] Anscombe writes, "Now, confining ourselves to pictures, it is also clear that if we 'think the sense of the picture' by correlating its elements with actual objects, we can in fact think it in either of two ways: namely either as depicting what is the case, or as depicting what isn't the case" (*An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus,* 69). She goes on to remark that "if you tried to make a picture of a situation's not existing you would only make a picture of what did exist instead of it" (69–70).

sense, a condition of (what the *Tractatus* calls) *Sinn*.[34] It follows that a Tractarian *Darstellung* (presentation of how things are) is not a case of what Travis calls "representing-as," and a Tractarian logical picture is not a Fregean thought. A logical picture of reality does not merely raise the question of truth; it *says* what *is* the case. On this account of the internality of logical picturing to propositional form, there is no room for the wholesale Fregean separation of the orders of thinking and being.

We saw Stroud seek to indicate in an elegantly concise fashion what is empty in the idea that the order of thought (or language) could "represent" in such a way that "what is the case" could bear exogenously on that order—so that we would need to get to someplace outside of thought in order to get all the way to reality—in his commentary on Wittgenstein's remark on "the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy":

> The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact that corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence. (This has to do with the Kantian Solution of the Problem of Philosophy.)[35]

The point of Stroud's commentary is that Wittgenstein wants to show us that, if we strictly think it through, we will come to see that there is nothing more to the idea of (that which, in philosophizing, we call) "the

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[34] As indicated above, what the Tractatus calls *Sinn* involves a nexus that comprehends both the "is" of the logical unity of *p* and the "is" of "*p* is the case"—a nexus Frege thinks is forged only once we advance from the Fregean *Sinn* of a thought to an acknowledgment of its truth-value. Only if we are clear about the depth of this difference between the Fregean and Tractarian notions of *Sinn* will we be in a position to appreciate that the following remark is directed against Frege: "Every proposition must already have a *Sinn*. It cannot be given a *Sinn* by affirmation. Indeed its *Sinn* is just what is affirmed" (§4.064). And once we are clear about this difference between the Fregean and Tractarian notions of a proposition, we can also see that what is negated for the *Tractatus* must already have Tractarian *Sinn* (and not merely Fregean *Sinn*). Hence, this remark, too, is directed against Frege: "[W]hat is negated is already a proposition, and not merely something that is preliminary to a proposition" (§4.0641)—where what the *Tractatus* here means by "proposition" (something which already stands in a determinate presenting relation to reality) is far closer to what Frege means by the term "judgment" than what he would mean by the term "proposition." What becomes here of the notions of *Sinn* and *proposition* are examples of what I mean when I say that the significance of Frege's fundamental terms of art are all shifted in the *Tractatus*. These remarks are all subordinated in the Tractarian numbering scheme to §4: *Der Gedanke ist der sinnvolle Satz*. If one assumes that the *Tractatus* is deploying Frege's terminology without repurposing it first, then the criticism of Frege in §4.064 will seem a non-sequitur. One first needs to appreciate that §4 (on Wittgenstein's understanding of what it says)—which is a verbal twin of a sentence Frege would be happy to affirm (on Frege's understanding of what it says)—is precisely a rejection of what Frege would thereby be affirming.

[35] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value,* trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 10.

relation between a sentence (or a thought) and reality" than what can be expressed by *saying* the sentence (or *thinking* the thought) in question.[36] What we here speak of when we employ the term "reality" (insofar as we succeed in meaning something by that word) is internal to the form of language and thought. It is not a word that allows us to gesture at a self-standing form of realm that "obtains" outside of the form of language and thought—one which language and thought must "reflect." To put this differently, so that it bears on one of Travis's own favorite philosophical locutions, there isn't anything more to the idea of *a way the world is* or *how things are* than a way of *saying* how things are. This is, as I put it in my joint reply to Hamawaki and Stroud, the truth in idealism. The only form of realism this requires us to reject is a philosophically confused one—one that presupposes the aforementioned dualism in the respective forms of the orders of thinking and being. Early Wittgenstein seeks in this connection to show that "idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought through."[37] If this is strictly thought through, Wittgenstein seeks to show, it requires a different conception of "thought" than the one that Frege works with[38]—and that Travis labors to expound on his behalf.

Now consider the following remark of Travis's:

> YW was suspicious of the idea that thoughts with all particular content stripped away were still, for all that, (fully) thoughts. His suspicion, though, took the wrong form. It is expressed in the idea that laws, or propositions, of logic *say nothing*.[39]

Stripping away particular content yields propositions with general content only if one presupposes a great deal else in Frege's (rather than early Wittgenstein's) overall conception of logic. Nevertheless, there is a Tractarian counterpart to the Fregean idea that "stripping away content" leaves us with something that is characterizable in merely logical terms. But, as we have seen in our previous replies, on the Tractarian conception of this, what is thus abstracted out will stand to content as form stands to matter—not as the general stands to the particular. The Tractarian abstraction of logical form from material content will not in each

[36] Stroud, "Meaning and Understanding," 295.

[37] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–1916*, eds. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), 85. I have modified the translation.

[38] This is another way of putting my central disagreement with Stroud regarding the question of how close Frege is to Wittgenstein.

[39] Travis, this volume, 255.

case yield a proposition that is *sinnlos,* as Travis in effect implies.[40] This means that if we want to get clearer about the Tractarian counterpart of (d) above—that is, if want to track what becomes of Frege's idea of logical structure or Russell's idea of logical form in early Wittgenstein's hands—we will need to distinguish between that with which we are left in the case of most propositional symbols when we abstract away their content—thereby restricting ourselves to a consideration of the mere form—and that with which we are left in the case of a very special limited subclass of propositional symbols: namely, those which early Wittgenstein calls "logical propositions"—that is, tautologies and contradictions.

If we have a Fregean conception of logic as absolutely general, then we will have no sense of lumping disparate cases together in grouping all thoughts that have been completely "stripped" of particularity of content in the appropriate way. If we have a Tractarian conception of logic as formal, then there will be a crucial difference between the following sorts of propositional symbols: (I) those which are purely formal but whose logical syntax is such that, if we specify (what the *Tractatus* calls) a *Bedeutung* for each of its expressions, it yields (what the *Tractatus* calls) a *Sinn,* and (II) those which are purely formal but whose logical syntax is such that a specification of (Tractarian) *Bedeutung* does not yield (Tractarian) *Sinn.*[41]

Conant makes it sound a bit as if any propositional symbol that Frege would regard as one of pure logic is one that is *a fortiori* classified by the *Tractatus* as a case of (II). That is a mistake.[42] Some of them will count as *Unsinn*—for example, if they involve what the *Tractatus* regards as an empty quantification over all propositions. Some will count as merely formal and, hence, as requiring a specification of material content before they can be regarded as propositions, rather than merely specifications of the logical syntax of a range of propositions, without having any de-

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[40] Such an abstraction will be such that the (Tractarian) *Bedeutung* of any expression will play no role in a characterization of its logical syntax; see, for example, §3.33. But this brings in a whole further set of considerations about the relation of form to content in the *Tractatus*—considerations that play no role in Travis's reading of that book.

[41] In a proper (Tractarian) *Begriffsschrift,* it is possible to distinguish cases of (I) from (II) simply through an inspection of the sign.

[42] This means that at least some of my differences with Travis about how to read the *Tractatus* may be traced to misreadings of the *Tractatus* that he and Conant share, or that Conant's sloppy formulations may at least have encouraged (and that Travis may therefore in this way have inherited from Conant, in relying upon his formulations of certain points of exegesis). I find it difficult to estimate how minor or major a role these play in my overall differences with Travis about how to read early Wittgenstein. Though many do not, at least some of my criticisms here of Travis's reading of the *Tractatus* do involve implicit criticisms of Conant's as well.

terminate proposition in view. A few will count as *sinnlos*. Travis's ire is directed at Wittgenstein's account of this limited subset, taking it to exhaust what logic is for YW. So the ire is directed at the idea that supposedly all that is left of the very idea of "logic" in the *Tractatus* is the set of propositions that the book deems to be *sinnlos*. This overlooks the philosophically more exciting Tractarian descendent of (what I called in the reply to Sullivan) the grand conception of philosophical logic—namely, the idea of logical form. For early Wittgenstein, logical form pervades language, thought, and world; it is everywhere and nowhere. Logic, so understood, is *shown* for the *Tractatus* in what we say, but it is not *said* by anything we say. This means that, for early Wittgenstein —to borrow an idiom of Travis's—logic has no dicta. No doubt, Travis, if he had this region of early Wittgenstein's thought in view, would be no more enthusiastic about the absence of logical dicta here (regarding logical form) than he is about the *Tractatus*'s not regarding the truth-functional equivalents of the negations of contradictions as logical dicta. But this does not gainsay that it is a mistake on Travis's part to take the Tractarian rejection of the idea that tautologies say something (have *Sinn*) to license the claim that all that remains in the *Tractatus* by way of a conception of logic is the idea of a tautology. If one wants to contest the Tractatarian idea that logic has no dicta (as Travis does), then one needs to bring within the scope of the quarrel a great deal else that occurs much earlier in the book—including a great many of the earlier sections of the *Tractatus* that I have commented on briefly in the foregoing pages. One will need to concern oneself with remarks prefaced with smaller section numbers than those on which Travis focuses.[43]

Here, on the other hand, are some of the sections of the *Tractatus* on which Travis does focus—bundled and arranged as he presents them, along with their section numbers:[44]

> The propositions of logic are tautologies. (6.1)
>> The propositions of logic therefore *say nothing*. (6.11)

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[43] Not least among these will be those that set forth the considerations that lead to the distinction between what is shown in language and what is said by language. A proper—non-ineffabilitist—understanding of that distinction, in turn, entails the Tractarian version of the moral that Stroud properly draws from Wittgenstein's remark about the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy.

[44] Travis's order of presentation suggests that he does not appreciate how an understanding of the earlier remarks is essential to an understanding of the later ones. I have left out the last few of the remarks he bundles with these in order not to get bogged down in too much exegetical detail.

Theories which make a proposition of logic appear *substantial* [*gehaltvoll*] are always false. (6.111)

The propositions of logic demonstrate the *logical properties of propositions* by combining these into *propositions which say nothing*. (6.121)

It is the characteristic mark of logical propositions that one can *recognize in the symbol* alone that they are true. (6.113)

Tautology and contradiction are not *pictures of reality*. They represent no possible state of affairs. For the one allows every state of affairs; the other, none. In the tautology, the conditions of agreement with the world cancel one another, so that it stands *in no presenting relation* [*in keiner darstellenden Beziehung*] to reality. (4.462)

A tautology has no truth conditions, since it is unconditionally true; and the contradiction is true under no conditions. Tautology and contradiction are *without sense*. (4.461)[45]

These passages mostly come late in the book and presuppose an understanding of an enormous amount that comes earlier—including, just to mention the most salient, Tractarian accounts of the following four topics: *Sinn* (hence, what it is to *say* something), *logical syntax* (hence, what it is to characterize the logical properties of propositions), the distinction between *symbol* and *sign* (hence, the internality of language to thought and world), and *logical picture* (hence, why only that which has Tractarian *Sinn* is a logical picture of reality).

These are all difficult and controversial topics. I have tried my best to briefly elucidate the first of them in my reply to Sullivan, as well as earlier in this reply; the second and third are treated in my reply to Gustafsson; the fourth was our topic just a moment ago. Travis blows by what is at issue in any of those discussions. His account of early Wittgenstein on logic requires no special prior struggle to come to terms with any of these aspects of the teaching of the book. He appears to think any of these ideas can be stated in the philosophical idiom he deploys throughout his contribution—one that is largely indebted to Frege. He takes several of the numbered remarks quoted in the block of passages reproduced above to proclaim theses that "correspond natu-

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[45] These are my emphases. The italicized bits, properly understood, involve aspects of a conception of logic that cannot be expressed in Frege's philosophical terminology. And each involves an aspect of early Wittgenstein's conception of logic that I have touched on above. Each one, in turn, equally touches on a wider region of early Wittgenstein's conception of logic that Travis appears to think is incidental to an understanding of these passages.

rally to different intuitive ideas."[46] About the first set of these remarks, Travis writes,

> Corresponding to the first set is an idea about representing-as (representing something as [being] something). There are two terms of a relation here: what is represented as (being) something and what it is represented as. It is with just this relation that truth can come into question. Now the idea is this: where there is a genuine case of this relation, neither of these two parties is allowed to idle. Truth is the yield of a genuine cooperative enterprise between them.[47]

This is, as we have seen, the very conceptual framework that Travis deploys to explain the Fregean distinction between the *Sinn* and the *Bedeutung* of a thought. He now deploys it to explicate the point of each entry in the above bundle of quoted remarks from the *Tractatus.* It presupposes the viability of (what I have called above) the restricted conception of the logical. That conception plays an essential role in his spelling out what he takes early Wittgenstein's conception of logic to be. Travis, that is, reads these sections as if their aim were to advance a series of claims about "logic" that a reader can understand simply by starting with these passages, while drawing on an understanding of what each of these sentences might mean if it had been advanced by a philosopher whose conception required a Fregean philosophical terminology in order to elaborate it—one whose elaboration therefore would not require in any way undertaking to shift the significance of all of Frege's central terms of art ("thought," "judgment," "proposition," "sense," "meaning," "logical structure," etc.). This allows Travis to read these sections as advancing a set of claims that might be held by someone who is willing to leave unchallenged a Fregean conception of thoughts (as cases of what Travis calls "representing-as"), along with a Fregean conception of the relation between thought (as that which brings truth into question) and world (as that which answers the question), while supplementing these with Travis's conception of truth (as a "reflection" of ways of being by ways of thinking). If one tries to hold this much of Frege's picture in place while trying to figure out what one would be saying if one deployed the very same strings of propositional signs that occur in these sections of the *Tractatus,* then the result, no doubt, will be a terrible view of logic. But the result is not Wittgenstein's view of anything. To read these remarks

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[46] Travis, this volume, 256.
[47] Ibid., 256–257.

in this way is simply to fail to engage with early Wittgenstein's philosophy—and hence to fail to locate the ground upon which he seeks to challenge Frege's conception of logic.[48]

The concluding section of Travis's contribution begins as follows:

> In 1945 Wittgenstein wrote that in 1929 he was forced to recognize "grave errors" in the *Tractatus*. . . . As he worked his way from these erroneous views to the changed view of *Philosophical Investigations,* a central locus of such errors proved to be the *Tractatus's* conception of logic. Thus, in the *Investigations* the *Tractatus's* idea that logic is not a science—that there could be nothing substantial about it, that its dicta were in principle immune to being borne on by experience—became the more nuanced idea that logic does not treat language—or thought—in the sense in which a natural science treats a natural phenomenon (§81). Logic is unlike a science in that its applications are unlike those of a science.[49]

Travis reads such passages in *Philosophical Investigations* as indications that later Wittgenstein came around to something resembling Frege's conception of logic. Unlike Travis, I think that everything early Wittgenstein seeks to criticize in Frege, later Wittgenstein is no less concerned to criticize (even if the later method is eventually meant to bring within its target range a great many of early Wittgenstein's own unwitting philosophical commitments). But I do think Travis has his finger on an important difference between early and later Wittgenstein here (even if I think that difference has nothing to do with his later self coming around to a more sympathetic view of Frege's conception of logic). But I think that what later Wittgenstein, in the passage to which Travis above alludes (and in related passages from *Philosophical Investigations*), means by the word "logic" could have equally been expressed by his employing his later al-

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[48] Travis also goes on to say things like this: "What YW sees, or seems to, then, is that the rest of Frege's conception of logic, as per above, clashes with the idea that laws of logic say something—are full-fledged thoughts. Logic's dicta reflect the structure of a system" (this volume, 257). Travis here seems to agree with Conant about there being a certain tension in Frege's conception of logic but seems to think that it is easily minimized. I will simply remark that if you could convince Frege that certain ideas in his conception of logic *clash* with the idea that a law of logic is a full-fledged thought, he will not simply happily give up the latter idea. It is crucial to Frege's entire conception that he be able to attach a judgment stroke to the content that follows the horizontal stroke in the expression of a law of logic. Hence I have some doubts about Travis's conception of what belongs to the core and what belongs to the periphery of Frege's conception of logic. But a discussion of these points must be deferred to another occasion.

