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Transcendentalism without Idealism

An Essay on Kant and Wittgenstein

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Declaration

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Signed: *Simone Nota*   Date: 29/06/2023

To my parents, Loredana and Giancarlo

[E]ven if it were only the removal of a deep-seated error, spreading far and wide in its consequences, something can still be done [negatively] for the benefit of metaphysics; just as a person who has strayed from the right path, and returns to his starting point in order to pick up his compass, is at least commended because he did not go on wandering up the wrong road, or come to a halt, but reverted to his point of departure in order to orient himself.

- Kant

Philosophical investigations: conceptual investigations. The essential thing about metaphysics: that the difference between factual investigations and conceptual investigations is not clear to it. A metaphysical question is always in appearance a factual one, although the problem is a conceptual one.

- Wittgenstein

Abstract

In this work, I compare Kant and Wittgenstein's critical philosophies with respect to Transcendental Idealism, as a doctrine meant to "prove" the possibility of Metaphysics. My Central Question is: *Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist?* In virtue of a distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, I answer "No", by arguing that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, but not a transcendental idealist *of any kind*. In particular, I distinguish two variants of Transcendental Idealism, namely an effable variant, which Kant endorsed, and an ineffable variant, often *ascribed* to Wittgenstein. And I argue that Wittgenstein cannot commit to either variant. This raises questions as to what kind of transcendental philosopher Wittgenstein is, if not an idealist one, and how his stance may bear on Metaphysics. I answer both questions by the end of the work.

The dissertation's core is structured into two parallel Parts, one on Kant (Part$_K$) and one on Wittgenstein (Part$_W$). Each Part is composed of 3 Chapters.

In Part$_K$, I give a general account of

(1$_K$) Transcendental Philosophy—based on Kant's one, but less restrictive than his.

(2$_K$) Effable Transcendental Idealism—by expounding Kant's doctrine.

(3$_K$) Ineffable Transcendental Idealism—inspired by Kant, but not strictly Kantian.

In Part$_W$, I argue that

(1$_W$) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher.

(2$_W$) the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist.

(3$_W$) the early Wittgenstein is *not* an ineffable transcendental idealist.

By the final Chapter of the work, I argue that

(7) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist,

namely someone who accepts that there are transcendental conditions of cognition, while refraining from commitment over their metaphysical nature and status. However, Wittgenstein's (ineffable) version of Transcendental Quietism is extreme, as it turns the whole of Metaphysics into mere nonsense. I will thus conclude the work by sketching a moderate (effable) version, whereby Transcendental Metaphysics is possible, but while we should engage *with* it, we should not engage *in* it.

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Foreword

In Philosophy, as in History, there are ages, characterised by occurrences and recurrences. A rough classification would certainly include metaphysical ages, when our urge to know ever more about reality and ourselves is exalted, and anti-metaphysical ages, when our metaphysical urge is shunned. Betwixt them, however, there are also *critical* ages, when the metaphysical aspiration is kept in check, but not necessarily kept at bay.

With his *Critique of Pure Reason*, and thus with *his* transcendental philosophy, Kant initiated the first truly critical age. Indeed, Kant asked whether Metaphysics—as an investigation aimed at substantive a priori knowledge of reality and our relation to it—is even possible. And he famously replied that, although a Transcendent Metaphysics investigating reality as it may be independently of our human point of view is *impossible*, a Transcendent*al* Metaphysics investigating the necessary conditions of our human cognition is *possible*. That "reformed" Metaphysics, for Kant, was *his* transcendental idealism, whereby we can know a priori *that* the experienceable world *depends*, for its necessary features, upon our point of view. Yet is *Transcendental* Metaphysics even possible?

The question must be asked, since Transcendental Idealism, which Kant took to be thinkable or effable, has often been *charged* with incoherence. What's more, the charges led to an ineffable variant of the doctrine, by which we are "shown" the dependence of the necessary features of reality upon our point of view. Such ineffable idealism has often been *ascribed* to another critical philosopher, Wittgenstein, whose *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* has been read as "the swansong of metaphysics", whereby metaphysical insights on all linguistically representable worlds are "whistled" in nonsensical remarks, but never really said. And if that were so, Transcendental Metaphysics would in some (*non*)sense be possible after all.

We could then gain perspective on the critical-transcendental method in Philosophy, and its relation to the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics, by comparing Kant and Wittgenstein, asking whether the early Wittgenstein was a transcendental idealist of some kind.

Hence, this work aims at answering an Overarching Question only *after* answering a more focused Central Question. The Central Question is: Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist? The Overarching Question is: Is Transcendental Metaphysics possible? I will answer "No" to the first question, arguing that, while the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, he is *not* a transcendental idealist *of any kind*. Still, I will answer "Yes" to the second question. More specifically, pace Wittgenstein and his adepts, I will argue

that Kant's transcendental idealism is *not* incoherent nonsense, but rather a coherent view. And if so, Transcendental Metaphysics is possible in the plainest *sense* of the term.

That, however, does not mean that engaging in Transcendental Metaphysics is *advisable*. On the contrary, by the end of the work, I will discourage prospective transcendental philosophers from advancing metaphysical doctrines, whether effable (like Kant's) or ineffable (like those often ascribed to Wittgenstein). Indeed, I will conduct this dissuasive work on Wittgensteinian grounds, arguing that we may take a transcendental position that is free of metaphysical lumber —unlike Transcendental Idealism. Like Kant, I engage *with* Metaphysics, but I ultimately side with Wittgenstein on the issue of whether we should also engage *in* Metaphysics.

I say this fearing to be misunderstood. For a time, I wanted to entitle this work *The Critique of the Critique*. However, I had to change my mind, as doing so would have suggested that Kant's critique of experience is illegitimate, whereas Wittgenstein's critique of language is legitimate— something I do not believe. Still, that early title captures something essential. For this is a work of Transcendental *Meta*-Philosophy, which recognises the necessary conditions that make it possible for someone to be a transcendental philosopher *and* those to be a transcendental idealist. The two sets of conditions overlap, but they are not identical. I regard the clear distinction between them, and thereby between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, as my primary critical contribution.[1]

Ironically, the phrase "Transcendental Meta-Philosophy" is prone to misunderstanding too. It almost makes it sound as if I wanted to examine the transcendental point of view "from the outside". Yet transcendental is our *human point of view*, considered irrespective of the empirical contingencies that characterise any given person. To station ourselves outside it, we should have to be that which we are not: non-humans. A "critique of the critique", ultimately aimed at evaluating whether Metaphysics of the transcendental kind is possible, could thus proceed only *from within* Transcendental Philosophy itself.

This is the rationale for the peculiar structure of the present work, which mirrors the inner articulation of Kant and Wittgenstein's respective transcendental philosophies. After the Introduction, the work is structured into 6 *parallel* Chapters, divided into two parallel Parts, one with 3 Chapters on Kant (Part$_K$), and the other with 3 Chapters on Wittgenstein (Part$_W$). Indeed, the sections of the Kant Chapters parallel those of the Wittgenstein Chapters, so each topic in the Kant Chapters will also be discussed in the Wittgenstein Chapters *from a different perspective*. These topics include transcendental methodology, ontology, logic, subjectivity, and ethics. The

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[1] The term "critique" comes from the Greek κρῑ́νω (krīnō), which means to distinguish.

work culminates in Chapter 7, where I give my verdict on whether Wittgenstein is a transcendental metaphysician—and on Transcendental Metaphysics more generally.

More than a ladder, then, this work resembles a tree. The tree branches are symmetric, but their leaves are of different colours, so to speak. To see them from up close, you may climb the tree in two different ways. After the low trunk (Introduction), you can either start from the first Kant branch (Chapter 1_K), move *sideways* to the first Wittgenstein branch (Chapter 1_W), before stepping up a level and doing the same (2_K and 2_W, etc.) Or else, you can go *up* the Kant side of the tree ($Part_K$) and then go up the Wittgenstein side ($Part_W$). The choice is up to you, provided you don't lose your balance, and reach the top of the tree: 7.

I owe intellectual debts to many people. But by far the greatest one is to Jim Levine, who was of invaluable support during my own climbing. Most of my interests in philosophy are rooted in Jim's work as a teacher, mentor, and scholar. His dedication, humanity, and sheer clarity of thought have shaped my work more than I could ever express. In fact, they have helped me grow up. Alongside his influence, I will only mention that of A. W. Moore. As it happens, Moore is often the critical target in this dissertation. But that is so out of respect for his views, which have been an unfailing source of inspiration.

I would, if I could, thank Kant and Wittgenstein. I know that sounds ridiculous—yet it is what I feel. They have been my teachers too. Perhaps, the most important lesson I have learned from them is this. It is of little philosophical use to just think *about* the great figures in the history of philosophy. Rather, we should think *with* them and, ultimately, *beyond* them. For no one has the last word in Philosophy.

It is in this philosophical spirit that the present work has been written. I would be happy if it helped someone to think for themselves about Metaphysics, and to feel the magical power it exerts on us——without necessarily being bewitched by it.

S. N.

Introduction

And it is all one to me
Where I am to begin:
for there I shall come back again.

                                                        - Parmenides

Transcendental Philosophy is born out of the need to check whether Metaphysics is in some way possible. With *his* transcendental philosophy, Kant argued that Metaphysics is possible *in a transcendental guise*, whereby we know a priori *that* empirical reality depends, for its necessary features, upon our point of view. This is Kant's transcendental idealism. After Kant, however, Transcendental Idealism has often been *charged* with incoherence—a charge buttressed by Wittgenstein's early critique of Metaphysics as nonsensical. Taking the case against Kant to be closed, many have turned to Wittgenstein to rescue Metaphysics *from itself*, committing him to an *ineffable* kind of Transcendental Idealism, "shown" with the help of nonsensical remarks. And if so, Transcendental Metaphysics would in some (*non*)sense be possible.

In this work, I systematically investigate whether there is (any form of) Transcendental Idealism in Wittgenstein's early philosophy, by comparing it with Kant's one, especially with respect to the possibility of Metaphysics. The Central Question I aim to address is: Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist? I will argue that a distinction should be made between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, and that, given this distinction, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, but *not* a transcendental idealist *of any kind*. In fact, I will distinguish between two variants of Transcendental Idealism, namely an effable variant, that Kant endorsed, on which Transcendental idealism can be coherently stated; and an ineffable variant, often *ascribed* to Wittgenstein, on which the attempt to "say" Transcendental Idealism results in nonsense, but the doctrine may nonetheless be "shown". And I will argue that the early Wittgenstein is neither sort of transcendental idealist.

More perspicuously, I will argue for the following three main claims:

(α) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (or transcendentalist),

(β) the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist, and

(γ) the early Wittgenstein is *not* an ineffable transcendental idealist.

Thus, I will answer the Central Question in the negative.

Given the claims above, however, the issue will also arise as to what kind of transcendentalist the early Wittgenstein is, if not an idealist one, and how his stance may bear on Metaphysics. By the final Chapter 7, I will argue that Wittgenstein takes a transcendental position free of metaphysical lumber, which I call "Transcendental Quietism", whereby we refrain from commitment over the nature and status of the necessary conditions for the possibility of cognition. This will constitute the fourth and final claim of the present work:

(δ) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist.

Still, Wittgenstein's (ineffable) variant of Transcendental Quietism is uncompromising, as it turns the whole of Metaphysics into mere nonsense. In conclusion to the work, I will thus sketch a moderate (effable) variant of Transcendental Quietism, whereby Transcendental Metaphysics is coherent,[2] and hence possible in a straightforward *sense*, but while we should engage *with* it, we should not engage *in* it. This will constitute my answer to the Overarching Question of the work, namely: Is Transcendental Metaphysics Possible?

Apart from the present Introduction, my main discussion of Kant and Wittgenstein will be in 6 parallel Chapters (three per philosopher), indicated by the numbers 1, 2, and 3, and accompanied by the letters $_K$ and $_W$. The discussion culminates in Chapter 7. Specifically, in Chapter

1$_K$ I expound Transcendental Philosophy with Kant's help.	1$_W$ I argue that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (α).
2$_K$ I expound Effable Transcendental Idealism with Kant's help.	2$_W$ I argue that the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist (β).
3$_K$ I expound Ineffable Transcendental Idealism with Kant's help.	3$_W$ I argue that the early Wittgenstein is *not* an ineffable transcendental idealist (γ).
7 I expound Transcendental Quietism, and argue that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist (δ).	

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[2] At any rate, Effable Transcendental Metaphysics. (The "ineffable" one is incoherent by definition.)

The work has been composed parallelly, and so I have ultimately arranged the Chapters in an "alternated" order (K-W-K…). But the reader is free to read it as she pleases (see Foreword).

In the remainder of the Introduction, I will locate Transcendentalism in "methodological space", against the background of Naturalism and Skepticism, so that the reader may see where some of the problems of the present work originate. More specifically, I will argue that the Naturalism *of Kant's times*, exemplified by realist philosophers such as Locke, incurred Skepticism about the possibility of Metaphysics. Kant took this as a good reason to turn to Transcendentalism, which *for him* also meant turning to Transcendental Idealism, as a doctrine meant to "prove" that Metaphysics is possible *in its transcendental guise*. Still, Transcendental Idealism is a price that not everyone may be willing to pay. The question will thereby arise of whether one may pursue transcendental investigations without committing to Transcendental Idealism—and, if so, of how this may bear on the prospects of Metaphysics. This complex issue will be examined throughout the work, by means of an investigation of Wittgenstein's early philosophy, to be conducted along the lines sketched above.

N.   Naturalism

In 1772, during the eleven years of silence preceding his critical turn, Kant wrote a momentous letter to his pupil Markus Herz. In it, Kant informs Herz that he was "making plans for a work that might perhaps have the title *The Limits of Sensibility and Reason*"—indeed, the very work that would have later become known as *Critique of Pure Reason*. Initially, the book was to be divided into two parts, the theoretical and the practical. Yet Kant's plans soon came to a halt. As he writes to Herz:

> As I thought through the theoretical part […] I noticed that I still lacked something essential, something that in my long metaphysical studies I, as well as others, had failed to consider and which in fact constitutes the key to the whole secret of metaphysics, hitherto still hidden from itself. I asked myself the question: What is the *ground* of the relation of that in us which we call "representation" to the object? (C, 10:130; my emphasis)

A ground is something in virtue of which something else (the grounded) is what it is/how it is.[3] Kant is thus asking: in virtue of what can our representations relate to objects, in such a way as to be representations of reality? In short, *how can we represent reality at all?*

This simple question, as Kant understood, contains "the key to the whole secret of metaphysics". Indeed, it is crucial for the very *possibility* of Metaphysics. For if we could not

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[3] I will return on this definition of "ground" in Chapter 1_K.

understand on what *grounds* our representations can be *of* reality, then how can we ever hope to legitimately engage in Metaphysics, as an investigation into the nature and status *of* reality, which is aimed at knowledge, and hence at a state that is *grounded* by definition?[4] Hence, if a philosopher wants to examine the prospects of Metaphysics, she must sooner or later tackle the question "How can we represent reality?".

Of course, there are different *methods* to tackle philosophical questions, including the question "How can we represent reality?". Perhaps, the first method that comes to mind is Naturalism, which often claims for itself a continuity with common sense's reliance upon experience.[5] Kant generally defined "naturalism" as the belief that "nature is sufficient unto itself" (*Prol*, § 60), so that only natural phenomena may enter philosophical explanations.[6] Accordingly, by Naturalism I understand the methodological position that philosophical problems should be tackled by appeal to nature and our experiences of it.[7] If so, naturalistic investigations, including into the question "How can we represent reality?",[8] should mainly proceed a posteriori or on the *grounds* of experiences.[9] Here, I will mainly be concerned with the Naturalism of Kant's times, and its problematic answer to "How can we represent reality?", as a fundamental reason[10] behind Kant's turn to Transcendentalism.

Back in Kant's times, the paradigmatic naturalist was arguably John Locke. Famously, Locke was concerned with our question, arguing that we represent a *mind-independent* reality in virtue of certain private experiences ("ideas"), which such a reality produces in us. Indeed, Locke committed not only to Naturalism, but also to Realism, namely the metaphysical view that

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[4] I will likewise return on the definition of knowledge in 1$_K$. For now, I rely on the reader's knowledge.

[5] Compare Gardner (2001, p. 552).

[6] See Bell (2001a, p. 195). Kant's definition of naturalism is also discussed in O'Shea (2023).

[7] Today, in light of Quine (1969, p. 26 and 1981, p. 21), it is standard to define "naturalism" in terms of a strong continuity between philosophical investigations and scientific ones, so that philosophical enquiry should be conducted with experimental-scientific methods (Maddy 2000, p. 108 and Papineau 2009, p. 2). However, first, there are self-declared naturalist, such as John McDowell, who do not readily fit this definition (see footnote below). Second, there were naturalist philosophers long before the rise of science (in a contemporary sense of the term), e.g. Democritus. The Quinean definition does not accommodate such cases well, whereas my general definition can.

[8] Notably, John McDowell, who identifies himself as a "soft" or "liberal" naturalist, refuses to tackle the question "How can we represent reality?", by declaring it to be a *pseudo*-problem (see his 1996). However, that would turn much of Western philosophy into *pseudo*-philosophy—a price that, as I will argue in Chapter 7, we may and should avoid paying. (On the distinction between "hard" and "soft"/ "liberal" forms of Naturalism, see Strawson (1985), Gardner (2007), and O'Shea (2023)).

[9] See Papineau (2009, § VI).

[10] "A fundamental reason" does not mean "the only reason". As is well known, Kant was also dissatisfied with rationalist accounts of the relation of our representations to reality, such as Descartes' and Leibniz's, that ultimately appealed to God to ensure that there is an external world and that we can represent it. I will briefly return on these rationalistic views in the final Chapter 7, suggesting that they may be regarded as *realistic* forms of Transcendentalism, that Kant shunned, in favour of his *idealistic* form of Transcendentalism (i.e. his transcendental idealism).

reality does *not* depend upon the point of view of any Subject. The resulting doctrine may be called Naturalistic Realism, of which Locke's view is an instance, though not by any means the only possible one.

To be clear, Naturalism is first and foremost a *methodological* stance, so that commitment to Naturalistic Realism is *not necessary* for the naturalist. Nor must the naturalist commit to Lockean "ideas", which have long been superseded by "private neural intake"[11] or such like. Still, we are here concerned with *Locke's* naturalistic realism, insofar as it is a representative of the Naturalism of Kant's times, and its *answer* to "How can we represent reality?". And the answer is roughly this. It is a mind-independent reality that ultimately grounds the possibility of objective representation, by producing in us certain private experiences ("ideas") *of* the objects belonging to that reality. As Locke writes:

> The understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without. (1975, Book II, Ch. XI, § 17)

What exactly is problematic in such a view?

S.   Skepticism

Upon reflection, this 17th century picture of the mind-world relation reveals itself as riddled.[12] The problem is that its advocates tend to conceive of the mind as a box that contains private representations, but they usually forget to ask how we are supposed to get "outside the box", so to speak—for this is what would be required to *know* that we represent *mind-independent objects*, as the proponents of this model *claim* they do.[13] As noted by Dan Zahavi, Husserl has in mind exactly this predicament, when he writes:

> The ego is not a tiny man in a box that looks at the pictures and then occasionally leaves his box in order to *compare* the external objects with the internal ones etc. For such a picture observing ego, the picture would itself be something external; it would require its own matching internal picture, and so on *ad infinitum* (Husserliana XXXVI, p.106; my emphasis).[14]

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[11] The expression is used by Quine in his paper 'Naturalism'. As Quine writes: "Neural intake is private, for subjects do not share receptors" (1995, p. 253).

[12] Notably, Putnam (1987) and Davidson (2001) argue that we are still largely in the grip of this picture, vehemently criticising it as "disastrous", and thus in need of being "abandoned". For a discussion of Putnam and Davidson's views, see Levine (1993).

[13] Zahavi (2008, pp. 359-360) and Moran (2013, pp. 331-2).

[14] Quoted in Zahavi (2008, p. 360). Significantly, the title of volume XXXVI of *Husserliana* is *Transzendentaler Idealismus*.

Husserl's argument is one of a myriad of arguments based on the notion of "comparison" between representations and a (supposedly) mind-independent reality, sometimes referred to as "comparison arguments". Illustrious philosophers have taken these arguments to call into question the view of truth as correspondence between our representations, including thoughts and judgements, and a *mind-independent* reality[15]—a view at the heart of most forms of Realism.[16] Indeed, Kant himself figures prominently among these philosophers. As he writes in his 1800 *Logik*:

> Truth, it is said, consists in the agreement of cognition with its object. In consequence of this mere nominal explanation, my cognition, to count as true, is supposed to agree with its object. Now I can compare the object with my cognition, however, only *by cognizing it*. Hence my cognition is supposed to confirm itself, which is far short of being sufficient for truth. For since the object is outside me, the cognition in me, all I can ever pass judgment on is whether my cognition of the object agrees with my cognition of the object. The ancients called such a circle in explanation a *diallel[us]*. (JL, intro, VII, pp. 557-578)[17]

Like Husserl's one, Kant's comparison argument exploits a characteristic explanatory circle, which, as Kant himself hints at, the ancient Pyrrhonian skeptics called *diallelus*. We incur a *diallelus* whenever we take a given ground to be grounded by what it should ground (or by something of the same kind of what it should ground);[18] for example, whenever in an explanation we inadvertently employ what needs be explained (*explanandum*) as what does the explaining (*explanans*). Any argument which recognizes and exploits similar explanatory circles, I shall simply call *diallelus* argument.[19]

Kant's argument above is a *diallelus* argument concerning cognitions, which are none other

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[15] Douglas McDermid names for example William James, Dewey, F. C. Schiller, Hempel, Neurath, Kuhn, Goodman, Putnam, Davidson, Rorty, Habermas and Apel, giving quotes (and references) for all of them (see McDermid 1998 and 2006, Ch. 3). I would add to the list Husserl, as well as Kant (see above).

[16] Strictly speaking, Realism is a metaphysical thesis, namely the thesis that there is a mind-independent reality, and not a semantic thesis by which truth involves a correspondence between our thought and the objects supposedly belonging to such a reality. It is not a chance, however, that Putnam defines "metaphysical realism" in terms of both the metaphysical *and* the semantic thesis (1990, p. vii, and 1995, p. v). Indeed, it is rather hard to find the two theses decoupled, "as [they] make for a very natural package" (Marian, 2016, pp. 176-7.).

[17] For the importance of this skeptical argument in Kant's philosophy, see Bird (1962, p. 77).

[18] Kant: "The skeptics said all judgments were made haphazardly — *diallelon*, always the grounded on the ground and this again on the grounded, hence in a circle" (Log/D, 718, p. 455).

[19] Perhaps, the most famous example of a *diallelus* argument, or at any rate of the form of a *diallelus* argument, is the so-called Agrippan trilemma. For any question which asks us to justify our stance on a given problem, the Agrippan skeptic wants to show us we are condemned to one of three types of answers: (1) a circular justification, in the guise of an explanation which employs the object that needs to be explained (*explanandum*) as that which does the explaining (*explanans*); (2) a regressive justification, since any justification or reason we may put forward still stands in need of another reason, and that in turn stands in need of yet another reason, and so on *ad infinitum*; (3) the mere assumption of the correctness of our answer, which arguably is as good as no justification at all, not least since it does not detract from the plausibility of literally every other answer. In this work, I mostly focus on (1), as it has been recognized that the skeptical mode of circularity is more fundamental than the other two (cf. Floridi, 1993, p. 207). However, I shall occasionally appeal to (2) and (3) as well.

than representations of reality.[20] Indeed, in Kant's *diallelus* argument, the truth of a cognition is supposed to be explainable in terms of another cognition—for example, a judgement about the external reality—the truth of which should however be explainable in terms of *yet another* cognition. This ingenerates a regressive circularity of cognitions, the ultimate truth of which, it seems, can never be ascertained.[21]

Clearly, Kant's *diallelus* argument strikes at the heart of mentalistic forms of Realism, such as Locke's. For how could I ever *know* the external objects if all I have are the mental representations "in me"?[22] More generally, how can I ever *know* an object that is completely *outside* my point of view, if "all I can ever pass judgement on is whether my cognition of the object agrees with my cognition of the object"? These questions testify that similar explanatory circles (*dialleli*) should be taken seriously. If not properly addressed, they could call into question our ability to know the external reality, thereby condemning us to Skepticism—not least Skepticism with respect to the possibility of Metaphysics, as a rational enquiry aimed at knowledge of reality.

Of course, that is not to say that Skepticism is "bad". At the level of methodology, Skepticism is an open-minded attitude to enquire, by calling into question all that can sensibly be called into question, asking for the *grounds* of our beliefs and knowledge-claims.[23] As such, the skeptical methodology is beneficial to human reason (cf. A377). For example, it may lead us to call into question the knowledge-claims of Metaphysics, launching an investigation into the grounds of its possibility as a form of enquiry. Only, if we start with a "mentalistic" Realism, as Locke did, then an enquiry into the possibility of Metaphysics would be over rather quickly, due to *dialleli* arguments such as the ones above. (Hume knew this well, presenting a *diallelus* argument of his own against the possibility of Metaphysics.)[24]

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[20] I return on this definition of cognition in Chapter 1$_K$.

[21] I should make clear that, for Kant, it is not the definition of truth as correspondence or "agreement" with the object that is at fault here. On the contrary, Kant endorses it in a critical passage in which the *diallelus* is mentioned (A58/B83). Rather, for Kant, what is problematic is the understanding of this definition in terms of a correspondence with a *mind-independent* object, *completely* outside our point of view. We will see that, with his transcendental idealism, Kant "internalizes" the relation to the object (see Longuenesse 1998, Ch. 1), so that "agreement with the object", for him, will be just agreement with those *mind-dependent* a priori conditions that make cognition (of appearances) possible. Kant calls this "transcendental truth" (A222/B269), but he should better have called it "transcendental *idealist* truth". I will give a *general* notion of transcendental truth in Chapter 7. (For further discussion of Kant's *diallelus* argument, see Van Cleve 1999, pp. 215-217, and Vanzo 2010).

[22] Cf. Maddy (2000, p. 93).

[23] Strawson: "The skeptic is, strictly, not one who denies the validity of certain types of belief, but one who questions, if only initially and for methodological reasons, the adequacy of our grounds for holding them" (1985, p. 2).

[24] Hume: "By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them [?] How shall this question be determined? By experience surely; as all other questions of a like [*viz.* factual] nature. But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never any thing present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects.

Indeed, the destructive potential of *dialleli* arguments will become even clearer, once we consider that the circularity at their heart is not rooted in mentalistic accounts of cognition, but rather in representation itself—*whether mental or otherwise*[25]—whose relation to reality is crucial for the prospects of Metaphysics. As Kant writes:

> [Representation] cannot be explained at all. For we would always have to explain *what representation is* by means of yet another representation. (JL, Intro, § V, p. 545)[26]

If this is right, and we cannot explain without circularity *what* representation is, then our only hope of grounding the possibility of Metaphysics lies in accounting for *how* representation of reality is possible. As we have seen, early modern naturalists had troubles in doing just that. This, I submit, was a fundamental reason behind Kant's turn to Transcendentalism.

T.   Transcendentalism

While a deeper discussion of it will be given in Chapter 1ₖ, in this section I *briefly introduce* Transcendentalism, especially in relation to the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics in the philosophies of Kant and Wittgenstein. First, I introduce Kant's transcendental turn, which *he* takes to be a turn to *Transcendental Idealism*, as a solution to the question "How can we represent reality?", and therewith to the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics. Then, I observe that a turn to Transcendentalism need not necessarily be a turn to Transcendental Idealism.[27] This will prompt the question of whether the early Wittgenstein, who arguably took the transcendental turn,[28] was a transcendental idealist, and of how his stance may bear on Metaphysics.

T.1   *Is Transcendental Metaphysics Possible?*

The question "How can we represent reality?" is key for an investigation into the possibility of Metaphysics. Tackling it a posteriori and realistically led early modern naturalists to Skepticism. Rightly understood, however, Skepticism is an incentive to inquire further, attempting different solutions to old problems. For example, rather than a posteriori, or on the grounds of experiences, the question of the possibility of our world-directed representations may be tackled

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The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in Reasoning" (2007, Section XII, pp. 111-2). From similar considerations, Hume concluded that we should "commit to the flames" any volume of Metaphysics, "[f]or it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion" (2007, Section XII, p. 120).

[25] As I show below, Wittgenstein has a *diallelus* argument in which the representations are *sentences*.

[26] On the impossibility to explain representation, see also BL, § 10.

[27] See Chapter 1ₖ, esp. § 1.3ₖ.

[28] See Chapter 1_W.

a priori, or on grounds known independently of any particular experience.[29]

As is well known, this is one of the main ideas behind Kant's turn to Transcendentalism. It is not, however, the only one. Many thinkers tackle philosophical questions, including the question "How can we represent reality?", on a priori grounds (*for example*, on the grounds of thought alone). That means they are *not* naturalists. But it does not *yet* mean that they are transcendentalists. They may, for all we know, be skeptics (or perhaps something else entirely).

It will be the task of Chapter 1$_K$ to give a detailed analysis of the Transcendental Method, or equivalently of Transcendentalism. Indeed, the whole work is concerned with Transcendentalism in a certain sense. Thus, I won't anticipate too much of what is to come here. Still, insofar as the present Introduction should act as a reliable guide to the entire work, I need to say something more on Transcendentalism, which will then be expanded upon at a later stage.

The fundamental insight of the transcendental philosopher is that she may tackle the question "How can we represent reality?" by appealing to *necessary conditions of the possibility* of representation of reality. More specifically, according to the transcendental philosopher, such conditions are *grounds* of the possibility of cognition, which are *known a priori* by any human being, and which transcendental philosophers are meant to *recognize* in Transcendental Philosophy itself, through some (a priori) procedure.[30]

Of course, an *exact* procedure will need to be detailed for how, if at all, it is possible to recognize these necessary conditions for the possibility of cognition, of which we supposedly have a priori knowledge. Yet let us for now postpone this issue to Chapter 1$_K$ and, just for the sake of the argument, grant the transcendental philosopher her fundamental insight. What, if anything, would follow for the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics?

Well, a new avenue of research could open for prospective metaphysicians, namely that of Transcendental Metaphysics. Transcendental Metaphysics is *not* aimed at somehow *transcending* our human point of view, to gain knowledge of the nature and status of reality "in itself". It is *not* Transcendent Metaphysics *à la* Locke. Rather, it aims at a priori knowledge of the nature and

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[29] "[T]he official epistemological conception of the a priori is of an item of knowledge that is justified regardless of the particularities of one's experience" (Smith and Sullivan, 2011, p. 16). I will return on this "official" conception of the a priori in Chapter 1$_K$.

[30] Stroud: "Kant […] thinks that in some sense we all know [the necessary conditions of experience] a priori, even that we could not fail to. But that apparently does not put an end to all dispute and uncertainty about them. The promise of transcendental philosophy is that such doubts or questions can be resolved by [recognizing] by reflection that the thing in question *is* a necessary condition of […] experience" (1999, p. 159). "[T]his [philosophical] investigation of the necessary conditions of […] experience […] was to proceed *a priori* […] Reason alone was to discover its own scope and limits" (1994, p. 231).

status of the necessary conditions of our representation of reality, and thereby of the nature and status of reality *insofar as it is representable from our point of view*. Only of such a reality, according to the transcendental metaphysician, we may have metaphysical knowledge. However, is this avenue of research *really* viable?

It is exactly at this point that our Overarching Question arises: *Is Transcendental Metaphysics possible?* To answer this question, the transcendental metaphysician may *in theory* appeal to Realism. However, he is *not likely* to do so. In effect, if it is hard to explain how we may know a mind-independent reality a posteriori, or on the grounds of experiences, it will be even harder to explain how we may know it *a priori*, and thereby independently of the experiences of the objects that supposedly make up such a reality.

The best bet the transcendental metaphysician has, then, is Idealism, as the metaphysical doctrine by which reality is in some way *dependent* upon the point of view of (one or more) Subjects. The idea is that Transcendental Metaphysics could take off, if only we changed our way of thinking, assuming for once that the reality we cognize *depends*, for its necessary features, upon our point of view, and more precisely upon *a priori* conditions of cognition grounded *in us*. This train of thought lies at the heart of Kant's Copernican turn in philosophy, which is a turn to *Transcendental Idealism*. As Kant famously writes:

> Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to [the conditions of] our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us. This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus… (Bxvi)

Here, Kant is introducing his proposed solution to the problem of the possibility of our representation of reality and, thereby, to the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics. The solution is roughly this. We can represent reality thanks to the necessary conditions of our cognition, which are known a priori. If we assume that experienceable objects conform to these conditions, which for Kant *depend* upon us, then we may have hopes of "establishing" something about objects a priori, as many metaphysicians claim they do. For knowing *a priori* the conditions, we could have *a priori* knowledge of the (necessary features of the) conditioned objects.[31]

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[31] Kant: "since we can indeed […] have [a priori] cognition of those conditions under which alone an experience regarding objects is possible […] we will therefore be able to study a priori the nature of things in no other way than by investigating the conditions" (*Prol*, § 17, 4:297).

Kant's proposed solution to the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics is thus a type of Transcendental Idealism, whereby the necessary features of empirical reality can be known a priori to depend upon our point of view. More specifically, insofar as Kant's transcendental idealism asks us to "*assum[e]* that the objects must conform to our cognition", it is supposed to be at least thinkable or *effable*. ("We can accordingly *speak* of space [and time] only from the human standpoint"[32]). However, at this stage, Kant's idealism is *at best* that: an *assumption* or *hypothesis*. It remains to be seen whether we may *prove* the hypothesis[33]—or, for that matter, whether the hypothesis is a genuine one, as opposed to nonsense that masquerades as a hypothesis.[34] More generally, it remains to be seen whether Transcendental Metaphysics is in some way possible.

T.2   *Is the early Wittgenstein a Transcendental Idealist?*

As we shall see in Part$_K$ of the present work, Kant thinks he has the resources to argue that (his) Transcendental Idealism is the only sensible move for a (transcendental) philosopher exercised by the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics. Yet Transcendentalism, like Naturalism and Skepticism, is at bottom a philosophical methodology, which does not *by itself* force on us any metaphysical position—not even Transcendental Idealism, however "natural" the association may seem.

This simple observation alerts us to the possibility that one may be a transcendental philosopher, and so retain *some* of Kant's insights, without having to pay the hefty metaphysical price of Transcendental Idealism (or for that matter *any* metaphysical price). It alerts us, that is, to the conceptual *distinction* between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism (or for that matter between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Metaphysics).

This distinction, to be discussed at length in Chapter 2$_K$, is the linchpin of the present work. It will be crucial to assess the early Wittgenstein's relation to Transcendental Philosophy in general, and to Transcendental Idealism in particular. Perhaps more than anywhere else, these issues powerfully come to the fore in a 1931 passage, in which Wittgenstein explicitly mentions Kant, and gestures at the skeptical *diallelus*,[35] in a linguistic variant of it:

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[32] A26/B42; my emphasis.

[33] We need to distinguish between 'being a hypothesis' and 'being provable'. The view that there is a plethora of universes is a hypothesis. But that does not mean it can be proved. (The "many worlds" interpretation of quantum mechanics).

[34] On "nonsensical hypotheses", see Ramsey (1990, p. 6).

[35] Glock (1997, p. 298-9) has convincingly argued that there is a striking parallel between Kant's *diallelus* argument in his *Logik* and Wittgenstein's 1931 passage.

> The limit of language shows itself [*zeigt sich*] in the impossibility of describing the fact that corresponds to […] a sentence without simply repeating the sentence.
> (We are involved here with the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy).   (CV, p. 13[36])

This passage is written in unmistakable Tractarian terminology. It adds to the ample textual evidence that *the* problem of philosophy, for the early Wittgenstein as for Kant before him, is that of the possibility of representation of the world ("How can we represent reality?").[37] Indeed, in a clear reference to Transcendental Philosophy, Wittgenstein writes of the "limit" of representation of reality (here, language), which is constituted by its necessary features or (a priori) conditions.[38] Finally, as I have anticipated above, the "Kantian solution" to the problem of the possibility of world-directed representation, and thereby to the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics, is Transcendental Idealism. Hence, we are bound ask: *Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist?*

This is the Central Question of the present work. The question is even more pressing, considered that in the 1931 passage, as well as in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein appeals to "showing", as opposed to saying, and thus to ineffability. This may lead some to argue that Wittgenstein espoused an *ineffable* variant of Transcendental Idealism, as *his* solution to the problem of the possibility of representation of reality and, thereby, of the possibility of

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[36] Translation slightly emended by rendering the German *zeigt sich* as "shows itself".

[37] As noted by Michael Kremer, the theme of a single overarching problem of philosophy recurs repeatedly in Wittgenstein's pre-Tractarian journals (Kremer, 2006, p. 155). Virtually whenever it does, Wittgenstein is wrestling with the possibility of the relation between linguistic representations—"propositions" or "logical pictures"—and the world. Right at the beginning of Wittgenstein's wartime *Notebooks*, the "[formal] identity of sign and thing signified" is associated to "the whole philosophical problem" and later characterized in terms of an internal or logical relation between the two (NB 3.9.14 and 26.10.14). Towards the end of September 1914, "the problem of truth" is identified with the problem of how the correlation of linguistic signs and reality is possible (NB, 24.9.14 and 25.9.14). A few days later than this observation, in introducing the topic of picturing, Wittgenstein associates the concept of the correlation of proposition and reality to "the solution to all [his] questions" (NB, 29.9.14). Fast-forward one week, and Wittgenstein writes that logic is interested in propositions "ONLY insofar as they are *pictures* [*viz.* representations] of reality" (NB, 5.10.14). In November 1914, in the context of a discussion of the "principles" that make "representation as such" possible, Wittgenstein talks of "the whole single great problem" (NB 1.11.14; cf. NB 3.11.14 and 5.11.14). In January 1915, he writes: "My whole task consists in explaining the essence of the proposition" and thereby "in giving the essence of all facts, whose picture the proposition is", i.e. "the essence of all being" (NB, 22.1.15). This remark would be unintelligible without the further assumption that propositions and reality are intimately related, and that understanding how is part of Wittgenstein's "whole task". At his return to philosophy in 1929, far from having been abandoned it, the problem of the relation between representation and world continued to obsess Wittgenstein in a variety of forms: the relationship between expectation and expected (PR, §§ 16, 25), intention and intended (§§ 21, 24), desire and desired (§ 26), memory and remembered (§ 19), imagination and imagined (§§ 12, 38), etc. As late as June 1930 Wittgenstein was still wrestling it, observing that the idea that "the connection between thought and the world cannot be represented (for this representation does not say anything at all) must be the answer to my problems" (MS 108, p. 196; my emphasis). One cannot help but notice here the thematic affinity with Wittgenstein's 1931 remark. Indeed, only four pages earlier Wittgenstein had written that he felt the solution to the problem of the relationship between representation and reality had to be found at the limits of language (MS 108, p. 192).

[38] I argue for these points in Chapters 2$_K$ and 2$_W$. For now, it is suggestive that in an unpublished note titled 'Wittgenstein', Frank Ramsey wrote "The problem of philosophy [:] to explain the logical, necessary, or a priori" (Ramsey, unpublished, Box 2, Folder 29, p. 1).

Metaphysics. As we shall see, that is the line taken by major interpreters of the *Tractatus* (e.g. Peter Hacker and A. W. Moore), who argue that Wittgenstein helped himself to some nonsensical remarks, with the aim of leading us to recognize *ineffable* metaphysical knowledge of Transcendental Idealism.

A whole range of issues thus hinges on the question of the early Wittgenstein's alleged Transcendental Idealism. What is Wittgenstein's relation to the transcendental tradition inaugurated by Kant? Did Wittgenstein work *for* Transcendental Metaphysics by advancing ineffable doctrines, such as Ineffable Transcendental Idealism? Or did he just militate *against* Transcendental Metaphysics, to expose it as a house of cards? More generally, what may a transcendentalist learn about Metaphysics and Philosophy, by thinking with Kant and Wittgenstein? Should she endorse transcendental metaphysical doctrines, as Kant did? Or should she regard them as nonsense, as Wittgenstein did? Or is there a third possibility? If so, which one?

By the end of this work, I will provide an answer to all these questions.

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Before delving deeper into the questions above, I must however spend a word more on the value that an investigation into them may hopefully have.

Both Kant and Wittgenstein were concerned with Metaphysics, but not just for the sake of showing it is possible or impossible. Thus Kant—whose *Critique* guards us against the illusion of transcending experience to know what's outside its bounds—"had to deny knowledge to make room for *faith*".[39] And Wittgenstein—whose *Tractatus* guards us against the illusion of transcending language to express its bounds[40]—reveals that "the point of the book is *ethical*".[41] Behind Kant and Wittgenstein's critical investigations, there seems to be something deeply human, philosophical insight into which may be *ethically* significant for us.

It is not easy to pinpoint what, if anything, this "something" may be. But I would suggest it is a characteristic *longing for transcendence*,[42] a "metaphysical urge"[43] we all share, which can generate pernicious illusions. Transcendental philosophy keeps this urge in check, by recognizing *limits*

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[39] Bxxx.

[40] Wittgenstein: "I cannot use language to get outside language" (PR, § 6).

[41] Quoted in Monk (1990). I return on this notorious statement by Wittgenstein in Part$_W$.

[42] I partly borrow this apt expression from Wittgenstein (BT, p. 312). Wittgenstein writes in fact of a *Verlangen nach dem Transcendenten*, i.e. a "longing for the transcendent" (incorrectly translated by the editors of Wittgenstein's *Big Typescript* as "longing for the transcendental").

[43] On the phrase "metaphysical urge" see Stroud (2011, p. 125 and p. 159).

to our cognition and, thereby, to our point of view. These limits remind us we are finite beings. Indeed, when we critically investigate our metaphysical urge, which fuels a burning desire to know ever more about ourselves and reality, we are destined to confront, sooner or later, our *human finitude*.

I believe that both Kant and Wittgenstein were, in their characteristic ways, ultimately concerned with our finitude. Indeed, I believe we have largely inherited from them the problem of how best to live and understand our finitude—the problem of "how best to be finite".[44] This is an ethical problem,[45] which potentially concerns any human being. And if so, we could attain a deeper understanding of the problem, and thus of ourselves, by critically engaging with Kant and Wittgenstein, as philosophers of the human.

Thus, the value I hope this work may have, if any at all, is ultimately meant to be ethical. This, however, will become clearer in the final Chapter 7.

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[44] This apt expression is A. W. Moore's (1997, p. 276).

[45] The word "ethical" comes in fact from the Greek *ethos*, which points to the semantic field of dwelling or inhabiting (Borutti, 2010, p. 16). The problem of "how to best be finite" is, for us, the ethical problem of how to best inhabit our cognitive home: our human point of view. (On the peculiar *feeling of being at home with ourselves*, whether in our experience of things or in our language, see Kant's CPJ, Intro, VII, 5:193; and Wittgenstein's CV, p. 41 and 74, and PI, § 116; for remarks on both Kant and Wittgenstein on this score, see Bell's insightful 1987, esp. p. 239 and p. 242).

1$_K$ Transcendentalism

If something is to be called a method, it must be a procedure in accordance with principles.

– Kant

AIM: Giving a general definition of Transcendentalism, by identifying and analyzing necessary and sufficient requirements to be a transcendental philosopher.

In the Introduction, I have focused on the problem of the possibility of representation of reality ("How can we represent reality?"), which is key for the prospects of Metaphysics. Once this problem is in view, the need arises for a method to tackle it. As we have seen, there may be different methods to do so. Focusing on the method known as Naturalism, I have argued that, *in early modern times,* it led to Skepticism about the possibility of our knowledge of the external world, and thereby about the possibility of Metaphysics. I have then *introduced* Transcendentalism. However, I have yet to characterize it in detail.

What *exactly* are the methodological principles the transcendental philosopher follows to tackle the problem of the possibility of representation of reality? In which distinctive way does the transcendental philosopher argue? And how could this be relevant for the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics? Answering these questions amounts to giving a general definition of the philosophical methodology that goes under the name of Transcendentalism.

In this Chapter, I expound the Transcendental Method, by individuating and analyzing two necessary and sufficient requirements to be a transcendental philosopher. My discussion, which is largely inspired by Kant, is in four sections. Specifically,

§ 1.1$_K$ expounds the first requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*i*) starting philosophical investigation from our representation of empirical reality (i.e. "from within").

§ 1.2$_K$ expounds the second requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori.

§ 1.3$_\text{K}$ argues that requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) are necessary and sufficient to define Transcendentalism.

§ 1.4$_\text{K}$ argues that the main methodological tool of a transcendental philosopher is the transcendental argument, namely an argumentative procedure that proceeds from (*i*) to (*ii*). Two of Kant's transcendental arguments are also examined, namely his argument for space and his argument for substance.

1.1$_\text{K}$ *Requirement (i) of Transcendentalism*

In this section, I expound the first requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*i*) starting philosophical investigation "from within". First, I elucidate the requirement using Kant's paradigmatic case, not least by appealing to the notion of empirical perspective. Then, I address an objection against this first requirement, which will act as a bridge toward the second requirement to be a transcendental philosopher.

1.11$_\text{K}$ *Investigation "From Within"*

In our most ambitious philosophical endeavours, we would like to provide a general account of the relation of our representations to the world, ultimately aimed at knowing "whether things really stand in the […] world in the ways we think we have good reason to believe they do".[46] If by "the world" we mean reality as it may be independently of us, then, to reach our goal, it may seem we should have to station ourselves "outside" our point of view, and represent the mind-independent reality "from outside", as it were. Yet this, as shown by our discussion of the skeptical *diallelus*, is a circular "idea". *We* can only ever give yet another representation *from our point of view*—"from within".

That looks like bad news for philosophical endeavours of this ambitious sort, that are characteristic of Metaphysics. But it need not be. For insofar as they are recognized, skeptical circles like the *diallelus* can act as a reason to change the methodological procedure we should follow in metaphysical and, more generally, philosophical investigations. This was well understood by the paradigmatic transcendental philosopher, namely Kant.

As opposed to starting from metaphysical claims about reality as it may be independently of

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[46] Stroud (2011, p. 3).

our representations of it—which surreptitiously presuppose the dubious notion of a transcendent perspective "from outside", or that anyways may incur a *diallelus*—Kant's critical investigation proceeds "from within", insofar as he addresses the question "How can we represent reality?" starting from our representation, and the cognitive capacities involved in it.

In effect, while we may not assume at the outset metaphysical knowledge that there is a mind-independent world, *of* which our representations are supposed to be, we do at least know that we represent *something*. For we experience, judge and reason about this something, which we call "the world"—the empirical reality we are given. The transcendental philosopher is aware of this "given", and exploits it to his advantage, by starting from our representation of empirical reality,[47] such as our experience that such and such is the case, and the cognitive capacities involved in it, such as the capacity for judging (that such and such is the case), and more generally the capacity for thinking and reasoning. Hence, at the very *beginning* of his first *Critique*, Kant writes:

> There is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with *experience*. (B1; my emphasis)

Only a little later, we read that

> [in transcendental philosophy] our object is not the nature of things, which is inexhaustible, but the understanding, which *judges* about the nature of things. (A13/B26; my emphasis)

More generally, though also more explicitly:

> [transcendental philosophy] has to deal not with the objects of reason, the variety of which is inexhaustible, but only with [*reason*] *itself* and the problems which arise entirely *from within itself*. (B23[48]; my emphasis)

In this sense—starting from our representation of empirical reality and the cognitive capacities involved in it—a transcendental philosopher like Kant starts "from within". Indeed, in agreement with many interpreters, I take it that starting philosophical investigation "from within" is a defining feature of Transcendental Philosophy in general,[49] and hence that it is a necessary requirement to be a transcendental philosopher.

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[47] Starting from our representation of empirical reality, however, need not mean starting with *particular* representations of empirical reality, as opposed to others, or else Kant's starting point would arguably be known on a posteriori "factual" bases—something he denies in Prolegomena (§ 4, 4:274). As I will urge below, in my discussion transcendental argumentation, Kant's transcendental philosophy may be read as beginning from the *possibility* of experience (which is instantiated by *any* of our experiences, irrespective of their peculiarities) in order to recognize the necessary conditions of such possibility.

[48] Kemp Smith's translation

[49] E.g. Hartmann (1966, pp. 248-9), Bell (1999), Nordmann (2005, p. 50), Stroud (2011a, p. 7; cf. 2011b, p. 309), Gardner (2015, p. 2; cf. p. 13, on the "interiority" of transcendental philosophy).

1.111_K *The Empirical Perspective*

One way to further characterize the idea of starting "from within" is by appealing to our empirical perspective. A perspective is a way of considering (seeing/thinking) things. An empirical perspective, then, will be a way of considering things in which we are immersed in our *experience* of them, and what we think or say about them.

Arguably, the notion of empirical perspective is traceable back to Kant, who talks of a "standpoint" from which we consider "objects as objects of the senses […] for experience" (Bxix), i.e. "the vantage point [*Gesichtspunkte*] of experience" (A737/B765).[50] Perhaps, however, the clearest formulation of this notion is to be found in the philosophy of Husserl, who writes:

> Our first outlook upon life is that of natural human beings, imaging, judging, feeling, willing, "from the natural standpoint" (1931, § 27).

> I am present to myself continually as someone who perceives, represents, thinks, feels, desires, and so forth; and for the most part herein I find myself related in present experience to the fact-world […]

> [T]he natural world, the world in the ordinary sense of the word, is constantly there for me, so long as I live naturally and look in its direction. I am then at the "natural standpoint", which is just another way of stating the same thing. (1931, § 28)

> [I]t is from […] the experience as given to us from the natural standpoint, that we take our start. (1931, § 33)

Here, Husserl is making clear that we are normally immersed in our experience of things, and what we think or say about them. That is, we normally find ourselves at our empirical perspective ("the natural standpoint"). Transcendental philosophers are aware of this, and thus purposively make the empirical perspective into the starting point of their philosophy (the point from which "we take our start"). Following Husserl's lead, we may thus equate the notions of starting from our empirical perspective and starting "from within".

1.112_K *An Objection*

It could however be objected that many thinkers that would hardly call themselves "transcendental philosophers" also claim they start "from within", and that they can do this

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[50] Translation slightly emended. In the transcendental aesthetic (A30/B45), Kant suggests that the vantage point of experience is the vantage point of "empirical understanding" [*empirischen Verstande*]. Given Kant's distinction between the empirical and the transcendental, I take it that this standpoint is distinguished from that of "transcendental understanding", i.e. the standpoint of the transcendental 'I', or equivalently the transcendental point of view. Arguably, for Kant, the transcendental point of view makes possible, and thus pervades, the empirical perspective in the first place (see A107).

without becoming transcendental philosophers. Thus, for example, in the last page of his *Word and Object*, Quine writes:

> [There are those who] imagine for the philosopher a vantage point outside the conceptual scheme that he takes in charge. There is no such cosmic exile. He cannot study and revise the fundamental conceptual scheme of science and common sense without having some conceptual scheme, [which is itself] in need of philosophical scrutiny, *in* which to work. He can scrutinize and improve the system *from within*. (2013, p. 254; my emphasis)

Famously, Quine is a naturalist. And Naturalism—I have urged in the Introduction—is methodologically antithetical to Transcendentalism. It should then give us pause that Quine agrees with Kant that philosophical investigation should start "from within".

In fact, that can be the case since, as strongly suggested by Quine's passages above, and as recently noted by Barry Stroud, there is a sense in which there is no alternative at all to starting investigation "from within",[51] whether one is then a transcendentalist, a naturalist, or something else entirely. As Stroud writes, "[u]nless we are prepared to make everything up as we go along, we have no choice but to start from where we are now, with what we already believe and think we know about the world".[52] Stroud calls this Kantian feature of philosophical investigation, by which we start with our world-directed representations, "Metaphysics from within".[53]

Now, if Quine and Stroud are right—if there is a sense in which in Metaphysics, or even in Philosophy in general, we *must* start "from within"—then requirement (*i*) to be a transcendental philosopher may seem vacuous, since nothing could ever count as starting "from outside". As should be clear by now, I think Quine and Stroud are right. However, I also think there is a way to spell out requirement (*i*) which avoids the charge of vacuity.

In effect, while anyone *must* start philosophical investigation from her representations of reality and/or the cognitive capacities involved in them (i.e. "from within"), that does not mean that everyone will be *aware* of this necessity. Being aware of it requires reflection on, or insight into, one's representation and the cognitive capacities involved in them. This suggests that there is a distinction to be made between *self-consciously* starting investigation "from within" *vs.* unself-consciously starting investigation "from within". The transcendental philosopher starts "from within" in the first sense, but arguably not *all* philosophers do.

That said, insofar as naturalists like Quine self-consciously start "from within" too,

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[51] cf. Stroud (2011, p. 7)

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

requirement (*i*) is surely a necessary, but far from sufficient condition to be a transcendental philosopher. And if so, we will need at least one more requirement of Transcendentalism.

1.2ₖ *Requirement (ii) of Transcendentalism*

While their starting point may be our representation of reality, Naturalism and Transcendentalism are different methodological approaches. That will be clear as soon as we distinguish between our representation of reality and *philosophical investigations* of it. In such investigations, naturalists give priority to experiences, which are arguably contingent and known a posteriori. Transcendentalists, on the other hand, give priority to something that is *not* empirical, namely the conditions that are *necessary* for the very possibility of experience, and that are *known a priori*.[54]

In this section, I expound the second requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori. First, I extract the requirement from one of Kant's definitions of the "transcendental". Then, I analyze it. My analysis proceeds outward, from the core of the requirement to its fringes. More specifically, I first discuss *conditions of possibility*, as well as *representation of empirical reality* (cognition), which for the transcendental philosopher is the conditioned. I then turn to the *necessity* that, for the transcendental philosopher, pertains to the conditions of cognition. After that, I discuss the *a priori knowledge* that, for the transcendental philosopher, all human beings have of such conditions. Finally, I focus on their philosophical *recognition*.

1.20ₖ *Transcendental*

The transcendental philosopher (self-consciously) starts investigation from our point of view or "from within". However, starting "from within" is not a prerogative of Transcendental Philosophy *alone*. What, then, is? Put otherwise, what is *distinctive* about Transcendental Philosophy? Clearly, to answer this question, we must first attain a deeper understanding of the term "transcendental". And there is no better way to do so than turning to Kant himself.

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[54] Indeed, naturalists are often suspicious of a priori knowledge (e.g. Maddy 2000; cf. Stroud, 1984, p. 214, and Smith and Sullivan, 2011, p. 16). Here, however, I am only calling attention to the fact that naturalist must reserve pride of place to a posteriori knowledge, as opposed to a priori one.

Kant offers a variety of definitions of "transcendental", and not all of them are equivalent. Some are more specific, others more general. I think it will be good to start from one of Kant's general definitions—one that won't make Transcendental Philosophy synonymous with *his* transcendental philosophy. Arguably, the most general definition Kant gives is to be found in the *Prolegomena*, where he writes:

> The word "transcendental" […] does not signify something that surpasses all experience, but something that indeed precedes experience (*a priori*), but that, all the same, is destined to nothing more than solely to make experiential cognition [*Erfahrungserkenntnis*] possible. (*Prol*, 4:374n)[55]

Here, Kant is doing two interrelated things. First, he is distinguishing the transcendental from the *transcendent*, which he regards as something that completely "surpasses" experience, or that goes beyond it. (Plato's forms are transcendent in this sense.)[56] This is worth stressing since some authors tend to downplay Kant's distinction, suggesting that his transcendental philosophy was mainly concerned with the transcendent.[57]

Second, Kant is giving us the characteristic marks of that to which the predicate 'transcendental' applies. According to Kant, what is transcendental must be *a priori*, by which he meant that it must be *known* a priori, or prior to experience. Indeed, what is transcendental must "precede experience", insofar as it is "destined" to make experience ("experiential cognition") possible in the first place.[58] Put otherwise, for Kant, there could be no experience at all, without the transcendental. And if so, the transcendental will not only be known a priori, but it will also be *necessary for the possibility of experience*. For Kant, then, transcendental is anything that is known a priori as a necessary condition of the possibility of experience (and, by extension, anything that concerns such conditions[59]).

This Kantian definition of the transcendental is a reasonably clear one. Still, we might make

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[55] Translation slightly emended.

[56] Compare Plato's *Phaedrus* (247c).

[57] See Williams (2006, p. 121 and p. 138) and Moore (1997). For example, Moore claims that, for Kant, the point of view of the Subject is transcendent (see 1997, p. 125). Except Kant explicitly denies this in the first *Critique*, when he asks rhetorically: "And how should it be possible to go beyond experience (of our experience in life) through the unity of consciousness with which we are acquainted only because we have an indispensable need of it for the possibility of experience[?]". In fact, to *completely* transcend experience, the Subject should have to transcend itself (which is absurd). I will return in some depth on these issues in Chapters 2_K, 3_K, and 7.

[58] "[E]mpirical cognition […] is called experience" (B147).

[59] For example, Kant's "transcendental logic", as a *philosophical investigation* of the necessary conditions of our thought about reality, is not itself a necessary condition of representation of reality (if it were, before Kant there would not have been representation of reality). However, Kant's transcendental logic nonetheless deserves the title of "transcendental", since it *concerns* (what Kant takes to be) necessary conditions of cognition, which are known a priori (i.e. the categories). I return on Kant's transcendental logic in Chapter 2_K.

it clearer by adding a couple of remarks. The first remark is this. All human beings, for Kant, (implicitly) know a priori the necessary conditions of experience see (see Anthr$_L$, 25:1222). However, not all human beings will (explicitly) *recognize* such conditions and the a priori knowledge they have of them. That is the task of a subset of human beings, namely the transcendental philosophers (cf. A703/B731). There is thus an important distinction to be drawn between *what* is transcendental, and *how* transcendental philosophers like Kant go on to recognize what is transcendental.

As for my second remark, Kant defines the transcendental in terms of the conditions that are necessary for the possibility of experience, but instead of "experience" I would perhaps say *"representation of empirical reality"* (cognition[60]). That's because, after Kant, the term 'transcendental' has been applied to the conditions of many types of cognition, whether such cognitions then take the name "experience", "thought", or "language" (or all of them at once). Again, we want to be as open-minded as possible, as to avoid that Transcendental Philosophy just becomes synonymous with *Kant's* philosophy.

With these two remarks in mind, we may now define *what* counts as transcendental. Transcendental is anything that is (or concerns) a necessary condition of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which is known a priori.

1.202$_K$ *How to Recognize the Transcendental*

As anticipated above, this prompts the question of *how* transcendental philosophers are to recognize and investigate such putative conditions—a question that must be answered, if we are to understand who counts as a transcendental philosopher in the first place. For example, could the transcendental philosopher recognize and investigate the relevant conditions naturalistically or on the grounds of experiences?

Kant, who is our paradigm of the transcendental philosopher, would answer "No" to this question. According to him, philosophical investigation into the necessary conditions of experience cannot be a posteriori or *grounded* on experiences, for "transcendental philosophy is a philosophy of pure [*viz.* non-empirical[61]] speculative reason" (A15/B29), "which takes no

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[60] For my identification of "representation of empirical reality" and "cognition" see § 1.23$_K$ below. Today it is generally acknowledged that "the transcendental is that which makes cognition possible" (Smith and Sullivan, 2011, p. 5).
[61] The context of the passage makes clear that this is *exactly* what Kant means, since he writes that whatever is "of empirical origin" does "not belong in transcendental philosophy".

foundation as given[62] except reason itself" (*Prol*, § 4; my emphasis). Indeed, even if it were viable, a naturalistic investigation of the conditions that make all experience, and so all a naturalistic investigation, *possible* in the first place, would always arrive *too late*.

As a result, for Kant, the examination of the necessary conditions of experience must be conducted by the *a priori* "tribunal of reason",[63] as opposed to the a posteriori "tribunal of experience".[64] And this means that, for Kant, the philosophical *recognition* of the necessary conditions of experience must be *a priori*, as much the (implicit) knowledge all human beings have of them. More generally, for the transcendental philosopher, the philosophical recognition of the necessary conditions of our representation of empirical reality must be a priori, as much as our (implicit) a priori knowledge of them. That is something that a naturalist cannot ultimately accept.[65]

Below, in my discussion of transcendental argumentation, I will return to the complex problem of how an a priori recognition of the transcendental may work. For now, keeping in mind our discussion so far, I will regard the following as the second requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, that are known a priori.

In what follows, I analyze this requirement. The analysis begins from its core, namely the claim that there are *conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality*. Or rather, it begins with the core of the core, namely the notion of 'conditions of possibility'.

1.21$_K$ *Conditions of possibility*

The notion of 'conditions of possibility' is widely recognized as a hallmark of Transcendental Philosophy, by means of an appeal to Kant. I surely agree with this view, though I believe it stands in need of clarification.

A condition C of *x* is a ground of *x*,[66] i.e. something in virtue of[67] which *x* is what it is/how

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[62] As I have urged above, experience is *given* for Kant. Only, it is *not* given *as a foundation* (ground) of his transcendental philosophy, which rather recognizes grounds of the possibility of experience in the first place.

[63] For this famous image, see Axi-xii and A751/B779.

[64] For this famous image, see Quine (1951, p. 38).

[65] With this, I do not mean to deny that there are interesting questions to be raised about the relation that Transcendentalism may have with Naturalism (see Smith and Sullivan 2011), nor that some forms of Naturalism may share *some* traits with Transcendentalism (we have seen that even a "hard" naturalist like Quine self-consciously starts "from within"). All I mean is that, insofar as their investigation is supposed to proceed *a priori*, transcendentalists cannot *ultimately* be methodological naturalists (see Bell 1999, § 2, and 2001a, p. 172-3).

[66] For the interdefinability of grounds and conditions, especially in the context of Transcendental Philosophy, see Franks (1999, pp. 115-6), Watkins (2018 and 2021), and Gardner (2015).

[67] In contemporary analytic philosophy, this "in virtue of" relation is typically considered metaphysical, so that 'ground' is taken to be a purely metaphysical notion. This, however, is not necessary. If the proposition *p* is

it is.[68] Thus C is a condition of possibility of *x* if, without *C*, *x* could not be what it is/how it is (in some yet unspecified meaning of "could").[69]

This is not a definition of 'condition of possibility', but rather an elucidation of it. For it presupposes an understanding of the notion of *possibility*, which cannot be defined without circularity. Sure, possibility is a modality, together with other modalities such as necessity and impossibility. However, while other modalities may be defined in terms of possibility, it is (how to say it?) impossible to give an account of possibility without recurring to words that already presuppose it, such as "could". And so too for *conditions* of possibility.

Hence, when Kant attempts to clarify possibility, he does that circularly, in terms of the conditions of the possibility of experience: "Whatever agrees with the formal conditions of [the possibility of] experience […] is possible" (A218/B265).[70] That is, Kant, as anyone else, cannot define possibility, and consequently conditions of possibility. Still, even though definitions are precluded, we may at least appeal to our shared sense of possibility, through elucidations such as the one above, which may help us to gain clarity on the conditions of the possibility in which the transcendental philosopher is interested.

These are necessary grounds that make our representations of reality what they are, namely representations *of* reality, and without which we could not represent reality at all. We might call the possibility of our representation of reality, insofar as we may have a priori insight into its necessary grounds, t r a n s c e n d e n t a l p o s s i b i l i t y. The necessary grounds of such possibility, which are known a priori, we may instead call t r a n s c e n d e n t a l c o n d i t i o n s (or, equivalently, t r a n s c e n d e n t a l g r o u n d s).

1.211ₖ *Transcendental Possibility*

Of course, these will be mere labels, unless we clarified what is so special about transcendental possibility, as well as the necessary conditions of that possibility, namely the transcendental conditions.

First, transcendental possibility arguably has a *sui generis* status, which is neither

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true, then, in virtue of this, the proposition *not: not p* is true as well. That, however, is hardly a metaphysical relation between *p* and *not: not p*, but rather a logical one. Below, I will thus argue that there may be many different kinds of conditions or grounds (and thereby of grounding relations), including the logical one.

[68] For example, a condition of peace is the absence of war. The absence of war makes peace what it is, namely *peace*, and it characterizes how it is, namely peaceful.

[69] The meaning of "could" in my elucidation remains unspecified at this stage, in that, as I clarify below, there may be different kinds of possibility.

[70] As will become clear in Chapter 2ₖ, this is Kant's characterization of "real possibility", as opposed to "merely logical possibility".

straightforwardly reducible to epistemology, ontology, nor logic. In effect, the possibility of our representation of reality may be at stake in all such disciplines, whenever we ask about the possibility of *knowledge/cognition*[71] of something *x* (epistemological possibility), the possibility of there *being* something *x* (ontological possibility) which we take ourselves to represent, and even the possibility of the *thought* of *x* (logical possibility).

It is Kant himself who first noticed this peculiarity of transcendental possibility, by identifying the possibility of our cognition of things (epistemological possibility) with "the transcendental possibility of things[72]" (ontological possibility), which allegedly requires the "transcendental predicates" he calls "categories", as the rules that make thought of something possible (logical possibility).[73] That is, for Kant, transcendental possibility is at the same time epistemological, ontological, and logical. And though that need not be the view of any transcendental philosopher, it alerts us to the wide scope of transcendental possibility.

Due to this wide scope, transcendental possibility may initially seem like a "jack of all trades" with no special property of its own, making it worthwhile to single it out. However, quite the contrary is true. The peculiarity of transcendental possibility is that it has a *necessity* as its ground of possibility.[74] There are necessary conditions that make transcendental possibility, well, possible in the first place! Really, then, it is the necessary conditions *of such possibility* that have a special status,[75] namely the transcendental conditions.

1.212$_K$ *Transcendental Conditions*

I understand by transcendental conditions necessary grounds of the possibility of our representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori. The transcendental conditions share the *sui generis status* of transcendental possibility (which they make possible in the first place). For example, the transcendental conditions may be that without which we could not cognize reality (epistemological conditions), or that without which there could be no reality[76] (ontological conditions), or that without which we could not even think at all (logical

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[71] As I will show throughout Part$_K$, knowledge and cognition are not *exactly* the same. Epistemology, however, should arguably deal with both.

[72] A244/B302. Here Kant means "things as appearances".

[73] Compare B113-114.

[74] Something similar is recognized by Gardner (1999, p. 45) and Kitcher (2011, p. 60) in their discussion of Kant's transcendental argumentation. I return to transcendental arguments, in Kant and in general, below.

[75] Stroud calls this "transcendental status" (1999, p. 158).

[76] At any rate, empirical reality.

conditions).[77] Indeed, these alternatives need not be mutually exclusive.

Once again, Kant was sensible to this point, as attested by one of his most famous passages:

> The conditions of the possibility of *experience* in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the *objects* of experience (A158/B197; my emphasis)

Here, Kant is concerned with transcendental conditions, qua conditions of the possibility of experience. However, for Kant, experience is a form of cognition ("empirical cognition"). Hence, Kant is clarifying that conditions of the possibility of cognition of reality are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the reality cognized. Put otherwise, for Kant, the transcendental conditions are epistemological and ontological at once.[78]

But we may go even further than this since, for Kant, without *some* transcendental conditions of experience, namely the fundamental concepts he calls "pure categories", it would not even be possible to think. Put otherwise, Kant's categories are also logical conditions. Hence, as a matter of fact, with his transcendental philosophy, Kant blurs the line between epistemology, ontology, *and* logic.

Now, we need not buy any metaphysical position, as Kant does, to take on board the *general* point that Transcendental Philosophy may be concerned with conditions of possibility that have a *sui generis status*, insofar as they *need not* be reducible to either epistemology, ontology,[79] logic, etc. "Need not" is the operative phrase here. Some transcendental philosophers are free to focus on logical conditions, and to treat them as entirely different from epistemological and ontological ones. (Strawson may be a case in point[80]). However, other transcendental philosophers, including Kant, are equally free not to do so. And that is because transcendental possibility, and consequently its (transcendental) conditions, *need not* be restricted to any one field of philosophical-theoretical enquiry.

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[77] At least insofar as one takes thinking as representation of empirical reality or, at any rate, that there may be not thought in general, if there were no thought of empirical reality.

[78] As noted by Sebastian Gardner 2015, p. 12; cf. 1999, pp. 39-40), by equating the conditions of the possibility of cognition with those of (cognized) being, Kant's transcendental philosophy blurs the line between epistemology and ontology. This was also noted by Sellars, who writes: "the core of Kant's 'epistemological turn' is the claim that the distinction between epistemic and ontological categories is an illusion" (1967, p. 634).

[79] In Chapter 2ₖ, I will distinguish between Metaphysics (in general) and Ontology (in general). There, I will argue that, while some ontologies commit their proponents to metaphysical views (such as Transcendental Idealism), not all ontologies need to.

[80] For the later Strawson, transcendental conditions are necessary features ("limits") of our *conceptual* scheme, but they are not (or they cannot be known to be) necessary features of the *reality* we take ourselves to conceptualize. As Strawson writes: "even if we have a tenderness for transcendental arguments, we shall be happy to accept [that] the most they can establish is a certain sort of interdependence of conceptual capacities and beliefs" (1985, p. 21). This is also Stroud's position (1994, p. 242). Indeed, in his passage above, Strawson was conceding to some of Stroud's points in his seminal 'Transcendental Arguments' (1968). I return on transcendental argumentation below.

Below, I will further clarify the crucial notion of transcendental conditions. However, before going on, I wish to clear the air on a common misunderstanding, insofar as it relates to the discussion above. Many interpreters, perhaps confused by the word "condition", take transcendental conditions to be in some sense "restrictive", i.e. to impose some *limitation* upon the conditioned.[81] However, just as playing with a tennis ball is a condition of playing tennis, but not a "limitation of playing tennis", so too there *may* be transcendental conditions that are not, thereby, limitations. Put otherwise, there may well be necessary conditions of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori, but which do not thereby "restrict" or "constrain" representation and/or the empirical reality represented.[82]

But to appreciate the importance of this point,[83] thereby coming to a more well-rounded appreciation of transcendental conditions, we first need to focus on what it is they are conditions of the possibility *of*. In the next sub-section, I thus turn to the notion of "representation of empirical reality", which I elucidate by means of the notion of "cognition".

1.23$_K$ *Representation of Empirical Reality*

Many scholars of Transcendental Philosophy talk in terms of "conditions of the possibility of *x*", where *x* is a cognitive function or achievement, such as experience, thought and language. While this is correct, it leaves the scope of *x* relatively arbitrary, unless one will also come up with suitable accounts of experience, thought, language, etc., or, at any rate, of what it is that unites them. Indeed, it won't suffice to say they are "cognitive" functions or achievements, springing from "cognitive" capacities, unless the term "cognition" is itself clarified.

Since our object is Transcendental Philosophy, once again we should look to Kant for guidance. "[C]ognitions", Kant says, "consist in the determinate relation of given representations to an object" (B137). Unfortunately, it will be a matter of interpretation what *exactly* Kant meant by this. However, one thing is clear to most interpreters: cognition requires both the givenness of something *and* the conceptual articulation necessary to think about that something in a determinate fashion.[84]

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[81] Chon Tejedor, for example, takes the notion of "condition", and thereby also of "transcendental condition", to be inherently "restrictive" (e.g. 2015, p. 48, p. 74, p. 79).

[82] Compare C. I. Lewis, who says of the principles of the interpretation of the given, which he calls "categories", that "they can be a priori—knowable with certainty in advance of experience—precisely because they impose *no limitation* upon the given but, as principles of interpretation, nevertheless *condition* it as a constituent of reality" (1929, pp. 13-14, my emphasis; cf. also p. 215).

[83] The point above will be vital, for example, for the distinction between transcendental features and transcendental constraints, as well as for my discussion of the distinction between limits and limitations, to be discussed in 2$_K$.

[84] E.g. Gomes (2017, p. 8), Watkins and Willaschek (2017), Tolley (2020).

Now, if there is something that may not only be given, but also conceptually described or articulated, then that is empirical reality. If so, irrespective of the many peculiarities of Kant's position (by which empirical reality is constructed out of representations), a *generally* Kantian definition of cognition might go as follows: a cognition is a representation related to empirical reality or, to put it shortly, a *representation of empirical reality*, such as an experience, or a world-directed thought/proposition, etc.[85]

To sum up, by equating cognition and representation of empirical reality, we may have an idea of *what is involved* in representation of empirical reality, e.g. givenness and conceptual articulation. However, in our quest to understand the necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, we would *like* to know something more: *what* representation of empirical reality *is*.

Alas, this ask cannot be satisfied. Perhaps, we may define 'empirical reality' as all that can be experienced—a definition, by the way, that need not "restrict" empirical reality to a portion of being,[86] since for some (transcendental) philosophers the space of the experienceable coincides with the space of the thinkable.[87] However, even though we may define empirical reality in terms of what can be experienced, experience (that such and such is the case) is itself a form of *representation* of empirical reality. And representation, as Kant noted, cannot be defined at all without incurring a *diallelus*.

Hence, our *analysis* of the second requirement to count as a transcendental philosopher hits rock bottom here. At best, we may provide *examples* of representations (e.g. intuitions, concepts, beliefs, thoughts, propositions, pieces of knowledge, pictures), to lead someone to recognize them as such.

1.24_K *Necessary*

So far, after having identified the second requirement to be a transcendental philosopher—namely (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical

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[85] Clinton Tolley writes for example that "Kant conceives of cognition as […] a representation […] of a real object" (2020, § 6). Since for Kant the only objects that may legitimately count as "real" and that can be cognized are spatiotemporal ones—those objects, that is, that constitute empirical reality—then Tolley's formulation is roughly equivalent to my own.

[86] Indeed, this definition is non-committal with respect to the metaphysical nature and status of that which is, or may be, experienced, namely empirical reality. It may be mind-dependent ideas (Berkeley) or appearances (Kant), or else as mind-independent sense-data (Russell) or physical objects of a different sort. This observation will become important with respect to my discussion of Wittgenstein's Tractarian notions of objects and empirical reality.

[87] This is the case of the early Wittgenstein, whose notion of "empirical reality" is non-restrictive, since he takes empirical reality to be all that can be represented by language (T, 5.5561; compare Sullivan 1996, p. 216, fn. 41). I will argue for this point at length in Part_W.

reality, which are known a priori—I have analyzed its core, by discussing the conditions of possibility the transcendental philosopher is interested in, namely the transcendental conditions, as well as the correlative conditioned, namely representation of empirical reality (cognition). However, I have not yet discussed the necessity and the apriority of the transcendental conditions in depth. In this sub-section, I discuss their necessity, and in the next one their apriority.

1.241$_K$ *Transcendental Necessity*

Kant famously characterizes transcendental conditions as *necessary* conditions of experience (e.g. A49/B66 and A157/B196). We can now more generally say that transcendental conditions are *necessary* conditions of representation of empirical reality (cognition). However, that won't take us very far, unless we also have an idea of what "necessary" means, and of the peculiar necessity at stake in Transcendental Philosophy.

Necessary is whatever could not, *in some sense*, be otherwise. I say "in some sense" since there may be different types of necessity, definable in terms of different kinds of impossibilities. For example, something x is epistemologically necessary, if it cannot be *known/cognized* otherwise (e.g. Platonic forms are epistemologically necessary, since it is impossible to know them other than by reason). Something x is ontologically necessary, if it cannot simply *be* otherwise (e.g. that an effect follows from a cause is ontologically necessary, since it is impossible for something to be an effect without a prior cause). Something x is logically necessary, if it cannot *be thought* otherwise (e.g. "all bachelors are unmarried men" is logically necessary, since it is impossible to think of "married bachelors"[88]). Indeed, there may well be *sui generis* kinds of necessity, defined in terms of *sui generis* kinds of impossibility.

Now, largely following Kant, I have claimed that the transcendental philosopher recognizes *necessary* conditions of the possibility of cognition, which are known a priori. *By itself*, however, this claim does not settle the issue of the specific *type* of necessity of the transcendental conditions. At this stage, it may be epistemological necessity (they cannot be known to be otherwise), ontological necessity (they cannot be otherwise), logical necessity (they cannot be thought to be otherwise), or some other necessity entirely, provided it is known and recognizable a priori. Should the transcendental philosopher commit to any of these necessities, *as opposed to the others?*

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[88] Equivalently, the words "married bachelors" are internally in conflict, so that every string of signs in which they appear will be a *contradiction*, such as "there are married bachelors". I return on contradictions below.

I do not think a specific commitment is—well—necessary. For example, in Kant, *some* of these conditions of cognition, namely the *pure* categories, are epistemologically, ontologically, and logically necessary at once: they cannot be *known* other than by reason, they cannot *be* other than they are,[89] and no alternative to them may be *conceived*[90] (though, for Kant, it is at least conceivable that there be categorial *realizations* other than our own; see 2$_K$). Accordingly, following Mark Sacks and Sebastian Gardner, I will call the necessity pertaining to the a priori conditions of cognition t r a n s c e n d e n t a l n e c e s s i t y, to signal it is of a *sui generis* kind.[91]

To offer a definition in terms of impossibility: something is transcendentally necessary if we can know a priori the impossibility of representing empirical reality without it. Hence, in virtue of this definition, any necessary condition of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which is known a priori, will count as *transcendentally* necessary, irrespective of the more specific type of necessity it instantiates, *if any*.[92]

1.2411$_K$ *Transcendental Necessity as "Hypothetical Necessity"*

Now, as was the case with transcendental possibility, it might at first seem that transcendental necessity is an empty placeholder, that may stand for any kind of necessity we please, as long as it is known a priori. On the contrary, however, there are at least two distinctive traits of transcendental necessity. Unsurprisingly, Kant was sensible to both. Here, I consider the first trait, whereas in the next sub-section I consider the second one.

The first characteristic trait of transcendental necessity, as necessity of the a priori conditions of cognition, is pinpointed by Kant in this short but important passage:

Necessity as a condition is properly hypothetical […]; it is necessity as a presupposition. (R 5569)

Here, Kant is making clear that transcendental necessity, or "necessity as a condition", is the

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[89] See *Prol*, § 22, 4:306.

[90] Given that, for Kant, the categories are *necessary* rules of thought, any attempt to think "an alternative" to them must already make us of them, and so crumbles on itself.

[91] See Sacks (2005, p. 453) and Gardner (2015, p. 8). The term "transcendental necessity" is also employed by Callanan (2013, pp. 3-4).

[92] Significantly, this well preserves a historical connotation of the term "transcendental" which, in the Middle Ages, already indicated necessary features that may hold across the board. Back then, it was in fact common to talk of predicates or concepts that extend to all objects in general, as "transcendentals", examples of which were supposed to be 'one', 'truth', 'good' (Gracia 1992; cf. B113). Ontology was then believed to deal with such "transcendentals" (cf. Wouter and Aertsen, 2019, esp. § 6), and there were also debates about whether these belonged (primarily) to the order of thought or to that of being (Philström 2012, p. 454). This medieval tradition was alive and well in 17th Century Germany and still traceable in Kant's 18th Century one (Tonelli, 1987, p. 174). However, Kant gave new and unprecedented shades of meaning to the word "transcendental" (ibid. and Allison 2015), and thereby new life to ontology of the transcendental kind. I will return to Transcendental Ontology, in a generally Kantian sense of "transcendental", in Chapter 2$_K$.

necessity of a *presupposition*. For him, it would be the necessity of any presupposition of experience.[93] For us, it will be the necessity of any presupposition of cognition (irrespective of whether the latter takes the name "experience", "thought", or "language").

In effect, a presupposition is none other than a condition or ground or, more precisely, an *a priori* condition or ground. Below, in my analysis of *a priori* or *pre*-experiential knowledge, I will further clarify the relevant notion of *pre*supposition. What interests us here, however, is the transcendental *necessity* of the presuppositions at stake in Transcendental Philosophy, namely the a priori conditions of cognition. In the passage above, Kant characterizes this necessity as "hypothetical", which is the first characteristic trait of transcendental necessity. But what could that mean?

I think that transcendental necessity, qua necessity of the preconditions of cognition, is hypothetical since it holds only under the "hypothesis" that we have cognition. For the transcendental philosopher, *if* there is cognition, *then* there are its necessary conditions of possibility. Indeed, for the transcendental philosopher, if there is cognition, then there *must* be its conditions of possibility, otherwise cognition should have to be possible without the conditions that make it possible, which is patently absurd. Hence, for C to be a *necessary* condition of the possibility of a cognition *x*, is none other than for the following conditional to hold

$$\Box^{94} \text{ if } x \text{ [the conditioned], then } C \text{ [its condition of possibility]}$$

It is the whole conditional, and hence the *relation* between cognition and its conditions of possibility, that is necessary. This does not endanger transcendental necesssity's status *as* a necessity. Rather, it characterizes it as a *relational* necessity.

Arguably, Kant introduced the notion of 'relational necessity' to characterize hypothetical necessity. As he writes, "[something is] hypothetically necessary [if it is necessary] *in relation to* the possibility of [...] experience" (R 5914; my emphasis). By "relational necessity", I will more generally mean a necessity that holds *in relation to* something else. Transcendental necessity is relational, since it holds only in relation to cognition, or insofar as we cognize anything at all.

Now, there being cognition may well be a contingency, i.e. something that *may* be otherwise.

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[93] For example, Kant writes: "Only under [the] *presupposition* [of the "a priori intuition" of time] can one represent that several things exist at one and the same time (simultaneously) or in different times (successively)" (A30/B46; my emphasis). Or else, Kant writes of the categories ("a priori concepts") that "without their *presupposition* nothing is possible as object of experience" (A93/B126; my emphasis). Starting in the next sub-section, and throughout Part_K of the present work, I will discuss Kant's view of time and the categories, as well as his view of space, insofar as they are all necessary presuppositions of experience for him.

[94] The box indicates the modality of *necessity* and may be substituted by the word "necessarily".

Kant himself writes that experience is "entirely contingent" (A737/B765)—though that need not be the view of all transcendental philosophers, given that some of them could equate experienceability and conceivability, thereby lacking the resources to so much as conceive of experience as "contingent".[95] However, irrespective of whether cognition is contingent, the transcendental's philosopher point is that, *necessarily*, if there is cognition, then there are its conditions of possibility. Cognition and its transcendental conditions of possibility are internally *related*, as it were.

One may object that some (putative) necessities are relational, and yet that not all philosophers would consider them "transcendental". For example, the (putative) necessity of the *relation* between cause and effect is, well, relational. For only *if* there is a cause, *then* there is an effect. However, not everyone will argue that causal necessity is a transcendental necessity. (Kant would have,[96] but not anyone is Kant). If so, it may seem that we are back at square one, and that transcendental necessity is little more than an empty placeholder.

What makes a necessity *transcendental*, however, is not just its relational character, but rather its *special* relation to representation of empirical reality (cognition), which is *made possible* by its necessary conditions (at least, according to the transcendental philosopher). Hence, transcendental necessity is distinctive, since it is a necessity *in the service of a possibility*, namely, the possibility of cognition. It is the necessity of those conditions that are *indispensable* if cognition is to be possible at all.[97]

1.2412$_K$ *Transcendental Necessity as Human Necessity*

That triggers the question: *Whose* cognition is made possible by the transcendentally necessary conditions? Put otherwise, *who* are the relevant beings, that could not cognize the world without

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[95] Kant's structural commitments—mainly his distinction between merely logical and real possibility to be examined in detail in Chapter 2$_K$—allow him to make the complex and layered claim that our experience is contingent. More specifically, given his distinction between logical and real possibility, Kant can not only claim that we may *think* or entertain the concept of finite rational beings that do not experience the world through our forms of experience, in such a way that our experience is *logically* contingent; he can go as far as claiming that we may think of a supreme rational being that does not receptively "experience" the world at all, but rather *creates it* with its (infinite) mind, in such a way that possible experience in general (whatever its form) will be *logically* contingent. I will return to some of these points in the next sub-section. For now, all I wish to stress is that not every transcendental philosopher needs to be committed to Kant's distinction between merely logical possibility (conceivability) and real possibility (experienceability), and hence to his claim that our experience is (logically) contingent. After arguing in Chapter 1$_W$ that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, I will argue in 2$_W$ that he cannot countenance a distinction between logical and real possibility. As a result, for the early Wittgenstein there can be no such thing as "thinking that *our* experience is contingent" or, for that matter, "thinking that experience in general is contingent".

[96] See A228/B280, where Kant characterizes the causal relation as an "hypothetically necessary" one, "without which not even nature itself would obtain", let alone experience of it.

[97] Kant himself characterizes (what I call) transcendental necessity in terms of "indispensability for the possibility of experience" (B5), experience being a type of cognition for him.

the transcendental conditions?

I have argued above that, to recognize necessary conditions of cognition, transcendental philosophers (self-consciously) start from *our* point of view. Now *we*, whoever else we may be, are *human beings*. Hence, arguably, transcendental philosophers will be interested in necessary conditions of human cognition, and, therewith, in the necessary features of the *human point of view*, insofar as they are known a priori.

Kant is adamant on this. After having argued that necessity is a criterion of the a priori (B3-4), he stresses that transcendental philosophy is concerned "with *our* mode of cognition of objects, insofar as this is possible a priori" (A12/B25). To leave no scope to doubt, he immediately adds that "transcendental philosophy […] would have to contain an exhaustive analysis of all of *human* cognition a priori" (A13/B27). Again, he says that "transcendental philosophy […] contains the *conditions* and first elements of all *our* cognition a priori" (What Real Progress?, 20: 260). And yet again: "the transcendental philosophy is the philosophy of principles, of the elements of *human* cognition a priori" (LoM, 28:576).[98]

The passages above and many others attest that the connection between the transcendental and humanity is essential for Kant.[99] But if so, given that "Kant's is the example that counts for most" in all matters transcendental,[100] we have a confirmation that Transcendental Philosophy deals with the necessary features of the human point of view, insofar as they are known a priori. Equivalently, we may say that transcendental necessity pertains to the a priori conditions of *the human point of view*.

This is the second distinctive trait of transcendental necessity. As it happens, this trait raises delicate philosophical issues, and extreme caution is required when dealing with it. We may generally agree with Kant that transcendental are the necessary features of the human point of view, insofar as they are known a priori.[101] However, we need not agree with him on *his* specific account of the human point of view in terms of "a priori cognition" (see passages above). For knowledge and cognition are not one and the same. (There may be ineffable knowledge, but not

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[98] Emphases added to these four quotes.

[99] A few more quotes may reassure the skeptic. Kant writes that "transcendental philosophy has the special property that there is no question at all […] given by pure reason that is insoluble by this very same *human* reason" (A477/B505; my emphasis). Also, he writes that something is transcendentally grounded if "it has its ground in the nature of *human* reason" (A341/B399; my emphasis). Indeed, "there is a transcendental philosophy firmly grounded in *our* [human] reason" (WRL, 20:275; my emphasis). Finally, and most importantly, Kant is clear that the fundamental questions of philosophy are summed up in the question "What is the *human being*?" (JL, p. 358; my emphasis).

[100] See Sullivan (2013, p. 257).

[101] At the limit, the whole human point of view may be called "transcendental" insofar as we consider its necessary and a priori features. I will return to the human point of view, qua transcendental point of view, in Chapter 3ₖ.

"ineffable cognition"). And besides, *what* is known a priori need not be an a priori cognition.[102] In what follows, I will thus endeavour to clarify where, in our quest to *generally* characterize Transcendental Philosophy, we need *not* follow the letter of Kant's text.

1.24121ₖ *Kant on the Necessary Features of Human Cognition*

Kant's account of the human point of view is condensed in the following, memorable passage:

> There are two stems of human cognition, which may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root, namely sensibility and understanding, through the first of which objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought. (A15/B29)

The human point of view, Kant suggests here, is a unity of two cognitive faculties, namely *sensibility*, through which "objects are given to us", and *understanding*, "through which they are thought". More specifically, for Kant, objects are given to us in *intuitions*, which are immediate representations of a single entity (*rapraesentatio singularis*),[103] and thought by means of *concepts*, which are mediate and general representations, in that they highlight what is common to several object*s* through the mediation of certain characteristic marks[104] (*rapraesentatio per notas communes*).[105] Both intuitions and concepts, for Kant, are necessary for cognition: "only from their unification can cognition arise" (A52/B76; cf. B125).

To be even more precise, the duality of sensibility and understanding, and the correlative one between intuitions and concepts, need not be true of human beings *alone* for Kant, for it is at least *conceivable* that there should be other *finite* thinking beings, namely beings who should be given things to think about them (as opposed to the infinite being, namely God, who should intuit things with his intellect, thereby creating them).[106] Put otherwise, for Kant, it is *logically possible* that there be non-human beings with a *discursive understanding*, namely an understanding that requires an articulation in thought or language of something *given* (as opposed to an "intuitive understanding", that creates things, and so needs no such articulation).

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[102] Hence, for example, Russell writes in his *Problems of Philosophy*: "our a priori knowledge [...] is not merely knowledge about the constitution of our minds, but is applicable to whatever the world may contain, both what is mental and what is non-mental" (1998, p. 50).

[103] It is debated in Kant scholarship whether the "immediacy" and the "singularity" that are required of intuitions ultimately amount to the same condition. A general appraisal of the debate is contained in Thompson (1972). For reasons of salience, however, I will not debate the issue here.

[104] As these marks would have to be possessed by given objects before being conceived *qua common marks* in conceptual representation, and indeed as the givenness of an object manifests itself in sensible intuition, concepts of objects (of possible experience) must ultimately be related to intuition (see A19/B33). Thus, they are ultimately (general) representations of (particular) representations, and in this sense they are called "mediate".

[105] For the intuition/concept distinction, see especially A19/B33 and JL, § 1.

[106] See A27/B43 and B72.

Still, in the continuation of the passage quoted above (A15/B29), Kant stresses once again that his transcendental philosophy is concerned with *us*, and more precisely with *human* sensibility and understanding:

> Now if sensibility were to contain a priori representations, which constitute the conditions under which objects are given to us, it would belong to transcendental philosophy. […] For the conditions under which alone the objects of human cognition are given precede those under which those objects are thought. (A16/B30)

As is clear from this passage, Kant takes the necessary features of human cognition to be "a priori representations" or "a priori cognitions". More specifically, Kant argues that *space and time*, as necessary features of our sensibility, are "a priori intuitions", or intuitions known a priori. Further, he argues that *the categories* such as <cause> and <substance>, as necessary features of the understanding, are "a priori concepts", or concepts known a priori. Accordingly, *Kant's* transcendental philosophy will be mainly concerned with the a priori intuitions of space, time, and the a priori concepts or categories, *insofar as they are all necessary features or conditions of our point of view*. As Kant writes:

> The transcendental philosophy is the philosophy of principles, of the elements of human cognition a priori […] But now we classify the elements of human a priori cognition:
>
> 1.   into the principles of a priori sensibility, namely the a priori cognitions […] of space and time; and
>
> 2.   into the principles of intellectual human a priori cognition […] These principles of human a priori cognition are the categories of the understanding. (LoM, 28:576)

As we shall later see, Kant believed space and time to be confined to human experience alone, whereas he believed the categories to have a wider domain than that of human experience. That, however, does not mean that for Kant the categories "transcend the human point of view" as a whole. (If they did, *we* could hardly entertain them).

I will return to these points in more detail over the next Kant Chapters. For now, I only wish to stress three vital points. First, while I agree with Kant that Transcendental Philosophy is concerned with necessary conditions of human cognition, which are known a priori, that is not to say that these conditions *must* themselves be mind-dependent a priori *cognitions*, such as Kant's a priori intuitions and his a priori concepts.[107] That's because my characterization of requirement (*ii*) does not imply any commitment over the metaphysical nature and status of the

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[107] Or for that matter the a priori propositions that are supposed to come out of (the interaction between) the a priori intuitions and the a priori concepts, which, as we shall see below, Kant calls "synthetic a priori judgements".

transcendental conditions. They may be mind-dependent cognitions, *or not*. (This simple point will prove invaluable for our discussion of the early Wittgenstein.)

Second, transcendental philosophers need not buy the Kantian duality of sensibility and understanding, and the relative duality between intuitions (aesthetic) and concepts (logic). *Some* transcendental philosophers may retain them.[108] But the point is that not all of them *need* to. Indeed, by equating the space of what we may experience and the space of what we may conceive, these further transcendental philosophers may recognize necessary features of the human point of view that are *neither* straightforwardly aesthetic *nor* logical. (This point too will become clearer in our discussion of the early Wittgenstein.).

Third, and relatedly, if a transcendental philosopher did not recognize a strong distinction between intuitions (aesthetics) and concepts (logic), then it is arguable that he would *not* have space to *conceive* of beings whose mode of cognizing the world is different from our, in the way Kant claims he can. And in that case, the words "we", "us", "our" would not enforce any "restriction" on our point of view, as opposed to that of other putative beings ("they", "them", "their"). Indeed, in that case, all talk of "we", "us", and "our" would become superfluous, and will eventually have to drop out. (As you might imagine, I will argue for this point too in my discussion of Wittgenstein).