[49] Ibid., 278–279.

ternative term of art "grammar."[50] These remarks about "logic" do not seek to express some general endorsement of Frege's conception of logic— at least not those aspects of it that Travis highlights—such as the maximal generality of its truths or the supposed priority of *Sinn* over *Bedeutung*. Rather, they seek to capture something about the character of his own philosophical/grammatical investigations: they do not treat language—or thought—in the sense in which a natural science treats a natural phenomenon.

This marks a difference from early Wittgenstein, for whom there is no class of "propositions" that articulate the form of our capacities for understanding, meaning, thinking, etc., in the *Tractatus*. These can only be shown. By contrast, later Wittgenstein carves out a space for a whole category of proposition for which the Tractarian account has no room: (what later Wittgenstein calls) grammatical propositions. But there remains an important continuity folded within this discontinuity. To attempt to assert a grammatical proposition as if it expressed some general matter of fact, for later Wittgenstein, is to fall into confusion.[51] It can have the status only of a reminder: a reflective articulation of something (an aspect of our forms of thought, language, and life) that we cannot help but already know. Thus, even for later Wittgenstein, the difference between empirical and logico-grammatical propositions does not simply lie in their degree of generality—with the latter encompassing a wider domain than the former while partaking of the same sort of relation to reality. To assimilate later Wittgenstein's conception of grammatical remarks to a Fregean model of how logical truths differ from empirical truths would still be to confer a sort of substance upon such remarks that would mischaracterize the role they play for later Wittgenstein in the quest for philosophical self-understanding. To conceive of logical investigation (qua articulation of the form of thought) in terms of what later Wittgenstein calls grammatical investigation is therefore not to revert, as Travis suggests, to a slightly retooled variant on a Fregean conception of logic.

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[50] The way the later notion (of grammar) inherits the earlier notion (of logic) is the topic of both Gustafsson's contribution to this volume and my reply to it. Wittgenstein sticks to the term "logic" in the stretch of sections of which §81 forms a part, precisely in order to be able to highlight the similarities and differences between his early and later conceptions (of logic/grammar).

[51] See, for example, the last paragraph of *Philosophical Investigations,* §402, on what happens when one tries to convert a grammatical reminder into something that has the logical character of an assertion.

In Frege's conception of logic, a logical law states an absolutely general truth—one whose truth every rational being must, on pain of contradiction, acknowledge. In later Wittgenstein's practice, a grammatical remark inherits an aspect of Frege's conception of the logical. On a proper understanding of a grammatical remark, it articulates a truism—something that admits of no contrary—hence something that every speaker of the language must acknowledge. Or conversely, if there is something in a given candidate grammatical remark that proves to admit of disagreement, then the remark in question cannot serve its methodological role. It fails to bring into view a point of (what later Wittgenstein calls) grammar. Grammatical remarks acquire their point—that is, our need for such reminders derives—from our attempting but failing to achieve a proper reflective understanding of our way around our own language. If the grammatical remark serves its purpose, what is thereby acknowledged is something that can come into view only against the background of a prior failed attempt to achieve a perspicuous overview of our own concepts. A Wittgensteinian grammatical remark comes to life as such only against the background of a philosophical confusion. Logic or grammar for later Wittgenstein, pace Frege, could qualify as a science only if philosophy is one. This also means that, for later Wittgenstein, unlike for Frege, there is no preexisting stock of propositions that constitutes all of the logico-grammatical truths there are. In potentiality there are perhaps indefinitely many, but in actuality the only remarks that actually exercise the power to disclose a philosophico-grammatical truth, for later Wittgenstein, are those that allow us to make progress with the problems that actually vex us in philosophy.

In this respect, there are, indeed, some partial but nonetheless interesting similarities between later Wittgenstein's conception of a grammatical remark (and the dependence of its status *as* such a remark on our actual philosophical needs) and certain ideas of Hilary Putnam's that Travis touches briefly upon toward the end of his contribution) about the framework-relativity of a priori truths. For not entirely the same reasons, both later Wittgenstein and Putnam are interested in how a priori and a posteriori propositions are related to and depend upon one another and how our understanding of which strings of words qualify as which can shift when our conceptual forms of thought undergo radical transformation through intellectual revolution or historical/cultural upheaval. So I agree with Travis that this region of Putnam's philosophy does bear a genuine affinity with certain ideas in later Wittgenstein, but not in any way that the later Wittgenstein would ever have wanted to regard as

even a partial return to something approximating Frege's conception of logic.

What Travis is also right about is that the bits of Wittgenstein's later thought that bear these affinities with ideas of Putnam's themselves seek to effect a break with ideas of the *Tractatus*. But this helps Travis's overall case only if the inadequacy thereby revealed in the Tractarian conception of logic simultaneously reveals an injustice in Wittgenstein's earlier criticisms of Frege. The opposite is closer to the truth: the later criticism of the Tractarian conception of logic continues and completes the earlier critique of Frege in a manner that brings the *Tractatus* itself within the target range of that critique. This means that there are certain critical remarks in the later writings that may be understood to have application to both Frege and the *Tractatus*. The theme of many of these remarks is how one can tacitly insinuate a philosophical requirement while not seeming to make a philosophical move at all—a requirement on, for example, what logic *must* be. The requirement becomes a lens through which we then see the phenomena we seek to investigate in philosophy. One pertinent example in the later writings of a discussion of such an unwitting requirement, laid down in advance in our philosophizing, concerns the theme of how one may be prone to conceive of logic as partaking of "crystalline purity."[52] Later Wittgenstein will level such a charge at the *Tractatus*. I submit that it is here—and not where Travis suggests—that later Wittgenstein locates the gravest misconceptions of his early philosophy: that is, in its subliming of the logic of our language.[53]

One mistakes the entire register of such a discussion if one construes it as charging a philosopher with thinking or believing something *false* about logic. That misses the depth of the target and the form of the criticism. The target is a *fantasy*—not a false belief—a fantasy in this case

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[52] "For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation:* it was a requirement" (*Philosophical Investigations,* §107).

[53] Let us go back to our distinction above, of two Tractarian forms of propositional symbol—(I) those which are purely formal but whose logical syntax is such that, if we specify (what the *Tractatus* calls) a *Bedeutung* for each of its expressions, it yields (what the *Tractatus* calls) a *Sinn;* and (II) those which are purely formal but whose logical syntax is such that a specification of (Tractarian) *Bedeutung* does not yield (Tractarian) *Sinn.* Wittgenstein's later criticism of his earlier philosophy is directed in the first instance, at his treatment of (I): at the way in which the Tractarian account sublimes the underlying logical character of *every* proposition and not just—as Travis suggests—specifically those which constitute the class of tautologies. For further discussion, see the later sections of my "Mild Mono-Wittgensteinianism," in *Wittgenstein and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Cora Diamond,* ed. A. Crary (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007).

regarding the underlying character of the logical dimension of our language, one that comes naturally to us and on which Wittgenstein thinks it is excruciatingly difficult to achieve the right perspective. The conception of purity at issue is of a sort that Wittgenstein calls (in one of his characteristic but also most easily misunderstood later terms of criticism) "mythological."[54] When later Wittgenstein applies such terms of criticism (of subliming, mythologizing, or projecting phantasmatic purity) in his later discussions of his earlier writings, he is redirecting a form of the very charge that the *Tractatus* was concerned to level at Frege—only now against his earlier self. He is accusing himself of having failed to prosecute his original philosophical project fully.

As seen in the replies above, Frege conceives of logic as pure in the sense that it is prior to world, language, and the thinking subject. We have also seen that the *Tractatus* seeks to show, pace Frege, that logic is not in these respects pure—that world, language, and the thinking subject are all already inscribed within logic itself and vice versa. Hence it seeks to show that that which Frege thinks *must* not depend for its truth on anything else—on any admixture of the empirical, on the actuality of language, or on the existence of human thinkers—does depend on what is empirically the case, on what can be said in language, and on the logical activity of judging subjects. Early Wittgenstein could have said of Frege that he sublimes the logic of our language, projecting upon it a purity that allows it to seem as if it in no way depends upon any admixture of that which Frege wants to purify it. Later Wittgenstein will turn this form of criticism back on the *Tractatus*, claiming that it too, albeit in a subtler and more nuanced way, still suffers from a false conception of the purity of logic.

Wittgenstein's treatment of the "mythological," and specifically of mythologies of purity, acquires its first true significance and depth in his corpus in the context of the series of notes he penned that were posthumously published under the title "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*." In those notes, Wittgenstein charges the British anthropologist Frazer with failing to appreciate that we moderns are just as prone to, and dependent upon, mythological ways of thinking—ways of thinking akin to the very ones that the anthropologist finds in the "pre-scientific" modes of thought of the natives whose beliefs and practices are chronicled in *The Golden Bough*.[55] In the course of developing this charge, Wittgen-

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[54] See, for example, *Philosophical Investigations,* §221.
[55] Wittgenstein is particularly scathing in his remarks about what we might call Frazer's en-

stein observes an affinity between the guiding concern of those notes and that of the *Tractatus*. Right after the observation that "an entire mythology is stored in our language" comes the following remark:

> "As dead as death." "Nothing is as dead as death; nothing is as beautiful as beauty itself." The picture in terms of which we conceive reality here is such that beauty, death, etc., are the pure (concentrated) substances, while they are present in a beautiful object as an admixture. And do I not recognize here my own observations about "object" and "complex"?[56]

"Nothing is as dead as death" and "Nothing is as beautiful as beauty itself" are examples of things that Wittgenstein can well imagine saying to himself. They evince modes of thought to which one can feel attracted without belonging to (what Frazer calls) a "primitive" culture. In so thinking, we conceive of beauty as possessing a sort of purity: we encounter beauty in the beautiful object, but it is present there as an

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lightenment caste of mind—for example, in connection with those moments in Frazer's descriptions of his supposed "savages" that betray his tendency to condescend to them, for example, on the ground that our culture's supposed comparative immunity to responses of wonder and awe marks our developmental distance from them and hence can serve as a measure of our freedom from savagery. I mention this because I suspect that one difference between Travis's reading of Wittgenstein and my own has its source precisely here: in the extent to which we are inclined to regard Wittgenstein as being, as it were, a child of the enlightenment or a vehement critic of it. I take up this issue in a recent interview and, in particular, how it bears on how to understand Wittgenstein's later conceptions of *grammar* and *the ordinary*; see "Inheriting Wittgenstein: James Conant in Conversation with Niklas Forsberg, Part 2," in *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 7, no. 2 (2018): 111–193; see especially pages 186–192. I suspect that Travis would find himself out of sympathy with at least some of what I say there. A discussion of how this dimension of difference in how we each read Wittgenstein bears more generally on the differences in our overall understandings of his philosophy will have to await another occasion.

[56] Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*," in *Philosophical Occasions* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 135. For an interesting discussion of this passage—and more generally of how the "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*" seek both to extend the criticism of prior philosophy presented in the *Tractatus* and to bring the *Tractatus* itself within the scope of that criticism—see Eli Friedlander's "Mythology and Significance in Wittgenstein's 'Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*'" (unpublished manuscript). Friedlander characterizes the moment of continuity that interests me here between Wittgenstein's earlier and later philosophy (that is helpfully foregrounded in his "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*") as follows: "Whatever is significant has meaning in itself. This in turn can be expressed by saying that the significant cannot be 'explained' if explanation means grounding our understanding of some phenomenon by referring its meaning to something external to it. . . . More generally, significance is not relative, or comparative. It does not have the form this is significant in contrast to that (which is insignificant). . . . Significance is in that respect like absolute value, like what is absolutely good or what is beautiful."

admixture. That which strikes awe in us—the beauty itself—cannot belong to the object qua mere object. Wittgenstein recognizes in this something that animated his own Tractarian observations about "object" and "complex." There, too, the concern was with a certain picture of purity—the purity of the logical. That which here occasions wonder in us—the absoluteness of the logical order—can come to seem to us to be such that it cannot possibly be implicated in our dependence on language: on, for example, *our meaning to assert p* in our using *p* as we do.[57] According the picture of the purity of the logical here under attack, the logical object of thought as such, that which so much as allows thoughts to possess judgable content comes to seem to us to be such that it cannot partake in any way in how the empirical world is. The capacity of the logical picture simply "to represent" some possible region of reality thereby comes to appear to us to be a power that the picture *must* be able to possess off its own bat, apart from the assertoric uses to which we happen to decide to put it. The unity of a logical complex *must* be prior to the obtaining of a state of affairs or to the activity of the judging subject in advancing from the unity of the complex to an acknowledgment of its truth-value. This "must" is the fundamental target throughout the Tractarian critique of Frege, yet at a far subtler level of detail it continues also to characterize the form of the target throughout those of his later criticisms which are directed specifically at the *Tractatus*[58]—that is, at the numerous Fregean eggshells that, largely unbeknownst to the author of the *Tractatus,* continue to stick everywhere to his early philosophy.[59]

Travis concludes that the reason Wittgenstein does not immediately warm to Frege's conception of logic is because YW is blind to its central insights. This is alleged to be due to his peculiar reasons for holding that

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[57] A more careful treatment of this issue would take us back to the differences in ways of reading of Wittgenstein, touched on in the previous two footnotes—between a reading (which I reject) in which Wittgenstein seeks to dissipate all sense of wonder in us (wonder, for example, at our very capacity to think and say what is *not* the case) and a reading (which I endorse) in which Wittgenstein seeks to restore our capacity for wonder by relieving us of those forms of perplexity occasioned in us through our attraction to forms of explanation that aspire to extinguish wonder altogether.

[58] Arguably, the redirection of this form of criticism back onto the *Tractatus* begins already in the remarks on Frazer; for example, in its remark about the Tractarian notion of "the world." "For, back then," Wittgenstein writes, "when I began talking about the 'world' (and not this tree or table) what else did I want but to keep something higher spellbound in my words" ("Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*," 117).

[59] I give eighteen examples of such eggshells—of such unwittingly laid-down requirements—in "Mild Mono-Wittgensteinianism"; see the list on pages 85–86.

there are no logical dicta; while MW happily sets these reasons aside. I have suggested that Travis is blind to the philosophical aims of the *Tractatus*—in particular, those that underlie its criticisms of Frege—and that this leaves Travis in no position to adjudicate a dispute between Frege and early Wittgenstein. Though I do not in the least disagree with certain of Travis's conclusions about how later Wittgenstein differs from early Wittgenstein—namely, in having a far more nuanced appreciation of the myriad ways in which the historical application of language in concrete circumstances shapes its logical form—I do disagree that, if properly understood, this development away from his early philosophy represents a movement back toward an embrace of a Fregean conception of logic. On the contrary, the criticism of Frege's conception of sense began in the *Tractatus*—in its discovery that a proper conception of sense requires an appreciation of how the sense of a proposition is nothing less than a matter of what *we mean to assert* in using it as we do. This is the seminal philosophical seed that grows into Wittgenstein's later conception of how our form of agreement in language is agreement in form of life. This brings us to the topic of the final reply.

How *does* one do justice to what occasions philosophical wonder in us without conferring false sublimity upon it? We said that what occasions Frege's wonder—the absoluteness of the logical order—seems to him to be such that it cannot possibly be implicated in our dependence upon language: say, in our meaning to assert *p* in using a proposition to say one thing rather than another, or in our using just these words rather than some others to assert it. The *Tractatus* (while repudiating Frege's conception that the nature of logic may in no way be implicated in that of language) still seeks a way to hold onto the idea that in logic it is not *we* who express, by means of signs, what we want; rather it is the nature of the essentially necessary signs—it is *logic*—that asserts itself. The later Wittgenstein, as we are about to see, seeks to undo this residual subliming of the logical in the *Tractatus*, while in no way seeking to dissipate the sense of wonder at the illimitable depth of the logical—(what he later calls) the grammatical—that shows itself in our forms of thought and life.

Reply to Benoist: Wittgenstein on the Relation of Language to Life

With this reply we move now all the way into the heart of the philosophical landscape of the later Wittgenstein: into the world of his characteristically outlandish examples, elusive thought-experiments, insistent interlocutory voices, dialogical interventions, and philosophical parables. The topic of Jocelyn Benoist's contribution to this volume, as well as of this reply, is how we should understand the relation of Wittgenstein's parable of the wood sellers to Frege's thought experiment about the logical alien.

Benoist begins his contribution by offering a succinct summary of the dilemma which figures at the heart of Conant's account of Frege's encounter with the logical alien: either our thought and that of the alien can achieve some form of logical engagement (we can "meet" his thought, as Benoist puts it) or not—in which case his performances cannot come into view for us as manifesting a form of thinking at all; hence, not an alien one.[1] Benoist endorses Conant's reading of the encounter as the exploration of a philosophical fantasy whose point lies in the attempt to achieve an understanding of why, in philosophizing, "we might be driven to entertain such a fantasy." The scenario of the encounter with the logically alien thinker, Benoist says, "is supposed to tell us something about thought" through the exploration of the idea of that which "precisely cannot really be grasped by thought." His aim is to "generalize [Conant's

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[1] In this connection, Benoist quotes the following remark from Conant: "Creatures who moo and eat grass are not manifesting a logically alien form of thought" (Conant, "Logically Alien Thought," this volume, 80).

strategy by applying it to the famous case of (what Benoist calls) 'the funny wood sellers'—namely those introduced by Wittgenstein in his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*."[2]

Wittgenstein's peculiarly alien tribe of wood sellers surfaces in the context of a fairly extended investigation into what it is to think and calculate "as we do." We will return below to the question of what is more generally at issue in the surrounding portions of the text. For the most part, however, the aim of this reply will be simply to shed as much light as possible on the four rather dark sections of *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* Part I—namely, §§149–152—in which Wittgenstein first elaborates and then enigmatically comments on his parable of the wood sellers.[3] The immediately preceding sequence of sections (starting with §143) begins by presenting us with a series of possible practices of wood-selling that are not particularly difficult to wrap our minds around. The first case seems to involve a practice that is immediately intelligible to us: "People pile up logs and sell them, the piles are measured with a ruler, the measurements of length, breadth and height multiplied together" so as to determine the cost of the pile.[4] Thereafter various alternative practices are proposed. For example, "Wouldn't it be more correct to sell [wood] by weight—or by the time it took to fell the timber—or by the labour of felling measured by the age and strength of the woodsman?, etc."[5] Benoist brings out how we are just as readily able to make sense of each of these alternatives, precisely because they all represent variations on the sorts of practices we already go in for. They all represent cases for which we can easily imagine circumstances that would render them sensible alternative ways *for us* to go about selling wood. None of these initial examples of wood-selling activity compete with or in any way threaten our concepts of measuring, calculating, and

[2] Benoist points out that Conant himself, in the footnotes to his paper, offers hints as to how one might connect his discussion of the logical alien with this moment in Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. All quotations from and allusions to Benoist in the preceding paragraph are to his opening remarks in this volume, 281–282.

[3] It is worth bearing in mind that these are notes Wittgenstein made to himself—not polished material intended in its presently existing form for publication. Part of the task of understanding these sections, therefore, consists in speculating how Wittgenstein might have gone about expanding them if he had chosen to incorporate some version of this material into the manuscript he was preparing for publication—i.e., the manuscript that subsequently became and was posthumously published as *Philosophical Investigations*.

[4] Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*; Revised Edition (hereafter *RFM),* eds. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), I, §143.

[5] Ibid., I, §148.

pricing. They simply indicate different ways of doing the things we call "measuring" wood—or wood-related "labor"—and determining a particular relation between that measurement and, via an intermediary "calculation," its "value" or "cost."

A comprehension of each of these cases in the initial sequence of possible wood-selling practices requires of us a projection of some or all of the concepts that figure in their formulation (measurement, calculation, value, price, cost, labor) onto a slightly different set of circumstances of use than those most familiar to us. For each such task of projection, the required extension of our concepts in question comes naturally to us. As Benoist observes, each such practice yields different results, but we are able to understand each of those results insofar as we are able to grasp both the nature and the point of the principle through which they are obtained. That these examples are so readily intelligible may be traced to their satisfying the following two conditions: first, though the envisioned practices yield different results, they do not stand in anything like a relation of fundamental logical conflict with any of our practices; second, they do not call upon us to imagine beings with fundamentally different concepts (of measurement, calculation, value, price, cost, labor, etc.) than ours. This raises the following questions: Could there be an example of a practice that fails to satisfy the first condition? And, if we conclude that there could not, does this entail that we cannot imagine beings whose concepts are fundamentally different from ours? We will return to these questions below. For the present, it is simply worth observing that it is only once we reach a certain point in the dialectical elaboration of the example that such questions arise.

The initial differences that come into view between our and their ways of selling wood are differences of no great philosophical moment. Depending upon the circumstances in which one finds oneself, considerations may be raised for or against any of these ways of selling wood—but the choice in each case, at least as characterized up until this point, is not one that places us at a crossroads between fundamentally conflicting conceptual spaces. Which of the practices is the most sensible to adopt will depend upon many considerations not specified here, but their further specification will not essentially alter our concepts. Up until this stage in Wittgenstein's dialectic of variations on forms of wood-selling, Benoist correctly observes, we have been presented with nothing more than choices that turn on ways of schematizing and applying our antecedently available concepts with respect to a set of equally intelligible, if not always equally optimal, alternative practical options.

Then we come to the following passage—where the mystery, or the fun, really begins:

> Very well; but what if they piled the timber in heaps of arbitrary, varying height and then sold it at a price proportionate to the area covered by the piles? And what if they even justified this with the words: "Of course, if you buy more timber, you must pay more"?[6]

It is not clear how this is to be understood. Indeed, it is central to Benoist's proposal for understanding what Wittgenstein is up to here that we be willing to do a certain amount of philosophical work on our own. The reader is given a task here to work out for herself. As we shall see, Benoist and various other fine readers of Wittgenstein—such as Stanley Cavell, David Cerbone, and Barry Stroud—have partially overlapping and partially diverging accounts of the character, extent, and degree of the intricacy of the exercise to be completed here on the part of the reader. Yet they all agree the reader must try to work through a range of possible ways of understanding these passages.

Let us begin by exploring Benoist's understanding of the range of homework assignments that have been handed down to us as readers of these passages. As we shall see, he in effect considers three distinct forms of strategy for making progress with the assignment—three ways of imagining a practice of "selling wood" that differs from our own: (1) *fully comprehensible ways* for selling wood in which we might engage, even if, as a matter fact, we do not; (2) *barely comprehensible ways* in which we would never engage but can still at least fleetingly grasp; and (3) *utterly incomprehensible ways* that are neither cases of (1) nor (2). The real question, for Benoist, is what any instance of the third way can really amount to, if anything. It would appear to require a form of thought and behavior about which the following would be the right to say: such thought and behavior is, precisely in virtue of the sort of thought and behavior it is, necessarily unintelligible to us. Could we ever be presented with a scene of human conduct about which that would be the right thing to say? This reply will conclude by taking up this question. Let us first, with Benoist's assistance, trace the steps through which Wittgenstein leads up to that question.

As Wittgenstein introduces further details, especially given how perplexing some of them appear to be, it requires ever more of an effort to conceive the wood sellers as engaged in a practice that we are able to find comprehensible. Once the wood sellers begin to perplex us in this way, it

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[6] Ibid., I, §149.

becomes a live question whether we might be able to understand them better if only we knew a bit more about them. As David Cerbone observes:

> Consider how little we know about the wood sellers, how little we are told about them: what they do with wood, why they are distributing wood, how do they distribute other products? These and other questions regarding their lives cannot be answered, and as long as they cannot, whether or not they are measuring and calculating (let alone correctly or incorrectly) must remain undecided.[7]

One solution to this deficit in our knowledge about the wood sellers is simply to supply a great deal of missing detail ourselves. This is what variants of strategy (1) do—they fill in the example so as to render it a depiction of *fully comprehensible ways* for selling wood. Read this way, the passage invites us to imagine a practice different from any in which we currently engage, but one whose point may be made fully intelligible once we are enabled to see its point. We need to postulate special circumstances to understand why wood should be sold in this way, but, as Benoist indicates, there are many ways to do this. For instance, we can imagine the onset of some local set of circumstances giving rise to the adoption of a peculiar practice—or we can imagine that we might engage in the practice with some very specialized interest. Such readings of the passage are like differing solutions to a riddle. Each variant of a reading confers a different retrospective sense on the original set of words by means of which the example was presented.[8]

Here is one solution to the example, thus conceived as a riddle, which Benoist offers:

> [W]hat if the problem is to get some pile of wood that can stick into some definite slot without being reassembled? Perhaps, in such a case, the size of the side of the pile that rests on the ground might prove to be the decisive factor and the measure of our needs.[9]

Wittgenstein's case of the strange wood sellers originally jars because it seems to envisage a general way of doing things that challenges our con-

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[7] David Cerbone, "How to Do Things with Wood," in *The New Wittgenstein,* ed. A. Crary and R. Read (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 302.

[8] As we shall see at the conclusion of this reply, in *RFM* §151, Wittgenstein offers his own remarkable suggestion for how we might go about making sense of the wood sellers—one that confers a very different retrospective sense upon the initial formulation of the riddle than any of the solutions we are about to consider below.

[9] Benoist, this volume, 285–286.

ception of what it could so much as mean to say of some quantity of wood that there is "less" or "more." Benoist points out that a solution to the riddle such as the one he suggests above may avoid this difficulty simply by resituating the behavior of the wood sellers within a set of circumstances in which we restrict ourselves to one very specific dimension of the possible arrangement of wood and deploy the terms "less" or "more" only in connection with that dimension. Hence, in deploying these concepts, we no longer take ourselves to be calculating the overall amount of wood, yet we still can make sense of what we are doing—we have a good reason for this restriction of interest (and hence for this departure from usual practice). This renders the example no longer deeply strange—it becomes, as it were, manageably exotic.

Another way to domesticate the example is to envision a set of circumstance in which it would be natural for us to calculate (what, in that situation, we would still call) "the amount of wood" in a manner that resembles what the members of Wittgenstein's tribe do:

> Thus, when we say that, under some particular circumstances, we might wind up calculating the amount of wood exactly the way those maybe not so strange people do, there is something misleading in that. Because what we mean is that, under those circumstances, due to the special needs of the moment, to calculate the amount of wood would not be what it usually is for us.[10]

If I understand him, Benoist's point here is that the transformation of the example here effected through this way of imagining it is misleadingly described as a scenario in which "we wind up calculating the amount of wood exactly as they do." Rather, though the initial description of them made it seem as if they were doing something quite different from us, it turns out to be a misleading description of a way of doing something that we, too, would do under those circumstances. In suggesting the possibility that we would do what they do "under some very particular set of circumstances," Benoist is exploring the possibility that there is a way to construe the passage in a manner that goes against the grain of the way in which Wittgenstein himself initially seems to want to invite us to construe it (and the way in which we ourselves may be inclined to suppose we must construe it) if it is to engage our official topic—namely, that of logically alien thought.

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[10] Ibid., 286.

The first solution to the riddle Benoist proposes above is—as he later acknowledges—a highly condensed rendition of a far more elaborated version of such a possible reading of the passage, first presented by Stanley Cavell.[11] Here is the initially envisioned scenario with which we are presented, as Cavell describes it: "We have come across some people who sell wood not according to what we call "the amount of wood" in a pile, but according to the amount of ground covered by the pile, regardless of its height."[12] In seeking possible ways to make sense of what some wood sellers who can be so described might be up to, Cavell proposes the following direction for beginning to imaginatively fill in what else the scenario might involve:

> [S]uppose our attitude is that we are inclined to suppose that they are quite coherent, even in our terms (they more or less seemed to be, until this last step about selling according to area covered). There are details which may then become relevant to learn: Does wood, given the way trees are felled and wood cut and stacked and transported in that place, "naturally" involve standard piles, so that logs are more trouble, i.e., more costly, to store and to load if they are strewn around; if for no other reason than that they have first to be piled, or piled again, before delivery?[13]

This is suggestive. But if this is all we have to say about it, then it does not take us all that far. But if one adds further details to the story, continuing to elaborate it in the suggested direction, then it begins to yield consequences for how to understand what the wood sellers mean by their words that may interest us. The guiding suggestion here is that it is possible to further fill in the scenario in ways that allow the wood sellers' uses of various crucial expressions—such as "a lot" and "a bunch" and "more"—to exhibit forms of logico-grammatical specificity whose very possibility we are initially inclined to disregard in a philosophical investigation into the nature of logical thought.