Since, however, these three points all deal with Transcendental Idealism (in both Kant and the early Wittgenstein), I will have to leave a full discussion of them to later Chapters. For now, I only wished to pre-empt the possibility of misunderstandings.

1.25$_K$ *Known a Priori*

We are now halfway through our analysis of requirement (*ii*) to be a transcendental philosopher, namely recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of cognition, which are known a priori (transcendental conditions). Above, we have discussed the necessity of transcendental conditions. However, according to the transcendental philosopher, such conditions are also *known a priori* (by every human being). And one may easily understand *why*. For if the transcendental conditions were known a posteriori, then they should have to be either experiences or objects of experience,[109] rather than presuppositions of them, as the

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[108] For example, Schopenhauer, who arguably was a transcendental philosopher, retained the Kantian dualities above, albeit in an idiosyncratic way. For a further discussion of Schopenhauer's (transcendental) view, in relation to Kant and Wittgenstein's ones, see Chapter 2$_W$.

[109] Here, I mean the phrase "object of experience" in the widest possible sense, so that it may include situations and facts, insofar as they may be experienced.

transcendental philosopher contends.

Yet what exactly is a priori knowledge? And in which sense, if at all, are transcendental conditions known a priori? To answer these questions, we must first gain some sense of the meaning of the word "knowledge".

1.251$_K$ *Knowledge*

Traditionally, knowledge has been defined as belief that is both grounded and true. I do not think that any item of knowledge must be a belief, since there may well be knowledge that cannot be expressed in language (as beliefs can), namely non-propositional or *ineffable knowledge*.[110] Put otherwise, the traditional definition of knowledge in terms of belief obliterates the fundamental distinction between two general kinds of knowledge:

Propositional Knowledge: knowledge that *can* be expressed by a proposition, and

Ineffable Knowledge: knowledge that *cannot* be expressed by a proposition,

where a "proposition" is any (declarative) sentence expressing a thought.[111] An example of propositional knowledge may be knowledge of the proposition that "Mont Blanc is 4807 meters high". An example of ineffable knowledge may be phenomenal knowledge,[112] whereby a Subject *feels* what it is like to enjoy certain mental states,[113] as in awareness of the sound of a clarinet,[114] or of one's pain,[115] etc.

In any case, even though there may be ineffable knowledge, and so knowledge without belief, I agree with the traditional definition of knowledge in other respects. Specifically, I think that there must be adequate *grounds* for the truth of any knowledge state (whether this truth be then expressible by propositions or not[116]). For the putative notion of "ungrounded knowledge"

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[110] In Western philosophy, ineffable knowledge goes as far back as Parmenides and Gorgias. In Eastern philosophy, it goes at least as far back as Lao Tse (see Jonas 2016, p. 10)

[111] For now, I rely on the pre-theoretic grasp that the reader has of the notion of thought, which will be defined in Chapter 2$_K$. I should mention that there is a debate in the contemporary literature on thoughts, over whether all thoughts may be encoded in propositions (see Belleri 2013). The question is whether there are "ineffable contents" that may somehow be grasped, but which however are inexpressible in language. This sort of debate will become important in Part$_W$ of the present work, since some Wittgenstein scholars (e.g. Hacker) take it that there are similar "ineffable contents".

[112] For the claim that "phenomenal knowledge" is ineffable, see for example Jonas (2021, p. 134).

[113] Chalmers: "phenomenal consciousness is defined in terms of the way the state *feels*" (2010, p. 504).

[114] Compare § 78 of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

[115] Compare Duncan (2020), who argues that knowledge of pain is ineffable.

[116] Insofar as there may be ineffable knowledge, there should be ineffable grounds for the *truth* of this knowledge, which will then be non-propositional or ineffable truth (notice the singular "truth" as opposed to the plural "truth*s*"). The notion of ineffable truth goes back at least to Aristotle, who believed it to be the truth of our contact or acquaintance with being (*Metaphysics* 1052a). More recently, following Aristotle, Heidegger has appealed to ineffable truth too (1962, § 44). I will return on ineffable truth in Chapter 7, when discussing Wittgenstein's

makes as little sense as the putative notion of "false knowledge".

As we have seen, grounds are conditions that (can) make something what it is/how it is. There may be grounds for all sorts of things—grounds of being (ontological grounds), grounds of thought (logical grounds), etc.[117]—which may be variously interrelated, and even overlapping, in some philosophical views, such as Kant's. In any case, when it comes to knowledge, there must be grounds for (the possibility of) its truth, without which it would not (or could not) be knowledge.

1.2511$_K$ *A priori knowledge*

Knowledge may have empirical grounds, whenever it is grounded upon experiences. It is then called *a posteriori knowledge*. For example, if I know that it is raining, my knowledge will be grounded on perception of rain, which is an experience. Hence, my knowledge that it is raining is *a posteriori*. Something similar holds if I know the sound of a clarinet. This too is an instance of *a posteriori* knowledge, as it is grounded upon the experience of having heard a clarinet.

However, there may also be knowledge *not grounded* upon experiences or, as philosophers sometimes say, knowledge that does not depend upon experiences. It is then called *a priori knowledge*. For example, most philosophers, including Kant, regard knowledge that "7 + 5 = 12" as *a priori*.[118] Or else, it is arguable that knowledge of our own thinking is an instance of *a priori* knowledge, as Descartes believed.

Still, while our examples of a posteriori knowledge are clear enough, in which sense exactly is, say, "7 + 5 = 12" known a priori? More generally, what should we mean by "knowing something *independently of experiences*"? Is it known independently of *all* experiences and, thereby, independently of experience as such? Or is there another option?

Clearly, the view that something is known a priori if it is known by an agent who has had no experiences *at all* is a tough sell.[119] In fact, on this view, not even "7 + 5 = 12" would count as something known a priori, since this is not a truth we know innately or independently of *all*

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ultimate stance in the *Tractatus*. As for the notion of ineffable grounds, compare Bernard Williams' (1972), especially § 3, 'Knowledge without reasons'. (Like Williams, I will reserve the term "reasons" to a species of grounds, namely propositional or *effable* grounds).

[117] This runs against the prevalent opinion in contemporary analytic philosophy that 'ground' is a purely metaphysical notion. Against this opinion, Paul Franks rightly stresses that there may be different kinds of grounds (2005, p. 18). Frank's list of grounds inspired my own above, thereby inspiring my characterization of transcendental grounds or conditions (cf. 2005, p. 206 and p. 360). However, to my knowledge, Franks never offers a *definition* of transcendental conditions or grounds, whereas I have done so, on the grounds (!) of my definitions of the notions of 'transcendental' and 'condition/ground'.

[118] See B15 and Bonjour (1998, p. 21).

[119] Swinburne (1975, p. 239).

experiences whatsoever, but rather a truth that we learn *with* experience (e.g. at school). Kant himself knew how unpalatable the view under examination is, as he begins his first *Critique* by clarifying that, *as far as time is concerned*, all our knowledge[120] begins with experience (B1).[121] If so, no knowledge, not even a priori knowledge, may ever be completely detached from experience.[122]

A priori knowledge, then, is not knowledge that *temporally* comes before experiences (for what does?), nor knowledge that is independent of experience as such. Rather, as Kant argues in the *Prolegomena* (§ 7 and § 36),[123] it is knowledge that is independent of any *particular* experience.[124] It is "prior" to experiences only in the minimal sense that it is not grounded upon any *particular* one.

The operative word here is "particular". A priori knowledge is neither grounded on particular experience e_1, nor on e_2, nor on e_n, nor indeed on any particular succession of experiences in an individual's life.[125] Still, it is not entirely independent of experience *in general*, and so "we must allow a *minimal* role to experience, even in a priori knowledge".[126] To put it in Kant's words, in a priori knowledge "we take from experience nothing more than what is necessary to give [...] an object" (A848/B876).

Let us then call a priori knowledge any knowledge state that is not grounded on any *particular* experience. Now, if we grant that any *particular* experience might not have been, and thereby that it is *contingent*,[127] then from our definition we may reasonably infer that a priori

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[120] In this passage, Kant says "cognition", but we may read "knowledge", *as long as we bear in mind one caveat*, discussed in footnote 120 below.

[121] Hence, Kant writes in his reply to Eberhard: "The *Critique* admits absolutely no implanted or innate representations" (OAD, 8:221, p. 312). The passage is discussed by Allison (1973, p. 82), Patricia Kitcher (1990, pp. 15-16) and Callanan (2013).

[122] To be fair, in the continuation of the passage quoted in the last footnote, Kant seems to admit of one piece of innate knowledge, namely (transcendental) self-consciousness, which is a form of self-knowledge (OAD, 8:221, p. 312). In Chapter 3$_K$, I will however argue that self-consciousness is a "subjective experience", so to speak. Hence, if we stretch the meaning of the word "experience", my claim that no knowledge may ever be completely detached from experience will still be compatible with Kant's passage (irrespective of whether we then think that self-consciousness is innate).

[123] In these two sections, Kant argues that items of a priori knowledge precede "all [...] *individual* perception" (§ 7) and thus that they have "no *particular* perception underlying [*viz.* grounding] them" (§ 36).

[124] Pereboom (1990, p. 31). Compare Hanna (1998, pp. 119-120)

[125] Cf. B2 and Philip Kitcher (2006, p. 30).

[126] Philip Kitcher (1980, p. 5; my emphasis). This minimal role is sometimes called "enabling", as opposed to "evidential" (see Williamson 2013, § 2). The idea is that experience may play a role in a priori knowledge, as long as it enables us to acquire or recognize that knowledge, without however *grounding* it.

[127] Take for example my experience that it is raining right now. Today *might have been* a sunny day. But in that case, I would not have had the experience that it is raining. Hence, this experience might have not been: it is contingent. Notice, however, that claiming that any particular experience is contingent is not yet to claim that *what is experienced* is contingent as well. A scientist's experience that "Water is H_2O" is arguably contingent upon a number of factors (e.g. her being born after the discovery of certain elements, her having studied chemistry, etc.) But that is not yet to say that water's being H_2O is a contingency. I will return below on similar issues.

knowledge must be grounded upon something that is *not* contingent, and hence upon something *necessary*. That does not yet mean that whatever is necessary is known a priori,[128] but it does mean that a priori knowledge cannot be *grounded* on contingencies, such as particular experiences. Indeed, one may even agree with Saul Kripke that some contingencies are known a priori;[129] but the point here is that this (alleged) a priori knowledge of contingencies cannot itself be *based* on contingencies. As with all priori knowledge, it should be based on *necessities*.

Kant himself argued that a priori knowledge must be based on necessities. As I have anticipated above, he believed necessity to be a "mark" of a priori knowledge, by which he meant that whenever something is known on necessary grounds, and with "consciousness of [this] necessity", it is also known a priori (see B3 and JL, p. 574-5). It will thus be crucial for our investigation of Transcendental Philosophy to attain a deeper understanding of the interplay between apriority and necessity.

To achieve this goal, however, we first need a map of the different kinds of a priori knowledge. In effect, similarly to knowledge in general, it is conceivable that *a priori* knowledge should come into two general kinds:

Propositional A Priori Knowledge: a priori knowledge that *can* be expressed by a proposition.

Ineffable A Priori Knowledge: a priori knowledge that *cannot* be expressed by a proposition.

Given our discussion above, both kinds of a priori knowledge should be grounded on something necessary. (At the limit, in the case of ineffable a priori knowledge, self-grounded[130]). Indeed, both kinds of a priori knowledge may have a role to play in Transcendental Philosophy.

However, since ineffable a priori knowledge has never been explicitly recognized before, we shall think *about* it in later Chapters.[131] Propositional a priori knowledge, on the other hand, is more familiar, and so I shall start from there.

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[128] Famously, Saul Kripke has argued for the 'necessary a posteriori' (1980). The link between apriority and necessity that I have drawn here does not rule out this possibility. Whatever is known *a priori* must be known on necessary grounds. Yet it *may* still be that some necessities are known on the grounds of (contingent) experiences, and hence a posteriori. In any case, although I allow space for this possibility, I remain neutral on this issue here.

[129] See again Kripke (1980). Not everyone will agree with Kripke that there is the 'contingent a priori' (Stalnaker, 2021). I remain neutral on the issue, though my discussion leaves space for the *possibility* that Kripke is right.

[130] This will become clear in Chapters 3_K and 3_W. By self-grounded knowledge I don't necessarily mean knowledge grounded in the Self alone. Rather, I more generally mean knowledge grounded *in itself* or *auto-grounded* (in need of no further grounding than that which it already supplies).

[131] As we shall see, there is no incoherence in thinking *about* ineffable knowledge. What is incoherent is the putative notion of "thinking ineffable knowledge".

1.25111ₖ *Propositional A Priori Knowledge*

Propositional a priori knowledge is, by definition, a form of propositional knowledge. While the distinction is not universally accepted among philosophers, Kant famously divided propositional knowledge into two kinds, namely analytic and synthetic knowledge (A7/B10-11).[132] Analytic knowledge he characterizes as "clarificatory", insofar as it clarifies the content of our concepts, without adding to it. Synthetic knowledge he calls "amplificatory", insofar as it adds to the content of our concepts, without clarifying it (ibid.). Today, we would likely say that analytic knowledge is grounded on the analysis of propositions and concepts, whereas synthetic knowledge is grounded on something else, such as experiences—though synthetic knowledge need *not* necessarily be a posteriori.[133]

In effect, Kant applied the analytic/synthetic distinction to propositional *a priori* knowledge. Put otherwise, for Kant, both analytic and synthetic knowledge may be a priori. More precisely, analytic knowledge may *only* ever be a priori. Synthetic knowledge, on the other hand, may be either a posteriori or a priori for Kant. Since, however, we are here concerned with propositional *a priori* knowledge, and the role it may have in Transcendental Philosophy (whether Kant's or anyone's), I shall leave aside synthetic a posteriori knowledge, and focus on analytic a priori knowledge and synthetic a priori knowledge. Let's start with analytic a priori knowledge.

1.251111ₖ *Analytic A Priori Knowledge*

Analysis is the process of dissecting complex propositions and concepts in simpler and/or clearer propositions and concepts.[134] In this process, which is not grounded upon particular experiences, we may recognize propositions that are known a priori, insofar as we know them on necessary grounds. For example, according to Kant, "*no* unlearned person is learned" is an analytic a priori propositions (A153/B192), since it is known on the grounds of a *necessary* logical rule, to which we may appeal in the analysis of propositions, namely the *principle of contradiction—not: A and not-A* (ibid. and *Prol* 4:267). Indeed, "*some* unlearned person is learned" is a

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[132] Famously, Quine (1951) objected to the analytic/synthetic distinction, arguing it constitutes one of two "dogmas" of empiricism. After Quine, Grice and Strawson (1956) have defended the "dogma".

[133] As we will see below, this "contemporary" characterization is indebted to Kant too.

[134] On one view of analysis, this process only makes explicit what we meant (implicitly) all along in unanalyzed propositions. As we will see, this is Kant's view of analysis, which is endorsed by G. E. Moore, Russell before 1900, as well as the early Wittgenstein. On another view, however, the analysis of a proposition only makes more precise what was previously vague, with no claim as to whether the more precise propositions resulting from analysis have the same sense as the unanalyzed vague ones. This is Russell's view of analysis after 1900, as well as the later Wittgenstein's one. For the difference between these views of analysis, especially in Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein, see Levine (2018).

contradiction, namely a well-formed string of signs, the truth of which is logically impossible. (The same goes for "some bachelors are married men", etc.)

Now, analytic a priori propositions *such as* "no unlearned person is learned" are trivial, and hence they are called *tautologies*. Importantly, however, not *all* analytic propositions need to be tautologies. This was already noted by Kant,[135] who writes in his *Logik*:

> The identity of the concepts in analytic judgments can be either *explicit* (*explicita*) or *non-explicit* (*implicita*). In the first case the analytic propositions are *tautological* [whereas in the second they are not].
>
> *Note I*. Tautological propositions are […] empty of consequences, for they are without value or use. The tautological proposition, *Man is man*, is of this sort, for example. For if I do not know anything more to say of man except that he is a man, then I know nothing more of him at all.
>
> Implicit analytic propositions, on the other hand, are not empty of consequences or fruitless, for they make clear the predicate that lay undeveloped (*implicite*) in the concept of the subject through development (*explicatio*). (JL, § 37)

Here, Kant argues that analytic propositions are either tautological or non-tautological. None of the two adds to the quantity of our (propositional) knowledge. However, non-tautological analytic propositions change the *quality* of it, making our (propositional) knowledge clear. For they bring out, or make *ex*plicit, what was previously implicit in it. Hence, they are not called tautologies, but rather *ex*plications or, more generally, *ex*positions [*Erörterungen*] (see A727-30/B755-8).[136] With Wilfrid Sellars, we may characterize expositions as "illuminating analytic truths".[137] But what may this have to do with Kant's transcendental philosophy, or for that matter with Transcendental Philosophy more generally?

Kant is clear that expositions may be fruitful. This means that, if his transcendental philosophy were to contain expositions of concepts, it would not be empty or fruitless, in the way tautologies are. Rather, it would be *illuminating*. Hence, when Kant writes that "philosophical knowledge is rational knowledge from concepts" (A713/B741), we should not understand him as saying that philosophy is tautological. Rather, by way of illuminating analyses, namely

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[135] But later, also by Frege, who argues that "we should put an end to the legend of the sterility of pure logic [and its analytic judgements]" (1960, § 17), as well as Carnap (1950, pp. 24-5), who argues that there are statements that are "analytic but far from trivial".

[136] By "exposition", Kant means "the distinct (even if not complete) representation of that which belongs to a concept" (A23/B38). Put otherwise, expositions are analyses of concepts, albeit not necessarily *exhaustive* analyses, for which Kant reserves the term "definition" (see again A727-30/B755-8).

[137] Sellars (1967, p. 635). Notably, Sellars discusses "illuminating analytic truths" in his interpretation of Kant's transcendental philosophy, which, he claims, is analytic a priori. In agreement with Sellars, I will defend this view below, backing it with textual evidence he does not appeal to. On Sellars' interpretation of Kant, see also O'Shea (2019, p. 407).

expositions of concepts, philosophy may bear the fruit of clarity and distinctness, bringing to light what was previously obscure and confused. As Kant writes:

> When I make a concept distinct […] my cognition does not grow at all as to content through this mere analysis. The content remains the same, only the form is altered, in that I learn to distinguish better, or to cognize with clearer consciousness, what lay in the given concept already. As nothing is added to a map through the mere illumination of it, so a given concept is not in the least increased through its mere *illumination* by means of the *analysis* of its marks [...] The philosopher *only* makes given concepts distinct. (JL, p. 569; my emphasis)

> [The] aim [of philosophy is reached] by means of a sufficient *illumination* of our concepts. (A735/B763; my emphasis)[138]

Here, Kant indicates that the task of philosophy may only ever be *analytical* and thereby aimed at conceptual "illumination" or clarity. Indeed, as we shall later see, this is exactly what Kant aims at in his *exposition* [*Erörterung*] of the concepts of space and time[139] (see A23/B37 and A31/B46), or for that matter in the 'transcendental deduction of the categories', which is none other than "the *exposition* [*Erörterung*] of these elements of the understanding" (A98; my emphasis).[140] Yet if so, Kant's transcendental philosophy must be *analytic* a priori.

Indeed, Kant is much clearer on this than usually recognized. Not only he writes that transcendental philosophy would need "to contain an exhaustive *analysis* of human cognition a priori" (A13/B27; my emphasis); but he also adds that this analytic investigation, even if it were carried out only up to a certain point,

> can properly be called not doctrine but only transcendental critique, since *it does not aim at the amplification of cognitions* themselves but only at their correction, and is to supply the touchstone of the worth or worthlessness of all cognitions a priori (A12/B26; my emphasis)

Clearly, then, Kant's transcendental philosophy is analytic, since it does *not* aim at the amplification of cognitions, in the way a synthetic philosophy would have to.

To be sure, it is not to be assumed that *all* transcendental philosophers must share with Kant this analytic conception of their task. Still, we may well imagine transcendental philosophers other than Kant, according to whom an illuminating analysis of the concepts of the

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[138] For Kant, the aim of philosophy is to know its own limits (see A727/B755), thereby bringing "speculation back to modest but thorough self-knowledge" (A735/B763). I return to Kant's general idea of philosophy in Chapter 7, since it requires a discussion of Kant's view of self-consciousness (see 3ₖ).

[139] Space and time (a priori intuitions) are here the necessary grounds from which analytic knowledge of their *concepts* proceeds. A priori knowledge of space and time themselves is grounded in yet another necessary condition of cognition for Kant, namely the Subject or 'I think' (on which, see 3ₖ).

[140] Compare A728-9/B756-7, where Kant writes that "strictly speaking no concept given a priori can be defined, e.g. substance, cause", and thus that for the categories, "[i]nstead of the word 'definition', I [*viz.* Kant] would rather use that of exposition". Indeed, Kant's "deduction" of the categories may be regarded as their exposition, which is to make clear that they are grounds of the possibility of experience (cf. B168-9).

transcendental conditions is the business of philosophy (irrespective of whether they agree with Kant that the transcendental conditions are a priori cognitions). But if so, analytic a priori knowledge (of the illuminating kind) *may* have an important role to play in Transcendental Philosophy more generally.

1.251112ₖ *Synthetic A Priori Knowledge*

But wait a second. Is not Kant's transcendental philosophy famously concerned with the (ground of the) possibility of *synthetic* a priori propositions of Metaphysics, such as "all events must have a cause"[141]? After all, Kant himself writes:

> The real problem of pure reason is now contained in the question: How are synthetic judgments a priori possible? That metaphysics has until now remained in such a vacillating state of uncertainty and contradictions is to be ascribed solely to the cause that no one has previously thought of this problem. (B19)

> What is the X on which the understanding depends [in synthetic a priori propositions]? It cannot be experience […] A certain mystery thus lies hidden here, the clarification [*Aufschluß*[142]] of which alone can make progress in [Metaphysics] secure and reliable: namely, to uncover the ground of the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments with appropriate generality, to gain insight into the conditions that make every kind of them possible. (A10; my emphasis[143])

Now, for Kant, "the conditions that make every kind of [synthetic a priori propositions] possible" can be none other than the necessary conditions of the possibility of cognition, which are known a priori (see A154/B193-7). Yet if so, why should we not say that Kant's transcendental philosophy, and perhaps every possible Transcendental Philosophy, is itself a form of synthetic a priori knowledge?

To understand and counter this potential objection, we first need to gain a deeper understanding of synthetic a priori knowledge. We may define synthetic a priori knowledge as propositional a priori knowledge that is *not* analytic.[144] In Kant's terms, this means that synthetic a priori knowledge is *not* clarificatory, but rather amplificatory: it adds to what we know, and *a priori* at that. Indeed, for Kant the word "synthetic" indicates the additive *combination* of different

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[141] For Kant, "all events must have a cause" is not only an *a priori* proposition, insofar as <causality> is an a priori concept, but also a *synthetic* (non-analytic) one. For we may analyze the concept of an event all we like, but we won't find in there the notion that an event must be an effect (cf. A9/B13). Indeed, there seems to be no contradiction in the concept of an uncaused event, that pops into being out of nowhere. If so, *Kant argued*, the proposition "all events must have a cause" amplifies our knowledge, and a priori at that. It is, for Kant, a synthetic a priori proposition.

[142] I have here rendered the German *Aufschluß* as "clarification". Kemp Smith translates "solution" whereas Guyer and Wood translate "elucidation". All three—clarification, (re)solution, and elucidation—are associated by Kant to *analysis*. This will become important in what follows.

[143] Translation slightly emended.

[144] Kant himself suggests this much in both the first *Critique* and his *Logik* (JL, § 36).

items (say, concepts) into a whole, rather than its analytic *resolution*[145] into parts.[146] In more contemporary terms, we might say that synthetic a priori knowledge is propositional a priori knowledge that is *not* grounded upon analysis.

As a result, synthetic a priori knowledge cannot be grounded on the principle of contradiction, qua principle of analysis. Not by chance, for Kant, the principle of contradiction is *not* a transcendental condition,[147] though it may be of great utility in transcendental investigations. And in any case, in knowing that a proposition is non-contradictory, we don't add to our knowledge in the least. (If a proposition is contradictory, we never knew it; if it isn't, we haven't learned anything). Hence, *synthetic* a priori propositions, if such there be, *must* be grounded on something other than the principle of contradiction (irrespective of the latter's status).

But what is this "something", upon which synthetic a priori knowledge is grounded? As you might have guessed, for the transcendental philosopher who countenances synthetic a priori knowledge, it must be the transcendental conditions or grounds that make cognition *possible*. Kant indicates this by writing that the X that grounds synthetic a priori knowledge is "the possibility of experience" and, therewith, the necessary conditions of that possibility (A154-8, B193-7[148]).

Hence, for Kant, it is space, time, and the categories that, in their interplay, ground synthetic a priori propositions. For example, according to Kant, the synthetic a priori proposition "all events must have a cause" is about events that take place in time (a priori intuition), as well as the succession of these events, which is ordered by <causality> (a priori concept). If there were no time and <causality>, and if these were not suitably combined in unity, neither there would be the synthetic a priori proposition at stake.

Now, the objection above urged that, since Kant is concerned with synthetic a priori propositions such as "all events must have a cause", his transcendental philosophy must be

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[145] The German term Kant uses to characterize analysis, which is translated as "resolution" or "dissolution", is *Auflösung* (B130). This has the same prefix of the word *Aufschluß*, which, in the passage quoted above, I have translated as "clarification" (see again A10). This is important since the prefix *Auf*, in German, may indicate openness. And indeed, for Kant, analysis "lays open" what is contained in a concept, as it were.

[146] Compare Bell (2001b). Kant is clear that analysis "always presupposes" synthesis (B130).

[147] I stress "Kant" since it is conceivable that, for some transcendental philosophers, the principle of contradiction may be a transcendental condition of representation. Arguably, the early Wittgenstein, who I shall argue is a transcendental philosopher, is the case in point, since for him "logic is transcendental" (T, 6.13), and he has no Kantian distinction in place between transcendental logic and general logic, so that, for Wittgenstein, transcendental logic includes the principle of contradiction. I return to the Kantian distinction between general logic and transcendental logic in Chapter 2ₖ, arguing in Chapter 2ᵥ that Wittgenstein has no such distinction in place.

[148] Cf. A8-9/B11-13.

synthetic a priori too. I agree with the first half of the objection. Indeed, it is beyond doubt that Kant was concerned with synthetic a priori propositions, which for him were crucial for the destiny of Metaphysics. But that is not yet to say that Kant's transcendental philosophy, as an investigation of the *possibility* of synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics, is itself a series of synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics. If it were, Kant's view would be doomed at the outset, for it would be blatantly circular.[149]

We don't need to rescue Kant from such inconsistency, since he never writes that transcendental philosophy is synthetic a priori. Rather, for Kant, transcendental philosophy is to *clarify* the possibility of synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics by uncovering the grounds that make them, and the experience regulated by them, possible in the first place (see again A10/B13). But this work of *clarification* can be none other than analytic a priori, since *only analysis is clarificatory for Kant*, as opposed to synthesis, which is amplificatory.

If so, Kant's transcendental philosophy can only ever consist in the *analysis* of synthetic a priori propositions into their elements—mainly space, time, and the categories—or at any rate in the analytic exposition of their concepts (e.g. the concepts of space and time).[150] Hence, we may now put in context Kant's passage, partly quoted above:

> [W]e need to take the *analysis* only as far as is *indispensably necessary* in order to provide *insight into the principles of a priori synthesis* in their entire scope, which is our only concern. This [analytic] investigation [is called] *transcendental critique*, since it does not aim at the amplification of the cognitions themselves but only at their correction. (A12/B25-6; my emphasis)

This passage leaves us in no doubt that Kant's transcendental philosophy aims at an analysis, or resolution, of our synthetic a priori cognition into its elements. As Kant writes later in the *Critique*:

> [T]he resolution [*Auflösung*] of all our transcendental cognition into its elements (as a study of our [human] inner nature) not only has in itself no small value, but is even a duty for a philosopher. (A703/B731)

All human beings, *for Kant*, have synthetic a priori knowledge of reality ("transcendental cognition"). Not all human beings, however, will *analyze* that synthetic a priori knowledge in such a way as to attain *insight* into those conditions that make it possible, and with it experience

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[149] Compare Sellars (1967, p. 365).

[150] This analysis is not *straightforwardly* circular since, for Kant, synthetic a priori judgements are possible in mathematics, irrespective of whether synthetic a priori judgements *of Metaphysics* are possible. I will return to this point in the final Chapter 7.

(as a rule-governed framework).[151] That, *for Kant*, is the task of a subset of human beings, namely the transcendental philosophers.[152]

Hence, the objection raised above fails. According to it, given that Kant is concerned with synthetic a priori judgements, then his transcendental philosophy (and perhaps Transcendental Philosophy more generally) is a form of synthetic a priori knowledge. However, the objection does not distinguish between two perspectives—that of the man of the street, that *for Kant* has synthetic a priori knowledge, and that of the (transcendental) philosopher, which *for Kant* carries out an *analysis* of such synthetic a priori knowledge.

More generally, the objection raised above does not distinguish between the empirical perspective, from where, according to transcendental philosophers, all human beings *know* the transcendental conditions, and the standpoint of Transcendental Philosophy, whereby a subset of human beings, namely the transcendental philosophers, *recognize* (knowledge of the) transcendental conditions that make human cognition possible. For it is one thing to have knowledge of the transcendental conditions, i.e., transcendental knowledge; but quite another to have clear knowledge of our transcendental knowledge.

This last point is crucial for a *general* characterization of Transcendental Philosophy. Above, I have stressed the words "for Kant" many times, since what Kant believes about transcendental philosophers is not always what must be the case for *all* transcendental philosophers. Indeed, our general requirement (*ii*) does not prescribe that all transcendental philosophers should commit to the existence of synthetic a priori knowledge. Nor, for that matter, it prescribes that transcendental philosophers should commit to the analytic/synthetic distinction. But if so, not *all* transcendental philosophers must aim at analytic a priori knowledge of synthetic a priori knowledge, in the way Kant does.

In fact, not all transcendental philosophers must commit to *propositional* a priori knowledge of the transcendental conditions, whether analytic or synthetic. For, as I have urged, it is at least conceivable that there should be non-propositional or *ineffable* a priori knowledge. But if so, some transcendental philosophers may take it that the only transcendental knowledge we may ever have is *ineffable*, and thus that it could not so much as be analyzed, but only ever *recognized in some non-propositional way*. (As I shall argue in Part_W, this is the case of the early Wittgenstein.)

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[151] Hanna (1998, p. 130) aptly talks of *analytic a priori insight* with respect to Kant's claim that *in analysis* "we become [clearly] conscious of the necessity of certain judgements" (A7/B11-12), thereby also becoming clearly conscious of the necessary conditions underpinning those judgements. Indeed, Kant explicitly links insight to analysis, when he writes that, since analysis clarifies or illuminates our knowledge, "it is prized as being, at least as regards [the form of our knowledge], new *insight*" (A6/B10; Kemp Smith's translation).

[152] See *Prol*, 4:370.

1.26ₖ *Recgonition*

We now have a deeper understanding of the second requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori. This requirement might be rephrased by saying that the transcendental philosopher takes himself to recognize conditions without which there could be no cognition, and which are known independently of any particular experience. Before leaving this section, we should however spend a word more on "recognition".

We may recognize something only to the extent that we *already* know it. (We could not recognize a friend's face in the crowd, if we did not know it). Arguably, this will be so in the extreme, if the object of recognition is *known a priori*, or independently of our particular experiences and their succession in our lives. If so, whatever is known a priori is known "from the outset", or at any rate *as soon as* we have certain experiences. For example, insofar as we experience a *bachelor* at all, we know "from the outset" that he is an unmarried man—whether we are clearly aware of this or not.

Now, if this view of a priori knowledge is right, then we could never really "discover" what is known a priori, but only ever "*re*discover it", or, as we should better say, *recognize* it. (We could never *discover* that bachelors are unmarried men, etc.). As a result, if this view of a priori knowledge is right, then what is (allegedly) known a priori in Transcendental Philosophy—the transcendental conditions of cognition—may only ever be *re*cognized too. (Or "*re*-known", if we may so speak).

Notably this, or at any rate something quite like it, was Kant's view of the a priori knowledge of the transcendental conditions.[153] According to Kant, "[w]e are in possession of certain *a priori* cognitions, and even the common understanding is *never* without them" (B3; my emphasis on "never").[154] One of such cognitions is for Kant the (synthetic) proposition that "all events must have a cause" (see B4-5), which, Kant argues, is known a priori by anyone who has an experience at all, since it is a proposition grounded upon the concept of <causality>, as a transcendental condition of experience that philosophy should bring "to the clearest light" (A737/B765; cf. A735/B763). Even more explicitly, Kant says:

> For all propositions of philosophy [such as "all events must have a cause"] are known to everyone, although only in obscure representations that are made clear and distinct through philosophy [so] that he becomes conscious of them and so to speak remembers, as he feels that these are the same propositions of which he was also previously conscious, albeit indistinctly. [...]

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[153] See Kitcher (2006) and Stephenson (2022, § 6).
[154] Compare *Prol*, 4:370.

> Hence Socrates rightly says: "I am not the teacher of my listeners, but only the midwife of their thoughts." (Anthr_L, 25:1222)

> [The categories] must be *recognized* as a priori conditions for the possibility of experience. (A94/B126; my emphasis)

Here, as elsewhere (JL, Intro, § 1), Kant's idea is that the business of philosophy is bringing to clear consciousness something that we have known all along, albeit obscurely—namely, the transcendental conditions of cognition, and thereby all those "propositions of philosophy" that we (allegedly) know a priori on their grounds, such as "all events must have a cause".[155]

I wish however to offer two clarifications, or rather two reminders, to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding. First, while I agree with Kant that Transcendental Philosophy must bring to clear consciousness the transcendental conditions of cognition, I do not think that these conditions *must* themselves be mind-dependent a priori *cognitions*, such as Kant's synthetic a priori propositions, and the concepts that ground them (e.g. <causality>).

Second, and relatedly, bringing to clear consciousness the (a priori knowledge of) transcendental conditions of cognition does not yet mean bringing those conditions to clear and coherent expression *in language*, as again Kant maintains (at least in most cases[156]). Indeed, as I have argued, we need not suppose that all knowledge, and hence all *a priori* knowledge and its "object", is expressible in propositions. If so, one may in principle be a transcendental philosopher without having to claim that he can articulate in language the (a priori knowledge he allegedly has of the) transcendental conditions of cognition.

Bearing these clarifications in mind, we may regard the analysis of requirement (*ii*) to be a transcendental philosopher as complete.

1.3_K *Definition of Transcendentalism*

So far, following Kant, but not doing so "blindly", I have identified and analyzed two requirements to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*i*) starting philosophical investigation "from within" and (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori.

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[155] This is also true of Kant's *practical* philosophy, and thereby of what he (misleadingly) calls "practical cognition", insofar as there is a transcendental condition (the 'I think'), from which there springs a universal practical proposition (the moral law). As Kant writes: "common human reason […] knows very well how to distinguish […] what is good and what is evil […] if, without in the least teaching it anything new, we only, as Socrates did, make it attentive to its own [moral] principle [*viz.* the moral law]" (G, 4:404). I will discuss the 'I think' and the moral law in Chapter 3_K.

[156] As we shall see in 3_K, even Kant recognizes an *ineffable* transcendental condition of cognition, namely the 'I think'.

In this section, I give a general definition of Transcendentalism, based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*). I then counter a potential objection on why we should take requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) as necessary and sufficient to be a transcendental philosopher. I argue that requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) are not circular, whereas other requirements proposed in the literature on Transcendental Philosophy are, or risk to be.

1.31ₖ *Other Requirements?*

Given requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), it is now possible to offer a general definition of Transcendentalism or Transcendental Philosophy. We may call Transcendentalism every philosophical outlook that (*i*) starting from our representations of empirical reality and or/the cognitive capacities involved in them (i.e. "from within"), aims at (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of their possibility, which are known a priori.[157]

Clearly, this characterization of Transcendental Philosophy is inspired by Kant. However, as I have argued, it makes room for transcendental philosophies other than Kant's. Indeed, I take (*i*) and (*ii*) as necessary and sufficient requirements to be a transcendental philosopher, whether one then buys Kant's more specific commitments, *or not*.[158] Put otherwise, I take requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) as definitive of Transcendental Philosophy *in general*.

Now, some scholars might dispute that (*i*) and (*ii*) are definitive of Transcendental Philosophy in general. For—it might be objected—other requirements have been suggested in the relevant literature on Transcendental Philosophy, such as

- the deployment of 'transcendental arguments',[159]
- a renewed (transcendental) concern with ontology,[160]
- an appeal to, and clarification of, the notion of a 'transcendental logic',[161]

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[157] Interestingly, among other things, this characterization might help us to make sense of the oft-made claim that Transcendental Philosophy is presuppositionless, or better that no presupposition can be completely "external" to it (Hartmann, 1966, p. 247; Bell, 2001a, p. 174; cf. Beck, 1978, p. 20). For, as Kant had already suggested, it seems that no presupposition can in principle be too far removed from the enquiry of the transcendental philosopher as long as he reflects upon representation, and *through it*, upon those necessary conditions that allow us to enjoy world-directed representations at all (A13/B26; cf. also Axx). I also suspect this (perceived) lack of "external" presuppositions is the reason why transcendental philosophers sometimes claim (not without *hubris*) to have provided a definitive solution to the problems of philosophy (Axiii; cf. Wittgenstein's Preface to his *Tractatus*, which, I shall argue in 1ᴡ, is a work of Transcendental Philosophy).

[158] I allude here to Transcendental Idealism. To buy Kant's specific commitments is already to be a transcendental idealist. In Chapter 2ₖ, I will however argue that my general characterization of Transcendental Philosophy does not enforce any form of Transcendental Idealism.

[159] Smith and Sullivan (2011, p. 2) and Gardner (2015, p. 2).

[160] Hartmann (1966, pp. 225-9) and Philström (2012, p. 454).

[161] Hartmann (1966, p. 248) and Gardner (2015, p. 2).

- emphasis on self-conciousness, through the notion of a 'transcendental subject',[162] and
- a distinctive (transcendental?) concern with practical philosophy or ethics.[163]

And why should we not countenance *these* requirements as definitive of Transcendental Philosophy?

A short answer to this question is that, unlike my own, the requirements above risk to be circular. For they are intended to define or characterize Transcendental Philosophy, and yet they *already* presuppose an understanding of Transcendental Philosophy (or at any rate of the term "transcendental"). Hence, it looks like these requirements must be derivable from, though not necessarily reducible to, other, non-circular ones. A longer answer to the question above should however specify what follows.

While, in my view, requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) are necessary and sufficient to be a transcendental philosopher, I have no business in claiming that they must be *the* requirements. That would be not only philosophically immodest but also historically insensitive, given the variety of philosophical figures that claimed or suggested to have worked in the framework of Transcendental Philosophy by appealing to different notions than the ones I employ (or: *of whom* this can be claimed/suggested). Thus, I am completely open to the suggestion that there might be *other* requirements, such as the many requirements listed above, that pick out the same group of people—namely, transcendental philosophers.[164]

That said, throughout Part$_K$ of the present work, I will show that, if one countenances my two requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), the other requirements listed above will be akin to corollaries, insofar as they could be derived by reflection upon (*i*) and (*ii*) themselves, plus some simple notions (e.g. the notion of 'argument'). This work of "derivation" begins in § 1.4$_K$ below, with my analysis of transcendental arguments.[165]

1.4$_K$ *Transcendental Arguments*

We now have our general characterization of Transcendental Philosophy, based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*). But how exactly can we move from (*i*) to (*ii*)? That is, how can we, starting from representation of empirical reality (and/or the cognitive capacities involved in it),

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[162] Bell (1999, pp. 199-201 and 2001a, pp. 176-7); see also Gardner (2015, p. 2, fn. 1).

[163] Cf. Gardner (2015, p. 2).

[164] The general idea here is that one may denote the same entities, belonging to a given class, connoting them in different ways. Cf. Quine's example concerning the general terms 'creature with a heart' and 'creature with a kidney' (1951, pp. 21-22).

[165] For transcendental ontology and logic, see 2$_K$; for transcendental subjectivity and ethics, see 3$_K$.

recognize its transcendental conditions?

This question still pertains to the methodology of Transcendental Philosophy. In this section, I answer it through the notion of *transcendental arguments*, qua distinctive procedures employed by transcendental philosophers.[166] My discussion is in two steps. First, I give a general *schema* of transcendental argument, based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), which may be interpreted in several specific ways. Second, I present two of Kant's transcendental arguments, namely his argument for space, and his argument for substance, showing that and how they respect the schema.

1.41ₖ *The schema of Transcendental Argument*

The notion of transcendental argument goes back to Kant (who preferred to talk of "transcendental proofs"[167]), but contemporary philosophers too have claimed to engage in transcendental argumentation—most notably, Peter Strawson.[168] Indeed, the nature and potential of transcendental arguments are still an object of debate. I cannot hope to survey here all that has been said about transcendental argumentation. Rather, my discussion in this sub-section will mainly be in the spirit of a general characterization.

In effect, thanks to our two requirements of Transcendentalism, plus the notion of 'argument', it is now possible to reach a general characterization of transcendental arguments. By argument, I understand any rational procedure aimed at providing or recognizing grounds for endorsing certain representations—whether these representations be beliefs, propositions, theories, ideas, experiences, cognitions more generally, etc.[169] A transcendental argument will then be any argument that (*i*) starting from our representations of empirical reality (and/or the cognitive capacities involved in them), aims at (*ii*) recognizing their necessary conditions of possibility, which are known *a priori*.

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[166] Compare A. W. Moore (2010, p. 312), who calls transcendental arguments "the principal methodological tool" of Kant's first *Critique*. By extension, I am here suggesting that transcendental arguments are the principal methodological tool of Transcendental Philosophy at large.

[167] E.g. A786/B814. Kant does employ the phrase "transcendental argument" at one point in his first *Critique* (A627/B655), but not with the same meaning that he ascribes to "transcendental proof" (cf. Franks 1999, p. 112, fn. 4). The earliest usage of the phrase "transcendental argument" in something like its current meaning is usually traced back to a 1961 paper by Austin (ibid. and Stroud 1999, p. 155). However, I have found an earlier instance in Russell's *Principle of Mathematics* (§ 432).

[168] See Strawson (1959 and 1966). But also, for example, Putnam (1981, Ch. 1).

[169] Notice that this is an *inclusive* characterization of "argument". In the context of our discussion, this is important since, as noted by Bell (1999) and Franks (1999, p. 113), the term "argument" is too quickly taken as synonymous with "deductive argument" in much of the contemporary literature on transcendental argumentation, so that "alternative ways of securing probative force" have been too often ignored. I will present below such an alternative way of securing probative force, by way of discussion of Kant.

In light of our discussion in the previous sections, the *general schema* of a transcendental argument will be something like

x

$\square$[170] if x [the conditioned], then C [its condition of possibility]

Therefore C[171]

where x is a cognition and/or the cognitive capacities involved in it, and C—its (transcendentally) necessary condition—is known a priori.

Clearly, the schema above shows that a transcendental argument is a regressive form of argumentation, in which we start from a conditioned, namely a (capacity for) cognition, and work our way back to the necessary condition "underpinning" it, which is to be recognized. The key step of a transcendental argument—namely the "hypothetical" one whereby *if* there is the conditioned x then there must be its transcendental condition C—may be called a transcendental claim.[172] Hence, a transcendental argument is an argumentative procedure that, in its regressive movement, should lead us to a transcendental claim.

The schema above also shows that transcendental arguments take the form of a modally modified *modus ponens* (or anyways, that it must be possible to cast them in this form). Of course, if the necessary conditions at stake in a transcendental argument are more than one, then that transcendental argument will take the form of an *extended* modally modified *modus ponens*.[173] Like so:

x

$\square$ if x [the conditioned], then C_1 [the condition of the possibility of x]

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[170] Beyond necessity, sometimes it is argued that transcendental arguments also need to have *universality* (Smith and Sullivan 2011, p. 7), in homage to Kant's "two criteria" of a priori knowledge (B3-4; cf. Divers 1999). Arguably, however, this addition is superfluous. That is because, as Kant already noted, necessity and universality "belong together inseparably" (B4). If, necessarily, bachelors are unmarried men, then, necessarily, *all* bachelors are unmarried men. Notice that this equally holds for transcendental necessities, of whatever specific kind. If, necessarily, space and time are the forms of human intuition, then, necessarily, *all* humans intuit in space and time.

[171] This schema of transcendental argumentation is implicit in the discussion of Harrison (1982, pp. 215-6). However, differently from me, Harrison does not take it that the necessary conditions of cognition must be known and recognized a priori according to the transcendental philosopher. This threatens to make the distinction between Transcendentalism and Naturalism completely superfluous.

[172] Compare Smith and Sullivan (2011, p. 5), who write: "We can call any claim to the effect that such and such is a condition of the possibility of cognition, a *transcendental claim*". I have added the words "necessary" and "known a priori" to this definition.

[173] Cf. Sacks (2005, p. 442).

$\Box$ if C_1, then C_2 [the condition of the possibility of C_1]

Therefore C_2

Sooner, or later, however, the regressive chain of necessary conditions, or at any rate the a priori knowledge we may have of them, must come to an end.

The *schemata* above will act as useful guides for our discussion of transcendental argumentation. However, they also raise some philosophical issues, which we better deal with right away. For example, are transcendental arguments necessary or contingent? A priori or a posteriori? Analytic or synthetic? I will now take each of these questions in turn.

1.411$_K$ *Necessary or Contingent?*

First, is a transcendental argument necessary or contingent?

In both our *schemata*, a transcendental argument is supposed to start with x, namely a representation of empirical reality (cognition), such as an experience. Kant is clear that experience is "entirely contingent", i.e. that there may not have been experience at all. This take seems reasonable (although it need *not* be the take of any transcendental philosopher). At any rate, the claim that experience is necessary sounds much harder to defend. But if so, where could the necessity of a transcendental argument lie?

As we have seen in discussing transcendental necessity, what needs to be necessary is not the starting point of a transcendental argument, and thus the conditioned, but rather the whole conditional—$\Box$ if x, then C. Necessarily, *if* there is cognition, *then* its conditions of possibility. But there is cognition. Hence, there *must* be its conditions of possibility too, which are known a priori. Or so the transcendental philosopher argues.

1.412$_K$ *A priori or A posteriori?*

But is this mode of argument a priori or a posteriori?

If I am right on the Transcendental Method, then a transcendental argument must in some sense proceed a priori. Kant himself suggests this much, when he writes that "one could establish [the] indispensability for the possibility of experience of [pure a priori principles], thus establish it *a priori*" (B5). However, there is an issue here. In effect, a transcendental argument is supposed to start with cognition, such as experience, but it does not look like experience may ever be known a priori. And if so, how could a transcendental argument ever proceed *a priori*?

Take for example my current perception of rain. This experience looks not only contingent—for it may have been sunny outside, in which case I wouldn't be perceiving rain—but is also known a posteriori. For my current perception of rain is a particular experience, but I could not know *it* if I did not undergo *that* experience. Hence, my current perception of rain cannot be known independently of any particular experience, or a priori—for it should then have to be known in spite of itself. As a result, if a transcendental argument started with the specific features of a particular experience, it could never proceed a priori.

Suppose, however, that instead of attending to the peculiarities of a *particular* experience, we attended to the *general possibility* of experience, which *all* experiences instantiate. It looks we may know this possibility independently of any *particular* experience. For insofar as we experience *anything* at all, whether rain, or bachelors, or mountains, we know the possibility of experience. But that which is known independently of any particular experience is known *a priori*. Hence, insofar as one takes the starting point of transcendental argumentation to be the possibility of experience in general, which is instantiated by all experiences (irrespective of their peculiarities), then the starting point of a transcendental argument may, *in a certain holistic sense*, be a priori.

Not by chance, Kant takes it that "in transcendental [proof] our guideline is possible experience" (A783/B811). And that, I suggest, is because the possibility of experience may be known a priori for Kant, insofar as it rests on necessary grounds (the transcendental conditions). At any rate, the possibility of experience may be known "comparatively a priori"[174] (cf. A226-7 and A217/B264). For although to know the possibility of experience we must be *given* something, it is completely indifferent what that something may be, and what *particular* experiences we may undergo as a result of an encounter with it.

Now, if we may know (at least comparatively) a priori the possibility of experience, we may also know *a priori* the necessary grounds of that possibility. For if there were no such grounds, experience would be impossible. But it is possible (since it is actual). Hence, from the *possibility* of experience, we may infer *a priori* to the grounds of its possibility. Or so the transcendental philosopher takes it.[175]

1.413ₖ *Analytic or Synthetic?*

Yet is this inference analytic or synthetic? There is an ambiguity in the question, which we should

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[174] Sometimes, Kant also talks of "relatively a priori". For example: "Every cognition that is relatively a priori is called a principle" (R5670).

[175] Stroud: "Kant 'deduces' from the possibility of […] experience [to its necessary conditions]" (1994, p. 232; cf. p. 231).

better split into two questions. First, is a priori knowledge of the necessary relation between the conditioned and its transcendental conditions, which *any human being* is supposed to have, analytic or synthetic? Second, is the a priori knowledge of such transcendental knowledge, which the *transcendental philosopher* is supposed to have, analytic or synthetic?

Insofar as Kant's transcendental philosophy is analytic, then the philosophical *recognition* that a transcendental claim holds should be analytic too, i.e. reached by analysis of propositions and concepts. That, however, is not yet to say that synthetic a priori knowledge has no role to play in Kant's transcendental arguments, especially when it comes to the *enforcement* of the transcendental claim, which must necessarily precede the recognition of its validity. I will argue for this point below.

More generally, however, it is a prejudice that transcendental arguments should be *either* analytic *or* synthetic. For one, as I have just anticipated, *both* analysis and synthesis may play a role in them. And besides, it is not to be excluded that ineffable (i.e. *non*-propositional) knowledge should have a role to play too. Thus, Paul Franks argues that some transcendental arguments rely upon the "first-personal" or perspectival grasp of our cognitive capacities, and that such grasp "is not fully discursive".[176] I will start to discuss this perspectival dimension of some transcendental arguments below (though a full appreciation of it will require a discussion of transcendental subjectivity, to be conducted in 3$_K$).

1.414$_K$ *Summary*

The starting point of a transcendental argument, namely our cognition and/or the cognitive capacities involved in it, seems neither necessary, nor *absolutely* a priori, nor indeed fully effable. Perhaps, then, the best thing to do is to take the starting point of transcendental enquiry and argumentation as a *given*, the ultimate character of which is problematic, or even undecidable. Arguably, this was Kant's move.[177] And besides, if our cognition of reality is not a given, then what is?

Once we take cognition as a given, however, something else follows of necessity for the transcendental philosopher. Indeed, the transition from the given-conditioned (i.e. cognition) to its necessary conditions is a *necessary* transition for the transcendental philosopher. For if there

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[176] Franks (1999, p. 119).

[177] Vanzo (2016) has compellingly argued that Kant takes his starting point as a given, and then regresses back to its necessary condition(s). Notably, Sellars had earlier noted that Kant was "not attempting to prove that there is empirical knowledge, but to articulate its structure" (1967, p. 647). Much earlier than Sellars, this was also Hermann Cohen's reading of Kant (see Kreis 2019, p. 295).

weren't its necessary conditions, then there could not be cognition at all. But *there is* cognition. Hence, there *must* be its necessary conditions of possibility as well. This much can be known a priori for the transcendental philosopher, for it is known upon necessary grounds, namely the transcendental conditions themselves (whichever those may then be).

If this is right, then our general schema of transcendental argument reads: *given* representation of empirical reality (and/or the cognitive capacities involved in it), there *must* be its necessary condition(s), which are known a priori. Indeed, a transcendental argument is none other than the a priori argumentative procedure that aims at bringing to clear consciousness the *necessity* of the conditions that must be in place if we are to cognize anything at all.

1.42$_K$ *Kant's Transcendental Arguments*

We now have our general schema of transcendental argument. Being based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), it is a tolerant or inclusive one. No specific interpretation has been superimposed upon it. For example, nothing has been settled over the metaphysical nature and status of the transcendental conditions at stake in a transcendental argument. Nor a priori knowledge of these conditions has been pigeon-holed into any one box. It may be synthetic or analytic, propositional or ineffable. Finally, it has not been *assumed* that the recognition of the transcendental conditions is meant to counter certain philosophers or philosophical stances— say skeptics and Skepticism, as most contemporary interpreters believe.[178]

I take this "tolerance" to be a virtue of our schema. Still, however tolerant it may be, the schema of an argument is not itself *an argument*. Hence, we will have to put our schema of transcendental argument to the test. As in this Chapter we are mostly concerned with Kant, I will present two of his arguments, showing *that* they respect our schema (thereby counting as transcendental arguments), and *how* they respect it. These are Kant's argument for regarding space as a transcendental condition (a priori intuition), and his argument for regarding <substance> as another such condition (a priori concept).

1.421$_K$ *Kant's Transcendental Argument for Space*

It is a *given* that we experience things[179] as spatially related to each other. One thing *a* is to the left of another *b*. Another *c* is behind *b*. Yet another *d* is to the right of *c*. And so on. Philosophers

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[178] The assumption is arguably due to the Strawson-Stroud debate on the anti-skeptical potential of transcendental arguments. Against the assumption, see Bird (2006, Ch. 11) and Cassam (2007, p. 56-7).
[179] Here I mean "things" in the broadest possible sense of the term, which may include sensations and/or sense-data.

like Leibniz, or for that matter like Russell (at one stage), believed that we may "construe" *space* itself a posteriori, out of the experience we have of relations such as these.[180] Kant, however, begged to differ.

According to Kant, it would be impossible to experience the spatial relations between things if *space* itself were not presupposed, as a necessary condition of the experience of those spatial configurations, which is known a priori. As Kant writes in the first *Critique*:

> Space is not an empirical concept that has been drawn from outer experiences. For in order for […] for me to represent [things[181]] as outside and next to one another, thus not merely as different but as in different places, the representation of space must already be their ground. Thus the representation of space cannot be obtained […] through [outer] experience, but this outer experience is itself first possible only through this representation. (A23/B38)

> Space is a necessary representation, a priori, that is the ground of all outer intuitions. One can never represent that there is no space, though one can very well think that there are no objects to be encountered in it. [Space] is therefore to be regarded as the condition of the possibility of [outer experiences]. (A24/B39)

Here, Kant clarifies that space is not something to be "drawn" a posteriori from the experiences of spatial relations among things, since it is always already *presupposed* in our experience of them. Hence, space is not known a posteriori, but rather is known a priori, as a necessary ground of our experience of spatial relations. More specifically, for Kant, space is an a priori *intuition*, for it is both *given all at once* and *endless*—two characteristics that, for Kant, concepts cannot have, being concepts given out of the composition of prior components,[182] as well as bounded (see A25/B39-40).

Compressed to its core, Kant's argument goes as follows:

> We experience things as spatially related to each other.

> If we are to enjoy such "outer" experiences, space must be a necessary condition of their possibility, and more precisely an a priori intuition.

> Hence, space is an a priori intuition.

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[180] See Leibniz (2000, Fifth Letter, § 47) and Russell (2009, pp. 118 – 119).

[181] Kant says "sensations", but compare the penultimate note above.

[182] These "prior components" may be further concepts. Sooner or later, however, they must come down to intuitions, since, for Kant, all concepts ultimately relate to intuitions, which alone have an immediate relation to objects (see A68/B93). That is so even for the *a priori* concepts or categories, which are such only in relation to a possible intuition (in our *human* case, space and time, but other cases are at least *conceivable* for Kant). Without this relation to a possible intuition, they are not a priori *concepts* (categories), but rather mere forms of judgement. I return on Kant's distinction between the categories and the forms of judgement in Chapter 2$_K$.

Clearly, Kant's argument fits our schema of transcendental argumentation. For it begins with a given, namely our experience of spatial relations among things, working its way back to its necessary condition of possibility, which for Kant is known a priori, namely the intuition that he calls 'space'. Hence, Kant's argument deserves the title of transcendental argument.

But now the question arises: *How* is the transition from the given-conditioned to its necessary condition to be *enforced*, and a priori at that? And even granting that it could somehow be enforced, how could we, starting from our representations of objects outside us, *recognize* that it has been enforced, in such a way as to recognize space as a transcendental condition?

Let us begin with the second question, working our way back to the first one. Insofar as Kant's transcendental philosophy is analytic, then, for Kant, the *recognition* that space is a transcendental condition should be analytic too. Specifically, Kant takes it that in a transcendental proof we must "run through the entire series of the grounds" (A791/B819), in order to attain clear "*insight* into [the] sources" of its truth (A789/B817; my emphasis). If so, the analysis leading us to this insight must start from the given-conditioned, proceeding from there to (the concept of) its necessary grounds. In our case, analysis must start from our representations of the external world, such as an empirical judgement, proceeding from there to (the concept of) space, which is known a priori. Let us then explore this analytic avenue.

If we *analyze* our ordinary judgements about things in empirical reality, such as "the table is to the left of the chair", we will for Kant arrive at more general judgements, which express the general framework of experience, and which ground empirical judgements, namely synthetic a priori judgements. Now, if we carry on with our analysis, and *analyze* synthetic a priori judgements, we will for Kant recognize that *space* grounds them, and a priori at that. For if space were not known a priori, neither could the possible spatiotemporal relations between objects, which synthetic *a priori* propositions are meant to express. Hence, Kant writes:

> Key – through the nature of synthetic judgments a priori. If no space were given a priori […]
> then no synthetic propositions that at the same time hold of actual outer objects would be
> possible a priori. (R 5637)

That is, by analyzing our ordinary empirical judgements, we quickly arrive at space or, at any rate, at the *notion* that there must be space, if our cognition of the external world is to be possible. Hence, the *recognition* that space is a transcendental condition is analytical. Or so I read Kant's transcendental argument for space.

The countercheck for my reading is provided by Kant's two critical passages above, which constitute the core of his argument (A23/B38 and A24/B39). Those passages belong to the

"metaphysical *exposition*" of the concept of space, exposition being for Kant an illuminating form of *analysis*. This exposition is to lead us to the notion that space is an *a priori intuition*, i.e. an immediately given presupposition of spatial relations among things and, therewith, of (outer) experience. This confirms that, for Kant, it is through analysis that we may *recognize* that space is a transcendental condition. Indeed, this analysis is part and parcel of his transcendental argument for space.

However, there is an important distinction between this analytic moment, whereby for Kant we *recognize* that the key step of a transcendental argument has been enforced, and the moment of the *enforcement* of that key step, which for Kant cannot be analytic. In effect, Kant is adamant that analysis "always presupposes" a synthesis or combination as its *ground* (B130; my emphasis). "[F]or where the understanding has not previously combined anything, neither it can dissolve anything" (ibid.). The ultimate *ground of proof* in Kant's transcendental arguments, then, cannot be analytic, but rather must be synthetic. This synthetic ground is an original *a priori* act of combination, namely the 'I think', which first "generates" space, and, with it, the possibility of (outer) experience.[183] (I will return on the 'I think' in 3$_\text{K}$).

Hence, while the moment of recognition in Kant's transcendental arguments is analytical, his arguments are not *merely* grounded upon analysis and its principle, namely the principle of contradiction. Rather, they are ultimately grounded upon an original "a priori synthesis" (the 'I think'), and *its* necessary principles, namely the conditions that make experience *possible*. Hence, Kant writes:

> In transcendental cognition [the] guideline is possible experience. [A transcendental] proof does not show, that is, that a given concept [e.g. <experience>] leads to another one [e.g. <space>], for such a transition would be a leap for which nothing could be held responsible; rather, it shows that *experience itself*, hence the object of experience, would be impossible without such a connection. The proof, therefore, had to indicate at the same time the possibility of achieving synthetically and a priori a certain cognition of things which is not contained in the concept of them. (A783/B811; my emphasis)

There is thus an ineliminable perspectival dimension in Kant's transcendental arguments, which always already appeal to the "a priori synthesis" that makes *our* experience possible,[184] namely

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[183] In a famous footnote to the first *Critique* (B161n), Kant is clear that space and time are "first given as intuitions", i.e. as singular or *unitary* representations, only on the grounds of a *synthesis*, which is none other than the unitary act 'I think' ("the transcendental unity of apperception"). Later in the *Critique*, Kant writes that through this synthesis "I generate time itself" (A143/B182). But the same must hold for space, given what he writes in the footnote.

[184] For Kant, this synthesis is always already latent in the first step of a transcendental argument, by which we experience reality. For it is itself a necessary condition of the possibility of experience—indeed, the supreme one.

the 'I think' operative in synthetic a priori judgements, in order to then analytically resolve this synthesis into its elements, leading us to the clear recognition of that which, for Kant, we knew all along, namely the transcendental conditions of experience, such as space.[185] As Kant writes in a letter to Beck, "we must synthesize if we are to recognize anything as synthesized (even space and time)".[186]

1.422ₖ *Kant's Transcendental Argument for Substance*

This perspectival dimension of Kant's transcendental arguments is increasingly recognized in Kant scholarship[187] (though not always as clearly as one may wish). Indeed, irrespective of whether it is cashed out in terms of an "a priori synthesis", the perspectival dimension of *some* transcendental arguments may be of wider philosophical interest. For it may help us to account for their (alleged) anti-skeptical potential—Transcendental Philosophy being born out of the need to combat Skepticism about the possibility of Metaphysics, which is of our concern.

Kant, for one, was already aware of the intimate relation between transcendental argumentation and Skepticism. As he writes in the transcendental doctrine of method:

> "Each [skeptic[188]] must conduct his affair by means of a legitimate proof through the transcendental deduction of its grounds of proof, i.e. directly, so that one can see what his claim of reason has to say for itself' (A794/B822).

Clearly, Kant puts forward a perspectival or "try-and-see-for-yourself" strategy against the skeptic. In effect, Kant insists that the ground of proof in transcendental argumentation is *possible experience* (A782-3/B810-11)—experience being something that everyone may, well, experience for themselves, and that not even skeptics are liable to doubt.[189] As a result, at crucial

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[185] Both Strawson (1966) and Friedman (2000) have recognized that, for Kant, a priori knowledge of space is *perspectival*. For example, Strawson writes that "when Kant claims the status of a priori intuition for infinite space, we can understand him to be thinking of the results of the pure or non-empirical *exercise of the [subject's] faculty of spatial intuition*" (1966, p. 67; my emphasis). For his part, Friedman writes that "[Kant's] space as the form of outer sense contains *the point of view of the subject*, from which the objects of outer sense are perceived and around which, as it were, the objects of outer sense are arranged" (Friedman 2000, p. 191; my emphasis). Both Strawson and Friedman relate this perspectivity to Kant's account of imagination, since imagination is in charge of the a priori synthesis that we have discussed above. I will return on Kant's imagination in Chapter 3ₖ.

[186] Quoted by Brook (1992, p. 249).

[187] See for example Brook (1992), Franks (1999), Sacks (2005), Marshall (2014), Ancillotti (2018), Gomes and Stephenson (forthcoming). I return on Sacks' proposal below, since it is the most general.

[188] There is a problem in Kant scholarship as to what exactly Kant meant by "skeptic". Some believe he meant the Cartesian skeptic, others that he meant the Humean skeptic, yet others that he meant the Pyrrhonian skeptic. For my part, I don't see the problem. For example, in the 'refutation of idealism' Kant is concerned with the Cartesian skeptic(ism), in the 'second analogy' Kant is concerned with the Humean skeptic(ism), in the 'antinomies of pure reason' he is concerned with the Pyrrhonian skeptic(ism).

[189] Compare R. Stern (2000, p. 8). That is not to say, of course, that experiences are intentional objects of mental states that, likewise, are called "experiences". All I meant is that any Subject feels what it is like to enjoy experiences, and knows this from her own point of view.

junctures of the *Critique*, Kant invites the skeptic to see for himself whether he may have the experiences he claims to have, without necessary conditions of their possibility. Yet how does "perspectival bit" in Kant's transcendental arguments exactly work?

Here an example may help. Many would do, and already Kant's argument for space included perspectival elements. ("One can never represent that there is no space, though one can very well think that there are no objects to be encountered in it."[190]). But let us take another one of Kant's arguments for a change—say, his argument for substance in the 'first analogy of experience' (A182/B224). Here it goes.

It is a *given* that we experience change of appearances. For example, we experience colour-changes, as when a banana turns from green to yellow, or the sky turns from blue to red, etc. Now, according to Kant, the necessary condition of such experiences of change is that there be substance in empirical reality, <substance> being one of the *a priori* concepts that we *apply* to spatiotemporal appearances. More specifically, by "substance" Kant means (the concept of) something that exists at all times, underlying the changes of its properties over time. That there is such a substance is to be proved to the skeptic.

To see how Kant intends to do so, it may be helpful to cast his argument in a more perspicuous form. Like so:

> We experience change of appearances.
>
> If we are to experience change of appearances, there must be an abiding <substance>, underlying that change.
>
> Therefore, there is such abiding <substance>.

Here, the first premise is one that a reasonable skeptic would accept. Sure, she could doubt whether we experience the change of *real* things in the world. But she would not doubt that we experience change of *appearances*. For example, she would not doubt that we experience colour-changes (even though she could suppose that they are just part of a dream).[191] Still, Kant needs much more than this. Indeed, he needs a way to *enforce* the transition from our experience of change to there being enduring spatiotemporal objects, or substances, which underlie that change, and *a priori* at that.

To this end, analysis alone won't do for Kant, since he is clear that an analytic transition that leads from a given *concept* (here, <change of appearances>) to another (<substance>) would be

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[190] See Ancillotti (2018, p. 1156).
[191] See Sacks (2006a).

"a leap for which nothing could be held responsible" (see again A783/B811). Hence, ultimately, Kant must invite the skeptic to *try for himself*, and see whether she could succeed in representing *any* change without representing a changing *something*, which endures throughout the change. This "perspectival bit" would not be analytic, but it would still be a priori, since it would not rely on *particular* experiences of change—any representation of change will do.[192]

This much has been argued by Mark Sacks, who believes we should consciously entertain a representation from our point of view to *enforce* the crucial step of a transcendental argument, namely the one from the conditioned to its necessary condition of possibility.[193] I will call any such representation, resulting from a self-conscious activation of our cognitive capacities, a perspectival representation. Sacks' idea is then that a perspectival representation may help us to attend to the necessary conditions of our cognition (if any). At that point, the ground of transcendental proof would *not* be mere analysis, but rather the perspectival representation itself.

But back to Kant. As we have seen, he invites the skeptic to engage in a similar perspectival procedure, by imagining a given change. Suppose the skeptic did, and that he came to see that he can't represent any change without therewith *representing* an enduring changing object. Still, the skeptic would likely argue, this does not show that there must be substance *in reality*—only that we must *represent* that there is substance. And if so, the skeptic is likely to continue, the argument establishes at best a *psychological* necessity,[194] as opposed to the ontological one that Kant wants to establish. For there just seems to be no way in which, starting from our experiences of change, we may know that there is substance *in reality*, as a necessary condition of those experiences.

Here, Kant would reply that, if by "reality" we mean *empirical* reality, then sure there is a way to know this—for empirical reality, *Kant* argues, is made up of appearances, which *depend* for their necessary features upon us. More specifically, Kant would argue that we can know *a priori* that there must be substance *in empirical reality*, if we are to experience change at all, since <substance> is one of our a priori concepts, that we have imposed onto spatiotemporal appearances, thereby connecting them in a rule-governed empirical reality in the first place.

At this point the skeptic would likely ask "How can we ever know something like *this*, let alone know it a priori?". And Kant will have much more to say. Among other things, he would

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[192] As noted by Marshall (2014, p. 565), while empirical elements may be involved in this procedure, the procedure itself is *a priori* since, for Kant, we may easily abstract from these empirical elements, attending just to the formal or necessary features of our cognition, "that is, the features of our mind that are common to all beings like us" (ibid.).

[193] See Sacks (2005).

[194] Not all representations are psychological (e.g. sentences), but many skeptics, such as the Cartesian skeptics, work with a psychologistic model of representation.

say that appearances need to be part of a rule-governed framework, if we are to make *any* sense of them. This framework cannot be derived from experience, since it makes a coherent experience possible in the first place. (Not even dreams, for Kant, are *completely* unruly[195]). But if not from experience, then—*Kant thought*—this framework must be supplied *by us*, and a priori at that.

Hence, for Kant, *we* give the rule to nature. For example, *we* impose the a priori concept <substance> onto spatiotemporal appearances. The act of giving the rule to nature is none other than a synthetic a priori judgement, in which appearances are connected or "synthesized" according to a priori concepts such as <substance>, in a process that gives *form* to one rule-governed empirical reality. Most of Kant's transcendental arguments are meant to lead us to *recognize* just this (by analysis of the synthesis).

Kant's transcendental arguments may thus undercut the ground of at least some forms of Skepticism, by leaving *no gap* between appearances and empirical reality, of the kind many skeptics feast upon.[196] For appearances, insofar as they are connected in synthetic a priori judgements, *are* empirical reality for Kant. Hence, for Kant, the necessary conditions of our experience of appearances *are* the necessary features of empirical reality (see again A158/B197). For example, the necessary condition of our experience of change of appearances is that there be substance in empirical reality.

Probably, the skeptic will still have more to say. And Kant more to reply. It is not my aim here to go through the entire dialectic here. My main aim was to make clear the gist of Kant's transcendental argument for substance. The argument proceeds by showing that (a certain kind of) *experience* would be impossible, were it not for the *application* of the concept <substance> to appearances in synthetic a priori judgements, which structure empirical *reality*. This application is a perspectival representation,[197] which needs to be *performed*[198] and attended to by whoever

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[195] "Dreams as well as delusions", Kant suggests, "are possible merely through the [imaginative] reproduction of previous outer perceptions, which […] are possible only through the actuality of outer objects" (B278). This means that, for Kant, there could not even be dreams if there were not substances persisting in space and time (cf. B277). Hence, for Kant, even dreams are grounded upon the necessary rules of the understanding, such as the a priori concept of <substance>.

[196] I say "*some* forms of skepticism" since more radical skeptics could still lament that, in Kant's view, we do not know reality as it is in itself. Kant has a reply against this charge (A277-8/B333-4), but post-Kantian philosophers (e.g. Jacobi and Hegel) were famously dissatisfied with it. Compare Franks (2003, p. 150).

[197] *For Kant*, the perspectival representation is a "transcendental schematization", transcendental schematism being exactly the categorial application to appearances in synthetic a priori judgements in Kant's view. However, given my general definition of them, perspectival representations need *not* necessarily be applications of a priori concepts to appearances in synthetic a priori judgements.

[198] Marshall (2014) is sensitive to this performative dimension of Kant's transcendental arguments, stressing that, for Kant, "transcendental reflection" is an "action" (A261/B317). Arguably, before Kant, Descartes had presented a performative argument in his *cogito* proof (Hintikka, 1962, p. 17), which some read as a

wants to work her way through Kant's argument. ("We must synthesize to recognize anything as synthesized").

However, Kant's transcendental argument for substance, no less than his argument for space, is supposed to lead us to recognize his *transcendental idealism*, by which space and time, spatiotemporal appearances, as well as the categories *insofar as they apply to spatiotemporal appearances*, all depend upon our human point of view. The question thereby arises as to whether transcendental enquiry and argumentation require a commitment to Kant's (variant of) transcendental idealism, or to Transcendental Idealism more generally. But to answer this question, we must leave the mere notion of Transcendentalism behind, and turn to Transcendental Idealism.

Conclusion

At the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines a method as "a procedure according to principles" (A855/B883). In this Chapter, I have individuated and analyzed two principles that define the *Transcendental* Method, in the form of two requirements that any transcendental philosopher must respect. These are (*i*) starting philosophical investigation "from within", and (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori.

These requirements allow us to give a general characterization of Transcendental Philosophy, and of the main methodological tool of the transcendental philosopher, namely the transcendental argument. However, as we have seen by discussing Kant's case, they also raise the issue of whether every transcendental philosopher must be a transcendental idealist. In Chapter 2$_K$, I will thus start to discuss Transcendental Idealism.

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transcendental proof (cf. Stroud 2011, pp. 126-8). This would confirm the perspectival character of *at least some* transcendental arguments, as procedures consciously performed from one's point of view.

1$_W$ Transcendentalism?

I think there is a lot to be learned about ourselves and our thought about ourselves and the world by looking carefully into the conditions we can see to be necessary even for us to think of a world at all.

– Stroud

AIM: Establishing that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (α), since he respects the necessary and sufficient requirements to be one.

Introduction

In Chapter 1$_K$, I have expounded Transcendentalism, by discussing two methodological requirements at the heart of Kant's transcendental turn, namely (*i*) starting philosophical investigation from our representations of empirical reality ("from within"), and (*ii*) recognizing their necessary conditions of possibility, which are known a priori. I have argued that these two methodological requirements are necessary and sufficient to be a transcendental philosopher. Further, I have offered an account of the transcendental argument, as the main methodological procedure employed by transcendental philosophers, allowing them to proceed from (*i*) to (*ii*).

    In this Chapter, I focus on the methodological similarities between Kant and the early Wittgenstein. I argue that, like Kant, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (α), since he respects requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), and indeed since he engages in transcendental argumentation. My discussion is in four sections. Specifically,

§ 1.1$_W$ argues that the early Wittgenstein respects requirement (*i*) to be a transcendental philosopher.

§ 1.2$_W$ argues that the early Wittgenstein respects requirement (*ii*) to be a transcendental philosopher.

§ 1.3$_W$ establishes that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (α).

§ 1.4$_W$ further substantiates claim (α), by showing that the early Wittgenstein engaged in transcendental argumentation. Specifically, I show that Wittgenstein's argument for substance (logical space) is a transcendental argument.

1.1$_W$ *Wittgenstein on (i)*

In this section, I argue that the early Wittgenstein, like Kant before him, respects the first fundamental requirement to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*i*) starting philosophical investigation "from within".

1.11$_W$ *Drawing limits "from within" language*

As by now we know, one of the fundamental hallmarks of Kant's transcendental paradigm shift in philosophy, and of Transcendental Philosophy more generally, is the following. As opposed to starting from *transcendent* metaphysical claims, which surreptitiously presuppose the dubious notion of an *external* vantage point "from outside", or that otherwise incur a skeptical *diallelus*, the transcendental philosopher starts investigation from *our* point of view or "from within". More precisely, the transcendental philosopher self-consciously starts from our representations of empirical reality and/or the cognitive capacities involved in them.

Now, it seems to me that Wittgenstein endorsed this methodological hallmark of Transcendentalism. In effect, when the topic of the *transcendental method* came up in one of his 1930s Cambridge lectures,[199] Wittgenstein reportedly said:

> This is the right sort of approach. Hume, Descartes and others had tried to start with one proposition such as "Cogito ergo sum" and work from it to others. Kant disagreed and started with what we know to be so and so, and went on to examine the validity of what we suppose we know. (WLC, pp. 73-4)[200]

Not only Wittgenstein calls the transcendental method "the right sort of approach", but he also characterizes it in terms of the notion of "starting with what we know to be so", which, we might say without hazard, is a way of starting "from within". In fact, Wittgenstein is suggesting that only starting in this way, and more precisely from what we know, Kant could proceed to examine the validity of what we *suppose* we know (say, the existence of God or of the immortal soul). More generally, Wittgenstein is endorsing the critical import of the idea of starting "from

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[199] This happened in the context of a discussion of C. D. Broad's classification of the methods of philosophy, which included the transcendental method, characterized by Broad as "Kant's critical method without the peculiar applications that Kant made of it".

[200] It may be noted that Wittgenstein is here unfair to Descartes. Indeed, it may be argued that even Descartes started with what we know, insofar as we know that we think. In this sense, it would not be wrong to say that, in starting from the *cogito*, Descartes started from our cognitive capacities, and, thereby, "from within". Even so, Descartes has a metaphysical interpretation of the cogito, such that, insofar as I think, I am a *thinking substance* as opposed to an extended one. And it is doubtful whether anyone of us knows *that*. I think Wittgenstein is critical here of such "metaphysical" beginnings. But, for obvious reasons, in what follows I shall leave aside the issue of Wittgenstein's interpretation of Descartes.

within" in Philosophy—one by which only after becoming thoroughly acquainted with our representations, and the relative cognitive capacities, we may proceed to set their necessary features or *limits*.

It is no surprise, then, that the idea of starting "from within", as well as its critical import just described, figure at the heart of Wittgenstein's early conception of philosophy. As he famously writes in his *Tractatus*:

> 4.114[201]   [Philosophy] should limit the thinkable and thereby the unthinkable.
> It should limit the unthinkable *from within* [*von innnen*] through the thinkable.

Philosophy, that is, cannot but start *within* the space of possible representation—here, from what we may think—and only then it can work its way outwards, toward the limits of that space, which it should set.

A similar point is reiterated by Wittgenstein, though in a much more subtle and evocative way, in the Preface to the *Tractatus*:

> [T]he 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).

Here, Wittgenstein urges that the limit of thought can be set only by setting a limit to the expression of thoughts *in* language—that is, working *from within* language. For drawing a limit to thought without the aid of language would require us to attain a perspective completely *outside* the limit of thought, and think, "from there", the "other side" of the limit of thought, thereby thinking that which completely *transcends* the limit of thought—thinking, that is, what cannot be thought at all. At this point, the whole "idea" of stationing ourselves "outside" the limit of thought starts to *implode* right in front of our eyes, and we should realize that there only ever was one option in order to draw the limit of thought: doing that internally, working "from within" language.[202]

Significantly, in an oft-quoted letter to von Ficker (a prospective publisher for the *Tractatus*), Wittgenstein connects the point just made to Ethics, by writing:

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[201] Ogden's translation; my emphasis.

[202] There is however a fundamental difference between Kant and the early Wittgenstein in these passages, namely that Kant was concerned with the limits of experience, which he took to be non-coincident with those of thought/language, whereas Wittgenstein is concerned with the limits of thought/language (cf. Levine, 2013, p. 207, fn. 52), which, as I shall argue in 2w, he took to be coincident with those of experience. At this stage, however, we are interested in the methodological similarities between both Kant and the early Wittgenstein, and it will be sufficient to mention this difference, in order to return on it later, once armed with the adequate theoretical tools needed to address it.

[T]he ethical is delimited by my book as it were from within [*von innen*]; and I am convinced that *strictly* it can *only* be delimited like that. (Quoted in Monk, 1990, p. 178)

We will return in Chapter 3w on this important passage, when discussing Wittgenstein's Ethics. For now, I will note that it reinforces the view that Wittgenstein's early philosophy, like Kant's critical one, self-consciously starts and proceeds "from within".

1.111w *Wittgenstein's Empirical Perspective*

This view is further confirmed by Wittgenstein's appeal to (what I have called) the empirical perspective. As we have seen in Chapter 1k, the notion of starting "from within" may be cashed out in terms of the empirical perspective, namely our everyday way of considering things, whereby we are immersed in our experience of them, and in what we think or say about them. Indeed, starting "from within" is none other than starting from our empirical perspective—or so I have argued, in agreement with Kant and Husserl.

Now, Wittgenstein too appeals to the notion of empirical perspective. Thus, in his wartime *Notebooks*, he talks of the "usual way of looking at things", that "sees objects as it were *from the midst* of them", or "*in* space and time" (NB, 7.10.16[203]). Later, in *Philosophical Remarks*, Wittgenstein writes of "the standpoint of normal common sense", that (like Husserl) he characterizes as "natural", insofar as it is the perspective of our everyday experience, in which "we look around us, move around in space, feel our own bodies, etc." (PR, § 18 and § 47).

These passages leave us in no doubt: the early Wittgenstein endorsed the notion of empirical perspective, from which we naturally take our start. Yet insofar as starting from our empirical perspective is none other than starting "from within", then this confirms that the early Wittgenstein self-consciously started his philosophical investigations "from within". And if so, the early Wittgenstein checks this box to be a transcendental philosopher.

1.2w *Wittgenstein on (ii)*

In Chapter 1k, I have however argued that a second box needs to be checked to be a transcendental philosopher, namely (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori. It is often remarked that the early Wittgenstein concerned himself with the preconditions of representation.[204] In this section, I

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[203] My emphasis on "from the midst" (which of course is equivalent to "from within").

[204] E.g. Stenius (1960, ch. 11); Apel (1994, p. 7); D. Stern (1995, p. 57 and p. 187); Glock (1997, p. 291); Nordmann (2005, p. 69); Hacker (2013, p. 33 and p. 37).

give both substance and precision to that widespread intuition, by focusing on Tractarian 'objects'. Specifically, I will argue that Wittgenstein recognizes objects as necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori. My discussion will be divided into two parts. First, I will show that, for Wittgenstein, objects are given or *known a priori*. Then, I will argue that Wittgenstein took objects to be *necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality*.

1.21$_W$ *Objects are known a priori…*

The Preface of the *Tractatus* has alerted us to the critical importance of (self-consciously) starting "from within", thereby guarding us against *transcendent* metaphysical enterprises, which are dogmatic philosophy at best, and sheer confusion at worse. Yet, "in the light of all of that, [right after the Preface,] the *Tractatus* presents a quite unexpected initial appearance. Where we might have expected a series of examples of the confusions that bad philosophy endangers […] – the kind of thing, in other words, that we find in Kant's Transcendental Dialectic – what we actually find, from the very outset, is what *looks* for all the world like hard-core traditional metaphysics, in the same vein as the great metaphysical systems of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz".[205]

Indeed, in a dense series of remarks at the beginning of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein apparently presents an ontology. At its centre there are *objects*, which are simple yet gregarious things. Simple, since they are not-composite. Gregarious, since they come essentially endowed with *combinatorial possibilities* with other objects, so that they can arrange into *combinations of objects*. Wittgenstein calls the combinatorial possibilities of objects "forms", and their possible combinations "states of affairs", or more generally "situations".[206] "Space, time, and colour are forms of objects" (T, 2.0251). Thus, objects can combine into spatial, temporal and chromatic

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[205] A. W. Moore (2012, p. 227; my emphasis).

[206] Cf. T, 2.0121-2.0122. In the *Tractatus*, the term "situations" [*Sachlagen*] has a more general scope than the phrase "state of affairs" [*Sachverhalte*], which latter is reserved to elementary configurations of objects, i.e. those corresponding to elementary propositions. It is true that, at 3.21 of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein talks of "the configuration of objects in a situation" [*die Konfiguration der Gegenstände in der Sachlage*], which is said to correspond to the configuration of names in in the propositional sign, i.e. the elementary proposition. Thus, one is rightly inclined to take "situation" as synonymous of "state of affairs" *here*, since elementary propositions exactly depict states of affairs according to Wittgenstein. Elsewhere, however, Wittgenstein indicates that the term "situation" is more general than this. For example, Wittgenstein writes that "the picture presents a situation [*Sachlage*] in logical space" (T, 2.11; cf. T, 2.202), or else that the sense of a proposition is the situation it represents (T, 4.031). But since, for Wittgenstein, *any* proposition is a picture, and not the just elementary propositions, then the term "situation" may cover both elementary and non-elementary (complex) configurations, which latter are pictured by non-elementary (complex) propositions. Put otherwise, in my view, the term "situation" is so general that it can cover both "atomic" combinations of objects (namely, states of affairs), and "molecular" combinations of objects, i.e. combinations of states of affairs. To avoid confusion, however, I will mostly reserve the term "situation" to the latter case. (For some interesting remarks on the difference between *Sachverhalte* and *Sachlagen*, see Pilch 2017.)

situations (which we can experience). Situations may obtain or not in reality. An obtaining situation is a fact. "The world is the totality of facts" (T, 1), and this totality determines not only what is actual, but also what is possible (T, 1.12-1.13). Since, however, the constituents of facts are ultimately objects, it is *objects* and their combinatorial possibilities that give the space of the possible—"logical space".

Clearly, then, objects are the cornerstone of Wittgenstein's Tractarian ontology. The problem is that, in his extremely abstract ontological remarks, Wittgenstein never tells us *what* Tractarian objects are (e.g. whether they are phenomenal or physical entities; whether they are mind-dependent or mind-independent, etc.). As a result, for a long time the nature and status of Tractarian objects was the holy grail of (early) Wittgenstein scholarship—and in many ways it still is.

It may however be questioned whether it *should* be. Being underdetermined by the textual evidence, the research into the nature of Tractarian objects has not led to any consensus, but only multiplied the disputes. I thus suggest we adopt a different strategy. Instead of starting by speculating on *what* Tractarian objects are, without much textual support to do so, let us first try to gain insight into Tractarian objects by getting clear on what they *cannot be*.

There was a time when Wittgenstein's objects were identified with Russellian sense-data, i.e. *sensible* objects with which we are acquainted *in experience*.[207] However, not only, as noted by William Child, "the idea that Tractarian objects are [Russellian] sense-data is not as popular as it once was";[208] rather, as argued by James Levine, Wittgenstein's objects cannot be Russellian sense-data at all,[209] for they are not given *in* experience, but rather are given prior to any particular experience or *a priori*.[210] This, as Levine rightly notes, is made clear by Wittgenstein in the following remark:

> 5.552 The "experience" that we need in order to understand logic is not that something or other is the state of things, but that something *is*: that, however, is *not* an experience.
> Logic *is prior* to every experience—that something *is so*.
> It is prior to the How [*dem Wie*], not prior to the What [*dem Was*].[211]

The "What" is here the existence of the world (cf. WWK, p. 77), as totality of facts, which however, as we have seen, comes down to the existence of *objects*—for objects combine into

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[207] Hintikka and Hintikka (1986); cf. Russell (1910-11, p. 109).
[208] Child (2013, p. 148).
[209] For the view that Tractarian objects cannot be Russellian sense-data, cf. Marion (1998, p.114).
[210] Levine (2013, p. 192; cf. also 1998, § II).
[211] Translation slightly emended.

situations and facts (the "How"). This may seem ironic, given that Wittgenstein never explicitly tells us *what* objects are. But there is a significant distinction to be made between *what there is* and *what it is*.[212] If so, insofar as a world is given at all, then *objects* will be a given too for Wittgenstein, independently of what they turn out to be. Indeed, if we are to take seriously 5.552 above, then not only the world, and thereby objects, are given,[213] but in fact they are given *prior to* any particular experience. But being given prior to any particular experience means being known *a priori*. Hence, Wittgenstein's objects are given or known a priori.[214]

Further evidence for the view that Tractarian objects are given or known *a priori* resides in the epistemological remarks of the *Tractatus*, which are centred around "givenness". Take for example the following one:

5.524   If objects are given, then at the same time we are given *all* objects.

Here it is clear once again that Tractarian objects are given or known *a priori*. Indeed, there is no other sound way of interpreting this remark. For allowing scope to the usual—empirical—connotation of "given" would produce the following, quite implausible claim: "as soon as one senses some objects, then she senses all objects".[215] And one simply cannot see why, if some objects are being sensed, then all objects are being sensed as well. Once again, then, we come to realize that Tractarian objects should *not* be essentially identified with sensible objects that are given empirically or a posteriori (such as sense-data). But if objects are not given empirically or a posteriori, then they—and thereby their combinatorial possibilities, and thereby the whole logical space—must be given *a priori*.

Yet another confirmation of this view resides in Wittgenstein's post-Tractarian conversations with the Vienna Circle. There, Wittgenstein urges in a strikingly Kantian tone that "experience cannot give us the system of possibilities. Experience teaches us what is there [here, which states of affairs obtain], not what can be there" (WWK, p. 214).[216] If the system or space of possibilities cannot be given in or through experience, as Wittgenstein urges here, then it

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[212] See Varzi (2011), and my discussion of Ontology and Metaphysics in Chapter 2K.

[213] "The world is *given* me" (NB 8.7.16; Wittgenstein's emphasis).

[214] I should note here that, beyond their being given or known a priori, Wittgenstein's "objects" also differ from Russellian particulars (or sense-data) since, as we have seen, they are essentially gregarious things, whereas Russellian particulars are self-standing (Russell, 1918, p. 525). That is, Wittgenstein's "objects" are *not* self-standing entities, but rather are incomplete or unsaturated: essentially in need of each other (or: essentially in need of the possible context of the state of affairs). Famously, Frege entertained similar thoughts before Wittgenstein, only not with respect to objects, which like Russell he thought are self-standing, but rather to concepts, which Frege believed to be incomplete or unsaturated (see Frege 1971: 34, fn. 13).

[215] Compare Sullivan (1996, p. 207).

[216] In the first *Critique*, Kant had in fact written that "experience teaches us, to be sure, that something is constituted thus and so, but not that it could not be otherwise" (B3).

must be given in some other manner. In fact, Wittgenstein explicitly says that the system or space of possibilities is given "*from the outset*" (ibid.)—that is, *a priori*.[217]

One might perhaps object that Wittgenstein could have arrived at this idea after the publication of the *Tractatus*. However, the idea that logical space is given "from the outset" had already been countenanced in the *Tractatus*, where Wittgenstein explicitly connects it to his objects. As he writes:

> 2.0123[218]   If I know an object I also know all its possible occurrences in states of affairs. (Every one of these possibilities must be part of the nature of the object.) *A new possibility cannot be discovered later.*

> 2.0124   If all objects are given, then at the same time all possible states of affairs are also given.

If we read 2.0123-4 alongside 5.524 quoted above, the view that emerges is the following. If Tractarian objects are given, then logical space—as space of all logically possible states of affairs—is therewith given "from the outset" or *a priori*. ("A new possibility cannot be discovered later"). But logical space could not be given *a priori* if objects—and thereby their combinatorial possibilities in states of affairs, which constitute logical space—were given with the unfolding of experience (a posteriori). Thus, Tractarian objects must be given or known *a priori*.

1.22ᴡ …*As Necessary Conditions of the Possibility of Representation of Empirical Reality*

All of this might not however be granted, unless one can also see *why* objects should be given *a priori* (for that surely sounds like a queer philosophical commitment). Luckily, there is no need to fetch the rationale far and wide, for it is already contained in 5.552 of the *Tractatus*, which we have likewise quoted above. There, Wittgenstein links his objects—the *what* of the world—to our need to understand logic. They are, quite literally, *what* we need to understand logic.

In effect, quite early in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had already remarked that logic deals with *every* possibility (T, 2.0121), by which he meant all the combinatorial possibilities of objects in states of affairs, that give the space of what is logically possible (logical space). If those

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[217] This was noted a long time ago by Pears, who writes of Wittgenstein's logical space: "Experience can only give us a world of facts, but this world floats in a space of possibilities which is given *a priori*" (1969, p. 84; Pears' emphasis). I will return on Pears' view in the final Chapter 7, arguing that, while his contention that for Wittgenstein logical space is given a priori is right, his further claim that Wittgenstein's logical space is mind-independent is misguided.

[218] My emphasis.

possibilities—or equivalently, the objects that essentially contain them[219]—were not given a priori, then they should either be given a posteriori, or not given at all. We have already ruled out the first option. The second "option" may instead be reduced to absurdity. For if, indeed, objects and their combinatorial possibilities were not given, then there would not be the world. But at that point, how could there *be* a logic at all?[220]

According to the early Wittgenstein, then, objects are necessary to understand logic. Now, for the early Wittgenstein, logic is interested in thoughts or propositions "ONLY insofar as they are *pictures* of reality" (see NB, 5.10.14). Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, logic is essentially "the logic of depiction" or representation of reality (T, 4.015). But then, his rationale for holding that objects are given *a priori*—indeed, for holding that not even logic is prior to them[221]—must be that if they were not so given, representation of reality would be impossible. And if so, Wittgenstein's objects are known a priori *as necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of reality*.

This is confirmed by yet another apparently strange claim by Wittgenstein:

> 4.2211   Even if the world is infinitely complex, so that every fact consists of infinitely many states of affairs and every state of affairs is composed of infinitely many objects, there would still have to be objects and states of affairs.

Why is that? Why couldn't it be that there are facts upon facts *ad inifinitum*, and no simple objects?[222] The answer can only be that, if that were so, there could be no representation of reality for Wittgenstein. Indeed, Wittgenstein explicitly links the very *possibility* of the proposition, and hence of linguistic depiction of reality, to there being simple objects (cf. T, 4.0312). He further writes that "the demand for simple things *is* the demand for definiteness of sense" (NB, 18. 6. 15). And since, for the early Wittgenstein, any proposition or picture must have a definite sense (T, 3.251), then the demand for simple objects is the demand that representation of reality should be possible. Thus, Wittgenstein's objects are indeed a necessary condition of the possibility of representation of reality.

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[219] Cf. T, 2.011, 2.012, 2.0123, and 2.014.
[220] Cf. T, 5.5521.
[221] Notice that the view that logic is *not-prior* to objects need *not* be taken as the view that objects are *prior* to logic, as if objects and logic could come in separate batches (first the objects, and then logic). That objects are given a priori simply means that they are given independently of any particular experience, exactly as Wittgenstein writes logic is. But this also means that objects and logic, being both a priori, might well come together, so to speak, i.e. that objects might be given *with* logic a priori, and logic might be given *with* objects a priori. (Questions of the order of "priority" between logic and world are pervasive in Wittgenstein's scholarship, and I shall return on them a number of times in the following Chapters, not least as they essentially bear on the question of the alleged presence of Transcendental Idealism in Wittgenstein's early philosophy.)
[222] Cf. Geach (1976, pp. 57-8).

Now the reality that is represented, albeit its objects are known a priori, must be *empirical* reality, at least in the minimal sense that its states (of affairs) may be *experienced*, and experience would be impossible if there were no objects combining in states of affairs. Indeed, experience is (a form of) representation of reality, which latter is made possible by the objects that, for Wittgenstein, give empirical reality. Thus, when Wittgenstein writes that "empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects" (T, 5.5561), he means that objects essentially constitute *the space of all that can be experienced*, or equivalently of all the empirically possible situations (spatial, temporal, chromatic, etc.), which, as we shall see in 2_W, are all the logically possible contents of representation for him, given that he does not distinguish between experienceability and conceivability.[223]

Furthermore, while for Wittgenstein what happens *in* this space of possible experience is contingent and known a posteriori,[224] the space itself cannot be. For if there were no such space, then there would be no representation of empirical reality. Yet there clearly is representation of empirical reality (e.g. experience). Hence, the space of all possible experience, namely logical space for Wittgenstein, must be a necessary condition of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which is known a priori.

But since this space is given by objects, then, for Wittgenstein, objects are known a priori as necessary conditions of possibility of representation of empirical reality. As such, they fully deserve the title of "transcendental objects".[225]

1.3$_W$ *Wittgenstein is a Transcendentalist*

In Chapter 1_K, I have argued that requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) are necessary and sufficient to be a transcendental philosopher. The early Wittgenstein respects these two requirements, insofar as starting from our representation of empirical reality ("from within"), he recognizes objects as necessary conditions of it, that are known a priori ("transcendental objects"). Hence, the early

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[223] As rightly noted by Peter Sullivan (1996, p. 216, fn. 41), the term "empirical" in 5.5561 effects no restriction. Indeed, the limit of empirical reality—Wittgenstein writes in the continuation of 5.5561 quoted above––"also makes itself manifest in the totality of elementary propositions", out of which, according to Wittgenstein, one can construe *all* propositions or logical pictures/representations (cf. ibid. and T, 4.01, 4.12, 4.21, 4.26, 4.51).
      This has to do with Wittgenstein's non-Kantian view of logical possibility, to be discussed in 2_W.
      [224] Cf. T, 5.552 and 6.41.
      [225] The view that Wittgenstein's objects are "transcendental" has been advanced, among others, by Stenius (1960, p. 223), Hintikka (1984, p. 453) and Borutti (2010, p. 132). Possibly, Frank Ramsey was the first to hold it, since he believed that, according to Wittgenstein, the Subject must be acquainted with objects in a "transcendental sense" (1991, p. 146)—a passage on which I will return in Chapter 3_W. Both Ramsey and the interpreters above, however, scarcely offer any argumentative chain or path to reach this view, resting content with its mere statement. Here, and in what follows, I substantiate the view by argument.

Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher or transcendentalist (α).

This claim will find numerous confirmations throughout Part_W of the present work, in our discussion not only of the early Wittgenstein's ontology, which I further expound below and in 2_W, but also of his logic (see 2_W), as well as of his views of subjectivity and ethics (see 3_W). Before turning to some of these discussions, however, we should defuse a couple of potential objections against our way of reaching claim (α). In this section, I do so, taking up the opportunity to discuss Wittgenstein's notions of elementary proposition and logical analysis along the way.

1.31_W *Tejedor's potential objection*

The first potential objection I'd like to address comes from Chon Tejedor's work, who reads Wittgenstein in complete opposition to Kant. According to Tejedor, the early Wittgenstein is *not* a transcendental philosopher, for he is in no position to countenance transcendental conditions (not even objects). More specifically, Tejedor's claim is that transcendental conditions are "restrictions" of that which they are conditions of, since 'condition' is an inherently "restrictive notion".[226] But Wittgenstein—Tejedor argues—does not wish to impose any restrictions, either upon representation of reality or upon the reality represented. Hence—Tejedor concludes—Wittgenstein cannot countenance transcendental conditions.

It will remain to be seen whether, in drawing the limits of representation of reality, the early Wittgenstein is in some sense "restricting" representation and represented reality to a particular domain, as opposed to another. Indeed, the whole Part_W of the dissertation aims at answering this problem, which is inextricably linked to the problem of Wittgenstein's alleged Transcendental Idealism.

There's no need to anticipate what is to come, however, to defuse Tejedor's objection. For in Chapter 1_K I have already demonstrated that the notion of 'condition', and with it the notion of 'transcendental condition', *is not* inherently restrictive. And if so, even if it turned out that Tejedor is right in arguing that the early Wittgenstein does not want to impose restrictions upon representation and the reality represented, that would not count as a reason to claim that the early Wittgenstein does not countenance transcendental conditions. It would not count as a reason, that is, to deny that (α) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher.

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[226] Tejedor (2015, p. 74; see also pp. 60-61, p. 88, fn. 6, and p. 126).

1.32_W *Sullivan's potential objection*

The second potential objection comes from Peter Sullivan's work. As I understand Sullivan, he would endorse the claim that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (α), since he writes *in propria persona* that he has a "view of Wittgenstein's work as belonging to the Kantian, transcendental tradition".[227] There are thus many points of agreement between us. However, my argument that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher is (so far) based on the view that, for Wittgenstein, *objects are known a priori* as necessary conditions of the possibility of cognition ("transcendental objects"). And on this claim, at least as I have presented it, Sullivan would likely raise concerns.[228]

The main one that comes to mind is this. According to Sullivan, "the range of objects", and hence the whole logical space, cannot be known "from the outset", as the fixed "a priori order of the world".[229] For, *according to Sullivan*, this view only makes sense under the "expository pretence" that the process of logical analysis has actually reached an end, which, by Wittgenstein's own admission, it has *not*, since Wittgenstein does not provide any *example* of object. But if so, it seems that, for Wittgenstein, "the range of objects", and hence the whole logical space, is not known a priori after all. *Or so Sullivan suggests.*

To understand better Sullivan's point, we should first clarify Wittgenstein's view of logical analysis, which we may do by means of a comparison with Kant. Indeed, although this chapter mainly focuses on the similarities between Kant's view and the early Wittgenstein's one, I will at this point make a partial exception to this rule, presenting a difference in their views of logical analysis (though one nested in some similarities). And I will do so since discussion of this difference will bring us right at the heart of Sullivan's (potential) objection.

Kant is concerned with an analysis of *cognition* into its elements, among which there are *the elementary concepts*, namely the pure categories (A89/B64). As is well known, Kant gives (what he takes to be) a "complete inventory" of the pure categories. This, however, means that, for Kant, the logical analysis of (a priori) cognition has come to an end. For otherwise he could not give

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[227] Sullivan (2011, p. 171). Indeed, Sullivan specifies that he reads the early Wittgenstein as a transcendental philosopher, but *not* as a transcendental idealist, which is in harmony with my distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism (on which, see 2_K).

[228] Among other things, Sullivan would likely call my view an "object-centred" view (see his 1996, p. 205). The label is however misleading, since, as I will show in 2_W, Wittgenstein takes Tractarian objects to be the *common* form of world and language, so that, in claiming that Tractarian objects are known a priori, I am not "centring" my interpretation of Wittgenstein on the world any more than language, as Sullivan's label would seem to suggest. At this stage, it remains to be seen whether, in the *Tractatus*, objects have some sort of priority over language, or language over the objects, or indeed whether, for Wittgenstein, there is no conceivable priority between reality and language.

[229] This is Wittgenstein's expression, in a retrospective passage in § 97 the *Philosophical Investigations*, that clearly looks back at his Tractarian objects. (I substantiate this point in 2_W.)

the "complete inventory" of the elementary a priori concepts, therewith giving the "complete inventory" of the *specific forms* of (his) elementary judgements, namely synthetic a priori judgements[230] (e.g. the substance-property form, the ground-consequent form, etc.)

Now, somewhat similarly to Kant (albeit not identically), Wittgenstein is concerned with an analysis of *language* into *elementary propositions*. These are concatenations of simple linguistic sings, or "names", that represent concatenations of simple objects. Further, not unlike Kant's elementary concepts, Wittgenstein's elementary propositions are supposed to be the end of a process of logical analysis—here, the analysis of complex propositions, as constructions out of elementary propositions (T, 5.3). Since, however, Wittgenstein never gives an example of objects, he cannot give an example of simple names standing for objects, and hence of elementary proposition. As a result, *contra Kant*, Wittgenstein maintains that we cannot give *the specific forms* of judgement, which in his case would be the specific forms of the elementary propositions. Analysis has not *actually* come to an end for Wittgenstein. As he writes:

5.55   We now have to answer a priori the question about all the possible forms of elementary propositions.
          Elementary propositions consist of names. Since, however, we are unable to give the number of names with different meanings, we are also unable to give the composition of elementary propositions.

5.554   It would be completely arbitrary to give any specific form.

We may now understand Sullivan's objection in a new light. While Kant gives us a "complete inventory" of the formal moments of judgement, namely the categories, for Wittgenstein it is impossible to give such a complete inventory, for analysis has *not yet* come to an end in his case. Hence, *Sullivan suggests*, it looks like "the range of objects", as the "range" of the possible meanings that names may take in the context of elementary propositions, cannot be given "from the outset" after all for Wittgenstein.

Now, we may happily grant Sullivan that Wittgenstein was unable to give an *example* of elementary proposition, so that he could not give an inventory of the *specific forms* that the elementary proposition may take. But that is *not* to say that, for Wittgenstein, objects, as meaning of simple names, are not given "from the outset" or a priori. Indeed, for the early Wittgenstein, *all* elementary propositions, and hence *all* objects, as meaning of simple names, *must* be given a priori. For if they were not given *a priori*, then, for Wittgenstein, we could not represent *all* the *possible situations* that make up empirical reality, the constituents of which are the objects, named

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[230] Kant calls synthetic a priori judgements "elementary principles" (WRP, 20:316).

in the elementary propositions. And at that point, the expressive power of language would fall short of reality, which for Wittgenstein, as Sullivan himself argues, is absurd. Indeed, Wittgenstein writes:

> 5.5561   Empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects. The limit also makes itself manifest in the totality of elementary propositions.

The two totalities, that of objects and of elementary propositions, go hand in hand. On this much I agree with Sullivan.[231] But that can only mean that they are *both* given "from the outset" or a priori. For if they were not so given, then we would not have language for Wittgenstein, as the *totality* of elementary propositions,[232] representing *all* possible situations. But clearly, there is (such a) language for Wittgenstein. Hence, for Wittgenstein, the totality of elementary propositions, and with it the totality of objects, are given or known a priori.

   What is more, for Wittgenstein we know these totalities a priori *irrespective of whether we have actually carried out analysis till the bedrock of language.* Hence, Wittgenstein writes in the remark following the last one quoted above:

> 5.5562   If we know on purely logical grounds that there must be elementary propositions, then everyone who understands propositions *in their unanalysed form* must know it.[233]

Here, Wittgenstein makes clear that we know a priori the necessity of there being elementary propositions *even before analysis takes place*. For the totality of the elementary propositions constitutes language, and we know there is language *insofar as we speak at all*. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, logic itself is rigorously a priori, i.e. known insofar as we think or speak at all. Yet

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[231] Sullivan rightly writes that, for Wittgenstein, language and reality are internally linked "formal totalities" (1996, p. 209). However, Sullivan also suggests that Wittgenstein silences "the worry that reality might outrun language […] by *conceiving* of language directly as that which embraces reality" (ibid.). As I will show throughout Part_W, for Wittgenstein, nothing counts as "*conceiving* language as that which embraces reality". For if that could be done, then, for Wittgenstein, I should have to station myself, by means of language, outside reality, in order to *conceive* of reality as the reality I conceive in language. And in that case, language would outrun reality—which for Wittgenstein, as opposed to Kant, cannot be, as I will argue in Chapter 2_W. (The point is connected to Transcendental Idealism).

[232] Wittgenstein writes that "the totality of propositions is language" (T, 4.001). Since, however, for Wittgenstein all propositions are constructions out of the elementary propositions, then the whole of language may also be regarded as the totality of elementary propositions. As Wittgenstein writes, "in a certain sense, it could be said that *all* propositions were generalizations of elementary propositions" (T, 4.52).

[233] The point that elementary propositions are known a priori even *before logical analysis takes place* is connected to Wittgenstein's distinction between logic and the *application* of logic. According to Wittgenstein, the *actual carrying out of* analysis, which will *uncover* which elementary propositions there are, does not belong to logic, which is purely a priori, but rather to the *application* of logic (see T, 5.557), which has an a posteriori element to it, insofar as it depends upon which propositions are to be analysed, which in turn depends upon the arbitrary and contingent use we make of words in those propositions. Indeed, Wittgenstein believed that which elementary propositions there are "could be specified at a later date" (WWK, p. 182), or that "language itself will decide [on the issue]" (PT, 5.42). I will briefly return on the distinction between logic and the application of logic in 2_W, in my discussion of Wittgenstein's logic.

if so, we know *a priori* the totality of elementary propositions *even before logical analysis takes place*. And if so, we know *a priori* the totality of objects, as possible meanings of names, *even before logical analysis takes place*.

Now, if logical analysis is *unnecessary* for having a priori knowledge of the elementary propositions and the objects they are about, then, for Wittgenstein, the actual carrying out of analysis may only ever bring to clear consciousness what we knew a priori "from the outset", albeit only "tacitly"[234]—namely, logical space, as the space of all possible combinations of objects representable by all possible combinations of names.

Admittedly, in this view, one must know *a priori* the elementary propositions, and yet be *unable to give examples of them or of their specific forms*. If that sounds "dogmatic", it is because it *is* dogmatic, as Wittgenstein himself later recognized (WWK, p. 182). Yet at the time of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein was just after the *general possibility* of logical forms (T, 5.555). He believed that, without being able to give an example of elementary proposition, we could know a priori, on "purely logical grounds", the necessary features of the elementary proposition, such as containing simple names that, combining with other names, stand for objects combining with other objects, thereby making it *possible* for us to represent *what may be the case*. Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, we can know a priori the *general form* of the elementary proposition, which, since all propositions are constructions out of elementary propositions, will be

<u>The General Form of the Proposition</u>: *such and such is the case*.[235]

But what are these "logical grounds" upon which we know the most general form of all (elementary) propositions, and hence of language?

"Logic", Wittgenstein famously writes, "is *transcendental*" (T, 6.13; my emphasis). Hence, the "purely logical grounds" of a priori knowledge of the general form of the elementary proposition must be *transcendental* too. Among them,[236] there must be objects, which as I have argued are transcendental conditions or grounds (*transcendental objects*). Indeed, a priori knowledge of the general form "*such and such* is the case" *presupposes*, for Wittgenstein, that we *can* know a priori what counts as "such and such" in each given case and, thereby, that we *may* know a priori the objects that we represent as combined in situations that may be the case (NB, 17.6.15; cf. T, 3.251). For—Wittgenstein thought—if we did not know *that*, and *a priori*, then how could we ever be sure of representing *reality*, which is made up of situations, which are made up of objects?

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[234] Indeed, I will argue in 3w that such a priori knowledge is *essentially* tacit for Wittgenstein, i.e. it is *ineffable* knowledge. Still, for Wittgenstein, logical analysis may help us in attaining perspicuity with respect to it.

[235] T, 4.5.

[236] As we shall see, objects are not the only transcendental grounds for the early Wittgenstein.

I thereby take it that Sullivan's potential objection against my claim that, for Wittgenstein, all objects, and with them logical space, are given *a priori*, does not constitute an obstacle to my transcendental interpretation of Wittgenstein. Rather, if rightly addressed, this objection gives momentum to my transcendental interpretation, confirming that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (**α**)—a claim to which, in any case, Sullivan himself is committed.

1.4_W Wittgenstein's Transcendental Argument

In my discussion above, I take myself to have established claim (**α**), by having argued that, for Wittgenstein, Tractarian objects are transcendental objects. Yet how *exactly* are we meant to recognise Tractarian objects as transcendental? Is there an argument in the *Tractatus* which is to lead us to such a recognition? And if so, how exactly does the argument proceed?

In this section, I start to address these questions by means of the notion of transcendental argument. More specifically, I argue that Wittgenstein's Tractarian argument for substance (= objects) deserves the title of "transcendental". First, I will show that Wittgenstein's argument for substance respects the schema of transcendental argument outlined in 1_K. Then, I will evaluate some interpretative options. I will argue that a *merely* analytic interpretation of Wittgenstein's argument fails, and that we should embrace a perspectival one.

1.41_W *The Structure of the Argument*

In Chapter 1_K, I have given a general characterization of transcendental argument. A transcendental argument—I said—is an argumentative procedure that (*i*) starting from our representations of empirical reality and/or the cognitive capacities involved in them (i.e. "from within"), aims at (*ii*) recognizing their necessary conditions, which are known *a priori*. I have then given the schema of transcendental argument, namely:

x,

$\square$ (if x, then C),

Therefore C.

where x is a representation of reality (and/or the cognitive capacities involved in it), and C is a necessary condition of it (or them), which is known a priori. It must be possible for any transcendental argument to fit the schema above (or an extended version of it). Wittgenstein's "argument for substance", if it is to be characterized as a transcendental argument, can be no

exception to this rule.

Wittgenstein's argument for substance is a truly dense piece of reasoning, which is *seemingly* encapsulated in the space of three brief Tractarian remarks:

2.021   Objects form the substance of the world. Therefore they cannot be compound.[237]

2.0211   If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true.

2.0212   It would then be impossible to form a picture of the world (true or false).

We now need to show that this argument respects the *schema* of a transcendental argument, which is based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*). For if it can be shown that the argument above respects requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), and thereby our schema, it will count as a transcendental argument.

There can be little doubt that Wittgenstein's argument respects (*ii*), since by the end of it we are supposed to recognize substance (= objects) as something without which it would be impossible to form a picture of the world, or, in other words, as a necessary condition of the possibility of representation of the world.[238] And since, as we have seen, objects (= substance) are given or known a priori, that sounds like a transcendental claim.[239] Still, one might ask, does Wittgenstein's argument also respect requirement (*i*)? Put otherwise, where is the representation of reality, and/or the relative cognitive capacities, with which a transcendental argument is supposed to *begin*?

To answer this question, we must consider the numbering system of the *Tractatus*. In the only footnote to the book, Wittgenstein says that the numbers that accompany his remarks indicate their "logical weight",[240] "the stress laid on them in [his] exposition". The rest of the footnote suggests that remarks that are accompanied by overall shorter numbers bear more

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[237] As noted by Ian Proops (2004), the non-compositeness of objects is supposed to follow from their being the substance of the world (this is signalled by Wittgenstein's "therefore").

[238] I should here briefly note what follows. I believe that, for the early Wittgenstein, there is no thinkable distinction between there being "substance" or "objects" and the givenness of "substance" or "objects" *to me*. This is because, in agreement with Frank Ramsey, I take 'givenness to me' to be a formal property of objects for Wittgenstein—a property without which we could not even think of objects at all (see Ramsey, unpublished, Box 4, Folder 29, p. 2). In my reading of Wittgenstein, this would mean that there is no thinkable distinction between objects being a necessary condition of representation and *the givenness of objects to me* being a necessary condition of representation. Since, however, a justification of this claim requires an in-depth discussion of the problem of solipsism in Wittgenstein's early philosophy, I shall put the whole issue on hold for now.

[239] Or, at any rate, a transcendental *pseudo*-claim, given Wittgenstein's structural commitments, to be examined throughout Part_W. It may seem problematic that an argument may contain (nonsensical) pseudo-claims. However, just like there can be an argument (e.g. *reductio ad absurdum*) that contains *absurd* hypotheses, so too there can be arguments containing nonsensical claims. That's all the more so if, as I shall argue below, Wittgenstein's argument for substance is a performative argument, which contains a *reductio ad absurdum* aimed at recognition that the *seeming* hypothesis of a "world without substance" crumbles upon itself.

[240] In German, *logische Gewicht*.

"logical weight" than those accompanied by longer ones. The point is very subtle: it is *not* that the Tractarian remarks accompanied by longer numbers are not very important, logically speaking.[241] Rather, remarks accompanied by shorter numbers take logical precedence *in Wittgenstein's order of exposition*. For example, if we are reading the 2's of the *Tractatus*, and if we are to respect Wittgenstein's instructions, we should ascribe expository priority to 2, followed by 2.1 and 2.2. Only bearing the weight of these remarks in mind—Wittgenstein must have thought—could one work her way through 2.021 quoted above, with all its comments, e.g. 2.0211 and 2.0212 quoted above.[242]

Now, it is sometimes said (or implied) that Wittgenstein's argument for substance contains a *suppressed premise*, namely "we picture the world" or "we can picture the world".[243] And it is surely true that we must start from our cognitive capacity to picture reality, if we are to work our way through the argument. However, if what we just said is correct, this "premise" is not at all "suppressed". In fact, in remark 2.1—which takes logical precedence in Wittgenstein's order of exposition over 2.021—Wittgenstein writes that "We [*Wir*] make to ourselves pictures of facts". With this simple observation, we have secured a starting point for Wittgenstein's argument for substance that respects requirement (*i*) too, namely starting from our representations of empirical reality (here, pictures of facts) and/or the cognitive capacities involved in them (here, our capacity to picture reality).

Wittgenstein's argument for substance thus respects (*i*) and (*ii*). Hence, it must be possible to cast it into our schema of a transcendental argument.[244] Here, then, is a reconstruction of the backbone of the "argument for substance" based on our discussion so far:

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[241] See Hacker (2015, p. 649, fn. 2).

[242] Strictly speaking, 2.021 and its comments are comments to 2.02 ("Objects are simple"), which in turn is a direct comment to 2, and not of either 2.1 and 2.2, and which thereby should be on the same "logical level" of 2.1 and 2.2. However, as argued Peter Hacker, Wittgenstein's remarks of the form n.0m "lie on the same level as, but as it were, *behind*, [remarks of the form] n.1, n2, etc." (2015, p. 655). If so, it is arguable that 2.02, while lying on the same level of 2.1 and 2.2, can be fully worked out only bearing in mind not only 2, *but also* 2.1 and 2.2, which together constitute 2.02's *foreground*. (In fact, there is no reason to countenance the simplicity of objects, unless one has in view the notion of picturing, which first makes its appearance at 2.1). But then, the comments to 2.02 too, some of which constitute Wittgenstein's "argument for substance", can be fully worked out by bearing in mind, e.g., 2.1, which is exactly what I urge above.

[243] D. Stern (1995, pp. 55-6), Proops (2004, p. 114), and Zalabardo (2015, p. 184). Compare also Michael Potter, who, after rightly noting that Wittgenstein "present[ed] the argument for substance as transcendental in character", immediately adds that "Wittgenstein *implicitly assumed* the […] premiss that the world is representable" (2020, p. 352: my emphasis)

[244] The phrase "it must be *possible*" is crucial here. It must be *possible* to cast a transcendental argument in the form of a *modus ponens*, but they need not *actually* take this form. A *modus tollens* could do just as well (see Hacker, 2013, p. 44). Indeed, such is the form of Wittgenstein's argument for substance.

2.1   We make to ourselves pictures of facts $\{p*\}$[245]

2.021   [If we are to picture facts, then] objects [must[246]] form the substance of the

       world. $\Box\{p* \to q*\}$

2.0211   [For] if the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense

       would depend on whether another proposition was true. $\{\ulcorner q* \to r*\}$

2.0212   [And] it would then be impossible to form a picture of the world (true or

       false). $\{r* \to \ulcorner \Diamond p*\}$

[from 2.1[247]] [But we *can* form pictures of the world] $\{\Diamond p*\}$

[Conclusion] [Therefore, objects must form the substance of the world] $\{q*\}$

Notably, *if compressed to its inner core*, this argument fits our schema of transcendental argument. Like so:

2.1   We make to ourselves pictures of facts $\{p*\}$

2.021   [If we are to picture facts, then] objects [must] form the substance of the

       world. $\Box\{p* \to q*\}$

[Conclusion] [Therefore, objects must form the substance of the world] $\{q*\}$

Yet if Wittgenstein's argument fits the schema of a transcendental argument, then it should be a transcendental argument.

  In what follows, I will confirm this result, by showing that the necessity at the heart of Wittgenstein's argument for substance is transcendental. I will then delve deeper into Wittgenstein's transcendental argument, by asking how exactly it proceeds to recognize the transcendental necessity of there being substance. In doing so, I will start from the simplified version of the argument above, in order to then turn to the *reductio ad absurdum* Wittgenstein

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[245] The letters *p*, *q* and *r* are accompanied by an asterisk, since, *without an asterisk*, these letters indicate genuine propositions in the notation Wittgenstein recommends in the *Tractatus* (see T, 4.24). However, as Wittgenstein famously maintains, the remarks of his *Tractatus*—which of course include the remarks that make up his argument for substance—are not genuine propositions at all (T, 6.54). Once again, the asterisks are simply meant to be a reminder for that.

[246] Notice that, at 2.022-3 of the *Tractatus*, which are on the same level as 2.021, Wittgenstein himself writes that objects (= substance) *must* constitute the shared form of any imagined world. I will return on the necessity belied by this "must" below, arguing that it is transcendental necessity.

[247] Assuming the uncontroversial modal axiom A → ◊ A (if A then A is possible).

operates at 2.0211-2, thereby accounting for the full argument in a transcendental framework.

1.42ᴡ *The Transcendental Necessity of Substance*

So far, I have reconstrued Wittgenstein's argument for substance. The reconstruction is neat, but merely formal—skeletal, one might say. Hence, to make real progress in the interpretation of the argument, we must start to put flesh on the bones.[248]

Already by looking at the compressed argument, it appears that the notion of "substance" stands urgently in need of an interpretation. Once again, the numbering system may help here. The six remarks in the 2's which share the same "logical weight" with 2.021 *and* constitute a unitary series with it (i.e. 2.022, 2.023, etc., up to 2.027), are in fact indispensable to throw light onto Wittgenstein's "substance" (though any of Wittgenstein's remarks on "objects" can in principle be of use here). Carefully working our way through these remarks, the following fundamental traits of Tractarian substance emerge.

Objects make up the substance of the world, i.e. the *fixed form* that the actual world *must*[249] have in common with all thinkable or logically possible worlds. It is in this formal respect that, for Wittgenstein, objects *subsist*[250] (exist in every thinkable world),[251] independently of what is the case (i.e. irrespective of whether they materially occur in this or that fact). Indeed, as we have seen, Tractarian objects give the space of all thinkable possibilities (logical space), insofar as they *contain* the possibility of all situations,[252] which resides in their combinatorial possibilities with each other in situations—*forms*.[253] Thus, substance (= objects) is form and content.

Each of these Wittgensteinian commitments could be examined at some length, and they all will throughout Partᴡ. But one piece of information is vital for our present purposes. Wittgenstein is adamant that objects (= substance) *must* be the common and fixed form of all thinkable worlds (including the actual one). Yet if his argument is to be a transcendental one, as

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[248] Compare Proops (2004, p. 114).

[249] In German, *muss*. See T, 2.022.

[250] This is not meant to be a metaphysical claim to the extent that, according to Wittgenstein, there are "formal objects" as opposed to "material objects", and that they do not coincide. Rather, all I mean is that Wittgenstein considered objects as bearers of (what he calls) formal properties, such as being simple and having form. Thereby, in my view, Wittgenstein was interested in claiming that objects, *qua bearers of formal features*, must exist in every thinkable or logically possible world (whatever objects may then turn out to be). What, materially speaking, simple objects are, was arguably a matter of indifference to Wittgenstein by the time of *Tractatus*—a question that had nothing to do with his investigation of logic, but which was rather a "purely empirical matter" (cf. Malcolm's report in his 1984, p. 70). For more on "formal properties" in Wittgenstein's early philosophy see Chapter 2ᴡ.

[251] Cf. PR, § 36.

[252] T, 2.014.

[253] See T, 2.0141.

I have argued it should, then the necessity flagged by this "must" needs to be transcendental too. That is, the necessity of there being substance needs not only be known a priori, but also to be in the service of the possibility of representation of reality.

There can be little scope for doubt here. In effect, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein is clear that objects, which are known a priori, must form the substance of the world, since otherwise it would be impossible to picture the world (truly or falsely). Further, in a conspicuous number of other remarks, pre-Tractarian and post-Tractarian, Wittgenstein confirms that the necessity of there being objects serves the *possibility* of linguistic representation of the world (whether truly or falsely). As he writes in his Notebooks:

> [I]n order for a statement to be possible at all, in order for a proposition to be CAPABLE of making SENSE, the world *must* already have just the logical structure that it has. The logic of the world is prior to all truth and falsehood. (NB, 18.10.14; my italics)

And again, retrospectively, in both *Philosophical Remarks* and the *Blue Book*:

> What I once called 'objects', simples, were simply what I could refer to without running the risk of their possible non-existence, i.e. […] what we can speak about *no matter what may be the case.* (PR, § 36)

> Supposing we asked: 'How can one imagine what does not exist?' The answer seems to be: 'If we do, we imagine non-existent combinations of existing elements'. (BB, p. 31)

In all these passages, Wittgenstein is clarifying that Tractarian objects, the a priori substance of the world, serve the possibility of (true or false) representation of reality. Without them, we could not make to ourselves pictures of facts (whether actual or possible ones). Yet if so, the necessity of there being objects (= substance) is *transcendental* necessity.

It may perhaps be objected that, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes that "there is only *logical* necessity" (T, 6.37; his emphasis). But really, that is no objection to our view. For as we have seen, Wittgenstein also writes that "Logic is transcendental" (T, 6.13).[254] Hence, the logical necessity of there being objects, on which Wittgenstein's argument for substance trades, *must* be transcendental necessity for him. We thus have a countercheck that Wittgenstein's argument for substance is a transcendental argument.

1.43ᵥ *The analytic interpretation of Wittgenstein's argument for substance*

Now, one might grant this much, and still wonder *how* exactly the transcendental necessity of there being substance is to be recognized for Wittgenstein. The first answer that comes to mind

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[254] In Chapter 2ᵥ, I will return at length on this all-important remark by Wittgenstein.

is: just analytically, or on the grounds of *mere* propositional analysis. In effect, right before presenting his transcendental argument for objects or substance, Wittgenstein introduces propositional analysis thus:

> 2.0201   Every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement about their constituents and into the propositions that describe the complexes completely.

In a way, this is to be expected. As we have seen, simple objects are the putative end of a process of linguistic analysis. The analysis dissects "complex" propositions, which are about "complexes" (e.g. facts), into simpler propositions, which are about the constituents of these complexes. The dissection proceeds by way of *definitions*.[255] Following this analytic route, we are supposed to reach the elementary propositions, as concatenations of names that represent concatenations of *objects*.

It may thus seem that by means of *mere* linguistic analysis, or equivalently on the grounds of conceptual analysis *alone*, the argument may reach the necessity of there being simple objects. Tellingly, at one point, Wittgenstein himself was tempted by this train of thought. As he writes in his *Notebooks*:

> It seems that the idea of the SIMPLE is already contained in that of the complex and in the idea of analysis, and in such a way that we come to this idea quite apart from any examples of simple objects, or of propositions which mention them, and we *realise the existence* of the simple object— a priori—as a logical necessity. (NB, 14.6.15; my emphasis)

However, this merely analytic option is a non-starter. It took Wittgenstein only three days to see this. As he writes:

> *Is it*, A PRIORI, *clear that in analysing we must arrive at simple components—is this, e.g., involved in the concept of analysis—*, or is analysis *ad infinitum* possible? —Or is there in the end even a third possibility? […] [N]othing seems to speak against infinite divisibility. (NB, 17.6.15)

Here, Wittgenstein is countenancing the skeptical scenario that linguistic analysis should proceed *ad infinitum*, without ever reaching simple names that stand for simple objects. And he sees that, as long as we take our grounds for "realising" the existence of simple objects to be *merely* analytic, then we can't take ourselves to *know* the existence of *simple* objects at all. For "nothing seems to speak against infinite divisibility".

It's easy to see this from another angle. If we could "realise" the existence of simple objects by means of mere analysis, and so by definitions, then "Tractarian objects form the substance

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[255] NB 9.5.15 and T, 3.261.

of the world" would be a tautology by Wittgenstein's lights, since for Wittgenstein, as opposed to Kant, all analytic propositions are tautological (T, 6.11). Put otherwise, if Wittgenstein's argument for substance were grounded on mere logical analysis, then "Tractarian objects form the substance of the world" would be a triviality on par with "all bachelors are unmarried men". Yet it clearly isn't.[256]

A clarification is necessary at this point. I do not wish to deny that logical analysis plays *a role* in Wittgenstein's transcendental argument for substance, or for that matter in his transcendental philosophy more generally. In a way, the formal endpoint of analysis—namely simple names that, in the context of the elementary propositions, stand for simple objects—might itself be regarded as a *necessary precondition* of representation of reality. For, according to Wittgenstein, there *must* be elementary propositions whose names stand for simple objects, if we are to represent the world at all (cf. T, 6.124).

However, all I have argued here is that the necessity flagged by this "must", while logical, cannot be *merely* logical, i.e. a necessity that concerns our thought *alone*, and that we may know by analysis of thought *alone*, independently of reality. For we can't arrive at the *existence* of anything out of *mere* propositional analysis, let alone recognize the necessity of this existence. And if so, *something more* than mere conceptual analysis is needed to recognize the transcendental necessity of there being simple objects.

1.44$_W$ *A more Kantian approach*

At this point, one may wonder what this "something more", that is needed to recognize the necessity of there being substance, is supposed to be. Kant would have said *the possibility of experience*, for "in transcendental [proof] the guideline is possible experience" (A782-3/B810-11). Given that the merely analytic approach to Wittgenstein's transcendental argument for substance has failed, it is worth trying out something along these lines—something more Kantian.

This move makes even more sense, considering that significant similarities between Kant and Wittgenstein's respective notions of "substance" have already been noted. Specifically, Ian Proops has convincingly argued that "Tractarian substance is the *modal* analogue of Kant's

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[256] In later Chapters, we will see that, for Wittgenstein, "objects form the substance of the world" would be a *nonsensical* [*unsinnig*] pseudo-proposition, which he keeps distinguished from *senseless* [*sinnlos*] tautologies. (Tautologies are part of the *symbolism*, nonsense isn't.)

(temporal) notion".[257] As we have seen in 1_K, Kant's substance endures or subsists, insofar as it exists at all times; Wittgenstein's substance endures or subsists—Proops argues—insofar as it exists at all (logically[258]) possible worlds. Further, we saw that Kant's substance endures or subsists through all existence-changes, underlying all coming and ceasing to exist of appearances over time;[259] Wittgenstein's substance—Proops argues—endures or subsists through all existence-changes too, underlying all the figurative coming and ceasing to exist of *situations* over a space of (logically) possible worlds, namely logical space.[260]

But what does this have to do with possible experience? Well, experience is (a form of) representation of empirical reality. And Kant's transcendental argument proceeds by showing that representation of empirical reality would be impossible, if there were no *temporal* substance (something that exists at all times, underlying change of appearances over time). By analogy Wittgenstein's transcendental argument should proceed by showing that representation of empirical reality would be impossible, if there were no *modal* substance (something that exists at all logically possible worlds, underlying change of situations over logical space).

Still, how would similar transcendental arguments, which are not to be grounded upon *mere* analysis, but rather on possible experience, *exactly* work? Inspired by Kant and Mark Sacks, in 1_K I have discussed a *perspectival* interpretation of transcendental argumentation. The idea was roughly that, to enforce the crucial step of a transcendental argument—the one from the conditioned (e.g. experience) to its necessary condition (e.g. substance)—we may consciously entertain a representation from our point of view, namely a perspectival representation. For example, we may self-consciously produce a possible representation of empirical reality, to see for ourselves what its necessary conditions are. The ground of proof, at that point, would be possible experience, and *not* mere analysis.

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[257] Proops (2004, p. 106). The similarity is deeper than Proops realizes, since, for Kant, substance is what exists at all *possible* times.

[258] I add the parenthetical "logically", which is not in Proops' discussion, since our discussion so far leaves open Wittgenstein's point is (also) a metaphysical one.

[259] In a way, that is true of Aristotle's notion of substance too, as Aristotle maintains that substances underlie qualitative change over time (from hot to cold, from dark to pale, etc.) while themselves remaining numerically one and the same throughout these changes (see Aristotle's *Categories*, 4a10 and 4a22). Still, there are important differences between Kant and Aristotle's respective notions of substance. For one, Aristotle identified substances with (mind-independent) individuals, such as Socrates or a horse (ibid., 2a11). But for Kant, Socrates or a horse would themselves count as appearances, which may be subject to existence change (Socrates may go out of existence etc.), and which therefore must be underlied by substance. Besides, in discussing substance Aristotle was concerned with the structure of the world "as it is in itself", completely independently of us. But even granting for the sake of the argument there is such a mind-independent world, and that it has such a mind-independent structure, it is doubtful we could ever know it *a priori*. Kant, and more in general the transcendental philosopher, will instead be concerned with substance as a condition of the possibility of representation of the empirical world, which, insofar as it can be known "from within", could arguably be known *a priori*.

[260] Cf. Morris (2017, p. 3).

In what follows, I will try to interpret Wittgenstein's transcendental argument perspectivally, and see where this leads us. As anticipated above, I will start from the compressed version of the argument, in order to circle back to Wittgenstein's *reductio ad absurdum*.

1.45ᴡ *The perspectival interpretation of Wittgenstein's argument for substance*

The key step of a transcendental argument is the one from the conditioned to its necessary condition. In Wittgenstein's argument for substance, the conditioned is our capacity to picture reality, which is mentioned in {*p**} ("we make to ourselves pictures of facts"), whereas its necessary condition is substance, which is mentioned in {*q**} ("objects must form the substance of the world"). In a perspectival interpretation, all we need to put the argument in motion, regressing from the conditioned to its necessary condition, is a perspectival representation issuing from our attempt to come to terms with {*p**}. Hence, *we* are to make to *ourselves* a picture of a possible fact—one that figuratively comes to be the case, or ceases to be the case, in logical space. And doing so, we are to recognize that, *in order to do so*, there must be objects shared across all thinkable or logically possible world, i.e. Tractarian substance.

Before proceeding, let me spend a word on the textual legitimacy of this strategy. It is Wittgenstein himself who appeals to our point of view, by writing that "*We* make to *ourselves* pictures of facts" {*p**}. Indeed, he stresses that any picture is essentially perspectival, insofar as it represents what it does from a *standpoint* [*Standpunkt*] (T, 2.173). Ultimately, that must be the point of view of the Subject, who makes to himself pictures of facts.[261] And if so, we won't do violence to Wittgenstein's text in applying to it the perspectival strategy outlined above, in order to work our way through his argument for substance. Let us try to do so, then, by making to ourselves a picture of a fact.

King's College is in Cambridge. *That* King's College is in Cambridge is a fact. Imagine now *that* King's college were on fire.[262] This is a picture of a possible fact (for surely King's College could take fire). Now, let us dwell for a moment in this picture. If King's College were to take fire completely and burn to ashes, then, materially speaking, there would be no King's College in Cambridge anymore. We may imagine that too. That is, we may imagine that there is *no* King's College (as a consequence of the tragic fire that devoured it etc.). But how could we picture the

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[261] The standpoint of each picture is the "form of representation", that Wittgenstein generally characterizes as the logical form that is common to representation and world. But since for Wittgenstein (I am shown) the world is *my* world (T, 5.62)—the world *I* represent in language—the standpoint of any picture or representation can only be the standpoint of the Subject. This, however, does not yet imply a version of solipsism in my view (I shall return at length on this point in Chapter 3ᴡ).

[262] Cf. BB, p. 31.

non-existence of King's College—picture, that is, something that is *not*?

Surely, we could not think of nothing at all (or so Wittgenstein maintained).[263] The proposition or picture "There is no King's College in Cambridge" can be no exception to this rule. If so, it looks like *there must be something we think about*, if we are to entertain the picture of a giant fire reducing King's College to ashes (cf. BB, p. 31), or for that matter any other picture involving an imagined coming or ceasing to exist of possible states of the world. This something, whatever it is, is *objects* according to Wittgenstein: the substance of the world. Thus, through a perspectival representation, the move from {*p**} to {*q**} may come into force.

To be clear, I am *not* here claiming that *King's College* is a Tractarian object. As we have seen, Wittgenstein never give examples of objects (and from the little he writes, it is likely that he would not have regarded King's College as one anyway, given its complexity). Rather, I have just used King's College for illustrative purposes, to show that, *for Wittgenstein*, if we are to imagine the non-existence of certain facts, there must be something we think *about*. And that something, *whatever it is*, is objects. The perspectival representation of King's College being on fire was just an instrumental aid to imagination, if you like.

Indeed, you may swap King's College with whatever you like, and produce whatever (perspectival) representation you please. For if Wittgenstein's argument is to proceed *a priori*, then *any* (perspectival) representation of a change *in* logical space will have to do, in order to recognize substance as a necessary feature of reality. Wittgenstein's point is that we can *never* succeed in imagining the non-being of objects—*whatever they may turn out to be* and *whatever facts they may materially figure in.*

If I am right, then, Wittgenstein's argument for substance may proceed on the grounds of any perspectival representation, aimed at making us realize that the non-existence of *objects* cannot possibly be imagined. Not, however, because our imagination is limited, but rather since, if objects were destroyed (along with e.g. King's College), and if their combinatorial possibilities were therewith destroyed, then we could not represent any possible situation in the first place. For there would be *nothing* to be pictured. And that is *absurd* for Wittgenstein, given that we *do* make to ourselves pictures of possible facts.

In fact, for Wittgenstein, we may go as far as imagining the *material* departure of all objects, i.e. of all the facts in which objects *actually* combine. But we cannot on that account imagine the formal departure of all objects—the departure, that is, of the substance of the world. For we

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[263] Indeed, for Wittgenstein, *all* propositions are pictures *of reality*, and *all* pictures represent that *things* stand thus-and-so. (Notice that, at 3.221, Wittgenstein writes that one can speak *about* objects, since propositions can say *how* things are, i.e. describe them as being a certain way).

should then have to imagine the departure of logical space itself, and with it the departure of the possibility of representing the world. We should have to represent the impossibility of representation—which is patently *absurd*. That's why Wittgenstein writes: "Each thing is, as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs. This space I can imagine empty, but I cannot imagine the thing without the space" (T, 2.013[264]).

1.46_W *Wittgenstein's reductio*

We can now circle back to Wittgenstein's *reductio ad absurdum* at 2.0211-2, that we have set aside up until now:

2.0211   If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense
           would depend on whether another proposition was true. $\{\ulcorner q^* \to r^*\}$

2.0212   It would then be impossible to form a picture of the world (true or
           false). $\{r^* \to \ulcorner \Diamond p^*\}$.

A *reductio ad absurdum* consists in a hypothetical or "what-if" supposition, which leads to absurd consequences. Remark 2.0211 invites us to *try* to imagine for ourselves: What if the world had no substance? Then, Wittgenstein says, "whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true", and this would make it impossible to picture the world (the absurd consequence). I suggest that, to work our way through this *reductio*, it could be helpful to interpret it perspectivally, for example through the perspectival representations above.

   Imagine yourself in Cambridge. Looking at a giant pile of ashes (which is the residue of King's College tragic fire) you say: "King's College is in Cambridge". The proposition would be false (since, materially speaking, there would be no King's College in Cambridge anymore); yet it surely would *not* be nonsense (passers-by could understand it, and perhaps point out that it is false). Now, if there were no substance of the world—no objects constituting the shared form of all thinkable worlds, including the world we are now imagining—then how could that proposition *make sense*? Indeed, how could it be a false *picture* of that imagined world? Not by sharing any form with that world, for we are under the assumption that there is no such shared form (= substance) in the first place.

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[264] Notice that the only comment to 2.013 begins with the words "A spatial object must be situated in infinite space" (T, 2.0131). Arguably, King's college is a "spatial object". The question of whether objects like King's College are in some sense or the other "simple objects" does not interest me *here*. In Chapter 2_W, I will return in much more detail on the intricate issues that concern space and spatial objects in Wittgenstein, and their relationship with logical space and "simple objects" (in the technical sense).

It would then seem that some *other proposition* should have to be *true* of that imagined world, if the original proposition—"King's College is in Cambridge"—is to make sense. Perhaps, the proposition "King's College exists", the truth of which would ensure that the sign "King's College" in the formulation "King's College is in Cambridge" refers (so that the formulation is not nonsense).[265] Or else the Russellian general proposition "$(\exists x, y, R)\ xRy$",[266] the truth of which would ensure that one could understand "King's College is in Cambridge" as long as, say, there is a Corpus Christi College in Cambridge (or at any rate, as long as something has some relation to something else).[267]

Leaving aside the many difficulties involved with these (alleged) "other propositions",[268] we should note that the following difficulty arises *whatever* the "other proposition" Wittgenstein might have had in mind: *How, if at all, could it be true?* According to Wittgenstein's "picture theory" of representation, if a proposition is to aspire at truth, it must be a picture of reality—it should have to make *sense*. But how could our "other proposition" make sense, if there were no substance of the world?

Under the hypothesis we are examining, the sense of this "other proposition" should itself be based on the truth of *yet another* proposition, opening a *diallelus* or a regressive circularity of

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[265] As noted by Zalabardo (2015, p. 143) and Morris (2008, p. 358; cf. pp. 355-6), in a standard construal of Wittgenstein's "argument for substance", the "other proposition" Wittgenstein has in mind at 2.0211, whose truth is required for the original proposition to make sense, asserts the existence of the referents of the names of the original proposition itself (or at any rate the existence of the complex the original proposition is about). Both Zalabardo and Morris are critics of this standard construal. It is however suggestive that Frege was concerned with this sort of "other proposition" in his 'On Sense and Reference'. As Frege writes: "That the name 'Kepler' designates something is […] a presupposition for the assertion 'Kepler died in misery'" (Frege, 1984, p. 168). In Frege's example, the reference of some signs in a given sentence—such as the sign 'Kepler' in the sentence "Kepler died in misery"—would itself seem to depend on the *truth* of some other sentence asserting the existence of the referent, such as the sentence "there was someone who discovered the elliptic form of planetary orbits", that someone being Kepler (Frege, 1984, p. 169). (Notably, Frege goes on to say that the dependence of the reference of a name upon the truth of a sentence is a fault of ordinary languages, which could be avoided by a logically perfect language, in which any proper name had reference.)

[266] See Russell (1984, p. 130). According to Russell, generalized propositions such as "$(\exists x, y, R)\ xRy$" ("something has some relation to something else") symbolize logical forms with which we can be "logically acquainted" independently of our acquaintance with particulars, and the truth of which is "self-evident", since if they were not true we could not understand particular propositions at all. However, David Pears (2006, pp. 13-14) notes that it is hard to know a Russellian form without knowing particular propositions that instantiate that form. Thus, for example, it is hard to know that something has some relation to something else, without thereby knowing that *something* (say, *a*) has some relation to *something else* (say, *b*). If so, the truth of the general proposition "$(\exists x, y, R)\ xRy$" would itself depend on the truth of the particular proposition (e.g. "*a* is related in this way to *b*"), which however, in order to be understood, would itself depend upon the truth of "$(\exists x, y, R)\ xRy$", and so on and so forth in a never ending circle. This kind of circularity or *diallelus* will play an important role below.

[267] There are passages in the *Notes dictated to Moore* and in the *Notebooks* that suggests that Wittgenstein might have had Russellian general propositions in his scope in talking of "another proposition" at 2.0211 of his "argument for substance" (notably, NdM, p. 116 and NB, 21.10.14). Zalabardo's recent interpretation of Wittgenstein's argument is arguably inspired by these passages (cf. Zalabardo 2015, pp. 181-184; cf. pp 142-146 and p. 42).

[268] For example, that something has some relation to something else seems contingent. Could we base the possibility of a proposition's sense (which belongs to logic) onto a contingency?

dependencies between senses and truths that would forever prevent the original proposition ("King's College is in Cambridge") to touch reality and be a picture of it.[269] Yet "King's College is in Cambridge" surely is a picture of reality (whether a true or false one). And so, the hypothesis under examination ("the world has no substance") must ultimately be recognized as absurd for Wittgenstein: it collapses under its own weight. This reinforces the transcendental conclusion of Wittgenstein's argument, by which there must be substance, if we are to picture the world.

1.47w *Towards the Central Question*

Let us take stock. I have argued that Wittgenstein's argument for substance is a transcendental argument, insofar as it respects the schema of transcendental argumentation. The question then became how exactly to interpret the argument. I have argued that a merely analytical interpretation cannot work.[270] I have thus proposed a "more Kantian" strategy to interpret Wittgenstein's transcendental argument, namely the perspectival one. According to it, the ground of proof is not analysis, but rather a possible experience, consciously entertained by the Subject (perspectival representation).

But *how* Kantian is this strategy? *In Kant*, the appeal to possible experience is also an appeal to his synthetic a priori judgements, and thereby to his transcendental idealism. We have seen this much at the end of Chapter 1k. But now, if the ground of proof of Wittgenstein's transcendental argument for substance is possible experience, under the guise of a perspectival representation of empirical reality (here, a picture), it may seem that Wittgenstein must commit to Transcendental Idealism too. For how could Wittgenstein recognize the necessary form of *empirical reality* (= substance) starting from our *representations* of it, if not by taking it that our mind/language gives form to empirical reality in the first place?

The Central Question of this work is thus knocking at our door ever more loudly. Indeed, "Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist?". It will be the task of the remaining Chapters of Partw to provide a satisfying answer.

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[269] This, I believe, is the kind of circularity David Bell alludes to in his cursory references to Wittgenstein's "argument for substance" in some of his works (e.g Bell 1979, p. 134 and Bell 1987, p. 226). The circularity has also been noted by Gargani (2000, p. 16).

[270] Indeed, by Wittgenstein's own pronouncements at the end of the *Tractatus*, {*p**} or "we make to ourselves pictures of facts" is a *nonsensical* pseudo-proposition, which, as such, cannot stand in *logical* relations with… well, other nonsense, given that the remaining remarks of Wittgenstein's substance passage are nonsensical pseudo-propositions too. If so, any merely analytic construal of Wittgenstein's argument is destined to failure. A perspectival construal, however, circumvents this predicament, since one may at least *attempt* to understand a pseudo-proposition (such as "we make to ourselves pictures of facts"), and in so doing he may end up producing perfectly fine representations, i.e. *making* pictures of facts *to himself*, such as the picture that King's College is on fire etc. These pictures may ineffably *exemplify* our ability to picture reality.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have argued that, like Kant, the early Wittgenstein respects requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) to be transcendental philosopher, given that his investigations start from our representations of empirical reality ("from within"), and recognize *objects* as necessary conditions of their possibility, which are known a priori. Thereby, I have argued, the early Wittgenstein is transcendental philosopher (α).

To further substantiate this claim, I have shown that Wittgenstein's Tractarian argument for substance is a transcendental argument. I have offered a perspectival interpretation of Wittgenstein's argument for substance, which is arguably superior to the merely analytical interpretation. However, my interpretation raised the issue of whether the early Wittgenstein is also a transcendental idealist, beyond being a transcendental philosopher.

In the rest of Part_W, I will thus investigate *whether* the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental idealist of any kind. Specifically, in Chapter 2_W, I will start by examining the question of whether the early Wittgenstein could, like Kant, be an *effable* transcendental idealist.

2_K   Effable Transcendental Idealism

Before Kant we were in [space and] time; now [space and] time [are] in us.

– Schopenhauer

AIM: Expounding Effable Transcendental Idealism, and its necessary requirements, by means of an examination of the requirements of Kant's transcendental idealism.

Introduction

In Chapter 1_K, I have identified two necessary and sufficient requirements to be a transcendental philosopher. At the end of the Chapter, however, the question was raised as to whether these two requirements enforce commitment to Transcendental Idealism (of any kind).

It is now time to analyse in more depth Transcendental Idealism, by conceptually distinguishing it from Transcendentalism. Indeed, for the transcendental idealist, there are necessary features of empirical reality and its representation (*transcendental features*), which we know a priori to *depend* upon our point of view—something that not any transcendental philosopher must claim, given our general characterization of Transcendentalism.

However, just like knowledge in general, a priori knowledge may come into two general kinds. It may be effable (propositional) or ineffable (non-propositional) a priori knowledge. Depending on the kind of a priori knowledge at stake, then, there will then be two different variants of Transcendental Idealism, which need to be analysed—Effable Transcendental Idealism and Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

In this Chapter, I will focus on *Effable* Transcendental Idealism, and its necessary requirements. I will analyse the requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism by means of an examination of the doctrine advanced by Kant, who is the paradigmatic effable transcendental idealist. My discussion is in eight sections, plus a Coda. Specifically, in

§ 2.1_K   I distinguish between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism. More generally, I distinguish between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Metaphysics, whether it be realistic or idealistic. I argue that this general distinction would hold even if a transcendental philosopher were to recognize

transcendental features shared by empirical *reality* and its representation, thereby engaging in Transcendental *Ontology*.

§ 2.2$_K$ I distinguish the two variants of Transcendental Idealism, identifying their respective claims. I then focus on Effable Transcendental Idealism, and its claim that (TI$_{eff}$) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view.

§ 2.3$_K$ I argue that Kant subscribes to a species of claim (TI$_{eff}$), by which we know a priori the truth of the proposition that *space and time depend upon our point of view* (S&T$_{IDEAL}$).

§ 2.4$_K$ I argue that a necessary condition of a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition that (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is being able to coherently entertain it.

§ 2.5$_K$ I argue that a necessary condition of the coherent entertainment of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is thinking (non-spatiotemporal) things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing (spatiotemporal) appearances.

§ 2.6$_K$ I argue that a necessary condition of the distinction between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances is a distinction between merely logical and real possibility.

§ 2.7$_K$ I argue that a necessary condition of the distinction between merely logical and real possibility is a distinction between general logic and transcendental logic (Kant's transcendental logic being a species of Transcendental Logic).

§ 2.8$_K$ I argue that this regressive chain of requirements of Kant's effable transcendental idealism is captured by a final one, namely countenancing a merely logical non-empirical perspective.

Coda   I argue that Effable Transcendental Idealism in general, and Kant's transcendental idealism in particular, are *coherent*, defending them from charges of nonsensicality advanced by A. W. Moore.

One word more before we begin. It is not to be excluded that we could have propositional a priori knowledge of the mind-dependence of transcendental features other than space and time. And if so, it may be objected that, even if I am right in regarding the requirements above as

those of *Kant's* effable transcendental idealism, they will not be indicative of the requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism *in general*. This objection, however, does not consider the possibility that we might still arrive at *general* requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism by suitably *generalizing* the requirements of Kant's position, in such a way that they would not apply to Kant's position alone, nor depend upon the *peculiarities* of his machinery.

In the Coda of this Chapter, I will try to make good on this possibility, distilling from Kant's position a general version of the requirements listed above, which is not "restricted" to space and time (nor for that matter to the details of the philosophical vision Kant builds around them). And I will then argue that these requirements, which I take to be definitive of Effable Transcendental Idealism in general, and which in any case are instantiated by Kant's idealism, articulate a *coherent* metaphysical project.

2.1$_K$ *Transcendental Ontology*

In this section, I distinguish between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism. For example, I argue that some transcendental arguments may be aimed at recognition of transcendental features, without being idealist arguments. More generally, after distinguishing between Ontology and Metaphysics, I argue that a transcendental philosopher may recognize transcendental features without having to commit over their metaphysical status, whether that be "ideal" or "real". If so, a transcendental philosopher *may* engage in Transcendental Ontology, without necessarily engaging in Transcendental Metaphysics.

2.11$_K$ *The distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism*

Transcendentalism, we said in Chapter 1$_K$, is every philosophical outlook that (*i*) starting from our representations of empirical reality and or/the cognitive capacities involved in them (i.e. "from within"), aims at (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of their possibility, which are known a priori. Our question is now: Does Transcendentalism enforce commitment to Transcendental Idealism?

The answer is "No". As I understand it, Transcendental Idealism is the metaphysical doctrine by which we know a priori the *dependence* of necessary features of empirical reality and its representation upon our point of view. This definition shows that requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) of Transcendentalism are necessary but *not* sufficient for Transcendental Idealism. For the latter, a

metaphysical commitment is also needed, to the effect that at least some transcendental conditions[271] *depend* upon our point of view (or are "ideal" in metaphysical status). Hence, Transcendentalism should be conceptually distinguished from Transcendental Idealism.

In effect, it is possible that, starting from our point of view ("from within"), we should recognize transcendental conditions of cognition, as required by Transcendentalism, without thereby knowing a priori that they are *mind-dependent* ("ideal") features of empirical reality, as required by Transcendental Idealism.[272] For it does *not* analytically follow from the general concept of <transcendental conditions> that they must also be "ideal" features of empirical reality, "imposed" onto it by us. But if so, Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism must indeed be kept conceptually distinguished.

This distinction is the linchpin of the present work. Importantly, we do *not* find in Kant. In fact, *Kant's* turn to (his) transcendentalism is already a turn to (his) transcendental idealism. Or better, *for Kant*, the two turns are one and the same, and go under the name of "Copernican turn", whereby we should "assum[e] that the objects must conform to [the conditions of] our cognition" (Bxvi). As a result, major Kant scholars have equated the two turns too, arguing that taking the transcendental turn means committing to the view that "empirical facts […] are in fact the result of an order imposed by a human framework" (Sacks),[273] or that "to take the transcendental turn is […] to accept that the Copernican revolution announced in the Preface of the *Critique of Pure Reason*" (Gardner).[274]

As is clear by our discussion, however, taking the transcendental turn by respecting requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) does *not* imply in the least a commitment to Kant's (or anyone's) Copernican turn, and so to Transcendental Idealism (whether Kant's or anyone's). Put otherwise, Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism are *not* one and the same, and so there may well be transcendental philosophers that are not, on that account, transcendental idealists (in the way Kant was, or in any way at all).

I don't make any claim to novelty in distinguishing between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism. Some variants of the distinction have been recognized by other authors. For example, Peter Strawson famously disentangled transcendental argumentation

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[271] Such transcendental conditions are better called "transcendental features", since they are not only necessary conditions of our cognition, but also necessary features of *empirical reality*. Below I will introduce the notion of transcendental features. However, I will argue that not all transcendental features need to be "ideal" in metaphysical status.

[272] Arguably, even Kant recognizes in "things in themselves" a necessary condition of cognition, the *nature and status* of which is however problematic, i.e. *not knowable*, and a fortiori not knowable as either "ideal" or "real" (cf. A256/B312 and A287-9/B343-5). I will argue for this point in the final Chapter 7.

[273] Sacks (2006b, p. 94, including fn. 3).

[274] Gardner (2015, p. 1).

from Transcendental Idealism.[275] More recently, Karl Ameriks has urged that "the [transcendental] turn's definitive claim, which is that there are immanently determinable necessary structures of our experience and its objects[,] is by itself a *nonmetaphysical* point […] and it therefore hardly seems identical with transcendental idealism's definitive metaphysical claim".[276]

Strawson's and Ameriks' views testify that there is *a* distinction to be made between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism. *Which* distinction may be a matter of debate, but being my distinction based on the general requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), which we have analysed in depth in Chapter 1ₖ, I will henceforth work with it. Indeed, in the remainder of Partₖ, I will clarify that and how my distinction may be a powerful tool for understanding *both* Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism. This work of clarification begins now, as I discuss non-idealist transcendental arguments.

2.111ₖ *Transcendental Arguments without Transcendental Idealism*

That Transcendentalism may be distinguished from Transcendental Idealism means, first of all, that one may argue transcendentally without having to take on board the metaphysical lumber that comes with arguing idealistically. But can a transcendental philosopher achieve what Kant achieved, by means of non-idealist transcendental arguments?

In effect, with *his* transcendental arguments, Kant claimed to be able to recognize *necessary features* of empirical *reality*, by recognizing *necessary features* of our *representation* of empirical reality. Indeed, on Kant's view, we may cross this "bridge of necessity" thanks to his transcendental idealism, whereby the necessary form of cognition *is* the necessary form of empirical reality, *because* the Subject has imposed the form of its cognitive scheme (e.g. the concept <substance>) onto the matter of empirical reality in synthetic a priori judgements

Put otherwise, for Kant, crossing "the bridge of necessity" requires an *isomorphism* (sameness

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[275] See Strawson (1959 and 1966).

[276] Ameriks (2015, p. 36; my emphasis). I take it that by "immanently determinable necessary structures of our experience and its objects" Ameriks *roughly* has in mind what I mean by saying "necessary conditions of the possibility of our cognition, that are recognizable from within". If so, Ameriks is here rehearsing a version of our point above, namely that, in starting "from within", we may recognize necessary conditions of our cognition (and *a priori* at that), without committing to their metaphysical status, and *a fortiori* to Transcendental Idealism. I stress *roughly*, however, since the claim that *objects* share the necessary form of our experience, while not *by itself* a metaphysical one, is not yet contained in the claim that there are necessary conditions of the possibility of our experience, which is the transcendental claim *proper*. Hence, Ameriks' account of transcendental claims is not as precise as one may wish. Besides, my formulation is arguably more general than Ameriks', insofar as the term "cognition" does not suggest that the investigations of a transcendental philosopher need to concern the necessary conditions of the possibility of experience, as (partially) opposed to those of thought or language in general.

of form) between representation and empirical reality *and* that the isomorphism be secured by his transcendental idealism. However, Kant's transcendental idealism also turns empirical reality into a world of *appearances* which formally *depend* upon the point of view of the human Subject—a metaphysical price that not everyone would be willing to pay.[277]

Our question thereby becomes: Can a transcendental philosopher, starting from our representation and its necessary features, attain insight into the necessary features of empirical *reality*, without paying the metaphysical price of Transcendental Idealism?

2.112ₖ *Transcendental Isomorphism*

I do think a transcendental philosopher can achieve this, at least in theory. What's more, I think he can achieve this by retaining a fundamentally Kantian insight, without having to commit to Transcendental Idealism *in any form*. The insight is that representation and empirical reality are *isomorphic*: they share the same form. Of course, the idea of an isomorphism between representation and empirical reality has a long and venerable history—a history that does not begin with Kant.[278] However, the isomorphism a transcendental philosopher *may* commit to must have some Kantian ring to it. The *shared form* of representation and empirical reality must consist of the necessary conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality, which are known a priori. I will call this transcendental isomorphism.

Now, it seems to me that commitment to a transcendental isomorphism does not *by itself* enforce commitment to Transcendental Idealism, by which the necessary form of empirical reality is *dependent* upon the necessary form of our representation, as if the latter had some sort of metaphysical priority over the former. For one, it be the other way around, namely that the transcendental isomorphism is "imposed" by reality upon our point of view, in such a way that reality has metaphysical priority. Besides, as hinted at by John McDowell,[279] it may well be that the (necessary) form of representation *is* the (necessary) form of reality, but that even so there is *no priority*—at any rate, no knowable priority[280]—between representation and reality.

If so, a philosopher may recognize a transcendental isomorphism without having to commit

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[277] Cf. Stroud (1994, p. 235).

[278] For example, in Thomas Aquinas' view, there are "sensible forms" shared by reality and our experience of it (cf. Pereboom 1988, p. 323). Aquinas' view is reminiscent of Aristotle's one (O'Grady, 2014, p. 195).

[279] (1996, p. 28). In a condensed footnote (1996, p. 28, fn. 5), McDowell links his point to the early Wittgenstein who, as I argue in 2_W, commits to a transcendental isomorphism residing in his Tractarian objects, "the a priori order […] common to both world and thought" (PI, § 97).

[280] Wittgenstein, I believe, would go as far as saying "*conceivable* priority". However, I will leave the discussion of this complex issue to Part_W.

to Transcendental Idealism. Indeed, in so doing, he could advance *ambitious* transcendental arguments, aimed at recognition of necessary features of empirical *reality*, that do not commit him to *any* metaphysical position. For if the necessary features of representations *are* the necessary features of empirical reality, then, knowing a priori the "former" would already amount to knowing a priori the "latter", with no need for a metaphysical view mandating priority of mind over world, or of world over mind.[281]

2.12ₖ *Transcendental Ontology and Transcendental Metaphysics*

Transcendental Philosophy arises out of a concern for the *possibility* of Metaphysics (see Introduction). However, as testified by its distinction from Transcendental Idealism, Transcendental Philosophy is *not necessarily* metaphysical. Indeed, our discussion has alerted us to the possibility that, following the method prescribed by requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) of Transcendentalism, we *could* recognize necessary features of both representation and empirical *reality*, without thereby committing to their metaphysical nature and status. But insofar as transcendental philosophers may recognize necessary features of empirical *reality* without committing to any metaphysical position, then it is arguable that Transcendental Philosophy *could* [282] at the same time be Transcendental Ontology, without thereby necessarily being Transcendental Metaphysics.

To see this, we need to settle some terminological matters. By Ontology, I understand a philosophical investigation of the necessary features of reality.[283] Significantly, this definition

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[281] I use scare quotes since, in the end, all talk of necessary features of our representations, as distinguishable from those of empirical reality, will have to drop out here. For if the necessary features of our representations are the necessary features of empirical reality, and if there is now way to recognize any priority between representations and reality, then nothing would count as a "bridge" of necessity to be "crossed" (cf. McDowell 2006, p. 20).

[282] I stress "could" since I do not regard engagement in Transcendental Ontology as a *requirement* to be a transcendental philosopher. (The later Strawson may be a transcendental philosopher without being a transcendental ontologist). Still, as I argue below, the notion of Transcendental Ontology may be derived by reflection upon the notion of Ontology *and* requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) to be a transcendental philosopher.

[283] Very often, instead of necessary features of reality, philosophers talk of the "most general" or the "most fundamental" features of reality—those that "carve up reality at its joints" (see Lowe, 2002, p. 14; Rosenkrantz, 2011, p. 84; Puntel, 2002, p. 110). But it is then recognized, at least by some, that such features are not only the most fundamental features of "everything there is" (for if they were, ontology would arguably be reducible to empirical science), but indeed the most fundamental features of "everything there could be" (see Rosenkrantz, 2011, p. 84; my emphasis; cf. Lowe 2002, p. 11 and p. 14). If so, ontological features are shared by *all possible worlds* (in *some* sense of "possible"). And at that point they would be *necessary* features. Admittedly, this *sounds* metaphysical. However, in some philosophical views, ontological features are at the same time *logical* ones, so that their necessity amounts to the *inconceivability* of a world without them. Put otherwise, in these views, ontological features are shared by every *conceivable* world, and so they are necessary to *conceive* of a world at all. In these views, the point is logical, not metaphysical. (This will become clear in our discussion of the early Wittgenstein in Partw).

allows us to conceptually distinguish Ontology from Metaphysics. That we may recognize and investigate necessary features of reality (Ontology) does not in fact mean that we must commit to the nature and status of those features too, and thereby to the nature and status of the reality they are features of (Metaphysics).[284] For example, one might in principle maintain that there *must* be objects, without speculating on whether objects are, say, mind-dependent appearances, as opposed to mind-independent "things in themselves".[285]

Now, Transcendental Ontology will be a philosophical investigation of the necessary features of empirical reality that (*i*) starts from our *representations* of empirical reality and (*ii*) their necessary features, which are known a priori. Clearly, it will be possible to investigate the necessary features of empirical reality thus, only if there is a transcendental isomorphism between representation and empirical reality—if, that is, representation and empirical reality *share* their necessary *features*, which are known a priori as conditions of the possibility of representation of empirical reality.[286] (The transcendental isomorphism may itself be recognized by transcendental argument).

Borrowing a label from Mark Sacks, but altering its meaning significantly, let us call transcendental features such shared necessary features.[287] Then, we might say that Transcendental Ontology busies itself with transcendental features, in which the transcendental isomorphism resides. However, this does not enforce a commitment to Transcendental Metaphysics, in which latter we should also determine the *source* of the transcendental isomorphism, and hence the nature and status of transcendental features.

More precisely, recognition of transcendental features, which are shared by representation

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[284] In contemporary philosophy, distinctions between ontology and metaphysics are advanced by Varzi (2011, p. 407) and Seibt (2000, esp. § 1). Significantly, Seibt argues that "ontological research can remain metaphysically neutral" (ibid., p. 275), since we can do ontology "without taking a stance within the realism-idealism debate" (ibid. p. 273). This will become important in the continuation.

[285] As Carnap writes, "the acceptance of a framework [of entities] must not be regarded as implying a metaphysical doctrine concerning […] the entities in question" (1950, p. 32).

[286] Arguably, however, an isomorphism of *some* kind must be recognized in *any* ontological investigation, which *must* begin, whether self-consciously *or not*, from our representations of reality, in order to recognize necessary features of reality. For example, if we ask how Aristotle could have come up with his own list of necessary features of reality—namely *his* 'categories'—then the answer can only be that he did by an investigation of our ways of thinking and talking about reality (Carr, 1987, p. 3). But Aristotle's ontology then presupposes that an investigation of the form of our thought/language will reveal the form of reality, and so, *a fortiori*, that our thought/language and reality are isomorphic. Indeed, as noted by Jorge Gracia, Aristotle explicitly acknowledges the isomorphism (Gracia, 2000, p. 340).

[287] Sacks writes in fact: "Transcendental features indicate the limitations on what, at a time, can be envisaged as possible, and to which alternatives cannot be made intelligible as long as they retain their transcendental status. But these features are rendered transcendental only by the empirical variety of language games currently available; they are relative to the way we are currently minded" (1997, p. 178). Clearly, Sacks definition of "transcendental feature" is incompatible with my *a prioristic* characterization of Transcendental Philosophy, and that is why, though I borrow Sacks' useful label, I have not borrowed the meaning he associates with it as well.

and empirical reality, does not imply a metaphysical view by which they are *primarily* features of our mind-dependent representations, which we "impose" onto empirical reality. That would be a form of Transcendental Idealism. Nor, for that matter, it implies a metaphysical view by which they are *primarily* features of a mind-independent empirical reality, which are "imposed" onto our representations. That would be a form of Realism *cum* Transcendentalism which, out of deference to Kant, we may call Transcendental Realism. But if we may recognize transcendental features without committing to either Transcendental Idealism or Transcendental Realism, then Transcendental Ontology may indeed be kept distinguished from Transcendental Metaphysics.

Borrowing another label from Sacks, but this time keeping its meaning intact, we might reach the same conclusion from a different angle, by distinguishing between transcendental features and transcendental constraints.[288] I understand by transcendental constraints either necessary features of our representation which can be known a priori to *constrain* the space of what can count as empirically real (leading to Transcendental Idealism), or vice versa necessary features of empirical reality which can be known a priori to *constrain* the space of what can count as a representation *of* empirical reality (leading to Transcendental Realism). By my definitions, all transcendental constraints are also transcendental features; however, not necessarily *all* transcendental features are (or can be known to be) transcendental constraints. Transcendental Metaphysics deals with transcendental constraints, which are by necessity metaphysical; Transcendental Ontology deals with transcendental features *in general*, irrespective of their metaphysical nature and status, *if any*.

Still, the distinction between Transcendental Ontology and Transcendental Metaphysics must not be taken as absolute. Put otherwise, although engagement in Transcendental Ontology does not *by itself* imply commitment to any form of Transcendental Metaphysics, the specific ontologies of *some* transcendental philosophers will entail such a commitment. Indeed, that is the case of transcendental idealists, which we shall now examine in more detail.

2.2ₖ *Effable Transcendental Idealism*

In this section, I distinguish between two variants of Transcendental Idealism, namely the effable and the ineffable variant. I then start to focus on Effable Transcendental Idealism.

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[288] Sacks: "a *transcendental constraint* indicates a dependence of empirical possibilities on a non-empirical structure, say, the structure of anything that can count as a mind" (1997, p. 178).

2.21_K *Two variants of Transcendental Idealism*

While not all transcendental ontologies engender commitment over the metaphysical nature and status of transcendental features, some do, hence engendering commitment to some form of Transcendental Metaphysics. The transcendental ontology put forward by a transcendental idealist requires not only commitment to transcendental features, but a priori knowledge of their *dependence* upon our point of view. Hence, the transcendental idealist must endorse, or at any rate be fully sympathetic to, the claim

> (TI) we have a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view.

Now, there may be different kinds of knowledge, and hence different kinds of *a priori* knowledge (see 1_K). More specifically, just like there can be propositional knowledge as well as ineffable knowledge, so too it is possible that, alongside *propositional a priori knowledge*, there should be *ineffable a priori knowledge*. If this is true, however, then there may be two different ways of interpreting claim (TI), from which there will spring two different variants of Transcendental Idealism, namely the effable variant and the ineffable variant.

First, there is Effable Transcendental Idealism. An effable transcendental idealist must endorse the claim that

> (TI*eff*) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view.

Propositional a priori knowledge, being propositional, is a priori knowledge expressible by a *true proposition*. Thus, if we are to have propositional a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view, we must *at the very least* be able to coherently express this (alleged) knowledge in a proposition, such as (TI*eff*).

Then, there is Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. An ineffable transcendental idealist must be fully sympathetic to the apparent claim that

> (TI*ineff**) we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view.

Ineffable a priori knowledge, being ineffable, is a priori knowledge that is *non-propositional* or linguistically *inexpressible*. Thus, if we are to have ineffable a priori knowledge of the mind-dependency of transcendental features, no proposition may ever express that knowledge. In

fact, as it happens, the ineffable transcendental idealist cannot regard (TI$_{ineff}$*) as a genuine proposition or claim at all, but at best at the abortive attempt to put into words an *ineffable* insight into the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view.

Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, however, has never been *clearly* recognized before.[289] Hence, it will be convenient to leave a discussion of it to later stages, beginning with Chapter 3$_K$.[290] In the remainder of the present Chapter, we will focus on Effable Transcendental Idealism, which is the more familiar variant of the doctrine.

2.3$_K$ *Propositional Knowledge of Transcendental Features*

In this section, I focus on the claim of the effable transcendental idealist, namely (TI$_{eff}$). After briefly rephrasing the claim, I will turn to Kant, as paradigmatic effable transcendental idealist. Specifically, after showing that space, time, and the categories are the transcendental features at the heart of his transcendental ontology, I argue that Kant endorsed a species of claim (TI$_{eff}$). This will put us in a position to start to analyse the requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism through a case-study, namely Kant's own view.

2.31$_K$ *Rephrasing the Claim of the Effable Transcendental Idealist*

As we have seen, the effable transcendental idealist must endorse the claim that

> (TI$_{eff}$) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view.

This claim may be usefully *rephrased* by saying that we know a priori the truth of the proposition that

> (TF$_{IDEAL}$) *transcendental features depend upon our point of view*,

whatever the transcendental features at stake in that proposition. Yet what is required to have such (alleged) knowledge?

As long as we remain at this extreme level of abstraction, it won't be easy to answer this question. It may then be convenient to proceed by example, turning to the case of someone

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who claimed to have propositional a priori knowledge of the "ideality" of *specific* transcendental features. We will therefore proceed in our investigation by examining a paradigmatic case of Effable Transcendental Idealism. This is Kant's transcendental idealism, which is enforced by his transcendental ontology. However, far from being confined to Kant alone, our discussion will individuate requirements that, *if suitably generalized*, may hold for any effable transcendental idealist (see Coda to this Chapter).

2.32ₖ *Space, Time, and the Categories as the elements of Kant's transcendental ontology*

The ontological investigations of a transcendental philosopher start "from within", and hence from our cognition and the capacities involved in it. The general insight here is that we cannot hope to attain a clear view of the necessary features of empirical *reality*, which is supposed to be cognized, if we cannot first command a clear view of our cognition, and of *its* necessary features. This was well understood by Kant.

In effect, as we have seen in 1ₖ, Kant starts from our cognition, which for him necessarily arises out of the cooperation of sensibility, as the faculty of the mind to receive representations, and understanding, as the faculty of the mind to spontaneously produce representations itself. Sensibility receives material in intuitions. The understanding frames concepts out of the material that intuitions afford.[291] This material is primarily *sensation*, that Kant defines as "the effect of an object on the capacity for representation, insofar as we are affected by it" (A20/B34). Indeed, "sensations" are for Kant "the real in appearance" (A168/B210; cf. A581/B609), where appearances are *objects* of empirical intuition (A20/B34), such as this-house, to which empirical concepts may be applied, such as <house>. But how can appearances ever be known as *objects* for us, if all there were to them were mere sensations?

The very beginning of Kant's answer, it seems to me, goes as follows. If we abstract from sensation, and thereby from the *matter* of cognition resulting from affection, there might still be a necessary *form* that *we* ourselves bring to cognition of reality on the occasion of affection, through which we order sensations in certain relations. In fact, as anticipated in 1ₖ, this form of human cognition coincides with our a priori representations for Kant, namely space and time, as a priori intuitions, and the categories, as a priori concepts. Indeed, it is these a priori representations that, for Kant, *inform* (the matter of) appearances that, *so informed*, make up empirical *reality*. This "form-giving process" comes down to synthetic a priori judgements, the

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[291] This is true also of the *a priori* intuitions that, for Kant, supply the a priori or "transcendental material" for the "generation" of the categories of the understanding, namely points of space and moments of time (at least in our human case). I will return on this point in § 2.7ₖ.

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elements of which are space, time, and the categories, which in their interplay make our experience of *objects* possible.

Now, insofar as Kant takes them to be (known a priori as) the *shared* necessary form of both our experience and empirical reality, then space, time, and the categories will be the *transcendental features* at the heart of his transcendental ontology.[292] Indeed, they are the subject-matter of his transcendental idealism, and thereby of his first *Critique*. More specifically, space and time are the subject-matter of Kant's transcendental aesthetic, namely the discipline that studies the necessary features that our sensibility contributes to empirical reality. Whereas the categories are the subject-matter of Kant's transcendental logic, namely the discipline that studies the necessary features that the understanding contributes to empirical reality.

Below, in my analysis of Kant's transcendental idealism, I will start from his transcendental aesthetic. Before doing that, however, I will note that not every transcendental ontology must be divided into a transcendental aesthetic and a transcendental logic. That is because not every transcendental philosopher who presents an ontology needs to countenance a distinction between intuition, and *its* necessary features, and thought, and *its* necessary features. We may for example imagine transcendental ontologies in which the necessary features of given objects are the necessary features of *thought*. In such a view, as soon as one busies herself with transcendental ontology, she is *therewith* engaging in transcendental logic, and no distinction could be drawn between transcendental logic and transcendental aesthetics—in such a way that a logical investigation could not essentially differ from an aesthetic one.

This, however, will become clearer in our investigation of Wittgenstein in Part_W. For now, back to Kant.

2.33_K *The Defining Claim of Kant's Transcendental Idealism*

In the transcendental aesthetic, Kant first presents the centrepiece of his transcendental idealism, namely the doctrine of the "transcendental ideality" of space and time (A28-29/B44-5 and A36/B52). This is the doctrine that space and time are necessary and a priori features of experience and empirical reality (transcendental features) that *depend* upon our point of view (ideal), and more precisely forms of intuition, that structure the things we experience ("appearances"), as opposed to things as they may be independently of our experience of them

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[292] Kant makes this clear, when he writes that (his) "ontology […] is called transcendental philosophy", and that it "consists in a system of all concepts of the understanding, and principles, but only so far as they refer to objects that can be given to the senses", i.e. objects that can be given in space and time (WRP, 20:260).

("things in themselves"). As Kant later writes in a famous definition of his transcendental idealism:

> I understand by [...] transcendental idealism [...] the doctrine that [appearances] are all together to be regarded as mere representations and not things in themselves, and accordingly that space and time are only sensible forms of our intuition, but not determinations given for themselves or conditions of objects as things in themselves. (A369)

According to Kant's definition, space and time are *not* conditions or properties of things as they may be independently of us, namely "things in themselves". Rather, Kant argues, space and time depend upon our point of view: they are "sensible forms of our intuition". Consequently, whatever is *in* space and time will for Kant depend upon our point of view too, if not for its existence, at least for the *form* in which its existence is manifested to us. It could only ever be known by us as appearance, that *conforms* to space and time. This is Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideality of space and time—and *consequently* of all appearances *in* space and time— which is the centrepiece of his transcendental idealism.

Once we are clear on what Kant's doctrine of the transcendental ideality of space and time is, the question however arises: *How* could we ever *know* that space and time are "transcendentally ideal"? Since Kant is a transcendental philosopher, he must maintain that we know this *a priori*, which he does. But is such (alleged) a priori knowledge of the transcendental ideality of space and time propositional or ineffable?

Kant never gives any indication that our knowledge of the ideality of space and time cannot be linguistically expressed. Quite the contrary, in his discussion of the transcendental ideality of space, he clearly writes that "we can [...] *speak* of space, extended beings, and so on, only from the human standpoint" (A26/B42; my emphasis). The same, of course, holds for time. I therefore take the following claim, which is a species of (TI*eff*), as the defining one of Kant's *effable* transcendental idealism:

(TI*eff*-K) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that *space* and *time* depend upon our point of view,

This claim too may be rephrased by saying that, for Kant, we know a priori the truth of the *proposition* that

(S&T_IDEAL) *space and time depend upon our point of view*,

where space and time are transcendental features, and more precisely forms of intuition, that structure the way things appear to us, as opposed to the way they may be in themselves.

This reformulation, however, just moves our question one step ahead. For *how* could Kant, or for that matter anyone, know a priori *that* space and time depend upon our point of view? Indeed, what are the conditions that must be met if we are so much as to hope of knowing a priori the truth of the *proposition* (S&T$_{IDEAL}$)?

2.4$_K$ *Thinking the Ideality of Transcendental Features*

We have individuated the defining claim of Kant's transcendental idealism, namely (TI$_{eff\text{-}K}$) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that space and time depend upon our point of view. Further, we have rephrased (TI$_{eff\text{-}K}$) as the claim that we have a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) *space and time depend upon our point of view*. But even admitting for the sake of the argument that we could know this proposition a priori, our question now is: What would be *required* to have such knowledge?

In this section, after a brief discussion of Kant's view of propositional knowledge, I argue that the *minimal* requirement for a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), and hence of Kant's transcendental idealism, is the possibility of coherently thinking the proposition itself. For if we could not think this proposition coherently, we could never know its truth, let alone a priori.

2.41 *Thinking (S&T$_{IDEAL}$)*

According to Kant, propositional knowledge consists in entertaining a proposition, and holding it to be true with consciousness of its necessity or, that which is the same for him, holding it to be true on necessary grounds (JL, Into, § IX).[293] Put otherwise, whenever we judge a proposition to be true on necessary grounds, then for Kant we *know* that proposition (ibid.). There are for Kant different ways of entertaining a truth in this way, depending on its necessary *ground*, which may be either intuitive or conceptual. Philosophical truths, however, must be known on the grounds of concepts, since for Kant philosophical knowledge is discursive *knowledge from concepts* (ibid. and A713/B741).

Now, the proposition expressing the transcendental ideality of space and time, namely (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), *is* for Kant a philosophical truth. Hence, it must be known from *concepts*—though

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[293] The "consciousness of necessity" here involved need not be clear, as it must be for the transcendental philosopher, but may well be obscure. All human beings, for Kant, have propositional a priori knowledge that space and time depend upon our point of view. But it is the duty of the transcendental philosopher to bring such knowledge to *clear* consciousness (see 1$_K$).

these will be concepts *of intuitions*, namely space and time. This is clear if we look at Kant's transcendental aesthetic. There, Kant carries presents an exposition of the *concepts* of space and time and concludes, *from those concepts*, that space and time are transcendentally ideal intuitions—that "we can speak of space only from the human standpoint" (A26/B42), and that "if we abstract from our way of internally intuiting ourselves [then] time is nothing" (A34/B51).

As a result, if we are to have any hopes of knowing the transcendental ideality of space and time, and hence Kant's (effable) transcendental idealism, we must at the very least master the relevant *concepts* required for a propositional understanding of the doctrine. Since, however, we can make no other use of concepts than to think by means of them (cf. A63/B93), then the minimal requirement of Kant's transcendental idealism is that we be able to *think* our proposition

$$(S\&T_{IDEAL}) \qquad \textit{space and time depend upon our point of view.}$$

2.5$_K$ *Thinking Things in Themselves vs. Cognizing Appearances*

Propositional a priori knowledge of the proposition (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) requires at the very least that we be able to think or entertain it. However, how could we think (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) in turn?

In this section, by reflecting on the negation of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), namely $\ulcorner$ (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), I argue that a necessary condition of the entertainment of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), and hence of Kant's transcendental idealism, is thinking non-spatiotemporal things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing spatiotemporal appearances. First, I discuss thinking non-spatiotemporal things in themselves (§2.31$_K$), then cognizing spatiotemporal appearances (§2.32$_K$).

2.51$_K$ *Thinking Things in Themselves*

I have argued above that, in order to know a priori the proposition that space and time are transcendentally ideal forms of intuition, namely (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), we need at the very least mastery of the relevant concepts. "Mastery of concepts" though? What would this involve? Well, it may involve many things, but it surely *must* involve mastery of all those logical operations that allow us to manipulate concepts in certain recognizable ways.

Among these operations, Kant would arguably list *negation*. In effect, as convincingly argued by Jessica Leech, Kant commits to the reasonable principle that, if we can coherently entertain

a concept *F*, we must be able to entertain its contradictory, namely *non-F*.[294] But since the only use we can make of concepts is thinking by means of them, then Kant must also be committed to the principle that, if we can coherently think a proposition, we must be able to think its contradictory (cf. JL, § 48). If we could not entertain the latter, we could not make sense of the original proposition at all.

With respect to our discussion, this means: if we can *think* the proposition that expresses the transcendental ideality of space and time, namely (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), then we *must* also be able to *think* its contradictory, namely

⌐ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$)   *space and time do NOT depend upon our point of view.*

Indeed, only if it is possible to coherently think or entertain ⌐ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), the latter could then be *denied* by argument, in a bid to prove the truth of the proposition (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), and hence the truth of Kant's transcendental idealism.

Now, thinking ⌐ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$) would clearly involve having *some idea*, however general, of what space and time should have to be, if *not* features or properties that depend upon our point of view, determining the way things appear to us (forms of intuition). But to have such an idea, we must be able to entertain the thought of something that does *not* depend upon our point of view—namely, things in themselves. Not by chance, Kant writes that if space and time were not properties that depend upon our point of view, they should then have to be either mind-independent things in themselves, or properties of/relations among mind-independent things in themselves (A23/B38).

In any case, one must be able to entertain these "alternative" thoughts, and the concepts involved in them, if one is to even so much as make sense of the proposition that (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$) space and time depend upon our point of view (as forms of intuition), let alone know it. Hence, it is a necessary condition of Kant's transcendental idealism that we be able to think things in themselves, by entertaining their concept—the concept, that is, of something that does *not* depend upon *us* (see A252)—when thinking propositions such as ⌐ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$).

Yet, even admitting *that*, in Kant's transcendental idealism, we need to think things in themselves, *why* do we need to think things in themselves? As I have anticipated above, it is because ⌐ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), namely the proposition that *space and time do NOT depend upon our point of view*, must first be entertained, and then in some way denied, in a bid to prove the proposition (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), and so Kant's transcendental idealism. There is, as it were, a dialectical stand-off

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[294] Leech (2021, p. 23).

between the two propositions, and only one can ever stand the fiery test of critique—only one can be philosophically *known*, at the expense of the other.

This process can be observed in both the *Critique* and the *Prolegomena*, where we find Kant entertaining for the sake of the argument a version of ⌐ (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), and more precisely the proposition that space and time are properties of mind-independent things in themselves, with the aim of reducing it *ad absurdum*. For it belongs to the very concept of space and time, as transcendental conditions, that they must be given or known *a priori* (Kant establishes this by argument in the aesthetic). But if space and time were properties of mind-independent things in themselves, then how could they be given *a priori*?

Kant is keen to stress that, even admitting that we could somehow know something about mind-independent things in themselves, we could only ever have knowledge of them and their properties by experiencing them, and hence a posteriori (Prol, § 9). But if so, space and time *cannot* be properties of mind-dependent things in themselves, for space and time are known a priori (this is Kant's fundamental premise). Hence, if *not* properties of (or relations among) mind-independent things in themselves, space and time must be mind-dependent properties of our point of view. Or so Kant argues.

Now, if this Kantian transcendental argument were correct, and space and time depended upon our point of view, then thinking things that do *not* depend upon our point of view, or "things in themselves", would ultimately amount to entertaining the thought of *non-spatiotemporal things*. Hence, I regard it as a necessary requirement of Kant's transcendental idealism that we be able to think *non-spatiotemporal* things in themselves. For only if we can, we can determine space and time as properties that *depend* upon our minds, and *not* on reality as it may be independently of us. (The concept of *non-spatiotemporal things* may be called the *critical* concept of things in themselves, as opposed to the pre-critical one, whereby e.g. space is a property of mind-independent things, or a "primary quality".)

2.52$_K$ *Cognizing Appearances*

Now, to thinking (non-spatiotemporal) things in themselves Kant famously opposes cognizing (spatiotemporal) appearances. The two go hand in hand. Indeed, as Kant often makes clear, it is this distinction that is a necessary condition of his transcendental idealism, and not just one half of it.

In Chapter 1$_K$, we have seen that cognition is representation of empirical reality. For Kant, this requires *both* the givenness of something in intuition and its conceptual articulation in

thought. That which is given to us, however, are for Kant spatiotemporal appearances, not things in themselves, with which we are not acquainted. For, according to Kant, anything that may ever be given to us is *in* space and time, which are themselves mind-dependent representations. It follows that we may only ever *cognize* spatiotemporal appearances, as opposed to (allegedly) non-spatiotemporal things in themselves. Things in themselves can at best be *thought* for Kant.

This point is connected to Kant's famous assertion that, while transcendentally ideal, space and time are also empirically real. It is true that, for Kant, only if we could *think* a non-spatiotemporal reality, then we may hope to know *that* space and time are "ideal" forms of our mind, and not something "real". But it is equally true that, insofar as we cognize appearances *in* space and time, thereby cognizing empirical or spatiotemporal reality, space and time are as real as it gets for Kant. Hence, with regard to things in themselves, space and time are *transcendentally ideal*; but in regard to appearances, space and time are *empirically real*.

To sum up, then, for Kant we could only ever cognize things as they appear in empirical or spatiotemporal reality. But as soon as we depart in mere thought from the conditions of our human (spatiotemporal) intuition, we cannot cognize anything at all. Strictly speaking, we could not even *cognize* things in themselves as non-spatiotemporal things, for that would require us to cognize things in themselves—something that Kant repeatedly stresses we can't do. Rather, for Kant, we can only ever have propositional a priori knowledge that things, when we *think* them as they may be in themselves, *cannot count as things that have spatiotemporal features*. Such knowledge is supposed to be recognized through the "expositions" of the concepts of space and time.

2.6$_K$ *Merely Logical Possibility vs. Real Possibility*

Let us take stock. The defining claim of Kant's transcendental idealism, namely (TI$_{eff-K}$), may be rephrased in terms of a priori knowledge of the proposition that *space and time depend upon our point of view* (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). A necessary condition of the a priori knowledge of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is the possibility of entertaining it, as well as its negation. This requires thinking things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing appearances.

In this section, I argue that a necessary condition of the distinction between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances, and hence of Kant's effable transcendental idealism, is that there be a distinction between merely logical and real possibility. I will first discuss merely logical possibility, and then real possibility. Finally, I will show that the distinction between merely logical and real possibility triggers a partial fracture between the conditions of mere

thought and the conditions of experience, which is of great consequence in Kant's effable transcendental idealism.

2.61ₖ *Merely Logical Possibility*

Already in the Preface to the first *Critique*, Kant had distinguished between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances thus:

> [W]e can have cognition of no object as a thing in itself, but only insofar as it is an object of sensible intuition, i.e. as an appearance [...] Yet the reservation must also be well noted, that even if we cannot cognize these same objects as things in themselves, we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves.* For otherwise there would follow the absurd proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears. (Bxxvi)

It was written in the stars that this passage should become one of the most controversial of Western philosophy. Here, however, I will only devote my attention to what is written in *the star*. In effect, right after his statement that, although we cannot cognize objects as things in themselves, "we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves", Kant redirects us to an all-important footnote:

> * To cognize an object, it is *required* that I be able to prove its possibility (whether by the testimony of experience from its actuality or a priori through reason). But I can think whatever I like, as long as I do not contradict myself, i.e., as long as my concept is a possible thought, even if I cannot give any assurance whether or not there is a corresponding object somewhere within the sum total of all possibilities. But in order to ascribe objective validity to such a concept (*real possibility, for the first sort of possibility was merely logical*) something more is required. (Bxxvi, fn.; my emphasis)

According to Kant, to *think* an object, only *merely logical possibility* is required, whereas *cognizing* an object requires "that I be able to prove its [*real*] *possibility*" as well. Merely logical possibility is the possibility of entertaining a concept or a thought *without contradiction*. Real possibility is the possibility of entertaining a concept or a thought about *given objects*. This, for Kant, requires "something more" than non-contradictoriness, namely an intuition, through which alone objects are given.[295] Let us first discuss the case of merely logical possibility (thinking things in themselves), in order to then turn to real possibility (cognizing appearances).