One way of filling things in along these lines could, Cavell suggests, have the following consequence: "a lot of wood" means something like "a bunch of wood" or a "non-pile."[14] What is a non-pile? In this further elaborated

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[11] Benoist is explicit about his indebtedness to Cavell on this point. This makes his subsequent criticism of Cavell's treatment of the passage—which I will discuss below—all the more puzzling.

[12] Cavell, *The Claim of Reason,* 115.

[13] Ibid., 116. We will return below to how Cavell introduces this passage.

[14] Ibid, 116.

version of the scenario, there are now only these two options for buying wood in their world: purchasing it in a conveniently pre-arranged pile or purchasing a set of pieces of wood scattered alongside one another across a stretch of ground. We can elaborate the example further in a broadly Cavellian spirit to render it even more perspicuous. Perhaps the scattered configurations of wood came about due to overzealous customers—wittingly or unwittingly—unbundling or toppling a pile in their determination to discern the precise quality, texture, and grain of the individual pieces. It is hard to get a good look at much of the wood that has been bundled into a pile. It is much easier to make out exactly what you are getting when the wood is arranged in a non-pile. From the point of the sellers, however, the latter configuration introduces difficulties that the former does not. They are more trouble, hence more costly, to store and to load, in part because they first have to be piled, or piled again, prior to delivery. The non-piles are better for the customer but worse for the seller. You pay less but take your chances, or you take fewer chances but pay more.

Now we have at least the beginning of a description of a world in which wood ought to cost more when it covers a greater surface area. And we now have at least the beginnings of a story about why the terms "more" and "less" might require a particular sort of grammatical inflection in this context. The intended sense in which one arrangement involves more wood than the other has nothing to do with what we mean when we speak of there being a "greater overall quantity" of something. Rather it is "more" because there are more separate bits of wood to which the seller has to attend in order to fulfill an order. Talk of "more wood" here is grammatically tied to more *labor* (for the seller)—not more *consumable matter* (for the buyer). Our initial misunderstanding was due to our imagining that when they spoke of "more" and "less" they meant more or less total stuff (to be received by us) rather than comparatively greater or fewer parcels (to be gathered by them). We were thinking of "wood" as a mass noun and of "more" and "less" as comparative measures of the total aggregate mass of wood-stuff at issue in each case. The wood sellers were thinking of wood as a count noun and of "more" and "less" as ranging over the countable collocations of wood with which, at the time of transaction, they would have to contend.[15]

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[15] This is still not yet a story for which it is right to say—at least about what *they* think they are doing—that they "pile the timber in heaps of arbitrary, varying height and then sell it at a price proportionate to the area covered by the piles." But it might be a good description of what *we* (are likely to) think they are doing. It is a story which the outside observer might find to be a perfectly accurate description of their behavior—an outside observer,

I started the previous paragraph by saying: "[W]e now have at least the beginnings of a story about why the terms 'more' and 'less' might require a particular sort of grammatical inflection in this context." Why only the *beginnings* of a story? What would a full story look like? It would require the investigation of a case in which we can really come to understand the shared interests and natural reactions of real human beings. That is, it would require a *real* example—not just a philosopher's *toy* example. If, upon further investigation, the language of the wood sellers turns out closely to resemble some actual natural language—say, modern Japanese—then we would have the resources at our disposal to transform it into a real example: one which would allow us genuinely to comprehend how certain ways of speaking are connected with avenues of human attention and concern in ways that are exhibited within the unity of a form of life. This, however, also requires much more work. For now, in order properly to characterize the modes of language appropriate to the activity of buying and selling wood, we need to understand a great deal else about the relation of their language to their form of life—such as the modes of speech they deem appropriate in a great many other activities; for example, how one goes about counting, storing, or conceptually carving out the kinds of things that are counted or stored in their world.

To bring out how a qualitatively different order of complexity comes into play when we turn from a toy to a real example, let us consider modern Japanese a bit more closely. The full panoply of grammatical forms for speaking of quantity is more difficult to master in Japanese than any other language. It is consequently also harder to fully master the grammar of the range of applications for concepts roughly translatable in English as "less," "more," "fewer," "greater," etc. Japanese employs a stunning variety of expressions—known to linguists as counters—depending upon the kind of thing one counts. It depends, for example, on whether what is counted (to gesture at just a few of the many counters in Japanese) are small animals, large animals, occurrences, tiny particles, built structures, things that come in pairs, garments, thin flat objects,

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that is, who is unable to comprehend either why they speak of there being more wood when it is scattered more widely or why they charge more for it once it comes to be scattered. More generally: if the description of the wood sellers Wittgenstein presents us with is supposed to be offered from the perspective of someone unfamiliar with their ways, then it is inevitable that—as long as the observer cannot see sense in what they are doing—at least some portion of what they do will strike him as unmotivated or arbitrary. This is one aim of the overall dialectic: to investigate the fantasy of a possible point of view on some general form of human thought-behavior that *simultaneously* permits us to conclude (1) we are able to describe it perfectly and (2) no possible sense can be made of it.

potted things, cupfuls, board games, human figures (or statues or images thereof), chairs or seats, small plants, round things, musical tunes, marine life, stories or episodes, floors, bags of rice, nights of a stay, weeks, months, years (qua historical dates), years (qua measures of age), picture frames, small boats and nautical craft, revered objects or statuary, servings of food, or boxes. (This list could be made much longer.) I have just attempted very briefly and crudely—by employing English words—to gesture at some of the distinct categories for which differing Japanese counters are used. Properly mastering the use of any of the more difficult cases of these requires first fathoming the contours of its categorial shape: the conceptual contours of the family of items it serves to numerate. This will prove much harder for us to do for some such categories than others.

Now comes the point at which we suddenly turn our toy example into a real one—the point at which knowing Japanese could offer us a way to confer an entire language and form of life upon the wood sellers. To make this move does not involve simply postulating a *merely linguistic* fact about them—that their language and Japanese have a structurally similar form of grammar. For what we mean here when we say they "have" a certain "grammar" is not simply a matter of their talking a certain way but also of their living or having lived in ways that shape, and are shaped by, certain characteristic forms of interest, attention, and concern.

There is one Japanese counter whose most straightforward and canonical use is for those things in the world that come in elongated cylindrical shapes: asparagus, noodles, icicles, pencils, screwdrivers, knives, arrows, chopsticks, bottles, and fishing rods, among other things. But this same counter is also used in connection with stuff that, though in some way associated with that shape, need not actually be of that shape. This includes things that, when stored, assume a cylindrical shape—like tatami mats—even if, in the normal run of life, they are usually not encountered or experienced as having that shape. Additionally, it includes things that once typically bore that shape—like chimneys—even if they no longer do. It also includes stuff that was once traditionally bundled into parcels or sold in certain characteristically shaped flasks or somehow deemed most interesting when arrayed in that form, etc.— again regardless of whether the stuff in question is initially or usually or finally encountered in anything like that arrangement on the average occasion. Hence, among other things, smoke plumes, perfume, alcoholic beverages, and—you guessed it—*wood*. On this way of talking, whether there is more or less wood is measured by how it is parceled out. If there

is a single pile or parcel of wood then, in order to specify the quantity, a word for "one" takes the expression for the counter as a suffix and the resulting compound expression jointly modifies the word for "wood." If you knock over a stack or unbundle a parcel, then the wood will no longer be grammatically correctly denominated or numerated by the compound expression (involving n=1 plus counter) signifying just one, but rather by some compound expression (involving 1 plus counter) signifying an amount greater than one. In short, in the appropriate set of circumstances, a grammatically correct thing to say in modern Japanese—once the stack is toppled or the bundle untied—would be, "Now there is more!"

But Wittgenstein's example is not in this sense a real example. There is no way to embark upon a systematic study of the grammar of modern wood-seller-speak. We have to do with (what I have called) a *toy* example. Philosophers are prone to play with such toys. This often has intellectually pernicious results, especially when they think their toys serve as adequate substitutes for the real thing. Playing with such toys, however, can be an intellectually fruitful activity if one understands—or at least comes to understand—what one is really doing in so playing and what one *can* learn from doing so. So let us return to our toy example and continue to play with it.

In the state of play at which we last left the wood sellers, we had just postulated that their language does not at all resemble modern English and at least somewhat resembles modern Japanese in certain respects. Unlike in modern English, in their language, "wood" is not a mass noun. Rather, in their language, wood is a category of a substance that comes with its own form of counter. This expression governs the grammar of speaking about "how much" there is of something in connection with a particular category of substance in such a way that when the stuff is assembled or parceled into neatly ordered stacks, each stack or parcel is numerated via the grammatical mediation of the counter as "one." And when these are toppled or unbundled, so that there is now "more" with which to contend, each distributed mess of scattered bits of stuff is "many." In thus fleshing out the toy example, I have taken certain of Cavell's initial suggestions further than he ever does, but I have done so in a manner that I take to be in the spirit of his original exercise. What is the spirit of that exercise? To appreciate what Cavell is up to here, we need to pause every so often and ask ourselves, in the light of various further proposed additions, how are we to understand the wood sellers *now?* And we need to do this repeatedly, registering how each set of additions makes for a further set of differences in our apprehension of "them."

If one knows a great deal about Japanese culture, then one will be able to see systematic connections between how they speak and how they live. To breathe life into our toy example, we must do something similar. To see how Cavell does this, we have to pick up the thread of his discussion where we last left it. That is, we must leave out my amendment to wood-seller linguistics—about how the grammar of counting might work in their world. We need instead to go back to where Cavell last left them, selling wood in two sorts of configurations: piles and non-piles, where the latter—since they require piling or being piled again, prior to delivery—cost more. In this hypothetical culture, why do they sell wood in just these two ways and no others? Cavell proposes a set of further details of his own to try to make sense of this. Let us consider what further differences they end up making to how we come to be inclined to picture the lives of the inhabitants in this increasingly determinately specified scenario:

> And what do their buildings look like? It needn't be true that you can "build more or bigger" buildings with more wood rather than less. All buildings may have the same amount of wood in them. Bigger buildings—i.e., ones covering a greater area—have the wood spaced differently; instead of what we call log cabins, the logs are used as columns, with cloth or strings of vines stretched between.—"But obviously 'build more or bigger' means 'more or bigger of the same kind'. You can build either more or bigger cabin structures or more or bigger temple structures with a greater amount of wood."—It was not obvious. And maybe it is irrelevant: each member is permitted to build only one structure, and he has simply to choose which; or maybe their architectural skills limit them to types of structures which will not accept more than a certain amount of wood for each structure. (For example, they can't lay logs horizontally on top of one another to a point higher than the tallest logs, which, placed vertically, are used as retainers.)[16]

As such details are introduced into our portrayal of their form of life, it affects our understanding of who they are. Our picture of their life becomes much more determinate if we enter all of the following into it: they are not permitted to build more than one structure each, their buildings come in preordained possible types of cabins of a fixed size, each of these cabins has the same amount of wood in it, and their architectural skills are such that they have no use for more than the standard amount of

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[16] Ibid., 116.

wood (perhaps not just because these are the only cabins they are *allowed* to build but are the only ones they so much as know *how* to build). These differences matter in that each makes a further difference to how we understand the original example. Once all of these further details are in place, there may no longer be reason to wonder whether "they have different practices of calculation from ours." If there are just two fundamental kinds of configuration of wood bought and sold, each with the same amount of wood in it (the only amount anyone wants to buy), and there is always the same fixed additional charge for the extra trouble exacted by the sloppy sort of configuration, regardless of how sloppy it is, then no one needs to calculate. Their deployment in such contexts of terms such as "more" allows for a form of application independent of any need for calculation. If all one needs to know is that any non-pile in the relevant sense involves "more" than any pile, then one's mastery of a practice of calculation need no longer play any role in one's appreciation of why a pile and a non-pile are not to be sold at the same price.[17]

As one seriously strives to make progress with the scenario of the wood sellers by moving in the direction Cavell here indicates, the time may come when questions about not just their *present* practices but also their *past* ones, hence about their *history* of practice, come to matter—questions that initially will have seemed quite irrelevant.[18] For example, how seriously are we to take the apparent fact that, on Cavell's way of filling in the scenario, their form of life is in certain ways so remarkably unsophisticated (for example, the techné of architecture remains remarkably undeveloped among them, they have little interest in varying the structures in which they dwell, and so on) and yet, in other ways, is apparently highly evolved (for example, they have left a barter economy behind, developed their own form of currency, expect money in exchange for wood, and so on). Perhaps we will conclude that they are a people who have lived through some historical period of great upheaval (one that featured a greater diversity in architectural forms but, alas, also crippling forms of inequality in material wealth and consequent forms of social strife). Perhaps they look upon that

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[17] Hence, Cavell remarks at one point, "Nor need calculation enter in at all, even where we will still call what they do 'selling' rather than 'giving.' If there is just one price for piles of wood and one other price for non-piles, what would there be to calculate?" (ibid., 117).

[18] To revert to our real example, if one does not just want to try to learn by rote which counters to use when in modern Japan, but wants really to *understand* why counters canonically used for counting long cylindrical things are also used in connection with stuff such as tatami mats or wood, then one may have to interest oneself in historical facts about how such stuff was traditionally stored, transported, sold at outdoor markets, etc. Absent an interest in their forms of *use*, their grammar will appear arbitrary—unmotivated—to us.

prior period in their history with a mixture of horror (at how terrible things were then) and relief (at how things are no longer like that). They refer to it as "the age of division." They have collectively willed to do what they call "returning to a simpler age"—to a time in which people lived in uniform structures and wealth was evenly distributed. But they have made some compromises: they retain some of the conveniences of a later age (including, among other things, money). They have endeavored to dispense only with those features of their history (such as the existence of private homes of wildly differing sizes) that they consider to have been causes of their former condition of strife.

This points to a whole range of possible questions that may arise when attempting to fill in the example along the lines proposed by Cavell. Is what is apparently "primitive" (to borrow a fraught, but essential, concept of Wittgenstein's) in their form of life something merely apparently primitive (in the sense that they have voluntarily imposed it upon themselves), is it a mark of a peculiar limit reached in their development (so that they seem to be somehow just plain stuck with their distinctive set of practices), or is it just that certain possibilities for further development have yet to dawn (making them ripe for a coming revolution)?