As we have seen, to think things in themselves, it is necessary to entertain the *concept* of an object that does not depend on our point of view (see A252). Now, Kant explicitly tells us that this concept is "not at all contradictory" (A254/B310). And in effect—Kant would maintain—

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[295] More precisely, for Kant, this condition holds in the case of *theoretical* knowledge. I am not concerned here with Kant's practical philosophy, with which I will deal in Chapter 3ₖ.

we must entertain it to entertain the proposition that space and time depend upon our point of view (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). Hence, insofar as the possibility of thinking *without contradiction* the concept of things in themselves is a necessary condition of a Kant's transcendental idealism, then merely logical possibility will be too.

But what does this "merely logical" possibility amount to? If I may coherently think things in themselves, by entertaining their concept without contradiction, does it follow that I may know anything *substantial* about them? Indeed, could I ever have substantive *metaphysical knowledge* (for Kant, "synthetic a priori knowledge") of things in themselves just by thinking them? Arguably, Kant's answer would be a categorical "No" here.

To see this, consider the following. Sometimes, Kant calls the concept of things in themselves "the *concept of an object in general*", characterizing it not only as "the highest concept [of] transcendental philosophy" (A290/B356), but also as the concept of "something in the *logical* sense" (LoM, 28:552[296]), since entertaining it requires us to abstract from the conditions of sensible intuition. Other times, Kant calls the concept of things in themselves the concept of "the transcendental object = X" (A104-109), to signal that this X is the logical "correlate" of the Subject or 'I think' (A250). Hence, for Kant, the *logical* form of all my thought is *I think X*. All the same, I can never *cognize* this X for Kant, since it is not itself an appearance, but rather the logical "object" to which all appearances, as representations *of something*, are to be related (A109 and A565-6/B594-5).

Indeed, in the absence of sensible intuitions, this *logical object X* is none other than an empty placeholder[297]—not, that is, something (that we can know to be) real,[298] but rather a formal correlate of our representations,[299] that just serves the purposes of giving directionality and logical unity to them (cf. A250-51 and A109).[300] Put otherwise, in abstraction from sensible intuitions, of such an "object" we merely have the non-contradictory *concept* for Kant, namely the concept of an object in general, which, *by itself*, is insufficient for thinking about a *real object*. As Kant writes in his *Lectures of Metaphysics*:

> What does not contradict itself is *logically possible*; that is, the concept is indeed possible, but there is no reality there. One thus says of the concept: it has *no objective reality*. *Something* means any object

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[296] My emphasis.
[297] Cf. Förster (2012, pp. 4-5).
[298] LoM, 28:544; cf. Rosefeldt (2003, p. 147).
[299] "[The] transcendental object […] is *a mere thought-entity*" (A565-6/B594-5; my emphasis).
[300] Kant calls such a correlate of representation the "transcendental referent" of thought. By "transcendental referent", he means the merely intentional object of representation (qua representation of…), which must at least be capable of being thought, however emptily, if the notion of representation itself is to make sense at all. On the idea of a transcendental reference [*transzendentale Bedeutung*], see for example A248/B305, as well as A355.

of thinking; this is the *logical* something. The concept of an object in general is the highest concept of all cognitions. One calls an object [in general] a something, but *not* a metaphysical, rather a logical something. (LoM, 28:544; my emphasis)

Accordingly, throughout the first *Critique* Kant stresses that we must beware the risk of confusing merely logical possibility, i.e. the possibility of thinking without contradiction the *concept* of an object, with real possibility, i.e. the possibility of cognizing a *real* object (A244/B302; cf. A596/B624fn and A610/B638). To cognize an object "something more" than mere concepts is required.

2.62ₖ *Real Possibility*

As I have anticipated above, this "something more" is intuition for Kant, which is therefore indispensable for real possibility:

> [T]he possibility of a thing can never be proved merely through the non-contradictoriness of a concept of it, but only by vouching for it with an intuition corresponding to this concept. (B308)

> In a word [...] concepts could not be vouched for and their real possibility thereby established, if all sensible intuition (the only one we have) were taken away, and there then remained only logical possibility, i.e., that the concept (thought) is possible is not the issue; the issue is rather whether it relates to an *object* and therefore signifies anything. (B302-3fn; my emphasis)

It is clear here that, for Kant, real possibility is the possibility of the *relation* of representations *to objects given in intuition*, and thereby to empirical reality. Put otherwise, for Kant, the problem of real possibility may be expressed by the question "How can thoughts relate to objects that are (or *can* be) given in intuition?".

Significantly, this is just a specific variant of the problem of Kant's letter to Herz, which in the Introduction we have condensed in the question "How can we represent reality?".[301] To this question, the transcendental philosopher answers that there are a priori conditions of representation that allow us to do so. In *Kant's* transcendental philosophy, these are the a priori conditions of thought (e.g. pure categories), *as well as* the priori conditions of our intuition (e.g. space and time). Such conditions, according to Kant's transcendental *idealism*, we impose onto appearances, and *this* explains how we can think about empirical reality (*cognize it*). We can, since empirical *reality* is formally rendered possible by our (a priori) cognitions.

Kant thereby solves the problem of the possibility of representation of empirical reality—the problem of *real possibility*—by means of his transcendental idealism, which makes empirical

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[301] Cf. Stang (2016, pp. 158-162).

reality *dependent*, for its very possibility, upon the a priori conditions of our representation of it. In *this* sense, Kant writes:

> The *a priori* conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience. (A111)

Indeed, for Kant, the problem of the possibility of experience is always at the same time the problem of a *really possible object* (as opposed to a "merely logical" one).

By a Kantian "really possible object" I mean an object that may be *given* in sensible intuition, in agreement with a priori conditions of sensibility, and be *thought of* as part of a possible experience, in agreement with the a priori conditions of the understanding. Kant himself suggests this much, in his definition of the modality possibility, by which he clearly meant *real* possibility (as opposed to merely logical):

> Whatever agrees with the formal conditions of experience (*in accordance with intuition and concepts*) is possible. (A218/B265; my emphasis)[302]

> The postulate of the possibility of things thus requires that their concept agree with the formal conditions of an experience in general [...] That in such a concept [of an object] no contradiction must be contained is, to be sure, a necessary logical condition; but it is far from sufficient for the objective reality of the concept, i.e., for the possibility of such an object as is thought through the concept. (A220/B268)

I suggest reading these important passages as follows. Merely logical possibility is agreement with the *conditions of thought* alone, through which the *concept* of an object may be entertained without contradiction. That, however, is insufficient for real possibility. For to think about an *object*, the Subject must not only entertain the concept <object> without contradiction, in agreement with the conditions of the understanding, but also be *given* something in intuition, to which this concept should be applied, in agreement with the conditions of sensibility.[303] Only then, the Subject may think about an *object* of possible experience (real possibility), as opposed to just thinking the *concept* of something in general without contradiction (merely logical possibility).

2.63ₖ *Conditions of Thought vs. Conditions of Experience*

If I am right, Kant's distinction between merely logical and real possibility triggers a partial fracture in his philosophy—a *mismatch*, if you like—between the conditions of the possibility of

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[302] Compare Kant's *Lectures of Metaphysics*, where we read: "Real possibility is the agreement with the conditions of a possible experience" (LoM, 28:557).
[303] On the *application* of the concept of an object in general, see Bell (2001b).

thought in general and the conditions of the possibility of experience. More precisely, according to Kant, the conditions of the possibility of experience are more stringent than those of thought. To see this, consider what follows.

The only "limit" that Kant places on thought is that it must have *logical form*, by which he means that thought must be internally *coherent*. Upon reflection, however, this limit is *not a* restriction or limitation of thought. For if something has no logical form it is not an "illogical thought", but rather no thought at all.[304] Put otherwise, Kant saw that the necessary conditions of thought are *definitive* of it. Thus, for Kant, the principle of contradiction defines 'thought', since "I can think whatever I like, *as long as I do not contradict myself*".[305] That is, nothing can count as a "contradictory thought". Similarly, for Kant, the *pure* categories define 'thought', since they are the forms of the thought of something in general (B148, B150, and B288), *irrespective of their application to particular objects*. Nothing may ever count as a "formless thought".

It is by definition, Kant would then say, that a thought agrees with its logical conditions.[306] However, for Kant, it is *not* by definition that a thought agrees with the conditions of experience, as required by real possibility. In effect, for Kant, agreement with the logical form of thought is *not enough* for real possibility, qua possibility of *experience* (and its *objects*). For that, we will need agreement with the conditions of both thought *and* intuition. But this exactly means that Kant is partially separating the conditions of thought in general from those of experience, making the latter more stringent than the former.

To be more precise, for Kant, the conditions of experience include not only the conditions of thought in general, such as the principle of contradiction and the pure *unapplied* categories (forms of judgement), but they also include: *the applied categories* (in synthetic a priori judgements); the conditions of such categorial application ("*schemata*"); and the forms of intuition, which in our human case are space and time—though Kant believes it is *conceivable* that there be beings with forms of intuition other than ours, and thus with completely different experiences.

This partial separation between the conditions of thought and the conditions of experience in Kant's philosophy may be represented by the following table:

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[304] Putnam rightly writes of Kant's "repeated insistence that illogical thought is not, properly speaking, thought at all" (1995, p. 246). This Kantian view predates Wittgenstein's one (T, 3.03 and 5.4731). Cf. Conant (1991).

[305] Indeed, Kant is clear that the principle of contradiction cannot be, well, contradicted, without thoughts being "stricken out", as in "this unmarried male is married" (A150-1/B190; A596/B624n; R 5726; the example is O'Shea's, 2011, p. 41).

[306] Something that "disagrees" with the logical conditions of thought is not "an illogical thought", but rather *not-a-thought*. A *feeling*, for example, is not a thought. And, since it is not a thought, a feeling may "disagree" with the logical conditions of thought. For a feeling has no "logical form". Indeed, there is no difficulty in the notion of contradictory feeling, such as the famous feeling of love-*and*-hate immortalized by Catullus ("*Odi et amo*"). For the distinction between feeling and thought, in Kant's philosophy and more generally, see Chapter 3ₖ.

CONDITIONS OF THOUGHT	CONDITIONS OF EXPERIENCE
Principle of contradiction	Principle of contradiction
Pure or unapplied categories (forms of thought/ judgement)	*Applied* categories (schematized forms of thought/judgement)
Concept <object>	Concept <object>
Subject ('I think')	Subject ('I think')
	Schemata (for categorial application)
	Space and time (for us); other forms of intuition? (other *conceivable* beings)

This partial fracture has fundamental consequences in Kant's transcendental philosophy. It allows that there be representations that are perfectly logical, and yet that do not count as representations *of empirical reality*. Such representations Kant calls *mere thoughts*, and they are the prerogative of the pure understanding, independently of sensibility. Indeed, as I shall argue in more depth in § 2.7$_K$, the ultimate condition of Kant's (effable) transcendental idealism is that, in mere thought, we may reach beyond space and time, thinking things in general or in themselves from the perspective of pure understanding alone. But before reaching this conclusion, there are a few more steps to be taken.

2.631$_K$ *Transcendental Limits and Transcendental Limitations*

First, we must make clear that, while *Kant* distinguishes merely logical possibility and real possibility, and thereby between the necessary conditions of thought and those of experience, not all transcendental philosophers must follow suit. Indeed, as I anticipated in 1$_K$, some transcendental philosophers recognize no distinction between conceivability, and "its" conditions, and experienceability and "its" conditions. They "equate" logical and real possibility, *so to speak*.[307]

Here's a way to clarify this point in contemporary jargon. Let us call a limit of *x* any necessary feature of *x*, and a limitation of *x* any necessary feature of *x* that can be transcended *in such a way as to have metaphysical knowledge of it*.[308] A transcendental limit will then be any

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[307] I stress "so to speak" since such ways of speaking will eventually have to drop out. (Where two things cannot be distinguished, they cannot be "equated" either).

[308] A distinction between "limits" and "limitations" plays an important role in the contemporary literature on Kant and Wittgenstein, and on Transcendental Philosophy more generally. For example, it is countenanced by

necessary condition of our cognition known a priori (transcendental condition), whereas a transcendental limitation will be any such condition that we can transcend *in such a way as to have metaphysical knowledge of it*. Our point is then that, while for Kant some transcendental limits are also transcendental limitations, that need not be the case for other transcendental philosophers.

In effect, given *his* distinction between merely logical and real possibility, Kant wants to claim that, in mere thought, we can transcend *some* "limits of possible experience",[309] such as space and time, in such a way as to have (meta)metaphysical knowledge *that* space and time *depend on us*, as opposed to things in themselves. In this sense, for Kant, space and time are transcendental limitations of our human point of view. They are (supposed to be) known as metaphysically "restricted" *to us*.

Since, however, not all transcendental philosophers need to accept Kant's machinery, then it is doubtful whether they should all commit to transcendental limitations. For example, for some transcendental philosophers, the transcendental limits of experience may coincide with those of thought. And if so, for these transcendental philosophers, we could not even *think* of the transcendental limits of cognition, let alone have propositional knowledge of their putative metaphysical "restriction" to us. (Though we can't yet rule out that they could appeal to *non*-propositional knowledge of such a putative "restriction"[310]).

This distinction between transcendental limits and transcendental limitations, which further clarifies our earlier distinction between transcendental features and transcendental constraints, will be instrumental for my discussion of Wittgenstein. For now, back to Kant.

2.7ₖ (*General Logic vs.*) *Transcendental Logic*

We have been examining a chain of necessary requirements of Kant's effable transcendental idealism. For Kant, we have a priori knowledge of the *proposition* that space and time depend upon our point of view (S&T_IDEAL). This requires that we be able to *think* (S&T_IDEAL), and hence *think* things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing appearances. To think things in themselves it must be possible to entertain their concept without contradiction, as required by merely logical

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Stephen Mulhall (2005), A. W. Moore (2013), and Peter Sullivan (2013). While inspired by theirs, my formulation of this distinction is arguably less prone to misunderstanding. For example, according to Sullivan, "limits have no 'other side'; there is nothing 'beyond' them" (2013, p. 257). Yet in saying this, Sullivan is exactly suggesting that we may peek on the other side of limits, to ascertain that "there is nothing beyond them". That, in effect, would already cast limits as limitations. Points such as these will become clearer in Part_W.

[309] Kant uses this expression in a very important passage at A296/B352, to which I will return by the end of this Chapter, to defend the *liminal* status of the transcendental, in between the immanent and the transcendent.

[310] I will discuss this alleged possibility in Chapter 3_W, by means of discussion of Wittgenstein.

possibility. Hence, a distinction between merely logical possibility, qua possibility of non-contradictory thought in general, and real possibility, qua possibility of thought about empirical reality, was shown to be necessary for Kant's effable transcendental idealism.

Now, with this last distinction, we are well into the territory of possible thought, and thereby into the territory of *logic*. In this section I argue that, to countenance it, one must also distinguish between general logic and transcendental logic, as Kant himself does. My discussion is in four parts. First, I clarify what Kant meant by "logic". Second, I present Kant's general logic. Third, I present Kant's transcendental logic. To assess their role in Kant's transcendental idealism, I compare the rules of the "two" logics in four different respects—necessity, a priority, generality (and particularity), formality (and content). Finally, I give a *general* account of Transcendental Logic, showing that one may engage in Transcendental Logic without thereby having to commit to Transcendental Idealism, as Kant does.

2.71ₖ *Kant on "Logic"*

We have left the last section with Kant's distinction between merely logical and real possibility, by which the conditions of the possibility of thought in general, on the one hand, and those of thought of empirical reality, on the other, are not the same in all respects. In a way, these conditions are like partially different *rules*, according to which *thought* proceeds, depending on whether we abstract from the forms of sensible intuition (thinking objects in general), or whether we don't (thinking about objects in empirical reality). Yet if so, there should be partially different *logics* dealing with these partially different rules. As we shall see, Kant calls them "general logic" and "transcendental logic".

Before coming to that, however, we should get a sense of what Kant meant by "logic". At the very beginning of his 1800 *Logik*, Kant writes that "everything in nature […] takes place according to rules". He continues:

> The exercise of our powers also takes place according to certain rules that we follow, *unconscious* of them at first, until we gradually arrive at cognition of them through experiments and lengthy use of our powers [...] Like all our powers, *the understanding* in particular is bound in its actions to rules, which we can investigate. Indeed, the understanding is to be regarded in general as the source and the faculty for thinking rules in general. For as sensibility is the faculty of intuitions, so the understanding is the faculty for thinking, i.e., for bringing representations [...] under rules. Hence it is desirous of seeking for rules and is satisfied when it has found them. Since the understanding is the source of rules, the question is thus, according to what rules does it itself proceed?
> For there can be no doubt at all: we cannot think, we cannot use our understanding, except

according to certain rules. […] [The] science of the necessary laws of the understanding […] we call logic. (JL, Intro, § 1)

According to Kant, the understanding is bound to necessary rules, without which we could not use it, and which, though "unconscious of them first", we may come to recognize "after a lengthy use of our powers". A systematic investigation (science) of these rules of the understanding is what Kant means by "logic" (cf. A52/B76). But since, for Kant, to use the understanding is to think, by "logic" Kant means the science of the rules of thought.

So far, so good. In the *Critique*, however, Kant also says that the science of logic can be considered in a twofold respect [*zwiefacher Absicht*[311]]: either as science of the rules that govern thought *in general*, or as science of the rules that govern thought about a determinate kind of objects (e.g. the object of metaphysics, the objects of mathematics, the objects of morality, etc.[312]). In the first respect, the science of logic takes the name of *general logic* for Kant; in the second respect, we should better talk of particular or *special logic*, "the organon of this or that science" (A52/B76). Below, I will start by discussing Kant's general logic, but we will soon return to particular or special logics since, I will argue, Kant's transcendental logic is one of them[313] (qua logic concerned with the rules of the understanding insofar as they govern thought about objects of possible experience, i.e. *really possible objects*).

2.72ₖ *Kant's General Logic*

Logic, for Kant, deals with the necessary *rules* of thought. Perhaps, then, the quickest way to understand Kant's general logic is by identifying its rules and discussing their character. Let us start from identifying them.

Among the rules of general logic, Kant explicitly includes the principle of contradiction,

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[311] The German *Absicht*, that today is often translated as 'intention' or 'aim', was in the past mostly linked to the relation of consideration with respect to something (i.e. the object considered), as indicated by a famous German dictionary compiled in Kant's times (Adelung's *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*). The verb *absehen* comes in fact from *sehen*, which points to the semantic field of seeing. Thus, by using the expression *zwiefacher Absicht* as he does at A52/B76, Kant is most probably indicating that we may consider logic in a two-fold respect, or *from two different perspectives*. This will be significant for my discussion below.

[312] See JL, Intro, § 1, p. 528.

[313] Kant does not *explicitly* say in the *Critique* that his transcendental logic is 'a special logic' and the issue is debated in Kant scholarship (see Tolley 2012). This, however, is the most natural reading of Kant (see MacFarlane 2002, p. 48), not least given that A52/B76 is the only passage in which Kant distinguishes between 'general' and special (or 'particular') logic. The passage comes right before the introduction of Kant's transcendental logic, and in the rest of the text Kant always distinguishes between general logic and transcendental logic. For a conspicuous body of textual evidence in support of the view that Kant's transcendental logic is a 'special logic', see Tonelli (1994, pp. 80-92).

namely ⌐ (A and ⌐ A), and he implicitly includes the forms of judgements,[314] which are so many ways of connecting terms in judgements, such as the subject-predicate form ("S is P") and the if-then form ("if *x*, then *y*"). Importantly, Kant takes the forms of judgement to be, in some sense, "the same" as the pure concepts of the understanding (A79/B105; cf. B143 and B159), namely the pure categories.[315] Thus, the distinction between his general logic and his transcendental logic is not as clear-cut as one may wish. There is however a *qualitative* distinction to be made between the mere forms of judgement and the categories *properly so called*, qua concepts of *objects*.

In effect, textual evidence suggests that, for Kant, the forms of judgement are the *merely logical* combinatorial rules that remain once *abstraction* is made from the conditions of application of the categories (*schemata*), and thereby from whatever "object" or "content" to which the categories may be applied (A135-6/B174-5; A239/B298; A348-9; B305). This would fit well with Kant's famous remark, by which general logic contains "the absolutely necessary rules of thinking, without which no use of the understanding takes place, and it therefore concerns these rules without regard to the difference of the objects to which [the understanding] may be directed" (A52/B76)—indeed, in abstraction from all contents of thought (A55/B79).

In any case, from Kant's dense remark above, we may extract some of the defining *characteristics* of the rules of general logic.

2.721ₖ *Absolutely Necessary Conditions of Thought*

The rules of general logic are for Kant "absolutely necessary" for thinking. This means that their necessity is not relative to any specific domain of thought. That is, the rules of general logic are not necessary for certain species of thought, as opposed to others. They are necessary if there is to be thought *at all*—necessary conditions of thought *as such*. Indeed, Kant is clear that without the rules of general logic "no use of the understanding takes place". But since, for Kant, the only use to which the understanding may be put is that of thinking, without the rules of

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[314] Kant does not *explicitly* say that the forms of judgement belong to general logic. Presumably, he took it to be obvious, since traditional logicians were concerned with them (cf. Tolley 2012, pp. 424-25). In any case, it is easy to see that Kant thought that the mere forms of judgement belong to general logic. For he does say that general logic abstracts from all content of cognition, and then goes on to say that the forms of judgement are found "if we abstract from all content of a judgement in general" (A70/B95). Hence, the forms of judgement *must* pertain to the pure view of general logic for Kant (cf. also A72/B97). That is not to say, however, that they do not have a *role* to play in Kant's transcendental logic. Indeed, Kant famously finds in the forms of judgement "the clue" to the categories. I return below on the intricate relation between forms of judgement and categories, and thereby between Kant's general and transcendental logic.

[315] See also *Prol*, § 39: "the pure concepts of the understanding are, of themselves, nothing but logical functions".

general logic thinking would be impossible. Hence, for Kant, the rules of general logic are *absolutely necessary conditions of thought*.

2.722ₖ *Analytic a priori*

At the beginning of the *Critique*, Kant suggests that whatever is known with consciousness of its necessity is also known a priori (cf. B3-4).[316] If so, to the extent that we may recognize the rules of general logic as the *absolutely necessary* rules of thought as such, then they must be *known a priori* for Kant.[317] Furthermore, to the extent that general logic is unconcerned with the contents of thought, but only with its (logical) form, such a priori knowledge should be *analytic* for Kant. And indeed, Kant writes that "general logic *analyses* the entire formal business of the understanding [...] into its elements" (A60/B84; my emphasis) and thus it can have "*a priori* insight [into these formal elements] through *mere analysis* of the actions of reason" (A131/B170; my emphasis).

2.723ₖ *General*

The rules of general logic are, of course, general. This means that they govern *all* thought or judgement, or that they are valid with respect to *all* thought or judgement. The generality of the rules of general logic stems from their "absolute necessity". That is, since the rules of general logic are necessary if there is to be thought at all, then they will automatically be the rules that govern *all thought*. Put otherwise, nothing could count as a thought if it is not governed by the rules of general logic. (An "illogical thought" could not—well—*be thought*).

2.724ₖ *Merely formal*

Given their absolute necessity, as well as their generality, the rules of general logic must also be considered "without regard to the difference of the objects to which [the understanding] may be directed". In fact, Kant goes as far as arguing that general logic does not concern at all the relation of thought to reality—which he calls "content" (A55/B79)—but rather only "the logical

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[316] However, this does not *yet* mean that, for Kant, whatever *is* necessary is known a priori. Cf. Stang (2011).

[317] Of course, the *exercise* of these rules may be influenced by empirical or a posteriori factors. But *the rules* themselves must be known a priori for Kant. This connects to the distinction Kant makes between "applied general logic" and "pure general logic". According to Kant, if in our logical investigations we abstract from the empirical/a posteriori factors, we will be engaged in "*pure* general logic", but if we don't, we will be engaged in "applied general logic". In what follows, I only deal with Kant's "*pure* general logic", which is usually identified with Kant's "general logic", as I shall do here for convenience of exposition.

form in the relation of cognitions to one another, i.e. the form of thinking in general" (A55/B79). Thus, the rules of general logic are *merely formal* or, at any rate, they must be considered in their merely formal aspects, independently of all objects or "contents" to which they may then be applied.

2.73$_K$ *Summary: Kant's General Logic*

To summarize, then, according to Kant the rules of general logic are absolutely necessary conditions of the possibility of all thought, that are known analytically a priori, and that guide the formal combination of terms in all thought or judgement, irrespective of the relation of these terms to *objects*.

But why are the rules of general logic fundamental with respect to Kant's transcendental idealism? In the light of our discussion so far, the answer is easily found. Without a rule such as the principle of contradiction, we could not coherently *without contradiction* the concept of things in themselves, as required by merely logical possibility. That means that we could not *think* or *judge* the proposition that space and time depend upon our point of view (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). But then, we could never have propositional a priori knowledge of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). And at that point, we could never hope to know Kant's transcendental idealism.

Something similar will hold for the logical forms of thought, without which there would be no thought at all—for nothing can count as a "formless thought", not even thought of things in general or in themselves, that for Kant can only be represented through such logical forms (*Prol*, § 45[318]). *A fortiori*, then, without the forms of thought or judgement, the concept of things in themselves could not be entertained, and, thereby, Kant's transcendental idealism could never be known.

By being necessary for thought in general, then, the rules of general logic are necessary for (thinking) Kant's transcendental idealism. However, *by themselves*, the rules of general logic do not yet deserve the title of "transcendental", since, as I have argued, Kant partially distinguishes thought in general from thought of empirical reality (cognition), the domain of the former being wider than that of the latter. Hence, for Kant, being necessary for the possibility of thought in general is *not exactly the same* as being necessary for the possibility of (our) cognition, the latter being the necessity at stake in Transcendental Philosophy and, as I shall now argue, in Transcendental Logic, whether Kant's own (§2.53$_K$) or not (2.54$_K$).

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[318] "[The categories] can indeed, as mere logical functions, represent a thing in general".

2.74ₖ *Kant's Transcendental Logic*

As we have seen, Kant's general logic is concerned with the merely formal aspects of thought. According to Kant, however, the mere form of thought is completely insufficient for real possibility. For that, we would need a logic that was not so much concerned with the *a priori* rules of the understanding insofar as they ensure the internal coherence of thought, but rather with the *a priori* rules of the understanding insofar as they allow us to think about *objects* (i.e. cognize them). For this purpose, Kant introduces his transcendental logic.

The rules at the heart of Kant's transcendental logic are the *categories*: necessary conditions of the possibility of *objective* thought, which are known a priori (e.g., <substance> and <cause>). Famously, Kant derives the table of the categories from the table of the forms or "functions" of judgement. The relation between the categories and the mere forms of judgement is problematic, to say the least, though immensely important in Kant's philosophy. Hence, it is worth spending a word more on it.

Kant says that concepts "rest on" functions (A68/B93), which are ways to combine many representations under a common one, the common representation being a *judgement*. If so, the categories must be based on the forms or functions of judgement (B131; cf. *Prol* § 23, 4:306). Indeed, many passages in the *Critique* reveal that the forms of judgement are the *combinatorial rules* at the heart of a category—considered, however, in abstraction from the objects to which they may be applied. If so, the categories *proper* will be these combinatorial rules *applied*, or at any rate applicable*, to objects*.

Once again, there is a lot to unpack here. As it was the case with Kant's general logic, it will be useful to discuss the rules of his transcendental logic by means of a discussion of their characteristic features.

2.741ₖ *Necessary conditions of thought about empirical reality.*

General logic considers the a priori rules of judgement in complete abstraction from any relation to *objects*, and hence as "absolutely necessary" for thought in general. Transcendental logic, on the other hand, considers the a priori rules of judgement as necessary to think about *objects*.

To think about *objects*, however, objects must be *given* (A62-3/B87-8). Indeed, for Kant, finite thinking beings *receive* objects, in agreement with *conditions* of their givenness. Hence, the rules of Kant's transcendental logic are *not* independent of *the conditions of an object's givenness*, from which general logic abstracts altogether. Put otherwise, it is possible to think about objects only if an object *can* be given, to which the forms of judgement can be applied. Only then, can a

thinker *apply* a form of judgement, and hence *think*, through it, *about an object* of possible experience (cf. B146). Only then could a mere form of judgement "become" a category *properly so called*, i.e. an a priori concept necessary for thought *about empirical reality*.

In *our* (human) case, the condition of the givenness of all objects is time for Kant.[319] Hence, the conditions of the application of the categories are *temporal* schemata, and the categories have a *temporal* realization. For example, the category of <cause> is none other than the if-then form of judgement applied to time, determining that if an event is posited in time, then another event must follow from it, as the effect follows from the *cause*. ("If the sun shines, then the stone is warm"[320]). Or else the category of <substance> is the subject-predicate form applied to time, determining that there are persisting subjects underlying the change of their predicates over time, i.e. *substances*. ("The stone, that was previously cold, is now warm").

Now, given that Transcendental Philosophy is concerned with the necessary features of our *human* point of view, then Kant's transcendental logic must be concerned with the *temporal* realization of the pure categories. With that said, given Kant's commitments, it should at least be *conceivable* that there be finite thinking beings who experience reality in forms that are not spatiotemporal, and hence whose categorial realizations are different from ours.[321] In *any* case, however, the necessity of the categories *proper* will not be "absolute", but rather *relative* to possible experience and its objects[322]—whatever form these may then take (cf. § *Particular* below).[323]

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[319] "Time is a necessary representation that grounds all [our] intuitions" (A31/B46).

[320] This is Kant's example in the *Prolegomena*. Kant's point is not that the connection between the sun's light and the stone's warmth is a merely subjective conjunction of perceptions out of habit (as Hume took it), but rather a connection of them according to an *absolutely necessary* logical rule (if-then form). Applied to time, this rule could determine that the sun's shining is the real ground—the cause—of the stone's warmth (that which we could also express, more naturally, through the judgement "the sun warms the stone").

[321] For this *logical* possibility in Kant's philosophy, see Haddock (2011, p. 33).

[322] As we have seen in Chapter 1$_K$, Kant himself goes very close to using the language of "relative necessity" to characterize transcendental necessity. Not all relational necessities need to be "relative" to a cognitive scheme *as opposed to other conceivable ones*, as Kant wants, since some (transcendental) philosophers may equate experienceability and conceivability.

[323] Below, in § *Particular*, I argue that, for Kant, the objective validity of the categories is relative to the domain of possible experience (whether in space and time or not), and hence to the domain of all possible appearances, which is narrower than the domain of thought in general, which may reach beyond appearances to think things in themselves. If we did not take it that the domain of thought in general is wider than the domain of possible experience in general, but rather that the two are coincident, then Kant's distinction between understanding and sensibility would collapse (for at that point, whatever could be thought could also be sensibly experienced by some finite being). And that in turn would erase the distinction between thinkable things in themselves and experienceable appearances. But this, I take it, is a price that no serious interpreter of Kant would be willing to pay, since Kant's transcendental idealism would then come to nothing.

2.742ₖ *Synthetic a priori*

To the extent that they may be recognized as *necessary* for thought about empirical reality, then the categories must also be *known a priori* for Kant. And indeed, Kant calls them *a priori concepts*, or, that which is the same, concepts given or known *a priori* (A728/B756). Still, the way in which we know a priori the categories *proper* is not the same way in which we know a priori the mere forms of judgement.

In effect, Kant is adamant that the business of his transcendental logic is not at all analytic, as is that of his general logic (A154/B193). Hence, for Kant, a priori *knowledge* of the categories cannot be analytic either (though their philosophical *recognition* may well be). Rather, for Kant, the categories are known a priori in synthetic a priori judgements, which combine a priori the manifold *contained in an intuition*. "This can never be accomplished by general logic" (A79/B105), since the latter abstracts from all content of a cognition, and merely analyses its intellectual form. Hence, knowledge of the categories is *synthetic* a priori for Kant.

In our human case, we are supposed to know a priori the categories by "synthesizing" the *a priori manifold* of intuition, namely points of space and moments of time (see § *Content* below). Hence, Kant's transcendental logic must deal with the synthesis that "generates" space and time, as *unitary* intuitions (see B161n), in synthetic a priori judgements. However, given Kant's commitments, it is at least *conceivable* that there be non-spatiotemporal manifolds to be combined or "synthesized" in a priori intuitions other than the human ones.

2.743ₖ *Particular*

I have argued above that the rules of general logic have general validity for Kant, meaning they govern *all* thought. To the extent that they are *numerically* "coincident" with the forms of judgement, there is a certain sense in which this is true also of the "pure" or *unapplied* categories. However, the categories *properly so called*—namely the applied or applicable pure concepts—are not "valid" for all thought. For while things in themselves must be thought in agreement with the mere forms of judgement, Kant is clear that we cannot legitimately *apply* the categories to things in themselves, to think them as e.g. substances, causes, etc. (see A247-8/B304-5 and A679/B707).

Strictly speaking, then, the categories *proper* do not govern *all* thought, but only a *particular* species of thought, namely thought of appearances, as opposed to thought of things in

themselves.[324] In our human case, appearances are spatiotemporal, and hence the validity of the rules of Kant's transcendental logic must be restricted to space and time. Put otherwise, for Kant, we cannot *legitimately* employ the categories beyond space and time—even though the mere forms of judgement may reach beyond space and time, as so many ways to think things in themselves (e.g. as subjects, as grounds, etc.).

Now, for Kant, it is *logically* possible that there be beings with categorial realizations other than our own, or equivalently beings endowed with pure concepts applicable to non-spatiotemporal appearances. As a result, some may argue that the validity of "their" categories, if we may so speak, is not restricted to a particular domain. However, first, "their" categories could not be the subject-matter of a truly transcendental logic, since Transcendental Philosophy is a philosophy of the human.[325] Second, even countenancing such "alien" categories, applicable to non-spatiotemporal appearances, the point remains that Kant restricts the validity of the categories to the *particular* field of possible experience of appearances, as opposed to that of thought of things in general or in themselves—whichever form this experience, and the appearances in it, may then take.

2.744ₖ   *Contentful*

In general logic, Kant says, we abstract from all content of thought, and hence from any *relation to the object*, attending only to the mere logical form of our cognitions in their relation to one another (A55/B79). Transcendental logic, however, does not abstract from all content for Kant, since its rules *relate to objects*, and *a priori* at that (A55-7/B79-81). Accordingly, the categories must have an a priori content, that Kant sometimes calls *transcendental content* (A79/B105; A575/B603).

The content of the categories may only ever come from the interaction of the categories with intuition, through which alone *objects* can be given. This is so for any finite thinking being (cf. B145). In the case of *human* beings, the transcendental content of the categories is none other than the a priori manifold of *our* pure intuitions, namely points of space and moments of time (A77/B102). These are structured by the understanding in a unitary and rule-governed spatiotemporal framework, in which appearances are given as objects of possible (here, spatiotemporal) experience. Hence, Kant's transcendental logic must deal with points of space and moments of time, insofar as they are synthesized according to the forms of judgement, in

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[324] To put it in the words of Michael Potter, "[Kant's] categories function as constraints that something might—and that things in themselves do—fail to satisfy" (2020, p. 377).

[325] Indeed, for Kant, we cannot even *know* whether "their" categories are *really* possible, let alone ground transcendental philosophy on them!

a process that "generates" concepts that relate a priori to objects of a possible experience, namely the categories.

2.75ₖ *Summary: Kant's Transcendental Logic*

To sum up, then, the rules of Kant's transcendental logic, namely the categories, are necessary conditions of the possibility of thought about empirical reality, which are known synthetically a priori, and which, strictly speaking, have a particular or "restricted" domain of validity, since they are rules of the combination of the a priori manifold provided by pure intuitions. In our human case, the a priori manifold consists in points of space and moments time (transcendental content). Hence, everything that may be empirically given in agreement with space and time, namely *spatiotemporal* appearances, must be combined in agreement with the categories, if it is to be cognized by us.

According to my understanding of the term "transcendental", Kant's categories, as necessary rules of the possibility of our cognition, deserve the title of "transcendental concepts" (and indeed, Kant himself calls them thus sometimes[326]). Further, once we recall our discussion of real possibility in Kant, it becomes clear why the categories play an essential role in his transcendental idealism. That is because, for Kant, we impose the conditions of the possibility of experience, including the categories, onto appearances, in such a way that they are also the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and thereby of *empirical reality*. Hence, the categories are not just necessary rules of *thought* about empirical reality, but also necessary rules of *empirical reality*—empirical reality being for Kant a rule-governed combination of spatiotemporal appearances, whereby the rules of such a combination are supplied *by us*.[327]

2.76ₖ *On Transcendental Logic in General*

Before leaving this section, it could prove useful to consider its core in the light of our discussion of Transcendental Philosophy *in general*.

In effect, we can and should distinguish Transcendental Logic from *Kant's* transcendental logic, by noting that, while the latter is idealistic, the former need not be. More precisely, being

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[326] A343/B401, CPJ 5:179, p. 67, OaD, 8:223, p. 313; Cf. *Prol*, 4:303. Other times, Kant calls "transcendental concepts" the ideas of reason, but the latter are best called "transcendent concepts", since their "objects", for Kant, are "transcendent objects" (WRP, 20:263).

[327] To the extent that space and time *depend* upon *us* for Kant, so too must the categories applied to spatiotemporal objects. Thus, as we have seen, a (Kantian) *substance* will be any subject persisting in time, underlying the change of its predicates over time; a (Kantian) *cause* will be anything that, if it is posited in time, acts as the real ground of something else, which necessarily follows upon it in time; etc.

part of *his* transcendental ontology, Kant's transcendental logic is of one piece with his transcendental idealism. However, given our distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*), it must be possible that there be transcendental logics which are not, thereby, transcendental idealist logics.

To see this, let us first settle some terminological matters. By thought I understand the intentional combination of terms (whether these be representations, objects and concepts, or the words that may stand for these) according to rules.[328] By Logic, instead, I mean the set of necessary *rules* of thought. Finally, by Philosophy of Logic I mean a philosophical investigation of the necessary rules of thought.

Now, Transcendental Logic is a philosophy of logic. Specifically, in Transcendental Logic, we must (*i*) start "from within", in order to (*ii*) recognize the necessary rules of thought *about empirical reality*, which are known a priori as *conditions of the possibility* of such thought. Let us call these conditions transcendental rules. Transcendental logic will then aim at recognizing transcendental rules "from within".

Retrospectively, we can see that Kant's transcendental logic recognizes transcendental rules "from within". For Kant is clear that we may recognize the logical rules of thought only "after a lengthy use of our powers". That is, according to Kant, our logical investigations must start from our cognitive capacities ("from within"), and only then we may turn to the rules that govern the representations springing from them. Yet these rules, insofar as we deal with *transcendental* logic, are for Kant known a priori as necessary for the possibility of our thought about empirical reality. They are the *transcendental rules* that Kant calls "categories".

Now, the categories are mental representations for Kant ("concepts"[329]), and to this extent, though we may not *know* whether they depend upon the human mind *alone*,[330] they are *mind-dependent* rules, that can only ever apply to *mind-dependent* objects (appearances). Hence, however one interprets it, Kant's transcendental logic has idealist implications. Still, given the general characterization of Transcendental Logic just given, this view is not forced on every transcendental philosopher. In particular, engagement in Transcendental Logic does not mandate commitment to Transcendental Idealism (in any form).

Indeed, even if we countenanced the view that transcendental rules are a species of

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[328] Notice that among the "items" that can combine in a thought, there might be elementary thoughts, which may combine into complex thoughts in agreement with rules. Indeed, elementary thoughts are representations, which I have included under the label "terms".

[329] With this, I do not mean that concepts are mental representations, but only that *Kant* took them to be mental representations.

[330] Cf. Gomes, A. W. Moore, and Stephenson (2022).

transcendental features, in such a way that transcendental rules are the necessary form of *both* thought *and* empirical reality—even then we are *not* obliged to commit to Transcendental Idealism. For transcendental rules need not be constrained to a specific domain of application, as is the case in Kant's transcendental logic (whereby the categories apply only to appearances, as opposed to things in themselves). Rather, transcendental rules may from the outset preside over both thought in general and empirical reality, in such a way that nothing would count as thinking them as mind-dependent rules that we impose upon nature—or, for that matter, as mind-independent rules that nature imposes upon us. But to better understand these points, we will have to wait until our discussion of Wittgenstein's logic in Part$_W$.

2.8$_K$ *The Merely Logical Non-Empirical Perspective*

Following the chain of necessary requirements of Kant's transcendental idealism, we have gained perspective on this effable metaphysical doctrine, and thereby on Effable Transcendental Idealism more generally. As we have seen, Kant claims that (TI$_{eff-K}$) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that space and time depend upon our point of view. We could not have such knowledge, if we could not entertain the *proposition* that space and time depend upon our point of view (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). We could not entertain this proposition, if we could not think things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing appearances. We could not think things in themselves, if they were not *logically* possible (as opposed to really possible). But they would not even be logically possible, if the rules of thought in general did not extend *beyond* the domain of the rules of possible experience (for us, the domain of space and time), allowing us to entertain the *concept* of things in themselves (for us, non-spatiotemporal things).

 This last requirement, and hence all the preceding ones, may be expressed through the language of perspectives, which Kant himself employs. In this section, after settling some terminological issues on "perspectives" and their relation to Transcendental Idealism, I argue that the *ultimate* condition of Kant's effable transcendental idealism is endorsement of a particular kind of *non*-empirical perspective, namely a merely logical one, through which we may station ourselves *outside* spatiotemporal experience. I shall call this the *extra*-empirical perspective of pure understanding, which for Kant allows us to think things in abstraction from space and time, and without which we could never hope to know that space and time *depend* upon our point of view.

2.81ₖ *Transcendental Perspectivism*

A perspective is a way of considering (seeing/thinking) things. Perspectives are such only relative to other perspectives. I call the perspectives that belong to (markedly) different Subjects external perspectives. For example, an alien perspective is external relative to a human one (and vice versa). Any philosophical view concerned with external perspectives I call External Perspectivism.

But there may also be internal perspectives belonging to the same Subject. The idea is that a Subject may take different perspectives on its own cognitive or conceptual scheme, which we may generally call its point of view. For example, it may well be that the human Subject may take different internal perspectives on its point of view (see himself *from different angles*, as it were). Any philosophical views concerned with internal perspectives I call Internal Perspectivism.

Now, transcendental philosophers, including idealist ones, are likely to be internal perspectivists. To see this, recall the notion of empirical perspective, as our everyday way of considering things, locating us in the midst of things and our experience of them. As long as we dwell in this perspective, we are not supposed to have clear consciousness of the transcendental conditions. For the man of the street does not recognize the transcendental conditions, which is the business of the transcendental philosopher. But from which standpoint could the transcendental philosopher recognize the transcendental conditions? And what does this have to do with our discussion of (Effable) Transcendental Idealism?

Insofar as the transcendental philosopher proceeds *a priori*, or independently of any particular experience, then his vantage point will have to be a *non*-empirical perspective. A non-empirical perspective is an *internal* perspective, whereby *we* are *not* in the midst of our experience of things. For example, if we grant that our experience is spatiotemporal, then a *non*-empirical perspective will be a way of considering things *not-within* space and time. And if *we* could take such an internal perspective, we could command a wider view of either the things, or of space and time, or both.

If I am right, the transcendental philosopher is likely to argue that *we* need a non-empirical perspective from where to *recognize* the transcendental conditions. Indeed, it is arguable that Transcendentalism is always at the same time Transcendental Perspectivism, namely a view by which we may attain a (internal) *non*-empirical perspective over (at least some) transcendental conditions. (I have suggested this much in Chapter 1ₖ, while expounding requirement (*ii*), by contrasting the perspective of the man of the street and the perspective of Transcendental

Philosophy, allowing us to *recognize* the transcendental conditions[331]).

Now, being Transcendental Idealism a *species* of Transcendental Philosophy, then it is arguable that Transcendental Idealism will be a *species* of Transcendental Perspectivism. Indeed, we may regard Transcendental Idealism as the metaphysical position by which we may attain a (special kind of) non-empirical perspective, allowing us to determine the metaphysical status of the transcendental features as "ideal".

It's easy to see this if we take the case of space and time, as (putative) transcendental features. As long as we are immersed in the empirical perspective *in* space and time, it will be rather hard to determine that space and time *depend* upon our point of view. We move about in space, we live our lives in time, but from this everyday perspective nothing so much as suggests that space and time are transcendental features, let alone "ideal" ones. Arguably, then, a *non*-empirical perspective is required to determine the "ideality" of space and time, or for that matter of transcendental features more generally.

2.811ₖ *Kant's Transcendental Perspectivism*

Unsurprisingly, Kant was aware of the need of a non-empirical perspective, to attain the necessary distance to recognize space and time as "ideal" forms of appearances, as opposed to "real" forms of things in themselves. As he writes in the Preface to the second edition of the first *Critique*:

> [T]he same objects can be considered from two different sides, on the one side as objects of the senses and the understanding for experience, and on the other side as objects that are merely thought at most for isolated reason striving beyond the bounds of experience. (Bxviii-xix, fn)

> The critique teach[es] that the object should be taken in a twofold meaning, namely as appearance or as thing in itself. (Bxxvii)

And again in the 'transcendental aesthetic':

> appearance […] always has two sides, one where the object is considered in itself (without regard to the way in which it is to be intuited), the other where the form of the intuition of this object is considered. (A38/B55)

And yet again in the 'amphiboly of the concepts of reflection':

> *We* therefore think something in general, and on the one side determine it sensibly, only *we* also distinguish the object represented in general and *in abstracto* from this way of intuiting it. (A289/B346; my emphasis on "we")

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[331] We may now call the perspective of Transcendental Philosophy a *non*-empirical perspective.

In all these passages, Kant stresses that there are two different ways in which *we* may *consider* things—"*a twofold standpoint*", as he says (Bxix n), or two *internal perspectives*, as I say. One of them, from which we consider objects "for experience" (appearances), and thereby as subject to *both* the conditions of (our) sensibility and the understanding, is quite clearly an empirical perspective. The other, from which we consider objects *in abstraction from* space and time, and thereby as they are *merely thought* "for isolated reason" (things in themselves), is quite clearly a *non*-empirical perspective.[332] It is the *merely logical perspective* of pure understanding, abstraction being one of the logical actions of pure understanding according to Kant (B1 and JL, § 6).

However, the merely logical perspective of pure understanding is not simply a non-empirical perspective, if by that we mean a perspective that is *not-within* the domain of experience. Rather, the merely logical perspective of pure understanding is a *peculiar kind* of non-empirical perspective, which according to Kant stations us in mere thought "*beyond* the bounds of experience" (Bxviii-xix, fn., my emphasis), and hence *beyond* space and time. I call this type of non-empirical perspective an extra-empirical perspective.

Now, in my view, it is only the critical distance from space and time that the extra-empirical perspective of pure understanding may afford us that, according to Kant, allows us to *think* that space and time depend upon our point of view (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), which was the minimal requirement to have propositional a priori knowledge that space and time depend upon our point of view, and hence of Kant's transcendental idealism.

To think that space and time depend upon our point of view, we must in fact be able to think things in themselves. But these, Kant says, are things "*considered* […] without regard to the way" in which they are to be intuited—things "insofar as they are thought *merely* through reason" (Bxviii; my emphasis). So too, in another passage from the transcendental aesthetic, we read that things in themselves are things "when they are *considered* […] through reason [alone], without taking account of the [spatiotemporal] constitution of our sensibility" (A28/B44; my emphasis).

These passages make clear that, for Kant, we may *think* things in themselves only from the perspective of *pure* understanding, without sensibility. Indeed, given Kant's distinction between merely logical and real possibility, the rules of pure understanding—the forms of judgement/*unapplied* categories—reach *beyond* the domain of space and time, allowing us to think things in themselves (e.g. B166n and A254/B309). Hence, we could not think, let alone conceptually know, Kant's transcendental idealism, if not from the extra-empirical perspective of pure understanding.

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[332] Cf. A262/B318.

It may strike the reader as an overly complicated view the one by which no conceptual knowledge that space and time are "ideal" in metaphysical nature—that is, *just representations*—would be possible without a merely logical extra-empirical perspective. To see this, however, consider the following analogy. Just like a man in a two-dimensional painting could not realize that he is *just in a painting*, unless he could somehow "jump outside" of the painting and land in three-dimensional reality, so too a man in spatiotemporal reality could not *think* that space and time are *just representations*, unless he could somehow attain *in thought* a non-empirical perspective which is *external to space and time*: a merely logical *extra*-empirical perspective. I thus take it that a merely logical extra-empirical perspective is the *ultimate requirement* of Kant's transcendental idealism—one needed to even so much as *think* that space and time depend upon our point of view (S&T$_{IDEAL}$).

We might arrive to the same conclusion from a different angle, by noting that Kant's space and time are not only transcendental features but also *transcendental constraints*. Indeed, for Kant, space and time are (supposed to be) necessary features of representation which can be known *a priori* to restrict the domain of what can count as empirically real to the domain of spatiotemporal *appearances*, as opposed to things in themselves. But this knowledge may only be attained if, in mere thought, we may reach *beyond* the sphere of spatiotemporal appearances, and *think* without contradiction things in themselves by means of the unapplied categories (forms of judgement). It may only be attained from the extra-empirical perspective of pure understanding.

It is a bit as if space and time were spectacles for Kant, through which things appear to us in certain characteristic ways.[333] Now, in everyday life, awareness that we have glasses on, through which things appear to us in a certain way, presupposes that we could in principle take off our glasses and, in so doing, realize that we had them on, and that things appeared in *that* way because we had them on (since without glasses we see things differently etc.).

My suggestion is then that, for Kant, we could take off our "spatiotemporal glasses" from the extra-empirical perspective of pure understanding, thinking things from a vantage point that is "external" to the spatiotemporal domain, thereby becoming aware that space and time pertain to our point of view *as opposed to things in themselves*, or equivalently that space and time have "ideal" metaphysical status. (Ultimately, however, the analogy with glasses breaks down insofar

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[333] cf. Russell (1948, p. 734) and A. W. Moore (2012, p. 120). Both Russell and Moore suggest that, according to Kant, we *always* wear spatiotemporal spectacles. However, I suggest below that, according to Kant, we can take these "spatiotemporal spectacles" off from the extra-empirical, yet *internal*, perspective of pure understanding (though, at that point, we could not cognize anything).

as, from the merely conceptual perspective of pure understanding, there is nothing left to *see*—not even blurrily—but only something to *think*. In a way, *concepts* without intuitions are *blind*).[334]

If I am right, Kant's take on Transcendental Perspectivism—namely, his transcendental idealism—retains an element of external perspectivism through the *extra*-empirical perspective of pure understanding. It must however be stressed that we are dealing here with an "internalized" externalism, so to speak. For the perspective of pure understanding, while being extra-empirical (i.e. *external* to the empirical perspective in space and time), is nonetheless a perspective attainable by *the human Subject* upon his own cognitive scheme. It is an *internal* perspective.

Indeed, Kant grants this much in a wonderful passage in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where he writes that we may regard *ourselves* and the laws for the use of our powers "from a twofold standpoint": either "from the side of [our] lower powers", and thereby as empirical entities subject to empirical laws, or else from the side of our higher powers, and thereby as the (transcendental) Subjects[335] of "laws which, being independent of nature, are not empirical" (GW, 4:452[336]). From the first standpoint, we are in space and time. From the second standpoint, space and time are in us. *Or so Kant argues*.[337]

Coda – The Coherence of Effable Transcendental Idealism

Having expounded its necessary requirements, we now have a full picture of Kant's transcendental idealism in particular. However, Kant's transcendental idealism has often been charged of incoherence. The latest, potentially lethal, charge comes from A. W. Moore, who argues that "Effable Transcendental Idealism" *in general*, and Kant's transcendental idealism in particular, are incoherent, insofar as the notion of the "transcendent" is incoherent. If Moore is right, Effable Transcendental Idealism would not be *effable* after all, and the ideas of the greatest of modern philosophers would be "nonsense". But that would endanger our distinction between two kinds of Transcendental Idealism,[338] as well as our reconstruction of Kant's view.

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[334] Here, I obviously play with Kant's famous *dictum*: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B75)

[335] On the notion of Transcendental Subject, in Kant and in general, see 3$_K$.

[336] I will return on this important passage in Chapter 3$_K$.

[337] Kant: "for us space and time […] prescribe *a priori* their law to all possible experience" (*Prol*, 4:375).

[338] In fact, Moore takes it that Transcendental Idealism *in general* is incoherent, thereby *collapsing* (what I regard as) the effable variant of the doctrine into the ineffable one. Hence, for example, Moore writes: "For precisely what transcendental idealism is, I would contend, is the pseudo-expression of certain non-propositional sense that can be made of things at the highest level of generality" (2012, p. 590). As against Moore, I will however argue that Transcendental Idealism is not *always* nonsense. And *if* so, our distinction between two variants of it should be retained.

We thus need to rebut Moore's charges.

In this Coda, I should like to do so. First, I present the requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism *in general*, abstracted out of the requirements of Kant's transcendental idealism examined above. Then, I present Moore's criticism of Effable Transcendental Idealism in general, and of Kant's idealism in particular. I argue that, being based on a conflation of the transcendental and the transcendent, Moore's criticisms are unsuccessful, and further that, given the machinery articulated throughout the Chapter, Effable Transcendental Idealism, including Kant's one, is perfectly *coherent*.

The Requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism in General

To see how, generalizing from the requirements of Kant's idealism, we might reach general requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism, let us imagine an idealist philosopher who took *colour*, instead of space and time, as a transcendental feature that depends upon our point of view. That philosopher should have to commit to a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition

(C$_{\text{IDEAL}}$) colour depends upon our point of view,

where colour is a transcendental feature.

Now, to have knowledge of the truth of this proposition, we must at least be able to coherently *think* it. To think such a proposition, however, we should have to think things that do not depend upon our point of view, which in this case would be *non-chromatic* "things in themselves", as opposed to things that do depend upon our point of view, which in this case would be cognizable chromatic "appearances". This requires that there be a distinction between merely logical possibility, which here is the possibility of thinking non-chromatically, and real possibility, which here is the possibility of (cognizing) chromatic objects. The rules governing the possibility of non-chromatic thought must in some sense differ from those governing the possibility of (cognition of) chromatic reality, in such a way that there should be two logics, dealing with these rules, namely general logic and transcendental logic. General logic would here be concerned with the necessary rules of thought insofar as they allow us to think non-chromatically; transcendental logic would here be concerned with the necessary rules of thought insofar as they govern (cognition of) chromatic reality. All this may be summed up in the final requirement that we should be able to attain a merely logical non-empirical perspective over

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colour, allowing us to propositionally determine its metaphysical status as "ideal".

It starts to appear here that there is a conceptual core to these requirements that is *not* anchored to the peculiarities of Kant's machinery. Not only there is no mention of space and time above, but not even of intuitions, sensibility and understanding. (Maybe colour is a mind-dependent feature of our point of view, but *not* a sensible intuition; who's to say?) Indeed, when the effable transcendental idealist speaks of cognition, he may simply mean representation of empirical reality, without claiming that the latter springs from the unification of intuitions and concepts, and of the correlative faculties of the mind. And when he talks of the appearances cognized, he need not mean "objects of empirical intuition" structured by synthetic a priori judgements. (The terms "appearance" and "things in themselves", do not just belong to Kant, as attested by many discussions in contemporary philosophy.) And so on.

This suggests that, by suitably abstracting away from the peculiarities of Kant's position, we may give a list of the necessary requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism *in general*. Here it goes.

The effable transcendental idealist must commit to a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition

(TF$_{\text{IDEAL}}$)   transcendental features depend upon our point of view

To know this proposition, one must be able to coherently think it. To think (TF$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), one must be able to *think* things that do *not* depend upon the transcendental features of our point of view ("things in themselves"), as opposed to things that do depend upon such transcendental features ("appearances"), which may be cognized. This requires a distinction between the possibility of thought in general ("merely logical possibility") and the possibility of—cognition of—empirical reality ("real possibility"). This requires a distinction between general logic, investigating the rules governing merely logical possibility, and transcendental logic, investigating the rules governing real possibility. And all these requirements are contained in the need for a merely logical non-empirical perspective, allowing *us* to propositionally determine the metaphysical status of transcendental features as "ideal".

Our question is now: Is the metaphysical vision articulated by these general requirements so much as *coherent*?

Moore against Effable Transcendental Idealism

In his second book, *Points of View*, A. W. Moore argues that (what I call) Effable Transcendental Idealism is incoherent. The argument is almost a series of interlocked definitions. By "idealism", Moore means the view that (some) necessary features of reality *depend* on (some) necessary features of our[339] representations.[340] If such dependence is *transcendent*, Moore writes, then the idealism is transcendent*al*.[341] Now "transcendent", *for Moore*, is whatever is not immanent—whatever is not-within reality.[342] But since, Moore argues, whatever exists is within reality, then "the *idea* of that which is transcendent is incoherent".[343] And if so, given Moore's definition of transcendental idealism in terms of *transcendent* dependence, Effable Transcendental Idealism will be incoherent too. Indeed, for Moore, any attempt to propositionally articulate Transcendental Idealism is destined to result in *nonsense*.

This, then, is Moore's swift argument against Effable Transcendental Idealism in general. Significantly, if successful, Moore's argument would turn Transcendental Idealism into an *ineffable* view, whereby we *cannot* have propositional knowledge of the "ideality" of transcendental features, but only ever *ineffable knowledge* of it, that we may recognize with the help of some nonsense.[344] Yet if we are to retain our distinction between two kinds of Transcendental Idealism, we must challenge Moore's argument.

I will cut to the chase. Moore's argument is *too* quick. For even granting for the sake of the argument that the idea of the "transcendent" is incoherent, Moore's conclusion that Effable Transcendental Idealism is incoherent does not follow, since he conflates the transcendent and the transcendent*al*. To be sure, the transcendental is *not-within* empirical reality, and hence it is not immanent in Moore's sense. Yet something may not be *within* reality (i.e. not be immanent) and still fail to be transcendent, in the same way in which a circumference is *not-within* a circle, but it does not, on that account, "transcend" the circle.

Similarly, transcendental features are not immanent, but they are not thereby *completely* outside of reality either. Rather, they pervade reality, as its necessary features. As such, transcendental features have a *liminal status*, hovering between the immanent and the

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[339] Due to the use of the word "our", Moore's definition of idealism is restrictive, when compared to mine. For example, Berkeley's idealism, whereby reality ultimately depends upon God's mind, would not count as idealism under Moore's definition.

[340] Moore (1997, p. 116).

[341] Ibid.

[342] Moore (1997, pp. 110 and 112)

[343] Ibid.

[344] Moore all but equates ineffable knowledge with *showing*. For a discussion of showing, and of the view that Ineffable Transcendental Idealism is shown, see Chapter 3w.

transcendent.[345] For, as Kant already noted (A296/B352), these features are the (transcendental) *limits* of cognition and empirical reality, as opposed to anything that lies within such limits (immanent) or completely outside them (transcendent).[346] Yet if the transcendental features are *not* transcendent, then their mind-dependence or "ideality" need not be "transcendent" either, as Moore wants.

Once we refuse to swiftly identify the transcendental and the transcendent, Moore's argument loses its appeal. The argument was based on the claim that Effable Transcendental Idealism purports to represent something *transcendent*, or something completely outside reality, namely the dependence of (some) necessary features of reality on (some) necessary features of our representations. But even if we grant Moore that the idea of representing such "transcendent dependence" is incoherent, that wouldn't establish the illegitimacy of the claim that (some) transcendent*al* features are represented as ideal in metaphysical status—a claim to which the effable transcendental idealist must be committed.

At this point, Moore could reply that to represent the ideal metaphysical status of transcendental features we should still have to take a "transcendent point of view",[347] i.e. a point of view *completely outside* reality. And how could there ever *be* such a standpoint? But that, again, is too quick. To be sure, the effable transcendental idealist must commit to a merely logical *non-empirical* perspective. However, while this perspective may perhaps be characterized as "transcendent" in the negative sense of "*not restricted* to empirical reality and its *sensible* conditions", it is still *internal* to the Subject who makes empirical reality possible.[348] As such, it does not *completely* transcend empirical reality, as if it were alien to it, but rather contributes to *its possibility* in the first place.[349] It is a transcendent*al* perspective that, as we shall see in 3K, may itself be part of a more comprehensive transcendent*al* point of view. To put it in Kant's words:

> From this [transcendental] standpoint […] reason is neither locked inside the sensible world nor adrift outside it. (*Prol*, § 59, 4:361)

There is no incoherence in this, *as long as we keep in mind the liminal status of the transcendental.*

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[345] For the liminal status of the transcendental, in between the immanent and the transcendent, see Bell (2001a, p. 177), Förster (2012, p. 105) and Sullivan (2013, p. 257). Curiously, Moore himself seems to be aware of such status, which he acknowledges in a footnote of his *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics* (2012, p. 121, fn. 35).

[346] Kant: "We will call [what] stays wholly and completely within the limits of possible experience immanent, but [what] would fly beyond these boundaries transcendent […] Hence transcendental and transcendent are *not* the same" (A296/B352; my emphasis). For an even clearer distinction, see *Prol*, 4:373n, quoted in 1K.

[347] Moore (1997, p. 112).

[348] At least, for the effable transcendental idealist.

[349] Hence, Kant rhetorically asks: "And how should it be possible to go beyond experience (of our existence in life) through the unity of consciousness with which we are acquainted only because we have an indispensable need of it for the possibility of experience[?]" (B420-1). I return below on Kant's view of consciousness.

But to better understand this last point, we need to turn to Moore's criticism of Kant's idealism, to criticize *it*. That will reinforce the view that Moore's charge of incoherence against Effable Transcendental Idealism misses the mark.

Moore Against Kant: The "Limit Argument"

The necessary background to evaluate Moore's criticism of Kant's effable transcendental idealism is as follows. Kant famously wants to draw *limits* to *cognition*. Limits are *necessary features* of that which they are limits of. Indeed, in wanting to draw limits to cognition, Kant presents us with *transcendental features*—necessary features of cognition *and* the empirical reality cognized, which are known a priori. But since transcendental features, for Kant, are imposed by us onto appearances, then, in (allegedly) drawing limits to cognition, as opposed to thought, Kant also presents us with (transcendental) *limitations*, or better *constraints*, that restrict empirical reality to cognizable appearances, *as opposed to thinkable things in themselves.*

Now, the question Moore raises is this: Is Kant's transcendental exercise in "limit-drawing" coherent? By means of a general argument, which has a strong Wittgensteinian flavour to it,[350] Moore wants to answer "No". Here's how the general argument goes:

The Limit Argument

P₁: We cannot properly draw a limit to what we can make sense of unless we can make sense of the limit.

P₂: We cannot make sense of any limit unless we can make sense of what lies on both sides of it.

C: We cannot properly draw a limit to what we can make sense of.[351]

Put in these general terms, it may at first seem that Kant's "limit-drawing" enterprise is condemned to incoherence. However, when we precisely reformulate the Limit Argument by means of the notion of cognition, which is what Kant wants to draw limits to, the result is the following:

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[350] Cf. the Preface to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which I discuss in Part_W of the present work.
[351] Moore (2012, p. 135).

P$_1$★:   We cannot properly draw a limit to cognition unless we can make sense of the limit.

P$_2$★:   We cannot make sense of any limit, unless we can make sense of what lies on both sides of it.

C★:   We cannot properly draw a limit to cognition.

Reformulated like this, the Limit Argument is rather unfair to Kant's position. For, given Kant's notion of merely logical possibility, we *can* in mere thought make sense of what lies on "the other side" of the limit of cognition, namely things in themselves. Indeed, according to Kant, we can *think* things in themselves from the merely logical perspective of pure understanding—and thinking certainly is a form of (what Moore calls) "sense-making". Hence, *prima facie*, C★ does not follow, and all the bite of the Limit Argument against Kant is lost.

However, we should not be unfair to Moore either. For Moore recognizes that Kant *claims* to have the machinery to think things in themselves, and hence to draw the limits of cognition from the other side of them—the side of *mere thought*. What Moore wants to deny is that Kant has the resources to draw the limits of cognition *as he does*, i.e. by propositionally casting them as (transcendental) limitations that *depend* upon the human point of view, and that constrain empirical reality to the field of spatiotemporal appearances, as opposed to things in themselves. Specifically, Moore argues, Kant's analytic/synthetic distinction is not suitable for the job.

Is Moore right?

Problems for Moore

Compressed to its core, here's Moore's anti-Kantian train of thought. Transcendental knowledge is a priori knowledge of the necessary conditions of our cognition. With his transcendental idealism, Kant claims knowledge that the "objects" of our (alleged) transcendental knowledge, and more specifically space and time, *depend* upon our point of view. This recognition or "acknowledgement" looks metaphysical.[352] And Metaphysics, for *Moore's*[353]

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[352] This is Moore's own terminology. For example, *Moore's* Kant takes the proposition "metaphysical knowledge is synthetic a priori" to be a synthetic a priori metaphysical proposition (2012, p. 138), so that, for *Moore's* Kant, our "*acknowledge[ement]* that there is a substantial contribution made by the a priori conditions of our experience to some of our knowledge" must itself be a piece of synthetic a priori metaphysical knowledge (2012, p. 139). Below, I will however argue that our acknowledgement that space and time are a priori intuitions that formally contribute to the possibility of empirical knowledge is *analytic* for Kant.

[353] Moore: "metaphysical sense-making, for Kant, must all be *thick*". (By "thick", Moore means *here* "synthetic a priori", since he calls "thick" any sense-making resulting from the interaction of concepts and

Kant, is both *substantive* and a priori.[354] Hence, *Moore* takes it, Kant is committed to regard knowledge of his transcendental idealism as *synthetic a priori*.

And here comes the kernel of Moore's objection. Synthetic a priori knowledge may only ever be of appearances for Kant, and *not* of things in themselves (cf. B73 and R 5637). However, Moore notes, knowledge of our transcendental knowledge, and thus, for Kant, "acknowledgement" that space and time depend upon our mind, looks like substantive knowledge of ourselves *as we are in ourselves*, and not as we appear in space and time. If so, Kant would be claiming that we have synthetic a priori knowledge of (at least some) things in themselves after all. And that looks incoherent.

Now, considering our previous discussion in Part$_K$, Kant has the resources to counter Moore's charge. For Kant could say that, while space and time are intuitions known a priori, still the philosophical knowledge we have of the dependence of space and time upon our point of view is *analytic* a priori. Indeed, Kant would say, philosophy aims at an illuminating *analysis* of our *concepts*, including the concepts of space and time (as concepts of intuitions).

To be sure, for Kant, Metaphysics is *stricto sensu* constituted by synthetic a priori judgements (e.g. "all events have a cause"). But that is not yet to say that the "Metaphysics *of* Metaphysics"[355]—namely the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is to draw the limits of cognition[356]— is just constituted of synthetic a priori judgements. For Kant's philosophy consists in the *analysis* of synthetic a priori judgements, which "resolves" them into their elements—namely space, time, and the categories (see 1$_K$).

Put otherwise, transcendental idealism is *strictu sensu* a metaphysical doctrine, which contains synthetic a priori judgements. But its philosophical acknowledgement need not be a synthetic a priori metaphysical doctrine. It is open to Kant to say that, in critical-transcendental philosophy, we mainly expound or *analyse concepts* (cf. A713-38/B741-66), by means of an analysis of judgements, including synthetic a priori judgements (see A14/B28). This, after all, is exactly what Kant does in his *expositions* of the concepts of space and time (see again 1$_K$).

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intuitions, and which thereby is synthetic in Kant's terms, and since Moore claims that, for Kant, metaphysical sense-making is a priori. I return on Moore's usage of "thick" below).

[354] See Moore (2012, p. 138). I return on this point below, arguing that, for Kant, Metaphysics contains fundamental analytic a priori judgements (namely, the expositions of concepts), so that it is false, or at any rate misleading, to say that it "must" be synthetic a priori, as Moore *assumes* (see note above).

[355] This is Kant's own expression, in a 1781 letter to Herz (C, 10:269).

[356] On Kant's critique of reason as a form of meta-metaphysics, see Zöller (2022, esp. pp. 165-6). In this sense, the critique of reason is not so much a science aimed at knowledge of things, but rather a "science of the limits of human reason" (D, 2:368).

"Thin" vs. "Thick"

At this point, Moore would resort to *his* distinctions. He would distinguish between "thin" knowledge, "in which concepts are exercised without intuitions"[357], which for Kant would be a species of analytic knowledge, namely *mere thought*; and "thick" knowledge, in which concepts are exercised with intuitions, which for Kant would be a species of synthetic knowledge, namely *cognition*. With this distinction in place, Moore would then ask: Can "thin" analytic knowledge so much as *aspire* to the rank of "thick" metaphysical knowledge, or even *meta*-metaphysical knowledge?[358] And he would raise doubts on the very *coherence* of this view. Indeed, for *Moore's* Kant, (meta)metaphysical knowledge must be both "thick" and a priori, since it is itself part of Metaphysics.

But Moore's Kant is not necessarily *Kant*. To be sure, for Kant, meta-metaphysical knowledge belongs to Metaphysics (*Prol*, § 2). Yet Kant never says that Metaphysics must *only* be "thick" (synthetic cognition), as Moore *assumes*. Quite the contrary, in § 2 of the *Prolegomena*, Kant is adamant that Metaphysics contains fundamental analytic propositions (namely, meta-metaphysical expositions), alongside the "properly metaphysical propositions" (namely, synthetic a priori propositions). And if so, for Kant, "thin" analytic knowledge may without problems aspire to the rank of meta-metaphysical knowledge of the limits of our ("properly metaphysical") cognition. For the critical knowledge of such limits is *not* supposed to be "thick", or "ampliative", or "substantive" (or what have you), as Moore *assumes*. On the contrary, for Kant, "transcendental critique […] does not aim at the amplification of cognitions" (A12/B26). Critical knowledge is just conceptual knowledge. We attain it in mere thought for Kant.

A step back, not a step out

Moore would now complain that, for Kant, mere thought *transcends* our human point of view, which Kant takes to be the proper locus of Metaphysics. For example, knowing the "ideality" of space and time view requires for Kant the logical possibility of things in themselves. And, in Moore's interpretation of Kant, it almost looks like, to even just think that space and time depend upon our point of view, as opposed to things in themselves, we should *transcend* our point of view, which is incoherent. Indeed, Moore calls Kant's merely logical possibility

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[357] Moore (2012, p. 134).

[358] "The concern [for the coherence of Kant's limit-drawing activity] is now exacerbated by the thought that this [meta-metaphysical] task is itself a metaphysical task, [and] metaphysical sense-making, for Kant, must all be thick" (Moore, 2012, p. 138).

"transcendent possibility",[359] arguing it requires a "transcendent point of view",[360] which however for Moore is the mirage of a point of view, given he regards the "transcendent" as incoherent.[361]

Now, it is surely true that, in one notorious passage of the first *Critique*—in talking about space and how, in mere thought, we may abstract from it—Kant *seems* to suggest that we may "depart" from the "human standpoint", by departing "from the subjective condition under which alone we can acquire outer intuition" (A26/B42). Clearly, however, Kant does not mean that *we* may completely transcend *ourselves* in mere thought—that would be an outright contradiction. Rather, he simply means that, in mere thought, *we* can take a step back from *our* usual mode of engagement with reality, to think of space and time as transcendental features that depend upon *our* point of view. And for Kant *we* can do this since, in mere thought, *we* are not subject to the same conditions to which *we* are subject in cognition, namely space and time, which latter are definitive, *though not exhaustive*, of *our* human mindedness (considered in opposition to other conceivable forms of mindedness.)

This may all look schizophrenic. Yet it is simpler than it looks. Moore does not fully realize that the logical perspective of pure understanding—from which, according to Kant, *we* may think that space and time depend upon *our* point of view—is not a perspective that *completely* transcends our point of view. Rather, it is an *internal* perspective that we, *human beings*, may take, even though it is not the ordinary empirical perspective in space and time, and thereby requires a step back *on our part* from our usual engagement with things. In the words of Sebastian Gardner (who in the Kant-Moore debate sides with Kant):

> [W]e do not need to get outside ourselves […] in order to apprehend [the basic shape of our cognition]; we have aboriginal knowledge of it *from the inside*. (2015. p. 71)

> [A] step *back* is indeed taken in transcendental reflection, but not a step *out of* the human standpoint. (2015, p. 72, Gardner's emphasis)

Moore had argued that philosophical knowledge of our transcendental knowledge can neither be analytic ("thin") nor synthetic ("thick") for Kant. Indeed, for Moore's Kant, in synthetic knowledge we know only appearances, as opposed to ourselves as we are in ourselves, whereas in merely analytic knowledge (in abstraction from intuition) we "transcend" our human point of view, so that neither kind of knowledge could *really* count as propositional knowledge of (what we know from) *our* point of view. It is now clear that this is not fair to Kant, and that he

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[359] Moore (1997, pp. 123-5).
[360] Ibid., p. 135.
[361] Moore: "A transcendent point of view is therefore not a point of view" (1997, p. 112).

has options.

For example, Kant may hold that, in philosophy, we may have conceptual knowledge of *part* of (what we know from) our point of view, such as space and time, since this conceptual knowledge springs from the *internal*—as opposed to completely "transcendent"—perspective of pure understanding, from which we may analyse our *concepts* of space and time. While it may be asked whether this conceptual analysis is enough to convince us of the *truth* of Kant's transcendental idealism—a question I will evaluate in Chapter 7—there is *no incoherence* whatsoever in the idea of pursuing the analysis itself from our point of view. And if so, Kant's position is *not* incoherent.

Yet what about the *whole* of our point of view, and thereby to the very *existence* of our human reason? How could we ever have access to *that*, asks rhetorically Moore, if we stick to Kant's machinery?[362] For, given Kant's commitments, knowledge of our *existence* can neither be synthetic (here, concerning appearances) nor analytic (here, revealed by conceptual analysis, in abstraction from intuitions)—neither "thick" nor "thin". And so, once again, it looks like Kant is in trouble.

Yet, once again, there is another possibility open to Kant. For he could maintain that we have knowledge of our (transcendental) point of view as a whole *not* by putting it into words, but rather by *being* ourselves—our own existence being *ineffable*. That's perfectly coherent, as long as Kant stays committed to the view that we have effable knowledge of *part* of (what we know from) our point of view. Indeed, I will argue in 3$_K$ that this is exactly what Kant maintains. For now, I will note that Moore's criticism fails to castigate Kant's view as incoherent, just as it failed to castigate as incoherent Effable Transcendental Idealism more generally.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have expounded Effable Transcendental Idealism, and its requirements, by means of a discussion of the necessary conditions of Kant's effable transcendental idealism. I have shown that and how these conditions come together into one organically conceived metaphysical doctrine, bearing on epistemological, ontological, and logical issues. The chain of conditions ends in a merely logical non-empirical perspective, which in Kant is the extra-empirical perspective of pure understanding. From there, *Kant argues*, we may think (with consciousness of its necessity) the proposition that space and time depend upon our point of

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[362] See Moore (2012, p. 140).

view, thereby knowing the truth of his effable transcendental idealism.

In the Coda to the Chapter, I have defended Effable Transcendental Idealism in general, and Kant's transcendental idealism in particular, against familiar charges of incoherence, epitomized by A. W. Moore. This is important, since similar charges have led to an ineffable variant of the doctrine, namely Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, which I will consider in Chapter 3$_K$.

2_W Effable Transcendental Idealism?

The mind is eternal in so far as it conceives things under the form of eternity.

– Spinoza

AIM: Establishing that the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist (β), since he does not respect any of the requirements to be one.

Introduction

In Chapter 1_W, I have argued that, like Kant, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendentalist or transcendental philosopher (α). However, by the end of the Chapter, the question has arisen: Is the early Wittgenstein also a transcendental idealist of some kind?

I say "of some kind" since in Chapter 2_K I have distinguished between two variants of Transcendental Idealism, namely the effable and the ineffable one. An effable transcendental idealist must endorse the claim that (TI*eff*) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view. An ineffable transcendental idealist must be fully sympathetic to the pseudo-claim (TI*ineff**) we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view. The question of the early Wittgenstein's *alleged* transcendental idealism thus bifurcates into *two*, namely the question of whether he endorses (TI*eff*), therewith buying Effable Transcendental Idealism, and the question of whether he is fully sympathetic to (TI*ineff**), therewith buying Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

In this Chapter, I address the first of these two questions. Overall, I argue that the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist (β), since he cannot endorse claim (TI*eff*)— and thereby he cannot respect any of the requirements of Effable Transcendental Idealism that flowed from endorsement of (TI*eff*), outlined in 2_K. While this may sound uncontroversial to some Wittgenstein scholars, others have advanced quasi-propositional (or quasi-effable) readings of the *Tractatus*, linking them to Transcendental Idealism.[363] This Chapter will thus start to offer substantial reasons to resist such readings, by clearly presenting the main differences

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[363] The main example is Peter Hacker, whose interpretation of Wittgenstein will be discussed at more length in Chapter 3_W. Hacker takes it that the *Tractatus* contains "numerous doctrines", among which Transcendental Idealism (1972 and 1986), which the remarks of the book help us to recognize as "*truths*" about reality, which cannot be stated (2000, p. 357). As this interpretation oscillates between effability and ineffability, it is *quasi*-propositional.

between Kant's effable transcendental idealism and the early Wittgenstein's transcendental philosophy.

My discussion of Wittgenstein proceeds in eight sections. Specifically,

§ 2.1$_W$ argues that, while the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, this is not yet to say that he is a transcendental idealist. That is so even though Wittgenstein recognizes *transcendental features*, such as his objects. Indeed, while Wittgenstein engages in Transcendental Ontology, this does not necessarily commit him to any form of Transcendental Metaphysics.

§ 2.2$_W$ argues that the early Wittgenstein cannot endorse (TI$_{eff}$), and hence Effable Transcendental Idealism. Specifically, I argue that Wittgenstein is in no position to claim that we know a priori the truth of the alleged proposition that *objects depend upon our point of view* (O$_{IDEAL}$).

§ 2.3$_W$ argues space and time, as forms of Wittgenstein's (transcendental) objects, figure among the transcendental features of his (transcendental) ontology. I then apply the result of § 2.2$_W$, by arguing that Wittgenstein cannot claim that we know a priori the truth of the alleged proposition that *space and time depend upon our point of view* (S&T$_{IDEAL}$).

§ 2.4$_W$ argues that, for Wittgenstein, (O$_{IDEAL}$) and (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) would not count as propositions at all—they are not pictures. Hence, for Wittgenstein, nothing would count as entertaining them in the first place.

§ 2.5$_W$ argues that, for this reason, Wittgenstein cannot countenance a distinction between thinkable things in themselves and cognizable appearances. Rather, for Wittgenstein, we can only ever think about objects with which we are in cognitive contact (a priori).

§ 2.6$_W$ argues that, thereby, Wittgenstein cannot have a distinction between merely logical and real possibility. On the contrary: for the early Wittgenstein, all that can be thought can be the case in empirical reality.

§ 2.7$_W$ argues that, as a result, Wittgenstein cannot countenance a distinction between general and transcendental logic either—logic is transcendental for him, while at the same time being general in scope.

§ 2.8$_W$ argues that, for all these reasons, Wittgenstein cannot endorse a merely logical non-empirical perspective, which was the ultimate condition of Effable Transcendental Idealism. While Wittgenstein commits to a non-empirical perspective, this is not merely logical, but rather *aesthetic*, namely the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. From this perspective, one cannot propositionally determine the metaphysical nature and status of space and time, or for that matter of objects more generally. This confirms that the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist (β).

2.1$_W$ Wittgenstein's Transcendental Ontology

In Chapter 2$_K$, I have distinguished between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, arguing that there may be transcendental philosophers who are not, on that account, transcendental idealists. Further, I have distinguished between Transcendental Ontology and Transcendental Metaphysics, arguing that some transcendental philosophers may engage in the former without therewith engaging in the latter.

In this section, I argue that, while the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, that is not yet to say that he is a transcendental idealist. Indeed, even though the early Wittgenstein engages in Transcendental Ontology, by recognizes objects as the shared necessary form of representation and represented reality (*transcendental isomorphism*), that is not to say that he engaged in Transcendental Metaphysics, whether idealistic (Transcendental Idealism) or realistic (Transcendental Realism).

2.11$_W$ *The early Wittgenstein's Transcendental Idealism?*

We have established by now that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher. However, given my distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, that does *not* establish that the early Wittgenstein is also a transcendental idealist.

Why is this important? Well, many scholars take it that, since the early Wittgenstein was a transcendental philosopher, he must have been a transcendental idealist of some kind as well. Their idea is that, just as in Kant the necessary form of *experience* is contributed by us, for Wittgenstein the necessary form of *language* is contributed by us (or at any rate by *me*). Consider for example this seminal passage by Erik Stenius:

The *Tractatus* could be called a 'Critique of Pure Language' [just as] Kantianism has been called 'Critical Idealism' or 'Transcendental Idealism'. This terminology emphasizes the fact that Kantianism is an "idealistic" philosophy in the restricted sense that the *form* of experience, but *only* the form, is imposed on the world of experience by the structure of the human mind. In a way the form of experience can therefore be said to be "subjective", but "subjective" only in a […] "transcendental sense" […] With regard to this terminology Wittgenstein's philosophical system could be called 'Critical Lingualism' or 'Transcendental Lingualism' or even 'Linguistic Idealism'. For Wittgenstein, too, the form of experience is 'subjective' in the transcendental sense […] Therefore, [Wittgenstein writes] "*the limits of my language mean the limits of my world*". (Stenius, 1960, p. 220)

In the last bit of the passage, Stenius alludes to Wittgenstein's discussion of Solipsism, as an extreme form of Idealism. I will deal with Wittgenstein's discussion of Solipsism in Chapter 3$_W$. Here, I only wished to stress how quickly Stenius—and as we will see many after him[364]—jump from the fact that the early Wittgenstein worked in the critical-transcendental tradition to his *alleged* endorsement of (some form of) Transcendental Idealism.

In the light of our distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, no such swift and apparently innocent move can be allowed. Whether the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental idealist is to be *demonstrated*.

2.12$_W$ *Wittgenstein's Transcendental Isomorphism*

Now, idealist interpreters of Wittgenstein may protest that their move is not quick at all. The rationale for this protest would arguably be this. Wittgenstein takes objects to be the necessary if we are to make to ourselves linguistic representations of facts (pictures). Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, objects are necessary features of our point of view, without which we could not so much as represent reality. His argument for substance was meant to lead us to recognize this much. But if so, must not Wittgenstein buy some form of Transcendental Idealism, whereby the necessary form of empirical reality (objects) *depends* upon our point of view?

It will take all Part$_W$ of the present work to evaluate whether the early Wittgenstein accepted anything like this view. For now, I will note that the early Wittgenstein is *not obliged* to commit to Transcendental Idealism in any form. Indeed, I believe that, even without such a commitment, Wittgenstein could retain the full force of his argument for substance, that concerns empirical reality, as much as our representations of it.

To see this, recall our discussion of *transcendental isomorphism* in 2$_K$. We have a transcendental isomorphism whenever the necessary features of *representation* are also the necessary features of

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[364] We will see this in Chapter 3$_W$, where I will discuss the views of Peter Hacker and A. W. Moore, as well as Sami Philström's.

representable *reality*, and we know this a priori. Kant, who is a transcendental idealist, endorses a transcendental isomorphism. However, a transcendental philosopher may commit to a transcendental isomorphism without thereby committing to Transcendental Idealism (in any form)—without, that is, locating the *source* of the transcendental isomorphism in the point of view of the Subject, *as opposed to reality*.

Now, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher. Indeed, Wittgenstein recognizes a transcendental isomorphism between representation and representable reality, which resides in his objects—"the a priori order of the world", which is shared by thought and language (PI, § 97[365]). Yet, given our discussion of transcendental isomorphism in 2ₖ, this does not imply a commitment on Wittgenstein's part to Transcendental Idealism (in any form).

This point is buttressed by our interpretation of Wittgenstein's argument for substance. I have argued that working our way through the argument requires a perspectival representation, aimed at recognizing *substance* as necessary to *think* of a world at all. Insofar as, for Wittgenstein, substance is also the necessary form of *reality*, which is known a priori, then Wittgenstein's transcendental argument aims at recognition of the transcendental isomorphism between the pictures, which *someone makes to himself*, and the reality pictured (which ultimately comes down to objects). Put otherwise, by means of a perspectival representation, the picturing Subject is meant to recognize, and *a priori*, the form of her point of view as the form of the empirical world she pictures—substance.

However, that the form of the Subject's point of view is also the form of empirical reality, does *not yet* make empirical reality *dependent* upon the Subject's point of view—not even formally dependent, as Kant wanted (and as any transcendental idealist in general should maintain). For one, the dependence relation could be the other way around, such that reality imposes its form

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[365] "Thought is surrounded by a halo.—Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world: that is, the order of possibilities, which must be common to both world and thought. But this order, it seems, must be utterly simple. It is prior to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty can be allowed to affect it——It must rather be of the purest crystal. But this crystal does not appear as an abstraction; but as something concrete, indeed, as the most concrete, as it were the hardest thing there is (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus No. 5.5563)". That Wittgenstein is here looking back to his Tractarian objects is clear from a variety of hints, which are not meant to be too subtle. He writes in fact of the order of possibilities that must be common to both world and thought; but this can be none other than logical space, which is exactly given by objects, and which is the space of all the possible combinations of objects which we can represent in thought or language. Wittgenstein further stresses that this order is utterly simple, prior to all experience, and pervasive of every experience; and indeed, as we have seen in 1_W, Tractarian objects are simple, given a priori, and constitutive of the space of all that which we can experience. Finally, Wittgenstein talks of this order of possibilities in terms of "the hardest thing there is", a formulation that is clearly reminiscent of a line in his wartime *Notebooks*, where he had characterized objects as "what is hard" (NB, 17.6.15). It should thereby be clear that the isomorphism he countenanced at the time of the *Tractatus* is a transcendental isomorphism, by which we know a priori the necessary or formal features of both representation and reality. In fact, in the light of Wittgenstein's retrospective remark above, we may safely take it that the transcendental isomorphism resided in Tractarian objects—"the a priori order of […] possibility which must be common to both world and thought".

upon the Subject's point of view.[366]   And besides, it would suffice if Wittgenstein's argument were aimed recognition of a *no-priority transcendental isomorphism*, by which the objects that the Subject is given are the form of both language *and* empirical reality, without any knowable, *or even conceivable*, priority between the two.[367] (Indeed, any talk of "priority" would eventually have to drop out here).

Hence, there is no *quick* way to conclude from Wittgenstein's transcendentalism to his *alleged* transcendental idealism. A whole investigation can and should be launched on this issue.

2.13$_W$ *Wittgenstein's Transcendental Ontology*

Before launching such an investigation, I briefly generalize the point made above, arguing that Wittgenstein's transcendental ontology does not *necessarily* commit him to *any* form of transcendental metaphysics, whether it be idealistic (Transcendental Idealism) or realistic (Transcendental Realism). The issue will be decided by the final Chapter 7.

2.131$_W$ *Wittgenstein, Transcendentalism, and Metaphysics*

In Chapter 2$_K$, combining the two fundamental requirements of Transcendental Philosophy (*i*) and (*ii*) with a general definition of Ontology, I have reached the following definition:

> Transcendental Ontology is the philosophical investigation of the necessary features of empirical reality, by means of an investigation of our *representation* of empirical reality, and more specifically of its necessary features, which are known a priori.

I have urged that this definition banks on a *transcendental isomorphism*, and so on *transcendental features* shared by representation and empirical reality, in which such isomorphism resides. And I have then argued that Transcendental Ontology may be distinguished from Transcendental Metaphysics, since in both we commit to transcendental features, but only in the latter we commit over their nature and status. Indeed, transcendental metaphysicians commit over the *source* of the transcendental isomorphism, locating it either in the Subject (Transcendental Idealism) *or* in reality (Transcendental Realism). But transcendental ontologists need not

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[366] I will return on this (transcendental) realist interpretation of Wittgenstein, advanced by David Pears, in the final Chapter 7.

[367] The idea of a no-priority isomorphism in the *Tractatus* is (*very* briefly) foreshadowed by McDowell in *Mind and World*. As McDowell writes in a footnote: "I doubt whether either claim of priority [*viz.* of mind over world or of world over mind] is to be found in the *Tractatus*" (1994, p. 28, fn. 5). In the remainder of Part$_W$ of this work, as well as in the final Chapter 7, I will substantiate McDowell's intuition, arguing at some length that, indeed, there are no such priority claims in Wittgenstein's early work.

necessarily do so.

Now, given our discussion so far, we have compelling reasons to declare that Wittgenstein's Tractarian ontology is a form of transcendental ontology. It may at first *seem* that Wittgenstein begins the *Tractatus* with metaphysical pronouncements over the essential nature and status of *reality*. Yet, as a matter of fact, Wittgenstein's philosophical investigation proceeds from our representation of reality, and the cognitive capacities involved in, such as our capacity for picturing reality in language.

Proceeding "from within" language, Wittgenstein recognizes *objects* as necessary conditions of its possibility, which are known a priori. Indeed, starting "from within" language, Wittgenstein recognizes objects as transcendental features shared by language and reality (transcendental isomorphism). If so, Wittgenstein puts forward a form of transcendental ontology. However, this does not imply commitment on his part to Transcendental Metaphysics. Put otherwise, Wittgenstein's commitment to transcendental features (e.g. objects) does not imply that they are also transcendental *constraints* on what counts as empirically real (Transcendental Idealism), or on what counts as a representation *of* empirical reality (Transcendental Realism).

We must thus enquire into whether, beyond being a transcendentalist, the early Wittgenstein is also a transcendental *metaphysician*. In the rest of Part$_W$, I will do so by investigating the question of the alleged presence of some form of Transcendental Idealism in Wittgenstein's early philosophy. That is because the early Wittgenstein has often been interpreted as a transcendental idealist.

However, my discussion of the early Wittgenstein's alleged transcendental idealism will inevitably bear on the issue of whether he is a transcendental realist, i.e. someone who believes that transcendental features are *primarily* features of a mind-independent reality, which *constrain* the space of what can count as a representation at all (transcendentally real constraints). In fact, if it turned out that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental idealist, then he could not be a transcendental realist. If, instead, it turned out that the early Wittgenstein is *not* a transcendental idealist, then it may well be that, by the same token, he cannot be a transcendental realist either.

In any case, by the final Chapter of this work, I aim at working out whether the early Wittgenstein is a (transcendental) metaphysician *at all*—whether an idealist or a realist. For now, let us focus on the problem of his *alleged* transcendental idealism, and more specifically on whether he is an *effable* transcendental idealist.

2.2$_W$ Wittgenstein's Effable Transcendental Idealism?

Transcendental Metaphysics comprises Transcendental Idealism and Transcendental Realism. Transcendental Idealism, with which we are concerned here, may be effable or ineffable.

In this section, I ask whether the early Wittgenstein could have been an effable transcendental idealist. I argue that the early Wittgenstein is in no position to endorse the defining claim of Effable Transcendental Idealism, namely (TI$_{eff}$). Specifically, I argue that, although Wittgenstein is a transcendental ontologist, who recognizes transcendental features such as his 'objects', nothing can count for him as having *propositional a priori knowledge* of transcendental features, and thereby of their allegedly "ideal" metaphysical status.

2.21$_W$ *Clarifying the Question*

As we know from 2$_K$, the transcendental ontology of the *effable transcendental idealist* commits him to the claim that

> (TI$_{eff}$) we have propositional a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view.

This claim may conveniently be *rephrased* as the claim that we have a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition

> (TF$_{IDEAL}$) transcendental features depend upon our point of view,

whatever the transcendental features at stake may then be. (For Kant, they were space and time, but it is not necessary that they are).

Now, Wittgenstein recognizes *objects* as transcendental features, and thereby he is a transcendental ontologist. Is it not possible, then, that for Wittgenstein we have propositional a priori knowledge that *objects depend upon our point of view*? In that case, Wittgenstein would have to maintain that we have a priori knowledge of the truth of the proposition

> (O$_{IDEAL}$)   *objects depend upon our point of view*,

which is a species of (TF$_{IDEAL}$). Indeed, that would make the early Wittgenstein into an effable transcendental idealist. The issue of whether the early Wittgenstein is, or could be, an effable transcendental idealist may thereby be approached by means of the question: Does the early Wittgenstein maintain that we know a priori the truth of the proposition that (O$_{IDEAL}$) *objects depend upon our point of view*?

The answer to this question will depend on Wittgenstein's view of *propositions*, as well as on his views concerning their *truth* and our *knowledge* of it.

Let us start from Wittgenstein's view of *propositions*. As is well known, according to the early Wittgenstein, propositions are pictures, namely structured combinations of terms (e.g., words[368]) that represent possible combinations of simple objects, namely states of affairs (T, 2.14-5), or more generally possible situations (T, 2.202).

When it comes to the *truth* of propositions, Wittgenstein writes that "a proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality" (T, 4.06). If the pictured situation obtains, then the picture/proposition is true. If not, then the picture/proposition is false (T, 2.21). For example, Wittgenstein would regard "the apple is on the table" as a proposition or picture. If, indeed, the apple is on the table, then the proposition is true; if not, then the proposition is false.

So far so good. But how can we *know* that a proposition/picture is true or false? Could we know this a priori? According to Wittgenstein, the truth (or falsehood) of pictures cannot be so known. As he writes:

> 2.223   In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality.
>
> 2.224   It is impossible to tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false.
>
> 2.225   There are no pictures that are true a priori.

Here, Wittgenstein is making clear that knowing *a priori* the truth of a picture or proposition would require knowing it by inspection of the picture or proposition *alone* (cf. T, 3.05). But this, for Wittgenstein, cannot be, since to know the truth of a picture or proposition, we need to *compare* it with reality. This comparison requires *experience* of what is the case in reality. Thus, for example, if I am to *know* the truth of "the apple is on the table", I need reality to instruct me as to whether, indeed, the apple is on the table. But for reality to instruct me in such a way, I need to *experience* that the apple is on the table. As Wittgenstein writes, "experience decides whether a proposition is true or false" (PR, § 23). Hence, for Wittgenstein, I can only ever know the truth of propositions or pictures *a posteriori*.

Why is this important for our current discussion? It is, since, given what we have just said, for the early Wittgenstein we could never know *a priori* the truth of the (alleged) proposition/picture that (Oᵢᴅᴇᴀʟ) *objects depend upon our point of view*, or for that matter of any

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[368] Notice that, for Wittgenstein, is not necessary that the terms of a picture are words. They may, for example, be chairs and tables, arranged in a certain way.

other (alleged) proposition/picture of the general form (TF$_{\text{IDEAL}}$) *transcendental features depend upon our point of view*. And, if so, it looks like the early Wittgenstein *cannot* be an effable transcendental idealist.

It may be objected that the conclusion just reached relies on the view that *all* propositions are pictures for the early Wittgenstein. Only then it will follow that, since we cannot have a priori knowledge of the truth of pictures, we cannot have a priori knowledge of the truth of propositions, including the (alleged) propositions of the general form (TF$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), such as (O$_{\text{IDEAL}}$). However—and here comes the objection—the early Wittgenstein also countenances "propositions of logic", namely tautologies, which are *not* pictures, and the truth of which may be known a priori, by inspection of the proposition *alone* (cf. T, 6.113). And if so, we cannot dismiss so quickly the possibility that the early Wittgenstein is an effable transcendental idealist.

This objection, however, is misguided. Wittgenstein is adamant that propositions are pictures that represent reality, and hence that have sense (T, 4.01). Tautologies, on the other hand, are *not* pictures for Wittgenstein, and hence are senseless. If so, although they are "part of the symbolism", tautologies are at best *degenerate* propositions—"limiting cases" in which the propositional bond *disintegrates*, and which thereby lack representational content (T, 4.4611-2 and 4.466).[369] Indeed, for Wittgenstein, tautologies are sheer trivialities, like "either it is raining or not raining" (T, 4.461). But whatever else it may be, the string of signs that is supposed to express (O$_{\text{IDEAL}}$)—namely "Tractarian objects depend upon our point of view"—does *not* have *that* status. It just can't be seen to be *true* by inspection of the sign alone, and so it cannot be a tautology.[370]

I will return at more length on Wittgenstein's tautologies later in this Chapter, at the end of my discussion of Wittgenstein's logic in § 2.7$_{\text{W}}$. For now, I will only note that, given that the objection above fails, then for Wittgenstein nothing could count as having a priori knowledge of the truth of the (alleged) proposition that (O$_{\text{IDEAL}}$), or for that matter any proposition of the (alleged) form (TF$_{\text{IDEAL}}$). Hence, the early Wittgenstein *cannot* be an effable transcendental idealist.

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[369] Hence, Wittgenstein writes in his *Notebooks*: "There are no such things as analytic *propositions*" (NB, 29.10.14; *his* emphasis)

[370] In fact, I have argued in Chapter 1$_{\text{W}}$ that not even "Tractarian objects form the substance of the world" could be a tautology for Wittgenstein. If so, it is impossible that Wittgenstein should have regarded "The substance of the world *depends upon our point of view*" as a tautology.

2.3~W~ *Wittgenstein against Propositional Knowledge of Transcendental Features*

As far as my **AIM** is concerned, this Chapter could end here. However, there are important reasons not to end it here. For investigating further *why* the early Wittgenstein cannot be an effable transcendental idealist, we may gain insight into some crucial differences between his philosophy and Kant's one. In effect, both Kant and Wittgenstein commit to transcendental features, and thereby to Transcendental Ontology. Yet Wittgenstein, as opposed to Kant, does not, and in fact cannot, commit to *propositional* a priori knowledge of the nature and status of the transcendental features of his transcendental ontology ('objects'). How much hangs on this difference?

As I will argue throughout this Chapter, quite a lot. In this section, I start to show this by delving deeper into Wittgenstein's transcendental ontology, thanks to a clarification of his "formal properties" of objects. I argue that Wittgenstein's "formal properties" deserve the title of transcendental features. Further, I argue that, like Kant, Wittgenstein takes it that space and time—as formal properties of objects—are transcendental features. However, as against Kant, the early Wittgenstein cannot maintain that we have propositional a priori knowledge of the (alleged) proposition that *space and time depend upon our point of view* (S&T~IDEAL~). In delving deeper into Wittgenstein's early ontology, I will thus start to illuminate his view of space and time, as compared to Kant's one.

2.31~W~ *Formal Properties as Transcendental Features*

Transcendental Ontology deals with *transcendental features*. Wittgenstein is a transcendental ontologist, since he recognizes *objects* as transcendental features. Now, it seems plausible that whatever features Wittgenstein's (transcendental) objects may have, these too will have to be "transcendental" for him.

To see this, let us consider Wittgenstein's "internal" or "formal" properties of objects:

2.01231   If I am to know an object, though I need not know its external properties, I must know all its internal properties.

2.0231   The substance of the world can only determine a form, and not any material properties. For it is only by means of […] the configuration of objects that [material properties] are produced.

4.1221[371]   An internal property of a fact can also be called a *feature* of that fact (in the sense in which we speak of facial features, for example).

4.123   A property is internal if it is unthinkable that its object should not possess it.

In these passages, Wittgenstein opposes the internal properties of objects, which he also calls *formal* properties, to the external properties of objects, which he also calls *material* properties. Internal or formal properties are features that belong to an object intrinsically (they make up its form), independently of the obtaining of situations in reality; material properties are instead features acquired by an object extrinsically, in the context of obtaining situations (in which the object materially occurs).

But since, for Wittgenstein, objects make up situations and facts, which make up empirical reality, then, in being intrinsic features of objects, internal or formal properties are intrinsic *features of empirical reality* (cf. T, 4.122). More precisely, since Wittgenstein takes his objects to be the logically necessary substance of empirical reality, then their internal or formal properties should be logically necessary features of empirical reality—features that empirical reality could not *conceivably* fail to have. Without them, objects, and thereby situations and facts, and thereby empirical reality at large would be *unthinkable* (cf. T, 4.123).[372]

Now, given that empirical reality would be *unthinkable* without internal/formal properties, then they *must* be the shared features of *both* empirical reality and thought, *if we are to think of empirical reality at all*.[373] They are logically necessary conditions of the possibility of cognition. Further, for Wittgenstein, internal/formal properties must be *known a priori*, since the objects that possess them are known a priori, and "If I am to know an object […] I must know all its internal properties" (cf. 2.01231). Hence, Wittgenstein's internal or formal properties are *transcendental features*: necessary features of both empirical reality and its representation, which are known a priori as necessary conditions of the possibility of thought of empirical reality.[374]

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[371] My emphasis.

[372] In a way, Tractarian objects are unthinkable, in that, for Wittgenstein, we cannot think *objects*, or put *them* into words (see T, 3.221). However, Wittgenstein is clear that we may think *about* objects (ibid.). For the impossibility of thinking Tractarian objects, see 3$_W$. For thought *about* Tractarian objects, see § 2.5$_W$ below.

[373] Not by chance, for Wittgenstein, internal or formal properties are also necessary marks of what he calls "formal concepts", such as the concept <object*>, under which all objects fall (see T, 4.126 and 4.1272). For a brief discussion of the formal concept <object*> in Wittgenstein's early philosophy see § 2.6$_W$ below.

[374] This is confirmed by Wittgenstein's treatment of variables (T, 4.126-7ff). According to Wittgenstein, variables (as opposed to functions) symbolize internal or formal properties, thereby symbolizing a necessary feature that is common to the things that fall within the range of the variable ("values") and the linguistic signs that stand for those things. For example, the variable x is the symbol of a formal feature, namely that of 'being an object*', which pertains of (logical) necessity to every object, as well as to the (formal) concept <object*>, under which all objects fall. This formal feature is thus reflected by thought or language. Specifically, it is reflected by all the signs that mean objects, i.e. names. But since, for Wittgenstein, if there were no objects, which are known a priori, there

Wittgenstein's transcendental ontology must then deal with internal or formal properties, insofar as they are transcendental features.

2.311ᴡ *"Space, Time, and Colour are Forms of Objects"*

But which internal or formal properties figure in Wittgenstein's transcendental ontology? Well, there may be many,[375] and it is not my aim to offer an exhaustive list here (if that can be done at all), nor I think it was Wittgenstein's.[376] However, to delve deeper into Wittgenstein's transcendental ontology, we should at least individuate *some* of the internal or formal properties that he recognizes.

Wittgenstein gives us a clue in the continuation of 4.123 quoted above. As he writes:

> 4.123   A property is internal if it is unthinkable that its object should not possess it.
> (This shade of blue and that one stand, *eo ipso*, in the internal relation of lighter to darker. It is unthinkable that *these* two objects should not stand in this relation.)

Here, Wittgenstein indicates that it is not being of a certain colour that is necessary for a shade; rather, once a shade is of a certain colour—say, blue—it must be lighter or darker than other shades of that colour. It is *unthinkable* that it should not be thus; therefore, we are dealing with an internal or formal property.

In fact, since internal or formal properties are elucidated through the limit-notion of unthinkability, there is no shortage of further candidates in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. One of them is still related to colour:

> 2.0131   A speck in the visual field, though it need not be red, *must* have some colour.

And if, for Wittgenstein, it *must* be thus, then it is *unthinkable that it should not be thus*, given that "there is only *logical* necessity" (T, 6.37). Hence, 'being coloured' is a formal property for Wittgenstein.

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could not be representations of empirical reality, then the formal feature 'being an object*' may be considered as a transcendental feature. (It is unthinkable, for Wittgenstein, that the variable *x* should have no values.)

[375] Some of them are not as obvious as one might think. For example, Frank Ramsey believed that 'to be mine' or 'to be given to me' is a formal property of objects for Wittgenstein (Ramsey, 1929-1930, Box 4, Folder 21). I agree with Ramsey, though I will postpone my discussion of this formal property to a later stage of this work, since it has to do with the problem of solipsism in Wittgenstein's early philosophy, which will be discussed in a transcendental framework in Chapter 3ᴡ.

[376] That Wittgenstein did not, and could not, give an exhaustive list of the propositional forms is due to his inability to give an example of elementary proposition and, thereby, of the particular forms that the elementary propositions may take (see 1ᴡ).

Other formal properties, beside 'being coloured', are related to space and time by Wittgenstein, once again through the limit-notion of unthinkability:

2.0121[377]   [W]e cannot think of spatial objects at all apart from space, or temporal objects apart from time[.]

It comes as no surprise, then, that Wittgenstein tries to elucidate his notion of 'object' by reference to space, time, and colour, when he writes:

2.0251   Space, time, and colour (being coloured) are forms of objects.[378]

Indeed, space and time *are* formal properties of objects (exactly as colour, or 'being coloured', is). But since, as I have argued, formal properties are transcendental features for Wittgenstein, then he should be committed to the view that space and time are *transcendental features*. Below, I show that this is indeed the case, before comparing Wittgenstein's view of space and time to Kant's one, and hence to Kant's effable transcendental idealism.

2.312w *Space and Time as Transcendental Features*

To establish beyond reasonable doubt that, for the early Wittgenstein, space and time are transcendental features, we need to show he committed to the view that space and time are *known a priori* as necessary or formal features of *both* empirical reality and its representation, without which we could not represent empirical reality in the first place.

Let us start from a priori knowledge of space and time. Insofar as, for the early Wittgenstein, space and time are forms (or formal properties) of objects, then they cannot be known a posteriori. In effect, objects and their combinatorial possibilities must be known a priori for Wittgenstein—"a new possibility cannot be discovered later". But combinatorial possibilities are none other than *forms*. Hence, to the extent that space and time are forms of objects—or possible modes of their combination—they must be known *a priori*.

This is confirmed by Wittgenstein's conversation with the Vienna Circle. There, Wittgenstein says of space:

[T]he totality of points of space is the totality of possible positions of a body, and we survey these possibilities from the outset. We cannot add a point of space, nor can we discover one. We can discover things only *within* space and time […] For what we know is only a system of possibility,

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isn't it? [… And] experience cannot give us the system of possibilities. Experience only teaches what is there, not what can be there. (WWK, p. 214)

Clearly, Wittgenstein is urging that space cannot be known through experience or a posteriori, but rather it must be known "from the outset" or *a priori*. The same, of course, will hold for time, given that they are both forms of objects.

We have now established that space and time, as forms of objects, must be known a priori for the early Wittgenstein. However, to reach the conclusion that space and time are *transcendental features*, we should also show that Wittgenstein takes them to be necessary features shared by representation and reality, without which we could not represent spatiotemporal situations. Once again, this can be done by appeal to Wittgenstein's view of space. In his discussion of picturing in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes:

> 2.161   There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts, to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all.
>
> 2.17   What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it […] in the way it does, is its pictorial form.
>
> 2.171   A picture can depict any reality whose form it *has*.
>   A spatial picture can depict anything spatial, a coloured one anything coloured, etc.

Here, Wittgenstein indicates that there must be a common form shared by pictures and empirical reality, if we are to picture empirical reality. For example, "spatial pictures", namely pictures that depict spatial situations, must *have* the form of the reality they represent, namely the form of the spatial situations themselves. But since spatial situations, like all situations, must be made up of objects, and since space *is* a form of objects, the form of spatial situations can be none other than space itself. It follows that the form of spatial pictures *is* space. Hence, for the early Wittgenstein, space is a necessary form of representation—necessary, that is, for depiction of spatial situations.

Indeed, Wittgenstein explicitly says so to members of the Vienna Circle, in a remark that almost perfectly parallels 2.0251 quoted above, and which concerns time as well:

> Space, time, and number are forms of representation. They are designed to express every possible experience (WWK, p. 214)

We may then take it that, according to the early Wittgenstein, space and time are known a priori as necessary or formal features that representation and empirical reality need to share, if we are to "to express every possible experience", and therewith represent empirical reality. Hence, space and time are indeed *transcendental features* for the early Wittgenstein.

2.32$_W$ *Wittgenstein against propositional a priori knowledge of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$)*

This puts the early Wittgenstein in a position that, *prima facie*, seems strongly Kantian. Indeed, both Kant and Wittgenstein advance a transcendental ontology. Further, they both take it that space and time are transcendental features shared by empirical reality and its representation. Does Wittgenstein, like Kant, also commit to the metaphysical thesis that (TI$_{eff\text{-}K}$) we have propositional a priori knowledge that space and time depend upon our point of view?

At this point, we need to recall that Wittgenstein is in no position to endorse any (alleged) claim of the general form (TI$_{eff}$), such as (TI$_{eff\text{-}K}$). Equivalently, Wittgenstein is in no position to maintain that we have a priori knowledge of the truth of the (alleged) proposition that *space and time depend upon our point of view* (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). And that is because, for the early Wittgenstein, the truth of a proposition or picture can only ever be known a posteriori. Hence, even granting *just for the sake of the argument* that, for the early Wittgenstein (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is a proposition, then, for him, it would be impossible to know its truth a priori. Put otherwise, Wittgenstein does not, and cannot, buy Kant's (effable) transcendental idealism.

In the continuation, I will examine in more depth the structural commitments that make it impossible, for Wittgenstein, to buy Kant's (effable) doctrine of the "transcendental ideality" of space and time, and thereby Kant's (effable) transcendental idealism.

2.4$_W$ *Wittgenstein Against Thinking the Ideality of Transcendental Features*

The question of Wittgenstein's alleged effable transcendental idealism came down to the question of whether he could endorse the claim that we know a priori the truth of any putative proposition of the general form (TF$_{IDEAL}$) *transcendental features depend upon our point of view*. So far, I have argued that, given his understanding of propositions, Wittgenstein cannot endorse this claim. More specifically, Wittgenstein cannot take it that we *know* a priori the truth of (O$_{IDEAL}$) *objects depend upon our point of view*, nor consequently, insofar as he takes space and time as forms of objects, that we *know* the truth of (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) *space and time depend upon our point of view*. If so, Wittgenstein cannot buy Kant's transcendental idealism.

In this section, I will argue that, for Wittgenstein, (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) cannot so much as be a proposition, so that he could not even take it that Kant's transcendental idealism is *thinkable*.[379]

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[379] This nicely explains Wittgenstein's otherwise obscure observation, reported by von Wright (1955, p. 543) that "he [*viz.* Wittgenstein] could get only occasional glimpses of understanding [from Kant]". (Some states of understanding may be ineffable; see 3$_K$ and 3$_W$).

We have now ruled out the possibility that, for the early Wittgenstein, we may *know* a priori the truth of the alleged proposition that (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) space and time depend upon our point of view. Perhaps, however, he could have maintained that we could at least *think* or entertain (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). Given that Wittgenstein identifies propositions and pictures, thinking or entertaining (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) should mean *picturing* that space and time, as transcendental features of both empirical reality and its representation, *depend* upon our point of view. But can we picture that?

I believe the early Wittgenstein could not even grant this much. According to him, space and time, as forms common to both representation and empirical reality, allow us to picture spatial and temporal situations. Yet how could we, in Wittgenstein's view, picture space and time *themselves*? Not again on the grounds of space and time, for space and time are not themselves spatial or temporal *situations*, which we may picture, but rather their forms. It thus seems that, to picture space and time, there should be a form *other than* space and time allowing us to do so. But this is absurd for the early Wittgenstein, given that the main tenet of his picture theory is that any representation must *share* its form with the represented. If the represented were the forms of space and time, and if our (alleged) representation of them should have a non-spatiotemporal form, then representation could never take off in the first place.

There is thus a logical difficulty in the whole "idea" of picturing space and time in the context of Wittgenstein's picture theory. Wittgenstein himself was aware of it. Thus, consider again, in the light of our current discussion, the following series of remarks:

2.17	What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it—correctly or incorrectly—in the way it does, is its pictorial form.
2.171	A picture can depict any reality whose form it has. A spatial picture can depict anything spatial, a coloured one anything coloured, etc.
2.172	A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form.

Here, among other things, Wittgenstein is clarifying that the forms of space and colour cannot be *depicted*, given the main tenets of the picture theory. The same, of course, will go for the form of time. This, I suggest, is due to the "logical difficulty" I have outlined above.

But if, indeed, space and time cannot be depicted, then nothing would count as *picturing* that space and time depend upon our point of view, or—that which is the same given Wittgenstein's picture theory—entertaining the proposition that (S&T$_{IDEAL}$). Put otherwise, given Wittgenstein's picture theory, (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) cannot be a picture/proposition about space and time

at all, let alone a picture/proposition about their alleged *ideality*. Accordingly, Wittgenstein writes in the *Tractatus*:

> 4.04   [A proposition and the situation it represents] must possess the same logical (mathematical) multiplicity.
>
> 4.041   This mathematical multiplicity, of course, cannot itself be the subject of depiction. One cannot get away from it when depicting.
>
> 4.0412   For [this] reason the idealist's appeal to 'spatial spectacles' is inadequate to explain the seeing of spatial relations, because it cannot explain the multiplicity of these relations.

Here, Wittgenstein is indicating that nothing would count as picturing space as an "ideal" form of representation. Indeed, Wittgenstein is more generally indicating that no proposition can represent the very form (or "multiplicity") *through which* it is supposed to represent—just like no pair of glasses can help us seeing its own lenses "from the outside", as it were. For the form through which *any* proposition represents, for Wittgenstein, is *the logical form* ("the logical multiplicity"). In which case, for Wittgenstein, no proposition can represent the form of *any* proposition, since, if it could do so, then it should have to represent *its own* pictorial form, something that remark 2.172, and many others in the *Tractatus*, "prohibit".

I will return below on Wittgenstein's views on "the logical form", its relation to space, and the glasses analogy, which we have already encountered in our discussion of Kant's effable transcendental idealism (recall § 2.8$_K$). For now, I will conclude that for the early Wittgenstein (S&T$_{IDEAL}$)—"space and time depend upon our point of view"—is *not* a picture/proposition Hence, for him, nothing could ever count as coherently thinking "it" or entertaining "it".

If not a picture/proposition, however, what is (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) for Wittgenstein? Perhaps, it could be a logical sentence or tautology. If so, we should be able to recognize its truth by inspection of the mere sign alone. However, we may inspect the linguistic string of signs "space and time depend upon our point of view" all we like, without ever recognizing it as a *trivially* true proposition, namely a tautology. "Space and time depend upon our point of view" just hasn't the status of "it is either raining or not raining" (cf. T, 4.461). Arguably, then, (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is not a tautology either.

But if not a picture/proposition, nor a logical sentence or tautology, then what can (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) be for Wittgenstein? The only possible answer is that (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is a nonsensical pseudo-proposition for Wittgenstein,[380] and more specifically a nonsensical pseudo-proposition

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[380] Some authors object to the view that the early Wittgenstein had a threepartition between propositions (pictures), logical sentences (which are not pictures but still belong to the symbolism), and nonsensical pseudo-

of Metaphysics.[381] This marks a fundamental difference between Kant and the early Wittgenstein, and thereby cements the result of the last section, by which Wittgenstein cannot buy Kant's transcendental idealism. Indeed, Wittgenstein could not so much as regard Kant's doctrine as thinkable, since he would have regarded it as nonsense, and nothing counts as "thinking nonsense".

2.5$_W$ *Wittgenstein on Thinking about Things*

In Chapter 2$_K$, I have argued that, for Kant, thinking (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) goes hand in hand with thinking its negation, namely ⌐ (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), and that this required thinking things in themselves, as opposed to cognizable appearances.

In this section, I argue that, since for the early Wittgenstein nothing would count as thinking (S&T$_{IDEAL}$), there is no such thing as thinking ⌐ (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) either. Consequently, I argue that for Wittgenstein nothing would count as thinking things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing appearances. After reaching this verdict, I then outline Wittgenstein's views of thinking and knowing, by which we cannot think without being cognitively related with what we think about.

2.51$_W$ *Wittgenstein and the appearances/things in themselves distinction*

According to Kant, we need to be able to *think* or entertain the (alleged) proposition that

(S&T$_{IDEAL}$)   space and time depend upon our point of view,

where space and time are transcendental features of both empirical reality and its representation. Indeed, in 1$_K$, I have argued that Kant endorsed the principle that it must be possible to negate any genuine proposition. With respect to (S&T$_{IDEAL}$)—which Kant regarded as a perfectly fine proposition—this means that it must be possible to think its negation, namely

⌐ (S&T$_{IDEAL}$)   space and time do NOT depend upon our point of view.

But this, in turn, already involved *thinking* things as they may be independently of our point of view, namely things in themselves, as opposed to things that depend upon its necessary form,

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propositions (which are not pictures and do *not* belong to the symbolism). For example, some resolute readers of the *Tractatus* take it that equations are a *sui generis* type of sign for Wittgenstein (A. W. Moore discusses the issue in his 2019a). But even if one were to grant that much to these readers (and that's a big "if"), surely (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) is not an equation.

[381] Indeed, insofar as the transcendental ideality of space and time figures at all in the *Tractatus*, then, by Wittgenstein's own lights, it must figure there as part of nonsensical strings of signs, given that his remarks are ultimately to be "recognized as nonsensical".

namely, for Kant, spatiotemporal appearances, which may be *cognized*.

Now, like Kant, the early Wittgenstein endorses the reasonable principle that it must be possible for any genuine proposition p to have a sense-endowed negation $\vdash p$. Hence, Wittgenstein writes in his *Notebooks*:

> "Not p" and "p" contradict one another, both cannot be true; but I can surely express both, *both pictures exist*. They are to be found side by side. (NB, 9.11.14)

Clearly, if both p and $\vdash p$ are pictures, they are both propositions for Wittgenstein, which can be entertained. Indeed, the possibility of entertaining a proposition p and the possibility of entertaining its negation $\vdash p$ go hand in hand for Wittgenstein. As he will later write in the *Tractatus*, "the possibility of negation is already written into affirmation" (T, 5.44).

However, for the early Wittgenstein, (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$) was not a picture or proposition at all, but rather a nonsensical pseudo-proposition of Metaphysics. Thus negating "it"—to the extent that it can be negated at all—will not yield a proposition, but it can only ever yield yet another nonsensical pseudo-proposition of Metaphysics, since the "negation of nonsense" will at best be *nonsense on stilts*.[382] Hence, for the early Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as *thinking* the proposition $\vdash$ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$). But since we could only think $\vdash$ (S&T$_{\text{IDEAL}}$) if we could think mind-independent things in themselves, as opposed to cognizing mind-dependent appearances, the early Wittgenstein is *not* entitled to the distinction between things in themselves, that may be thought, and appearances, that may be cognized.

In effect, thinking things in themselves would mean entertaining the concept of objects that are independent of our point of view, and hence independent of our forms of representation. That would require us to represent our forms of representation, and then representing objects as independent of them. However, as we have seen in the last section, for the early Wittgenstein nothing can count as representing forms of representation. Hence, for the early Wittgenstein, nothing can count as representing objects as independent of "our" forms of representation, just like nothing counted as representing reality as dependent upon them. From this, it does indeed follow that the early Wittgenstein is not entitled to Kant's distinction between thinking mind-independent things in themselves and cognizing mind-dependent appearances.

We are then left with the question: What is the early Wittgenstein's view concerning thinking and knowing?

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[382] This apt phrase is Bentham's, though he used it in a completely different context.

2.52ᴡ *Wittgenstein on thinking and knowing*

In distinguishing between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances, Kant was divorcing thought in general from cognition. According to Kant, thought in general required the entertainment of concepts. Cognition, however, as representation of empirical reality, required not only conceptual articulation, but also the *givenness of something* in intuition, with which we are acquainted.[383] Indeed, only by so divorcing thought in general from cognition, Kant could argue that we may *think* things in themselves, namely objects with which we are not acquainted (and which thereby we cannot cognize).

Now, as we have seen above, the early Wittgenstein cannot buy Kant's distinction between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances. As a result, the early Wittgenstein cannot divorce thought in general from cognition. For him, as opposed to Kant, there can be no such thing as thinking, without thereby thinking about something *given* or with which we are acquainted (*a priori*). Put otherwise, for the early Wittgenstein, there can be no thought which does not, at the same time, put us in a *cognitive relation* with the objects thought about.[384]

In effect, for the early Wittgenstein, a thought is essentially a picture of reality. But a picture, Wittgenstein writes, *touches* the objects like a measuring rod (T, 2.1512-1). He continues:

> 2.1513   So a picture, conceived in this way, also includes the pictorial relationship, which makes it into a picture.

> 2.1514   The pictorial relationship consists of the correlations of the picture's elements with things.

I will return below on the importance of this "pictorial relationship" between a picture and reality, "which makes [a picture] into a picture". Here, I am only interested in pointing out that for Wittgenstein *any* picture, and hence any thought, must be *related* to objects, which are *given*. But since, for the early Wittgenstein, "we picture facts to ourselves", then, in picturing or thinking *anything at all*, we must be in *cognitive relation* with the objects, that we picture as combined in certain facts. This marks a stark contrast with Kant, who believed that we may *think* things with which we are not in cognitive contact at all.

We may arrive at this conclusion from a different route. Wittgenstein virtually identifies

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[383] Lucy Allais (2015) cashes out Kantian intuition in terms of acquaintance, acquaintance being a *direct* relation to an object, with which a Subject is *immediately* presented. While this strikes me as generally correct, we should be careful not to read back *Russellian* acquaintance into Kant's position, as Allais herself clarifies at one point (2015, pp. 158-9). In fact, for Kant, mere intuitions (without concepts) cannot put us in *cognitive* relation with objects, as Russell (1910-11) would have it with *his* acquaintance, for the simple reason that, for Kant, only from the unification of intuitions and concepts can a *cognitive* relation to the object be secured.

[384] Russell famously characterized acquaintance as a direct cognitive relation (see footnote above).

thoughts and propositions, and both with (logical) pictures.[385] Thus, we should expect him to maintain that all *propositions* put us in cognitive contact with reality. This is indeed the case. According to the early Wittgenstein, all propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions, including the elementary proposition, which is a truth-function of itself (T, 5). But since the elementary propositions are concatenations of names, which refer to objects, then all the elementary propositions put us in cognitive contact with reality, by referring to objects by means of names. But if so, all propositions, being truth-functions of elementary propositions, should put us in cognitive contact with reality. And indeed, Wittgenstein takes it that a "projective relation to the world" belongs to propositions as such (T, 3.12).

It is thereby the case that, for Wittgenstein, whenever we entertain propositions, we think about given objects, with which we are cognitively related. Indeed, as I have argued, this is a consequence of the impossibility of a commitment on his part to the Kantian (or for that matter to any) distinction between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances.[386]

2.6ᵥ *Wittgenstein on Logical Possibility*

In Chapter 2ₖ, I have argued that a distinction between thinking things in themselves and cognizing appearances presupposes a distinction between merely logical and real possibility. Merely logical possibility is the possibility of thinking something without contradiction. Real possibility is the possibility of (thinking of) empirical reality, which according to Kant is *spatiotemporal* reality (at least for us humans). This distinction triggered a fracture in Kant's philosophy, between the conditions of thought in general, such as the logical forms of thought, and the conditions of (our) experience, such as space and time.

In this section, I argue that the early Wittgenstein is in no position to endorse a distinction between logical and real possibility, and consequently that he is in no position to recognize a distinction between the necessary conditions of thought and those of experience. More specifically, I argue that Wittgenstein "equated" the conditions of thought and those of experience, in such a way that, for him, as against Kant, space and time are *logical* forms of thought.

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[385] For the notion of 'logical picture' see § 2.7ᵥ below.

[386] A brief sidenote. In arguing that all propositions put us in cognitive relation with objects, Wittgenstein is *not* thereby arguing that we know much *about* objects, in the way Kant believed we know much about objects of possible experience (e.g. that they must be mind-dependent appearances). Rather, for Wittgenstein, in order to express thoughts at all, we must simply know, or be given, *objects*. As he writes in a letter to Ogden: "to know [an object] just means: I know *it* but I needn't know anything *about* it" (quoted in Levine, 2013).

2.61ᴡ *Wittgenstein's "equation" of logical and real possibility*

Kant believed that we could think without contradiction the *concept* of an object in general without thereby thinking about *objects* in empirical reality. Put otherwise, for Kant, the space of thought in general was wider than the space of thought of empirical reality (cognition), and thereby wider than the domain of the empirical reality that may be thought. In this consisted Kant's distinction between merely logical and real possibility. The early Wittgenstein, however, begged to differ.

First of all, for the early Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as *thinking* the concept of an object. That is because, for Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as thinking or representing the formal properties of objects that, given a transcendental isomorphism between world and language, must also be the characteristic marks of the *formal concept* <object*> (cf. T, 4.126). At best, the concept <object*> is itself a (transcendental) feature that language "reflects" in all those signs that stand for objects, but that cannot be *represented* as a genuine (empirical or material) property that belongs to objects in empirical reality.

Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein as against Kant, the concept <object*> is a *pseudo*-concept (T, 4.1272), which, insofar as we attempt to think or say "it" at all, will lead us to *pseudo*-propositions, such as "*a* is an object". In effect, as opposed to the concept <red>, which figures in propositions as "*a* is red" and "*a* is not red", the concept <object*> is not a concept that may or may not be applied to things for Wittgenstein, since there is no arbitrary determination to be made here—no carving of logical space. Rather, for Wittgenstein, the concept <object*> pertains to *all* objects, covering the whole of logical space. As such, for Wittgenstein, this concept *underlies* all our thought, while not being itself *thought*. For, according to Wittgenstein, we can only ever think determinate "points" or "places" of logical space—possible situations— but there is no such thing as "thinking the whole logical space".[387]

This has important consequences. Every thought, for the early Wittgenstein, is a picture. But every picture represents a *possible* situation. Hence, every thought is the thought of a *possible* situation:

> 3.02[388]   A thought contains the possibility of the situation of which it is the thought. *What is thinkable is possible too*.[389]

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[387] Russell already made this point in his Introduction to the *Tractatus* (1974, p. xxxi).
[388] My emphasis.
[389] Compare also remark 6.362: "What can be described can happen too".

Here, Wittgenstein is indicating that all that can be thought are situations that may be the case *in reality*. Put otherwise, for the early Wittgenstein, as against Kant, there is no such thing as exercising concepts without thinking of something *really* possible. Logical possibility cannot be divorced from real possibility. Accordingly, Wittgenstein writes:

> 5.61   Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits. So we cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that.' For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic should go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well.

I am not concerned here with the relationship between this remark and the problem of solipsism, on which I will return in Chapter 3$_W$. Rather, all I want to point out is that, for the early Wittgenstein, there is no way of divorcing the space of empirical reality from that of thought in general. Hence, for Wittgenstein, we could not say *à la* Kant that empirical reality has appearances in it, but not things in themselves. "For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities", which we could think, but which could not really be the case.[390] Rather, for the early Wittgenstein, the space of all that can be thought—logical space, which is given by objects—is also the space of all that can be the case in empirical reality.

A confirmation of this view may be found in the following remark:

> 5.5561   Empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects. The limit also makes itself manifest in the totality of elementary propositions.

In this remark, which we have met before, Wittgenstein is making clear that the totality of objects gives the space of all that may be the case in empirical reality, which for him is also the space of all that which can be thought or expressed by propositions (logical space). Hence, *contra* Kant, Wittgenstein is maintaining that the possibility of thought (logical possibility) and the possibility of something being the case in empirical reality (real possibility) are essentially indissoluble. Indeed, there is a "certain sense" in which logical and real possibility *coincide* for the early Wittgenstein (cf. T, 4.014), as he indicates by equating "logical form" and "the form of reality" (T, 2.18). (Though we should note that, if there is no such thing as separating the "two", then the words "coincidence" or "equation" will be superfluous and thus, ultimately, meaningless for Wittgenstein).[391]

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[390] There seems to a sense in which, for Kant, it cannot be the case that things in themselves are *in* empirical reality. For if this were the case, then things in themselves should have to be in space (and time), and it should have to be possible for us to have *experience* of them. But then, things in themselves should have to be appearances (i.e. things we can experience), that which would undermine Kant's transcendental idealism.

[391] Cf. T, 3.328.

To put it in the words of Erik Stenius, who recognized Wittgenstein's "equation" of logical and real possibility a long while ago:

> Whereas Kant thought 'possible to theoretical reason' [i.e. cognizable as object of a possible experience] to be a more narrow concept than 'logically possible' [i.e. thinkable], these two concepts are *identical* according to Wittgenstein. Therefore, what Kant calls the 'form of experience' is [for Wittgenstein] the common form of all logically possible worlds (1960, p. 219)

2.62$_W$ *Wittgenstein's "equation" of the conditions of thought and experience*

From the discussion above a significant conclusion *should* follow. Given his "equation" between logical and real possibility, Wittgenstein can recognize no essential distinction between the necessary conditions of thought and those of experience, not even in the nuanced way Kant did. More specifically, whereas Kant distinguished space and time, as forms of experience, from the *pure* (unschematized) categories, as forms of thought, for Wittgenstein space and time, qua forms of objects, *should* also be forms of thought or language—*logical* forms, accountable in terms of *logical* possibility.

I stress "should" since, while the early Wittgenstein *should* have held this claim, it is not beyond dispute that he did. In fact, the claim that space and time are logical forms is a contested one in Wittgenstein scholarship,[392] given a tension that lies deep in the *Tractatus*, between a holistic and an atomistic force in the book (see below).[393] Thus, if we are to show that *Wittgenstein* understood the consequences of his view of logical possibility, we will need to discuss some textual evidence, alongside the systematic considerations we have just offered. In the remainder of the present section, I will thus defend the claim that, for the early Wittgenstein, space and time are logical forms, by critically engaging with textual evidence, coming not only from the *Tractatus*, but also from Wittgenstein's pre-Tractarian period and post-Tractarian period.

Let us start from space. In both his *Notebooks* and *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes that a geometrical/spatial place (namely, a place in space proper) and a logical place (namely, a place in logical space) *agree* in their being *both* the possibility of an existence (NB, 7. 11. 14 and T, 3.411). Accordingly, Wittgenstein maintains that to represent in language something that

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[392] Mauro Engelmann, for example, argues that space, time, and colour are *not* logical forms of objects for Wittgenstein, but rather contingent empirical ones (see Engelmann, 2021, pp. 33-4). Against Engelmann—and backed by textual evidence he seems to ignore—I argue below that space, time (and colour) are accountable in terms of logical possibility for Wittgenstein, and thereby that he took them to be logical forms. In this footnote, I will only note that there is *no* textual indication that the early Wittgenstein ever employed the word "form" to indicate contingent empirical properties of reality, but only ever indications to the contrary.

[393] For an insightful discussion of these two forces in the *Tractatus*, which are in tension with each other, see Pears (1987, esp. Ch. 4; and 1990).

contradicts the laws of logic is "*as impossible as*" representing in geometry something that contradicts the laws of space[394] (T, 3.032). But since, for Wittgenstein, "there is only a *logical* impossibility" (T, 6.375; his emphasis), then Wittgenstein is committed to claiming that we are dealing with *logical* impossibility in *both* cases.[395] If so, both space proper and logical space should be accountable in terms of *logical* possibility. Thus, discussing the issue of spatial "places" or "positions", Wittgenstein will write in his so-called middle period:

> [I]f I hear that the book is somewhere on the table, and then find it in a particular position, it isn't possible for me to be surprised and say "oh, I didn't know that there was this position" […] It is physical, not logical possibilities that take me by surprise! (PG, Appendix II, pp. 261-2)

One might object that, by the time of the middle-period, Wittgenstein's views on space could have changed. That is because, in his middle-period, Wittgenstein famously dropped the notion of elementary proposition, and hence he was free to claim that spatial possibility is accountable in terms of logical possibility, without having to worry about the whole scaffolding of his logical atomism.

There may be some truth in this. Yet I do not think that similar considerations are decisive against my claim above, by which space, or for that matter time, belong to the purview of logic for the early Wittgenstein. For one, even before completely jettisoning the notion of elementary proposition, Wittgenstein *explicitly* wrote that space and time are "logical forms" (SRLF, p. 165). Further, besides the systematic considerations already adduced above, there is more textual evidence coming from both the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* in support of my claim.

Thus, take the case of time. As early as the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein writes of the *logical* properties of time (NB, 12.10.16), and more specifically of the *logical* essence of the event, which rules out the repetition of one and the same event as a *logical* impossibility (ibid.). He links his

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[394] There is a problem here regarding what Wittgenstein meant by "laws of space" [*Gesetzen des Raumes*]. Did he mean the laws of Euclidean geometry, and thereby of Euclidean three-dimensional space, as Kant before him? By the time of the *Tractatus*, there existed non-Euclidean geometries, and thereby "laws" of non-Euclidean "spaces", such as Einstein's fourdimensional "spacetime". In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein seems to be aware of something like this, by alluding to "four-dimensional space", in the only remark in which the name "Kant" appears (T, 6.36111). This *suggests* that, for Wittgenstein, "space" and its laws need not be Euclidean. (If Wittgenstein's "space" were Euclidean, then, given his equation between real and logical possibility, non-Euclidean spaces such as Einstein's spacetime would be *logically* impossible for him). This conjecture may perhaps find some degree of confirmation in Wittgenstein's conversations with the Vienna circle, when Wittgenstein links Einstein's understanding of geometry to his views on the "syntax of language" (WWK, p. 38). Later, well into his middle-period, Wittgenstein says that the three-dimensionality of space may be construed as an "hypothesis" (WWK, p. 163). In any case, it is hard to speculate over whether, for the early Wittgenstein, the "laws" of space are Euclidean or non-Euclidean (or perhaps neutral), given the scant things he says on the matter. I won't commit to any of the alternatives here.

[395] This is as against Sullivan, who maintains that the Tractarian parallel between logic and geometry "breaks down all over the place" (1996, p. 199). Still, Sullivan is at least right in his belief that passages dealing with space and logic are important to understand Wittgenstein's engagement with Transcendental Idealism.

view to the impossibility of there being one body in two different places *of space* at the same time. And that too, given 6.375 quoted above, must be a *logical* impossibility. Indeed, that a body may only ever occupy one place of space at any given time must be signalled, in Wittgenstein's view, by the *contradictoriness* of such combinations of sings "*a* is here and *a* is there at the same time" (where *a* is a body).[396]

One may still object that, given that "*a* is here at time *t*" contradicts "*a* is there at time *t*", Wittgenstein cannot regard any of the two as *elementary* propositions. That is surely right. For Wittgenstein writes that "it is a sign of a proposition's being elementary that there can be no elementary proposition contradicting it" (T, 4.211). And *here* lies the deep tension I was alluding at between a holistic and an atomistic force of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

Space and time are *deeply* holistic systems,[397] as are our sentences representing spatiotemporal situations. There are inferential relations between propositions that represent spatiotemporal situations. Thus, if "*a* is here at time *t*" is true, we may infer that "*a* is there at time *t*" is false. But while, for the early Wittgenstein, elementary propositions too form a holistic system—if some of them are given, then all the others are given too (T, 5.524)—they also have an atomistic character. There are no inferential relations between them: the truth or falsehood of each of them is independent of the truth or falsehood of the others. Indeed, the early Wittgenstein believed that it must be possible for two different elementary propositions to determine the same "co-ordinate" of logical space in two completely different ways, at the same time. But that is clearly not possible with propositions representing spatiotemporal situations, such as "*a* is here at time *t*" and "*a* is there at time *t*".

In the *Tractatus*, then, there is a logical level that lies "deeper" than space and time, and that analysis will supposedly uncover—namely, the elementary level. This, however, does not detract from the point that space and time are logical forms for Wittgenstein, but rather confirms it. For upon analysis, propositions that have space and time as their pictorial forms, *just like* elementary propositions, will ultimately need to be of the form *such-and-such-is-the-case*—which for Wittgenstein, insofar as every proposition is a picture of what can be the case, is *the general form of the proposition* (T, 4.5). In which case, space and time *must* be logical for Wittgenstein.[398]

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[396] Notice that while Wittgenstein maintains that *tautologies* reflect the formal properties of both language and world (T, 6.12 and 6.22), he is also clear that *contradictions* might serve this purpose just as well (T, 6.1202; cf. NdM, p. 107). Space and time, as we have seen, *are* formal properties of both language and world for Wittgenstein. It follows that, on his view, the contradiction "*a* is here and *a* is there at the same time" should signal that it is in the (logical) nature of space and time that a body may only ever occupy one point of space at any given time.

[397] See Strawson (1959, Ch. 1).

[398] That said, Wittgenstein surely has troubles in telling us what the analysis of spatial, temporal, and chromatic (!) propositions may look like, for few propositions look as elementary as "*a* is here at time *t*" or "*a* is

If I am right, then, for the early Wittgenstein there can be no *essential* distinction between the conditions of the possibility of experience, such as space and time, and those of thought. Rather, given Wittgenstein's "equation" between real and logical possibility, there is a "certain sense" in which the "two" are one.[399]

2.621ᴡ *Transcendental Limits and Transcendental Limitations (Again)*

Wittgenstein's "equation" of logical and real possibility, and consequently of the conditions of thought and those of experience, has vast implications in his early philosophy. Among other things, it may help us to see more clearly *why* Wittgenstein cannot commit to Effable Transcendental Idealism.

To see this, recall our distinction between transcendental limits and transcendental limitations in Chapter 2ᴋ. Transcendental limits are none other than transcendental conditions. Transcendental limitations, however, are transcendental conditions which can be known to be metaphysically "restricted" to particular entities. It is necessary to Effable Transcendental Idealism that, in mere thought, we could have propositional knowledge that transcendental conditions are restricted to *us*, as opposed to mind-independent things in themselves. Hence, for Kant, space and time were transcendental *limitations* of our point of view. Indeed, for Kant, we can *conceive* of finite beings who do not cognize in space and time. And although, *by itself*, this is *not* yet an idealist claim,[400] it is all too easy to hear it as such.

Now, Kant could maintain all this since he has a distinction in place between merely logical and real possibility, by which our thought may reach *beyond* the space of our experience. Wittgenstein, however, has no such distinction in place. As a result, even though for Wittgenstein space and time (and colour) are transcendental limits of the reality we conceive from our point of view, he is no position to propositionally cast them as transcendental *limitations* that *depend* upon our point of view, as opposed to "reality in itself". That's *why* the early Wittgenstein could never be an effable transcendental idealist.

By the same token, whenever Wittgenstein writes "we" in the *Tractatus*, he is no position to mean that we humans stand opposed to "other conceivable beings", who could *make sense* of

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red". This trouble will lead him to jettison his early notion of elementary proposition—though this is a story that need not detain us here.

[399] Cf. T, 4.014.

[400] Ordinary people think of aliens, but they are not idealists. Similarly, some transcendental philosophers may *think* of aliens that do not share the conditions of human cognition. But that does not *automatically* make them transcendental idealists. And indeed, even though Kant *links* the logical possibility of other cognizers to his idealism, in the end the definitive claim of the latter is that space and time depend on us, *as opposed to (existing, but to us uncognizable) things in themselves.*

reality in ways that are precluded to us. For, according to Wittgenstein, "Man [*der Mensch*] possesses the ability to construct languages capable of expressing *every* sense" (T, 4.002; my emphasis). Put otherwise, given Wittgenstein's "equation" between logical and real possibility, nothing counts as conceiving of beings who could cognize situations that we humans could not—a claim that *Kant* linked to his idealism (though again, *by itself*, this is not yet an idealist claim).

That said, there is no one way to be a transcendental idealist. In fact, at this stage, we cannot rule out that, for Wittgenstein, there may be *non-propositional* ways of knowing the transcendental limits of empirical reality as transcendental limitations that *we*—or, at any rate, *I*—impose upon it. But to this ineffable form of Transcendental Idealism, that Peter Hacker and A. W. Moore ascribe to the early Wittgenstein, I shall return in Chapter 3ᴡ, since a critical discussion of it first requires us to delve deeper into Wittgenstein's logic.

2.7ᴡ   *Wittgenstein's Transcendental Logic*

To countenance a distinction between merely logical and real possibility, Kant had to countenance a distinction between general logic and transcendental logic. General logic is the investigation of the necessary rules of thought in general. Transcendental Logic is the investigation of the necessary rules of (the combination of terms in) thought *of empirical reality*—which, at least for humans as opposed to other conceivable beings, is thought of spatiotemporal reality according to Kant.

In this section, I argue that, given his "equation" between logical and real possibility, the early Wittgenstein is in no position to countenance a distinction between general and transcendental logic either. Rather, I argue, for the early Wittgenstein logic is both transcendental and general in scope. First, I argue that Wittgenstein's Tractarian logic is an instance of Transcendental Logic, by identifying the transcendental rules at its core, namely the forms of objects. I then compare Kant and Wittgenstein's transcendental rules under four respects: necessity, apriority, generality, and formality. Finally, I give an interpretation of Wittgenstein's "picture-theory", as a *transcendental logic of depiction*, and show that "logical propositions" or tautologies are for Wittgenstein by-product of the transcendental logic of depiction.

2.71 *"Logic is transcendental"*

In Chapter 2ₖ, I have first presented the general idea of Transcendental Logic, which was based on requirements (*i*) and (*ii*) to be a transcendental philosopher. I have argued that Transcendental Logic is a philosophy of logic, and more precisely the philosophical investigation that (*i*) starting from our thoughts about empirical reality ("from within"), aims at (*ii*) recognizing their necessary rules, which are known a priori. I have called the necessary rules of thought about empirical reality, insofar as they are known a priori, *transcendental rules*. Hence, I have concluded, Transcendental Logic recognizes "from within" transcendental rules.

Now, the Preface to the *Tractatus* makes clear that Wittgenstein's philosophical investigation of "the logic of our language" starts "from within", and can only ever start "from within", since the putative "idea" of occupying a perspective outside thought or language, and investigate their rules "from there", is a mere confusion for the early Wittgenstein (see 1ᴡ). Hence, Wittgenstein respects the first requirement to be a transcendental logician. However, does he also respect the second one, by recognizing transcendental rules of thought about empirical reality? That will depend on what Wittgenstein meant by "thought".

As I have anticipated above, by "thought" the early Wittgenstein means a *picture*, namely a structured combination of terms (e.g. words) that represents a structured combination of objects. Hence, if Wittgenstein is to be a transcendental logician, he should take it that there are rules, that are known a priori, and that are necessary for the combination of terms in pictures (transcendental rules). Does Wittgenstein's logic commit him to this view?

That, in turn, will depend on Wittgenstein's understanding of "logic". It is usually said that, for Wittgenstein, logic just consists of "logical propositions", namely tautologies, which are *not* pictures.[401] That, however, is quite an impoverished and one-sided reading of Wittgenstein. For Wittgenstein is adamant that logic is interested in propositions "ONLY in so far as they are pictures" (NB, 5.10.14; his caps). If so, Wittgenstein's transcendental logic *cannot* be reduced to empty tautologies,[402] but rather must first and foremost be "the *logic* of depiction" (T, 4.015). Tautologies, as we shall later see, can only ever be a *by-product* of the logic of depiction.

Now, the logic of depiction, for Wittgenstein, requires a picture to share its *form* with the

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[401] For example, this view is advanced by Hylton (2005, p. 139), who writes that for Wittgenstein "logic [is] made up of tautologies", as well as by Potter, who writes that for Wittgenstein "[tautologies] are the whole of logic" (2020, p. 374).

[402] Wittgenstein goes as far as writing that "we can actually do *without* logical propositions" (T, 6.122; my emphasis). This is essentially incompatible with the view by which logic is reducible to "logical propositions" (i.e. tautologies), that is so often *ascribed* to Wittgenstein. For if logic were *reducible* to tautologies, then Wittgenstein's remark should read "we can actually do without logic". (Rather than reducing logic to tautologies, this reading of Wittgenstein reduces itself to absurdity.)

pictured. This common form are objects, and thereby their combinatorial possibilities with each other ("forms"), which are known a priori as necessary conditions of thought of the combinations of objects (states of affairs), and therewith of thought of empirical reality. Hence, Wittgenstein's "logic of depiction" must *in some way* deal with the forms of objects, as Wittgenstein makes clear by writing that "logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts" (T, 2.0121).

I stress the words "in some way" since, as I read Wittgenstein, it is not the task of his logic of depiction to give a complete *inventory* of the forms. That would have been the task of what he called "the *application* of logic", i.e. the carrying out of logical analysis. However, if it is to "deal with every possibility", Wittgenstein's logic must deal with the most general characteristic *shared* by forms, and thereby with forms, *at least insofar as they instantiate these more general characteristics.*[403] This will become clearer in the continuation. For now, I take myself to have established that Wittgenstein's logic of depiction must, in some way, deal with the forms of objects.

Yet exactly insofar as Wittgenstein's logic of depiction must deal with the forms of objects, which are transcendental conditions of depiction of empirical reality, then Wittgenstein should recognize the *forms* of objects as transcendental rules. Indeed, as I have argued above, it is a clear commitment of Wittgenstein's that thought and language must *share* an a priori form with empirical reality, in order to represent it. And this form, as I have also argued, lies in the objects, and more specifically in their *combinatorial possibilities* with other objects, which we may now see as *rules of combination*. As David Stern writes:

> [For the early Wittgenstein] the rules governing the combination of objects constitute not only the very nature of these objects but also the nature of logic itself, and the rules of our language simply reflect these constitutive rules (1995, p. 50)

Put otherwise, Wittgenstein recognizes transcendental rules in the forms of objects—the substance of the world—which are mirrored by language. Thus, he can write in the *Tractatus*:

6.13   Logic is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror-image of the world.
                  Logic is transcendental.

This remark has clear Kantian resonances,[404] and confirms that the early Wittgenstein's logic is an instance of Transcendental Logic. And yet, given the differences between Kant and the

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[403] Compare Potter (2008, p. 227).
[404] Potter (2020, p. 376). Interestingly, Potter notes that there was a stage in the development of the *Tractatus* in which the book was planned to end with this remark.

early Wittgenstein's respective transcendentalisms, which we have outlined so far, we should also expect Wittgenstein's transcendental logic to differ from Kant's one in many ways. In what follows, I examine these differences, by discussing the rules of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic—namely, the logical forms of objects—under four respects: necessity, apriority, generality, formality (and content).

Let us start from necessity.

2.711$_W$ *Necessity*

In Chapter 2$_K$, I have argued that the rules of Kant's transcendental logic, namely the categories, are *necessary* for the combination of objects (there, appearances) in empirical reality. As such, the categories were also necessary for the possibility of thought *of* empirical reality. However, to the extent that Kant distinguished thought of empirical reality from thought in general, the necessity of the (applied or applicable) categories was *relative* to the domain of empirical reality, which for Kant did not exhaust the domain of the thinkable.[405] And indeed, the categories did not *apply* to things in themselves, so that one could think things in themselves, without thereby thinking of them as, say, causally determined. (In this way, we could think ourselves as *free* for Kant).

When it comes to the rules of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic, namely the forms of objects, these too are *necessary* for the combination of objects in empirical reality and, therewith, necessary for the thought of combinations of objects, i.e. the thought of the situations and facts that make up empirical reality. In *this* respect, the forms of objects are not *so* different from Kant's categories. That is, both Kant's categories and Wittgenstein's forms of objects are necessary conditions of the possibility of thought of empirical reality (cognition).

Since, however, unlike Kant, Wittgenstein did not countenance an essential distinction between thought of empirical reality and thought in general, for Wittgenstein we are in no position to *think* that the necessity of the forms of objects is *relative* to the domain of thought of empirical reality. That would require juxtaposing empirical reality to *something else*, which could still be *thought*, namely things in themselves. Yet this cannot be Wittgenstein's early stance since, for him, the limits of thought do not outrun the limits of empirical reality—logical possibility does not outrun real possibility.

Perhaps, then, we should say that the necessity of Wittgenstein's forms of objects is

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[405] I say that, *strictly speaking*, this is so since, in a *wider* sense, the pure or unapplied categories "coincide" with the forms of judgement, the domain of which is for Kant the domain of thought in general.

absolute—the necessity, that is, that Kant reserved to the rules of his general logic. However, if there is no such thing as thinking or saying that the necessity of the forms of objects is relative to empirical reality, then there is no such thing as thinking or saying that such necessity is absolute either. For Wittgenstein, the string of signs "the forms of empirical reality are *the* forms of *the* reality" would be as nonsensical as "the forms of empirical reality are *not* the forms of the reality". And that, again, is because Wittgenstein does not countenance a *conceivable* distinction between empirical reality and reality as it may be in itself. Besides, for Wittgenstein, we could not represent forms at all, and hence, *a fortiori*, we could not represent their necessity.[406]

Since it cannot be represented, the (transcendental) necessity of the rules of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic, namely the forms of objects, is neither characterizable as "relative" nor as "absolute". Still, to the extent that he recognizes objects and their forms as necessary for thought and language, then, for Wittgenstein, the necessity of transcendental rules holds across logical space. Hence, it feels stronger than the necessity of the rules of Kant's transcendental logic (which did not apply to thinkable things in themselves etc.).

2.712ᴡ *Apriority*

Insofar as Wittgenstein's logic is transcendental, then its rules must be known a priori. Up to this point, Wittgenstein agrees with Kant. For Kant, however, the rules of transcendental logic were known *synthetically* a priori, in synthetic a priori judgements. And that is something that Wittgenstein could not agree with.

In effect, as we have seen, for Wittgenstein there are no pictures the truth of which can be known a priori. Which is another way to say that there are no such things as synthetic a priori judgements, of the sort Kant believed to be possible in Metaphysics. This point, I take it, is uncontroversial in Wittgenstein scholarship.[407] *A fortiori*, then, for Wittgenstein there can be no synthetic a priori knowledge of the rules of transcendental logic.

It is natural to suppose that, if not synthetic, then the a priori knowledge of the rules of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic must be analytic. This, I take it, is how most Wittgenstein scholars read him.[408] However, if by that they mean that, for Wittgenstein, knowledge of

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[406] Famously, for the early Wittgenstein, only *contingent situations* in the world may be pictured or represented (cf. T, 6.4 and 6.41).

[407] Cf. McGuinness (1988, p. 253).

[408] This should follow from the fact that most Wittgenstein scholars take his (transcendental) logic to be made up of tautologies, which, Wittgenstein writes, are "the analytic propositions" (T, 6.11).

objects is *grounded* upon the logical analysis of propositions alone, then they are most likely wrong. For Wittgenstein writes:

> 5.5562   If we know on purely logical grounds that there must be elementary propositions, then everyone who understands propositions *in their unanalysed form* must know it.[409]

Here, among other things, Wittgenstein is making clear that the logical grounds of knowledge of objects are not analytical. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, we know *a priori* that there must be elementary propositions, even *before* logical analysis takes place. But that can only be if we knew a priori objects, the meaning of simple names, even *before* logical analysis takes place. Hence, a priori knowledge of objects and their forms cannot be analytic either (in the sense outlined above).[410]

For Wittgenstein, then, a priori knowledge of objects and their forms is neither synthetic nor analytic. If so, it is arguable that it is *not* propositional knowledge at all. And indeed, as we have seen, the forms of objects cannot be propositionally represented or pictured for Wittgenstein. This strongly suggests that he takes a priori knowledge of objects and their forms to be *non*-propositional or ineffable—a claim I will defend in Chapter 3_W.

2.713_W *Generality*

In Chapter 2_K, I have argued that the rules of Kant's transcendental logic have a *particular* or *special* domain, namely the domain of thought of empirical reality. That could only be, however, since for Kant the domain of thought in general was *wider* than the domain of thought of empirical reality. In effect, in Kant's view of logical generality, we may think the general propositions that "There are things in themselves", without being acquainted with any such thing. It will be sufficient to entertain the concept <object> in agreement with the logical forms of judgement. In this way, for Kant, we may reach in thought "beyond" the domain of the things with which we are acquainted (here, appearances).

Kant's view of logical generality bears a striking resemblance to Russell's one, by which a Subject may think the general proposition that "there are things with which I am not acquainted", without being acquainted with such things. It will be sufficient to be related in

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[409] My emphasis.

[410] There is, to be fair, an important role that logical analysis has to play when it comes to a priori knowledge of objects for Wittgenstein. While we must know objects a priori even *before* logical analysis, the latter may *help* in bringing our a priori knowledge to *clear* consciousness. This consciousness, however, is ineffable, as I will later argue. If so, for Wittgenstein, a priori knowledge of objects and their forms won't be *said* by the elementary propositions that are the end of the process of analysis, but rather will, at best, be *perspicuously shown* by them. I will return in Chapter 3_W on these complex issues.

thought with universals and logical forms. In this way, for Russell, as for Kant before him, we may reach in thought "beyond" the domain of things with which we are acquainted (here, the sense-data we are given[411]).

Now, for the early Wittgenstein, the things with which we are acquainted (a priori) are objects. Could we, in general thought, reach "beyond" the objects we are given? As argued by Levine, this cannot be the case for Wittgenstein, since his view of generality radically differs from Russell's[412]—and, similarly, from Kant's.[413] In effect, for the early Wittgenstein, general propositions are constructions out of "singular" propositions, namely the elementary propositions. But the elementary propositions are about objects, which are given. Hence, general propositions, not unlike "singular" ones, are for Wittgenstein about *given* objects. It follows that for Wittgenstein there is no such thing as reaching in general thought or language "beyond" the objects we are given, or with which we are acquainted (a priori). Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as thinking or saying that "there are non-given objects".

If so, for the early Wittgenstein, the scope and validity of the forms of objects cannot *conceivably* be confined to the "particular" domain of the things given to a Subject, in the way Kant confined the scope and validity of the (applied/applicable) categories to the domain of possible experience, as opposed to that of thought in general. By the same token, however, the forms of objects cannot *conceivably* be the rules that govern "absolutely all" thought for Wittgenstein. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, the forms of objects cannot be thought at all.

That said, since for Wittgenstein a general proposition "*palpably* [*fühlbar*] depends" on elementary propositions (cf. T, 4.411), the totality of which is language,[414] then it is plausible that he wanted us to *feel* that the rules of his transcendental logic have, by their very essence, general scope (cf. T, 6.1232).

2.714ᵥᵥ *Form and Content*

It is often assumed that Wittgenstein's (transcendental) logic is "contentless" or "merely formal", on the grounds that, for Wittgenstein, "logical propositions" such as tautologies are *not* pictures, and hence are contentless. That, however, cannot be the full story, since Wittgenstein

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[411] However, as against Kant, Russell holds that sense-data are mind-independent.
[412] See Levine (2013, esp. §§ 2-3).
[413] This last point emerged in conversation with Levine.
[414] Wittgenstein writes that "the totality of propositions is language" (T, 4.001). Since, however, for Wittgenstein all propositions are constructions out of the elementary propositions, then the whole of language may also be regarded as the totality of elementary propositions. As Wittgenstein writes, "in a certain sense, it could be said that *all* propositions were generalizations of elementary propositions" (T, 4.52).

takes it that logic is interested in propositions "ONLY in so far as they are pictures" (NB, 5.10.14), and hence insofar as they *do* have content. If so, Wittgenstein's transcendental logic cannot make do without content. Indeed, I will now argue that Wittgenstein's transcendental logic is, in a sense to be clarified below, *contentful*.

To see this, it will once again be instructive to compare Wittgenstein's transcendental logic with Kant's one. In Chapter 2ₖ, I have argued that, while the rules of Kant's general logic are merely formal, the rules of his transcendental logic have a *transcendental content*, namely points of space and moments of time. Hence, for Kant, there is a subtle but important distinction to be made between the "mere" form of thought, namely the form of judgement, and the content-endowed form of thought, namely the (applied) category. This is rooted in a more general, and arguably neater, Kantian distinction between form and content, whereby content must always come "from outside of logic" (A60/B85), namely from an intuition of sensibility, as opposed to a concept of the understanding.

Now, having no strong distinction in place between general and particular thought, Wittgenstein cannot buy a strong distinction between concepts and intuitions. But if so, Wittgenstein has no space to countenance a neat distinction between form and content in his logic, in the way Kant did by distinguishing the formal rules of logic from the content-endowed ones. At first, this may seem puzzling. For the rules of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic are the forms of objects. And objects, Wittgenstein stresses, are "form *and* content" (T, 2.025). Hence, it looks like Wittgenstein has a neat distinction between form and content after all.

I want to suggest, however, that appearances are deceptive here. As we have seen, Wittgenstein writes that "logic deals with all possibilities", namely the possibilities of all situations, that give logical space. He then adds in two consecutive remarks:

2.014   Objects *contain* the possibility of all situations.

2.0141   The possibility of its occurring in states of affairs is the *form* of an object.

Here, Wittgenstein is clarifying that objects *contain* their possibilities of combination, and thereby that objects *contain* their *form*. If so, the form of objects, for Wittgenstein, *is* their content. Yet insofar as Wittgenstein's logic deals with logical space, and hence with the forms of objects, which are also the content of objects, then Wittgenstein's logic deals with (a type of) content, and hence it is a contentful logic.

One may object that, for Wittgenstein as much as for anyone else, logic must deal with *thought* and not with objects, which are the business of ontology. For Wittgenstein, however, the forms of objects are *shared* by empirical reality and thought (transcendental isomorphism).

Indeed, given his "equation" of real and logical possibility, Wittgenstein can countenance no distinction between transcendental ontology and transcendental logic.

If I am right in maintaining that, for Wittgenstein, the form of objects is their *content*, then the form of objects should be *contained in thought* as well. Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, a thought should contain the combinatorial possibilities of the objects that make up the situation of which it is the thought. And indeed, as we have seen, Wittgenstein writes:

> 3.02   A thought *contains* the possibility of the situation of which it is the thought. What is thinkable is possible too.

At first, this may strike the reader as something that Wittgenstein cannot *really* hold. For the *content* of a thought, for Wittgenstein, is the situation it represents.[415] The *possibility* of this situation—its form—cannot itself be thought or represented. How, then, could it be *contained* in the thought or proposition?

The apparent paradox is dissolved once we realize that being contained in a thought does not yet mean being *that which is thought*. Just like a speck of paint may be contained in a painting, without being, on that account, *that which is painted*, so too the combinatorial possibilities of an object may be contained in a thought, without being, on that account, *that which is thought*.

There is, then, a shifting use of the word "content" at work in the *Tractatus*. Under a certain respect, the content of a thought or proposition is its *sense* (cf. T, 6.111), i.e. the possible situation that is represented by the thought/proposition (cf. T, 2.221); under another respect, however, the content of a thought or proposition is the *possibility* of its sense (T, 3.13), i.e. the *possibility* of the represented situation.[416] Yet how exactly should we account for this difference?

I suggest that for the early Wittgenstein, as for Kant before him, there are two varieties of content: empirical and transcendental. More specifically, as I read Wittgenstein, the empirical content of a thought is the situation that gets to be represented as part of empirical reality, the *obtaining* of which is known a posteriori. The transcendental content of a thought is the *possibility* of that situation, which comes down to the *combinatorial possibilities* of its objects, namely forms, which are known a priori. Put otherwise, the empirical content is the matter of sense—that which we think or say. The transcendental content is the form of sense—that which allow us to

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[415] This is confirmed by the fact that, according to the early Wittgenstein, the sentence of logic are *contentless* (T, 6.111), since they are not pictures of possible situations (T, 4.462).

[416] This "double-aspect" of the word "content" is rendered by Wittgenstein in German by means of the distinction between *Gehalt* (which he reserves for sense) and *Inhalt* (which he reserves for the possibility of sense). *Gehalt* appears at 6.111, whereas *Inhalt* at 2.025, 3.13 and 3.331. Without this "double-aspect", it would be impossible to understand Wittgenstein's apparently contradictory remarks by which "What a picture *represents* is its sense" (T, 2.221) and "a proposition *shows* its sense" (T, 4.022).

think or say what we think or say (cf. T, 3.13).

That said, Wittgenstein's "transcendental content" is quite unlike Kant's. While for Kant the transcendental content of thought, namely the forms of intuition, comes "from outside" thought itself, for Wittgenstein the transcendental content of thought, namely the forms of objects, comes *with thought itself*, being the forms of objects the logical forms of thought. Further, while for Kant the transcendental content of thought *effably* issues in synthetic a priori judgements, which *represent* the form of experience, for Wittgenstein that cannot be the case at all, since he holds that we cannot represent forms *in any way*.

I will now examine in more detail Wittgenstein's transcendental (contentful) logic of depiction, before presenting his account of (contentless) "logical sentences", as by-products of pictures.

2.72ᴡ *The "picture theory" as transcendental logic of depiction*

We have analysed the character of the transcendental rules at the heart of Wittgenstein's logic, namely the forms of objects. By now, it should be clear *that*, for Wittgenstein, they contribute to the possibility of depiction of reality, in ways that are in some respects similar, and in others very different, from Kant's transcendental rules. However, as of yet, we must still investigate *how*, for Wittgenstein, the forms of objects contribute to the workings of depiction. In what follows, I address this issue, by expounding Wittgenstein's so-called "picture theory", as a transcendental logic of depiction.

An account of Wittgenstein's "picture theory" cannot but start from his notion of picture. According to Wittgenstein, a picture is a *fact* representing another fact—a structured combination of elements representing a structured combination of objects. Specifically, for Wittgenstein,

> 2.15   The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate
> way represents that things are related to one another in the same way.

The idea is that the elements of the picturing fact may go proxy for the objects of the pictured fact, combining with one another in such a way as to *re*present a possible combination of objects. Our question now is how exactly depiction *works* for Wittgenstein—how the picturing fact may depict the pictured fact at all. For a fact, *by itself*, is surely not the picture of anything else.

As I interpret Wittgenstein, there are at least two deeply interrelated requirements for a fact to count as a picture, namely

isomorphism: having the same form of the reality represented, and

intentionality: being *of* the reality represented.

Indeed, I believe that the interplay between *isomorphism* and *intentionality* is the key to Wittgenstein's picture theory.

To see this, let us start from the first requirement, namely *isomorphism*. In 2.15 quoted above, Wittgenstein suggests that, "the same" mode of combination must be common to the picturing fact and the pictured fact. Indeed, if it is to count as a *picturing* fact, it must be *possible* for the picturing fact to have its elements combined in "the same way" as the elements of the reality that is to be represented. This will be possible only if the picturing fact shares the *possibilities of combination* of its elements—*form*—with the pictured fact. Put otherwise, the picturing fact may depict the pictured fact only if the former is *isomorphic* to the latter.

Now, the common form shared by picture and depicted reality is what Wittgenstein calls "pictorial form":

> 2.151   Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture.

Importantly, he glosses:

> 2.1511   *That* is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it.

Here we come to the second requirement to be a picture, namely *intentionality*. In effect, for Wittgenstein, we must be in cognitive contact with reality if we are to represent anything at all. More specifically, if a fact is to be a representation of another, an *intentional relation*[417] must link the picturing fact to the pictured fact. Otherwise, Wittgenstein thought, there would just be two unrelated facts, and the one would not be a representation *of* the other.[418] Thus, Wittgenstein continues:

> 2.1513   So a picture, conceived in this way, also includes the pictorial relationship, which makes it into a picture.
>
> 2.1514   The pictorial relationship consists of the correlations of the picture's elements with things.
>
> 2.1515   These correlations are, as it were, the feelers of the picture's elements, with which the picture touches reality.

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[417] By itself, intentionality need not be a relation, which presupposes the existence of both *relata*, i.e. thought and objects (that are thought about). However, as will become clearer below, the early Wittgenstein committed to a relational view of intentionality. I argue for this view in my (2021), esp. § 4.

[418] Compare Putnam (1981, p. 1).

A picture, then, essentially involves the intentional "correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects" (see T, 5.542). For without such a correlation, the elements of the picturing fact could not go proxy for the objects of the pictured fact, and stand in a possible relation for those objects, in such a way as to represent reality.

Isomorphism and *intentionality* are then the two minimal requirements for a fact to be a picture of another fact. Still, how can these two requirements be jointly satisfied? In 2.151 and 2.1511 quoted above, Wittgenstein suggests it is in virtue of sharing their possibilities of combination—pictorial form—that the picturing and pictured fact are intentionally correlated. ("*That* is how a picture is attached to reality"). To enter the workings of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic of depiction, we should then focus first on "pictorial form". Below, I will start to do so by expounding a (by now) familiar kind of pictorial form, namely spatial form, to which there corresponds a specific kind of pictures, namely spatial pictures. I will then turn to a more general pictorial form, namely "the logical form" [*die logische Form*], and examine logical picturing more generally, with the aim of clarifying its interplay with intentionality.

2.721$_W$ *Spatial pictures*

The German term that Wittgenstein employs for "picture" is *Bild*, which may also be translated as "model". Not by chance, when Wittgenstein first developed his notion of picturing, he heavily relied on spatial examples, such as three-dimensional models. It will then be good to start from space and spatial models to understand Wittgenstein's "picture theory", as a transcendental logic of depiction.

As we have seen, space is a transcendental feature or form of objects for Wittgenstein. Further, the forms of objects are the transcendental rules at the heart of Wittgenstein's transcendental logic. Thus, space must be one of the transcendental rules of representation, or at any rate a system of such rules, that govern the combination of terms in pictures, allowing us to depict spatial situations. This much follows from our discussion. We are now interested in how spatial depiction *works*.

To this end, let us consider a spatial model [*räumliche Bild*], such as a three-dimensional architectural model of the kind used in urban planning, composed by two model-buildings, which we may call "A" and "B":
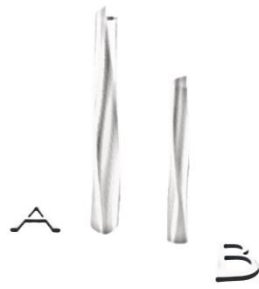
According to Wittgenstein, a model like this one can work as a spatial picture of the spatial situation by which building A is to the left of building B in reality:

More precisely, for Wittgenstein, the fact that model-building A stands to the left of model-building B *can* represent the possible spatial situation that building A is to the left of building B. Further, given that space is a (system of) transcendental rule(s) of both representation and reality, this *possibility* must reside in the form of space itself, which the architectural model and the spatial reality it represents share. Indeed, the fact that model-building A stands to the left of model-building B instantiates the possibility that an object is to the left of another one *in space*. Thereby, this fact may be used as a representation that building A is to the left of building B.

Now, for the early Wittgenstein, propositions are essentially pictures or models. We should thus expect that propositions may work in a similar way as the architectural model above for him. Thus, for Wittgenstein, the written proposition "Building A is to the left of Building B" could represent the possible spatial situation by which Building A is to the left of Building B. For the name "Building A" is exactly to the left of the name "Building B", and so this fact—namely, the fact that one name is to the left of the other—can be exploited as a representation of the possible situation by which one building is to the left of the other. This is possible insofar

as both complexes, the propositional one and the "worldly" [419] one, share the form of space or *spatial form*.

2.722w *Logical pictures*

In the *Tractatus*, after presenting pictures as models (T, 2.12), thereby prompting to the reader's mind spatial examples, Wittgenstein gradually generalizes the notion of picture. Indeed, Wittgenstein writes of a pictorial form which is more general than spatial form, namely "the logical form" [*die logische Form*],[420] which essentially pertains to all pictures/propositions, and not just to "spatial" ones. This leads him to introduce a more general category of pictures—logical pictures. In Wittgenstein's words:

> 2.18 What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it—correctly or incorrectly—in any way at all, is the logical form, i.e. the form of reality.
>
> 2.181 A picture whose pictorial form is the logical form is called a logical picture.
>
> 2.182 Every picture is *at the same time* a logical one. (On the other hand, not every picture is, for example, a spatial one.)[421]

The introduction of logical pictures does not mean that spatial pictures are not logical. As I have argued, space is *a* logical form for the early Wittgenstein, and so spatial pictures will *at the same time* be logical ones.[422] Still, the introduction of logical pictures has fundamental consequences.

In effect, having "the logical form", logical pictures may be more general than spatial pictures, which have a *specific* logical form, namely spatial form (space). Thus, logical pictures that do *not* have spatial form may nonetheless depict spatial realities for the early Wittgenstein. For example, if I *utter* the proposition "Building A is to the left of Building B", the *uttered* names "Building A" and "Building B" do not stand in any spatial relation to each other (though they surely stand in a temporal relation of succession). Still, for Wittgenstein, the uttered proposition can logically depict the corresponding spatial situation,[423] insofar as the former shares with the

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[419] I use inverted commas here since the propositional complex is itself part of the world according to the early Wittgenstein. A propositional sign is a *fact* (T, 3.14).

[420] It is a significant fact that, in Ogden's translation, which was approved by Wittgenstein himself, we read of "the logical form". The point is also taken up and insightfully discussed by Ramsey, in his 'Critical Notice' to the *Tractatus* (1923, p. 467). (Note that, given what I have remarked above concerning absoluteness, any string of signs containing the phrase "the logical form" ultimately needs to be recognized as nonsensical for Wittgenstein).

[421] Translation slightly emended, to render *die logische Form* as "the logical form" (cf. note above).

[422] Compare also Pears (2006, p. 9).

[423] Compare Wittgenstein's 1930 Lent Term Cambridge lectures, in which he is reported to have said: "A spatial order can correspond to a temporal one. There's a special & general arrangement" (LC30-33, p. 6).

latter "the logical form"—the same possibilities of logical combination in general.[424]

Of course, this prompts the questions "What is a logical picture?" and "How does *it* work?". Let us start from the first question, in order to turn to the second one. In one of the cardinal remarks of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes:

> 3   A logical picture of facts is a thought.

A thought, in turn, is that which finds sensible expression in a proposition—linguistic signs (spoken or written) in their "projective relation" to reality:

> 3.1   In a proposition a thought finds an expression that can be perceived by the senses.
>
> 3.11   We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a projection of a possible situation.
>
> 3.12   I call the sign with which we express a thought a propositional sign.—And a proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world.

It is clear here that logical picturing, whose form is "the logical form", is *essentially* entangled with the intentional "projective relation" of signs to reality. This is to be expected, given the interplay between *isomorphism* and *intentionality* to which I have already called attention. This interplay now reveals itself as a matter of logic, as testified by those remarks in which Wittgenstein essentially links the logical form and the projective relation, to clarify his transcendental "logic of depiction":

> 4.014   A gramophone record, the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound-waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting that holds between language and the world.
>   They are all constructed according to a common logical pattern.
>   (Like the two youths in the fairy-tale, their two horses, and their lilies. They are all in a certain sense one).
>
> 4.0141   There is a general rule by means of which the musician can obtain the symphony from the score, and which makes it possible to derive the symphony from the groove on the gramophone record, and, using the first rule, to derive the score again. That is what constitutes the inner similarity between these things which seem to be constructed in such entirely different ways. And that rule is the law of projection which projects the symphony into the language of musical notation.

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[424] Given Wittgenstein's lack of examples, these possibilities of logical combination "in general" may only be characterized as the common logical features of entire classes of facts, *irrespective of their specific forms* (e.g. spatial, temporal, chromatic). Perhaps, partly inspired by Russell, Wittgenstein had in mind general forms like the relational one, i.e. xRy, which may be common to facts of different specific forms (see Zalabardo 2015, Ch. 2). In any case, for Wittgenstein as against Russell, logical form is not in a platonic heaven. Rather, it is built in the objects and, thereby, as I argue below, in thought about them, since the objects are the common form of reality and thought.

4.015   The possibility of all imagery, of all our pictorial modes of expression, is contained in the logic of depiction.

Clearly, Wittgenstein does not take it that the musical notation *is* the music itself, or for that matter that language *is* the world, but rather that the logical *form* of the one is the logical form of the other. Thanks to "the law of projection", which projects the *form* of reality into the linguistic signs, language and world are "in a certain sense one".[425]

It is a bit as if, for Wittgenstein, the propositional *signs*, which *by themselves* are not pictures, *absorbed*[426] the logical form of reality via "the law of projection", in such a way as to become linguistic pictures. We then need to understand *how* exactly this intentional-projective relation between signs and reality—"the law of projection"—may project the logical form into signs, thereby making it possible for us to picture *reality* by means of them.[427] And to do that, we must descend at the level of the projection of signs onto reality—the elementary level.

2.723~W~ *Elementary Pictures*

When Wittgenstein first presents his idea that propositions are pictures, he does not confine it to any specific kind of proposition. As we read in a key remark of the *Tractatus*:

4.01   A proposition is a picture [*Bild*] of reality.
          A proposition is a model of reality as we think it [*Der Satz ist ein Modell der Wirklichkeit, so wie wir sie uns denken*]. [428]

This passage suggests that all propositions are "models of reality as we think it". Even so, Wittgenstein believed that there is a *quintessential* logical model of reality, that philosophy must consider, namely the elementary proposition. For elementary propositions "are the kernels of *every* proposition" (SRLF, p. 163).

As we know from 1~W~, an elementary proposition is a combination of names that represents a possible combination of objects (state of affairs). The names, qua elements of the

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[425] Or in a certain *non*sense, one might say!

[426] The metaphor of "absorption" is employed by Pears (1977, p. 189). However, in his interpretation of Wittgenstein, Pears gives priority to the world over language, whereas here I am suggesting that *mere signs*, which by themselves are *not yet language*, "absorb" the logical form of reality via thinking, which shares that form with reality originally. I will criticize Pears interpretation of the *Tractatus* in the final Chapter 7.

[427] The view that, if we are to represent reality in language, the logical form of objects must be "absorbed" by signs via intentional projections, is confirmed by Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Remarks*, when he writes: "if a mark should happen to occur that looks like a word, I say: that's not a word, it only looks like one, it's obviously unintentional [...] If you exclude the element of intention from language, its whole function collapses" (PR, §§ 18 and 20). Wittgenstein then goes on to argue that only *symbols* (i.e. signs that have a logical-syntactic use, and that thus are projected onto reality), "include the form of the objects" (PR, § 78)

[428] Translation slightly emended.

propositional sign, must be "projected" onto reality, in such a way as to relate to objects, the elements of reality, which are their meanings. But does this *correlation* between names and objects work? Answering this question, amounts to showing how an elementary proposition—the archetypal logical picture—may "touch" reality, thereby picturing it. But since the elementary propositions are the building bricks of the whole language for Wittgenstein, answering this question will illuminate his solution to the problem of the possibility of linguistic representation of reality (logical depiction), and thereby his whole transcendental logic.

As rightly noted by David Bell,[429] the correlation of names and objects cannot itself be pictorial or judgemental for Wittgenstein, if by that we mean that first we judge, and only then we correlate names to objects.[430] For it is rather the correlation of names to objects that makes elementary judgements, and hence all judgements, possible in the first place for Wittgenstein (cf. T, 4.0312). It is natural to suppose, then, that the correlation of names to objects takes place *before* (their use in) judgement or propositions.[431] That, however, is equally a non-starter. For, following Frege, who was following Kant in turn,[432] Wittgenstein writes:

3.3   [O]nly in the context of a proposition has a name meaning.[433]

As a result, Wittgenstein's words have all the appearance of being viciously circular. For *it seems* that, in order to judge, we need to relate names to objects, but to relate names to objects, in such a way that they have meaning, we need to judge.

The threat of vicious circularity, however, is indeed *apparent*. It is defused, if we read Wittgenstein as claiming that the correlation of names to objects is given neither before nor after thought or judgement, but rather *with* thinking or judging—*with* the logico-syntactic *use* of names (cf. T, 3.327). In effect, according to Wittgenstein, a thought or judgement *is an* *application*

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[429] 1979, pp. 134-6.

[430] The "judgement first" (and "reference second") view is at the core of Hidé Isghiguro's seminal paper 'Use and Reference of Names'. There, she writes: "The *Tractatus* theory of names […] is a refutation of views which assume that a name is like a piece of label which we tag on to an object which we can already identify. A label serves a purpose because we usually write names—*which already have a use*—on the label" (1969, p. 35). Here, Ishiguro suggests that, according to the early Wittgenstein, *first* we use names in judgement, and only *then* we may attach them to reality. As I argue in the continuation, this claim is incompatible with Wittgenstein's actual views. However, Ishiguro is right in her contention that, for the early Wittgenstein, the notion of 'use' is already crucial. I expand upon this point below.

[431] Sometimes, Pears suggests this view, as when he writes that, for Wittgenstein, "a constraint [is put] on the use of the names in a sentence *after* they have been attached to objects" (1987, p. 118). I return on Pears' interpretation of the early Wittgenstein in the final Chapter 7, criticizing it.

[432] As we have seen in 2_K, Kant had written that we "can make no other use of concepts than that of judging by means of them" (A68/B93). David Bell (1979, pp. 4-5) and Peter Simons (2011, p. 4) have argued that this is a clear anticipation of Frege's context principle, i.e. "it is only in the context of a proposition that a word has any meaning" (1960, § 62), which is endorsed by Wittgenstein, both in his early and later philosophy (see T, 3.3 quoted above and PI, § 49).

[433] Ogden's translation.

of signs according to logical rules (ibid. and T, 3.5). These are the necessary rules of the combination of signs with each other, that make it possible for signs to be used as projections or representations of a possible situation. They are the transcendental rules of *both* thought and reality, which are known a priori—namely, the forms of objects. Hence, Wittgenstein writes in his *Notebooks*:

> One name is representative of one thing, another of another thing, and they themselves are connected; in this way the whole images the situation—like a *tableau vivant*.
>
> The logical connection must, of course, be one that is possible as between the things that the names are representatives of, and this will always be the case if the names really are representatives of things. (NB, 4.11.14)

And again, in the *Tractatus*:

> 4.0311   One name stands for one thing, another for another thing, *and* they are combined with one another. In this way the whole group—like a *tableau vivant*—presents a state of affairs.[434]

The relation of names to objects comes neither before, nor after, but *with* the rule-governed combination of names with one another in the context of a proposition. As Wittgenstein writes, "only connections that are lawful [*gesetzmäßige*] are thinkable" (T, 6.361). But the "laws" that govern the thinkable connections of objects can be none other than the forms of objects, as transcendental rules of combination shared by thought and reality. Hence, it is only by combining names according to transcendental rules—the forms of objects—that we can linguistically represent reality. No more and no less than this "miracle"[435] takes place at the level of the elementary proposition for Wittgenstein. And the miracle may happen since *the transcendental rules are originally contained in the projective-intentional representing relationship that Wittgenstein calls "thinking"*,[436] and thereby in the proposition, which is the *projection* of a possible situation. As we read in the continuation of 3.11:

> 3.11   We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a projection of a possible situation.
>   The method of projection is thinking the sense of the proposition [*Die Projektionsmethode ist das Denken des Satz-Sinnes*].[437]

And later, in 'Some Remarks on Logical Form':

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[434] My emphasis on "and".

[435] Compare David Pears who, in the context of his discussion of Wittgenstein's "picture theory", writes of "the miracle of sense" (Pears, 2006, pp. 5-6).

[436] Cf. Wittgenstein's 1930 Cambridge lectures, in which he is reported to have said that "the intention *contains* [the] rule of using" certain signs (LC30-33, p. 97, 5:44; my emphasis)

[437] Translation slightly emended.

I have said elsewhere [*viz.* at 2.1511 of the *Tractatus*] that a proposition "reaches up to reality", and by this I meant that the forms of the entities are *contained* in the form of the proposition which is about these entities. For the sentence, together with the mode of projection which projects reality[438] into the sentence, determines the logical form of the entities.[439] (SRLF, p. 169; my emphasis)

2.73w *Tautologies*

We may now circle back to Wittgenstein's view of "the propositions of logic", namely tautologies, and realize that they are a *by-product* of (content-endowed) pictures, and thereby of the (transcendental) "logic of depiction". As Wittgenstein writes:

4.462   Tautologies […] are not pictures of reality […] In a tautology the conditions of agreement with the world—the representational relations—cancel one another, so that it does not stand in any representational relation to reality.

4.4661   Admittedly the signs are still combined with one another even in tautologies […] i.e. they stand in certain relations to one another: but these relations are meaningless [*bedeutungslos*].

6.1   The propositions of logic are tautologies.

6.11   Therefore the propositions of logic say nothing. (They are the analytic propositions.)

In passages such as these, Wittgenstein is making clear that, *by dint of their unique construction*, tautologies are "limiting cases" of propositions—*degenerate* pictures, as it were. In effect, for the early Wittgenstein, the "propositions of logic", like all propositions, are constructions out of elementary propositions, which *are* pictures.[440] However, the peculiar way in which elementary pictures figure in a tautology deprives them of their sense or content, and hence of their relation to reality, so that there remain only the relations that linguistic signs bear to one another—which are "meaningless".

To see this, consider the following. Let p be an elementary picture. According to Wittgenstein, by means of the application of some operations, such as '&' (*and*) and '⌐' (*not*), we may construe the logical sentence "⌐ (p & ⌐ p)", which is a tautology (see T, 6.1201). Here, it

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[438] Notice that Wittgenstein is not taking the view that reality is *materially* contained in a proposition, as Russell did by taking the constituents of a proposition to be particulars and universals. Indeed, Wittgenstein is clear in the *Tractatus* that a projection does not contain "what is projected", namely the depicted reality, but only its *form*, which comes down to the *combinatorial possibilities* of objects (see T, 3.13). The passage from 'Some Remarks', among other things, hammers home the same point.

[439] Cf. T, 3.327 and NB, 25.4.15.

[440] For Wittgenstein's view of tautologies as constructions out of elementary propositions, see Levine (2013, p. 201).

is clear that "representational relations" of *p* (the "feelers" with which *p* "touches" reality) have cancelled each other out. For while *p*, being a picture, represents a certain situation, which is its (empirical) content, "⌐ (p & ⌐ p)" does not represent anything at all, and has no (empirical) content. Rather, it is just an instance of the principle of contradiction.

Now, being molecular pictures constructions out of elementary pictures, the applications of operations to molecular pictures may yield tautologies just as in the elementary case. Thus take "it is raining". Though for Wittgenstein this would not have been an elementary picture, it would have been a *picture*, which has content, insofar as it represents the world as being a certain way, making a certain cognitive claim on it. If, however, we apply to this picture the operations 'v' (*or*) and '⌐' (*not*) in a certain way, we obtain "either it is raining or not raining", which is an empty tautology. As Wittgenstein writes, "I know nothing about the weather when I know that it is either raining or not raining" (T, 4.461).

What does this have to do with Wittgenstein's transcendental logic of depiction? Well, everything. "It is raining" is a temporal proposition, or a picture that shares temporal form with reality, insofar as it represents a possible event in time, namely the event that it is raining. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, the tautological character of "either it is raining or is not raining" is indicative of something concerning reality—it reflects the *logical* form of time, and the *logical* impossibility that the same event should happen *and* not happen at once.

Now, the point just made applies to all propositions, whether they be temporal, spatial, chromatic, etc., insofar as they are all *logical* pictures. Thus, "*a* is here" and "*a* is there" are spatial pictures. But I know nothing when I know that "*a* is either here or there". Or else "*a* is green" and "*a* is not green" are chromatic pictures. But I know nothing when I know that "*a* is either green (all over) or not-green (all over)". These are empty tautologies, which however, for Wittgenstein, reflect the *logical* form of space and colour, and the *logical* impossibility of one thing being in two different places (at the same time), and of one thing being of two different colours (all over, at the same time).

If I am right, for Wittgenstein, "the logic of the world" is built into the pictures that represent the world (T, 3.42), starting at the elementary level and building up to the molecular one. Put otherwise, given Wittgenstein's "equation" of real and logical possibility, "the logic of the world" is always, at the same time, "the logic of depiction". Tautologies are just a reflection of the "logic of the world" (see T, 6.22), or equivalently of "the logic of depiction" for Wittgenstein. As such, they *presuppose* the logic of depiction and all its rules, which, at bottom, are "the logical form" that elementary propositions share with reality in virtue of a pictorial relation that connects the two:

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6.124[441]   The propositions of logic describe the [logical] scaffolding of the world, or rather they present [*stellen*] it. They "treat" of nothing. They *presuppose* that names have meaning and elementary propositions sense; and that is their connexion with the world. It is clear that something about the world must be indicated by the fact that certain combinations of symbols—whose essence involves the possession of a determinate character—are tautologies.

Here, Wittgenstein is adamant that tautologies *presuppose* the pictorial relation of pictures to reality. To that extent, however, they are not independent of picturing, and thereby of the transcendental logic of depiction, whose rules ground the possibility of representation of reality for Wittgenstein (i.e. the possibility of content). Indeed, for Wittgenstein, the logic of depiction is at the same time "the logic of the world".[442] Such logic comes down to the transcendental rules shared by language and reality, i.e. logical form, which is *reflected* by tautologies. In this way, I have argued, we should read Wittgenstein remark by which "Logic is transcendental" (T, 6.13).

2.8~W~ *The Aesthetic Non-Empirical Perspective*

Let us take stock. By means of a detailed comparison with Kant, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein cannot be an effable transcendental idealist. That, as we can now see, is mainly due to Wittgenstein's "equation" between logical and real possibility, and thereby between "the logic of depiction" and "the logic of reality". However, in Chapter 2~K~, I have argued that the *ultimate* condition of Effable Transcendental Idealism is a *non*-empirical perspective of particular kind— a *merely* logical *extra*-empirical perspective. While, given our discussion so far, there is no indication whatsoever that Wittgenstein could respect this requirement, we may complete our comparison with Kant by checking whether Wittgenstein committed to another kind of non-empirical perspective.

In this section, I argue that, given his structural commitments, the early Wittgenstein cannot endorse a merely logical extra-empirical perspective. Rather, he endorses an *aesthetic* non-empirical perspective that, following Schopenhauer, he calls the view *sub-specie aeternitatis*. This will not only confirm (yet another time) that the early Wittgenstein cannot be an effable transcendental idealist, but will also foreshadow the question of whether he subscribed to *Ineffable* Transcendental Idealism, to be addressed in Chapter 3~W~.