As Cavell further fills out the example of the wood sellers in some of the ways specified above, their form of life becomes increasingly intelligible to us precisely through its coming to seem different from ours in increasingly clearly specifiable respects. Some of these specifiable differences in cultural and economic dispensation, as they come more sharply into view, have the consequence that—as long as they are not construed as part of a return to a simpler form of life through a collective act of legislative fiat—also appear to exhibit an element of contingency and fragility. They appear liable, given the onset of certain pressures, to collapse into something that will be a version of *our* form of life. If certain changes are introduced into "their" practices thus imagined, then what initially appeared to be "radically different" ways of speaking about and exchanging wood will prove transformable into a set of practices resembling our own. For example, further developing the scenario from the point at which we last left off, Cavell adds this wrinkle:

> If a great architect rises up among them, he or she may teach them to notch the logs into one another so as to get much greater heights; then a member will have to choose not just which kind of structure he wants, but what size; and maybe pay accordingly. Now they will have a use for the expression "more wood" which is like ours, because then they

will also have a use for the expression "bigger cabin" and even for "more cabin".[19]

Now, for example, a mastery of practices of calculation will necessarily begin to play a role in how "they" go about determining how much a given configuration of wood ought to cost. Accordingly, "they" are apt to start to seem less like a "they" and more like some version of us. This is a general feature of ways of understanding the passage that belong to strategy (1): they will depend upon introducing forms of difference between us and them that are, in this sense, comparatively parochial—and hence relatively culturally eliminable (insofar as they permit imagining the possible future development of their practices into ours or vice versa) and relatively intellectually surmountable (insofar as they permit of the achievement of forms of understanding between us and them).

As far as I can make out, Benoist thinks that Cavell's view of what Wittgenstein is up to with his scenario of the wood sellers is exhausted by passages such as the ones I have just gone to some pains to adduce from *The Claim of Reason*—passages in which Cavell tries to fill in the scenario in ways that render "them" increasingly intelligible to us. This points to a significant part of Cavell's reading of the wood sellers but, in mistaking the part for the whole, it also mistakes the overall shape of his account of what it means to work with this sort of Wittgensteinian example.

We might be inclined to think that the additional details Cavell introduces into the examples matter as follows: as we introduce each of these differences, we change the example in some important way. But much of the thrust of Cavell's discussion seems to point toward the opposite conclusion: namely, that until we introduce this sort of detail into our specification of the case at hand, we do not yet really have an example—what we have is merely the illusion of an example. So did Wittgenstein fail to provide a proper example? Should we understand Cavell, in filling in the example, to be remedying a failure on his part—turning something philosophically useless into something that can do philosophical work? What sort of work is a Wittgensteinian example of this type supposed to do? What *type* of example is this, anyway?[20] Why does an example of this

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[19] Ibid., 116. This requires understanding how "bigger cabin" and "more cabin" are (what Wittgenstein calls) *expressions* of their *interest*; see *Philosophical Investigations*, §570.

[20] As will soon become clear, I take the scenario of the builders (*Philosophical Investigations*, §2ff.) and that of the private linguist (*Philosophical Investigations*, §243ff.) to constitute Wittgenstein's two most famous (and most widely misunderstood) examples of the type

type suit Wittgenstein's philosophical purposes in a way that a real example never could? We will take up these questions in a moment.

Before we do so, we would do well at this juncture to take the time to turn back a handful of pages and read through the whole stretch of passages in the *Remarks in the Foundations of Mathematics* that precede the introduction of the scenario of the wood sellers. In many of those passages, we will find Wittgenstein adducing a wealth of concrete features that our practices of measuring and calculating exhibit—a sort of detail that he suspects will at first strike us as irrelevant to a philosophical investigation of what "measuring" and "calculating," as such, really are. This is, of course, a characteristic gesture on the part of the later Wittgenstein: to show us that our concepts have connections to our lives and practices of a sort that we are non-accidentally inclined to overlook in philosophy. A subsequent move of his will be to return all the way to the form of philosophical perplexity that helped to launch our investigation in the first place. For he thinks that when the concepts we investigate in philosophy are considered in the manner that they characteristically are—in complete isolation from the circumstances in which they have their life—it ends up seeming mysterious to us how they could possibly have the sort of grip on us that they do. If this is any part of what the thought-experiment about the wood sellers is supposed to show in connection with our concepts of measuring, calculating, inferring, etc.,

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here in question. My own favorite case of an example of this type in *Philosophical Investigations* is found in §207. It follows upon §206, where we are first set this task:

> Suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them, and so on?

§207 then introduces the sort of twist that is characteristic of the more extraordinary type of Wittgensteinian example here at issue:

> Let us imagine that the people in that country carried on the usual human activities and in the course of them employed, apparently, an articulate language. If we watch their behaviour we find it intelligible, it seems 'logical'. But when we try to learn their language we find it impossible to do so. For there is no regular connexion between what they say, the sounds they make, and their actions; but still these sounds are not superfluous, for if we gag one of the people, it has the same consequences as with us; without the sounds their actions fall into confusion—as I feel like putting it. Are we to say that these people have a language: orders, reports, and the rest?

This is arguably—as I suggested in my reply to Gustafsson above—the case of an example of this type that pushes us the furthest in the direction of fully thinking through the philosophical upshot of Frege's case of the logical alien. I leave it as an exercise for my reader to work out how what I say below about the builders, the private linguist, and the wood sellers might equally apply to the task which Wittgenstein sets his reader in §207.

then it should hardly surprise us that part of the point of the exercise is to reveal how, if we seek to investigate these concepts in isolation from the wider context in which they have their life, we will be led to regard them with philosophically characteristic forms of perplexity.

With these observations in hand, let us now return to our five questions: With his wood sellers, did Wittgenstein fail to provide a proper example? Is Cavell, in providing a wider context for understanding them and their utterances, remedying a failure on Wittgenstein's part? What sort of work is an example of this type supposed to accomplish? What is the type of which it constitutes a supposed instance? Why does an example of this type suit Wittgenstein's philosophical purposes in a way that a real example never could? The idea that it is a defective example—for example, that it suffers a defect which we could remedy by substituting a real example for it—depends on something like the following assumption: its philosophically fateful degree of indeterminacy is an unintentional feature—at best inessential and at worst detrimental to its philosophical purpose. This raises two questions: What would it be for the example not to suffer from the supposed defect while still fulfilling its dialectical role? And what is here required of the reader presented with this scenario? What, on a comprehensive reading of the text, should our understanding be of what it means for a reader of Wittgenstein to do her homework: to work—and make progress—with this type of example?[21]

Its philosophically fateful degree of initial indeterminacy will not be inessential to its purpose if an essential part of its purpose is to reveal our liability to certain forms of philosophical fantasy. Before we turn to Benoist's criticisms of (what he takes to be) Stanley Cavell's treatment of the wood sellers, it is worth noting how closely it parallels Cavell's treatment of two further philosophical parables found in the writings of later Wittgenstein: that of the builders at the opening of the *Investigations* and that of the private linguist. In his discussions of each of these cases, Cavell takes himself, in teasing out the sorts of questions that the text may elicit in us, to be revealing layers of philosophical intention that are latent in Wittgenstein's dialectical strategy. A brief look at his account of these other two cases will help us better understand how he sees the general type of Wittgensteinian assignment to the reader of which he takes the wood sellers to be an instance.

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[21] "Anything your reader can do for himself leave to him" (Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value,* 77).

In his discussion of the builders, Cavell explores how the initial description of them, with their four available words and corresponding forms of behavioral uptake, may incline us to picture them as belonging to a form of life essentially different from ours—perhaps as plodding and primitive, lacking expressiveness or variety in their possibilities for response. Here, too—as with the wood sellers—we may be inclined to conceive the case to be one of members of a tribe whose form of life is radically different from our own. Our inclination to so picture them will likely be further exacerbated by Wittgenstein's final instruction to us: "Conceive this as a complete primitive language."[22] Cavell reports the result of his first attempt to conceive things in accordance with this instruction:

> [W]hen I try to imagine adults having just these words—e.g., the builder and his assistant—I find that I imagine them moving sluggishly, as if dull-witted, or uncomprehending, like cave men. Try it out. Make yourself call out one of your only four words, making one of your only four choices (except for the choice not to work, if that is a choice in these circumstances).[23]

And in teaching the *Investigations,* he describes his effort to make this experience of his first response to the passage come alive for his students in the classroom:

> I confess to shuffling slowly down the sides of the classroom moaning out my four "words." I want this experience in this room to bring itself, in contrast to the way a child "says" its four words—with what charming curiosity, expectation, excitement, repetitions. . . . The child has a future with its language, the builders have, without luck, or the genius of invention, none—only their repetitions.[24]

But we can also imagine them differently, if we try to find a coherence in what they do—if we imaginatively labor to supply them with an environing set of circumstances against whose background their forms of behavior may come into focus for us as perfectly natural ways to proceed:

> [Imagine] the context in which the builders are doing their jobs in a noisy work area, . . . an area surrounded by traffic, spectators, featuring

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[22] *Philosophical Investigations,* §2.

[23] Stanley Cavell, "Notes and Afterthoughts on the Opening of Wittgenstein's *Investigations,*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein,* ed. H. Sluga and D. Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 278.

[24] Ibid.

heaving machinery. If in that noisy environment I imagine the calls "Slab," Pillar," etc., I do not imagine them said sluggishly or vacantly . . . but vigorously, in shouts, perhaps with hands cupped around the mouth. Wittgenstein does not say that his builders are *not* in such an area.[25]

Once we uncover this second possible way of reading the example, we may retrospectively become interested in the fact that we were initially inclined to imagine them otherwise:

> I [initially] imagined them alone, and in an otherwise deserted landscape. As though they were building the first building. Was this arbitrary? And why have I not been interested in *what* they were building, or even *that* they were building a particular building—for the fact that they are building something in particular would influence the order and repetition of the series of "four calls." If I could think of the task as dictating the (order of the) calls, hence of the builder as ready for the next item, I might have imagined him differently. . . . [26]

A final parallel in our possible responses to the two parables—the wood sellers and the builders—needs to be mentioned. An abrupt additional specification provided by Wittgenstein (with regard to exactly what it is that we are to imagine) may have the effect that we find we are simply no longer able to make *any* sense of these people—that we find their supposed form of life unimaginable or incomprehensible. In the case of the wood sellers, this response may be elicited in us when we are further informed by Wittgenstein: ". . . but what if they piled the timber in heaps of arbitrary, varying height and then sold it at a price *proportionate to the area* covered by the piles?" Huh? In the case of the builders, it may come when we are informed: ". . . and they have just these four words *and no others*—conceive this as a complete primitive language!" Imagine: At the end of the day, when they sit down and relax over a drink, they still just have these four "words" (or "calls") available to them for purposes of communication, and nothing else. Huh? If our reaction to either of these additional specifications has the form of such a "Huh?" then the attempt to take the imaginative plunge into the teeth of this incomprehension is likely to have the result that, in trying to execute the instruction (as Cavell puts it), "we make them quite unintelligible to us."[27]

[25] Ibid., 289.
[26] Ibid., 289–290.
[27] *The Claim of Reason*, 116.

Much earlier in this volume, we considered Wittgenstein's parable of the private linguist in connection with Stroud's reading of §§243ff from the *Investigations*. There, too, we are presented with something we are apt to construe as the specification of a form of thought into which it is impossible for another being, in principle, to enter—in this case, not because we cannot express the required form of thought in the *first-person plural* (i.e., in the manner we suppose only bearers of this practice, the wood sellers, can) but because others cannot express the required form of thought in the *first-person singular* (i.e., in the manner we suppose only the bearer of this sensation, the private linguist, can). Stroud's reading of the passages on private language closely aligns with (what we might call) one-half of Cavell's overall account of them. The primary difference—which, as we shall see below, parallels a corresponding difference in their treatments of the wood sellers—is that where Stroud emphasizes, on his way of construing the point of the parable, its culmination in a philosophical fantasy of privacy, Cavell additionally wants to emphasize the standing availability of an alternative response—a second way of reading the same words on the page. On this second reading, we find ways for making sense of the words that set forth the instructions for what is to be imagined: ways of turning the private-diary keeper into someone who is maintaining something private in a philosophically non-hyperbolic understanding of what it is for "something" to be "private."

This provision of an alternative option for how imaginatively to engage with the passages in an overall account of §§243ff, however, should not obscure the extent of the overlap between Cavell's and Stroud's respective readings. Cavell places no less weight on the first mode of response. Indeed, his overall account requires it. And he agrees that this is the first thing we must notice: the philosophical tendency to fixate on the words on the page in such a way that we take it that we know what they *must* mean, even if what they thereby mean is something that we must also take ourselves to be unable to understand. It is this first form of response that gives rise to (what I will call) the Stroudian direction of reading—in which we come to recognize our idea of a kind of language that others in principle cannot understand to be a philosophical fantasy. Here is Cavell on Wittgenstein's treatment of the fantasy of a private language:

> So what is the point of "trying" to "imagine" a "language" which "another person" "cannot" "understand"? Evidently, the effort is to illuminate something about the publicness of language, something about

the depth to which language is agreed in. I would like to say: its point is to release the fantasy expressed in the denial that language is something essentially shared. The tone of the sections dealing explicitly with the idea of a private language are peculiarly colored by the tone of someone allowing a fantasy to be voiced.[28]

One could formulate a Cavellian counterpart to these remarks for the case of the logically alien wood sellers. It might go something like this:

So what is the point of "trying" to "imagine" a "form of life" in which "people" "measure" and "calculate" in ways we "cannot" "understand"? Evidently, the effort is to illuminate something about how our ways of doing these things (such as measuring and calculating) are intertwined in our practices and hence something about the depth to which these practices are agreed in. I would like to say its point is to release the fantasy expressed in the denial that those who measure and calculate are essentially bearers of a practice. The tone of the sections dealing explicitly with the idea of a logically alien form of thought are peculiarly colored by the tone of someone allowing a fantasy to be voiced.

What all three parables (the builders, the private linguist, and the wood sellers) have in common for Cavell is that they invite at least two apparently competing forms of response: (i) a first reading, in which one finds the protagonists of the parable perched at the very edge—either barely on the near side or else already over the far side—of what can so much as be comprehensible to us, and (ii) a second reading on which we are able to imagine a relation between their language and their form of life that permits their ways of speaking to snap into view for us as forming a piece with ways of acting and speaking that we find intelligible. The heart of Cavell's overall account is that a full understanding of each of these parables requires getting both of these possible modes of response into view, coming to appreciate how they form two aspects of a single overarching philosophical exercise.

What holds for his account of the other two parables holds equally for that of the wood sellers. We are supposed to come through our engagement with the supposed scenario to discover for ourselves that "the example" admits of a variety of readings. Among these will be at least the following two: (a) an initial reading, in which we incline to view these passages as presenting us with something deeply, perhaps incomprehen-

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[28] Ibid., 344.

sibly, alien, and (b) a second reading, once we fill in certain details, in which they present us with something wholly possible but insufficiently alien to allow us to grasp what a mode of thought utterly unlike our own might amount to. When Cavell brings this schema to bear on the wood sellers, it yields the following: (a') an initial reading in which we view the passages as apparently culminating in a glimpse into a mathematically alien practice of calculation (and hence a variety of thought we are at best barely able to comprehend), and (b') a subsequent reading in which we work to supply the details that allow us to make sense of this tribe's ways of speaking of and dealing in wood. Only once we have both of these readings before us, Cavell suggests, can "the example" begin to serve its further philosophical purposes.

Here is how Cavell introduces the larger stretch of passages about the wood sellers, which we went over above:

> If we are convinced that those wood sellers cannot have in mind any coherent mode of "calculating a proportionate price" we can make all sorts of difficulties for them, make them quite unintelligible to us, decide they are unlike us. But suppose our attitude is that we are inclined to suppose that they are quite coherent, even in our terms (they more or less seemed to be, until this last step about selling according to area covered). There are details which may then become relevant to learn: . . . [29]

Cavell then goes on to fill in the scenario in some of the ways that we considered above. Two observations that will matter below: first, it matters to Cavell's overall account that Wittgenstein situates and characterizes the wood sellers within the dialectical structure of his text in such a way as to incline us to view them as failing to be engaged in a coherent mode of "calculating a proportionate price"; second, Cavell does not infer from this that this way of viewing them or, for that matter, some alternative to it, is *the* correct way to view them. There is not, for Cavell, some single correct way to construe the words that Wittgenstein has placed on the page in characterizing the wood sellers—some single discoverable fact of the matter about the one and only way Wittgenstein's words really ought to be understood or about what he really had it at heart to mean in so placing them on the page. Rather, Cavell suggests that what the likely first response on our part brings into view is, in the first instance, just that: a fact *about us*—about a place we are apt to go in philosophizing, a place that Wittgenstein seeks to show us that we are

[29] Ibid., 116.

apt to go. We are apt initially to engage with the wood sellers, in such a manner that we make them unintelligible to us. Moreover, we do this without having it so much as occur to us that it is pertinent to our philosophical purpose to interest ourselves in the details of how they live. We take such details to be irrelevant to—to have no bearing on—what we take to be the important philosophical question under investigation here: Is their practice an intelligible one?

On Cavell's account, part of what we are eventually to come to appreciate through our subsequent engagement with the text is the following: that it is quite unclear what we were initially imagining when we concluded that the wood sellers must be unintelligible to us. That they do seem this way is a function of how *we* take them to be—and this only comes into view for us when we see that we *can* also take them another way. But this, in turn, can happen only if we are willing to work with the idea that there might be a method in their seeming madness. Then, and only then, may the specification of further details pertaining to the quotidian texture of their practices so much as begin to strike us as relevant—details that Wittgenstein thinks will initially strike us, when philosophizing, as necessarily irrelevant to a philosophical investigation into what it means for certain beings to share (or not share) our form of thought.[30]

I have lingered over what I take Cavell's account of this and related examples in Wittgenstein to be, because Benoist's pointed criticisms of Cavell's treatment of the wood sellers strike me as puzzlingly wide of the mark:

> [A]lthough my reading of the story of the . . . wood sellers shares important features with Stanley Cavell's interpretation and is deeply inspired by it, I cannot go all the way with him. . . . The astonishing move that constitutes the basis of Cavell's interpretation consists in making the story of the . . . wood sellers really a story about us. Breaking from Wittgenstein, he talks of imagining not forms of another life but of our own—or of putting ourselves in relation of imagination to our real life. So, we would have to identify ourselves with the . . . wood sellers.[31]

There are three main criticisms here of Cavell's reading of the story of the wood sellers: (1) he holds that it is really a story about us; (2) whereas

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[30] "[W]e must learn to understand what it is that opposes such an examination of details in philosophy" (*Philosophical Investigations,* §52).

[31] Benoist, this volume, 291.

Wittgenstein talks of imagining other forms of life, Cavell breaks from him and imports into the discussion the idea that we are to imagine only forms of our own life; and (3) he thinks we have to identify with the wood sellers. I will take these in order.

It is not right to say that according to Cavell the story of the wood sellers is "really" a story about us, but not because he thinks it is really about something else. On Cavell's account, as I have tried to bring out above, the question of what it is *really* about is ill-posed. Its initial purpose is to elicit a series of reactions in us.[32] What it turns out to be a story about will turn on these reactions. Potentially, it has the power to allow us to discover any or all of the following four things about ourselves: (i) that we, when philosophizing about the nature of logic, are initially inclined to take it to be a story about beings whom, in principle, we cannot understand; (ii) that if we fill in further details, those same words (that initially elicited that reaction in us) may come into focus as a fragment of a larger story about some beings who are intelligible after all—and, indeed, with each such detail we add, they may increasingly come to seem to share a common intellectual world with us; (iii) that in the light of this discovery, we may come to see what it means to confer a fully determinate sense on these words (that we initially took to describe an alien form of thought and life); and (iv) that this, in turn, may allow us to appreciate in retrospect how, in our initial imagination of the case, we had failed to confer any determinate meaning upon our words (though we believed that we had done so).

This brings us to Benoist's second criticism. As far as I can see, it turns on a mischaracterization of the relevant passages in *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. Wittgenstein does not—in introducing "the story"—instruct us that the task at hand is to imagine a people with a form of life (and a form of thought) that is in no way ours. He introduces "the story" as follows: "People pile up logs and sell them, the piles are measured with a rule, the measurements of length, breadth and height multiplied together." So far there is no reason not to take these people to be just some people. Our resistance to taking them in this way only first kicks in when, in filling in his own further details about them, Wittgenstein abruptly remarks:

> Very well; but what if they piled the timber in heaps of arbitrary, varying height and then sold it at a price proportionate to the area

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[32] As too, on Cavell's readings of them, are Wittgenstein's scenarios of the builders and the private linguist.

covered by the piles? And what if they even justified this with the words: "Of course, if you buy more timber, you must pay more"?[33]

The question now is, What do we do with these abrupt supplementary remarks? Cavell, in effect, suggests it constitutes a significant philosophical datum about you, qua philosophical reader of this text, if the following should turn out to be true of you: upon reading this, you find yourself immediately convinced that these wood sellers *cannot* have in mind any coherent mode of "calculating a proportionate price." I take this possible datum about each of us, qua readers of this text, and how we may initially be prone to think, not to be unrelated to the one that Wittgenstein himself adduces about Frege when he observes the following three sections later:

> Frege says in the preface to the *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik:* "we have here a hitherto unknown kind of insanity—but he never said what this 'insanity' would be like."[34]

For Frege, there is a standpoint from within logic and then there is the psychologistic theorist's false imagination of the possibility of a perspective on thought that is "outside logic." Regardless of whether our concern is to elucidate the former or expose the emptiness of the latter, various concrete details about how we live—having to do, for example, with how our forms or methods of calculation are woven into our lives—cannot possibly reveal anything relevant to a logical investigation into the form or structure of thought. For what should interest us in connection with such an investigation is not to be found in the messy details of daily life but only through reflection on what must be prior to and independent of our lives and the world in which we live.

Wittgenstein's first comment on the example—in the next section of the text (§150), right after he unleashes the abrupt remarks—explores the question "How could I show them that . . . you don't really buy more wood if you buy a pile covering a bigger area?" Benoist is certainly right that Wittgenstein here means to be engaging Frege's thought experiment of the logical alien. However, Benoist's account of this seems to me to contain a significant omission that it shares with Conant's account. They both view the deployment of the parable of the wood sellers as merely seeking to sharpen and deepen the original point of Frege's thought experiment of the logical alien—that is, neither of them views it as in any way taking critical aim at Frege's conception of logic. What Cavell's fuller

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[33] *RFM,* I, §149.
[34] Ibid, I, §152.

interpretation of the parable brings out is not only that later Wittgenstein's conception of how to show someone "you don't really buy more wood if you buy a pile covering a bigger area" is very different from Frege's; it also seeks to bring out that there is good reason to think that Wittgenstein is specifically concerned here to explore the philosophical implications of (what we might call) a Fregean indifference to the question of the extent to which we are able to make sense of the possibility of a form of life radically unlike our own and yet not simply unintelligible to us. I will return to this point below.

Let us first address the third of Benoist's criticisms of Cavell's reading. It is simply not true that, for Cavell, *we have to* identify with the wood sellers—whatever that might mean. Indeed, he seems to think that it is altogether likely that, at least to begin with, when first reacting to Wittgenstein's abrupt supplementary remarks, what we will do is exactly the opposite. We will recoil from them and regard them as unintelligible. Moreover, Cavell seems to think that Wittgenstein himself knows that this is how we are likely, initially, to react. The grain of truth in Benoist's third criticism is that Cavell does think that Wittgenstein wishes to show the following: our capacity to make sense of the wood sellers will be a function of our ability to discern in their form of life some aspect of the physiognomy of our own. The point of the example is not simply to prompt us "to identify" with them (so that there is no longer any room for a difference between us and them). Indeed, part of its point is to enable us—precisely through our engaging patiently in an effort to discern coherence in what they do—to discern something about ourselves: about the extent to which we are able to project our concepts into descriptions of ways of talking and acting that strike us as alien. In fully entering into an imaginative effort to understand what the wood sellers might mean (when, for example, they say, "Of course, if you buy more timber, you must pay more"), we may discover in ourselves unsuspected resources for understanding those who are remarkably unlike us—possibilities for making sense of what, in our philosophizing, as in Frege's, we had initially been inclined to rule out as irrelevant to a philosophical investigation into what thought, logic, inference, calculation, etc., are.

In the light of a sufficiently nuanced exploration of such possibilities, the following may come into view: if the form of agreement in judgment exhibited in the wood sellers' practices is sufficiently unlike any exhibited in our own, then we will be unable to find our feet with them—and hence be unable to form a community of agreement in judgment with them. From this it does not follow that the logical cogency of our form

of thought is somehow threatened by such a discovery. Later Wittgenstein wants to show us that the possibility of alternatives to our forms of agreement in judgment is not, as such, precluded a priori. Frege sees the possibility of all relations between judgments as ones in which every judgment must be able to make head-on logical contact with every other—for any such judgment must be a fellow member of a single inferentially articulated logical space. Where two judgments do not contradict one another, they must logically agree *with* one another. Where our judgments do not logically disagree, each of my judgments must agree *with* each of yours. This leaves no room for Wittgenstein's conception of what is involved in agreement *in* judgment. Cavell explains:

> It is altogether important that Wittgenstein says that we *agree in* (forms of life) and that there is agreement *in* (judgments): "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement [*Übereinstimmung*] not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments" (§242); "It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use" (§241). The idea of agreement here is not that of coming to or arriving at an agreement on a given occasion, but of being in agreement throughout, being in harmony, like pitches or tones, or clocks, or weighing scales, or columns of figures. That a group of human beings *stimmen* in their language *überein* says, so to speak, that they are mutually voiced with respect to it, mutually attuned top to bottom.[35]

It is not just that this dimension of agreement has a different logical character than any allowed for in Frege's conception of the nexus of possible relations of logical agreement in which judgments stand to one another. More critically, for the purpose of gaining an overview of the overall lesson of the parable of the wood sellers, Frege's conception of logic leaves equally little room for Wittgenstein's understanding of the sort of mutual unintelligibility that obtains when our capacity for *Übereinstimmung*—for this dimension of mutual attunement—with one another is exhausted. Where we find that certain forms of agreement in judgment are not shared, say, by some "us" and some "them," our discovering this will not consist in our identifying some judgments of theirs as standing in relations of logical contradiction with some of ours. Rather, we will simply find that we are unable to judge as they do—that we have no way of

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[35] *The Claim of Reason*, 31–32. See also what Cavell says (e.g., on page 28) about *who* is implicated in what a grammatical investigation reveals.

simply adding certain of their forms of concepts to ours such that we are then in a position to determine a Fregean relation of logical agreement or disagreement between their forms of judgment and ours. A fundamental transformation in how we live would be a prerequisite of our being able to find any place for their practices of judgment in what we do—or vice versa. The truth in Frege's thought experiment about the logical alien is this: we can make no sense of beings whose form of thought is such that none of their judgments agree with any of ours; there can be no plurality of logical spaces that stand in thoroughgoing relations of fundamental logical contradiction to one another. The overkill in the lesson Frege draws from his thought experiment is this: that there is only one logical space, that there can be no divergence in human practice that makes for a difference in the *forms* of judgment humans agree in.[36]

"To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life" applied to the wood sellers turns out then to mean, first, the following—with which Benoist will agree: until we have begun on the project of attempting seriously to bring into imagination for ourselves what the wood sellers' life with language is like, we are in no position to claim to understand what they might be doing with their words (for example, when they say, "Of course, if you buy more timber, you must pay more")—and hence in no position to say anything about how those words, as they use them, are meant to be understood (let alone, about how the way they are meant to be understood is, in principle, logically alien to us). But it turns out, second, to mean also this—with which it is far less obvious to me that Benoist agrees: once we are fully launched on a project of attempting seriously to bring into imagination for ourselves what the wood sellers' life with language is like, we may discover that we are simply unable to find our feet with them (for example, when they say, "Of course, if you buy more timber, you must pay more"), where this does not mean that we will necessarily forever remain in no position to be able to say anything informative about how they mean their words. (We may strive to become experts in wood seller anthropology, refining our capacity to imaginatively project ourselves into their alien form of community of agreement in judgment.) But it may well mean that we continue to find the differences here to be great enough that members of our community

[36] I touch in a note below on how this also points to a criticism of the Tractarian conception of logic. For a discussion of how a practice can fundamentally differ from ours without contradicting it, see Cora Diamond, "How Old Are These Bones" (*Proc. of the Aristotelian Society,* Supplementary Vol. 73, no. 1).

will be unable to attach themselves to their community of agreement in judgment or vice versa—absent at least some prior degree of transformation of members of one of the communities through exposure to the other.

None of this gainsays the most fundamental point on which Conant, Benoist, and Cavell are all in agreement: insofar as we do not fill in the example at all but still take ourselves to know exactly what the wood sellers *must* mean by their words—perhaps because we tell ourselves, "After all, we know what each of these words mean"—we are philosophically liable to take ourselves to have described something incomprehensible, without appreciating that we have actually lapsed into a case of no longer knowing what we mean.[37] This is the sort of case in which, though we take ourselves to mean something perfectly determinate in our employment of words, part of Wittgenstein's aim—in luring us into the contemplation of such a supposed scenario—closely tracks Frege's and early Wittgenstein's prior treatments of logically alien thought: namely, to reveal to us how easily, while doing philosophy, we are apt to fall into meaning nothing determinate at all. This is what early Wittgenstein means when he says we sometimes imagine we have conferred a determinate method of symbolizing upon our signs even though we have failed to do so[38] and what later Wittgenstein means when he speaks of language going on holiday.[39]

The author of the parable of the wood sellers means to engage the topic of logically alien thought in a manner that both brings out the truth in Frege's exercise of engaging the logical alien (as well as in the *Tractatus*'s exercise of climbing a ladder that displays the limits of logic), while, at one and the same time, seeking to exhibit the overkill in a further lesson that can seem to follow directly from this truth. David Cerbone observes, "The cogency of Frege's description (of what it is to infer) presupposes the availability of a notion of inference apart from our actual practices of inferring."[40] This brings us back to the numerous passages in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* that prepare the way for the introduction of the scenario of the wood sellers—passages that aim to bring to the fore the myriad ways in which our practices of measuring

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[37] "What we lose is not the meaning of our words. . . . What we lose is a full realization of what we are saying; we no longer know what *we* mean" (*The Claim of Reason*, 207).