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[441] My emphasis.
[442] This phrase appears at T, 6.22.

As we have seen in 2ᴋ, Kant distinguished between an empirical perspective, from which things are considered *in* space and time, and a *non*-empirical perspective, from which things are *not* considered in space and time. More specifically, Kant's non-empirical perspective was both *extra*-empirical and *merely logical*, so that from its vantage point, we could reach *beyond* empirical or spatiotemporal reality, and *think* that space and time depend upon our point of view. This much was essential to Kant's specific form of transcendental perspectivism, namely his effable transcendental idealism.

  After Kant, the idea of a distinction between an empirical and a non-empirical perspective continued to thrive in the transcendental tradition, though not necessarily in the exact form in which Kant had envisioned it. Thus, in his *World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer puts forward a distinction between an empirical perspective, which he called "immanent", and a non-empirical one, which he called "transcendental", claiming that the latter may come not only in a conceptual variant, as in Kant, but also in an *intuitive* one. As Schopenhauer writes:

> The apprehension of things […] in accordance with [space, time, and causality] is immanent; on the other hand, that which is conscious of the true state of things is *transcendental*. We obtain this *in abstracto* through the *Critique of Pure Reason* [i.e. through a conceptual investigation into the nature of reason itself], but in exceptional cases it can also appear intuitively. This last point is my own addition [to Kant's work]. (1969a, § 31)

A few sections later, expanding upon *his* idea of an *aesthetic* non-empirical perspective, Schopenhauer identifies it with the Spinozistic view *sub specie aeternitatis*,[443] only reframed transcendentally:

> Raised up by the power of the mind, we relinquish the ordinary way of considering things, and cease to follow […] their relations to one another […]. Thus we no longer consider the where, the when, the why, and the whither in things, but simply and solely *the what*. [We] devote the whole power of our mind to intuition [*Anschauung*]. [W]hat is thus known is not the individual thing as such but […] the eternal form […]. It was this that was in Spinoza's mind when he wrote: *Mens aeterna est, quatenus res sub specie aeternitatis concipit*. (1969a, § 34)

Now, in his wartime *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein famously writes:

> The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside.
>   In such a way that they have the whole world as background.
>   Is this it perhaps – in this view the object is seen *together with* space and time instead of *in* space

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[443] In his *Ethics*, Spinoza had written of an "intuitive" kind of knowledge, namely "knowledge of the essence of things" (1954, pt. 2, prop. 40, note 2). Whoever has this knowledge can see the truth (ibid.), conceiving things under the form of eternity (pt. 5, prop. 31).

and time?

    Each thing modifies the whole logical world, the whole of logical space, so to speak.

    (The thought forces itself upon one): The thing seen *sub specie aeternitatis* is the thing seen together with the whole logical space. (NB, 7.10.16)

Like Kant and Schopenhauer, the early Wittgenstein countenances a distinction between an empirical and a non-empirical perspective. Unlike Kant, however, but like Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein countenances an *aesthetic* non-empirical perspective—the view *sub specie aeternitatis*—from which a Subject can *see* things under an *eternal* respect (NB, 8.10.16). Indeed, they both take the view *sub specie aeternitatis* to be a different perspective with respect to time, as well as space, and thereby with respect to the whole empirical reality.[444] But since for Wittgenstein space and time are transcendental features of both empirical reality and its representation, his view *sub specie aeternitatis* must be a *transcendental* perspective no less than Schopenhauer's one.

    To put it otherwise, like Kant and Schopenhauer, the early Wittgenstein is a *transcendental perspectivist*, for they all commit to a non-empirical perspective on transcendental conditions, such as space and time. However, Wittgenstein's transcendental perspectivism differs from Kant's, since, for Wittgenstein as for Schopenhauer before him, such non-empirical perspective that is *not* merely logical, but rather aesthetic—the view *sub specie aeternitatis*.

    There is, however, a significant difference between Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein's transcendental perspecitvisms. For Schopenhauer, in fact, we could attain a non-empirical perspective intuitively ("in concreto") *as well as* conceptually ("in abstracto")—from the aesthetic view "sub-specie aeternitatis" *as well as* from the conceptual vantage point of Kant's *Critique*,[445] namely the merely logical *extra*-empirical perspective. That is because Schopenhauer retained a strong distinction between intuitions and concepts,[446] which commits him to a distinction between real and logical possibility,[447] as he indicates by endorsing "Kant's great doctrine of the

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[444] Notice however that Wittgenstein connects space and time to *logical* space, which confirms once again that, for the early Wittgenstein, space and time are themselves logical. As opposed to this, Schopenhauer, like Kant, maintained that space and time are forms of *intuition*, and hence *not* logical forms. This is due to Schopenhauer's distinction between intuitions and concepts, to be further discussed below.

[445] See again 1969a, § 31.

[446] Indeed, Schopenhauer laments that even Kant failed to draw the distinction between intuitions and concepts with enough clarity and precision, something that he (Schopenhauer) takes himself to have done instead (see 1969a, p. 431).

[447] Schopenhauer does not *explicitly* say that he commits to a distinction between merely logical possibility (the possibility of mere thought) and real possibility (the possibility of cognition). However, he writes *in propria persona*: "The Transcendental Aesthetics is a work of such merit that it alone would be sufficient to immortalize the name of Kant […] I number its propositions among the incontestable truths" (1969a, p. 437). Now, among the propositions of Kant's transcendental aesthetics, there is (S&T$_{IDEAL}$) *space and time depend upon our point of view*, which, to be known as true, let alone "incontestably" true, requires a distinction between real and merely logical possibility,

ideality of [space and] time",[448] by which we may *think* that space and time are forms of our point of view, as opposed to forms of "reality as it is in itself". (Despite a few idiosyncrasies, Schopenhauer is arguably an effable transcendental idealist[449]).

The early Wittgenstein, on the other hand, has no distinction in place between real and logical possibility, nor consequently a strong distinction between intuitions and concepts. Hence, the aesthetic view *sub specie aeternitatis* is the only non-empirical perspective he can afford. That is, for Wittgenstein, nothing counts as *thinking* things from an *extra*-empirical "merely logical standpoint", in such a way as to *think* that space and time are transcendentally ideal—or for that matter, in such a way as to *think* that logical form more generally is transcendentally ideal. As he writes in the *Tractatus*:

2.174   A picture cannot […] place itself outside its representational form.

4.12   Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it—logical form.
           In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world.

Hence, while for the early Wittgenstein, as for Kant and Schopenhauer before him, there are transcendental features of empirical reality and its representation, still they cannot be *thought* as transcendental constraints that we impose onto reality, as Kant and Schopenhauer believed. And that is because, given his "equation" of real and logical possibility, for the early Wittgenstein there is no such thing as "taking off our spectacles in mere thought", thereby attaining a merely logical perspective, from which we could *think* that transcendental features depend upon our point of view, as opposed to reality "as it is in itself". Indeed, for the early Wittgenstein, transcendental features cannot be thought at all.

As a result, for the early Wittgenstein, the "right logical perspective" (T, 4.1213) may only ever be the *aesthetic* perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, as a view that sees things "together with space and time", and thereby, insofar as space and time are logical forms for him, "together

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as I have argued at length in Chapter 2$_K$. Hence, if Schopenhauer is to be consistent, he *must* buy a distinction between real and merely logical possibility.

[448] Schopenhauer (1969b, Chapter XLI).

[449] The idiosyncrasies ultimately come down to the fact that, for Schopenhauer, the thing in itself may be *known* as the will. Knowledge, however, is *not* cognition or representation of empirical reality. Indeed, by Schopenhauer's lights, the will is neither a representation nor an object of representation, and hence it cannot be *cognized* (in my sense of the word), as objects of representation can. It may only ever be either *felt* "in concreto" or *thought* "in abstracto" (1969a, § 21). Hence, Schopenhauer may still count as an effable transcendental idealist.

with the whole logical space" (cf. again NB, 7.10.16).[450] As Wittgenstein writes towards the end of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*:

> 6.45   The view [*Anschauung*] of the world *sub specie aeterni* is its view as a—limited—whole.

It is clear here that, for Wittgenstein, the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* is the perspective of (transcendental) logic, as a view of the whole logical space. And we can expect nothing else, given Wittgenstein's "equation" of real and logical possibility, which in the end is an "equation" of transcendental aesthetic and transcendental logic.

    Still, exactly insofar as it is an *aesthetic* one, and not a *merely* logical one from which we may "think the transcendental", the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* may for Wittgenstein allow us to recognize the *ineffability* of the transcendental features of empirical reality and its representation. I will argue for this view in Chapter 3ᵥᵥ. This, however, will raise the issue of whether, according to Wittgenstein, we may from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* recognize an *ineffable dependence* of transcendental features upon our point of view. If so, the early Wittgenstein would be an *ineffable* transcendental idealist. I shall, likewise, deal with this interpretation of the early Wittgenstein in Chapter 3ᵥᵥ, to check its credentials.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist (β), by showing he does not respect any of the necessary requirements to be one, outlined in Chapter 2ᴋ. In doing so, I have expounded many ontological, epistemological, and logical issues in Wittgenstein's early philosophy, as compared to Kant's critical one. By the end of the Chapter, I have introduced Wittgenstein's view *sub specie aeternitatis*, as an aesthetic non-empirical perspective on transcendental features. This foreshadowed the issue of whether the early Wittgenstein could be an ineffable transcendental idealist, to be addressed in Chapter 3ᵥᵥ.

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[450] I will return in detail on this point in Chapter 3ᵥᵥ.

3ₖ   Ineffable Transcendental Idealism

Slowly blossomed, slowly ripened in Siddhartha the realisation, the knowledge, what wisdom actually was, what the goal of his long search was. It was nothing but a readiness of the soul, an ability, a secret art, […] to be able to feel and inhale the oneness.

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– Hesse

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AIM: expounding Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, by discussing its necessary requirement.

Introduction

In Chapter 1ₖ, I have given a general characterization of Transcendentalism. In Chapter 2ₖ, I have then distinguished between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism. Further, I have also distinguished between two variants of Transcendental Idealism, namely the effable and the ineffable one.

Guided by Kant's work, I have expounded Effable Transcendental Idealism, as the metaphysical position defined by the claim that (TI_{eff}) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view. Indeed, I have argued that *Effable* Transcendental Idealism is *coherent*, defending it against charges which are as old as Kant, and which today are epitomized by Moore. But even those who accuse Kant of incoherence, chastising his view as "nonsense", are usually *sympathetic* toward some of his insights.

Now if, like Moore, you think that Kant's idealism is nonsensical, *yet deeply insightful*, then you would be tempted (obliged?) to collapse it into an *ineffable* idealism, of the sort interpreters, including Moore himself, attribute to the early Wittgenstein. In such a view, we have *ineffable* knowledge of the "ideality" of (at least some) transcendental features, and some *nonsense* is supposed to help us to recognize this. I call it Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.[451] And while I do *not* think it is Kant's view, nor the view in which Kant's view will eventually "collapse", it may still be that its *building bricks* could be found in Kant, so that we might *construe* the view out of Kantian materials. Indeed, this exercise might clarify the view itself, which in turn will help us to settle the issue of its alleged presence in Wittgenstein.

In this Chapter, I start to investigate Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, as the metaphysical position that prescribes *full sympathy* for the pseudo-claim that ($TI_{ineff}*$) we have *ineffable* a priori

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[451] Moore would simply call it "transcendental idealism".

knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view. My discussion, which is once again *inspired* by Kant, will be in four sections:

§ 3.1$_K$ introduces Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. I argue that its necessary requirement is *commitment* to ineffable a priori knowledge of the "ideality" of transcendental features, or equivalently full sympathy for (TI$_{ineff}$*).

§ 3.2$_K$ focuses on the distinction between thoughts (effable) and feelings (ineffable), which is already present in Kant. I argue that a clear instance of ineffable a priori knowledge is a priori feeling. Hence, the necessary requirement of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism may be cashed out in terms of an a priori feeling of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view.

§ 3.3$_K$ argues that Kant's 'I think' is an a priori feeling of thinking. I then construe, out of Kantian materials, different forms of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, including a form of Transcendental Solipsism. However, Transcendental Subjectivity does not entail Transcendental Idealism.

§ 3.4$_K$ argues that a priori feelings may have ethical significance for transcendental philosophers in general, and for transcendental idealists in particular. After presenting Kant's feeling of the sublime, as a feeling of respect for the "moral law", I argue that the sublime may be integrated in the forms of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism construed in § 3.3$_K$, in such a way as to make them ethically significant. However, Transcendental Ethics does not entail Transcendental Idealism.

3.1$_K$ Ineffable Transcendental Idealism

In this section, I briefly introduce Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, by flashing out the necessary requirement to be an ineffable transcendental idealist, namely commitment to ineffable a priori knowledge of the "ideality" of (at least some) transcendental features, or equivalently full sympathy for the pseudo-claim (TI$_{ineff}$*). In later sections, I will then show how the *seeds* of such a commitment, and thus of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, may already be found in Kant (though Kant was *not* an ineffable transcendental idealist).

3.11ₖ *Ineffable Transcendental Idealism*

According to the transcendental philosophers, transcendental conditions are known a priori. Just like knowledge in general, a priori knowledge divides into propositional and ineffable. If so, some transcendental philosophers could commit to *ineffable* transcendental features, i.e. necessary features of empirical reality and our representation, of which we (allegedly) have *ineffable a priori knowledge*. Indeed, nothing would seem to bar a transcendental philosopher from commitment to ineffable priori knowledge of the *ideality* of some transcendental features. This commitment is the necessary requirement to be an ineffable transcendental idealist.

As I have anticipated in 2ₖ and above, an ineffable transcendental idealist must be *fully sympathetic* to the apparent claim

(TI*ineff**): we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view.

The word "sympathetic" does heavy duty here. For, ultimately, an ineffable transcendental idealist must recognize (TI*ineff**) as a nonsensical *pseudo*-claim, and more precisely as an abortive attempt to put into words the *ineffable* dependence upon our point of view of transcendental features. In fact, (TI*ineff**) is what we may call a tissue of transcendental nonsense, i.e. a species of nonsense that masquerades as a sense-endowed formulation concerning ineffable transcendental conditions.[452] A species of nonsense, however, *is still nonsense*. Thus, an ineffable transcendental idealist cannot "endorse" (TI*ineff**), for nothing counts as "endorsing nonsense". He may only ever have *sympathy* for it, as the result of the misguided attempt to put into words what, for the ineffable transcendental idealist himself, is a genuine metaphysical insight.[453]

In any case, even if it is nonsensical, (TI*ineff**) may be helpful in thinking *about* the ineffable.

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[452] Arguably, it was Wittgenstein who first introduced the notion of transcendental nonsense, which he called "transcendental twaddle [*transcendentales Geschwatz*]" (quoted in Monk 1990, pp. 152-3; cf. Williams 1973, p. 79, Hacker 1986, p. 104, and A. W. Moore 2003, p. 184). Now if one takes it that all the transcendental conditions are *ineffable*—as I shall later argue the early Wittgenstein does—then all the *apparent* claims that would *seem* to concern these conditions must ultimately be recognized as transcendental nonsense. If, however, one sides with Kant, and maintains that most transcendental conditions are *effable*, then few transcendental claims will ultimately need to be recognized as transcendental nonsense. Of the few instances of (creative) nonsense that Kant works might contain, see § 46 of the *Critique of Judgement*, and my discussion of it in the final Chapter 7.

[453] While there are obvious difficulties in "endorsing nonsensical claims", there are no difficulties in *feeling* something with respect to nonsense, as when we feel amused by Lewis's Carroll's nonsensical poem 'Jabberwocky'. One may even feel *sympathetic* to nonsense, or at any rate sympathetic to the aspirations and/or insights that have led us to produce it. If this sympathy is a *full* one, and if the nonsense is of the transcendental species, those aspirations and/or insights, and the fact that the attempt to put them into words leads to nonsense, might be regarded as somehow indicative of the (ineffable/shown) truth or understanding of (Ineffable) Transcendental Idealism (cf. A. W. Moore, 1997, p. 212). If this sympathy is only *half-hearted*, then in the end it may be "uprooted", and at that point one would *not* count as an ineffable transcendental idealist (cf. Sullivan, 2003, p. 216).

For, as insightfully noted by Moore, "there is no absurdity in the idea of saying a good deal *about* what cannot be said. What is impossible is to say a good deal—anything—*that* cannot be said".[454] More to the point, (TI*ineff**) prompts us to think about ineffable knowledge, and more specifically about ineffable *a priori* knowledge. Indeed, if we could find a clear instance of *ineffable a priori knowledge*, then we may have hopes of understanding better the necessary requirement of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

3.2ₖ Thoughts and Feelings

In this section, I present feelings, as opposed to thoughts, as clear instances of ineffable knowledge. I then argue that an *a priori feeling* would be a clear instance of ineffable a priori knowledge—or ineffable understanding—which may play a fundamental role in Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

3.21ₖ *Ineffable Knowledge*

To find a clear instance of ineffable a priori knowledge, we need a firmer hold on its difference from propositional a priori knowledge, and from propositional knowledge more generally.

By definition, propositional knowledge is linguistically expressible in propositions. Thoughts are linguistically expressible in propositions, and thus, whenever we know their truth, they are instances of propositional knowledge. It follows that *a priori* thoughts, namely thoughts whose truth can be known a priori, would count as instances of propositional a priori knowledge. For example, if it expresses a thought at all, "all bachelors are married men" may be regarded as a piece of propositional a priori knowledge, since we do not need any particular experience to know its truth.

Now, let us try to contrast this with ineffable knowledge. By definition, ineffable knowledge is *not* propositional, i.e. it is *not* linguistically expressible in propositions. We have just noted that thoughts *are* expressible in propositions.[455] Thus thoughts, including those we know to be true, can *never* be instances of ineffable knowledge,[456] let alone ineffable *a priori* knowledge. If not thoughts, however, what could be regarded as a clear instance of ineffable knowledge? And

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[454] Moore (1997, p. 156). Compare also his (1992a, p. 427).

[455] I say "expressible in propositions", and not simply "expressible", since there are forms of expression that are not propositional. Think of many forms of art, such as sculpture or music.

[456] Peter Hacker goes very close to arguing that the early Wittgenstein believed in ineffable thoughts or propositions. That, however, is a misguided reading, that nearly makes Wittgenstein's early philosophy into a blatant contradiction. For a discussion of Hacker's reading of Wittgenstein, see 3ᴡ.

what as a clear instance of ineffable a priori knowledge?

The answer to these questions is not easy. It would be helpful to say that any knowledge state that is not a thought is a state of ineffable knowledge. And roughly speaking that's right. Yet ineffability is a matter of *degrees*, as there may well be knowledge states that, while not being thoughts, can nonetheless be *part* of the cognitive content of thoughts, thereby being *part* of what can be expressed in language. For example, while not being thoughts, Kantian intuitions are awareness-states that provide us with well-grounded information on reality.[457] Indeed, intuitions are the singular terms of those thoughts about reality that Kant calls cognitions,[458] which latter are linguistically articulable.

As a result, we should distinguish between *partially* ineffable knowledge states and *fully* ineffable knowledge states. Partially ineffable knowledge states, like Kantian intuitions, cannot themselves be thought (for they are *not* thoughts), but can still figure in the cognitive content of (some) thoughts, which is expressible in language. These states are not completely "mute", so to speak. Fully ineffable knowledge-states, on the other hand, cannot so much as figure in the linguistically expressible content of a thought. They are completely "mute".

Now, if we wanted to find a *clear* instance of ineffable knowledge, then we should better find a *fully* ineffable knowledge state. In what follows, that's what I should endeavour to do, with the aim of then finding a clear instance of ineffable *a priori* knowledge.

3.211ₖ *Feeling*

Here, as so often, Kant may help us. For there is in Kant's works a widely neglected distinction that *neatly* lines up with the propositional/ineffable distinction, and that thereby may lead us to a *clear* instance of ineffable knowledge, as well as of ineffable *a priori* knowledge. This is the distinction between thoughts and *feelings*, which, *in Kant's philosophy*, ultimately goes back to the distinction between the understanding and sensibility.

The understanding, recall, is for Kant the faculty of objectivity, for it alone can relate given representations (e.g. intuitions) *to objects*, or, that which is the same for Kant, *think of objects*. But now look at what Kant says of sensibility, right at the beginning of his *Metaphysics of Morals*:

> One can characterize sensibility as the subjective aspect of our representations in general; for it is the understanding that first refers representations to an object, i.e., only it *thinks* something by

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[457] We should not be afraid of saying that (some) awareness states are knowledge states. In Kant, empirical intuitions are awareness states that afford us with information on empirical reality, by putting us in contact with it. This information is as reliable as we may wish, for it is grounded on the "machinery of objectivity" (a priori intuition and categories).

[458] Compare George (1981, p. 243-4).

means of them. What is subjective in our representations may be such that it can also be referred to an object for cognition of it (either in terms of its form, in which case it is called pure intuition, or in terms of its matter, in which case it is [properly] called sensation [*Empfindung*]); in this case sensibility, as receptivity to such a representation, is *sense*. Or else what is subjective in our representations cannot become *a part of cognition* [*Erkenntnisstück*] because it involves *only* a relation of the representation to the *subject* and nothing that can be used for cognition of an object; and then receptivity to the representation is called *feeling* [*Gefühl*], which is the effect of a representation (that may be either sensible or intellectual) upon a subject and belongs to sensibility, even though the representation itself may belong to the understanding or to reason. (MoM, Intro, § I[459])

Here, Kant is doing two interrelated things. First, he is clarifying that the representations of sensibility, insofar as they are modifications of a subject, are subjective. But second, Kant is clarifying that the subjective representations of sensibility may either figure *as part of* the cognitive or objective content of a thought or judgement, *or not*. In particular, feelings, as opposed to intuitions and (external) sensations,[460] *cannot* figure in the cognitive content of a thought or judgement. At one point in the third *Critique*, Kant even goes as far as saying that feeling "must always remain *merely* subjective" (CPJ, § 3; my emphasis).

Now, while Kant is arguably right in maintaining that feelings have an ineliminable subjective character, we need not take on board his point that feelings are "merely" subjective. In fact, as I will later argue, Kant himself believes that there is a *special* feeling, that makes possible our cognitive relation to the object, even though it is not itself a cognition, nor part of a cognition. And that feeling would not be "merely" subjective after all.

Still, we might preserve the spirit of Kant's passages above, by taking it that feelings are *fully non-conceptual mental states*. By this, I mean that feelings are neither thoughts, nor part of the cognitive content of thoughts. More specifically, even though there is a certain sense in which feelings have "objects" (i.e. whatever is felt), feelings are neither *about* objects, in the way thoughts may be, nor themselves *objects*, or even just terms, that may figure in the cognitive content of thoughts.[461] Feelings are fully ineffable.[462]

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[459] Translation slightly emended.

[460] In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant draws a distinction between external sensations (i.e. sensations *proper*) and feelings (CPJ, § 3). Insofar as we may attribute in judgement certain sensations to objects in space, for example when we judge that "the meadow is *green*", then these *external* sensations are not *essentially* subjective for Kant, for they may be regarded as the effect that external *objects*, such as a meadow, make on us. This effect may be put into words by judgements such as the one above, or at any rate by judgements containing the judgement above. When, however, the effect upon a subject is not that of an object, but only that of a subjective source of knowledge, then we should better talk of feeling for Kant, which is *internal* sensation. Compare Jankowiak (2014).

[461] While feelings may have an "object", it does not make sense to say that their "object" is independent of the feel*ing* itself, in the same way in which an object of thought may be independent of the psychological process of think*ing* (cf. McDowell 1994, p. 28). Rather, the "object" of a feeling is, or at any rate *reflects*, the feeling itself. (The object of respect is *respected*). Properly speaking, then, feelings are not *about* anything outside of them, but rather have *in themselves* entire worlds.

[462] This means that nothing may ever count as "thinking *feelings*". Still, there is no difficulty in the idea of thinking *about* feelings. Indeed, that's what we are doing right now.

That feelings are fully ineffable, however, is not yet to say that we don't *know* anything in and through them. For, in feeling anything at all, we know at the very least *the feeling itself*. For example, in feeling pain, we know pain.[463] In feeling love, we know love. In feeling respect, we know respect. And if so, feelings are forms of *phenomenal knowledge*, i.e. knowledge of "what's it like" to be in certain mental states.

Put more picturesquely, a feeling is the consciousness *of itself*: by enjoying it at all, we *know how it feels* to enjoy it. Indeed, exactly in virtue of their being subjective states, feelings may be regarded as a form of *self-knowledge* (which, as I will argue below, is *ultimately*[464] ineffable knowledge).[465] But if, as I have argued, feelings are fully *ineffable*, and if indeed they are a form of *knowledge*, namely phenomenal or self-knowledge, then feelings are clear instances of states of ineffable knowledge.

3.2111ₖ *A priori feeling*

This is of crucial importance for our purposes. For if there were an *a priori feeling*—a feeling known independently of the encounter with any particular object of experience—it would be a clear instance of ineffable *a priori* knowledge. Indeed, insofar as an a priori feeling is *a feeling known a priori*, we would have reasons to suppose it has a transcendental function. Or even more, a fundamental role to play in Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

3.21111ₖ *Understanding a Priori Feeling*

Before proceeding in our quest to find an a priori feeling, we should address a potential objection, which will also start to give us a sense of what an a priori feeling may be. The objection roughly goes as follows. Even granting that, indeed, feelings are *clear* examples of ineffable knowledge, they need not be *the only* clear examples. For one, Moore identifies some states of understanding as instances of ineffable knowledge (understanding being for Moore

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[463] It is ridiculous to maintain that pain could not be felt unless we could talk about it by means of propositions. Animals suffer or feel pain, and yet they do not entertain propositions. Humans have the concept <pain> and so they are in such a position as to talk *about* pain. That, however, is not yet to say that we can put *pain* into words. If we could, pain would be a thought, and not a feeling.

[464] The word "ultimately" must be stressed since, while we may have effable knowledge of *parts* of our point of view, our most intimate knowledge of ourselves, as knowledge of our point of view *as a whole*, is ineffable. Or so I will argue below.

[465] Thus, for example, in his *Critique of Judgement* Kant writes that the feeling [*Gefühl*] of the unnameable [*Unnennbares*] "animates the cognitive faculties and combines spirit with the mere letter of language" (CPJ, § 49, 5:316). This point is addressed in an interesting footnote by A. W. Moore, as part of a 2007 paper in which he argues that the *feeling of unity* that Kant presents in his third *Critique* is ineffable since "instances of this feeling are not representations of how things are", and hence "have no content" (2007, p. 484). I return on this feeling of unity below, arguing that, for Kant, it is none other than the 'I think' or (transcendental) self-consciousness.

"knowledge of how to process knowledge").[466] And he argues that understanding does not contribute in the least to the content of a thought. So why should we not countenance states of understanding, *as opposed to feelings*, as clear instances of ineffable (a priori) knowledge, which may have a role to play in Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?

This objection misunderstands the relation between states of understanding and of feeling. We may grant that some states of understanding are instances of ineffable knowledge. But that would not yet mean they are separable from states of feeling, as the objection above implies. For, insofar as they are both states of *ineffable* knowledge, both feelings and states of understanding must be sharply distinguished from *thoughts* (though some states of feeling and/or understanding may still require quite a lot of think*ing* on our part[467]). Indeed, if they are to be *clear* examples of ineffable knowledge, then neither states of understanding nor feelings can be part of the *conceptual content* of thoughts (though they may still *ineffably issue in* thought).[468] But if, just like feelings, (some) states of understanding are not thoughts, nor part of the conceptual content of thoughts, *then what are they?*

I ask this question not because I have a final answer to it, but only to lead the reader to see that states of understanding and states of feeling are much more intimately related than the potential objection above takes them to be, so that a targeted discussion of (a priori) feeling *may* at the same time act as a discussion of ineffable states of understanding. Indeed, Moore himself writes that "understanding […] is a mode of *reception*".[469] It is only a small step from there to the view that understanding, as a state or capacity for thinking and making sense,[470] "is at bottom just a *feeling*".[471] But to understand this last point, and its relation to Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, we must return to Kant.

3.3ₖ The Transcendental Subject

So far, following Kant, I have argued that feeling, and thereby a priori feeling, has an ineliminable *subjective* character. In this section, I discuss transcendental subjectivity. My discussion is in three sub-sections. In the first sub-section, I present Kant's transcendental

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[466] A. W. Moore (1997, p. 189). Cf. Moore (1997, p. 184).
[467] Cf. Bell (1987, pp. 236-7).
[468] See A. W. Moore (2007, pp. 478-9).
[469] Moore (1997, p. 184; my emphasis). To my knowledge, Moore never says whether this is compatible with Kant's view of understanding. Below, however, I argue that it is. Specifically, I will argue that the 'I think'—which Kant's says is "the understanding itself" (B134n)—is the feeling of ourselves thinking, or the receptivity to our own spontaneity.
[470] For understanding as that which enables me to make sense, see Moore (1997, p. 185)
[471] G. Strawson (2017, p. 2; my emphasis).

subject, namely the 'I think'. I argue that Kant's 'I think' is an *a priori feeling*; I show how it makes cognition possible according to Kant; and I then construe, out of Kantian materials, a species of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. To be clear, this is *not* Kant's view, but it is me going beyond Kant for the sake of my argument. In the second sub-section, I present an extreme species of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, namely Transcendental Solipsism. In the third sub-section, I give a general account of the Transcendental Subject, as an inner a priori feeling of unity of the transcendental conditions, which itself is a transcendental condition. Further, I argue that Transcendental Subjectivity does not require Transcendental Idealism.

3.31$_K$ *Kant's 'I think'*

I have started the present work with Kant's letter to Herz, that asked about the *ground* of the relation between representation and reality. Of course, since then, we have seen that there are for Kant many transcendental grounds which, *in their interplay*, make possible our representation of empirical reality (cognition). When, however, Kant is asking about *the* ground of the relation between representation and reality, he is asking for the *final* ground—that ground of cognition which, being *self-grounded*, may bring us to some degree of metaphysical satisfaction. Put otherwise, Kant is asking: How can the necessary conditions of cognition "*come into play* at all"?[472] More precisely: What is that transcendental ground that makes this interplay, and thereby the cognitive *relation to objects*, possible in the first place?

  Now, this unique transcendental ground is for Kant the *I think*, or the "transcendental consciousness" (A117n), as a unitary and *a priori* consciousness of ourselves (ibid.). As Kant writes in the first edition of the *Critique*:

> [N]o cognitions can occur in us [...] without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions [*viz.* is a priori], and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible (A 107)

> This relation [to an object] is nothing other than the necessary unity of consciousness. (A109)

And again, more famously, in the second edition:

> The I think must be able to accompany all my representations, for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or at least would be nothing for me. (B131-2)

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[472] Bell (2001b, p. 13; my emphasis).

> [T]he unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity, and consequently is that which makes them into cognitions and on which even the possibility of the understanding rests. (B137)

In short, according to Kant, the 'I think' is the "highest" transcendental condition (see B134n and B136).[473] For without it, there could be no thought at all, and, *a fortiori*, no thought or judgement of empirical reality (cognition).

But now three questions immediately arise with respect to our discussion:

(1) What exactly is the 'I think'?
(2) How can it make all cognition possible?
(3) And how can it be related to Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?

3.311ₖ *What is the 'I think'?*

Let us start from the first question. The 'I think', Kant is keen to stress, is an *act of spontaneity*, and thus an *act of thinking*, which is the business of the understanding. Indeed, the very possibility of the understanding, "as the faculty of thinking" (A97), is said to rest on this act (B137), since without the 'I think' nothing could be thought.

That, however, does yet not mean that the 'I think' is something that lends *itself* to be thought or expressed in propositions. In fact, since the 'I think' must be able to accompany *all* my representations, including every thought, then it cannot itself be thought without circularity. For if the 'I think' were itself something thinkable, and hence *a thought*, then this thought would require *yet another* 'I think' thinking that thought (and that would trigger an infinite regress of subjectivities).[474] Put otherwise, insofar as it is the transcendental ground of the possibility of all thought or judgement, the 'I think' cannot itself be *thought*, in the way thoughts would.

Kant himself was sensible to this circularity, as is attested by the following passage from the first *Critique*, which is worth quoting in full:

> [Of] the simple and in content for itself wholly empty representation I [...] one cannot even say that it is a concept, but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept. Through this I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = x, which is recognized only through the thoughts that are its predicates, and about which, in abstraction, we can never have even the least concept; because of which we therefore turn in a *constant circle*, since we must always already avail ourselves of the representation of it at

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all times in order to judge anything about it; we cannot separate ourselves from this inconvenience, because the consciousness in itself is not even a representation distinguishing a particular object, but rather a form of representation in general, insofar as it is to be called a cognition; for of it alone can I say that through it I think anything. (A346/B404; my emphasis)

Here Kant is clarifying that the 'I think' is neither a concept, nor a thought, for it is rather the representation that accompanies all concepts and thoughts, as their transcendental condition. Thus, Kant himself realizes that, ultimately, the 'I think' cannot itself *be thought* without incurring a *constant circle*.[475] But if neither a concept nor a thought, nor indeed any element that may figure in the content of a thought—for the 'I' is "in content for itself wholly empty"[476]—then the question becomes ever more pressing: What is the 'I think'?[477]

The only remaining answer is that the 'I think' is a *feeling*. And that, indeed, is what Kant himself writes in the *Prolegomena*:

[The 'I'] is nothing more than a feeling of an existence [*Gefühl eines Daseins*] without the least concept (*Prol*, 4:334n)

Clearly, however, this must be a peculiar feeling for Kant. It must be receptive, as all feelings, qua representations of sensibility, are. And yet it must also be spontaneous, as only a representation of the understanding may be. It is *given*, but only *to thinking in general* (B423n). In fact, in and through this feeling, we are *receptive to our spontaneity* according to Kant.[478] For the 'I think' is the *a priori feeling* of our existence as thinking beings, that belongs neither to the understanding narrowly conceived, nor indeed to sensibility alone, but rather to the human point of view *as a whole*. Or better: it *is*, for Kant, the human point of view as a whole.[479]

Hence, for Kant, we do not have knowledge of *the whole* of our own point of view by putting

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[475] Still, that the 'I' cannot be thought—for it is not a thought, as object of thinking—does not mean that it is not *thinking*, as an *act*. Kant explicitly writes that "this representation [*viz*. 'I think'] is a thinking [*ein Denken*], not an intuiting [*nicht ein Anschauen*]" (B157). Notice that the fact that the 'I think' is not an intuiting does not imply that it is not a feeling (i.e. the feeling of thinking), since, as I have shown, Kant distinguishes between intuitions and feelings, and thereby between intuiting and feeling.

[476] Hence, the 'I think' can be neither an intuition nor an external sensation, for these can figure in the cognitive contents of thoughts or judgements.

[477] I do not ask this question in a metaphysical tone. All I am asking is: how should we classify the 'I think', if neither as a concept/thought nor as an intuition?

[478] See Alweiss (2014, p. 97). For my discussion of subjectivity in Kant, I am very much indebted to Alweiss. I should however note that Alweiss does not distinguish between feelings and intuitions (2004, p. 97), and so she takes Kant as saying that, in and through the act 'I think', I intuit myself as subject of thought (ibid.)—something that Kant repeatedly denies. If, however, one carefully distinguishes between feelings and intuitions, as I have done above, then no such problem arises.

[479] Is the 'I think' *just* our human point of view, or is it rather the point of view of other finite rational beings as well? It should at least be *conceivable*, given Kant's structural commitments, that other finite rational beings should have an 'I think', insofar as they would have both sensibility (finitude) and understanding (rationality), and so they could feel their own spontaneity. However, by the same token, it should be conceivable that their 'I think' oversaw different forms of intuitions, and hence different (schematized) categories. It would, in short, be a different species of the same general self-consciousness.

it into words (which he is clear we cannot do without circularity), but rather by *being* ourselves, in and through the *a priori feeling* of our existence as thinking beings—the 'I think'. This feeling is a form of ineffable self-knowledge. Indeed, it is the *ineffable a priori knowledge of our point of view as a whole*, and hence of our existence as thinking beings.

3.312ₖ *How can the 'I think' make all cognition possible?*

Let us now turn to our second question: How can the 'I think', as a priori feeling of an existence "without the least concept", make all cognition possible for Kant?

As we know, cognition is representation of empirical reality or, that which is the same for Kant, judgement of empirical reality. Further, we know that cognition requires *both* the givenness of something and its conceptual articulation, which for Kant are respectively the business of sensibility and the understanding. Thus, the question above really asks how, *prior to all concepts*, the 'I think' may *bring together* sensibility and the understanding, in that interplay that is necessary for the possibility of judgements about empirical reality (cognition).

Prima facie, that would seem to be impossible. For a judgement is a *rule-governed* combination of terms, and rules are usually identified with concepts by Kant (e.g. the categories). Which would seem to imply that, for Kant, it is impossible to judge without concepts (the categories) that determine how the terms of judgement are to be combined.

Yet there is another possibility open to Kant. What if *we* spontaneously gave the rule to ourselves *with* thinking or judging? That would be an act of what David Bell aptly calls "rule-governed spontaneity",[480] or what we may equally call "spontaneous law-giving". And through it, the impasse above could be avoided, for in *spontaneously combining* terms in a judgement, *we* would first bring forward the rule of judgement for Kant, without the need for any prior concept. Yet how would *that* work?

It all starts with the very idea of combination. Combination, Kant writes, is not given through objects,

> but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity. One can here easily see that this action must originally be *unitary* and equally valid for all combination […] for only through it can something have been given to the power of representation as combined. (B130; my emphasis)

The idea here is that all combination is *unification*, or connection of a plurality of elements into *unity*. If this unity were not originally given, then there could be no combination, and hence no

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[480] Bell (1987, p. 227).

judgement either, as a combination of terms into a unitary representation.

Now, given what we have said above, this unity cannot be the unity of ready-made concepts, for it precedes and makes possible all judgements, in which alone concepts are possible for Kant. Thus, it can be none other than the transcendental unity of consciousness—the 'I think'—which is not a concept at all, but rather a spontaneous feeling of ourselves. It is the *felt* unity of our consciousness, which we know ineffably and a priori. However, this would seem to move our question just one step forward. For how can we *feel a priori* the unity of our own consciousness, and without the least concept, thereby first making all cognition possible?

If we are to avoid the postulation of *yet another* ground for the felt unity of our consciousness, then we must be able to feel ourselves, and a priori, *in and through something unitary that we ourselves make*. Now judgements, for Kant, are unities, or complex wholes whose parts cohere with each other,[481] for they belong together by virtue of combination, which is an act of the unitary Self. Thus, for Kant, judgements may act as *models* of the felt unity of consciousness, so that we may feel, reflected in our judgements, the a priori unity of our own selves.

Now, for Kant, we may feel the unity of consciousness in *all* judgements. That of course includes standard "cognitive judgements", namely judgements to the effect that such and such is the case, which require conceptual articulation. The *original* discernment of this unity, however, cannot depend on "cognitive judgements", for these are conceptual, whereas the *felt unity* at stake here—the a priori unity of self-consciousness—is not conceptual for Kant, but rather precedes all concepts and "cognitive judgements", as their transcendental ground. Thus, when it comes to such original discernment, we need a different model of unity altogether.

Bell insightfully argues that, for Kant, this model is none other than *aesthetic* judgement, as a free and harmonious combination of given terms *without a concept*.[482] In effect, in the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant presents aesthetic judgements as *non*-cognitive judgements. These are judgements that are *not* grounded on concepts (CPJ, § 5, 5:209), but rather on feeling—indeed, on *a priori* feeling. As Kant writes:

> The judgment of taste rests on a priori grounds.[483] (CPJ, § 12)

> The judgment is also called aesthetic precisely because its determining ground is not a concept but the feeling (of inner sense) of that unison in the play of the powers of the mind, insofar as they can only be sensed. (CPJ, § 15, 5:228)

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[481] Cf. Bell (2001b, p. 11).

[482] Bell (1987, esp. § 3 and § 4).

[483] It is worth stressing that this, for Kant, "transposes" aesthetic judgements into transcendental philosophy (CPJ, § 29, 5:266).

But now that *a priori feeling of unity* in the interplay of the powers of the mind can be none other than the 'I think', as the feeling of receptivity to our own spontaneity. And so, for Kant, in aesthetic judgement we spontaneously give to ourselves—we *feel a priori*—that universal rule that one cannot explicitly express or formulate (CPJ, § 18), but which is necessary for all cognition. For *we*—as the a priori feeling of thinking that harmonizes sensibility and understanding—*are* the original law for Kant:

> [Aesthetic judgement] brings the faculties of cognition into the well-proportioned disposition that we require for all cognition and hence also regard as valid for everyone (for every human being) who is determined to judge by means of understanding and sense in combination. (CPJ, § 9, 5:219)

> [Thus in] aesthetic judgments, [the power of judgement] does not (as in theoretical judgments) merely have to subsume under objective concepts of the understanding and stands under a law, but [rather] it is *itself*, subjectively, both object as well as *law*. (CPJ, § 36, 5:288; my emphasis)

Put otherwise, in our spontaneous aesthetic judgements, we may originally feel the unity of our own selves for Kant (or feel *ourselves* at play). And it is exactly in the a priori feeling of this subjective unity—the 'I think' that ineffably issues in aesthetic judgement—that for Kant we may find the ultimate (non-conceptual) ground for the application of the "machinery of objectivity",[484] i.e. all those other transcendental conditions which make cognition of objects possible.

3.313ₖ *How can the 'I think' be related to Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?*

We thus arrive to our third question, which we may now reformulate thus: How could the Kantian idea that, in the act *I think*, we spontaneously give the rule to ourselves—for our consciousness of unity *is* the rule—relate to Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?

I believe there is a rather quick way to arrive, from here, to a form of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism—though, I cannot stress enough that what follows is *not* Kant's official view, but rather a view that *I* will construe, for the sake of *my own* argument, out of the Kantian materials we have examined so far. Put otherwise, what follows is a series of theoretical reflections *inspired by* Kant, and nothing more. Here they go.

A rule, we said, is usually a concept for Kant. Now a concept, Kant writes, *is* "this one consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited […] into one representation" (A103). The concept <object>, in particular, is that fundamental "unity of rule"

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484 Bell (1987, p. 228, and 2001, p. 13).

necessary to all cognition (A105). Hence, to the effect that we may give the rule to ourselves—for the consciousness of our unity in aesthetic judgement *is* the rule for Kant—then it looks plausible that we may give to ourselves the concept <object>, by means of an original combination of manifold appearances in one consciousness ('I think'), which would be none other than an original aesthetic judgement (*exhibitio originaria*[485]).

Now nature, Kant suggests, exactly is a combination of appearances into *one* concept, namely the concept <object>. For "nature [is] the sum-total of all appearances" (B163), as objects of experience, and "an object is that in the *concept* of which the manifold of a given intuition is united" (B137; my emphasis). But if nature is a combination of manifold appearances in the unitary concept <object>, and if, through the a priori feeling 'I think', we were to give to ourselves this unitary concept in an original aesthetic judgement, then a transcendental feature of nature—its *unity*—could be felt a priori to *depend* upon our point of view. For the *transcendental unity* of nature, as sum total of appearances, would be felt a priori to *depend* upon our unitary concept of an object *of sensible intuition*, as opposed to reality as it may be in itself.[486] And that would be a form of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.[487]

Sometimes, especially in the third *Critique*, Kant himself *seems* to suggest something like this view. He seems to suggest, that is, that the unity of nature is the transcendental unity of self-consciousness, *because* we originally "imposed" the unity of self-consciousness onto the matter of nature, in the (ineffable) a priori act 'I think'. As I said, however, I am not interested in finding this view *in* Kant, but only to present it to the reader, as a potential development *out of* Kantian materials. A development which is relevant for us, since it issues in a form of Ineffable

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[485] See Anthr, § 28, 7:167.

[486] The concept of an object *of sensible intuition* is what Kant sometimes calls "the transcendental object", which is the concept of an object of in general (<noumenon>) *when determined by sensible data*. As Kant writes: "this transcendental object cannot even be separated from the *sensible data* [for] it is only the representation *of appearances* under the concept of an object in general, which is determinable through the manifold of appearances" (A251; my emphasis). Hence, though Kant sometimes conflates the two, there is a subtle distinction to be made between the transcendental object and the concept of things in general or in themselves (the former is more determined than the latter, which is completely general). If this distinction is in place, the unity of objects of sensible intuition ("synthetic unity of apperception") might still be "set in relief" against the background of the unity of mere thought ("analytic unity of apperception"). And if that's possible, the ineffable transcendental idealist could have *space* to commit to the mind-dependence of the unity of objects *of sensible intuition* (appearances) as opposed to objects in general or in themselves. (Though, again, I am *not* claiming this is what Kant did).

[487] To be sure, this variant of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism still presupposes that there be an effable distinction between merely logical and real possibility, so that nature, as sum total of cognizable appearances, could be "set in relief" against thinkable things in themselves. Still, even with this distinction in place, we could never *think* that "the Subject is the unity of nature", since the Subject is *fully ineffable*. Hence, on the view under consideration, the Subject must *feel* itself (a priori) as the unity of nature, as sum total of appearances, as opposed to things in themselves. And that's what would make it an *Ineffable* Transcendental Idealism.

Transcendental Idealism, and since, in fact, it may point us toward *other* forms of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

3.32ₖ *Transcendental Solipsism*

In the last sub-sections, I have argued that Kant takes the 'I think' to be an a priori feeling of ourselves, or equivalently of our human point of view. And in effect—as attested by § 9 of the third *Critique* quoted above—for Kant the 'I think' is shared by all human beings, as a *sensus communis*, or common feeling[488] (CPJ, § 40). To be sure, each of us has this feeling severally, and that's why Kant calls it "I think". Nonetheless, we *all* have it,[489] and we may actually communicate it to other human beings in aesthetic (non-conceptual) judgement for Kant (ibid.).[490] That is, contrary to what the name might suggest, Kant's 'I think' is the "universal standpoint" of humanity (see ibid., 5:295).[491] As such, it might as well have been called '*We think*'.[492]

Transposed to the Ineffable Transcendental Idealism I have construed above, this idea of a 'We think' amounts to the following. According to the ineffable transcendental idealist, insofar as *we* are human beings who think, *we* may feel a priori the dependence upon *our* point of view of the transcendental features of nature (e.g. its unity). Indeed, the words "we" and of "our point of view", insofar as they may range over the whole of humanity, have been instrumental in coming up with my definition of Transcendental Idealism in general, *whether effable or ineffable*.

Yet it is conceivable that there should be an *extreme* form of Transcendental Idealism, not concerned with us and our point of view, but rather with *me* alone, and *my* point of view. In effect, an extreme form of Idealism is Solipsism, namely the metaphysical position by which reality depends upon *my* point of view. But then, an extreme form of *Transcendental* Idealism will

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[488] The idea of a *sensus communis* goes back at least to Aristotle (see Blackburn 2005, p. 335). The literal translation of *sensus communis* would be "common sense", but it is generally acknowledged that this translation does not capture what is meant (ibid.). Indeed, Kant himself makes clear that the expression "common sense", in its usual signification of "standard intellectual capacities", is *not* what he is aiming at (CPJ, § 40). For by "sense" Kant here means "the effect of mere reflection on the mind" (ibid, 5:295), which effect can be none other than a feeling. Whence my translation of *sensus communis* as "common feeling", which is *exactly* what Kant means (CPJ, § 22, 5:239).

[489] Or, at any rate, we *may* all have it. (I am here thinking of, say, infants).

[490] It may seem a contradiction that we may communicate a feeling in a non-cognitive judgement. But in fact, it may be no more puzzling than our ability to communicate a feeling of pain with "ouch".

[491] Here, starting from similar considerations, I go in the opposite direction of A. W. Moore, in his discussion of transcendental solipsism in Kant (1997, p. 125). Later, however, Moore reaches something like my view of Kant, when he writes that for Kant "we are all rational creatures, with shared receptive capacities, representing the world from a common point of view" (1997, p. 204). This common point of view Moore identifies with Kant's *sensus communis* (ibid.), as I do above.

[492] Hence Kant can ask rhetorically: "Yet how much and how correctly would we *think* if we did not think as it were in community with others to whom we *communicate* our thoughts and who communicate theirs with us?" (*Orient*, p. 12, 8:144).

be Transcendental Solipsism—a metaphysical position by which *I* know a priori the dependence of transcendental features upon *my* point of view.

Now, one may initially think that, just like Transcendental Idealism, Transcendental Solipsism too will have an effable (propositional) variant, as well as an ineffable one. That, however, is doubtful. For if I had propositional a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon my point of view, then I should be able to express this knowledge linguistically. Yet, barring the possibility of an essentially "private language", in which sense could I do this, if other human beings could not understand those linguistic expressions—if, that is, they could not *share* that propositional knowledge with me? Rigorously thought out, the idea of 'Effable Transcendental Solipsism' just collapses into Effable Transcendental Idealism.

As a result, we should best regard Transcendental Solipsism as an *ineffable* metaphysical position, which is fully sympathetic to the apparent claim

> (TS*)   I have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon my point of view.[493]

But since, as I have argued, *a priori feeling* is a clear instance of ineffable a priori knowledge, then Transcendental Solipsism may also be reformulated as the metaphysical position by which I *feel a priori* the dependence of transcendental features upon my point of view. Henceforth, I will then use the label "Transcendental Solipsism" to indicate such an ineffable metaphysical position alone.

Before going on, let me quickly address a possible point of contention. A. W. Moore has suggested that Kant himself "toyed" with something like Transcendental Solipsism.[494] And in effect, there are some passages in Kant's first *Critique* which, especially if taken out of context, could lend themselves to a solipsistic interpretation. Take for example the following two ones from the first edition of that book (which tellingly disappear from the second one):

> I cannot have the least representation of a thinking being through an external experience, but only through self-consciousness. 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. (A347)

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[493] While this is nonsense—for it attempts to put into words the (alleged) ineffability of the dependence of transcendental features upon my point of view—the transcendental solipsist would take it that, *behind* its production, there is an ineffable a priori insight into Transcendental Solipsism.

[494] Moore (1997, p. 125).

[A]ll these appearances and thus all objects with which we can occupy ourselves are all in me, i.e., determinations of my identical self (A129)[495]

The solipsist may take Kant as saying that I cannot really *know* that others have the feeling of consciousness which *I* have, and from there reach the metaphysical conclusion that *I alone* am self-conscious—or even more, that I alone feel a priori the *dependence* of the transcendental features of nature upon my point of view. And that would be Transcendental Solipsism.

However, while the passages above may be suggestive, Kant never really doubts that there are other self-conscious human beings and, by the time of the third *Critique*, he has a transcendental argument in place to show that communication would be impossible, if I did not presuppose *in others* the (a priori) feeling of consciousness that I myself have (CPJ, § 21).[496] Thus—as Moore himself knows—trying to read into Kant's critical work a form of Transcendental Solipsism is in the end misguided. For, ultimately, Kant aims at reducing the solipsist to the familiar, uncompelling dilemma between silence and incoherence.

That said, many Wittgenstein scholars, including Moore, have argued that *the early Wittgenstein* was a transcendental solipsist. And the issue there is much more complicated to adjudicate. I will try to do so in Chapter 3ᵥᵥ, on the basis of the general account of transcendental subjectivity given below.

3.33ᴋ *On Transcendental Subjectivity in General*

So far, I have given an account of transcendental subjectivity *in Kant*. More specifically, although Kant was an effable transcendental idealist, I have shown how his account of subjectivity may be "developed" into a different one, that fits Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. This, however, prompts the question: Is transcendental subjectivity inextricably linked to Transcendental Idealism (whether effable or ineffable)? With the aim of answering this question, let me offer some remarks on both Subjectivity and Transcendental Subjectivity *in general*.

I understand by S u b j e c t an inner conscious[497] *feeling* of thinking. This is not meant as a

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[495] A. W. Moore himself quotes this passage, as a potentially solipsistic one in Kant's philosophy (1997, p. 125). Quoted like this, however, the passage is taken a bit out of context, since in the preceding sentence Kant had written: "appearances constitute an object that is merely in *us*, since a mere modification of *our* sensibility is not to be encountered outside *us* at all" (A129; my emphasis).

[496] The argument at § 21 of the third *Critique* is aimed at the skeptic (not by chance, given it is a transcendental argument). Yet, for Kant, the solipsist is none other than the "skeptical" or "problematic idealist" (A378 and B274), who doubts all propositions except "I am" (ibid.).

[497] As far as I am aware, the first author who explicitly characterizes consciousness as something "inner" is Descartes, who writes of the "inner awareness of one's thought and existence" (1996, p. 69). Notably, a few decades later, Berkeley writes in a rather Cartesian tone that "we know by a certain internal consciousness the sentient, percipient, intelligent thing" (1992, § 21).

definition. For if we try to put this feeling into words, we see that language always already presupposes it. In fact, the qualitative character of this feeling of thinking—the character of *subjectivity*—is ultimately ineffable. It could only ever be *elucidated* by means of figurative expressions, aimed at appealing to it.[498]

I have already resorted to one of these figurative expressions, which triggers a cascade of them. Subjectivity is something "inner" or "internal"—it may only ever be known "from within". Anyone knows "what it is like" [499] to be a subject in and through his conscious feeling of thinking.[500] That does not mean that the feeling of subjectivity is independent of a community of thinkers, but only that, to be *self*-conscious, one must be able to feel the feeling of thinking *as his own*. What one feels, indeed, is the unity of one's own representations, and thereby the unity of one's own self—of one's own point of view.[501]

Now, if this conscious feeling of thinking is not only (*i*) known "from within",[502] but also (*ii*) recognized as an *a priori* feeling that is necessary for the possibility of all cognition, then I call it T r a n s c e n d e n t a l S u b j e c t. Indeed, this "recognition" *just is* the Transcendental Subject, who feels himself (a priori) as that necessary *trait d'union* of all cognition, without which no cognition would be possible at all.

Since, however, for the transcendental philosopher, cognition is made possible by the transcendental conditions underpinning it, then the Transcendental Subject will be the *feeling of unity of the transcendental conditions, which is itself a transcendental condition*. Transcendental conditions are in fact necessary conditions of cognition, which are known a priori. And if their *unity* were *felt* a priori, we would thereby feel the transcendental self—the *transcendental point of view*.[503]

Our question now is: Does *that* imply any form of Transcendental Idealism? I believe it does not. For an a priori feeling of the *unity* of transcendental conditions need not be the a priori

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[498] For the idea that elucidations may appeal to feelings, see Frege (1951, p. 171).

[499] This notorious expression was coined by Timothy Sprigge, as an elucidatory "hint" to what may be meant by the word "consciousness" (1971, pp. 166-8). Later, the expression "what's it like" was popularised by Thomas Nagel. Importantly, Nagel connects it to the notion of point of view. As he writes: "Whatever may be the status of facts about what it is like to be a human being, or a bat, or a Martian, these appear to be facts that embody a particular point of view" (1974, p. 441).

[500] Hence, we may say, "what it's like" to be a subject simply is *how it feels* to be one.

[501] On the unity of consciousness, as that unity attending to all conscious states (e.g. experiences) insofar as they belong to one encompassing or global conscious state, see Chalmers (2010, chapter 14). For the Kantian origin of this idea, see Brook (2001, § 3). For a reinterpretation of this Kantian idea in a metaphysical realist setting, see A. W. Moore (1997) and (2016, esp. pp. 941 and 943, fn. 23).

[502] By this, I mean that this feeling cannot come "from outside" (as perhaps some sensations do), but can only ever arise *with* representation. Notice that if we understand feeling as "internal sensation", as Kant does, then adding the words "internal", or "known from within", to the word "feeling" will only serve the purpose of *emphasizing* the character of feeling.

[503] As one might expect, the expression "transcendental point of view" goes back to Kant himself, who, takes it to be the point of view of pure reason *as a whole* (A852/B880). On the expression "transcendental point of view", cf. also Pereboom (1990, p. 30), Bell (2001a, pp. 176-7), and Gardner (2015, § 3).

feeling of a *dependence* of transcendental features of empirical reality—e.g. its unity—upon our point of view. And that is because transcendental conditions, and *a fortiori* transcendental features of empirical reality and its representation, need not be mind-dependent at all. That much follows from my distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism.

Thus, for a transcendental philosopher, the unity of empirical reality need not "depend" upon the unity of our point of view—as if the latter had metaphysical priority over the former. For one, some may argue that the dependence relation is the other way around, i.e. that the unity of our point of view depends upon the unity of empirical reality. Yet even more importantly for us, it seems perfectly possible that we should recognize the unity of our point of view *as* the unity of empirical reality, without being able to conceive, *or even to feel*, "one" unity as prior to the "other".[504]

On the importance of this last remark, I will however return in Chapter 7, where I will suggest that it may have ethical significance.

3.4ₖ Transcendental Ethics

So far, by way of reflection on Kantian materials, I have argued that an a priori feeling of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view is necessary for Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, showing how such a feeling may issue in different forms of this ineffable metaphysical doctrine, including Transcendental Solipsism. But why should one ever grant that there is an a priori feeling *of the kind the ineffable transcendental idealist claims we have*?

In this section, I argue that a priori feeling may be *ethically significant*, so that, insofar as it figures in Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, the latter may have ethical significance, no less than its effable counterpart. My discussion is in four parts. First, by means of a presentation of the lineaments of Kant's ethics, I argue that Transcendental Idealism may be put in the service of Ethics. Second, I show how this point is proven by Kant's (a priori) *feeling of the sublime*, qua access point to Kant's perspective of pure understanding, as *practical perspective*, and hence qua necessary condition of a (morally) good life for Kant. Third, I go beyond Kant, developing his discussion of the sublime in such a way as to show how *Ineffable* Transcendental Idealism may have ethical significance. Fourth, I present Transcendental Ethics in general, as an investigation aimed at recognizing the necessary conditions of a good life, some of which may be felt *a priori*

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[504] These are not the only alternatives available. For example, it may be argued that the unity of nature is only a *regulative ideal*, i.e. that we should only ever think *as if* the unity of our own consciousness were the unity of the whole of nature. In any case, the presence of all these alternatives confirms my claim that Transcendental Subjectivity does not imply commitment to any form of Transcendental Idealism.

as significant for us. I argue that Transcendental Ethics may be detached from Transcendental Idealism (ineffable or effable).

3.41$_K$ *Transcendental Idealism in the Service of Ethics*

Transcendental Idealism is a metaphysical position that is supposed to ground the very possibility of Metaphysics, as an investigation aimed at a priori knowledge of the nature and status of reality. For, according to the transcendental idealist, we can know a priori the necessary features of empirical reality, *because* they (are known a priori to) depend upon our point of view.

Suppose now one should ask: Why should we buy, or even just care about, Transcendental Idealism? The natural answer would then seem to be "because it ensures that Metaphysics is in some way possible". But then again, why should we care about *that*? Behind the "natural" answer above, there seems to be an *unspoken assumption* that Metaphysics is a *good* thing. But that, I take it, is exactly the sort of thing that cannot be assumed in philosophy.[505]

Indeed, even if we grant that Transcendental Idealism succeeds in grounding the possibility of Metaphysics—and that's a big "if"—it still looks like we have not yet succeeded in justifying the *need* for something like Transcendental Idealism. For it is somewhat empty to make the *sole* purpose of a metaphysical doctrine that of showing that (some form of) Metaphysics is possible.[506] The deep problems are still left untouched: *why* should we want Metaphysics to be possible?[507] And even then, *why Transcendental Idealism*? Why "restricting" the universe to a world that depends, for some of its necessary features, upon our point of view?

When we look at Kant's answer to these complex questions, it is clear he believed (his) Metaphysics to be mainly in the service of (his) Ethics.[508] In effect, thanks to his transcendental idealism, Kant had carefully delimited the field of *cognition*, whereby we may experience appearances, distinguishing it from the wider space of *thought in general*, whereby we may think things in themselves. Yet it is exactly thanks to this distinction that, for Kant, we may *think*

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[505] It may perhaps be thought that we should buy Transcendental Idealism because the argument for it is a good one. A good argument, of course, must be supported by *good* reasons. But what reasons may we call "good"? Are the reasons we may have to buy Transcendental Idealism "good" ones? Is ensuring the possibility of Metaphysics, *by itself*, the sort of reason we would call "good"? If not, the "good" reasons to buy Transcendental Idealism must ultimately be found elsewhere.

[506] To adapt a pun by A. W. Moore, if demonstrating the possibility of Metaphysics were the *sole* goal of Transcendental Idealism, then Transcendental Idealism would not be unlike the "notorious plinth whose sole purpose is to support a sign reading 'Mind the plinth'" (2012, p. 242). Moore himself rightly notes that (Kant's) transcendental idealism is not only "metaphysics in the service of metaphysics", but also metaphysics in the service of science, ethics, and theology (2012, p. 137).

[507] Cf. Nietzsche (2001, § 11).

[508] cf. A. W. Moore (2012, p. 248).

ourselves as *not subject to*[509] the laws that govern empirical reality, such as the deterministic category of <cause>, and hence *think* ourselves as *free* (A541/B569).[510] As Kant writes in the Introduction to the first *Critique*:

> [I]f the critique has not erred in teaching that the object should be taken in a twofold meaning, namely as appearance or as thing in itself; if [indeed] the principle of causality applies only to things taken in the first sense, namely insofar as they are objects of experience, while things in the second meaning are not subject to it; then just the same will is thought of in the appearance (in visible actions) as necessarily subject to the law of nature and to this extent not free, while yet on the other hand it is thought of as belonging to a thing in itself as not subject to that law, and hence free, without any contradiction hereby occurring. [H]ence [while] I cannot cognize freedom as a property of any [sensible] being [...] I can think freedom to myself, i.e., the representation of it at least contains no contradiction in itself, so long as our critical distinction prevails between the two ways of representing (sensible and intellectual). (Bxxxvii-xxxviii)

Here, Kant is indicating that, although freedom, as the property of the will of being independent of external causes, cannot be cognized, we may still *think* our will as free without contradiction. That is possible thanks to the "critical distinction between two ways of representing", and thereby between *two perspectives*, namely "[the] sensible and [the] intellectual". Indeed, the merely logical perspective of pure understanding, that Kant's transcendental idealism requires, and from which we may coherently think things in themselves, is also a *practical perspective* for Kant. For it leaves open for us an ethical dimension—a dimension of *freedom*—that the empirical perspective seemingly foreclosed. As Kant later writes in the *Groundwork*:

> [A] rational being must regard himself as intelligence (hence not from the side of his lower powers) as belonging not to the world of sense but to the world of understanding; hence he has two standpoints from which he can regard himself and [the] laws for the use of his powers and consequently for all his actions; *first*, insofar as he belongs to the world of sense, under laws of nature (heteronomy); *second*, as belonging to the intelligible world, under laws which, being independent of nature, are not empirical but grounded merely in reason. (G, 4:452)

> Hence it is an indispensable task of speculative philosophy at least to show that [we think] of *the human being* in a different sense and relation when we call him free and when we hold him, as a part of nature, to be subject to its laws, and to show that both not only can very well coexist but also *must* be thought as necessarily united *in the same subject*. (G, 4:456; my emphasis)

Clearly, then, Kant takes his transcendental idealism, with its "two standpoints", to be necessary if we are to think ourselves as free, and thus as not subject *to* natural laws, but rather as the

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[509] I stress this phrase since, while for Kant we, as we are in ourselves, are not subject *to* the category of causality (since the categories do not legitimately apply to things in themselves), still we are subjects *of* a different kind of causality, i.e. noumenal causality, in and through which alone we can act freely (see A538-9/B566-7). This is what Kant calls "causality through freedom" (ibid.) or, more simply, freedom (CPJ, § 76, 5:403).

[510] This, I take it, is what Paul Guyer calls "[Kant's] transcendental idealist solution to the problem of free will" (2010, p. 133).

Subjects *of* laws that we spontaneously give to ourselves. Indeed, if we are to make any sense of our ethical lives, then we *must* think ourselves as free or law-giving for Kant, even though we may never cognize ourselves as free or law-giving. That is what Kant meant when he wrote that he "*had* to deny knowledge [*Wissen*], in order to make room for faith [*Glauben*[511]]" (Bxxx). And that is also why, for Kant, we should care about his transcendental idealism—namely, because it *coherently* "makes room" for our ethical necessities, by allowing at least the logical possibility that we are free or lawgiving.

Yet what are these laws, *to* which we are not subject, but *of* which we are rather Subjects or *authors* according to Kant? With respect to *nature*, and hence to appearances, they are mainly[512] the categories, such as the category of cause. ("The categories are concepts that prescribe laws a priori to appearances, thus to nature"[513]). Yet with respect *to ourselves*, not as appearances, but as we may be in ourselves, the law for Kant is

The Moral Law: *So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.*[514]

An in-depth discussion of Kant's moral law would take us far away. For our purposes, I wish to point out just two things. First, for Kant, it would be impossible to even *think* of ourselves as free, if we could not therewith *think*, from the perspective of pure understanding, this self-given law. For "freedom is the will's property to be a law to itself" (G, 4:447). Second, insofar as, for Kant, to *think* of ourselves as free, we need to *think* the moral law, then the moral law must be *effable*.[515] And we can expect nothing else, given that Kant's transcendental idealism is a form of Effable Transcendental Idealism.

But now that we have demonstrated, through the case of Kant's transcendental idealism, that Effable Transcendental Idealism may be put in the service of Ethics, the same still needs to be shown of *Ineffable* Transcendental Idealism, which is the topic of the present Chapter.

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[511] Perhaps, *Glauben* is best translated as "rational belief", which however cannot aspire at the rank of cognition. For example, there are reasons, according to Kant, for believing in God, although we cannot have any theoretical knowledge of God.

[512] I say "mainly" since, as I have argued in Chapter 2$_K$, space and time might themselves be regarded as laws (of our sensibility) that we give to nature (though Kant would have quibbled over the term "law" here). Notably, space and time themselves are not completely independent of the categories (laws of the understanding), as Kant indicates when he writes that time itself is "generated" in the application of the category of magnitude to the a priori manifold by means of the schema 'number' (A143/B182). Likewise, the schematized categories, which are the categories properly so-called, are not independent of a possible pure intuition for Kant.

[513] B163.

[514] G, 4:429. As is well known, Kant's moral law (the "categorical imperative") comes in three different formulas. Here, I have chosen the so-called "formula of humanity", given my concern with the human point of view. However, it must be stressed that, for Kant, the moral law is valid for all rational beings.

[515] Indeed, Kant argues that the moral law is a "synthetic a priori practical *proposition*" (G, 4:420).

Indeed, the question is still open as to whether Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, no less than its effable counterpart, may have ethical value, in such a way that we should deeply care about it. That, however, is none other than the question of whether Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, being ineffable, could have ethical *significance*—*non*-propositional meaning, that cannot be adequately put into words.[516]

I now turn to this question. However, I will do so by way of an unconventional route, namely by going back to Kant's aesthetics. And that is because significance, insofar as it is non-propositional or ineffable, must ultimately lie in a *feeling*, and hence in something which has an aesthetic character by its very nature.[517] In particular, I will now develop our discussion of Kant's aesthetics in such a way as to find in the *feeling of the sublime* the point of attack for showing that and how *Ineffable* Transcendental Idealism may be ethically significant.

3.42ₖ *The Feeling of the Sublime*

"We call sublime—Kant says—that which is absolutely great", i.e. great *in every respect* (CPJ, § 25). This cannot be an object of nature, for in nature, depending on the unit of measure we adopt, everything may be only *comparatively* big or small (ibid.). Thus, the solar system is big when compared to planet Earth, and yet small if we compare it to the milky way. No external object of nature, then, may properly speaking be sublime for Kant; rather, only something which is "internal" can. As Kant writes:

> If [...] we call something not only great, but simply, absolutely great, great in every respect (beyond all comparison), i.e., sublime, then one immediately sees that we do not allow a suitable standard for it to be sought outside of it [*viz.* in nature], but merely *within* it. It is a magnitude that is equal only to itself. (CPJ, § 25, 5:250; my emphasis)

Now if there is one "thing" that, for Kant, is not an object of nature, and which is its own unit(y) of measure, then that is the Subject or 'I think', namely the "feeling [*Gefühl*] that we have pure

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[516] I generally reserve the word "sense" for propositional meaning, and "significance" for non-propositional meaning. All sorts of things may be significant for us. These may include, but are not limited to, music, paintings, memories, the atmosphere/mood surrounding certain situations, and even some words. For example, pronounced by someone who knows he won't ever see again a loved person, the Italian word "addio" (literally "to God", and translatable with considerable loss into the English "farewell") contains much that is inexpressible by means of (further) words—indeed, "a whole world of pain" (cf. CV, p. 60). This word may be extremely significant for an Italian speaker, though he would not be able to propositionally articulate its significance. For the view that significance has a non-propositional character (or at any rate component), see Parret (1979). Compare also Moravcsik (1979), and A. W. Moore (1997, p. 201).

[517] Not by chance, the word "aesthetics" comes from the Greek *aísthesis*, which translates as sense-perception or feeling.

self-sufficient reason, as a faculty for estimating magnitude" (CPJ, § 27, 5:258).[518] It neatly follows from our discussion above that, for Kant, sublime is only ever the a priori feeling of ourselves. But since, as we have seen, for Kant we may feel ourselves a priori in aesthetic judgement, then "true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the one who judges" (CPJ, § 26, 5:256).

Yet what does this have to do with Ethics? And what, more precisely, with the alleged ethical significance of *Ineffable* Transcendental Idealism? Let us begin with the first question, in order to then turn to the second one.

3.421_K *The Sublime as Ethical Feeling*

To understand the relationship of the sublime to Ethics, we need to delve a bit deeper into the peculiar modality in which, according to Kant, the 'I think' is manifested in the aesthetic judgement of the sublime, as opposed to aesthetic judgement of beauty.

While for Kant aesthetic judgements concern feeling (for they are non-cognitive), they must still be *occasioned* by something, which is given to us. (Not even the act of combination 'I think' would be operative, if there were no manifold to combine). This something may be, say, the calm sea reflecting the light of the moon. In which case we would likely contemplate it and judge it beautiful.

Now, if instead of the calm sea we saw towering waves, generated by a mighty storm, one would expect us to feel just disquiet and horror. That, however, is not so for Kant. In fact, according to Kant, even the most powerful and devastating natural phenomena may emotionally *move us*, making us aware of a feeling that we judge absolutely great, and hence sublime. How does that happen? And where exactly is the link with Ethics secured?

A natural object, for Kant, is a combination of sensible representations into unity. The act of combination is the Subject, in and through its *imagination*, as a faculty for the *composition* of the sensible manifold into *one* representation (intuition[519]), and thereby for sensible presentations or "exhibitions", such as a view of the calm sea. When, however, instead of the calm sea, we see towering waves, imagination struggles to present in one intuition the manifoldness of nature for Kant. Imagination pushes forward, *toward infinity*, in its successive composition of the manifold (waves, ships, lightning bolts); yet there is too much to synthesize, and it cannot keep it all

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[518] That pure reason is its own unit of measure (i.e. measure as well as measured) is a *leitmotiv* in Kant's philosophy, as is clear for example by his famous analogy, by which the *Critique of Pure Reason* is like a court of justice, in which judge and judged are one and the same (see Axi-xii and A751/B779).
[519] Recall, intuitions are *singular* representations.

together in one view. Something must be left behind: in striving to infinity, "imagination [sacrifices] on one side what it gains on the other" (5:252).

But exactly in this *strive to infinity*, imagination *breaks free* of the (transcendental) constraints of sensibility according to Kant, revealing to us a capacity for thinking, as opposed to intuiting, *the infinite*. This faculty is *pure reason*—indeed, "the very same Subject"[520]—that *feels itself* as something which is not confined to the empirical perspective within nature, and thus *as free* to leave it behind from a different, non-empirical perspective.[521] This *feeling of freedom in thinking* we judge sublime. And *here* is the link with Ethics:

> [A] faculty for being able to think the infinite […] surpasses any standard of sensibility, and is great beyond all comparison […] not, of course, from a theoretical point of view, on behalf of the faculty of cognition, but still as an enlargement of the mind which *feels itself* empowered to overstep the limits of sensibility from another (*practical*) standpoint. (CPJ, 5:255; my emphasis)

For Kant, then, it is in the judgement of the sublime, and thus in the act 'I think', that we may go beyond *mere* sensibility, and access the perspective of pure understanding *as a practical perspective*.[522] Yet we do not thereby transcend ourselves—how could we?[523] Rather, we truly *are* ourselves, as beings that exist "in the *act*" of thinking,[524] and hence as practical beings.[525] And we do not thereby transcend our finitude—how could we? Rather, exactly in our finitude, manifested in the impossibility of intuiting the absolute whole, we come to feel infinity in thinking.

We are then in awe, indeed in a state of profound *respect* for the power of reason, which in its boundless freedom surpasses even sensible nature for Kant. And it is exactly this feeling of respect, as part and parcel of the sublime, that for Kant is the *moral feeling*—the effect of the moral law on us, who bow to its power, and thereby to our own power. Put otherwise, the a priori feeling of the sublime is always at the same time a feeling of *self-respect*, which, together with the moral law that generates it, is a necessary condition of the possibility of the morally

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[520] "[T]he subject's own incapacity [to intuitively exhibit infinity] reveals the consciousness of an unlimited capacity *of the very same subject*" (CPJ, 5:259)

[521] As we have seen, this non-empirical perspective is "external" only in a watered-down sense. For it is still *internal* to our transcendent*al* point of view, which for Kant is a necessary condition of experience. Hence, not even the non-empirical perspective may completely transcend experience, for it should then have to transcend the *possibility* of experience, and hence to completely transcend itself (which is absurd).

[522] Cf. A. W. Moore (1988, p. 219).

[523] At the end of the second *Critique*, which I quote below, Kant is clear that my nature as intelligence, which is what properly speaking is sublime, is *not* "veiled in obscurity or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon", but rather is "*within me*". In fact, in feeling the sublime, we do not even *completely* transcend sensibility, for the feeling of the sublime is still *a feeling*, and hence a representation of sensibility—though one that, as we will see, is the effect on us of the moral law, which for Kant is intellectual.

[524] B423n. The act, of course, is the act 'I think'.

[525] In the *Groundworks*, Kant is clear that the human being is its "proper self" only insofar as it thinks itself "as intelligence" (see G, 4:457-8 and 4:461)

good life. For to live a morally good life, Kant argues, we must *respect* the moral law, and that may only ever happen if we represent it as *sublime*:[526]

> The object of a pure and unconditioned intellectual satisfaction is the moral law in all its power [...] And, since this power actually makes itself aesthetically knowable only through sacrifices (which is a deprivation, although in behalf of inner freedom, but also reveals in us an unfathomable depth of this supersensible faculty together with its consequences reaching beyond what can be seen) [...] the intellectual, intrinsically purposive (moral) good, judged aesthetically, must not be represented so much as beautiful but rather as sublime, so that it arouses more the feeling of respect [...] than that of love and intimate affection, since human nature does not agree with that good of its own accord, but only through the dominion that reason exercises over sensibility. (CPJ, 5:271)

Hence indeed, for Kant, the a priori feeling of the sublime has ethical significance for us, insofar as it is a feeling of *respect* for the moral law, and hence of *respect for ourselves*, who are not just sensible beings, but first and foremost intelligences. As Kant writes in the (sublime) conclusion to the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and [respect[527]], the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*.[528] I do not need to search for them and merely conjecture them as though they were veiled in obscurity or in transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence. The first begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense and extends the connection in which I stand into an unbounded magnitude with worlds upon worlds [...] The second begins from my invisible self [...] and presents me in a world which has true infinity but which can be discovered only by the understanding [...] The first view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital force (one knows not how) must give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came. The second, on the contrary, infinitely raises my worth as an *intelligence* [...] in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as this may be inferred from the purposive determination of my existence by this law, a determination not restricted to the conditions and boundaries of this life but reaching into the infinite. (CPR, 5:161-2)

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[526] Kant makes clear that, without the feeling of respect, we would not—well—respect the moral law of our own accord, and hence that this feeling is an (aesthetic) precondition of morality (MoM, § XII, p. 200; cf. Guyer 2010), no less than the (intellectual) moral law. To put it in Kant's own words, "respect for the law is not the incentive to morality; instead it is morality itself subjectively considered as an incentive inasmuch as pure practical reason, by rejecting all the claims of self-love [in favour of self-respect] supplies authority to the law" (CPR, 5:76).

[527] Kant writes "reverence", but in the next paragraph he specifies "admiration and respect" (CPR, 5:162).

[528] It is to be noted that, for Kant, admiration and respect are not exactly the same. For "respect is always directed only to persons, never to things" (CPR, 5:76), while admiration, albeit it may generate awe like respect, is an "amazement [that] can be directed to things also" (ibid.). Hence, for Kant, "the starry heavens above me" fill the mind with admiration, whereas "the moral law within me" fills the mind with respect.

3.43$_K$ *The Ethical Significance of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism*

Now for our second question: What could this have to do with the (alleged) ethical significance of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?

Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, recall, is the metaphysical position by which we feel a priori the dependence upon our point of view of the transcendental features of nature, such as its unity. Now, if Ineffable Transcendental Idealism is to have ethical *significance*, the latter must lie in an a priori feeling. This a priori feeling need not *necessarily* be the feeling of the sublime. However, since our discussion so far has been of that feeling, I shall continue on that road for now, leaving the discussion of another a priori feeling to Chapter 3$_W$.[529]

With respect to the sublime, which is entangled with *respect*, the ethical significance of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism should lie in the a priori feeling of the dependence of the unity of nature upon our point of view, in such a way that the moral law (allegedly) grounded in our point of view must be *respected* by the whole of nature. That would make Ineffable Transcendental Idealism ethically significant (and in a grandiose fashion). Let us then try to construe a similar view *out of* Kantian materials, keeping firm in mind all the provisos we already went through.

For Kant, in feeling the sublime, we go beyond the conditions of mere sensibility, and feel our power for thinking the infinite, or the unconditioned. The unconditioned is none other than the thing in itself—the *noumenon*, the *object in general*—the concept of which allows us to think ourselves as free without contradiction, and hence to make sense of the moral law. Hence, if we were to *impose* the concept <object> (<*noumenon*>) onto nature *in an original aesthetic judgement of the sublime*, we would feel a priori the infinity of nature as *dependent* upon the infinity of our faculty for thinking, and thereby feel a priori that nature stands *under* our moral authority, i.e. that it must *respect* it.

Sometimes, it may look as if Kant himself is close to something *like* this view. Hence, for example, he writes:

> But even to be able to think the infinite without contradiction requires a faculty in the human mind that is itself supersensible. For it is only by means of this [faculty] and its idea of a noumenon […] that the infinite of the sensible world is completely comprehended […] *under* a concept. (CPJ, § 26, 5:254-5; my emphasis)

> [O]ur own faculty of reason [is a] nonsensible standard, which has [the] infinity [of nature] *under* itself. (CPJ, § 28, 5:261; my emphasis)

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[529] This, as the reader might guess, will turn out to be the mystical feeling, which I will discuss in the context of interpretations of Wittgenstein as an ineffable transcendental idealist.

> Thus sublimity is not contained in anything in nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of being *superior* to […] nature outside us. (ibid., 5:264)

Passages such as these may perhaps suggest that the "superiority" over nature that we feel in the sublime lies not only in our having *moral* nature (or "second nature"[530]), but also in the putative fact that the infinity of nature must stand "under" the infinity of reason, and hence "under" our moral authority. Indeed, one may go as far as imagining that, for Kant, nature must *respect* our moral authority, and hence the moral law, which may be imposed upon it through the act of thinking the concept of <object> or <noumenon>, under which nature stands. And that would be a form of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism with a (grandiose) ethical twist.

Once again, however, I am not interested in finding a similar view in Kant. Indeed, I think it would be an enthusiastic misreading of his ethical position, that makes it seem as if he wants to play God.[531] In any case, I don't need to go into that here. All I needed is to show that and how Ineffable Transcendental Idealism *may* have some degree of ethical significance.

3.44ₖ *On Transcendental Ethics in General*

Above, I have argued that Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, no less than its effable counterpart, may be connected to Ethics by means of a priori feeling. Yet is Ethics, for every transcendental philosopher who engages in it, necessarily linked to Transcendental Idealism (in any form)? To answer this question, we first need to get a firmer hold on the word "Ethics".

I understand by Ethics a philosophical investigation into the good life, or into the meaning of life, or into whatever is ultimately[532] of value.[533] Whatever else may be said about these matters, I think it will be safe to say that we care about them from our point of view, and thus that, in addressing them, we inevitably start "from within". That does *not* mean that Ethics is just about our human point of view.[534] Only, we naturally care about the good life for beings

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[530] CPJ, § 29, 5:275.

[531] The allusion here is to a caustic remark against Kant by A. W. Moore (1997, p. 212). This "playing God" is connected to what Moore calls "our aspiration to be infinite", which leads us to "fantasize about an infinitude whereby what we will […] and what is are […] one" (1997, p. 259). I return on this "aspiration" in Chapter 7.

[532] The word "ultimately" does heavy duty here. Smartphones may, in a certain (economic) sense, have value. Arguably, however, they do not have *ultimate* value, and so, by themselves, they are irrelevant to Ethics. For if smartphones were to disappear, the meaning of (our/my) life would not *ultimately* hinge upon this event. (Unless, that is, we belonged to Gen Z!)

[533] One may find a similar view of Ethics as early as Aristotle (1999). More recently, G. E. Moore (1922), Wittgenstein (LoE), and Bernard Williams (2006) have all subscribed to it.

[534] For one, Kant is clear that morality concerns all rational beings, not just human beings. Similarly, I am here suggesting that Ethics, as a form of investigation, need not be just about the human point of view, though we will naturally care about it from our human point of view.

like us, the meaning of our life, and whatever it is ultimately of value for us. (Instead of "we", "us", and "our", insert "I", "me" and "my" if you are an ethical egoist[535]). This is not a prejudice. Rather, as argued by Bernard Williams, it is an ethical necessity for human beings.[536]

In fact, according to Williams, Ethics is tied to the shape of one's life as a whole[537]—*the unity* of one's life, which, in the case of our human life, is ultimately the unity of our human point of view. If so, insofar as *we* are to engage in it, Ethics demands *self-conscious reflection* on our part, aimed at actions that are in harmony with our human reason and, more generally, with our human condition. But since, as I have urged, self-consciousness is an ineffable feeling of thinking, then, whatever else may be said about ethical matters, it looks like we cannot adequately put some of their meaningfulness into words, and hence that Ethics must have a dimension of *significance*.

Now, if the philosophical investigation that bears the name of "Ethics" not only (*i*) started "from within", but also aimed at (*ii*) recognizing the necessary conditions of the good life— insofar as they are known a priori to be (linked with) transcendental conditions of cognition— then we should better talk of Transcendental Ethics. For example, Kant is a transcendental ethicist, since, according to him, the a priori act 'I think' is both a transcendental condition of cognition and, in the feeling of our sublimity, a necessary condition of the good life.

This does not mean that *all* the necessary conditions with which a transcendental ethicist could concern himself will be ineffable, as the feeling of the sublime is. Indeed, Kant is adamant that the moral law is effable. Yet to the extent that *self-consciousness* is required in Ethics, and that self-consciousness is ineffable, then it looks like *some* of those conditions must ultimately be ineffable. Put otherwise, Transcendental Ethics too must have a dimension of significance.

We can now return to our question: is Transcendental Ethics necessarily linked to Transcendental Idealism? In the light of the discussion above, and given our distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, we have strong reasons to answer "No". To appreciate this, consider first what follows.

At a very high level of generality, our question is about whether the conditions of the good life depend upon our point of view, *as opposed to reality in itself*. Some argue they do. The familiar background of their position, by which ethical values are subjective projections onto the world,

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[535] An ethical egoist (someone who only cares about *his* life and what is ultimately of value *for him*) is not the same as an ethical solipsist (someone who believes that his life is *the* life, and that ethical values *depend* upon *his* point of view). Just like one may be an egoist without being a solipsist, so too one may be an ethical egoist without being an ethical solipsist. The same goes, of course, with ethical altruism and ethical idealism. I return on Ethical Solipsism, as a form of Ethical Idealism, below. On ethical egoism, see instead Frankena (1973, pp. 17-20).

[536] Williams (2006, pp. 118-9).

[537] Ibid., Ch. 1-3.

may be called Ethical Idealism.[538] The ethical idealist takes it that the conditions of the good life must primarily lie in Subjects, *as opposed to objects*—or at any rate in the Subject (singular), in which case we should better talk of Ethical Solipsism.

However, it is not clear at all that the conditions of the good life lie primarily in Subjects. Arguably, friendship is a condition of the good life,[539] and it obviously involves subjects. But it is hard to see in which sense, if any, friendship is "in the Subjects", any more than "in Reality". (And it is even harder if the Subject is just one!) Luckily, engaging in Ethics, as an investigation into the (conditions of the) good life, does not require *commitment* to similar metaphysical views (though it may well require investigation of them).

Suppose now that we engaged in *Transcendental* Ethics, taking it that there are *necessary* conditions of the good life, which may be known "from within" and *a priori*. Must the transcendental philosopher take it that these ethical conditions primarily lie in our transcendental point of view, *as opposed to reality*, and be imposed onto reality "at a later stage"? That would be a form of Ethical Idealism *cum* Transcendentalism, of the kind I have construed above in my discussion Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

Given the reflections above, as well as my distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, it is arguable that Transcendental Ethics does *not* imply a similar idealist ethical outlook, so that one may be a transcendental ethicists without having to take it that ethical values *depend* on one or more Transcendental Subjects, *and* that they are imposed onto reality from their vantage point—without, that is, committing to Ethical Idealism *cum* Transcendentalism.

If so, Transcendental Ethics does not require Transcendental Idealism, or for that matter any other metaphysical view which enforces a hard distinction between Subject(s) and Reality, whether it be idealistic or realistic. Indeed, it is not at all clear that a hard metaphysical distinction between Subject and Reality—on which both Idealism and Realism thrive—is necessary to Transcendental Philosophy in general (or for that matter to Philosophy *tout court*). But on this delicate point I will return in Chapter 7, where I will present a transcendental stance that, while *ethical*, is neither idealistic nor realistic.

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[538] For more on (what I call) Ethical Idealism, see Mackie (1977, Ch. 1) and Stroud (2011, esp. Ch. 4).

[539] This view too is as old as Aristotle, who says that friendship "is most necessary for our lives. For no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all other goods" (1999, Book VII, 1155a). Later, we find the view that friendship is a necessary condition of the good life also in G. E. Moore (1922, § 113).

Conclusion

The human point of view is an awe-inspiring and self-perpetuating mystery, which may hardly be captured by words. In this Chapter, I have tried my best to elucidate some aspects of it *in a transcendental framework*. First, in agreement with Kant, I have urged that the Subject is nothing but a feeling of thinking, or the feeling of a unitary consciousness, which is by its very essence ineffable. Then, I have argued that, insofar as the transcendental philosopher concerns herself with this feeling, she must take it that it is known *a priori* as the feeling of the unity of the transcendental conditions, which is itself a transcendental condition. While such a priori feeling need *not* result in Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, I have construed, out of Kantian materials, different variants of this ineffable metaphysical doctrine, by which the transcendental unity of nature depends upon our point of view, or upon my point of view (Transcendental Solipsism). Finally, I have shown how Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, no less than its effable counterpart, may be connected to Ethics. However, given my distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, I have also argued that not every transcendental philosopher who engages in Ethics must take it that ethical values *depend* upon our (or my) point of view, as opposed to reality in itself.

3_W   Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?

Then I reflected that all things happen, happen to one, precisely now. Century follows century, and things happen only in the present. There are countless men in the air, on land and at sea, and all that really happens happens to me…

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- Borges

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AIM: Establishing that the early Wittgenstein is not an ineffable transcendental idealist, by arguing that he does not respects the necessary requirement to be one.

Introduction

In Chapter 2_W, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein could not be an effable transcendental idealist, given that he does not respect any of the necessary requirements to be one. Since, however, I have distinguished Effable Transcendental Idealism—by which (TI*_{eff}*) we have propositional a priori knowledge that transcendental features depend upon our point of view— from Ineffable Transcendental Idealism—by which (TI*_{ineff}**) we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view—the question remains as to whether the early Wittgenstein could be an *ineffable* transcendental idealist. In this Chapter, I address this issue, thereby answering the Central Question of the present work, concerning the early Wittgenstein's alleged Transcendental Idealism.

My discussion will be in four sections:

§ 3.1_W   introduces the issue of Wittgenstein's alleged Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. After a recap of the doctrine, I argue that Wittgenstein transformed the transcendental into the ineffable. The question is then whether, for Wittgenstein, the ineffable is not only transcendental but also "ideal".

§ 3.2_W   introduces Wittgenstein's distinction between saying (effable) and showing (ineffable). I argue that showing is an instance of ineffable a priori knowledge, and more precisely of a priori feeling. Further, I argue that for Wittgenstein transcendental features are shown.

§ 3.3_W   interprets Wittgenstein's 'Subject' as a Transcendental Subject, i.e. as an priori feeling of the unity of the transcendental conditions, which is itself a

transcendental condition. This raises the issue of whether, for Wittgenstein, Ineffable Transcendental Idealism—or better Transcendental Solipsism—is shown. As against Peter Hacker and A. W. Moore, I argue that it is *not*.

§ 3.4$_W$ interprets Wittgenstein's Ethics as a Transcendental Ethics. I argue that Wittgenstein recognizes the a priori feeling of the mystical, "experienced" from the Subject's aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, as a necessary condition of the good life. However, Wittgenstein's transcendental ethics, if read idealistically, would be *un*ethical. This confirms that Wittgenstein cannot be an ineffable transcendental idealist, and more specifically a transcendental solipsist.

3.1$_W$ *Wittgenstein's Ineffable Transcendental Idealism?*

In Chapter 3$_K$, I have first introduced Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, as a variant of the doctrine that, by definition, is *not* thinkable or effable. Now, the early Wittgenstein does not endorse Effable Transcendental Idealism. Still, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, and he engages with Transcendental Idealism, as "the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy". Is Wittgenstein an *ineffable* transcendental idealist, then?

In this section, I give both substance and precision to this question. First, I offer a brief recap of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, as a doctrine by which we have ineffable a priori knowledge of the "ideality" of transcendental features. Then, I argue that the early Wittgenstein operated a transformation of the transcendental, such that, for him, transcendental features are all known *ineffably*. This will trigger the issue of whether, beyond being known ineffably, transcendental features are also "ideal" for Wittgenstein, i.e. of whether he is an ineffable transcendental *idealist*.

3.11$_W$ *Recap*

As we know from Part$_K$, Ineffable Transcendental Idealism is the metaphysical position that is fully sympathetic to the apparent claim

> (TI$_{ineff}$*)   we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view.

The claim is only an apparent one, for no claim may ever put into words the (alleged) *ineffability* of the dependence of transcendental features upon our point of view. Indeed, (TI$_{ineff}$*) must

ultimately be recognized as a tissue of *transcendental nonsense*, i.e. nonsense that masquerades as sense about transcendental conditions. Yet for the ineffable transcendental idealist, (TI*ineff**) may still be the abortive attempt to put into words genuine insights into the (ineffable) truth of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, or at any rate the abortive attempt to express the (ineffable) understanding we have of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. To this extent, for the ineffable transcendental idealist, we should still be fully sympathetic to nonsense such as (TI*ineff**).

Our question in this Chapter now is: Is the early Wittgenstein an ineffable transcendental idealist? Put otherwise, is he *fully* sympathetic to (TI*ineff**), taking it that behind this tissue of transcendental nonsense there lies an ineffable *metaphysical* insight? Or is his sympathy just "the sympathy of a therapist",[540] who wants to completely eradicate the (alleged) metaphysical illness called "Transcendental Idealism" (even in its ineffable variant)? This, in short, is the question of Wittgenstein's alleged Ineffable Transcendental Idealism.

Clearly, the question is highly complex. I will, for convenience, divide it into two. First, there is the question of whether for the early Wittgenstein we have *ineffable a priori knowledge* of the transcendental features, which would make him into a transcendental*ist* of the ineffable kind. And second, there is the question of whether, for the early Wittgenstein, what is known ineffably and a priori is the *ideality* of transcendental features, that we abortively attempt to put into words in transcendental nonsense like (TI*ineff**). Only a positive answer to this second question would mean that the early Wittgenstein is an ineffable transcendental *idealist*.

In what follows, I start with the first question, arguing that, for the early Wittgenstein, we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of (all) the transcendental features.

3.12w *Wittgenstein's Transformation of the Transcendental*

To reach this aim, let us first recall some similarities and differences between Wittgenstein and Kant. Like Kant, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, insofar as he recognizes transcendental conditions, which are known a priori (1w). However, given his "equation" between logical and real possibility, Wittgenstein takes it that *all* the transcendental conditions are conditions of thought or language, which cannot be divorced from those of experience—not even in the nuanced way Kant did.