[38] *Tractatus*, §5.4733. This is a fine moment to look back at the first paragaph of *Tractatus*, §3.031.

[39] *Philosophical Investigations*, §38.

[40] Cerbone, "How to Do Things with Wood," 302. In this connection, see the discussion of Wittgenstein on inference in §6 of Cora Diamond's "Thinking about Naturalism and Pragmatism" (forthcoming).

and calculating are woven into the fabric of our lives. If we overlook their dialectical role within the text, Cerbone suggests, we will fail to appreciate how the parable of the wood sellers figures as part of a broader criticism of Frege's conception of logic:

> Wittgenstein prepares us for the wood sellers by pointing to a variety of familiar practices of measuring and calculating and by showing further the connections among these practices to other activities such as fixing prices and building things such as houses. The concepts of measuring and calculating have, one might say, a home within this nexus of activities. To have the concept of measuring is to engage in a practice that has these sorts of connections; divorced from these connections, removed from such circumstances, the actions we perform when we measure or calculate may now, despite any superficial resemblance, have nothing at all to do with measuring or calculating.[41]

The exploration of this nexus of activities is part and parcel of a critique of (what we earlier called, following Sullivan) Frege's conception of the priority of logic. On the one hand, that critique builds on the Tractatarian insight that logic is *in*—and not something apart from—the world and our forms of engagement with it. Yet, on the other hand, the implications of this insight are spelled out in Wittgenstein's later work in a manner that doubles back, issuing also in a critique of the unwitting metaphysical commitments of the *Tractatus*.[42] It is this dimension of *The Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*—the ways in which it seeks to prepare the ground for a criticism of Frege and the author of the *Tractatus*—that I think goes largely missing in Conant's, Stroud's, and

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[41] Ibid., 303.

[42] For further discussion of the unwitting metaphysical commitments of the *Tractatus,* see my "Mild Mono-Wittgensteinianism," 78ff. One example of such a commitment traces back to the moment in Frege's conception of logic, highlighted above, as falling within later Wittgenstein's target area: the idea of there being only *one* logical space. In both Frege and early Wittgenstein, the unwitting commitment turns on the slide from (1) the idea that, within a given logical space of *sinnvolle* judgments, each judgment must stand in a relation of either logical agreement or logical contradiction to every other such judgment in that space to (2) the claim that no sense can be made of the very possibility of a logical space, some of whose judgments stand in neither relation to some of our judgments. This issue is intimately related to the question of how one ought, in philosophy, to prosecute a critique of the very idea of logically alien thought—and hence what philosophical morals one takes oneself to be entitled to draw from the manner in which one has done so. A proper discussion of this topic would have to explore the differences in philosophical method practiced by the respective authors of *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic,* the *Tractatus,* and the *Philosophical Investigations.*

Benoist's respective accounts of how the lesson of the wood sellers bears on an understanding of the relation between the wood sellers and Frege's treatment of the logical alien.

Admittedly, one will arrive at an altogether shallow conception of wherein Wittgenstein's later critique of his early analytic predecessors consists, if one has not first taken the full measure of the truth in Stroud's and Benoist's respective accounts of the relation between later Wittgenstein's exploration of the case of the wood sellers and Frege's exploration of the possibility of logically alien thought. As we have seen, in his build-up to his presentation of the most apparently alien case of wood-selling, Wittgenstein presents examples of what initially may appear to be nothing more than perfectly possible, albeit increasingly deviant, ways of inferring, calculating, weighing things, or even selling wood. He then, once things have become apparently remarkably deviant, explicitly alludes to Frege's discussion of the logical alien. And, as Conant indicates, we might also initially take Frege, in the encounter with his alien, to be presenting us with nothing more than a scenario in which we are invited to imagine beings that engage in a perfectly possible, albeit remarkably deviant, way of inferring. As Conant, Stroud, and Benoist are all concerned with indicating, this eventuates in explorations of a philosophical temptation to picture the possibility of a perspective on our forms of thought from a supposed vantage completely outside those forms of thought—a philosophical temptation that Frege as well as early and later Wittgenstein, in their three very different ways, each seeks to help us think through. Yet, as we have also seen, Wittgenstein quotes Frege's remark about a hitherto unknown kind of insanity and observes, "Frege never said what this 'madness' would really be like." I have indicated that I take this to be connected to later Wittgenstein's concern with bringing out how a certain Fregean indifference to any aspect of anthropological detail in a characterization of our logical practices is a function of his underlying commitment to a certain conception of the priority of logic—and, hence, how it presupposes the availability of a notion of inference that is prior to, and intelligible apart from, the order of actuality in which our practices of inferring have their logical life.

Benoist, on the other hand, as far as I can make out, sees no criticism of Frege intended anywhere in the passages from *The Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* that bear on an understanding of the point of the parable of the wood sellers. His reading, in this respect, appears to have certain affinities with that of Stroud. In connection with Wittgenstein's observation that "Frege never said what this 'madness' would really be like," Stroud remarks in his contribution to this volume:

I think there is good reason for that. When we press the descriptions of those apparently deviant ways of proceeding far enough and try to get a consistent picture of them, I think we cannot really make full sense of such people. Up to a point, we can give them the benefit of the doubt, as we say. Or better, we can give them the benefit of humanity. But beyond a certain point in trying to conceive of such beings, they become more and more impenetrable to us.[43]

This is, as we are about to see, what Benoist is most concerned with bringing out in connection with Wittgenstein wood sellers. As indicated above, Wittgenstein does want to reveal that when we try to "conceive" of such "beings," they, beyond a certain point, will begin to become more and more impenetrable to us; and I agree this is a crucial part of the lesson of the wood sellers. But it is only part of the lesson. A further crucial part of the lesson is to show us that their being more or less impenetrable to us is a matter of *degree*—not a matter of *all or nothing* in the manner that Frege's conception of logic requires. For later Wittgenstein, their relative penetrability to us depends, as we have seen, not just upon the extent to which our judgments contradict or agree *with* theirs but also upon the extent to which we and they are able to achieve forms of mutual attunement that allow for agreement *in* forms of judgment.

So the relation of the parable of the wood sellers to Frege's thought experiment of the logical alien is double-edged. One edge of the parable's lesson aims to sharpen further the philosophical blade first wielded by Frege, in order to cut even deeper in the same direction. Its other edge is honed with the aim of cutting against aspects of Frege's conception of logic that (as we have had ample occasion to observe in our earlier replies) are pervasive targets of criticism throughout Wittgenstein's writings. As the parable has both these edges, the issue here is partly one of emphasis. Stroud himself, after all, says that over the course of the parable the wood sellers "become *more and more* impenetrable to us"; and some of Benoit's discussion, building as it does on Cavell's, also brings out how their impenetrability comes in degrees. This would suggest that neither Stroud nor Benoist ought to really disagree with me about the depth of the difference between Frege and later Wittgenstein here. Nevertheless, in their respective contributions to this volume, they each seem to resemble Conant in allowing their enthusiasm for the undeniable mo-

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[43] Stroud, this volume, 177.

ment in philosophical continuity between Frege and later Wittgenstein here to blind them to a full appreciation of the depth of the philosophical discontinuity.

This is not to deny that the moment of continuity they choose to celebrate is of deep significance. Whereas Cavell seeks to uncover possibilities for making sense of the wood sellers where we may initially have been prone to think there were none, much of Benoist's way with the wood sellers—his fulsome acknowledgment of indebtedness to Cavell's discussion notwithstanding—has far greater affinities with Stroud's: not just with his handful of observations on the topic in this volume, but especially with those in his much earlier and deservedly classic paper "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity." At various points in that paper, Stroud proceeds in the opposite direction of dialectical motion from that which Cavell adopts in the only passages of his of which Benoist seems to take any notice. Stroud's reading begins by addressing a reader who is able to talk herself into something along the following lines: there is simply no difficulty whatsoever in making sense of what Wittgenstein says about the wood sellers. Stroud presses the question of whether such a reader really can understand what she thereby takes herself to understand:

When we look more closely at the examples, are they really as intelligible as they seemed at first? For instance, consider the people who sell wood at a price proportionate to the area covered by the pile of wood and who defend their doing so in the way described earlier. Surely they would have to believe that a one-by-six-inch board all of a sudden increased in size or quantity when it was turned from resting on its one-inch edge to resting on its six-inch side. And what would the relation between quantity and weight possibly be for such people? A man could buy as much wood as he could possibly lift, only to find, upon dropping it, that he had just lifted more wood than he could possibly lift. Or is there more wood, but the same weight? Or perhaps these people do not understand the expressions "more" and "less" at all. They must, if they can say, "Now it's a lot of wood, and costs more." And do these people think of themselves as shrinking when they shift from standing on both feet to standing on one? Also, it would be possible for a house that is twice as large as another built on exactly the same plan to contain much less wood. How much wood is bought need have no connection with how much wood is needed for building the house. And so on. Problems involved in un-

derstanding what it would be like to sell wood in this way can be multiplied indefinitely.[44]

If a reader was not stopped in her tracks by Wittgenstein's abrupt supplementary remarks about the wood sellers but took them in stride (accepting them at face value as offering a perfectly intelligible specification of a form of life logically alien to our own), then Stroud's unfolding of the implications of that supposed idea ought to help her measure just how puzzling those supplementary remarks really are—or at least are initially supposed to strike us as being. The interest of Cavell's way with the text presupposes that one has first taken the measure of the difficulties that Stroud seeks to bring out here.[45]

Whereas Cavell begins by briefly discussing a reading of the wood sellers according to which they are unintelligible and then spends most of his energy elaborating a reading on which they make sense, like Stroud in the passage above, Benoist is mostly concerned with proceeding the other way around. After touching relatively briefly on Cavellian possibilities for making sense of wood sellers, Benoist spends most of his energy exploring what happens when we do try to take seriously the supposed idea that they really are logical aliens. But before he does, he lingers briefly over (what I called above) strategy (2) for making sense of the wood sellers—involving ways of calculating and selling in which we would never engage, but which we are still, in some sense, able to imagine and understand. On strategy (2) for understanding the passage, what is required is the imagination of a form of life very different from ours, where "very different" now has to mean at least this: far more different from us than anything Cavell's attempt to make sense of the wood sellers ever yields.

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[44] Barry Stroud, "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity," in *Philosophical Review* 74, no. 4 (Oct. 1965): 512.

[45] I am inclined to think that the reason Cavell (ever bent on having something original to say) spends so little time pressing the example from this—(what I called above) the Stroudian—direction is that he thinks Stroud already did an admirable job of showing what sort of philosophical harvest approaching it from that direction could yield. (Cavell alludes to and expresses his indebtedness to Stroud's article on page 116 of *The Claim of Reason*. Stroud was his colleague at Berkeley in the years during which first Stroud's and then Cavell's discussion of the wood sellers were each written—though the latter was published many years later.) As I have in effect indicated above, I see no conflict (though perhaps Benoist does) in thinking that the wood sellers are equally fruitfully explored from both the Stroudian and the second of the Cavellian directions; these readings may be seen to complement, rather than mutually exclude, one another. Only if one sees this, can one appreciate how Wittgenstein's deployment of his parable aspires both to inherit and to criticize Frege's treatment of the logical alien.

What is now required is an exercise of our powers of conception that tests the very limits of our imagination, but—this is what makes it in each case still qualify as a variant of strategy (2)—without exceeding them. The strategy is to explore how far we can go in making sense of the very idea of forms of life differing from our own. Anthropology and ancient history can afford useful repositories of ethnological and historical detail, engagement with which may enable our minds to stretch in the required ways: "As we know, ancient Egyptians did not have the same technique of multiplication as we do."[46] The main point of Benoist's brief foray into variants of strategy (2) is to show the following: as intrinsically fascinating and instructive as such examples might be for other purposes, they do not alter the fundamental shape of the problem. Benoist observes that a consideration of the mathematical practices of the ancient Egyptians does "not prevent us from saying that they multiplied numbers."[47]

Would Wittgenstein simply agree with this? And how does this bear on the case of the wood sellers? In the following passage, after the abrupt supplementary remarks, Wittgenstein seems more determined than ever to render the chasm between them and us as difficult to bridge as he can:

> How could I show them that—as I should say—you don't really buy more wood if you buy a pile covering a bigger area? I should, for instance, take a pile which was small by their ideas and, by laying the logs around, change it into a "big" one. This *might* convince them—but perhaps they would say: "Yes, now it's a *lot* of wood and costs more!"—and that would be the end of the matter.[48]

That would be the end of the matter? Holy smoke! What a note on which to end the matter! But if we work at it, we may think there remain routes to be explored that would allow them to become intelligible to us again—routes that would require us to learn an entirely new language (in which some of the linguistic signs we share with them will now come to signify linguistic symbols of an entirely different sort). Wittgenstein suggests the following:

> We should presumably say in this case: they simply do not mean the same by "a lot of wood" and "a little wood" as we do; and they have quite a different system of payment from us.[49]

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[46] Benoist, this volume, 287.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Wittgenstein, *RFM,* I, §150.
[49] Ibid., I, §150.

But if these differences are mere differences in how our words and currency signify and circulate, then we still do not have a clear example that touches on the question of the very limits of measurement and calculation, let alone those of language, thought, and logic. This, according to Benoist, pushes us to strategy (3), in which we are supposed to strive to milk the example for the very most that it can possibly yield in the way of a moral regarding the possibility of logically alien thought.

It is this third (at least initially apparently possible) way of pressing the example that can make it seem as if Wittgenstein's wood sellers afford a fleeting glimpse into the life of something like a counterpart to Frege's logical alien: a glimpse into the mind of a being whose "form of thought" is utterly unlike ours. Or if we think of the form of thought of Frege's logical alien as being so alien that not even a fleeting glimpse into its positive character is possible for us, then perhaps the better comparison here would be to Descartes's account of the relation of a finite mind to the idea of the infinite. In attempting to elucidate that idea, we considered the idea of (what I called) *the ontological alien*—a being that is such that we are able to apprehend from the positive character of its very manner of being that it is incomprehensible to us. We do not just fail to comprehend such a being. We accurately apprehend something of its actual positive character precisely in apprehending it to be such that we cannot comprehend it. Similarly, in attempting to elucidate what is involved in an encounter with Wittgenstein's wood sellers, we may be led to consider the idea of (what I will call) *the anthropological alien*—the idea of a group of beings who are such that we appear to be able, simply by attending sufficiently carefully to the determinate character of their practices, positively to apprehend that their form of life is such as to be irremediably incomprehensible to us. We engage in the struggle to get such beings into view by endeavoring to imagine the tribe of wood sellers as unlike ourselves as possible, while continuing at the same time to try to imagine them as satisfying the supposed "description" of "what they do" with which Wittgenstein provides us. It is when we press it in this way, Benoist suggests, that the most important thing that the example may teach us really comes to be revealed. On the one hand, it shows us that, as a matter of logic (or grammar), the limits of imagination do not extend further than those of sense; on the other hand, it shows us something about us: that our relation to language allows for a philosophically remarkable form of estrangement. One of the characteristic signs of this form of estrangement is that the limits of sense come to appear to be able to extend further than they can. When we try to go beyond "the limit," we do not end up somewhere else—in a place whose

logical location can be specified through a characterization of a sort of thing that we *cannot* do—but we may nonetheless mistakenly take ourselves to have succeeded in completing a philosophical journey to such a place.