As a result, Wittgenstein cannot claim *propositional* a priori knowledge of some transcendental conditions (as Kant did with space and time). For, in light of his "equation", propositional a priori knowledge of the transcendental conditions would require *language* to go *beyond itself* (which

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[540] The apt expression is Pears' (1996, p. 124).

is patently absurd). Indeed, for Wittgenstein, nothing counts as "picturing the transcendental conditions", let alone "knowing a priori the truth of pictures of the transcendental conditions", i.e. having *propositional* a priori knowledge of such conditions. This much we have seen in Chapter 2$_W$.

Now, if the early Wittgenstein cannot commit to *propositional* a priori knowledge of the transcendental conditions, then he *must* be committed to the view that that a priori knowledge of them is *non*-propositional or ineffable. That's the only alternative left, given that Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, and given his "equation" of logical and real possibility, in consequence of which transcendental knowledge can *only ever* be ineffable. If so, for the early Wittgenstein, transcendental conditions should always be known *ineffably*[541] and a priori. (Kant countenanced ineffable a priori knowledge of only *one* transcendental condition, namely the 'I think', but he claimed propositional a priori knowledge of all the others).

It is easy to prove this is so with respect to Wittgenstein's objects, which we have identified as *transcendental* conditions ("transcendental objects") already in 1$_W$, and more specifically as transcendental *features* shared by language and reality in 2$_W$. Take for example the following, notorious Tractarian remark:

> 3.221   Objects can only be *named*. Signs are their representatives. I can only speak *about* them: I cannot *put them into words*. Propositions can only say *how* things are, not *what* they are.

Here, Wittgenstein is clarifying that Tractarian objects, as well as knowledge of them,[542] are *ineffable*. For if "I cannot put *them* into words", my knowing *them* cannot be put into words either (though, I may still put into words what I know *about* them). But since, being transcendental features, objects are also known *a priori* for the early Wittgenstein, then knowledge of them must be *ineffable* a priori knowledge. And this, as I have urged above, is a direct consequence of Wittgenstein's structural commitments, analysed in Chapter 2$_W$.

The same, of course, will go with the forms of object (formal properties), which, as we have seen, are transcendental features too. Indeed, for the early Wittgenstein space and time, as transcendental features of objects, cannot be known *propositionally* and a priori (see 2$_W$). For having propositional knowledge of space and time would require the limits of language to outrun the limits of empirical reality—a view Wittgenstein is in no position to countenance, given his "equation" between logical and real possibility. Hence, for the early Wittgenstein, space

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[541] Compare Cooper (1991, p. 1).
[542] On knowledge of objects, cf. again T, 2.0123-2.01231.

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and time, or for that matter any other transcendental feature of objects (e.g. colour), can only ever be known *ineffably* a priori.

Hence, we may then legitimately hold that, in virtue of his view of logical possibility, the early Wittgenstein operates a *transformation of the transcendental*, such that, for him, the transcendental is ineffable and the ineffable is transcendental. For example, when Wittgenstein writes that "Logic is transcendental" (T, 6.13), he is indicating not only that logic is a priori (T, 5.4731), and that it deals with the necessary conditions of representation of reality (cf. NB 24.7.16 and T, 6.124), but also that "the logic of the world" cannot be said (cf. T 6.22), i.e. that logical form cannot be represented (T, 4.12), and hence that it is *ineffable*.

Once we realize that the ineffable is the transcendental for the early Wittgenstein, many passages of the *Tractatus* become suddenly more revealing. Thus, when Wittgenstein writes that the Subject is the limit of the world (T, 5.632), and that the limits of the world cannot be said (T, 5.61),[543] Wittgenstein is also indicating that the Subject is transcendental, as opposed to empirical (cf. T, 5.641). *Or so I shall later argue*. And when, towards the end of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes that "[i]t is clear that ethics cannot be put into words" (T, 6.421), it comes as no surprise that he immediately glosses "Ethics is transcendental" (ibid.).

I will return in much more depth on Subjectivity and Ethics in the early Wittgenstein later in this Chapter, to further discuss them under the banner of the transcendental, and hence of the ineffable for Wittgenstein himself. Here my aim was only to argue that, given his structural commitments discussed in Chapter 2ᵥᵥ, the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental*ist* of the ineffable kind, i.e. a transcendental philosopher for whom *all* the transcendental conditions are known *ineffably* and a priori.

But exactly this point brings us back to our second question above. We have in fact answered the first question, by arguing that, for the early Wittgenstein, we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of transcendental features shared by language and reality (e.g. objects and their forms). But does Wittgenstein *also* take it that we have ineffable a priori knowledge of the *mind-dependence* ("ideality") of such transcendental features? Indeed, is the early Wittgenstein an ineffable transcendental idealist?

The question is even more pressing, since many early Wittgenstein scholars, such as Peter Hacker and A. W. Moore, attribute to him a form of (what I call) Ineffable Transcendental Idealism. As we shall see, these scholars read Wittgenstein as the author of nonsensical pseudo-propositions that may help us to get *beyond* significant language, where we will be perspicuously

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[543] Compare T, Preface.

shown Transcendental Idealism. Put otherwise, according to these interpreters of Wittgenstein, the tissue of transcendental nonsense (TI*ineff**), or something quite like it, may help us in *transcending* what can be said, so that we may be *shown* Transcendental Idealism. This would be possible only if *showing* transcended language, reaching beyond it.

However, is this a viable interpretation of Wittgenstein? To answer this question, we must first delve deeper into Wittgenstein's view of ineffability, that which requires us to examine his *say/show distinction*.

3.2_W *Saying and Showing*

In this section, I discuss Wittgenstein's distinction between saying (effable) and showing (ineffable). First (§ 3.21_W), I introduce Wittgenstein's distinction, focusing on *what* is shown for him. I argue that, for Wittgenstein, *transcendental* features are shown. Then (§ 3.22_W), I focus on *how* he takes them to be shown. I argue that states of showing are states of ineffable a priori knowledge, or ineffable *understanding*. But since, in 3_K, I have linked ineffable understanding to *a priori feeling*, I also argue that, for the early Wittgenstein, transcendental features are shown in a priori feeling (as must be the case given his "equation" of transcendental logic and transcendental aesthetic). This will translate the issue of Wittgenstein's alleged Ineffable Transcendental Idealism into the problem of whether, according to him, we are *shown* (or feel a priori) the *ideality* of transcendental features.

3.21_W *Showing*

It is one of the most well-known facts about Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* that, in the book, at least when one takes it at face-value, a distinction is drawn between saying and showing. More precisely, a distinction is drawn between that which propositions *say* and that which propositions *show*. And a neat one at that. For "[w]hat *can* be shown, *cannot* be said" (T, 4.1212). But what can only be said for Wittgenstein? And what can only be shown?

As regards what can only be said, the answer is pretty simple for Wittgenstein: any possible situation can be said. Indeed, Wittgenstein writes, "[p]ropositions can represent the whole of reality" (T, 4.12).[544] That is because propositions, which as linguistic incarnations of thoughts

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[544] This, of course, does not mean that propositions can represent reality *as a whole*, but only that they can represent each of the possible situations that, for the early Wittgenstein, make up reality. As I have argued in 2_W, for the early Wittgenstein nothing counts as propositionally representing reality as a whole. (The concept <object*>, and thereby the concept <reality*>, are pseudo-concepts for Wittgenstein).

put thoughts into words (cf. T, 3.1), also put into words the possible situations that we picture to ourselves in thought (cf. T, 4.01). Put otherwise, since thoughts are *sayable*, whatever may be thought—namely possible situations—is sayable too.

When it comes to what can only be shown, the answer is unfortunately more complicated than that, for a variety of reasons. The main one is this. There is a heated debate on *what*, if anything, for the early Wittgenstein may be shown as opposed to said. In fact, this debate quickly descends into *how*, if at all, something may be shown.

The two issues are deeply interconnected. In the next sub-section, I will be mainly concerned with the *what*-question, whereas in the sub-section after that, I will be mainly concerned with the *how*-question. In any case, I will for now largely refrain from critical engagement with the secondary literature on the say/show distinction, which I reserve for later stages of this Chapter, as well as for the final Chapter 7. My aim at this stage is only to present Wittgenstein's remarks on showing, indicating that and how they fit my transcendental interpretation so far.

3.211$_W$ *What is Shown?*

When Wittgenstein first introduces showing in the *Tractatus*, he links it to the *use* or application of linguistic signs, writing that "what signs fail to express, their application *shows*" (T, 3.262; my emphasis). A proposition is itself a linguistic sign, used or applied in a certain way (T, 3.5 and 4). Hence, for Wittgenstein, *a proposition shows* something—"[it] shows *its sense*" (4.022; my emphasis).

Already at this point one might be puzzled. For Wittgenstein writes that the sense of a proposition (or picture) is the possible situation that it *represents* (T, 2.202 and 2.221). Hence, given that, for Wittgenstein, representing a situation *is* putting that situation into words (cf. T, 3.144), the sense of a proposition is what the proposition *says* or asserts (T, 4.064). Yet if so— if, that is, a proposition *says* its sense—how can the sense of a proposition be what is *shown*?

The (dis)solution of this riddle lies in distinguishing, as I have argued Wittgenstein does (2.7$_W$), between two aspects of sense: the material one and the formal one (cf. T, 3.13). The matter of sense is that which the proposition represents, namely a possible situation. The form of sense is the *possibility* of that which the proposition represents, namely the *possibility* of the represented situation, which comes down to the possibilities of combination of its component objects: forms.

Now, while for Wittgenstein possible situations are said by propositions, their possibility

shows itself in propositions.[545] Put otherwise, while for Wittgenstein the matter of sense can be said, the form of sense—*logical form*—may only ever be shown.[546] Hence, Wittgenstein writes:

> 4.121 Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.
> What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.
> What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language.
> Propositions *show* the logical form of reality.
> They display it.

In showing their sense, then, propositions show *the form of sense*, i.e. the logical form. Yet since the logical form comes down to objects and their forms, then we should agree with Levine that *objects and their forms are shown* in propositions for Wittgenstein.[547] Hence, Wittgenstein writes that the "proposition 'fa' *shows* that the object *a* occurs in its sense" (4.1211; my emphasis), and that "the holding of [formal] properties [of objects] *shows itself* in the propositions, which represent the states of affairs and treat of the objects in question" (T, 4.122[548]; my emphasis).

What else is shown for the early Wittgenstein, alongside objects and their forms? If one takes it that whatever cannot be said is shown, or at any rate *can* be shown, then quite a lot. Notably, since the Subject is not part of the world for the early Wittgenstein (T, 5.631-2), and hence it cannot be said (ibid.), then the Subject can only be shown. (Indeed, Wittgenstein goes as far as writing that it is shown that the world is *my* world, to which problem I will return below). Likewise, since values are not in the world for the early Wittgenstein (T, 6.41), and hence cannot be said (T, 6.42), then whatever is of value can only be shown. In short, not only Logic, but also Subjectivity and Ethics have to do with showing for the early Wittgenstein.

This should put us on high alert. For if, as I have urged, Logic, Subjectivity and Ethics are *transcendental* for the early Wittgenstein, and if indeed the transcendental is *ineffable* for him, then *the transcendental is shown*. Hence, for example, Tractarian objects and their formal features are shown, since they are *transcendental* objects and *transcendental* features (see 1$_W$ and 2$_W$), which we need to understand logic. Or else, as I will later argue in much more depth, Wittgenstein's 'Subject', as Transcendental Subject, and (the conditions of) his Ethics, as Transcendental Ethics, are shown.

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[545] On the distinction between what is said *by* propositions, and what shows itself *in* propositions, see Narboux (2014, p. 208).

[546] In my view, this is the best way to avoid the seeming paradox that would otherwise accrue from 4.461 of the *Tractatus*: "The proposition shows what it says [*Der Satz zeigt was er sagt*]".

[547] See Levine (2013, p. 210). Levine does not *explicitly* connect his view to the transcendental. However, under my understanding of Transcendental Philosophy, he may be read in that way. For he writes that objects, which are shown, are known a priori (cf. 2013, p. 192), and that the knowledge of what is shown is "necessary in order for us to make any judgements at all" (2013, pp. 211-12).

[548] Translation slightly emended.

In fact, on a suitably wide understanding of 'transcendental features', objects and their formal properties, the Subject, and that which is ultimately of value, are *all* transcendental features of representation and reality for the early Wittgenstein. For they all pervade the whole of representable reality, as its necessary features. In which case, we might generally put our point thus: *transcendental features are shown* for the early Wittgenstein.

This reading of "what is shown", whereby, for Wittgenstein, transcendental features are shown, has significant interpretive power. For example, thanks to it, we may square Wittgenstein's famous contention that the say/show distinction is "the cardinal problem of philosophy"[549] with his concern with the possibility of representation of the world (which is central to Transcendental Philosophy). For if, indeed, the transcendental features that make *possible* representation of reality cannot be said, but can only be *shown*, then the say/show distinction becomes *crucial* for the possibility of representation of reality, and hence for the early Wittgenstein's (transcendental) philosophy. This is a further reason to take it that, for the early Wittgenstein, transcendental features are shown.

Of course, my interpretation raises the issue of whether, in being shown transcendental features, anything *metaphysical* is therewith shown for Wittgenstein. Specifically, it raises once again the issue of Wittgenstein's alleged Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, which now becomes the issue of whether the "ideality" of transcendental features is *shown*. However, we still miss one piece of the puzzle to answer this question. For we need to understand *how*, for the early Wittgenstein, transcendental features are shown in the first place.

3.212$_W$ *How is it shown?*

How are we shown what we are shown (for Wittgenstein)?

This question may be translated without loss into the question: "In which states are we shown what is shown (for Wittgenstein)?". At first, this reformulated question would seem harder than the original one. However, in light of our discussion so far, we are in a position to answer it. I have argued above that transcendental features are *shown* for the early Wittgenstein. Yet to be *shown*, transcendental features must not only be *known a priori*, but also be known *ineffably*. Hence, Wittgenstein is committed to the view that states of showing must be states of *ineffable a priori knowledge*.

Now, surely the phrase "ineffable a priori knowledge" sounds rather mysterious. However,

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[549] Quoted in Monk (1990).

in Chapter 3$_K$, with the help of Kant and A. W. Moore, I have linked states of ineffable a priori knowledge to certain states of *understanding*. And these are not mysterious at all. For we all know how it feels to be in a state of understanding. States of showing may then be equated with certain states of understanding. To put it in a nutshell: *we understand what we are shown*. Or else: *whatever is shown is an object of understanding*.[550] Indeed, this has been convincingly argued by Moore himself, in his brilliant discussion of showing in general. However, can we find this view *in the early Wittgenstein*?

I think we can. Tractarian objects, I have argued in agreement with Levine, are *shown* for the early Wittgenstein. But if so, Tractarian objects should be *objects of understanding* for Wittgenstein. And indeed, objects, for Wittgenstein, are what we need to *understand* logic (see § 1.2$_W$). Hence, we may now see in a new light Wittgenstein's 5.552:

5.552[551]   The "experience" that we need in order to *understand* logic is not that something or other is the state of things, but that something is: that, however, is not an experience.
   Logic is prior to every experience—that something is so.
   It is prior to the How, not prior to the What.

The "What" is here *what is shown*, including objects, and with them the existence of the world, without which logic could not so much as *be*, let alone *be understood*. Hence, for Wittgenstein, in the "experience" of being shown objects—which, insofar as objects are known *a priori*, is not an "experience" properly so called—we *understand* logic. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, "logic deals with all possibilities", and hence with objects and their combinatorial possibilities, which are shown. Hence, insofar as we understand logic, we are shown objects. This confirms that, for Wittgenstein, states of showing are indeed states of understanding.

But now, objects and their forms, which are shown, are transcendental features of language and reality for Wittgenstein. Hence, from our discussion it also follows that, for Wittgenstein, in states of showing we *understand* transcendental features (therewith understanding logic, etc.).

3.2121$_W$ *Showing as a priori feeling in Wittgenstein*

Now, one may grant this much, and yet desire more details about Wittgenstein's view of 'understanding' and how we are supposed to understand transcendental features. In Chapter 3$_W$, I have argued that certain states of understanding, insofar as they are states of *ineffable* a priori

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[550] On this employment of the phrase "object of understanding", see Sullivan (2003, p. 199). Sullivan is there recapping Moore's views.
[551] My emphasis.

knowledge, are linked with (or even identical to) states of *a priori feeling*. Hence, if I am right, Wittgenstein's view that we are shown transcendental features in states of understanding should have something to do with a priori feeling.

A feeling, recall, is a subjective mental state—a "subjective experience" if you will—that has no conceptual content, and hence that is ineffable. In states of feeling we ineffably know something. Whatever the "something" at stake, however, the feeling will be *reflected* in it, since in feelings, differently from most thoughts, there is no distinction between object and Subject. So too for *a priori* feelings, i.e. feelings in which something is known (ineffably) a priori, such as Kant's feeling of the sublime.

Now, since for Wittgenstein we are shown *transcendental* features (e.g. objects) in ineffable states of understanding, and since ineffable understanding is linked to states of *feeling*, then Wittgenstein should be committed to *a priori feeling*, as a subjective "experience" in which something is known a priori, namely the transcendental features. Mind you, Wittgenstein *should* be committed to a priori feelings—but was he?

The first step to answer this question is to ascertain that, indeed, the early Wittgenstein has some distinction in place between thoughts and feelings. As rightly noted by Peter Sullivan, often in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein distinguishes between thoughts and feelings.[552] But if thoughts, and whatever they represent, are that which can be said for Wittgenstein, then it is natural to suppose that feelings, and whatever it is felt, are (or may be) shown for him.

So far, so good. But *a priori* feeling? In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein is not (yet) concerned with empirical feelings, such as the feeling of pain. That is because the experience of feeling pain, and similar experiences, may be analysed in terms of facts and, *to that extent*, they may be said after all, thereby pertaining to the business of natural science,[553] which Wittgenstein sharply distinguished from philosophy. Hence, states of showing cannot be linked to states of *empirical* feeling for the early Wittgenstein.

If, however, for the early Wittgenstein states of showing (or understanding) are neither states of saying, nor are (linked to) states of *empirical* feelings; and if indeed Wittgenstein's distinction between thoughts and feelings maps onto that between saying and showing; then it becomes highly plausible that, for Wittgenstein, states of showing are (linked to) states of *a priori* feeling.

There is an easy countercheck for this. Granted that states of showing are (linked to) states

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[552] Sullivan (2013, p. 267).
[553] I say "to that extent" since, while natural science may analyse a state of pain in terms of facts which are sayable—e.g. the firing of neurons—natural science cannot adequately capture the subjective "what it is likeness" or the "how it feels" of feelings, including the feeling of pain.

of a priori feeling, then we should expect that, for Wittgenstein, in being shown objects, we are receptive to them, and a priori at that. (Moore: "understanding is a mode of reception"). And indeed, we find Wittgenstein characterizing knowledge of objects, which are shown, in terms of *receptivity*. Objects are *given* for him.[554] More precisely, as I have argued, they are given both *ineffably* and *a priori*. That strongly suggests that, for Wittgenstein, objects are given with an *a priori feeling*, which, *as I will argue below*, is the a priori feeling of (transcendental) Subjectivity.

3.21211ᵥᵥ *A Perspicuous Logical Notation*

The view that objects, and hence logical form, are shown, and hence linked to a priori *feeling*, finds further confirmation in Wittgenstein's remarks on a perspicuous logical notation, and on the perspective such a notation may afford.

A perspicuous logical notation, for Wittgenstein, is a "sign-language that is governed by logical grammar [or] logical syntax", i.e. by the rules of logic. Given his "equation" of logical and real possibility, however, the rules of logic are the grammar of the world for Wittgenstein ("logical form [is] the form of reality"). Accordingly, Wittgenstein writes that a perspicuous logical notation may disclose to us "a perspective [*Aufschluss*] on the essence of the world [*über das Wesen der Welt*]" (T, 3.3421[555])—a perspective on logical form. Yet this perspective can be none other than the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, as an *aesthetic* perspective on the whole of logical space—and thereby as the perspective of logic, from which we *feel* logical "rightness" or "correctness".[556] Hence, Wittgenstein writes *in two consecutive remarks*:

> 4.1212   What can be shown, cannot be said.

> 4.1213[557]   Now, too, we understand our *feeling* [*Gefühl*] that we already have a correct *logical perspective* [*logischen Auffassung*[558]], once we have a sign-language in which everything is all right.

Wittgenstein is here indicating that a correct logical notation is linked to the *feeling* of having a correct logical perspective. This, however, can be none other than the feeling "experienced" in

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[554] Notice that this does not mean that Wittgenstein buys Kant's distinction between sensibility and understanding. For the early Wittgenstein, if objects are given, then all possible situations are *therewith* given, and thereby all that can be put into words is given. That is not so for Kant. All I wish to argue is that the a priori *givenness* of objects cannot be put into words for the early Wittgenstein, and that, insofar as this reception is ineffable, it must be linked to a priori feeling.

[555] Translation slightly emended.

[556] *Nota bene*: that the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* is the perspective of logic does not mean that it is that it is itself effable or propositional. (Indeed, if it were effable, we should need *yet another* logical perspective to put it into words, and so on *ad infinitum*.)

[557] Translation slightly emended, and emphasis added.

[558] Importantly, *Auffassung* may be also translated as "understanding".

the *aesthetic* perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, as a view of the whole logical space (see T, 6.45). But since logical space is given *a priori* by objects, which are transcendental features of both language and reality, then, from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, we may for Wittgenstein feel *a priori* the whole logical space, thereby attaining clear consciousness of what was shown all along, namely the transcendental features common to both language and reality.

I will return below on this a priori feeling "experienced" from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, which will turn out to be Wittgenstein's mystical feeling.[559] For now, I only wanted to substantiate my claim that, for Wittgenstein, states of showing are related to states of a priori feeling, and that the transcendental features of language and reality may be perspicuously shown in a priori feeling. I have done this by defending the view that (the forms of) objects, which are shown, may be *felt a priori* as some of the transcendental rules of language for the early Wittgenstein. (Not by chance, Wittgenstein will later talk of "*feeling* for the rules"[560], comparing philosophical investigations to aesthetic ones[561]). Further, I have suggested that, for the early Wittgenstein, the a priori feeling of transcendental features may come to clear consciousness from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*.

If I am right in my contention that, for Wittgenstein, states of showing are linked to states of a priori feeling, then, given our discussion above, it should follow that other transcendental features, alongside objects and their forms, are linked to a priori feeling by Wittgenstein, and indeed to the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. More specifically, it should follow that for the early Wittgenstein both the (transcendental) Subject and ethical values are linked to *a priori feeling*, as well as to the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. In the continuation, I will argue for this view. In doing so, I will finally answer the question of whether, for the early Wittgenstein, we are shown (or feel a priori) the *dependence* of transcendental features upon our point of view. Of whether, that is, the early Wittgenstein is an ineffable transcendental idealist.

3.3W *Wittgenstein's Transcendental Subject*

In Chapter 3K, I have introduced the Transcendental Subject, as the a priori feeling of unity of the transcendental conditions, which is itself a transcendental condition. I have argued that Kant took such a feeling to be common to *all human beings*, and that it *could* theoretically issue in

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[559] Notably, already McGuinness (1966, pp. 313-4) identified the "experience" that something is, "which is the experience that we need in order to understand logic", with the mystical feeling.
[560] L&C, § 15,
[561] CV, p. 29.

Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, understood as the metaphysical position by which *we* feel a priori the dependence of transcendental features upon *our* point of view. However, I have also construed an extreme variant of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, namely Transcendental Solipsism, by which *I* feel a priori the dependence of transcendental features upon *my* point of view.

In this section, I examine Transcendental Subjectivity in the early Wittgenstein, given that many interpreters have ascribed to him a form of transcendental solipsism. First (§ 3.31$_W$), I argue in depth that Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is transcendental, linking it to the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, and thereby to the *a priori* feeling of the mystical, as a feeling of unity of the transcendental conditions (e.g. objects) "experienced" from that perspective. Then (§ 3.32$_W$), I confront the issue of Wittgenstein's alleged transcendental solipsism, by means of a discussion of Peter Hacker and A. W. Moore's interpretation of the *Tractatus*. As against both, I argue that Transcendental Solipsism could not be *shown* (felt a priori) for Wittgenstein, given his understanding of the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* and the mystical feeling. Finally (§ 3.33$_W$), I sketch a different interpretation of Wittgenstein's remarks on solipsism and showing.

3.31$_W$ *Reading the 5.6s in a Transcendental Framework*

Perhaps the hardest section of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is the one on subjectivity—the 5.6s. Here, threads coming from everywhere else in the book tangle in one knot, several lines of projection converge in one focal point (of view).[562] As one might expect, then, the 5.6s have attracted the efforts of generations of thinkers. I am but the last on the list, and further I can make no claim to novelty. For the transcendental reading of Wittgenstein's 'Subject' goes as far back as Frank Ramsey, and it has counted many adherents ever since.

Still, most of these "transcendental interpreters" take it that the early Wittgenstein was a transcendental idealist, and more specifically a transcendental solipsist.[563] Here, I aim at substantiating the transcendental reading of Wittgenstein's Subject, without the immediate implication of Idealism, given that I have separated Transcendental Subjectivity from Transcendental Idealism in Chapter 3$_K$.[564]

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[562] Cf. Pears (1987, Chapter 7).

[563] I say "most of", since, as I understand them, Peter Sullivan (2011) and James Levine (2013) sympathize with a transcendental reading of the *Tractatus*, yet they are against reading the early Wittgenstein as an idealist of any kind. But most of the other transcendental interpreters I am aware of read the early Wittgenstein as an idealist (e.g. Stenius, Hacker, Glock, Moore, etc.).

[564] In fact, there is no immediate implication of Transcendental Realism either, given that I have separated Transcendental Philosophy in general from Transcendental Metaphysics.

To establish the view that Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a Transcendental Subject, we need to establish the following claim:

(T$_W$)   Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is an a priori feeling of unity of the transcendental conditions, which is itself a transcendental condition.

However, (T$_W$) is a rather complex claim. It will be convenient to parse it into two-sub claims, namely the sub-claim that

(T$_{W1}$)   Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a transcendental condition,

and the sub-claim that

(T$_{W2}$)   Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is an a priori feeling of unity of the (other) transcendental conditions

I will first deal with sub-claim (T$_{W1}$), and then with sub-claim (T$_{W2}$), with the aim of establishing claim (T$_W$), thereby establishing that Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a Transcendental Subject.

3.311$_W$ *Wittgenstein's 'Subject' as a transcendental condition*

First, then, we need to show that (T$_{W1}$) Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a transcendental condition—i.e. a necessary condition of the possibility of cognition, which is known a priori. This too is a complex claim, so let's begin from the apriority of Wittgenstein's 'Subject'.

### 3.3111$_W$ *The Apriority of Wittgenstein's 'Subject'*

As rightly noted by Peter Sullivan, the question of the *a priori* is of fundamental importance to understand Wittgenstein's Tractarian remarks on subjectivity, as well as his engagement with Transcendental Idealism.[565] In effect, the "core" of the 5.6s is concerned with apriority. It is worth quoting the remarks that make up this "core" in full here, with the aim of elucidating them:

5.632   The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world.

5.633   Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be found? You will say that this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do not see the eye. And nothing in the visual field allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye.

5.6331   For the form of the visual field is surely not like this

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[565] See Sullivan (1996).
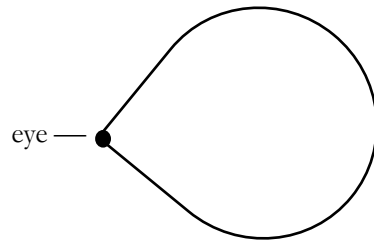
5.634   This is connected with the fact that no part of our experience is at the same time a priori. Whatever we see could be other than it is. Whatever we can describe at all could be other than it is. There is no a priori order of things.

Here, Wittgenstein is urging that the Subject is not a part of the world. For the 'I' is nowhere to be found in the world. In the world, there are tables and chairs, and there are also human bodies. But nowhere the 'I', *as locus of consciousness*, is to be found.[566] How does this connect with the a priori?

Before transitioning to the problem of the a priori, Wittgenstein employs a notorious metaphor, namely that of the eye and the visual field, to clarify his view of subjectivity.[567] If the eye, as the source of the visual field,[568] were a part of the visual field, then we should have to *see* it within the visual field. But the shape of the visual field is not such as to contain the eye, as source of the visual field, and nowhere this eye is seen *in* the visual field. Indeed, the eye, as the source of the visual field, *cannot* be seen in the visual field. For if *that* were possible, then there should have to be *yet another* eye seeing it. Like this:

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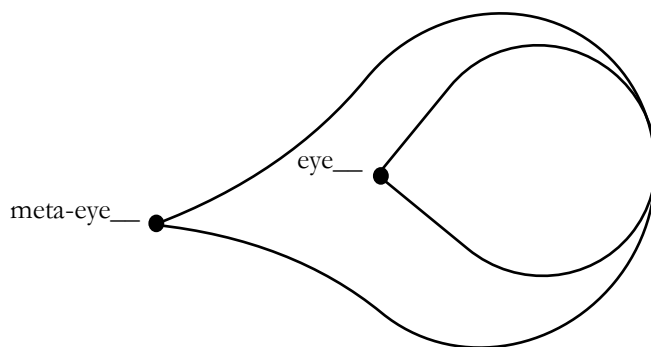
[566] Cf. Bell (1996, pp. 159-160).

[567] This metaphor goes at least as far back as Locke, who writes: "The understanding, like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself" (1975, Book I, Ch. 1, § 1). Later, we find it in Schopenhauer too: "the 'I' or ego is the dark point in consciousness, just as […] the eye sees everything except itself" (1969b, p. 491). (In all likelihood, Wittgenstein was inspired by Schopenhauer.)

[568] The specification "as source of the visual field" is essential here. Of course, we may see an eye (or even two!), as organ(s) of sense, in the world. It will suffice to look in a mirror (cf. Pears, 1987, p. 159). And in this sense, there is no difficulty in taking it that an eye is in the world, for it is part of this or that body etc. But clearly, Wittgenstein is not interested here in the organ of sense, which he calls the "physical eye", but rather in the source of the visual field, which he calls the "geometrical eye" (BB, p. 63).

And that, of course would trigger an infinite regress of meta-eyes, which reveals the whole "hypothesis" that the eye, as source of the visual field, is *in* the world, as a house of cards.

The same holds for the seeming "hypothesis" that the 'I', as the source of consciousness, is within the world. Just like the eye, as source of the visual field, cannot be seen, so too the 'I', as the source of consciousness, cannot be thought or described according to Wittgenstein. Indeed, if a circle is to be avoided, the 'I' cannot be *in* the world at all, where everything that can be thought or described is. Rather, for Wittgenstein, the 'I' is the *limit* of the world.

And here we come again to *a priority*. That the 'I' is not part of the world—just like the (geometrical[569]) eye is not part of the visual field—is for Wittgenstein *connected* with "the fact that no part of our experience is at the same time a priori". And the connection lies in this, namely that "whatever we could see", and "whatever we could describe", "could be other than it is", and hence *contingent*. The 'I', on the other hand, is not contingent for Wittgenstein. For it is the limit of the world, i.e. a *necessary* feature of it. It follows that for Wittgenstein the 'I' is *known a priori*, given that he maintains that "the only necessity is *logical* necessity", and that logic is rigorously a priori. Indeed, while "*no part* of experience is at the same time a priori", the Subject, being a *limit* of empirical reality, and hence of all that can be experienced, can and must be known *a priori* for Wittgenstein.

Thus, when Wittgenstein writes that "there is no a priori order of things", he is not denying that the Subject is known a priori, but only indicating that we cannot find a subjective a priori order *in* the world, or *among* things. If we could, we should be able to put that order into words, in the way Kant believed we do through synthetic a priori judgements, i.e. judgements that supposedly express necessary connections among things (which for Kant have their *source* in the Subject).[570] But this goes against all of Wittgenstein's structural commitments, which I have presented in 2ᵥ.

However, while for the early Wittgenstein there is no (effable) a priori order *among* things, there is an (ineffable) a priori order of all thinkable worlds, namely *the things* (NB 19.9.16 and T, 2.022-3; cf. PI, § 97), which are known a priori *by the Subject*. And this Subject must itself be known a priori. Indeed, only if we take it that Wittgenstein's Subject is known a priori, we may understand why, for Wittgenstein, the totality of objects gives the *limit* of empirical reality (T, 5.5561), and hence the Subject, as limit of the world. For if (all) things are given a priori, then

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[569] See last footnote above.

[570] In an apparent reference to Kant, Sullivan calls this the "idealist explanation of necessity and a priority" (1996, p. 198), meaning "transcendental idealist". I should add the word "effable" to the mix, for an *explanation* is always effable. (There are no "ineffable explanations").

the Subject, to whom (all) things are given, must be given a priori too. Hence, indeed, for the early Wittgenstein, the Subject is known a priori.

3.3112_W *The Transcendental Necessity of Wittgenstein's Subject*

Once established that Wittgenstein's Subject is known a priori, we just need to show it is a necessary condition of the possibility of cognition, to establish that it is a transcendental condition. This should be easier to do. I have already argued that, for the early Wittgenstein, the Subject is necessary. For Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a limit of the world, and hence a necessary feature of it. This necessity, I have also urged, must be logical necessity for Wittgenstein. It is *unthinkable* that there should be no Subject. For if, *per impossibile*, I could succeed in thinking that "there is no Subject", *I* would succeed, and hence there would be a Subject after all. As a result, for Wittgenstein, the string of signs "there is no Subject" is a nonsensical pseudo-proposition, no less that its negation, namely "there is the Subject". And that's because, for Wittgenstein, Subjectivity is *not* a contingency, i.e. a fact in the world that can be represented or pictured, but rather a necessity, which cannot be represented.

Since, however, for the early Wittgenstein, "Logic is transcendental", then the logical necessity of the Subject must be transcendental necessity. That is: it should be known a priori that, without the Subject, there could be no representation of empirical reality (cognition). I think that's why Wittgenstein writes:

> 5.641 [T]here really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way[571] […] The philosophical 'I' is not the man, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world—not a part of it.

Reflecting on passages such as these should lead us to realize that Wittgenstein did not want to *eliminate* subjectivity.[572] Quite the contrary, as a necessary feature (limit) of the world, *and hence of whatever can be said*, the Subject is *pervasive* of both reality and representation for him (T, 5.6 and 5.61).[573] Indeed, nothing can count as a representation of reality, i.e. as a *picture*, without someone who makes for himself such a picture (cf. T, 2.1). Hence, the Subject is not only known a priori, but is also a necessary condition of representation of reality (cognition) for the early

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[571] Perhaps, Wittgenstein should have written, equally nonsensically, that "there is really a *nonsense* in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way" (cf. Williams, 1972-3, p. 78). But then, of course, the illusion of *sense* would have vanished ahead of time.

[572] Notice that I have written here that *reflection* on nonsense may lead us to an insight or a realization, not that *nonsense* does. I will return on this point in Chapter 7.

[573] Cf. Bell (1996, pp. 156-7).

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Wittgenstein.[574] This establishes that Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a transcendental condition, i.e. sub-claim (T$_{W1}$).

3.312$_W$ *Wittgenstein's Subject as Feeling of the Unity of the Transcendental Conditions*

Many would already regard this as enough to claim that Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a Transcendental Subject. Since, however, I understand by 'Subject' a feeling of thinking that is common to all cognition, and hence to all conditions of cognition, then, to confirm that the early Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a Transcendental Subject, I will also need to establish that

> (T$_{W2}$) Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is the a priori feeling of the unity of the transcendental conditions.

To establish sub-claim (T$_{W2}$), it is convenient to first show that Wittgenstein's Subject is an *a priori feeling of thinking*. In the light of our discussion so far, that's easy enough. Being not a part of the world, but rather the limit of the world, the Subject cannot be said for Wittgenstein. Yet that which cannot be said can be shown. Hence, for Wittgenstein, the Subject is (or can be) shown. Now, a state of showing is, or at any rate is linked to, a state of a priori feeling. Hence, to the extent that the Subject is shown, it must be connected to a priori feeling, no less than objects were.

Differently from objects, however, the Subject is *not* a thing for Wittgenstein (NB 7.8.16). What, then, do I feel when I feel subjectivity a priori, according to Wittgenstein? The only possible answer is that I feel *myself*—my own consciousness, i.e. my own feeling of thinking. If so, for Wittgenstein, the 'Subject' *just is* the a priori feeling of thinking—i.e. a feeling that may be "experienced" in every instance of thinking or judging, irrespective of that which I think or judge.

Once settled this issue, we need to show that this a priori feeling, for the early Wittgenstein, is none other than the feeling of the unity of the transcendental conditions. Once again, given our discussion so far, I think we can show this. Objects, I have argued, are transcendental conditions for Wittgenstein. Further, the logical forms of objects, for Wittgenstein, are common to both reality and thought. For that to be possible, the unitary form of reality—*the* logical form—must be the unitary form of thought. However, for Wittgenstein, the unitary form of

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[574] Indeed, for the early Wittgenstein, every picture must be from a point of view (T, 2.173). For ultimately, this point of view can be none other than the point of view of the Subject, i.e. the vantage point from which *we* make *to ourselves* pictures of empirical reality (T, 2.1)—or, at any rate, from which *I* do. (In 2.1 of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein employs the pronoun "we", instead of "I". But that may well be just a station along the philosophical he has travelled, from Idealism to Solipsism, and beyond (see NB, 15.10.16)).

thought is the unity of consciousness, namely the Subject. ("The world is my world"). Hence, for the early Wittgenstein, the Subject is the unitary form of reality—"the unity that attends every possibility",[575] or the unity of logical space.

Now, since for Wittgenstein logical space is given by objects, which are given with an a priori feeling, then the Subject must feel a priori the unity of logical space, thereby feeling himself *as* that unity. Further, since the "experience" that there are objects may be felt a priori, with clear consciousness, from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, then the Subject may feel himself as the unity of logical space from that perspective—feel himself a priori as *the limit* of the whole world. This peculiar a priori feeling, for Wittgenstein, is the *mystical feeling*:

> 6.45 The view of the world *sub specie aeterni* is its view as a—limited—whole.
> The feeling [*Das Gefühl*] of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling.[576]

That is, from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, the Subject feels logical space as a *limited* whole, and thereby feels himself—the *limit* of the world—as that which embraces the whole logical space in unity. It is this that, for the early Wittgenstein, is mystical. But since logical space is given by objects, *which for Wittgenstein are transcendental conditions* (transcendental objects), then, in the mystical feeling, the Subject feels himself a priori as the unity of the transcendental conditions. This establishes ('I'$_{W2}$) and confirms that Wittgenstein's 'Subject' is a Transcendental Subject.

Does *that* make the early Wittgenstein into an ineffable transcendental idealist?

3.32$_W$ Wittgenstein as a Transcendental Solipsist?

Many would say it does. More precisely, they would say that Wittgenstein's commitment to a Transcendental Subject also commits him to an extreme form of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, namely *Transcendental Solipsism*. As we have seen in 3$_K$, this is the metaphysical position that is fully sympathetic to the apparent claim

> (TS*) *I* have ineffable a priori knowledge (a priori feeling) of the dependence of transcendental features upon *my* point of view,

or equivalently, as we may now say, the metaphysical position by which I am *shown* this dependence. Being a species of (TI$_{ineff}$*), namely the pseudo-claim of the ineffable transcendental idealist, (TS*) is a tissue of transcendental nonsense. Still, according to those interpreters that

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[575] A. W. Moore (1997, p. 150).
[576] Translation emended.

attribute a form of Transcendental Solipsism to the early Wittgenstein, similar tissues of transcendental nonsense may help us in realizing that Transcendental Solipsism is *shown*.

The attribution to Wittgenstein of (a form of) Transcendental Solipsism has a long and distinguished pedigree, that arguably stretches as far back as Frank Ramsey, who writes:

> That I must be acquainted with [objects] in a transcendental sense is W[ittgenstein]'s solipsism. (1991, p. 146)

Ramsey's remark is highly condensed, but it suggests that, in knowing a priori objects as (ineffable) transcendental features, I also (ineffably) know them a priori as *my* objects,[577] in such a way that it is *shown* that they, and thereby the whole world, *depend* upon *my* point of view. At any rate, it seems plausible to say, that's how Ramsey would interpret Wittgenstein's famous passage, by which "what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself" (T, 5.62[578]).

I will return below on this puzzling Tractarian remark. For now, I will only note that, after Ramsey, the interpretation of the early Wittgenstein as a transcendental solipsist was taken up and developed by many other authors. For example, we find it in Hacker,[579] who coined the phrase "Transcendental Solipsism" in the first place.[580] After Hacker, the "transcendental solipsist" interpretation of the early Wittgenstein became mainstream, and thus we also find it in Williams,[581] Glock,[582] A. W. Moore,[583] Philström,[584] and others.[585]

In the continuation of the present section, I will take into consideration Hacker and A. W. Moore's interpretations of the early Wittgenstein as a transcendental solipsist. That's because Williams and Glock follow Hacker by their own admission, and so there is no need for

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[577] According to Ramsey, Wittgenstein holds that "to be *mine*, to be given in experience, is [a] formal property to be a genuine entity" (Ramsey, unpublished, Box 4, Folder 21, p. 2; my emphasis). The "experience" Ramsey has in mind should be the "transcendental acquaintance" he mentions in the passage quoted above.

[578] On my view of meaning, the solipsist *may* mean something without being able to put that something into words. For there is, alongside propositional meaning (sense) also *non*-propositional meaning (significance). Non-propositional meaning, for trivial reasons, won't be expressed by a proposition, though there may well be strings of signs that are abortive attempts to articulate such meaning into words, and that, exactly in misfiring, elicit feelings of sympathy, which may be significant.

[579] Hacker (1972 and 1986).

[580] Arguably, however, this interpretation of Wittgenstein was earlier advanced by Stenius (1960), even though he does not use the phrase "Transcendental Solipsism". See again the beginning of 2w.

[581] Williams (1972-3).

[582] Glock (1999).

[583] A. W. Moore (1997 and 2012)

[584] Philström (2011).

[585] At one point, David Pears held this view too (see his 1972). He later changed his mind, arguing that, while in some sense sympathetic to (transcendental) solipsism, Wittgenstein was never himself a solipsist. "His sympathy was the sympathy of the therapist" (1996, p. 124). Indeed, after his change of mind, Pears argued that the early Wittgenstein was a transcendental *realist*. I will evaluate Pears' interpretation of Wittgenstein in Chapter 7.

repetitions.[586] A. W. Moore, on the other hand, has quite a unique interpretation, which deserves to be discussed on its own. As for Philström, I will evaluate his take in the last section of the Chapter, in my discussion of Wittgenstein's ethics.

3.321$_W$ *Hacker's Interpretation*

Hacker is an exponent (perhaps, the main exponent) of the "traditional" interpretation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, by which Wittgenstein's Tractarian remarks are to lead us to the recognition of *shown metaphysical truths* about reality, which cannot be said. Hacker thus advances what may be called a *quasi*-propositional reading of Wittgenstein, by which nonsensical Tractarian remarks, that do not have a truth value, may nonetheless "mean" metaphysical *truths* that can be shown.

Among these "shown metaphysical truths" there is, for Hacker, the alleged truth "that the world is my world", which the transcendental solipsist allegedly "means", and which is allegedly "quite correct", although it cannot be said. Now, insofar as Wittgenstein cannot hold a propositional (or effable) variant of Transcendental Idealism (2_W), a *quasi*-propositional reading like Hacker's is not likely to fare much better. However, we should be as charitable as possible, and reserve our judgement on Hacker's view only after a presentation of it.

In effect, the starting point of Hacker's transcendental solipsist interpretation of Wittgenstein is a comparison with Schopenhauer, for which Hacker deserves some credit. For, as we have seen at the end of 2_W, there are indeed important similarities between Schopenhauer, who was a transcendental idealist, and Wittgenstein, the most important one being Wittgenstein's endorsement of the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Now Hacker takes this similarity to mean that "Wittgenstein's solipsism was inspired by Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism".[587] In fact, according to Hacker, Wittgenstein's alleged solipsism, no less than Kant and Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism, "involves a *belief* in the transcendental ideality of time (and presumably space)", with the difference that, "unlike Kant and Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein *thought* that his transcendental idealist doctrines, though profoundly unimportant, are literally inexpressible".[588] What are we to make of this?

As I have argued, space and time are transcendental for Wittgenstein, and on this much Hacker is right. However, Wittgenstein could neither *believe* in the transcendental ideality of

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[586] See Williams (1972-3, pp. 77-79) and Glock 1999 (§ III).
[587] Hacker (1972, p. 75 and 1986, p. 99).
[588] Hacker (1972, p. 76 and 1986, pp. 99-100).

space and time, nor *think* that his transcendental idealist doctrines are inexpressible, as Hacker alleges. And that's because, as I have argued, for the early Wittgenstein there can be no such thing as *believing* or *thinking* Transcendental Idealism at all. The early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist.

Hacker would at this point complain that all he means is that, for the early Wittgenstein, the transcendental ideality of space and time—or better, the *solipsistic* variant of the doctrine by which space and time depend upon *my* point of view—is *shown*. That is, while for Hacker's Wittgenstein (TS*) is a tissue of transcendental nonsense, so that its species

(S&T$_{SOLIP}$*) space and time *ineffably* depend upon *my* point of view

must be nonsensical too, still, with their help, I am supposed to be *shown* that space and time depend upon my point of view, and therewith be shown Transcendental Solipsism. Indeed, "*that* space and time ineffably depend upon my point of view", and "*that* the [spatiotemporal] world is my world", are for Hacker's Wittgenstein metaphysical *truths* that cannot be said, but that are nonetheless *shown*.

At this point, we must note, in agreement with Levine, that for *Wittgenstein* "what 'shows itself' are *not* truths at all".[589] Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, what shows itself does not take the form '*that p*'. Rather, as I have argued in agreement with Levine, for Wittgenstein we are shown *objects* and their forms, including *space* and *time*. But neither objects, nor space and time, have the form 'that *p*'. They are *not* truth*s* (in the plural), least of all "showable truths", as Hacker alleges. They are *things*, and their *forms*.

It is easy to prove that Hacker's view is untenable when one considers that, for *his* Wittgenstein, the only perspective from which anything could be shown is the *aesthetic* perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. For, as I have argued, what is *shown* from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* is logical space, and thus objects and their forms, including space and time. Yet, logical space, and with it objects and their forms, including space and time, are *not truths*. Indeed, even though, according to Wittgenstein, in the mystical feeling "experienced" from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, the Subject may *feel a priori* the whole logical space, what is therewith felt is *not* anything of the form 'that p'. And that's because feelings, let alone *a priori* feelings, do not have the form 'that p' at all, as thoughts, or even apparent thoughts, do!

Hacker's interpretation of the early Wittgenstein as a transcendental solipsist is thus misguided.

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[589] Levine (2013, p. 204).

3.322ᵥ *Moore's Interpretation*

In Wittgenstein scholarship, the reaction to Hacker's misguided view has been to retreat in the claim that the *Tractatus* is philosophical gibberish—nonsense that looks like Metaphysics, but the main (or even the only) purpose of which is to be unmasked as nonsensical. On this (so-called) "resolute" reading of the *Tractatus*, there is nothing the solipsist may so much as *mean*. Indeed, for "resolute" readers, not only there are no ineffable truths, but there is *nothing* ineffable for Wittgenstein. As James Conant puts it, "there is no ineffable 'it'".[590] If so, for Wittgenstein, there is not even ineffable knowledge, the 'object' of which may be shown. And if so, by definition we may never be *shown*, with the help of Tractarian nonsense, metaphysical doctrines such as Transcendental Solipsism.

I will return on the "resolute" reading of the *Tractatus* in the final Chapter 7. For now, however, we should be wary of taking the "resolute" route just because Hacker's view is misguided. In effect, Hacker's "traditional" interpretation is not the only interpretation of Wittgenstein as a transcendental solipsist. For example, A. W. Moore identifies himself neither with the "traditional" camp, nor with the "resolute" one. Still, in many of his papers and books, Moore attributes to the early Wittgenstein an austere form of Transcendental Solipsism. In what follows, I will thus engage with Moore, to evaluate whether the early Wittgenstein was an ineffable transcendental idealist, and more precisely a transcendental solipsist.

3.3221ᵥ *Presenting Moore's interpretation*

Moore's interpretation of the early Wittgenstein as an ineffable transcendental idealist, and more precisely as a transcendental solipsist, finds full expression in his *Points of View*. There, Moore begins his train of thought thus. For Wittgenstein—Moore writes—"objects constitute the form of the world" and "representations share this form".[591] Up to this point, we may readily agree with Moore. Indeed, he himself admits that "*so far* there is nothing in [Wittgenstein's] vision that is clearly idealistic", i.e. "nothing that unequivocally suggests a *dependence* [of the form of reality on the form of representation]".[592]

But then, Moore adds in a sequence of passages worth quoting at length:

However, even if there is nothing yet in the vision that is clearly idealistic, Wittgenstein brings it to completion, towards the end of the book, with a compressed combination of solipsism and

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[590] Conant (1991, p. 160).
[591] Moore (1997, p. 150).
[592] Ibid.; my emphasis.

mysticism in which the strain of Kantian idealism is unmistakable.

> The idealism comes out as follows. Wittgenstein's vision has a very atomistic quality. Objects are independent of one another […] But, as Wittgenstein himself observes, this independence, which is a matter of the possibilities that things enjoy, is itself a kind of *dependence*, a dependence on the world's logical form. In a sense, his preoccupation is with the unity in which everything is held together, an abstract, logical unity which contributes nothing to what the world is like but *constrains* what it could be like. It is the unity that attends every possibility. It is also the unity of self-consciousness […] [For] the world's unity *is* the possibility of its being represented from a single point of view […] So the world is *my world*.

> What makes this a kind of idealism is, first, that the world's being my world is an aspect of its form, and, second, that it is *determined* by an aspect of representations, namely that any representation is a representation of how things are for me.

> The idealism is manifestly transcendental […] [Further,] the idealism can [only] be shown […] I am shown the idealism when I am shown that the world is my world.[593]

There is a lot packed into these passages. However, Moore's main contention is quite straightforward: Wittgenstein's view is a form of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, and more precisely of Transcendental Solipsism, since for Wittgenstein the (transcendental) form of reality *depends* upon the point of view of the Subject, the unity of which *constrains* logical space ("what the world could be like"), *determining* it as "my" logical space. All this is supposed to be shown and, thereby, *for Moore's Wittgenstein*, Transcendental Solipsism is shown.

More precisely, for Moore's Wittgenstein, as for Hacker's one, the apparent claim of transcendental solipsism (TS*), and species of it like

> (O$_{SOLIP}$*) *Objects ("the logical form") ineffably depend upon my point of view*

must be tissues of transcendental nonsense, that masquerade as sense about the transcendental features of reality and its representation. However, for Moore's Wittgenstein, as opposed to Hacker's one, such transcendental nonsense does *not* help us to recognize quasi-propositional "ineffable metaphysical truths". Rather, for Moore's Wittgenstein, if we process it rightly, the transcendental nonsense will help us to gain *insight* into, or *ineffable understanding* of, Transcendental Solipsism.

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[593] Moore (1997, pp. 150-153; my emphasis on "dependence", "constrains" and "determined"). Notice that, in the last sentence, Moore is rather incautious, and writes that, for Wittgenstein, "I am shown that the world is my world". If that were all there is to Moore's interpretation, it would be no better than Hacker's one, by which what we are shown is of the form 'that p'. A few pages later in *Points of View*, however, Moore writes that we are not shown truths (1997, p. 155), hence differentiating his view from Hacker's. Rather, Moore suggests that what we are shown must be nonsense (p. 157). Now, we may grant Moore that nonsense may take the form 'that p', as in "that the world is my world" (or "that there are green ideas sleeping furiously at 5 pm is clearly a tautology"). But then again, it is not very clear what "being shown nonsense" amounts to.

Now, one may legitimately ask how exactly this is supposed to work. For Moore, recall, "understanding is a mode of reception". Indeed, as I have urged in agreement with him, understanding is a state with an *aesthetic* quality to it. Hence, unsurprisingly, Moore connects his view of Wittgenstein as a transcendental solipsist to the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. As Moore writes in his first book, *The Infinite*, in the chapter dedicated to Wittgenstein:

> When I—the subject—view the world as a limited whole [viz. *sub specie aeternitatis*], I view it from my own particular point of view. Both its limits and its unity are shown in everything's being as it is *from that point of view*, *for me*. […] I am shown that the world is *my world* […] I am shown the world *as mine*, and hence as limited and unified. (2019b, p. 189)

Put otherwise, for Moore's Wittgenstein, I am shown from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* the "mineness" of the world *in a metaphysically loaded sense*[594]—namely its *dependence* upon *my* point of view, at least as regards its (transcendental) form. But since, as we have seen, the mystical feeling is felt from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, Moore is also bound to connect his interpretation of the early Wittgenstein to that feeling, and to argue that, *in it*, Transcendental Solipsism is shown. Which he does, implicitly, in the following passage:

> Wittgenstein identified what cannot be put into words (what can be *shown*) with what is mystical, and what is mystical with feeling the world as a limited whole. (2019, p. 193; my emphasis)

Indeed, since, for Moore's Wittgenstein, Transcendental Solipsism is shown, and since for Moore's Wittgenstein what is (or can be) shown is what is mystical, then, for Moore's Wittgenstein, it is in the mystical feeling that I am shown the *dependence* of the unity of the whole logical space upon my point of view. In *this* way, for Moore's Wittgenstein, I am shown Transcendental Solipsism.

Is Moore right?

3.3222ᴡ *Some First Remarks against Moore's Interpretation*

I believe he isn't—albeit his interpretation is the most rewarding one among those of the idealist interpreters of Wittgenstein. Indeed, even though I share with Moore the beginning of his train of thought, I believe it is not forced onto us. Demonstrating this is the task of the present sub-section. In the next ones, I will then argue that not only Moore's train of thought is not forced

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[594] The word "sense" is not casual here. For Moore, there are non-propositional forms of "sense-making", such as showing. Hence, for Moore, I may non-propositionally make metaphysical *sense* of the "mineness" of empirical reality, i.e. be shown the form of empirical reality as *dependent* upon my point of view. That said, I do not share Moore's understanding of the word "sense". Indeed, as will become clear below, I regard Moore's view of Wittgenstein as "metaphysically loaded *non*sense".

onto us, but in fact that there is a precise point where it goes awry or, as I should perhaps say, *implodes*. This will turn out to be his interpretation of the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* and, thereby, of the mystical feeling.

Let's start then from the first task, i.e. showing that Moore's interpretation is not forced onto us. As I have just noted, I share with Moore the beginning of his train of thought, namely that, for the early Wittgenstein, (transcendental) objects are the (transcendental) form of both reality and its representation. Indeed, I even agree with Moore that the unity of this form—the unity of *the* logical form—is none other than the unity of consciousness for Wittgenstein, and hence the Subject, as limit of the world.

But Moore "jumps" from this, namely the view that for the early Wittgenstein the unity of the Subject's point of view *is* the (transcendental) unity of reality, to the *metaphysical conclusion* that, for the early Wittgenstein, it is shown that the (transcendental) form of reality *depends* upon the point of view of the Subject. And that's Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, and more precisely Transcendental Solipsism.

It is Moore's "jump" that I don't buy. For one, he does not present it as a "jump" at all, but rather as a fluid and natural move. And that is suspicious. For even if, for the early Wittgenstein, the unity of the Subject's point of view *is* the transcendental unity of empirical reality, that does not *yet* commit him to the view that (it is shown that) the transcendental unity of reality *depends* upon my point of view.

In effect, as I have already suggested in Part$_K$, a transcendental *realist* may argue that the dependence relation is the other way around, i.e. that it is the transcendental form of a mind-*independent* reality that is "imposed" upon my representations, and thereby upon my point of view—and that *this* is shown in self-consciousness, namely that the unity of my point of view depends upon the transcendental unity of reality. Further, yet others could argue that nothing could count as the "dependence" of "one" unity over the "other". Indeed, it may well be that the Subject and reality are *correlated* in unity, and yet that nothing could count as thinking, or even being shown (*feeling*), any metaphysical priority of either the Subject or reality.

It's easy to see from a different angle that Moore's "metaphysical jump" is not obvious at all. Thus, recall the distinction between transcendental features and transcendental constraints. Transcendental features are necessary features of both reality and its representation, which are known a priori, whereas transcendental constraints are—*for the transcendental idealist*—necessary features of representation which can be known a priori to *constrain* the space of what can count as real. As I have urged, Wittgenstein's Subject *is* a transcendental feature of both reality and representation. Yet it is not, on that account, a transcendental constraint, as Moore alleges.

In effect, Moore takes it that, for Wittgenstein, the unity of the Subject's point of view *constrains* the (transcendental) form of reality, and hence that it *constrains* logical space, determining as *my* logical space *in a metaphysically loaded manner*, i.e. as *dependent* upon my point of view. Hence, Moore takes it that Wittgenstein's Subject is a transcendental constraint. But this alleged "dependence" cannot in any way a be a direct consequence of Wittgenstein's Subject being a transcendental feature.

Yet another variation on my theme would be this: Wittgenstein's Subject is a transcendental *limit* of the world but not, *on that account*, a transcendental *limitation* of it. Transcendental limits, recall, need not be restrictive, whereas transcendental limitations are metaphysically restrictive. Hence, Wittgenstein's Subject *may* be a transcendental limit of the world without *restricting* the world to *my* point of view, as the transcendental solipsist wants.

In any case, I think you get the idea, and so there is no need to be repetitive. We already have sufficient ammunition to establish that Moore's "metaphysical jump"—from Wittgenstein's endorsement of Transcendental Subjectivity to his (alleged) Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, and more precisely to Transcendental Solipsism—is not forced onto us. In what follows, I argue that, in fact, Moore's interpretation does not take off at all, given the early Wittgenstein's structural commitments. First, I criticize Moore's interpretation of the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, and then his interpretation of the mystical feeling.

3.3223_W *Against Moore's perspective sub specie aeternitatis*

So far, I have reconstructed Moore's interpretation of the early Wittgenstein as a transcendental idealist, and more precisely as a transcendental solipsist. My reconstruction has been as neutral as possible, and it was not aimed at finding fatal weaknesses in Moore's interpretation, but only to show it is not forced onto us.

Yet we should now recall that Moore has a questionable understanding of the transcendental in terms of what is "transcendent". And here, I think, we may put pressure on Moore's interpretation of Wittgenstein, just like we did with his interpretation of Kant in 3_K. Or rather, even more so, to the point that Moore's interpretation of Wittgenstein will eventually crumble on itself.

Let us go step by step. Moore takes it that both "Kant [and] the early Wittgenstein [are committed to a] *transcendent* unifying structure that determines the form of the world".[595]

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[595] (Moore, 1997, p. 206; my emphasis). We have seen in 3_K that this is a questionable reading of Kant. Indeed, Kant is adamant that the 'I think' is not "transcendent", insofar as it serves the only purpose of making

That is, according to Moore, both Kant and Wittgenstein are committed to a "transcendent point of view"—even though for Moore's Kant the form of the world, namely the spatiotemporal form, is effably determined as "ours" from a "transcendent point of view", whereas for Moore's Wittgenstein the form of the world, namely the logical form—*and thereby logical space*—is ineffably determined as "mine" from a "transcendent point of view".

Now, while his usage of the term "transcendent" is questionable, Moore's understanding of Kant is not *so* far from the truth. For Kant has a distinction in place between real and merely logical possibility, and claims that merely logical possibility extends *further* than real possibility. Thus, for Kant, by taking the perspective of merely logical possibility—the merely logical perspective of pure understanding—we may abstract from the forms of empirical reality, namely space and time, and think them as dependent upon our point of view. Put otherwise, there is a sense in which, for Kant, the perspective of merely logical possibility stations us "outside" our empirical perspective in space and time, and thereby "outside" space and time themselves, in such a way that we may think of them as mind-dependent forms. And that's why, I take it, Moore would call Kant's merely logical perspective a "transcendent point of view".

Wittgenstein, however, does not have a distinction in place between real and logical possibility, and thereby has no merely logical perspective either. Hence for Moore's Wittgenstein, the "transcendent point of view" can only ever be the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. In effect, to ascertain that logical space *depends* upon my point of view, *it seems* I should need to occupy a perspective that "transcends" logical space—a perspective that stations me "outside objects" (*ex mediis rebus*), as opposed to the empirical one that puts me in the midst of things (*in mediis rebus*). And Wittgenstein's aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, as a perspective that views objects "from outside", would *seem* to fit the bill. Only by occupying it, *it seems*, I could *feel* logical space as *my* logical space, in a metaphysically loaded manner. Only then, *it seems*, I could *feel*, albeit not think, the dependence of the logical form of reality upon my point of view.

Hence, while for Moore's Kant the perspective of pure understanding is transcendent yet still logical, for Moore's Wittgenstein the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* is transcendent in a stronger sense, for it goes "beyond representation" altogether, as Moore himself writes, and hence *beyond logic*. Indeed, Moore's idea would seem to be that only from such an aesthetic "logic-transcendent" perspective I could ineffably understand (or *feel* a

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experience possible (B420-21). Here, I will argue that reading Wittgenstein's (transcendental) Subject in terms of transcendence is even more questionable.

priori) the dependence of the transcendental form of reality upon my point of view, and hence be *shown* Transcendental Solipsism.

Yet a "logic-transcendent" perspective must be nothing but a confusion for the early Wittgenstein, even if we try to qualify it as "aesthetic". In effect, insofar as he does not recognize a distinction between real and logical possibility, then Wittgenstein cannot have a distinction between (transcendental) aesthetics and (transcendental) logic, in the way Kant did. Hence, Wittgenstein often writes of the uncanny resemblance between aesthetical and logic investigations. But if so, as I have argued in 2$_W$, the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* must for Wittgenstein be the perspective of logic—"the correct logical perspective". And how could *the perspective of logic* transcend logic itself?

If the perspective of logic could transcend logic, then logic could transcend itself. And at that point, it should have to be possible to *represent* logical form. But that, Wittgenstein is clear, is absurd. It may be objected that from the "correct logical perspective", logical form, and hence logical space, is *shown* to the Subject. That's quite correct. But exactly for this reason, I am not shown anything that goes "beyond" logical space, say the "transcendent" dependence of logical space upon my "transcendent" point of view, and hence (Moore's) Transcendental Solipsism. Insofar as, for Wittgenstein, objects give logical space, and insofar as they are shown, that which is shown does not "transcend" logical space. It *is* logical space. Hence, we may now understand in a new light Wittgenstein's remarks on the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*:

> The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside.
> In such a way that they have the whole world as background.
> Is this it perhaps – in this view the object is seen together with space and time instead of in space and time?
> Each thing modifies the whole logical world, the whole of logical space, so to speak.
> (The thought forces itself upon one): The thing seen sub specie aeternitatis is the thing seen together with the whole logical space. (NB 7.10.16)

Here, Wittgenstein is making clear that the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* is *not* a perspective that somehow "transcends" logical space—for that should have to be an illogical perspective. Rather, it is a transcendent*al* perspective which sees objects, as necessary conditions of the possibility of representation, *with* logical space—as opposed to *in* logical space, which is how they are seen in the standard empirical perspective.

If, however, the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* cannot so much as count as a transcendent perspective "outside logical space"—for an "illogical perspective" is just an absurdity for

Wittgenstein—then nothing could count as "determining" or "constraining", from its vantage point, logical space itself, as *dependent* upon my point of view.

Indeed, given Wittgenstein's "equation" between logical and real possibility, I could not so much as feel this. For otherwise, I should have to station *myself*—this feeling of thinking—completely outside logic and, thereby, for the early Wittgenstein, completely outside being. I would then fail to *be*. But clearly, if I am to feel anything at all, I *must* be. In which case, nothing counts for me as standing completely "outside logic and being" and feeling a priori, "from there", the dependence of transcendental features upon my point of view. Nothing counts as being shown Transcendental Solipsism in the view sub specie *aeternitatis*. Or so Wittgenstein must take it, given his structural commitments.

3.3224ᴡ *Against Moore's mystical feeling*

Moore's solipsistic interpretation of Wittgenstein's aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, then, implodes. However, Moore also connected his solipsistic interpretation to the (a priori) mystical feeling. Indeed, for *Moore's* Wittgenstein, I know in the mystical feeling the ineffable *dependence* of the (transcendental) form of reality upon my point of view. Hence, Moore's interpretation of the mystical feeling should implode too. I will now show this is the case, to confirm that Moore's attribution of a form of Transcendental Solipsism to the early Wittgenstein is mistaken.

Once again, the comparison with Kant may be useful here. Having a distinction in place between real and merely logical possibility, Kant could divide the domain of thought—logical space—into two sub-domains: the space of objective thought (cognition) and the space of mere or empty thought. This allowed Kant to claim that, in mere thought, we could at least *think* his transcendental idealism.

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, has no distinction between real and logical possibility. As a result, all thoughts or propositions are objective for him—they all represent reality. Moore knows this. Yet he claims that, instead of Kant's mere thoughts, Wittgenstein has nonsense as the "vehicle" of Transcendental Idealism. Thus, while it cannot be thought that (TS*) I have ineffable a priori knowledge of the dependence of transcendental features upon my point of view, Transcendental Solipsism may still be *shown* for Moore's Wittgenstein, in our *coming to terms* with the transcendental nonsense that (TS*) is. Indeed, since as we have seen states of showing are (linked to) states of a priori *feeling*, then Moore is bound to claim that, according to the early Wittgenstein, I am shown Transcendental Solipsism in the mystical a priori *feeling*, which not by

chance appears at the end of the nonsensical ladder of the *Tractatus*. Consistently with his assumptions, Moore claims this.

But now let us try to reflect on Moore's view, in the light of these differences between Kant and Wittgenstein. Kant divided a common domain, namely logical space, in the sub-domains of objective thought (cognition) and mere thought, with mere thought extending "beyond" objective thought, and allowing us to think his transcendental idealism. Wittgenstein can have no such division of logical space, for he takes logical space to be the space of objective thought. But then, to be a transcendental idealist, he would have to claim that, with the aid of some nonsense, we may recognize that *feeling* reaches "beyond" logical space—indeed, that it reaches into a domain of its own, populated by "transcendent" stuff that cannot be thought, such as the "transcendent" dependence of logical space upon my point of view. It is this that, for Moore's Wittgenstein, is mystical.

This however prompts the question: How could feeling reach "beyond" logical space for Wittgenstein? In Kant, mere thought could reach "beyond" cognition because they were *both* species of thought—sub-domains of the common logical space. Yet what is the common domain that gets to be divided into effable thought and ineffable feeling for Wittgenstein? It cannot be logical space, otherwise feeling and that which we feel would be *within* logical space, and hence effable. It surely cannot be the "domain of feeling", since otherwise thought would be ineffable. Moore could argue that it is the domain of knowledge, divided into effable knowledge (some thoughts) and ineffable knowledge (feeling). But if feeling reached "beyond" logical space, ineffable knowledge would have to transcend logic, and thus, for Wittgenstein, being. It would fail to *be*. (And, *a fortiori*, it would fail to *be knowledge*.)

Hence, as first understood by Peter Sullivan,[596] the "view" that, for Wittgenstein, the space of thought (logical space) "butts against" the space of feeling, so that the latter "restricts" the former to "my" logical space in a metaphysically loaded manner—this "view" does not take off at all. Indeed, as we have seen, the whole "view" that feeling has its own space, that "transcends logical space", is self-annihilating. For *logical space* is what is felt for Wittgenstein in the mystical feeling. And if so, nothing could ever count as being shown, in the mystical feeling, the "transcendent" dependence of logical space upon my point of view. Transcendental Solipsism, for Wittgenstein, could *not* be shown.

In the next section, I will cement this result, by arguing that the transcendental solipsist interpretation of Wittgenstein ends up ascribing to him deeply *un*ethical views, so that it does

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[596] Sullivan (2013, pp. 267-70).

not square with Wittgenstein's famous remark, by which the point of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one. Before doing that, however, let me first conclude this section, by sketching an alternative interpretation of Wittgenstein's remarks on solipsism.

3.33ᴡ *Sketching an alternative interpretation*

Above, I have argued that Transcendental Solipsism is not, and in fact could not, be shown for the early Wittgenstein. Yet, as I have noted at the beginning of this section, Wittgenstein famously writes that

> 5.62   [W]hat solipsism *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself. That the world is *my* world shows itself in the fact that the limits of the language (*the* language, which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my* world.

How to interpret this elucidation?

To answer this question, I will avail myself of all the elements of our discussion so far, plus a simple observation. As noted by Pears[597] and Levine,[598] in 5.62 Wittgenstein suggests that the solipsist has misconstrued something that has been genuinely recognized. Clearly, this something is not a true proposition, for it should otherwise be possible to say it. Indeed, the whole point is that the solipsist *attempts* to cast into propositional form something that cannot be said, but rather *shows* itself (ibid.).

Now, I have argued above that what is shown is *felt*, or at any rate is connected to *feeling*. Hence, the solipsist is attempting to construe a (ineffable) feeling as a (effable) thought, which is an attempt destined to misfire. Specifically, the solipsist is attempting to construe the ineffable feeling of subjectivity—which for Wittgenstein *pervades* the whole of reality, insofar as reality is that which I can represent—in propositional form. But the result may only ever be "the world is my world", i.e. a formulation which we are bound to hear as "the world *depends* upon my point of view", and which is ultimately to be recognized as (transcendental) nonsense.

So, the insight the solipsist has regards the pervasiveness of subjectivity, as a necessary feature—a limit—of representable reality. He *feels* he is not a part of the world, but rather the unity of the whole of thinkable reality.[599] Indeed, he *feels* this in his own feeling of thinking, which is what he is after. But he then misconstrues this feeling—he makes violence to it—in attempting to cast it in propositional form, in the way outlined above. He falls victim of an

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[597] 1987, pp. 163-5.
[598] 2013, p. 204.
[599] See McGuinness (1966, p. 318).

illusion of sense.

The next stage is this. The solipsist comes to recognize that his formulations are tissues of transcendental nonsense. Yet even though the solipsist will recognize them as such, he will still cling to them, maintaining that a *metaphysical* insight lies behind them—a *metaphysical* truth, or perhaps a *metaphysical* understanding, that while unthinkable, may nonetheless be *shown* in some way. Transcendental Solipsism is supposed to be shown.

We have now dispelled this ulterior illusion. Just like nothing counts as saying Transcendental Solipsism, nothing can count as being shown Transcendental Solipsism for the early Wittgenstein. And that is because saying (thought) and showing (feeling) do not butt against each other, but rather internally complement each other. Indeed, what is shown (or felt a priori) are the necessary conditions of the possibility of language, and hence of all that which can be said (or thought).[600]

Yet now that we have dispelled the illusion that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental solipsist, for whom Transcendental Solipsism is shown, the question becomes all the more pressing: What could Wittgenstein *mean* in writing that "the world is my world"? The easy answer, at this point, would be "absolutely nothing". And that, as we shall see in the final Chapter, is how Wittgenstein gets to be interpreted these days by many "resolute" readers of the *Tractatus*.

I find this interpretation both illuminating and depressing. Illuminating, since Wittgenstein could mean nothing *propositional*. (There is no *sense* in nonsense). Depressing, since it makes propositional meaning into the only kind of meaning there is, whereas it is far from being it. For, as I have argued in 3$_K$, there is also non-propositional meaningfulness or *significance*, which must ultimately lie in a feeling.

Significance, however, need not be "metaphysical meaning" (whatever that may be). Just recall the significance of a sunset, or of a life-changing choice, or of a work of art—and even of some peculiar words, which we find impossible to articulate by means of any further words. There need not be anything "metaphysical" in each of these instances, even though we may feel them as deeply meaningful. Indeed, we may feel *Tractarian elucidations* as deeply meaningful, even though they could never have propositional meaning (sense), nor, arguably, "ineffable metaphysical meaning". And that's because elucidations, as Frege knew well, may appeal to *feeling*,[601] which latter may be deeply significant for us.

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[600] Hence, I am here offering what may be called a "non-contrastive" account of saying and showing. Cf. Kremer (2001, p. 62) and Narboux (2014).

[601] Frege (1951, p. 171).

Not unlike the solipsist, then, Wittgenstein could still be after something *significant* for us by way of his nonsensical formulations, namely the transcendental feeling of Subjectivity, which comes to *clear* (self)consciousness in the mystical a priori feeling "experienced" from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. Unlike the solipsist, however, Wittgenstein need not misconstrue this significance in terms of a metaphysical view, such as Transcendental Solipsism. To this transcendental yet non-metaphysical interpretation of the early Wittgenstein, and how it stands with respect to other interpretations of the *Tractatus*, I shall however return in the final Chapter 7. For an understanding of it first requires an understanding of Wittgenstein's ethical remarks, to which we now turn.

3.4_W Wittgenstein's Transcendental Ethics

In Chapter 3_K (§ 3.4_K), I have first presented Transcendental Ethics, as a philosophical investigation that (*i*) starting "from within", aims at (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the possibility of the good life, which are known a priori as (linked to) transcendental conditions of cognition. I have argued that the necessary conditions of the good life, which in Transcendental Ethics are to be recognized "from within", may be *felt* as significant for us. My example was Kant's feeling of the sublime, as an *a priori* feeling which has moral value, insofar as it is a (ineffable) feeling of respect for the (effable) moral law, the latter being thought from the merely logical perspective of pure understanding.

In this section, I show that and how the early Wittgenstein engaged in Transcendental Ethics. First, I argue that Wittgenstein's ethics is "transcendental". However, given Wittgenstein's "equation" of logical and real possibility, Wittgenstein's (transcendental) ethics becomes "one" with his (transcendental) aesthetics, in such a way that the necessary condition of the good life *just is* an a priori *feeling* for him, with no "moral laws" attached to it. This is the feeling of the mystical, "experienced" from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. By the end of the Chapter, I argue that a solipsistic interpretation of this feeling would destroy its ethical value. This will confirm that the early Wittgenstein is not an ineffable transcendental idealist, and more precisely a transcendental solipsist.

3.41_W "Ethics is transcendental"

First, then, we need to show that Wittgenstein's early Ethics is a form of Transcendental Ethics. In a famous letter to von Ficker, Wittgenstein writes regarding the *Tractatus*:

[T]he book's point is an ethical one. I once wanted to include a sentence in the preface which doesn't in fact appear there now. But I am writing it to you now because it might serve you as a key. For I wanted to write that my work consists of two parts: the one you have in front of you and all that I have *not* written. And just that second part is the *important* one. Because the ethical is delimited by my book as it were from within [*von innen*]; and I am convinced that *strictly* it can *only* be delimited like that. (Quoted in Monk 1990, p. 178)

There can be no doubt, then, that Wittgenstein's ethical investigations starts "from within", as is required if they are to be transcendental. Indeed, Wittgenstein understands the whole task of working "from within" language to set its limits as an ethical task, which has ethical "importance"[602], "value" or "meaning" (significance).[603] For it is the task of protecting ethical value itself, from those who believe it may be put it into words, just like they can put into words every contingent fact.[604]

Once clarified that Wittgenstein's ethical investigations start "from within", it will be sufficient to show that he countenanced necessary conditions of the possibility of the good life, which are at the same time (linked to) transcendental conditions of cognition, to show that his Ethics deserves the title of "transcendental". Let us then do that, with the further aim of understanding the peculiar way in which ethics is transcendental for Wittgenstein.

A good life is a life worth living—a meaningful or valuable life, for the one who lives it. I have suggested in 3_K that no human life is truly worth living without a modicum of self-consciousness, which however is an ineffable feeling. That was not to say that Ethics in general, or for that matter Transcendental Ethics, is *completely* ineffable. As we have seen, Kant had the resources to maintain that, while some necessary conditions of the good life are ineffable, e.g. the feeling of the sublime, *some others* are effable, e.g. the moral law that is entertained from the merely logical perspective of pure understanding. The early Wittgenstein, however, has no such resources. There is no "merely logical possibility" for him, which should allow us to think "ethical propositions" or "moral laws". As a result, Wittgenstein writes:

6.42[605]   [T]here can be no propositions of ethics [*Sätze der Ethik*].

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[602] The word "important" and cognates often figure in Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics'.

[603] The words "meaning" and "value" figure prominently in the Preface of the *Tractatus*, where Wittgenstein takes it that his work does have some kind of meaning after all. On the "resolute" reading of the *Tractatus*, this is inexplicable, given that the only kind of meaning resolute readers admit is propositional meaning. On my reading, this is perfectly explicable, for in the Preface to the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein is concerned with *ethical* meaning, which he takes to be non-propositional meaning, and thus *significance*.

[604] Hence, at the end of the letter to von Ficker quoted above, Wittgenstein writes: "In short, I believe that where many others today are just gassing, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it".

[605] Translations slightly emended.

6.422   When an ethical law of the form, 'Thou shalt . . .', is laid down, one's first thought is, 'And what if I do not do it?'.

Here, Wittgenstein is going against Kant, in writing that there can be no propositions of ethics, and thereby no "moral laws". Put otherwise, for the early Wittgenstein, ethics is *ineffable*. Since, however, the ineffable *is* the transcendental for him, then Wittgenstein is bound to take it that Ethics is transcendental. Which he does:

6.421   It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words.
         Ethics is transcendental.

This passage can be understood in light of Wittgenstein's earlier remark that "logic is transcendental" (T, 6.13). Just like logic, for the early Wittgenstein, is transcendental insofar as it deals with the ineffable features of language and world, so too ethics is transcendental by dealing with those ineffable features (cf. NB, 24.7.16), *insofar as they are at the same time* (linked to) *necessary conditions of the good life*. Hence, not only Wittgenstein's ethics counts as "transcendental", but in fact it is an *ineffable* form of Transcendental Ethics.

This, however, raises the question: What are, for the early Wittgenstein, the necessary conditions of the good life, that are at the same time (linked to) transcendental conditions of cognition?

3.42ᴡ *The mystical as ethical feeling*

We are already in a position to recognize such conditions—or better, condition. For insofar as "ethics is transcendental" for Wittgenstein, and insofar as he takes the transcendental to be not only a priori but also ineffable, then the necessary condition of the good life will likely be connected to an *a priori feeling*—say the transcendental Subject, as a condition or limit of language and world. Thus, Wittgenstein writes:

Good and evil only enter through the *subject*. And the subject is not a part of the world, but a limit of the world. (NB, 2.8.16)

As the subject is not a part of the world, but a presupposition of its existence, so good and evil are predicates of the Subject, not properties in the world. (ibid.)

If there were no will, neither would there be that centre of the world, which we call the I, and which is the bearer of ethics. What is good or evil is essentially the I, not the world. (NB, 4.8.16)

Here, Wittgenstein is clarifying that the transcendental Subject, insofar as it *wills* anything, is the bearer of ethical values, such as "good" and "evil". Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, as for Kant

before him, only the will is ultimately good or bad. Since, however, Wittgenstein's transcendental Subject cannot take a "*merely* logical perspective", then the good or bad exercise of his will is *not* related to "meaningful ethical propositions" (e.g. Kant's moral law), which the Subject himself is supposed to entertain. Rather, for Wittgenstein, the good or bad exercise of the will may only ever affect the *non*-propositional meaning (significance) that the Subject may feel the whole world to have. Hence, Wittgenstein writes in the *Tractatus*:

6.423   Of the will, as the bearer of ethical attributes, nothing can be said.[606]

6.43   If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts—not what can be expressed by means of language. In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man.

Here, Wittgenstein suggests that the good or "happy"[607] life lies in the Subject's attitude with respect to the world. More specifically, to lead a good life, the Subject must exercise his will in such a way as to feel the world as a meaningful whole, "as if by accession […] of meaning" (NB, 5.7.16). But the Subject exactly feels this in the mystical *feeling*, as an a priori feeling of logical space as a limited whole, "experienced" from the *aesthetic* perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. Hence, Wittgenstein writes:

6.421   (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same).

The good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. (NB, 7.10.16)

6.45   To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a—limited—whole.
        Feeling the world as a limited whole—it is this that is mystical.

Once again, we may understand these passages by way of comparison with Kant, and more specifically with his discussion of the sublime. In Kant, the (ineffable) feeling of the sublime was the access point to the merely logical perspective of pure understanding, from which we could *think* the (effable) moral law. Indeed, for Kant, the sublime is the feeling of being able to *think* the unconditioned or infinite whole, thereby *thinking* our will as not-conditioned by causes in the phenomenal world, and hence as free.

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[606] My translation.

[607] Wittgenstein, as opposed to Kant, equates the "good" life and the "happy" life (NB, 30.7.16). Indeed, for Kant, one may lead a holy life (a life of duty), and yet be unhappy, since happiness is for Kant an empirical state of satisfaction, as opposed to moral goodness, which belongs to the will in itself. For Wittgenstein, happiness does not look like an empirical state, but more like a state in which I feel in harmony with the world *as a whole* (NB, 8.7.16), and hence in harmony with myself, as transcendental limit of the whole world.

Wittgenstein, however, has no *merely* logical perspective from which transcendental ethics, or at least a part of it, could be thought or said. Indeed, his transcendental ethics is ineffable, and may only ever be shown. But since being shown something is (connected to) being in a state of a priori feeling, then the necessary condition of the good life at the heart of Wittgenstein's transcendental ethics *just is* the a priori feeling of the mystical, which the Subject feels from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*—thereby *feeling himself*, as the limit of the whole world.

That may all seem a bit abstruse. But in fact, the point is quite straightforward. To live the good life, for Wittgenstein, is *not* to "*think* the infinite", in order to "*think* our will as free", and "obey *thinkable* moral laws". Rather, it is to change our way of *seeing* the relation between ourselves and the world, by renouncing the confused fantasy of thinking the whole ("the whole infinite logical space"[608]), which fuels our equally confused desire to "place ourselves beyond the limits of the world". For that fantasy, in Wittgenstein's eyes, is just a version of our confused aspiration to be infinite, which is destined to lead us to unhappiness.

As opposed to this "fantasy", for Wittgenstein, we need to recognize that there being a logical space, and hence there being a world, is a necessary condition of putting into words all that can be put into words—a necessary condition of language which, as such, could *never* be put into words, however much one may (confusedly) desire to do so. One may only ever *be shown* the being of the world. One may only ever *feel* the whole and, therewith, feel marvel at the being of the world. This feeling, for Wittgenstein, is the mystical. It has ethical value. In a way, it *is* the ethical itself.

3.421~W~ *Some further passages*

This account is confirmed by Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics', which was delivered in Cambridge, in 1929. In that occasion, Wittgenstein said:

> [I]f I want to fix my mind on what I mean by absolute or ethical value […] it always happens that the idea of one particular experience presents itself to me which therefore is, in a sense, my experience *par excellence.* I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it I wonder at the existence of the world. (LoE, p. 47)

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[608] T, 4.463. The German word translated as "infinite" is *unendlichen*, which could also be translated as "endless", and which is the same word Kant uses for "the infinite [*unendliche*] sphere of the possible" (A72/B97). However, Kant is there referring to *merely* logical possibility, i.e. the possibility of mere thought. (The situation is complicated by the fact that, for Kant, even nature—and hence real possibility—is infinite, in the sense of endless, as indicated by Kant's assertion in his transcendental aesthetic that the progression of the intuition of spaces is endless. The problem is solved by Kant by asserting that one infinity, namely the infinity of nature, must stand under another infinity, namely the infinity of thinking. See 3~K~.)

Later in the 'Lecture', Wittgenstein equates the experience of wondering at the being of the world with the experience of seeing the world *as a miracle*. The "experience" of seeing the world as a miracle, however, can be none other than the "experience" of seeing the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, and hence the mystical feeling, which is the ground of Wittgenstein's identification of aesthetics and ethics. As Wittgenstein had already written in his wartime *Notebooks* and in the *Tractatus*:

> Aesthetically, the miracle is that there is the world. That what there is, there is. (NB, 20.10.16)

> 6.44   Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is.

The ethical point of these passages is this. The ethical man is not so much concerned with the particular way the world is, which for Wittgenstein cannot be changed, since "the world is independent of my will" (T, 6.373). Rather, the ethical man will be concerned with the world as a whole, which may be *seen* with "a happy eye", as long as one renounces to change the facts of the world by sheer will-power, rather marvelling at the world as such. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, the ethical man sees *the whole world* as a miracle. He wonders at the world, *however it may be*. For he wonders at its *being*, not at its being *so-and-so*. It is this that for Wittgenstein is mystical.

Now, since there being a world is a necessary condition of the possibility of language, then the mystical feeling, as an a priori feeling of marvel at the being of the world, is always at the same a feeling of those necessary conditions that make language—and what may be *thought* by means of it—possible in the first place. Indeed, the non-existence of the world cannot be thought at all, for thinking of anything already requires that there be a world. Yet insofar as the being of the world is a necessary condition *of thought*, then the being of the world is *logically* necessary.[609] This realization—which is at the heart of Wittgenstein's twin remarks "logic is transcendental" and "ethics is transcendental"—fuels the ethical man's wonder at the being of the world.

The unethical or *un*happy man, on the other hand, won't be concerned with the being of the world, but rather with its being *so-and-so*. He will be concerned with *how* the world is, always finding dissatisfaction with the current state of things, insofar as it is contingent—insofar as it could have been otherwise. Hence, the unethical man constantly fantasizes about what could have been otherwise, never *living* in the present.[610] If it rains, the unhappy man will think "it

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[609] Notice that this does not imply that the being of the world is *metaphysically* necessary. That we cannot *think* the non-being of the world does not imply that the world must be e.g. independently of our cognition of it.

[610] For Wittgenstein, "only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy" (NB, 8.7.16). Indeed, "eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (T, 6.4311).

could have been sunny".[611] If it sunny yet cold, the unhappy man thinks "it could have been warmer". And if it's both sunny and warm, and in all respects enjoyable, then the unhappy man will still say something like "I wish I could snap my fingers and change the weather", or even "I wish I did not exist at all".

Ultimately, the unhappy man is repulsed by all possible states of the world. He always wants to change things. He always wants *more*, and nothing is significant for him. And that is because, as opposed to the happy man—who considers the conditions of world and language as a *given*, and who is grateful for their sheer givenness, realizing they open an infinity of possibilities[612]— the unhappy man *feels* the conditions of world and language as unfair impositions or *constraints*. (One may feel that which is not there, e.g. feel a phantom limb). Yet exactly for this reason, he is bound to be *unhappy*. To put it in the words of a perceptive interpreter of Wittgenstein's ethics, namely Stephen Mulhall:

> [According to Wittgenstein,] to act, to live, ethically is to see nothing punitive in the limits [of the world], to overcome any tendency to apprehend the limits of the world as limitations, the conditions of language and existence as constraints. To live unethically is to be unreconciled to those limits, to allow them to be reflected in one's existence as a kind of punishment, an unacceptable imposition, as if they deprived one of something, fenced one off from something that lies beyond them. (2007, p. 230)

> [I]t is fatally easy to interpret limits as limitations, to experience conditions as constraints. (2005, p. 94)

For Wittgenstein, then, the ethical comes down to the issue of how the Subject *feels* the transcendental conditions of language and world—whether just as transcendental features or also as transcendental constraints. In the former case, the Subject will be happy; in the latter, unhappy.

3.43$_W$ *The unethical thrust of Transcendental Solipsism*

At this point, it should become clear that Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, and more precisely Transcendental Solipsism, would be an *unethical* position for Wittgenstein. In effect, in Transcendental Solipsism, I am supposed to feel the limits of the world as transcendental *constraints* on logical space, that determine it as "mine" in a metaphysically loaded sense. I am supposed to feel myself, in Moore's words, as that unity that "*constrains* what [the world] could

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[611] Mulhall (2016, p. 235).
[612] In *Philosophical Remarks*, Wittgenstein suggests that Tractarian objects contain the infinite. And indeed, Tractarian objects, for the early Wittgenstein, give "the whole infinite logical space" (T, 4.463)

be like".[613] But this is a recipe for unhappiness. For I would then feel the whole world *shrinking* to *my* world[614]—waning, instead of waxing. I would then be liable to want *more* than "what I have", to the point of wanting to *dictate* what is ethically good and what is not. (This starts to sound like a childish delirium of omnipotence—a capricious desire to play God.)[615]

To further see this, consider the following. In Chapter 3$_K$, I have briefly introduced the notion of Ethical Idealism, as that metaphysical-ethical position by which ethical values are subjective projections onto reality, or are *dependent* upon our point of view, as opposed to reality in itself. Being Solipsism an extreme variant of Idealism, I have then introduced Ethical Solipsism, whereby ethical values depend upon *my* point of view alone. Finally, I have introduced a *transcendental* variant of Ethical Solipsism, by which the necessary and a priori conditions of the good life, and *thereby* that which is good (or bad), depend upon myself alone.

Now, it must be obvious that "Ethical" Solipsism, as well as its transcendental variant, are profoundly *un*ethical views, which make good and evil completely arbitrary—indeed, contingent upon what *I* want. In these views, something would be good, or bad, only as far as *I* will it to be so. In these views, if I will murder as "good", and kindness as "bad", so it will be. For values are supposed to *depend* upon myself alone.

The next thing I am going to write will likewise sound obvious—*or so one would think*. Ascribing any form of ethical solipsism to the early Wittgenstein would render his philosophy deeply unethical, flying in the face of his letter to von Ficker quoted above, by which the point of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one. And yet, astonishingly, interpreters have nonetheless read Wittgenstein as an ethical solipsist of the transcendental kind.

The chief example here is Sami Philström. According to Philström, ethical solipsism is the view that "*my will* is the only relevant one", or that "any value there may be *depends* on my valuational acts or attitudes". Now—Philström writes—the early Wittgenstein has a perspectival understanding of ethics, and sympathy for the transcendental solipsist. Hence—Philström concludes—the early Wittgenstein *must* be committed to ethical solipsism of the transcendental kind.

We may surely grant Philström that Wittgenstein had a perspectival understanding of ethics.

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[613] See again Moore (1997, p. 150; my emphasis).

[614] Here, I am obviously alluding to Wittgenstein's famous remark, which goes the other way around: it is the Subject, Wittgenstein writes, that "shrinks to an extensionless point" (T, 5.64)—*not* the world that "shrinks" to "my world", as the solipsistic interpreters of Wittgenstein would have it.

[615] It is interesting to note that, for the early Wittgenstein, good is not what *I* want (as the ethical solipsist would have it), but rather what *God* wills (see WWK, p. 115). Unless I am God (unbeknownst to me!), ascription of Transcendental Solipsism to the early Wittgenstein is very much misguided, as it cannot be squared with his ethical views. In any case, I won't employ this quick (yet sound) argument to finally refute this interpretation of Wittgenstein below.

Wittgenstein says this much to the members of the Vienna Circle,[616] and he takes the mystical feeling, as necessary condition of the good life, to be "experienced" from the transcendental Subject's point of view. (The mystical feeling just is a mode of *transcendental* self-consciousness.) Indeed, we may go as far as saying that Wittgenstein had *some degree* of sympathy for the transcendental solipsist. However, I have also argued at lenght that all this does not imply that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental solipsist, and that similar interpretations of Wittgenstein are ultimately misguided. And if so, Wittgenstein's ethics cannot involve a transcendental variant of "Ethical" Solipsism.

In effect, Philström's interpretation of Wittgenstein is based on a variety of conceptual blunders. For Philström, perspectivality (i.e. experiencing something from one's own point of view) virtually amounts to Solipsism. As a result, commitment to a transcendental point of view amounts to Transcendental Solipsism, and an Ethics which gives importance to the Transcendental Subject's point of view is destined to be a transcendental variant of Ethical Solipsism. However, thanks to my distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, I have shown that one may countenance Transcendental Subjectivity without being a transcendental idealist/solipsist, and engage in Transcendental Ethics, without being a transcendental idealist/solipsist.

I do not wish to quarrel with Philström here. Tellingly, Philström himself knows that (transcendental) ethical solipsism is an unsustainable view. Indeed, he writes that "there is something almost inhuman in the idea that *I* alone am responsible for all [good and] evil". Yet he nonetheless resigns himself to ascribe such a view to Wittgenstein—a philosopher of the human. I take it that this resignation comes from the perceived inevitability of certain theoretical associations. With the help of the conceptual distinctions outlined above, which I have discussed in Part_K of the present work, I submit that Philström, as well as many other transcendental interpreters of the early Wittgenstein, would refrain from ascribing to Wittgenstein such unethical views.

Indeed, my distinctions save the early Wittgenstein from *both* theoretical inconsistencies and ethical lunacy, that the transcendental idealist interpreter is destined to ascribe to him. They show a different, consistent, transcendental interpretation of the early Wittgenstein is possible. And while this interpretation will find its culmination only in the final Chapter 7, we already

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[616] "At the end of my lecture on ethics I [*viz*. Wittgenstein] spoke in the first person: I think that this is something very essential [to ethics]. Here there is nothing to be stated any more; all I can do is to step forth as an individual and speak in the first person" (WWK, p. 117).

have reasons enough to claim that the early Wittgenstein is not, and cannot be, an ineffable transcendental idealist, and more precisely a transcendental solipsist.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein is not an ineffable transcendental idealist, for both theoretical and ethical reasons. The path I have followed was roughly this. First, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein transformed the transcendental into the ineffable, so that, for him, transcendental features are shown. Then, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein commits to both Transcendental Subjectivity and Transcendental Ethics. However, given the machinery expounded in Part$_K$ of the present work, I have argued that these commitments of Wittgenstein's do not imply that he is an ineffable transcendental idealist, and more precisely a transcendental solipsist. In fact, by way of an interpretation of Wittgenstein's remarks on the Subject, the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the mystical feeling, I have shown that the early Wittgenstein *cannot* be an ineffable transcendental idealist, and thereby a transcendental solipsist, as Hacker, Moore, Philström and others allege.