When we enter into the third strategy for understanding the wood sellers, we will find that—as Benoist puts it—"we have the strong temptation to say that those people cannot do that."[50] The example of the wood sellers, so construed, will appear to constitute an example of an impossible form of thought. To think this is to fail to think strategy (3) for reading the passage through all the way to the end. Benoist's central point here ties in nicely with a central theme of Gustafsson's contribution to this volume.[51] For what it means to think through such a reading of the wood sellers is strikingly parallel to the central point of the preface of *Tractatus* (at least on a resolute reading of that point): if we attempt to draw the limit to thought in thinking, we fall into the trap of trying to think what cannot be thought. This is not a description of something we either can or cannot do. We will come to see this if we carry such an exercise of limit-drawing as far as we can. For it is only by going too far that we can properly discover how far we can go. In thinking it through all the way to the end, we discover that we reach a point at which we fall into the fantasy of imagining that we mean something, whereas we have succeeded in imagining or meaning nothing. And this shows that the only limit that can be drawn here is one that is to be drawn *within* language—one that marks off uses of language in which we recognize the symbol in the sign from employments of signs in which we do not (even if we think we do).[52] What lies on the far side of such a "limit" (one that can be drawn only from a position inside language, within the field of the linguistic sign) is simply nonsense.[53]

What early Wittgenstein describes as the task of drawing the limit from within language, Benoist recasts—and suggests later Wittgenstein recasts—as the task of discovering that we can stand in two different relations to language: one in which we are at home in language and one in which we are alienated from that home. Like the encounter with Frege's logical alien, the encounter with Wittgenstein's wood sellers starts off in the guise of an encounter with beings apparently unlike ourselves, but as the

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[50] Benoist, this volume, 287.

[51] As well as with a central theme of Cerbone's discussion of these matters; see especially "How to Do Things with Wood," 308.

[52] Hence, Benoist says, "What Wittgenstein wants to show us with that example . . . is that there is no way to sunder our meaning from its application" (this volume, 288).

[53] The allusions here are to the *Tractatus* preface, third and fourth paragraphs, as well as to §§3.326 and 5.4733.

effort at understanding "them" deepens, it turns out to issue in a form of understanding about *us:* it seamlessly metamorphoses into an exercise through which we come to understand ourselves.[54] But, on Benoist's reading, where Frege's inquiry stops, later Wittgenstein's begins: with an inquiry into what sort of place this is that we occupy when we stand in this relation of estrangement from our own possibilities for meaning our words. The considerations Benoist raises here connect with points made earlier in these replies but takes them further, focusing on how much more extreme Wittgenstein's emphasis on this dimension of the peculiarity of philosophy is than any we find in his predecessors.

We have seen that, as a matter of philosophical method, an exercise in self-understanding must pass through a stage of self-alienation. This is implicit in the Kantian conception of critique (or else we in philosophy would not need to labor to reflectively recover forms of understanding already latent in the healthy human understanding) as well as in Frege's treatment of the logical alien (or else psychologism would not be the widespread philosophical disease of the human understanding that Frege takes it to be). This engagement with a condition in which we find ourselves somehow at a seeming distance from that which we can never achieve distance from (our knowing, thinking, or speaking human form) achieves a new degree of methodological stringency and self-consciousness in Wittgenstein's practice of philosophy. It comes to look to be no longer a matter of minor philosophical embarrassment that we must traffic in episodes of nonsense and self-bafflement in order to achieve philosophical sense and self-understanding. Rather, the very form of understanding we seek in philosophy now seems to require that we pass through a phase in which we speak in apparently intelligible ways, which we must have non-accidentally come to discover in a subsequent phase were merely apparently intelligible. An engagement with such an alienated relation to our own words comes, in Wittgenstein's texts, to appear to be a necessary moment in the achievement of any form of philosophical understanding. This leads to the topic of Wittgenstein's interest in what Benoist variously describes as "the idea of 'a meaning without its application,' . . . the figure of estrangement of meaning—of *our* possible estrangement from meaning."[55]

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[54] This is how Benoist puts this point: "As a matter of fact, what is really misleading in that story about the funny wood sellers is that it seems to be about funny people who practice some task very strangely, but it is primarily about ourselves, about the meaning of what we effectively do" (this volume, 288).Wittgenstein remarks: "Don't for heaven's sake, be afraid of talking nonsense! Only don't fail to pay attention to your nonsense" (*Culture and Value,* 64).

[55] Benoist, this volume, 290; my emphasis.

Benoist's reading here connects back up with (what I have claimed is) a central theme of Cavell's: how Wittgenstein's parable of the wood sellers is designed to allow us to come to face to face with our inclination in philosophy to employ words with an apparently remarkable sort of meaning—one in which, when we employ the words in (what we imagine to be) *that* way, then, at one and the same time, we both want to mean and not to mean one and the same thing. We want those words to mean *calculating* but not just in some way that resembles what we usually call "calculating"—*measuring* but not just "measuring," *thinking* but not bound by the limits of "our" "thought." Wittgenstein says, "[T]o imagine a language is to imagine a form of life."[56] Benoist observes that this means that a possible form of disconnection of our language from our form of life is always possible. It is for this very reason that the task of imagining our language—and with it, our form of life—is philosophically far more strenuous and *unheimlich* than we are at first inclined to presume it should be.

Does this mean that there is no way to imagine a sort of behavior that will, precisely in virtue of the very sort of behavior it is, be necessarily unintelligible to us? No, it does not. We can imagine a situation for which such a description will fit. We can find a sense for these words, too. Indeed, Wittgenstein's next suggestion for how to understand the example of the wood sellers is a suggestion about how to understand it to be an example of just that sort. It comes in the very next numbered passage in *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics*. The tendency, however, even among the most Talmudic of Wittgenstein scholars is to skip over this particular passage (indeed, I have never seen anyone comment on it), possibly because of the obscurity of its literary allusion (to *The Wise Men of Gotham*). Commentators instead rush on to the far more popular numbered section that comes right after it.

Like its neglected predecessor, the popular section comprises nothing more than a literary allusion and a brief comment thereupon. But, unlike the previous such pair, both the passage alluded to and the passage doing the alluding have achieved considerable notoriety. Indeed, they are by now very familiar to any reader of this volume. They are the passage in Frege (regarding a hitherto unknown kind of insanity) and the comment on it ("Frege never said what this 'madness' would really be like"[57])—each memorably discussed by Stroud in his early paper, commented on by Conant in his article, highlighted in the title to this volume,

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[56] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* §19, 8.
[57] Wittgenstein, *RFM,* I, §152.

revisited in Stroud's criticism of Conant, and taken up again in my reply thereto. Now that notorious pair—Frege's encounter with the logical alien and Wittgenstein's comment on it—stand at the center of the present discussion. The time has come to consider how the immediately preceding neglected pair—which also consists of an allusion to an encounter with apparently logically alien forms of behavior and an observation from Wittgenstein—might bear on an understanding of the notorious pair.

Benoist and Cavell, as we have seen, each canvass an impressive array of ways to make sense of what the seemingly alien wood sellers might be up to. But there is one way of doing so that neither of them suggests or notices that Wittgenstein suggests. The suggestion comes in the passage that everyone (including Benoist, Cavell, Cerbone, and Stroud) skips. As just indicated, the neglected passage comes just before the notorious passage. Hence, it is the one that prepares us for Wittgenstein's comment, in the very next remark of *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* on Frege's non-description of what an encounter with a logical alien is really like. (As we shall see, it prepares us for this beautifully.) And remember also, it comes just after the attempt by one of Wittgenstein's interlocutors to show the wood sellers that (what they call) a "small" pile of wood can be converted into (what they call) a "big" pile of wood and vice versa, simply by moving the wood around—where the demonstration in question is meant to show that even if what they say is true on their idiosyncratic ways of using the words "small pile" and "big pile," it hardly means that such a moving around of wood in any way changes the *actual quantity* of wood; hence, for heaven's sake, don't they see that such a mere rearrangement ought not to result in the wood *costing more?* And to this, they respond, "Yes, now it's a *lot* of wood and costs more!" And we are told that (at least for them) this is the end of the matter.

For whom could this be the end of the matter—and what must their conception of the matter be that it could end there? One line of answer to this question is supplied in that next neglected numbered section. In its entirety, it reads as follows: "A society acting in this way would perhaps remind us of the Wise Men of Gotham." Perhaps it would—if we were in a position to be reminded of the parable in question. This is an allusion to an old English folktale. At the time of the tale, any road on which the king traveled had first to be widened and converted into a public highway. King John intended to travel through Gotham. The good people of Gotham did not wish to have a public highway routed through the heart of their village. When the royal messengers arrived, they came upon an extraordinary scene. The villagers were found engaged in an

array of surreal exercises. One source suggests that their tasks were inspired by nursery rhymes and proverbs about the varieties of human foolishness. One imagines tableaux of human activity presented to the gaze of the wonderstruck messengers not unlike those to be found in Pieter Brueghel the Elder's painting *The Dutch Proverbs*—an equally neglected treatment of logically alien thought!

The Wise Men of Gotham confronts us with an altogether richer depiction of apparently logically alien comportment than any found in Frege's or Wittgenstein's writings. But, as we shall see in a moment, through the tale, we are also provided with a wider context ("an expedient to turn away his Majesty's displeasure") that allows us to make sense of the villagers and what they are doing. The tale as a whole affords a frame through which to schematize Wittgenstein's wood sellers—one that permits their humanity to come back into focus for us. Suddenly we see why they want to insist that the more they scatter the wood around a wider area of ground, the more it is worth and the more it should cost. That is, we see this, but only once we put that fragment of their behavior together with additional fragments from the tale (quoted in full below). For the wood sellers of Gotham not only scatter their wood in order to increase its quantity; they also endeavor to drown their eels in pools of water, drag carts of wood up onto large barns in order to shade the wood from the sun, and tumble their cheeses down a hill hoping the cheeses will find their own way to Nottingham for sale. Viewed within this frame, the wood sellers snap back into view as making human sense, as engaging in linguistically describable patterns of human behavior, through the supposition that their very aim is to act in ways that precisely defeat any attempt to see them as making ordinary forms of sense.

"[T]o imagine a language is to imagine a form of life." Hence what better way to conclude a volume on logically alien thought than with Wittgenstein's most vivid example of the enactment of an apparent form of life designed in exquisite detail to strike its audience as logically alien?

> CUCKOO BUSH, near Gotham, tradition says, was planted or set to commemorate a trick which the inhabitants of Gotham put upon King John. The tale is told thus[ly:] King John, passing through this place towards Nottingham, intending to go over the meadows, was prevented by the villagers, they apprehending that the ground over which a king passed was for ever after to become a public road. The king, incensed at their proceedings, sent from his court soon after some of his servants, to inquire of them the reason of their incivility and ill-treatment, that

he might punish them by way of fine, or some other way he might judge most proper. The villagers, hearing of the approach of the king's servants, thought of an expedient to turn away his Majesty's displeasure from them. When the messengers arrived at Gotham, they found some of the inhabitants engaged in endeavoring to drown an eel in a pool of water; some were employed in dragging carts upon a large barn, to shade the wood from the sun; others were tumbling their cheeses down a hill, that they might find their way to Nottingham for sale; and some were employed in hedging in a cuckoo which had perched upon an old bush which stood where the present one now stands; in short, they were all employed in some foolish way or other which convinced the king's servants that it was a village of fools, whence arose the old adage, "The wise men," or "The fools of Gotham." The words of a humble poet may be here applicable:

> "Tell me no more of Gotham fools,
> Or of their eels in little pools,
> Which they were told were drowning;
> Nor of their carts drawn up on high,
> When King John's men were standing by,
> To keep a wood from browning.

> "Nor of their cheese shoved down the hill,
> Nor of a cuckoo sitting still,
> While it they hedged round;
> Such tales of them have long been told,
> By prating boobies, young and old,
> In drunken circles crowned.

> "The fools are those who thither go
> To see the cuckoo bush, I trow,
> The wood, the barn, and pools;
> For such are seen both here and there,
> And passed by without a sneer
> By all but errant fools"[58]

Among the titles that versions of the tale carry in various collections, we find both *The Fools of Gotham* and *The Wise Men of Gotham*.[59] And

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[58] Thomas Blount, *Tenures of Land and Customs of Manors,* ed. W. C. Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, 1874), 133–134.

[59] One also finds this title: *The Wise Fools of Gotham.*

it has been passed down that this tale gave rise to the lovely adage "We ween[60] there are more fools pass through Gotham than remain in it."[61] This raises the question, Which of the characters in the tale are the fools mentioned in the first of those titles? Those who seem mad? Or those who take them for fools? Those who remain in Gotham? Or those who merely pass through while leaping to judgment about those who dwell there? The pair of titles, when taken together, yields a further suggestion: it is the fools who are the wise men.

This volume lingers over what might at first appear to be some of the most foolish moments in the history of philosophy. It begins with Descartes's warning that it is wrong to say that God cannot make two and two equal five. It moves on from there to Descartes's suggestions that perhaps the reason why we cannot help but take two and two to equal four is that we were created by an evil demon. It takes up Kant's attempt to imagine that our very forms of understanding might be empty—that they might be such as to be able to do nothing with anything with which our sense provides us—so that what we would be left with by way of experience would amount to even less than a dream. It proceeds from there to Frege's thought experiment of an encounter with a logical alien— someone whose forms of thought are logically alien to ours—so that even if such a being engages in thinking, it can do so only in a manner that must elude us, for we would be unable to recognize it as thinking. It moves from there to asking whether we could understand such a being to be *speaking*—whether we could make out its words and repeat them in different combinations ourselves—without ever so much as possibly being able to make out any of the thoughts it seeks to express through its uses of words. It ends with Wittgenstein's wood sellers charging for lumber according to the area it covers on the ground, regardless of the height of the pile, leaving us with the question, What are they doing? Do they so much as understand what *less and more, calculation, commerce*, and *money* are? In these cuckoo corners at the edge of philosophy, which initially appear to present us with unfathomable forms of mindedness, as in Cuckoo Bush near Gotham, one needs to linger, not merely pass through—to dwell with the perplexities, not rush to put a name on them—if one wishes to uncover the wisdom in the apparent foolishness.

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[60] Archaic English for "to opine or conjecture."
[61] G. Seal, *Encyclopedia of Folk Heroes* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO: 2001), 272–273.

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INDEX OF NAMES

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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INDEX OF NAMES