With this Chapter, the crucial task of the dissertation has been discharged. Indeed, we now have an answer to the Central Question of the work, namely: "Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist?" For having argued at length that neither Effable Transcendental Idealism nor Ineffable Transcendental Idealism are live options for the early Wittgenstein, I take myself to have established that he cannot be a transcendental idealist *at all*. This, however, raises the further question: What kind of transcendental philosopher was the early Wittgenstein, then? I will answer this question in the final Chapter 7, which is more generally about the destiny of Transcendental Philosophy, in light of Kant and Wittgenstein's respective critiques of Metaphysics.

7   Transcendental Quietism

Così tra questa

Immensità s'annega il pensier mio:

E il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.[617]

- Leopardi

AIM: Establishing that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist (**δ**), and evaluating
the prospects of Transcendental Metaphysics.

Transcendental Philosophy is born out of the need to check whether Metaphysics is in some
way possible. In our journey so far, we have dealt with the problem of the possibility of
Metaphysics *in light of the transcendental method*, as exemplified by the philosophies of Kant and
Wittgenstein. According to this method, we must start from our point of view (i.e. "from
within"), to recognize necessary conditions of the possibility of cognition, which are known a
priori. Only if we do *that*, we may then try to ascertain whether such conditions are not only
known a priori, but in fact known as necessary features of empirical reality that *depend* upon our
point of view, or that don't. In the first case we would have Transcendental Idealism, in the
second one Transcendental Realism.

Historically, Transcendental Idealism has been marketed as the solution to the problem of
the possibility of Metaphysics. Hence, throughout the work, I have mostly focused on
Transcendental Idealism. I have expounded two variants of it, namely the effable or sayable
variant, which is Kant's, and the ineffable or showable variant, which is often *ascribed* to the early
Wittgenstein. However, by way of an examination of his philosophy, I have argued that the early
Wittgenstein is *not* an ineffable transcendental idealist, nor for that matter an effable one.

What kind of transcendental philosopher is Wittgenstein, then, if not an idealist one? Is he
a transcendental *realist*? Or is there a third option? And if so, how could this bear on the
prospects of (Transcendental) Metaphysics?

In this final Chapter, after ruling out that Wittgenstein could be a transcendental realist, I
will argue that there is a third option open to him, and to transcendental philosophers more
generally. This is a position free of metaphysical lumber, which I call Transcendental Quietism.

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[617] "And into this / Immensity my thought sinks ever drowning, / And it is sweet to shipwreck in such
a sea." (Translation by Henry Reed).

According to it, there are transcendental conditions, but we should refrain from commitment over their metaphysical nature and status. I will mainly present Transcendental Quietism by way of discussion of Wittgenstein's stance in the *Tractatus*. More specifically, after a critical examination of the main interpretations of the *Tractatus*, I will argue that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist (**δ**), which is our final claim.

Before leaving the work, I will consider how exactly Wittgenstein's view bears on Metaphysics. I will argue that Wittgenstein's (ineffable) version of Transcendental Quietism transforms Metaphysics into "mere nonsense". And I will suggest that this view is unnecessarily extreme. A transcendental philosopher may avoid it, by either going back to Kant, endorsing Effable Transcendental Idealism; or else by endorsing a moderate (effable) version of Transcendental Quietism, which is neither Kant nor Wittgenstein's position, though it is inspired by both. Highlighting some potential issues with Effable Transcendental Idealism, I will suggest that the transcendental philosopher should go for the effable quietist position. On this view, while we should engage *with* (the propositions of) Transcendental Metaphysics, we should refrain from engaging *in* it (by asserting or denying them).

My discussion is in three sections. Specifically,

§ 7.1   raises the question of whether the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental realist. I distinguish between an effable and an ineffable variant of the doctrine, arguing that Wittgenstein cannot buy either one. If so, the early Wittgenstein is neither a transcendental idealist *nor* a transcendental realist.

§ 7.2   shows that a third option besides Transcendental Idealism and Transcendental Realism is open to the transcendental philosopher, namely Transcendental Quietism. Transcendental Quietism too comes into an effable and an ineffable variant. I argue that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist (**δ**) of the ineffable kind.

§ 7.3   concludes by pondering whether transcendental philosophers should side with Kant (Effable Transcendental Idealism), or with Wittgenstein (Ineffable Transcendental Quietism). I suggest that they should side with neither, but rather embrace Effable Transcendental Quietism. This view may bring us to a different conception of ourselves and of (Transcendental) Philosophy, as a work of clarification and self-understanding.

7.1 Transcendental Realism?

In the core of the work, we were mainly concerned with Transcendental Idealism, to answer the question: Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental idealist (of any kind)? We have now answered in the negative. In Chapter 2_K, however, I have briefly introduced the polar opposite of Transcendental Idealism, namely Transcendental *Realism*. The question thereby arises: Is the early Wittgenstein a transcendental *realist* (of any kind)?

In this section, I distinguish two kinds of Transcendental Realism, namely Effable Transcendental Realism and Ineffable Transcendental Realism. After a brief presentation of them, I argue that the early Wittgenstein cannot commit to either. In particular, I criticize an ineffable transcendental realist of Wittgenstein, advanced by David Pears.

7.11 *Effable Transcendental Realism*

Transcendental Realism is the view by which

> (TR) we have a priori knowledge of the *in*dependence of transcendental features from our point of view.

Like Transcendental Idealism, Transcendental Realism has an effable and an ineffable variant. The *effable* transcendental realist, whom I will address here, endorses the claim that

> (TR_{eff}) we have *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features are independent of our point of view.

Put otherwise, in Effable Transcendental Realism, transcendental features are *primarily* features of a reality which is independent of our point of view, and to which our point of view conforms. Indeed, according to the transcendental realist, we *cognize a priori* the mind-independence of the necessary features of reality.

Arguably, this is just a throwback to a pre-critical, and hence dogmatic, way of doing Metaphysics. Indeed, Kant's Copernican turn was partly triggered by a revolt against (Effable) Transcendental Realism. His train of thought was roughly this. To cognize a priori that reality and its necessary features are mind-independent, we should be able to know reality a priori in *pure thought*, as the rationalists believed we could. Only, this alleged "ability" of ours, which presupposes that our thought conforms a priori to a mind-independent reality, sounds like an utter mystery. As Kant writes in his 1772 letter to Herz:

> [A]s to how my understanding may, completely a priori, form for itself concepts of things with which concepts the facts should necessarily agree […] this question, of how the faculty of the understanding achieves this conformity with the *things themselves* is still left in a state of obscurity. (C, 10:131; my emphasis)

And later, in the first *Critique*:

> [If I assume] that […] the concepts […] conform to the objects […] I am once again in the same difficulty about how I could know anything about [these objects] a priori. (Bxvii)[618]

The gist of these passages is this. If we take it that our thought conforms to the mind-independent reality, then we find ourselves in the embarrassing position of having to explain how this is possible *a priori*—how, that is, it is possible for us to know a mind-independent reality in mere thought, independently of experiences of it. This is a problem with all rationalist realist philosophies, and more specifically with Effable Transcendental Realism.

But it is far from being the only one. For Effable Transcendental Realism makes the problem of our knowledge of the external world intractable. By espousing it, we soon will feel confined to our "private" thoughts, with even the world in space *completely* outside our point of view, and without any convincing way to bridge *a priori* the "gap" between two. Hence, Kant famously writes:

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

Indeed, the ultimate outcome of Effable Transcendental Realism is a sense of confinement to the allegedly "private" contents of one's mind. Soon enough, the effable transcendental realist wants to "get out" of the "private" contents of his mind, to claim knowledge of the external world in space, but he has not many resources to do so. This results in costly (and frankly unknowable) metaphysical views, such as the Cartesian one by which God guarantees the reality

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[618] Compare also *Prol*, § 14.

of the external world,[619] or else the Leibnizian one by which God guarantees a pre-established harmony between the external world and our point(s) of view.[620]

7.12 *Wittgenstein's Effable Transcendental Realism?*

In any case, our question is whether the early Wittgenstein could endorse Effable Transcendental Realism. And the answer is simply "No". Not only it is extremely unlikely that a critical-transcendental philosopher like Wittgenstein would espouse a pre-critical dogmatic view. But in fact, given his "equation" of logical and real possibility, for Wittgenstein nothing would so much as count as entertaining propositions about transcendental features, including the (alleged) proposition expressing Effable Transcendental Realism, namely (TR*eff*). Indeed, for Wittgenstein, (TR*eff*) and cognates would be *nonsense*.

Exactly for this reason, however, the question now arises as to whether the early Wittgenstein could commit to an *ineffable* variant of Transcendental Realism. But to answer this further question, we must first present this ineffable doctrine.

7.13 *Ineffable Transcendental Realism*

The ineffable transcendental realist must be fully sympathetic to the *alleged* claim that

> (TR*ineff**) we have *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the independence of transcendental
> features from our point of view.

Ultimately, an ineffable transcendental realist must recognize (TR*ineff**) as a nonsensical pseudo-claim, and more precisely as an abortive attempt to put into words the *ineffable independence* of transcendental features from our point of view. In fact, (TR*ineff**) is a tissue of transcendental nonsense, no less than its idealist counterpart (TI*ineff**) is. Still, the ineffable transcendental realist will hold that behind the production of this nonsense there lies ineffable a priori knowledge of the mind-independence of the transcendental features. Indeed, for the ineffable transcendental realist, nonsensical formulations such as (TR*ineff**) may help us to reach the metaphysical revelation (if that's what it is) of Transcendental Realism.

This view encounters the same difficulties of Effable Transcendental Realism, plus some new ones. For one, if it was hard to understand how we could have a priori cognition of a completely mind-independent reality, it is even harder to understand how we may have *ineffable*

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[619] Descartes (1996, Sixth Meditation, p. 62).
[620] Leibniz (1871, p. 216).

a priori knowledge of it. Indeed, for the ineffable transcendental realist, we have ineffable a priori knowledge of the necessary form of the mind-independent reality, which is supposed to "constrain" the form of our point of view "from the outside". Yet knowing such a constraint on our representations would require us to *transcend* them, to ascertain that their form is imposed onto them by a mind-independent reality. And how could *we* do *that*?

To this question, the ineffable transcendental realist may only ever reply: by way of a priori feeling (or ineffable understanding), and hence by way of *showing*. This response, to the extent that it may be justified at all, could only be justified by appeal to a realist reading of Wittgenstein's early philosophy. Thus, we come again to the question of Wittgenstein's alleged ineffable transcendental realism.

7.14 *Wittgenstein's Ineffable Transcendental Realism?*

In many of his works, David Pears attributes (what I call) Ineffable Transcendental Realism to the early Wittgenstein.[621] Despite rightly noting that, for Wittgenstein, logical space, as space of possible states of affairs, is given a priori by objects,[622] Pears then writes:

> Wittgenstein saw the underlying structure of reality as a kind of grid of possible states of affairs, with objects at the nodal points […] Now, according to [Wittgenstein], this grid imposes a *constraint* on all factual languages: they can describe reality only in so far as they conform to it. (1987, p. 6; my emphasis)

> The *Tractatus* is basically realistic in the following sense: language enjoys certain options on the surface, but deeper down it is founded on the intrinsic nature of objects, which is not our creation but is set over against us in mysterious *independence*. (1987, p. 8; my emphasis)

> [For the early Wittgenstein] the essential structure of reality […] can only be *shown*. (1969, p. 85; my emphasis)

In passages such as these, Pears is arguing that, for Wittgenstein, we are *shown* the mind-independence of the a priori form of reality—a form which is supposed to "impose a [transcendental] constraint" on language. And that would exactly make the early Wittgenstein into an ineffable transcendental realist.

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[621] Pears never *explicitly* characterizes the early Wittgenstein as a "transcendental realist". However, he offers a general characterization of Wittgenstein's early philosophy as "transcendental" and "realist" (1969, p. 84 and 97; 1987, p. 8). As I will argue in the main text, the transcendental realism that Pears attributes to Wittgenstein is also supposed to be shown, and hence is ineffable.

[622] "[For Wittgenstein, the] world floats in a space of possibilities which is given *a priori*". (Pears, 1969, p. 84). I stress again that Pears' contention that Wittgenstein's logical space is given a priori is *right* (see 1$_W$). It is Pears' metaphysical realist interpretation of Wittgenstein's view that, as I argue below, is misguided.

At first, this realist interpretation of Wittgenstein would not seem to be so far-fetched. After all, Wittgenstein writes *in propria persona*:

> This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at last I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so on the one side nothing is left over, and on the other side, as unique, the world. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out. (NB, 15.10.16)

> 5.64   [S]olipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it.

Pears' idea would then be that, for Wittgenstein, Transcendental Solipsism collapses into (Ineffable) Transcendental Realism. "Any limited world, defined by its relation to a single point of view […] will inevitably collapse back into the one and only [mind-independent] world".[623] Put otherwise, for Pears's Wittgenstein, the 'I' drops out of language, and all that is supposed to be left is the allegedly *language-independent* world. That much is supposed to be shown, for Pears' Wittgenstein.

However, it is rather doubtful whether what Wittgenstein calls "pure realism" is the Transcendental Realism that Pears attributes to him. For Wittgenstein is very suspicious of (metaphysical) Realism—which latter is an essential ingredient of any form of Transcendental Realism. As Wittgenstein writes:

> [I]t's strange that those who ascribe reality only to things and not to our representations [*Vorstellungen*] move about so unquestioningly in the world of representation [*Vorstellungswelt*] and never long to escape from it. In other words, how much of a matter of course the given is. It would be the very devil if this were a tiny picture taken from an oblique, distorting angle. This which we take as a matter of course, life, is supposed to be something accidental, subordinate; while something over which I never break my head, reality! That is, what we neither can nor want to go beyond would not be the world. (PR, § 47[624])

According to Wittgenstein, "we neither can nor want to go beyond" the world represented in language ("the world of representation"). But if so, it is hard to see how Wittgenstein can be a metaphysical realist, which puts enormous pressure on Pears' claim that Wittgenstein is a transcendental realist.

Curiously, Pears is aware of the passage above. He argues that, in it, Wittgenstein is "rejecting" the reality of mind-independent things in themselves, in favour of the reality of the

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[623] Pears (1987, p. 189).
[624] Translation slightly emended.

phenomenal world.[625] Now, given that for *Pears'* Wittgenstein reality is "set in mysterious independence", then *Pears'* Wittgenstein must be committed to the view that the phenomenal world is mind-independent. Indeed, *Pears'* Wittgenstein conflates phenomena and the mind-independent reality, which, as Kant told us, is the mark of Transcendental Realism.

This view, however, cannot be sensibly attributed to *Wittgenstein*, for the simple reason that, to "reject" the reality of things in themselves in favour of that of phenomena, one should have to *think* things in themselves, thereby going "beyond" the empirical world represented in language *by way of thought or language*. Yet, as we have seen in Part_W, given his "equation" between real and logical possibility, Wittgenstein is clear that nothing counts as doing that. "I cannot use language to get outside language" (PR, § 6).

At this point, Pears would likely take refuge in the claim that, for Wittgenstein, we are *shown* the language-independence of phenomena. Since, however, only *language* shows something for Wittgenstein, then nothing may count for him as being *shown* that "the phenomenal world is language-independent", for that exactly involves the confused "idea" of language getting outside language. Indeed, that would require 'showing' to transcend language and the world. Yet we have exposed such "transcendent" interpretations of showing as misguided in Chapter 3_W.

Arguably, then, the early Wittgenstein is *not* an ineffable transcendental realist, as Pears wanted.

7.2 Transcendental Quietism

In the core of the work, I have argued that, although the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, he is *not* a transcendental idealist (of any kind). Above, I have argued that the early Wittgenstein is *not* a transcendental *realist* (of any kind). What kind of transcendental philosopher is the early Wittgenstein, then? More generally, what option(s) may be there for a transcendental philosopher who is neither an idealist nor a realist?

There is one last alternative to consider, namely Transcendental Quietism. In this section, I discuss this alternative, especially by way of Wittgenstein's example. After a brief discussion of Quietism in general, I introduce Transcendental Quietism, as a non-metaphysical transcendental position. I distinguish two variants of Transcendental Quietism, namely the effable one and the ineffable one. I then argue that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist (**δ**) of the ineffable kind. In so doing, I offer a systematic reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which avoids

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[625] See Pears (1987, p. 95).

the pitfalls of past interpretations, while retaining their strengths. In the next and final section, I will return to the effable kind of Transcendental Quietism, which is a view *inspired* by both Kant and Wittgenstein, but different from theirs.

7.21 *Quietism…*

To understand Transcendental Quietism, we first need an understanding of Quietism. I mean the term "Quietism" *not* in its traditional religious sense,[626] but rather in its technical philosophical connotation. In this connotation, Quietism is a non-doctrinal philosophical position that aims at calling into question, or even getting rid of, doctrinal metaphysical positions,[627] by suspending judgement on them, or more generally by practicing silence with respect to them.[628]

The consistent quietist should *not* free herself from metaphysical baggage by proposing yet another metaphysical doctrine (say, a form of Realism as opposed to Idealism). Rather, he should refrain from advancing metaphysical doctrines altogether. This refrainment, however, may come in different flavours, depending on the reasons behind it. And so, there will be different forms of Quietism, that need to be accurately distinguished.

For example, some quietists might take it that metaphysical propositions are *coherent*, and yet suspend judgement over them, as they may find that there are equally un-compelling grounds for either asserting or denying them. This is the quietism usually associated to the ancient Pyrrhonian skeptics, especially Sextus Empiricus,[629] who called the suspension of judgement *epochê*.[630] Given that in this view metaphysical propositions are at least thinkable or effable, I will call it Effable Quietism.

Other quietists, however, will *not* take it that metaphysical formulations are coherent. It is in fact possible that a scrutiny of *alleged* metaphysical propositions should reveal that they are unintelligible—that is, that they are not propositions after all, but rather nonsensical *pseudo*-propositions. Quietists who have reached this conclusion will refrain from advancing

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[626] In this religious sense, "[the word] 'quietism' refer[s] to a withdrawal from worldly affairs and intellectual activity together with a doctrine of self-annihilation. Religious quietists held that through the constant contemplation of God one could overcome the self and merge with Him" (MacArthur 2017, p. 250).

[627] Hence, Quietism in the philosophical connotation is always *metaphysical* quietism, or quietism over *metaphysical* matters. Were it not so, then one should need to be "quiet" over *any* philosophical matter. But at that point, one would not do philosophy at all! (Sometimes, the later Wittgenstein is represented as a quietist who has no philosophical commitments *whatsoever*, since he holds that philosophy "describes", instead of "explaining". But this *is* a philosophical commitment, or at any rate a meta-philosophical one.)

[628] Compare MacArthur (2017, p. 250).

[629] See Sextus' *Outlines of Scepticism* (2000).

[630] On the skeptical *epochê*, see for example Priest (1995, Chapter 3).

metaphysical formulations. Not, however, because they are coherent yet undecidable, but rather because they are *nonsensical.* As we shall see, this kind of Quietism is associated with the early Wittgenstein. Given that in this view metaphysical formulations are at best the nonsensical result of a (misguided) attempt to articulate ineffable knowledge, I will call it Ineffable Quietism.

7.22 … *Turns Transcendental*

At this point, we may throw Transcendentalism into the mix. In effect, nothing prohibits that transcendental philosophers (like the early Wittgenstein) should also be quietists. The result will be Transcendental Quietism. Like any transcendentalist, the transcendental quietist accepts that there are transcendental conditions of cognition. However, differently from both the transcendental idealist and the transcendental realist, the transcendental quietist will *refrain* from advancing a doctrine on their metaphysical nature and status (e.g. their "ideality" or their "reality").

Now, since Quietism comes into an effable and an ineffable variant, there will be two different forms of *Transcendental* Quietism, namely Effable Transcendental Quietism and Ineffable Transcendental Quietism.

Effable Transcendental Quietism is the transcendental heir of the Pyrrhonian skeptical position. In this view, metaphysical propositions about (at least some) transcendental conditions are coherent, yet we should suspend judgement over their truth, since such judgements would be dogmatic and/or problematic. For example, the effable transcendental quietist may realize that endorsing one of these transcendental metaphysical propositions may rip apart our conception of ourselves and the reality we live in, making us prone to pernicious illusions.

Ineffable Transcendental Quietism is more radical than this. In this view, metaphysical formulations that are *seemingly* about the transcendental conditions of cognition are to be recognized as pieces of transcendental nonsense, that masquerade as sense about those conditions. Hence, one cannot so much as suspend judgement over those formulations. For nothing counts as "suspending judgement over nonsense". Rather, one may only ever observe the strictest silence regarding the (ineffable) transcendental conditions.

It is not obvious which one of these two transcendental quietist views—the effable or the ineffable—is superior to the other. Indeed, it is not clear which one, if any, transcendental philosophers should espouse. By the end of this work, I will argue that they should take the effable view. Indeed, I will argue that Effable Transcendental Quietism is both a critical *and* moderate view, since it may protect us from the urges that lie behind transcendental

metaphysical doctrines, while *not* reducing Metaphysics to nonsense.

Effable Transcendental Quietism is not, however, the only view a transcendental quietist may take. Before presenting it, I will thus expound its ineffable counterpart. Specifically, I will offer an exemplary case of Ineffable Transcendental Quietism, which *does* reduce Metaphysics to nonsense, protecting us against the urge to utter such alleged nonsense. This, as we are about to see, is Wittgenstein's case.

7.23 *Whereof one cannot speak*

At the end of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein takes the reader by surprise, with the following remark on the "correct method in philosophy":

> 6.53   The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. sentences of natural science—i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy—and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his sentences. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person—he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy—this method would be the only strictly correct one.

According to Wittgenstein, "the correct method in philosophy" would be to rigorously abstain from metaphysical pronouncements, for these are strings of signs to which we have failed to give a meaning—"simply nonsense", as he puts it in the Preface to the *Tractatus*. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, the whole business of philosophy is to draw the limits of sense, separating it from nonsense, which the metaphysicians are prone to utter. Yet how is this limit-drawing activity to be carried out for Wittgenstein? And how, if at all, is it exemplified by his philosophy?

In Part$_W$ of the present work, I have argued that Wittgenstein's philosophy proceeds "from within", to recognize the limits of sense-endowed language, i.e. its necessary features. Indeed, Wittgenstein's philosophy is supposed to help us recognizing the necessary features of *language*, so that we could also recognize the strings of signs that lack them, which as such will be nonsensical. The trouble, however, is that the necessary features of language cannot be expressed by sense-endowed propositions for Wittgenstein. Put otherwise, by Wittgenstein's lights, one cannot trace the limits of sense by means of sense-endowed language alone. And if so, to trace the limits of sense, one must rely on strings of linguistic signs that are ultimately to be recognized as nonsensical. Hence, Wittgenstein writes of his own philosophy:

> 6.54   My sentences elucidate in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up

beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must overcome these sentences, and then he will see the world aright.[631]

In fact, it turns out that for the early Wittgenstein not only metaphysical philosophy is nonsensical, but any attempt to denounce the nonsensicality of metaphysical philosophy, as he would seem to have done in his limit-drawing activity, must be ultimately recognized as nonsensical too. For, given Wittgenstein's structural commitments, if "$p*$" is a nonsensical formulation of Metaphysics, then "'$p*$' is nonsense" must itself be nonsensical, since it contains a component to which we have failed to give sense, namely "$p*$".[632] In this (non)sense, then, one must for Wittgenstein throw away the ladder after having climbed up it—that is, overcome even the seeming attempts to denounce the nonsensicality of Metaphysics. And at that point, the only rigorous option is to be silent on the limits of sense:

7   Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

In this (non)sense, the early Wittgenstein is a quietist.

7.24 *Wittgenstein's Transcendental Quietism*

That, of course, is not the end of the story. On the contrary, the interesting issues arise *here*. As the *Tractatus* ends in silence, many interpreters could in principle agree that the early Wittgenstein is a quietist. Yet they may still ask: What is Wittgenstein doing in the *Tractatus*? If his denunciation of the nonsensicality of metaphysical pronouncements is *itself* nonsensical, then what is the status and purpose of Tractarian nonsense?

As we have started to see in Chapter 3ᵥ, interpreters have been painfully at odds on this issue. There, I have anticipated that there are two main systematic interpretations of Wittgenstein's nonsense: the "traditional" one, and the "resolute" one.[633] Traditional interpreters of the *Tractatus* tend to maintain that Wittgenstein's nonsense helps us in

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[631] Translation slightly emended.

[632] It may be objected that, in "'$p*$' is nonsense", '$p*$' is being mentioned, rather than used. And if so, "'$p*$' is nonsense" could make sense after all. The trouble is that, *for Wittgenstein*, '___ is nonsense' is not a genuine predicate. For if it were, its negation, namely '___ is sense-endowed' would have to be a genuine predicate too. And at that point, the limits of sense could be propositionally said—something that goes against any of Wittgenstein's structural commitments.

[633] Sometimes, the resolute reading is called "new" reading, on the grounds that the word "resolute" seems to imply that traditional interpreters "chickened out" in their interpretation of Wittgenstein (see Diamond 1988, p. 7). And that would be an ethical assessment that not anyone is comfortable with (cf. Bronzo 2012, p. 47). By now, however, the non-traditional reading is not "new" anymore, but rather is older than this author. I have thereby retained the qualification "resolute", not least as it is not clear to me that being resolute is *always* an ethical quality, most of all in philosophy, where nuances are often behind the corner.

recognizing knowledge of "ineffable metaphysical truths", i.e. putative truths about the metaphysical nature and status of the necessary features of reality, which cannot be said, but may nonetheless be shown. For them, Tractarian nonsense is "substantive" nonsense, at least in the sense that it helps us to recognize such "ineffable metaphysical truths" about reality and our relation to it.

As opposed to this, resolute interpreters of the *Tractatus* tend to maintain that nothing is ineffable. For them, "there is no ineffable 'it'".[634] Among other things, this implies that Tractarian nonsense, which only has the *appearance* of propositionality, can never be connected to *ineffable* knowledge, let alone ineffable *metaphysical* knowledge, of the kind the traditional interpreters commit to, or of any kind whatsoever. Rather, it is "austere" nonsense—mere gibberish, which we may recognize as such thanks to our capacity for sense-making. Such gibberish, for the resolute reader, does not help us to recognize anything as shown (except perhaps its own nonsensicality[635]).

More concisely put, the difference between the two readings is this:

Traditional reading: Tractarian nonsense helps us in recognizing knowledge of "ineffable metaphysical truths", which show, but don't say, the metaphysical nature and status of the necessary features of reality.

Resolute reading: Tractarian nonsense is ultimately to be recognized as mere gibberish thanks to our capacity for sense-making. There is nothing ineffable, which such nonsense may help us to recognize as shown, not even (knowledge of) the necessary features of reality.

The last thirty years of Tractarian scholarship have been dominated by the debate between traditional and resolute readers of the book. However, the two readings are extreme. The traditional reading is *positively* dogmatic ("there are ineffable metaphysical truths"); the resolute

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[634] This, as we have seen in 3$_W$, is Conant's formulation (1991, p. 160 and 2002, p. 422). Conant attributes the view that nothing is ineffable to the early Wittgenstein, as does Diamond (1988, p. 7). It would be interesting to know the status of "there is no ineffable 'it'". It can't be an intelligible proposition, otherwise Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* should make propositional sense on the resolute reading. And if it is simple gibberish, the resolute readers of the *Tractatus* need to be ready to agree their own papers and books are simple gibberish that tries to "clarify" some more simple gibberish. Suppose that they are ready to agree. Then *in what way* does their gibberish clarify Tractarian gibberish? How does this clarification *work*? It can neither be effable clarification (for it is "just gibberish") nor be connected to anything ineffable (since resolute readers usually hold that "there is no ineffable 'it'"). This dilemma suggests that the resolute reading is either to be heavily modified or abandoned.

[635] Conant: "What we finally grasp is that [Tractarian remarks] are nonsensical. For that is the only thing such [remarks] can show: their own nonsensicality" (1989, p. 281, fn. 39). Some years later, Conant was a bit more cautious, but the point is still very similar: "when I reach the top of the [Tractarian] ladder, I grasp that there has been no 'it' in my grasp all along [...] The attainment of this recognition depends upon the reader's actually undergoing a certain experience [... namely, the] experience of having his illusion of sense [...] dissipate through its becoming clear to him that (what he took to be) the *philosophische Satze* of the work are *Unsinn*" (2002, p. 422).

reading is *negatively* dogmatic ("there is nothing ineffable").[636] As a result, interpreters from the two camps have tended to talk past each other and, for a long time, no *real* progress was made.[637]

That all started to change when "middle-ways" emerged. Arguably, the most ambitious attempt to conciliation comes from A. W. Moore, with his *transcendental idealist reading*.[638] In agreement with the resolute readers, Moore urges that Tractarian nonsense does not help us in recognizing "ineffable metaphysical truths". Rather, for Moore as for the resolute readers, Tractarian nonsense is carefully crafted to generate an illusion of sense. By working our way through this illusion, we are to see that Tractarian nonsense is mere nonsense. In this "process", however, for Moore we reactivate an *ineffable understanding* of our own capacity to make sense, and thereby of our own point of view. This ineffable understanding is, for Moore's Wittgenstein, also a *metaphysical understanding* of Transcendental Idealism. We are *shown*, in and through this understanding, Transcendental Idealism. Hence, Moore also agrees with the traditional readers that, for Wittgenstein, we are shown the metaphysical nature and status of reality.

More concisely put, Moore's reading is this:

Transcendental idealist reading. When we process Tractarian nonsense, we may recognize it as nonsense thanks to our capacity for sense-making. In this process, we reactivate ineffable understanding of our point of view. This ineffable understanding is *metaphysical*. In and through it, we are *shown* Transcendental Idealism.

Moore's view is superior to both the traditional and the resolute readings, as it assigns the right weight to the transcendental aspects of the *Tractatus*, as well as to Wittgenstein's engagement with Transcendental Idealism, while avoiding for the most part dogmatism. Still, as I have argued in Chapter 3$_W$, Moore's proposal is *ultimately* flawed. Indeed, on Moore's reading, Wittgenstein remains victim of a kind of "double-wanting". For, on this reading, Wittgenstein wants to be silent over the metaphysical nature and status of the transcendental conditions of language, and yet to be a (ineffable) transcendental idealist with respect to them. That would require a "transcendent" function of showing which, I have argued, Wittgenstein would have regarded as deeply misguided.

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[636] I agree here with David Stern, who writes: "Both sides of the debate over Wittgenstein's views […] have been overly dogmatic" (2004, p. 37). Stern also extends this verdict on Wittgenstein's *Investigations*, with which however I am not concerned here.

[637] That is not to say, of course, that progress has not been made *within* each of the two camps, especially within the resolute one. Yet the difference between the two readings, taken at face value, is so stark that no real progress has been made in the overall debate *between* their representatives.

[638] However, Moore's reading is not by any means the only "middle-way" reading. Compare McGinn's "elucidatory" or "clarificatory" reading (1999).

We then need a reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* that learns from the past—a reading that retains the virtues of all the previous readings, while doing away with their flaws. This, I think, is the *transcendental quietist reading*.[639]

From the traditional reading, the transcendental quietist reading retains the idea that we are shown the necessary features of reality and language (e.g. objects), discarding however the idea that anything is therewith shown regarding their metaphysical nature and status, let alone shown in quasi-propositional "ineffable metaphysical truths". From the resolute reading, the transcendental quietist reading retains the idea that we may recognize Tractarian nonsense as nonsense thanks to our capacity for sense-making, discarding however the idea that nothing is ineffable. In fact, in agreement with Moore's reading, the transcendental quietist reading takes it that, by processing Tractarian nonsense, we may reactivate *ineffable knowledge* of our point of view, recognizing the transcendental features that reality shares with it in virtue of a transcendental isomorphism. However, as against Moore, such ineffable knowledge is *not* metaphysical knowledge of Transcendental Idealism. Rather, it is *simply* ineffable knowledge of the transcendental features shared by language and reality. These are shown *in language*, but nothing is therewith shown regarding their metaphysical nature and status. Indeed, we are neither shown their "ideality" (and hence the primacy of our point of view over reality), nor their "reality" (and hence the primacy of reality over our point of view).

More concisely put, here is my reading:

Transcendental quietist reading. When we process Tractarian nonsense, we may recognize it as nonsense thanks to our capacity for sense-making. In this process, we reactivate ineffable understanding of our point of view. This ineffable understanding, however, is *not* metaphysical. In and through it, we are *not* shown Transcendental Idealism, nor for that matter Transcendental Realism. Rather, we only see perspicuously that which was shown all along, namely the transcendental features shared by language and reality.

7.25 *How Does the Transcendental Quietist Reading Work?*

Let us unpack the transcendental quietist reading. On this reading, Wittgenstein intentionally *offends* against our capacity for sense-making, with the aim of reactivating the non-metaphysical understanding we always already have of the transcendental rules that make possible our

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[639] If I can advance this reading, it is only thanks to Jim Levine. Many of the ideas at the heart of the transcendental quietist reading of the *Tractatus* are to be found in Levine's 'Logic and Solipsism' (2013), which is the work that, more than any other, has shaped the line of argument of the present dissertation.

linguistic representations of reality. This "offence" is none other than Tractarian nonsense. But how could Wittgenstein's nonsense ever help us in reactivating such a non-metaphysical understanding? Indeed, how could *nonsense* serve as an aid for understanding at all?

It should not surprise us that here, as so often, Kant pointed the way. As he writes in his discussion of genius in the *Critique of Judgement*:

> [S]ince there can also be original nonsense [*Unsinn*], its products must at the same time be models, i.e., exemplary, hence, while not themselves the result of imitation, they must yet serve others in that way, i.e., as a standard or a rule for judging. (CPJ, § 46)

According to Kant, a genius may produce "original nonsense", namely nonsense that can be *aesthetically understood* as a standard or rule[640] for judging.[641] But how is an aesthetic understanding of nonsense even possible? And what does this have to do with Wittgenstein?

To answer these questions, it is important to remind ourselves that we may impart understanding in a variety of ways, some of which cannot be *reduced* to propositions and the understanding we have of them. Thus, if I want you to understand what pain is, I might slap you in the face (granted that you have a place in the geography of your concepts for mental states). Or else, if I want you to understand the rules of a game, I might play it in front of you, one or several times, without saying anything[642] (granted that you have some beliefs on how games work). When it comes to the use of our words, I could likewise give you the rules in oblique ways. For example, I could lead you to an understanding of how to use a certain word, by *abusing* it on purpose. I could *scream* that 'YOU MUST NOT SCREAM HERE!'

At the limit, I could give you rules for using words in ways that are not propositional at all. For example, I could carefully craft nonsensical pseudo-sentences, so that, thoroughly reflecting upon them, you might come to *feel* that I am abusing language—*feel* that the words I have uttered or written have been unfairly *treated*, so much so that the resulting formulations have been cheated of their right as propositions (cf. PR, § 86). In this process, you are reactivating your understanding of the rules of language "negatively", as it were. For, in *feeling* that words have

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[640] As we have seen in 3ₖ, Kant is clear that some rules cannot be linguistically expressed or formulated (CPJ, § 18). For him, the only way to understand them is aesthetic—through *feeling*. I expand upon this point below, in connection to my reading of Wittgenstein.

[641] Producing "original nonsense" is what Kant self-consciously does in some of his texts (see *Settlement*, 8:410), and what, as I argue below, Wittgenstein does in the *Tractatus*. Resolute readers of the *Tractatus* usually claim that we are to understand *Wittgenstein*, as opposed to understanding his nonsensical remarks (e.g. Diamond 2000, pp. 155-6 and Conant 2002, p. 424). I agree that we need to understand Wittgenstein, but how could we ever understand him without understanding *in some way* his Tractarian remarks? This impasse is overcome if, as I argue below, we understand Wittgenstein by *aesthetically understanding* his Tractarian nonsense as (negative) standards or rules for judging. And indeed, in the Preface to the *Tactatus*, Wittgenstein himself writes that the "purpose [of the book] would be achieved if it gave *pleasure* to one person who read and *understood it*" (my emphases).

[642] Cf. PI, § 54 and OC, § 95.

been mistreated, you are recognizing *how you must not treat words*—therewith recognizing what counts as using words instead. ("Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same"[643]).

This, I take it, is the strategy of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Tractarian nonsense may be *aesthetically* understood as paradigm for judging, only not directly, but rather obliquely or "negatively". For it may lead us to see that certain formulations *lack* the rule-governed unity of propositions, by repeatedly offending against it—by shredding it to pieces *right in front of our eyes*. Indeed, nonsensical Tractarian remarks are aesthetic paradigms of how not to treat words. As such, they may help us to *see* nonsensical formulations *as nonsensical*, so that we may steer clear from them (if need be). Yet exactly insofar as they are aesthetic paradigms of how we must not treat words, nonsensical Tractarian remarks may strengthen our *feeling for the rules* that govern the uses of our words.

Now, for the early Wittgenstein, the rules that govern the uses of our words are none other than *transcendental rules* that are shared between language and reality, which make possible our representation of reality in the first place. Hence, on my reading of the *Tractatus*, in coming to terms with Tractarian nonsense, we feel the *transcendental relation* between our point of view and reality. Further, *for Wittgenstein*, we see this relation with new eyes, once we realize that nothing could count as knowing it "from without", as the transcendental metaphysician fancies he can.[644] For it is an *internal* relation, that we may only ever know *from within* our point of view, *feeling* from there what makes sense and what doesn't.

If I am right, then, by the end of the nonsensical ladder of the *Tractatus* we are supposed to attain a clearer perspective on the logic of our language. However, this is *not* a transcendent perspective which, somehow, puts us "beyond" language and the world, allowing us to ascertain the metaphysical nature and status of reality and our relation to it. Rather it is an internal, transcendent*al* perspective, from which we silently contemplate the transcendental features of language and reality, which make possible our representation of the world. It is the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, from which we "will see the world aright".

Whoever attains this perspective will live a transformative "experience"[645]: the mystical one. Indeed, the outcome of the *Tractatus* is not a metaphysical doctrine, such as Transcendental

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[643] T, 6.421.

[644] I stress "for Wittgenstein", since it is Wittgenstein's equation between real and logical possibility that makes him think that transcendental metaphysicians claim knowledge of the transcendental conditions "from without". Kant would insist that his claims are made "from within" our point of view, since the merely logical perspective of pure understanding is, on Kant's view, an *internal* one (belonging to the human Subject).

[645] Rico Gutschmidt (2020) rightly notes that Wittgenstein's philosophical practice is aimed at leading us to a transformative experience. However, working with a narrow definition of quietism, he also argues that this means that Wittgenstein should not be regarded as a quietist. As against this, my reading shows that the two claims are perfectly compatible, as long as we have a general enough concept of Quietism.

Idealism, nor the *rejection* of a metaphysical doctrine (for that would be as metaphysical as the doctrine itself). Rather, it is a transformation of our way of looking at things. Instead of obsessing over their "metaphysical nature and status", as metaphysicians take themselves to do, we now *contemplate* our transcendental relation to them. Or so Wittgenstein intended for us.

Such contemplation is to afford us clarity on the transcendental features of our propositions, yet it is not *itself* propositional. Our transcendental relation to reality cannot be put into words for Wittgenstein, insofar as it is the necessary condition of all that can be put into words. It is *shown* in everything we think or say about reality. Yet nothing could so much as count as "being shown its metaphysical nature and status". For Wittgenstein, *we just can't make this intelligible to ourselves*, in any way at all. We may only silently marvel at the relation, in the mystical feeling. This is the reading of the early Wittgenstein I recommend.

7.26 *Transcendental Truth*

The transcendental quietist reading of the *Tractatus* has a variety of interpretive advantages over its competitors. It avoids the dogmatism of the traditional and the resolute readings, while retaining their strengths. Further, it retains the widely shared conviction that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher, without saddling him with Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, which, I have argued, Wittgenstein *cannot* buy, given his structural commitments (and which, in any case, is a doctrine with dubious credentials).

As a result, my reading helps us in coming to terms with notoriously hard passages of the *Tractatus*. Above all, the passages on *silence* are now seen in a new light. Tractarian silence is neither magical silence, in which ineffable metaphysical doctrines are somehow revealed, nor it is shallow silence, in which nothing is shown. Rather, it is the deeply meaningful silence of she who, faced with the being of the world—which is shown in everything she may think or say—*feels* marvel in silent contemplation. Indeed, she feels this in the mystical, as an a priori feeling "experienced" from the aesthetic perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, which affords her with full *logical clarity*, thereby radically transforming her.

What of other problematic Tractarian passages? Take for example this one, coming from the Preface to the *Tractatus*:

> the *truth* of the thoughts that are here communicated seems to me unassailable and definitive. (T, Preface; Wittgenstein's emphasis)

Haven't we said that, for Wittgenstein, there are no quasi-propositional "ineffable metaphysical truths", as traditional readers dogmatically maintain? If so, how could Wittgenstein write

anything like this? Is this his last joke at our expenses, as some resolute readers would maintain instead?[646] The questions seem never ending.

In effect, there are myriads of complex issues in the short remark quoted above. By its lights, the *Tractatus* "communicates" *thoughts*, the *truth* of which is "unassailable" and "definitive". Now, Wittgenstein is clear that Tractarian remarks are nonsensical pseudo-propositions. And so, Wittgenstein would seem to be suggesting that *nonsensical pseudo-propositions* somehow *communicate* thoughts, the truth of which is irresistible, as it were. That's puzzling, to say the least.

Now, while Wittgenstein has left it to the reader to decrypt his condensed remark, so that any *interpretation* of it is bound to be controversial, the transcendental quietist reading may help us out. The key to the remark, I believe, is the verb "to communicate". We may communicate different things, in different ways. For example, we may communicate thoughts, in sentences. And we may communicate feelings, in non-verbal behaviours (smiling, kissing, hugging, etc.), as well as music and poetry—*even nonsensical one*. Indeed, there is no problem in the idea that nonsensical pseudo-propositions may communicate *feelings*, such as the amusement that we feel in reading Lewis Carrol's nonsensical poem 'Jabberwocky'.

The trouble is that Wittgenstein suggests that the nonsensical pseudo-propositions of the *Tractatus* may communicate *thoughts*, whose *truth* is "unassailable" and "definitive". To understand how, if at all, that is possible, we need to realize that thoughts themselves may be communicated in different ways. Directly, in sentences. Or indirectly, with the mediation of feelings. It is in fact conceivable that some feelings should "bear thought with them", so that if we communicate these feelings, we will communicate thoughts as well. For example, Kant maintained that the sublime is a feeling of respect for the effable moral law, so that communicating the feeling (e.g. in sublime art) will also communicate the law.

Now, I believe that Wittgenstein's nonsense, if rightly processed, is supposed to communicate the mystical feeling, and that this in turn communicates all logically possible[647] thoughts. Not, however, in the sense that we now *think*, in the mystical feeling, the whole logical space. That's not an option for Wittgenstein. Rather, since in the mystical *feeling* we are clearly aware of our transcendental relation to reality, which allows us to think all that can be thought,

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[646] I am here alluding to the "authorial conspiracy" that has been attributed to resolute readers (see Engelmann 2018), most notably Conant, who argues that Wittgenstein *ironically* deceives his readers with "mock doctrines" (Conant 1995, esp. 286; cf. Conant 1991, pp. 159-160). Another resolute reader, namely Kremer (2001), has tried a "Biblical" interpretation of Wittgenstein's remark in the Preface ("the truth of the thoughts that are here communicated…"). But I will not discuss Kremer's reading below, as it regards Wittgenstein's personal life, with which I am not here concerned.

[647] At any rate, all the thoughts we may think, which however is a "qualification" that effects no restriction here, since, for Wittgenstein, "man possess the ability to construct languages capable of expressing every sense" (T, 4.002).

we may *feel* the whole of logical space, *as space of all possible thoughts*. Or so I interpret Wittgenstein (though, again, the text is heavily underdetermined here).

If I am right, in drawing the limits of sense, in such a way as to lead us to feel the mystical, the *Tractatus* aims at indirectly communicating to us all logically possible thoughts—the whole logical space. Indeed, reflection upon Tractarian nonsense is supposed to reawaken us to the necessary conditions of sense, and thereby to our transcendental relation to reality, which, for Wittgenstein, is the ground of all logically possible thoughts. But how can these thoughts, which the *Tractatus* is supposed to communicate, be *true*?

And here comes the twist. All logically possible thoughts, insofar as they are based on our transcendental relation to reality, are in a certain (non)sense true for Wittgenstein. Not, however, *empirically* true. For the truth at stake here is not correspondence with situations in empirical reality. Rather, *transcendentally* true. For the truth at stake here is the fulfilment of the necessary conditions of thought about empirical reality. For Wittgenstein, these conditions cannot *conceivably* fail to be fulfilled, since any conception, whether true or false, always already fulfils them. Hence, insofar as we think at all, our thoughts are transcendentally true for Wittgenstein. And the conditions of such thoughts are *the transcendental truth* (in the singular):[648] the possibility of all empirical truth (and falsehood).

Significantly, "transcendental truth" is a term that Kant first used in the *Critique* (A146/B185). It is the truth of the *relation* between thought and being. However, Kant took himself to have *said* the transcendental truth by means of his synthetic a priori judgements, which locate its source in the human Subject (A221/B269[649]). As opposed to this, for Wittgenstein (as I interpret him), the transcendental truth is *shown* in everything we think or say. Put otherwise, for Wittgenstein, the transcendental truth is *ineffable*, exactly insofar as it allows us to put into words all that can be put into words. We *feel* it in the mystical.

The notion of a *non*-propositional or ineffable truth will no doubt sound like a monstrosity to most contemporary (analytic) philosophers, but as it happens it has a venerable history, that goes as far back as Parmenides. Aristotle believed it to be the truth of our *contact* with being, which admits of no falsehood.[650] (Our contact with being is *not* a proposition, *nor* a quasi-

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[648] Differently from its empirical counterpart, the transcendental truth does not admit of the plural. There are countless empirical truths (in the plural). But the transcendental truth is *the* transcendental truth. (This is connected with the ineffability that some philosophers, including Wittgenstein as I read him, ascribe to the transcendental truth. For them, *the* transcendental truth cannot be articulated at all.)

[649] "Only from the fact that these concepts [*viz.* the categories] *express* a priori [in synthetic a priori judgements] the relations of the perceptions in every experience, does one cognize their objectivity validity, i.e their *transcendental truth*" (my emphasis).

[650] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1052a.

proposition). Heidegger believed it to be the truth of things, "something that shows itself".[651] Similarly, for Wittgenstein (as I read him), things and our relation to them are *shown* in language.[652] Yet insofar as, for Wittgenstein, our relation to things is *transcendental*, then, for Wittgenstein, the *transcendental truth* is shown. "That simple thing which we ought to give here is not a model [*viz.* a picture] of the truth, but *the whole[653] truth itself*" (T, 5.563; my emphasis[654]).

However, since the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist, the transcendental truth is *not* metaphysical for him. Put otherwise, as opposed to Kant, who took the transcendental truth to be a metaphysical truth (indeed, one sayable in synthetic a priori judgements), for Wittgenstein we may only ever contemplate the transcendental truth of being, which is shown to us in language, without advancing metaphysical doctrines, whether effable or ineffable ones.

7.3 Quietism, Finitude, and Philosophy

Having argued for it at some length, I take myself to have established the final claim of the present work, namely that the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist (**δ**). As I have defended all my main claims, the work could end here. Yet Wittgenstein's view too comes at a high price, albeit *not* a metaphysical one. It makes the whole of Metaphysics, including Transcendental Metaphysics, into "mere nonsense". If one buys this view, millennia of Philosophy, including centuries of Transcendental Philosophy, are reduced to "twaddle",[655] and thousands of philosophers, including most transcendental philosophers, are thus reduced to charlatans.[656] While illuminating, Wittgenstein's view is arguably extreme.

In this final section, I would like to sketch a moderate alternative, suggesting that transcendental philosophers should take it. This is *Effable* Transcendental Quietism—a middle way between Kant and Wittgenstein's transcendentalisms. First, I will show that, while Kant

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[651] Heidegger (1962, § 44).

[652] I am not here suggesting that Wittgenstein was influenced by Heidegger, since the *Tractatus* was published much earlier than *Being and Time*. Only, there is a similarity in their views on the issues discussed above. This is attested by the conversations with the Vienna Circle, in which Wittgenstein claimed to be able to understand some of Heidegger's views that have to do with ineffability, feeling, and the being of the world (WWK, p. 68).

[653] The word "whole" or "entire" [*volle*] is not casual here. For Wittgenstein has in mind the whole logical space, as the transcendental space of possible representation, which, as I have argued, cannot be said, but can only ever by shown for Wittgenstein. Hence, for Wittgenstein, the transcendental truth is shown.

[654] Translation slightly emended. Given the context of 5.563, as well as Wittgenstein's retrospective comments on it, there can be no doubt that Wittgenstein has in mind simple objects. Indeed, we must recognize simple objects as given if we are to "experience" the mystical, as a feeling of the whole logical space, thereby feeling "the whole truth itself".

[655] Wittgenstein himself wrote of the need to "cut out the transcendental twaddle [*transcendentales Geschwätz*]". See Chapter 3ₖ, note 11.

[656] In fact, the term "charlatan" comes from the Italian verb *ciarlare*, which is roughly translated as "talking much and in vain".

foreshadowed this position, he fell short of fully embracing it due to his idealism, which arguably has some theoretical and ethical shortcomings. Then, I will suggest that, similarly to its Wittgensteinian ineffable counterpart, but without reducing Metaphysics to "twaddle", Effable Transcendental Quietism may lead us to a transformative experience, which has ethical value. This is a change attitude with respect to our human finitude, which may have deep consequences for our conception of ourselves and, thereby, of (Transcendental) Philosophy, as an activity of clarification and self-understanding.

7.31 *Kant's Effable Transcendental Quietism?*

Having examined Ineffable Transcendental Quietism, all is left for us to consider is Effable Transcendental Quietism. As we have seen in the last section, this view asks us to *suspend judgement* over the truth of *metaphysical* propositions about the transcendental conditions, since committing to it would be dogmatic and/or problematic. Put otherwise, according to the effable transcendental quietist, we should exercise *epochê* with respect to the metaphysical nature and status of the transcendental conditions, which is thinkable, though *not* cognizable.

It is significant to note that Kant foreshadowed this position, *at least to some extent*. For while Kant does *not* suspend judgement over the metaphysical nature and status of *some* transcendental conditions, rather judging space and time to be "ideal", he arguably suspended judgement over the metaphysical nature and status of *some other* transcendental conditions.

I have here in mind Kant's "things in themselves". In effect, for Kant, things in themselves "ground" appearances in us by virtue of affection, so that they look like necessary conditions of our cognition (of appearances). Further, it is not to be excluded that, for Kant, the *existence* of things in themselves[657] could be known independently of the experience of any *particular* appearance (i.e. a priori), since he writes that "*just by the fact* that it accepts appearances, [the understanding] also admits to the *existence* of things in themselves" (*Prol*, § 32; my emphasis).[658]

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[657] Kant never doubts the existence of things in themselves, rather writing that "cognition reaches appearances only, leaving the thing in itself as something actual [*wirklich*] for itself but uncognized by us" (Bxx). (The German *wirklich* may also be translated as "effective", which in this case would suggest that things in themselves affect us). I return on Kant's commitment to the existence of things in themselves below. For now, I will only note that this commitment does *not* entail any commitment to their metaphysical nature and status, nor for that matter on "two-worlds" or "two-aspects" views of the appearances/things in themselves distinction, and so of Kant's transcendental idealism.

[658] Would this (alleged) a priori knowledge synthetic or analytic for Kant? Arguably neither, for according to Kant we cannot have synthetic a priori knowledge of things in themselves, and we cannot know an existence on the grounds of mere analysis. The only alternative left is that the (allegedly) a priori knowledge we have of things in themselves is *ineffable*. On this view, we *feel* the existence of such things, insofar as they *affect us* at all, grounding appearances in us. Indeed, the language of *affection* is none other than the language of *feeling*——Note that this does not imply that things in themselves are metaphysically distinct from appearances. For it is *conceivable* that

If so, things in themselves would be transcendental conditions for Kant. And indeed, Kant often calls the thing in itself, insofar as it may affect us, the "transcendental object".[659]

Now, while for Kant things in themselves are existent, he *suspends judgement* over their metaphysical *nature and status* (A277-8/B333-4 and A287-8/B344): "what may be the case with objects in themselves [...] remains entirely unknown to us" (A42/B59[660]). To this extent, then, Kant may have been an effable transcendental idealist *about space and time*, and yet an effable transcendental quietist *about things in themselves.*——Or perhaps better: Kant was an effable transcendental idealist, and an effable *transcendent* quietist, since, according to him, things in themselves lie "*beyond* the bounds of experience" (Bxixn[661]), and so, whatever they may be, they are transcendent in his sense.[662] (*Here* Kant conflates the transcendental and the transcendent, which he otherwise keeps distinguished).

It is this mix of Transcendental Idealism and Transcendent Quietism that, in the end, is characteristic of Kant's philosophy. For Kant wants to engage in *Transcendental* Metaphysics, judging that space and time are properties of our minds, and not of things in themselves; and yet, he does not want to engage in *Transcendent* Metaphysics, which would require a dogmatic commitment over *what* things in themselves are.

That's insightful. What's more, as I have argued, it is *coherent.* But coherence alone is not enough to endorse a philosophical view. Indeed, while Kant's critique of Transcendent Metaphysics is rock solid, it remains to be seen whether his Transcendental Metaphysics is. If it turned out that it isn't, then a transcendental philosopher who wants to retain Wittgenstein's insights, but avoid his zero-tolerance approach to Metaphysics, will have good reasons to *fully* embrace Effable Transcendental Quietism.

In what follows, I will then try to submit Kant's (coherent) idealism to critique, before suggesting that a transcendental philosopher should *fully* embrace Effable Transcendent*al* Quietism.

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appearances should be the sensible aspect of those things that, considered irrespective of our sensibility, Kant calls "things in themselves". However, while Kant must leave room for this *logical* possibility, I do not think that a *metaphysical* commitment of this sort is necessary for Kant, nor that matter advisable, given his distinction between logical and real possibility. Ultimately, if he is to be coherent, Kant must suspend judgement over the metaphysical nature and status of things in themselves (including on issues concerning their alleged metaphysical identity or difference from appearances). As I argue in the continuation, that's what Kant does.

[659] See A277/B333; A288/B344; A366; A379-380; A393; A494-B522; A538/B566; A540/B568.

[660] Compare A277/B333: "what the things may be in themselves I do not know, and also do not need to know, since a thing can never come before me except in appearance". Hence, we may go as far as saying that, for Kant, the nature and status of things in themselves is not only unknown, but *unknowable* for us. That, indeed, is a consequence of his distinction between logical and real possibility.

[661] My emphasis.

[662] For Kant's sense of transcendent, see his passage in the *Prolegomena*, quoted in 1$_K$ (*Prol*, 4:374n).

According to Kant's effable transcendental idealism, synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics are possible. These judgements are not supposed to be about objects that "transcend" the bounds of experience; rather, they are about the transcendental framework that makes experience possible and, therewith, about all that may be the case within this framework. For example, the synthetic a priori judgement "all events must have a cause" is about events, that take place in time (a priori intuition), as well as the succession of these events, which is ordered by <causality> (a priori concept).

Yet *how*, if at all, can we know that synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics are possible? It would be viciously circular to claim that "synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics are possible" is itself a synthetic a priori proposition of Metaphysics. Hence, the only *a priori* route left for Kant, if he is to defend his *effable* transcendental idealism, is the *analytic* route. This prescribes that we should *analyse* synthetic a priori propositions into their elements, namely space, time, and the categories, and then analyse *those* in turn, or at any rate their concepts (e.g. the concepts of space and time). *Prima facie*, this analysis is not circular, since Kant takes synthetic a priori judgements to be possible *irrespective of* Metaphysics, e.g. in geometry.[663]

As we have seen in Chapter 2$_K$, it is a similar conceptual analysis that, according to Kant, allows us to recognize a priori the truth of the proposition

(S&T$_{IDEAL}$) space and time depend upon our point of view,

that is meant to express his effable transcendental idealism. More precisely, for Kant, the a priori *analysis* of the concepts of space and time allows us to recognize that space and time are pure intuitions, and thereby to recognize that the synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics are possible (e.g. "all events must have a cause"). For *if* we can have analytic a priori knowledge that time depends upon our point of view, then we may have analytic a priori knowledge that whatever happens in time, namely events, and any temporal regularities, such as causal relations, will depend on us too. We would, in effect, have analytic a priori knowledge that synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics are possible.

But here I want to take issue with Kant. Even though it is *not* incoherent to argue that we may recognize, by means of a priori conceptual analysis, that space and time depend upon our point of view, and hence that synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics are possible, such

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[663] Note that this is not just Kant's position. Illustrious analytic philosophers, such as Frege (1960, § 89), agree with Kant that geometry is synthetic a priori.

propositions are not on that account *true*, as Kant wants.

To be sure, Kant has a transcendental argument for this claim. As we have seen Part_K, the kernel of the argument was this. By analysis of the concepts of space and time, we come to recognize that space and time are endless magnitudes given a priori. That, *Kant argues*, may only ever be the case if space and time are *a priori intuitions*, and hence mind-dependent properties, as opposed to properties of/relations among (putative) mind-independent things in themselves. And *if so*, synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics would not only be coherent, but in fact be *true* of whatever could be in space and time.

Now, we may go as far as granting Kant that space and time are endless and given a priori. It still would not follow that they are a priori intuitions that depend upon our point of view, as Kant wanted. For example, Wittgenstein's logical space is endless (T, 4.463), and it is given a priori, insofar as Tractarian objects are given a priori.[664] Yet Wittgenstein's logical space, and the objects that give it, are *not* a priori intuitions that depend upon our point of view (or cannot be known to be such for Wittgenstein[665]). Hence, "space and time depend upon our point of view (a priori intuitions)" looks hardly like an analytic a priori truth, in the way Kant believes. And if so, we do not have analytic a priori knowledge of the *truth* of synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics.

7.312 *Kant's Transcendental Thought Experiment*

Kant may at this point object that "space and time depend upon our point of view" *is* an analytic truth, for it follows from *his* definitions of <space>, <time> and <intuition>. But then, Kant would be *stipulating by definition* that his transcendental idealism is true. And in that case, the truth of synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics, and hence of Kant's effable transcendental idealism, would be grounded on an *original stipulation*—an original *thought experiment*, if you like. ("Suppose that empirical reality conformed to our intuitions of space and time"). Not by chance, Kant first presents his Copernican turn in philosophy, which is a turn to (his) transcendental idealism, as an experiment (Bxviii)[666] or hypothesis (Bxxii).

By thought experiment, I understand an imaginative procedure aimed at making us visualize a scenario that, if properly worked out in our *thought*, may lead us to the recognition of

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[664] Notice that Wittgenstein writes that Tractarian objects "contain the infinite" (PR, § 138).

[665] If, for Wittgenstein, we could know them to be such, then Wittgenstein himself would be a transcendental idealist. However, I have demonstrated that he is *not*.

[666] Notably, while the term "thought experiment" was introduced only in the 19th century, Kant already talked of "experiments thought out in accordance with [the] principles [of reason]" (Bxiii). For a discussion of experiments of pure reason in Kant, see Buzzoni (2018).

something that wasn't clear to us beforehand. If a thought experiment aims at recognition of transcendental conditions, I will call it **transcendental thought experiment**. (Both thought experiments and their transcendental versions are effable, insofar as they are *thought* experiments, even though they may well lead to ineffable knowledge on the part of the "experimenter").

The Copernican turn is a transcendental thought experiment, or better, a transcendental *idealist* one. It asks us to *imagine* that space and time depend upon our point of view. This we can do if we take an initial *leap of faith*,[667] accepting Kant's definitions of a priori intuitions, as that which alone may give endless magnitudes a priori.[668] Indeed, if we proceed in this way, we can hope to *know* that "space and time depend upon our point of view (as *a priori intuitions*)", and thereby know the truth of synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics, that make up Kant's transcendental idealism. For at that point, it will also follow *by definitions* that we may cognize a priori what is in space and time, namely appearances, as opposed to things in themselves, which is exactly what Kant's transcendental idealism prescribes.

7.313 *The Transcendental Diallelus*

The Copernican turn is a transcendental thought experiment stipulating that Kant's idealism is true, in order to then "prove" its transcendental truth. This, however, alerts us to the presence of a *transcendental circle* at the heart of Kant's idealism, which is none other than a transcendental version of the skeptical *diallelus* presented in the Introduction. A *diallelus*, recall, is the skeptical circle whereby a ground is supposed to be grounded by what it should ground. If the ground at stake in a *diallelus* is a transcendental condition of cognition, or it involves one, I will talk of **transcendental diallelus**.

Kant's position incurs a transcendental *diallelus* since, to know that synthetic a priori propositions of Metaphysics are true, we must know Kant's transcendental idealism. To know Kant's transcendental idealism, we must know a priori that "space and time depend upon our point of view". But the ultimate ground for knowledge of the truth of this proposition is the Copernican turn, which requires us to accept Kant's definitions, from which his transcendental idealism *already* follows. Hence, Kant's transcendental idealism is supposed to ground *itself*. This does *not* make Kant's transcendental idealism incoherent, but it arguably makes it theoretically *unprovable*.

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[667] "Rational faith is the cognition of the necessity of a hypothesis of reason" (R 2770). For the role of "faith" in Kant's theoretical philosophy, see Palmquist (1993, pp. 143-8).

[668] "In philosophy one must not imitate mathematics in putting the definitions first, *unless perhaps as a mere experiment*" (A730/B758; my emphasis)

Kant may protest that transcendental idealism *must* be true, *if experience is to be possible*, and that this is proof enough. But if we were to ask Kant to prove *this*, he would ultimately take refuge in a perspectival thought experiment of the form "try-and-see-for-yourself", namely the Copernican turn. We must *first* accept the Copernican turn, with all the definitions that it entails, and *then* Kant's transcendental idealism can be proven to be true (Bxix[669]). Yet *accepting* the Copernican turn *is* already committing to the truth of Kant's transcendental idealism. (Without taking the Copernican turn, we can't enter Kant's system; taking it, we can't leave it.)[670]

Here's another way to make this transcendental circularity evident. For Kant, *possible experience* is the ground of proof in transcendental arguments. Kant's transcendental idealism, to the extent that it may be proved at all, must be proved transcendentally. The proof would consist in showing that, if experience is to be *possible*, Kant's transcendental idealism must be *true*. But that, in effect, means that Kant's transcendental idealism is supposed to be *its own* ground of proof, since its synthetic a priori propositions (e.g. "all events must have a cause") should make experience possible in the first place.

It is testament to Kant's genius that he was aware of this transcendental *diallelus*. As he writes:

> [A synthetic a priori proposition of Metaphysics[671]] has the special property that it first makes possible its ground of proof, namely experience, and must always be presupposed in this. (A737/B765)

The only (effable) way to avoid a *vicious* circularity is taking a leap of faith, by embracing the (effable) Copernican experiment. But that is already buying Kant's (effable) transcendental idealism. It is already to be a "believer".

I think we should not be believers. Or better, we should recognize that Kant's transcendental idealism is *thinkable*, but we should not take ourselves to recognize its alleged *truth*. For to recognize the truth of Kant's transcendental idealism we must *already* take ourselves to know it, however obscurely, and buy a bunch of definitions that are meant to clarify what we allegedly knew "all along". (This is Kant's position, but I leave it to the reader to critically evaluate whether we are all, "deep down", transcendental idealists). We must *already* have accepted the Copernican turn in philosophy, as a turn to Transcendental Idealism. This looks

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[669] "For *after* this alteration in our way of thinking [*viz.* the Copernican experiment in philosophy] we can very well explain the possibility of a cognition a priori, and what is still more, we can provide satisfactory proofs of the laws that are the a priori ground of nature, as the sum total of objects of experience" (Bxix; my emphasis).

[670] This is an intentional echo of Jacobi's famous quip to Kant: "Without the presupposition [of the thing in itself,] I was unable to enter into [Kant's] system, but with it I was unable to stay within it".

[671] Kant's example here is exactly "everything that happens has its cause".

question begging. Hence, I don't think we should take Kant's position, nor for that matter any form of Effable Transcendental Idealism, which would incur similar issues, requiring us to take *some form* of the Copernican turn.

7.32 *The Unethical Outcome of Effable Transcendental Idealism*

But am I not too rash? Suppose I was right,[672] and that Effable Transcendental Idealism is *theoretically*[673] unprovable[674] (without begging the question). Even then, there could well be *practical* reasons for taking some form of the Copernican turn in philosophy. And if there were some such reasons, the effable transcendental idealist could still attempt something like an "ethical proof" of his doctrine.

Let us explore this possibility. At first glance, Effable Transcendental Idealism has a hefty *metaphysical price*. For it enforces a distinction between appearances and things in themselves, such that empirical reality is made up of appearances, that can be known a priori to *depend* upon our (transcendental) point of view. What is more, in this view, things as they may independently of us are *thinkable*, but not cognizable.

Clearly, not anyone would be happy to pay this metaphysical price. Yet the effable transcendental idealist may still argue that the price is right. By paying it, he urges, we can not only have insight into the workings of nature, but also make room for *the ethical*. For example, we may render natural necessity compatible with our freedom, or at any rate with the *thought* of it. For while we, considered as appearances, are subject to the necessary laws of nature, still we, considered as things in themselves, may *think* of ourselves as *free* from the constraint of these laws—say, as those Subjects who freely give the law to both nature (e.g. categories) *and* themselves (e.g. moral law).

To sum up, then, while for the effable transcendental idealist we may never cognize things in themselves, we may still *think* them, that which may allow us to *think* ourselves as free. And *that's why*—the effable transcendental idealist could argue—we should pay the relevant metaphysical price. Some may still be unconvinced, but this train of thought is perfectly

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[672] I use this circumspect formulation, since I may well be mistaken and am conscious that others will defend Kant with any possible means. (I myself have defended Kant from accusation of incoherence).

[673] I stress the word "theoretically" since, for Kant, that which cannot be proved on theoretical grounds may still be "proved" on practical ones. I address this issue below.

[674] In the first *Critique*, Kant is clear that synthetic a priori judgements of Metaphysics are *not* to be called "theorems", which are provable, but rather "*principles*", exactly insofar as they have the "special property" of making possible their own ground of proof, namely possible experience (see A737/B765 quoted above). In his *Logik*, Kant clarifies that "principles" are immediately certain elementary propositions, which are "not capable of a [theoretical] proof", and which as such are "indemonstrable" (JL, §§ 33-34).

coherent. Hence, if freedom ranks high on the priority list of a transcendental philosopher, she *may* accept some form of the Copernican experiment, therewith endorsing Effable Transcendental Idealism.

Yet is this "ethical argument" worth the price? Alas, the answer is "No". On the contrary, there are *ethical reasons* to resist it. To ensure the mere possibility of the *thought* of our freedom, Effable Transcendental Idealism asks us to consider empirical reality as made up of appearances, which in the last analysis[675] are *mind-dependent states* ("mere representations"[676]), depending for their form on other *mind-dependent representations* (e.g. space and time).[677] If we grant the ask, taking ourselves to deal with a reality of appearances, we will soon feel *prisoners of our own minds*.

This, I take it, is the *un*ethical outcome of Effable Transcendental Idealism. Soon enough, if we buy this doctrine, we will want to break free of the "prison". But the *mere thought* of freedom is not enough to escape. We want to *be* free. We *really* want out of our "mental prison", to be in touch with "reality itself". Ironically, Effable Transcendental Idealism entices the very urge it is supposed to warn us against: the urge to claim substantive knowledge of the "transcendent".

Take Kant's case. When Kant declares that, while thinkable, things in themselves are not cognizable, his words are destined to sound like a prohibition, an obstacle, or a difficulty, that needs to be transcended. That is not because Kant's critical warnings about transcendence are ill-conceived. Rather, it is because, in being told we may think something, yet not cognize it, our thirst for knowledge is called into cause, and we are liable to *want more*. "We *want* to cognize reality itself, not just think it", we may hear detractors already complaining. "We *want* substantive knowledge of the absolute".

To a large extent, post-Kantian philosophy is the story of these syrens of absoluteness, and of how they gave rise to philosophical systems that, *ultimately*, did away with Kant's critical distinctions (including the appearances/things in themselves one, and the correlative immanent/transcendent one[678]). Kant was seen as "the policeman of the spirit",[679] enforcing rules that were felt as *constraints*—limits which were felt as *limitations*. Cognition was to be unbridled. Thought was to become *substantive knowledge* of the absolute whole, i.e. *the infinite*.[680]

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[675] The last analysis, of course, is the *transcendental* analysis of our cognition here. Empirically considered, appearances are *objects* for Kant, rather than mind-dependent entities.

[676] A372 and *Prol* 4:292-3.

[677] Even a "revolutionary" interpreter of Kant like Graham Bird is ready to grant that "[Kant] identifies a sense in which all […] experience, inner and outer, is *mind-dependent* as the residual truth to be found in traditional idealism" (Bird, 2006, p. 318; my emphasis). This "sense", of course, is the transcendental one.

[678] See A. W. Moore (2012, Ch. 7, esp. § 2).

[679] I owe this expression to Vasilis Politis. Kant himself compares the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the police (Bxxv and R 5112).

[680] See for example Hegel (2010, 21:30; 1991, § 60; 1977, § 89).

Indeed, when brought to its extreme consequences, the Copernican turn leads straight to Absolute Idealism, namely the view that *self-knowledge* is (substantive knowledge of) the *whole* reality.

A discussion of Absolute Idealism would take us far away. All I wanted to note here is that this position goes *beyond* anything the transcendental philosopher may ever countenance (at least, under our characterization of Transcendentalism.) Transcendental philosophers are in fact concerned with necessary *conditions* or *limits* of our cognition and, therewith, with our human *finitude*. The claim that we can cognize the unconditioned or unlimited whole is the claim that we are *not really* finite—for it is the claim that we can have (or even *be*) substantive knowledge of the infinite. Hence, transcendental philosophers, including effable transcendental idealists, cannot ultimately countenance it.[681]

As a result, the effable transcendental idealist is stuck with the *un*ethical outcome of his metaphysical position—prisoner of it, as it were. The metaphysical price of his doctrine is high, and the ethical advantages of paying it are trumped by the unethical outcome. Hence, the transcendental philosopher should avoid buying Effable Transcendental Idealism, at least if he can get a "better bargain". I will now suggest that he can, by *fully* embracing Effable Transcendental Quietism.

7.33 *The Transcendental Epochê*

According to the transcendental philosopher, the transcendental conditions are necessarily built into our thought of reality. We cannot think of reality, without the transcendental conditions. As a result, any attempt to think *the transcendental conditions*, as if they were themselves thoughts of reality, would always already presuppose them, which is circular (transcendental *diallelus*). And if so, granting that we can think of reality thanks to the transcendental conditions, we cannot think *them*.

That, however, is not yet to say that we cannot think *about* them. For Kant may well be right that, in "mere" or *general* thought, we may acquire the critical distance needed to reflect upon the transcendental conditions. Indeed, if this work, or even just part of it, has been intelligible

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[681] With this, I do not mean to deny that there are important affinities between (Effable) Transcendental Idealism and Absolute Idealism, that Hegel himself points out, alongside the many differences he also points out. Further, I am aware that there are major interpreters who read Hegel as a transcendental philosopher, by employing different characterizations of transcendental philosophy. For example, Vittorio Hösle claims that Hegel's absolute idealism counts as "transcendental", if by the term "transcendental" we denote any "methodologically rigorous reflection on its own claims of validity" (Hösle, 2012, p. 69, fn. 1; my translation). All I meant is that, given *my* characterization of Transcendentalism, Absolute Idealism is disqualified *by definition* from the scope of transcendental positions.

to you, chances are that you have been thinking *about* transcendental conditions all along. You have thought *about* their effability or ineffability, ideality or reality. Heck, you have even thought *about* nonsense that masquerades as sense about the transcendental conditions (though, of course, you haven't "thought nonsense")!

But *how* can we think about transcendental conditions? For that to be possible, general thought must not be identical with representation of empirical reality (cognition). To be sure, general thought must be grounded upon representation of empirical reality, which in turn—for the transcendental philosopher—is grounded upon the transcendental conditions. But that is not to say that the two are identical. For there may well be a distinction to be drawn between merely logical possibility, as possibility of thought in general, and real possibility, as possibility of cognition. And if so, we could still entertain general propositions *about* the transcendental conditions (as we did). *Up to this point*, Kant is vindicated.

Now, when we entertain general propositions about the transcendental conditions, we operate at a high level of abstraction, disregarding what is empirical, and dealing just in concepts, that figure in the relevant propositions. Some of these propositions will be non-metaphysical, such as "transcendental conditions are necessary grounds of our cognition, which are known a priori". Others will be metaphysical, such as the defining claim of Effable Transcendental Idealism, namely that "transcendental features depend upon our point of view" (TF_{IDEAL}). The former proposition may be known analytically, for it is true in virtue of the definition of the concept of <transcendental> given in Chapter 1_K. But can we ever know analytically the *truth* of a metaphysical proposition like (TF_{IDEAL})?

Sure, we may know the *coherence* of (TF_{IDEAL}) on conceptual or *analytic* grounds. For we understand the meaning of the concepts contained in it, such as <transcendental features> and <Idealism>. There is no contradiction in these concepts, nor in their combination in (TF_{IDEAL}). Indeed, we may well understand the negation of (TF_{IDEAL}), namely the proposition that "transcendental features are *in*dependent of our point of view", by entertaining the equally non-contradictory *concept* of mind-independent things.

Still, knowledge of the coherence of (TF_{IDEAL}) is not enough for knowledge of its *truth*, for the simple reason that logical knowledge of the meaning of our concepts, such as the concept <transcendental features>, is not metaphysical knowledge of reality, such as the alleged knowledge that transcendental features are *ideal*. Indeed, given our distinction between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, it is *not* part of the meaning of <transcendental features> that transcendental features are *ideal* features of empirical reality. Kant believed so. But he was in effect *assuming* that all human beings have a priori knowledge of the ideality of the

transcendental features, which we are meant to recognize in his transcendental philosophy, by buying a bunch of definitions. We need not buy the definitions. And even if do, the metaphysical picture they articulate remains a *hypotheses*, that is not passible of a rigorous (non-circular) proof.

The propositions of Transcendental Metaphysics[682] are thus coherent, but the *grounds* of their coherence are insufficient to *really know* whether they are true (without begging the question). That may sound puzzling. However, we must distinguish sharply between thought and metaphysical knowledge. If we think or entertain a concept, we can therewith know something about its instances, but we do not therewith have *metaphysical* knowledge of them. For example, if I think the concept <3>, I must know something about the number 3 (e.g. that it follows the number 2, etc.). But I do not *therewith* know "the metaphysical nature and status" of the number 3. Indeed, even eminent philosophers of mathematics may not know *that*.

Similarly, we may know much about the transcendental conditions in mere thought, by *analysing concepts* that are dear to the transcendental philosopher (and that's what we have done in this work). Indeed, by operating with such concepts, we may even *think* or *claim* that we know the *metaphysical nature and status* of the transcendental conditions. Yet if we find ourselves with inadequate *grounds* for this substantive metaphysical knowledge-claim, we must ultimately recognize it as a speculative *hypothesis*, such as Kant's Copernican *experiment* in philosophy.[683]

True, we may reflect on whether we should "buy" transcendental hypotheses such as these, concerning the metaphysical nature and status of the transcendental conditions. Perhaps, the price is worth it, as Kant wanted.[684] Yet if after a thorough scrutiny we conclude that we should *not* buy similar hypotheses, for they are unprovable, and generate pernicious illusions, then all that is left for us is to suspend judgement over them, refraining from either asserting or denying them. If we do, we will exercise the true transcendental *epochê*,[685] thereby fully embracing Effable Transcendental Quietism.

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[682] I need not specify *Effable* Transcendental Metaphysics, since Ineffable Transcendental Metaphysics contains no propositions, but only *pseudo*-propositions.

[683] Kant would say that the hypothesis gets to be *proved* in the course of the *Critique* (Bxxii). But, as I have suggested, Kant is in no position to "prove" this without circularity.

[684] Kant explicitly says that his idealism, which allows only cognition of appearances, but not of things in themselves, is "worth the *expense*", since through it the understanding accomplishes something remarkable, namely "determining for itself the boundaries of its use and knowing what may lie within and what without its whole sphere" (A237-8/B297; my emphasis).

[685] The phrase "transcendental epochê" was famously employed by Husserl. Arguably, however, Husserl's epochê is a *transcendent* epochê, with a transcendental function. That is because, according to Husserl, we should suspend judgement on the nature and status of the external (here *transcendent*) reality, to investigate the transcendental presuppositions of the natural standpoint, which are *immanent* to the pure field of consciousness (Husserl 1931, §§ 30-33; Zahavi 2017, p. 56). As opposed to this, my epochê fully deserves the title of "transcendental", as it is the suspension of judgement over the metaphysical nature and status *of the transcendental conditions*.

But does not Effable Transcendental Quietism, strictly thought out, collapse back into Effable Transcendental Idealism? For it is not the claim we may entertain *propositions* about transcendental conditions of *our* cognition, which is part of Effable Transcendental Quietism, none other than the metaphysical claim of Effable Transcendental Idealism, whereby we may have *propositional* a priori knowledge that the transcendental conditions *depend* upon our point of view, as opposed to reality "as it is in itself"?

The answer to this objection lies not only in distinguishing, as we have already done, between Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism, or for that matter between mere thought and substantive metaphysical knowledge. Rather, we should also distinguish between two possible ways of understanding the anthropological claim of the transcendental philosopher, whereby the transcendental conditions are *definitive* of our human point of view.

In Effable Transcendental Idealism, we are *metaphysically defined* by the transcendental conditions. On this view, given our conditioned nature, we cannot have metaphysical knowledge of the unconditioned "thing in itself", which is nonetheless *admitted as existing* (*Prol*, § 32)— "something *actual* for itself" (Bxx; my emphasis).[686] We cannot have metaphysical knowledge of the infinite reality, but only ever have (meta)metaphysical knowledge of our finite point of view. Ultimately, on this view, the transcendental conditions are the *metaphysical mark* of our finitude, leaving us longing for the unattainable transcendent. What makes us human is this original metaphysical bereavement, precluding us from answering metaphysical questions on *existing* things in themselves (Avii[687] and A278/B334[688]).

In Effable Transcendental Quietism, on the other hand, we are *logically defined* by the transcendental conditions. On this view, it is a necessary feature of our *concept* of humanity that there be transcendental conditions of our cognition. The transcendental conditions are *logical marks* of the concept <human>, rather than the metaphysical mark of humanity, cutting us off from substantive knowledge of existing "things in themselves". Indeed, the transcendental

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[686] Notice that there is no contradiction in the claim that we know the *existence* of things in themselves, without being able to know anything about their *nature and status*. On Kant's view, we know *them*, but we do not know anything metaphysical *about* them.

[687] "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".

[688] "Those transcendental questions, however, that go beyond nature, we will never be able to answer […] [The] relation of [our sensibility] to an object, and what might [in itself] be the transcendental ground of this unity, undoubtedly lie too deeply hidden for us, who know even ourselves only through inner sense, thus as appearance, to be able to use such an unsuitable tool of investigation [*viz.* inner sense] to find out anything except always more appearances, even though we would gladly investigate their non-sensible cause". (Note that here Kant conflates the transcendent and the transcendental, as I have already urged).

quietist has no incentive at all to commit to the *existence* of "things in themselves", though he may happily grant Kant that we have a *concept* of mind-independent things.

The difference between Effable Transcendental Idealism and Effable Transcendental Quietism is then this. The Idealism cuts across *metaphysical space*, separating us, conditioned beings, from metaphysical knowledge of existing unconditioned objects.[689] The Quietism cuts across *logical space*, separating the *concept* <human> from the *concept* <reality>, that which allows us to *think* without contradiction that the reality *we cognize* is fully independent of our point of view—though the effable transcendental quietist will *suspend judgement* over whether, as a matter of "metaphysical fact", it is.

But now, if the effable transcendental quietist may entertain propositions about the transcendental conditions of our cognition, without taking it that the reality *we cognize* depends upon our point of view, then Effable Transcendental Quietism is indeed to be distinguished from Effable Transcendental Idealism, that takes the reality *we cognize* to be made of mind-dependent appearances.[690] Indeed, the Quietism is not only free from metaphysical lumber, but also avoids the unethical outcome of the Idealism, whereby we feel prisoners of our own minds. As such, the Quietism is arguably preferable to the Idealism.

7.35 *Effable Transcendental Quietism vs. Ineffable Transcendental Quietism*

But even granting that we should prefer Effable Transcendental Quietism over a Kant-style Effable Transcendental Idealism, why prefer it to a Wittgenstein-style Ineffable Transcendental Quietism? After all, why should we not take it that Metaphysics is just nonsense, so that metaphysical questions could not as much as *arise*? Would not *that* give us the peace of mind we so often seek in philosophy? I think it would not.

Wittgenstein's Quietism is based on his "equation" of logical and real possibility, so that not only we could not think without cognizing, but in fact nothing would count as thinking of beings who could cognize the world differently from how we do. On this view, whoever *can be recognized* as a thinking being, or a speaking being, must have the transcendental conditions of our thought or language. That, however, *invites* the metaphysical (and speciesistic) illusion that *only we* think and speak. It now *seems* that our language, or even my language, is *the* only language. It now *seems* that our way of thinking and speaking, or even my way of thinking and speaking, is the measure

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[689] Notice that this need *not* be a separation of *objects* into metaphysically distinct sets of entities. Rather, on this view, *we* are separated from a certain kind of *knowledge*, namely "absolute" metaphysical knowledge.

[690] Kant: "nature [is] the sum total of all appearances" (B163).

of all things.

To be sure, the Wittgensteinian quietist *invites* this metaphysical illusion only to expose it *as an illusion*. Yet exactly in recoiling from it, the Wittgensteinian quietist might inadvertently fall back into the correlative illusion, familiar by now to us post-Kantians, of feeling *trapped* in our human point of view. Tellingly, Wittgenstein concluded his 'Lecture on Ethics' by publicly saying that our language is "our cage", and that "running against its walls" is "perfectly, absolutely hopeless". (The *later* Wittgenstein recognized this as an ulterior illusion, but that is not of our concern here).

So, if it was hoped that Ineffable Transcendental Quietism should finally bring us peace of mind, then the hope is optimistic. (And besides, there is reason enough in the history of philosophy to suspect that no philosophical view may ever bring us *that*.) Indeed, Ineffable Transcendental Quietism may *increase* the sway of the illusions it is meant to combat, since, without the possibility of thinking of other beings, it is easier than ever to *feel* trapped in our human point of view, deluding ourselves that we should "run against its limits", *as if* they were the walls of a cage.

I will now suggest that Effable Transcendental Quietism may fare better than this, by radically transforming our *conception* of ourselves, as finite human beings.

7.36 *Reconsidering Human Finitude*

As human beings, we share a peculiar urge, that may perhaps be called the metaphysical urge. For there is in us a visceral *longing for transcendence*, which we feel, more than anywhere else, in our unquenchable thirst for knowledge.[691] We want to *transcend* our current state of knowledge or, that which is the same, to know more. To be sure, many of our achievements as a species are the fruit of this urge to transcendence. Yet therein also lie the gravest dangers for us, since it is the source of pernicious metaphysical illusions.

The ultimate illusion is that of transcending *ourselves*, or our human point of view, to finally know reality "as it is in itself". It is a great merit of Kant's transcendental philosophy to have shown that this *is* an illusion. No human being can ever "transcend the human point of view" —for if he could, he would not be a *human* being. There are, Kant believed, necessary *conditions* of our point of view, without which we could not even *represent reality*, let alone have genuine knowledge of it. For example, objects are *given* to us. This is a necessary feature of our knowledge

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[691] Aristotle: "By nature, all men long to know" (*Metaphysics*, 980a). Stroud: "We (or some of us) do have a 'thirst for knowledge', and as that thirst increases [...] our knowledge expands and becomes more and more integrated" (2023, p. 23).

of reality for Kant. There's no way around it.

And yet, to dispel the metaphysical illusion that our knowledge of reality may "transcend our point of view", Kant recurs to yet another metaphysical story, namely his transcendental idealism. Those conditions, which are necessary for our cognition, are for Kant metaphysical *limitations* of ours. Perhaps, the infinite being—God—could have unconditioned or "absolute" knowledge of reality "as it is in itself", by *creating* objects, instead of receiving them as we do. Indeed, on Kant's metaphysical story, the conditions of our cognition are the metaphysical mark of our finite nature, to which we are bound to *resign*, with mere glimpses of infinity in empty thought. "[O]ut of such *crooked* wood as the human being is made, nothing entirely straight can be fabricated" (*Idea*, 8:23; my emphasis[692]).

In previous sections of this Chapter, I have started to wonder whether this understanding of our finitude is helpful. And I have suggested that it isn't, since it is destined to fuel the very longing for transcendence it should warn us against. By making the transcendental conditions of our cognition into *metaphysical* limitations of ours, Kant has in effect generated the illusion that our point of view is a cage.[693] A "transparent" cage, perhaps. But still a cage,[694] from which we now *want* to escape, without being possible for us to do so.[695] In the wake of Kant's transcendental idealism, we feel captives of our own minds.

Wittgenstein's transcendental philosophy is the proof that there is a different path than Transcendental Idealism (or for that matter Transcendental Realism, which triggers an even worse philosophical claustrophobia). We may refrain from claiming knowledge of the metaphysical nature and status of the transcendental conditions of our cognition. That's what the transcendental quietist does.

Still, being an *ineffable* transcendental quietist, Wittgenstein refrains from all this on the grounds that metaphysical formulations are nonsensical. And in so doing, Wittgenstein reduces most of (Transcendental) Philosophy to a charade. What is more, exactly in chastising Metaphysics as nonsensical, Wittgenstein fuelled an even worse version of the Kantian illusion. We are now liable to *feel* that our entire language cuts us off from a transcendent "something", though we are not so much as able to think this "something".

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[692] In the context of the passage, Kant is discussing the conflict between the double nature of human beings, as "animal" sensible beings, and as "free" intelligent beings. As we have seen in 3$_K$, only as intelligences, for Kant, we may at least *think* the infinite, even though we are *metaphysically* "stuck" with our finite nature as sensible creatures, by which we need to receive an object to think about it.

[693] "With all possible perceptions, you always remain caught up among conditions, whether in space or in time" (A483/B511).

[694] My allusion here is to Quentin Meillassoux's criticism of Kant (2008, pp. 6-7).

[695] On this "craving for escape", and its relation to Kant's transcendental philosophy, see Benoist's illuminating (2023).

As against this, the *effable* transcendental quietist argues that metaphysical propositions—at least those belonging to Transcendental Metaphysics[696]—make perfect sense, although we cannot *know* their truth (without already assuming it).

But is this not falling into the Kantian trap *once more*, only not with respect to the transcendent, but rather with respect to the transcendent*al*? No. The impossibility of metaphysical knowledge of the transcendental conditions is not some *metaphysical* limitation of ours. Rather, it is a *logical* limit, built into our concepts of <knowledge>, <Metaphysics>, and <transcendental>.[697] Knowledge must be grounded. Metaphysics is an investigation that aims at *substantive* a priori knowledge of reality and our relation to it, which as such requires *substantive* grounds. Yet the grounds of our knowledge of the transcendental conditions are just conceptual and, thereby, *not* substantive. Indeed, our whole investigation was just a work of conceptual clarification.

During this clarificatory work, it has emerged that there may be limits to what we may know and, therewith, to our point of view. But, at the cost of being repetitive, *these limits are not metaphysical limitations of ours*. They are not original sins, that constantly remind us that *what we have* is not enough. For the limits of our point of view are not a question of "having" anything at all. Rather, they are part of our very idea of humanity. They define *who we are*.

7.37 *Who are We?*

We are finite rational beings, whose cognition and action are limited or conditioned. Indeed, while the conditions of our point of view are *not* metaphysical limitations, we are *not* entitled to claim that "there are no limits to what we can know and do", or that "we are infinite". Our finitude is a transcendental feeling of reason, built into our idea of humanity. *By definition*, insofar as we cognize or do something, we cognize or do something determinate (or at any rate determinable). It is a necessary condition of (what we call) a cognition that it be of some spatiotemporal facts, as opposed to others; and it is a necessary condition of (what we call) an action that it be willed among other possible ones, that shall cease to be practical possibilities.[698] *Yet conditions such as these are neither cognized*[699] *nor willed*. They are just *given* at the outset (*a priori*)

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[696] I here mean *Effable* Transcendental Metaphysics, of course.

[697] To be sure, something is arbitrary in the definition of these concepts, which is *up to an extent* a matter of choice. But once the definitions are in place, something else follows of necessity.

[698] Hence, for example, I have chosen to undertake a PhD in Philosophy. Yet as I am now approaching the 30-year-old threshold, the window to be an elite footballer has closed off for me. In this sense, given my course of action, it has become a practical impossibility, for me, to be an elite footballer. (That, of course, also has to do with the physical decay of my body over time and, ultimately, with my mortality).

[699] Though, as we have seen, they may be thought *about*, by working with concepts.

with our idea of humanity. Fulfilling them just means cognizing and acting in the way we do. Fulfilling them just means to be finite in the way we are.

We don't choose our finitude. Yet we may have power over *how we feel our finitude*. In the sway of the Kantian picture, we may feel it as the metaphysical mark of a "crooked" condition that destiny had in store for us. Yet that view is not forced onto us. Once we realize that our finitude *logically* defines 'us' in the first place, then the seeming complaint that "we cannot transcend our finite point of view" will be *fully* recognized as either tautological (and so, not a complaint), or as completely nonsensical.[700]

There is in Metaphysics a certain urge or longing, which is manifest in our desire to know, brought to such an extreme that we feel we want to know *Everything*. We then feel at loss, repeating to ourselves that "we cannot have what we want". Yet where it does not make sense to *want* something, there can be no genuine sense of loss either. Finitude is a *logical* feature of our humanity. What we *felt* we wanted—Infinitude—is not something it makes sense for us to want, not even in Metaphysics. (And in any case, even if we could somehow attain Infinitude, would we be *finally* satisfied?)

Our metaphysical longings are thus nothing but bittersweet illusions. Once they are exposed as such through painstaking critique, we might *embrace* our (transcendental) condition(s)—*embrace ourselves* for who we are. Effable Transcendental Quietism may thus transform our way of considering *ourselves* and our finitude. And it may do so by transforming our relationship with certain metaphysical propositions, to which we are irresistibly attracted when doing (Transcendental) Philosophy.

7.38 *The Nature of Philosophy*

This transformation in our self-conception is not only consequential for how we feel our finite condition, but also for our idea of Philosophy. Far from being an "end-of-philosophy Philosophy", (Effable) Transcendental Quietism is a different way of doing Philosophy. For the transcendental quietist, Philosophy does not advance metaphysical doctrines. Rather, it is just a work of clarification of the necessary features of our point of view and, thereby, a work of self-understanding.

It is telling that Kant anticipated, to an impressive extent, this idea of Philosophy. As he writes:

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[700] Kant and Wittgenstein respectively recognized this, but not *fully*, as sometimes they fell victim of the very same illusions they wanted to dispel. See discussion above.

[A]lthough for expansion of the role of the understanding in the field of pure cognitions *a priori*, hence as a doctrine, philosophy seems entirely unnecessary or rather ill-suited, since after all its previous attempts little or no territory has been won, yet as critique, in order to avoid missteps in judgment (*lapsus judicii*) in the use of the few pure concepts of the understanding that we have, philosophy with all of its perspicacity and art of scrutiny is called up. (A135/B174)

it is [thus] not suited to the nature of philosophy […] to strut about with a dogmatic gait […] [For] its aim [is that] of revealing the deceptions of a reason that misjudges its own boundaries and of bringing the self-conceit of speculation back to modest but thorough self-knowledge by means of a sufficient illumination of our concepts. In its transcendental efforts, therefore, reason [must frequently] look back and consider whether there might not be errors in [its] progress. (A735/B763)

Here, Kant is adamant that the main business of philosophy is not the dogmatic one of advancing doctrines, but rather the critical one of clarifying the transcendental limits of our cognition (e.g. the categories), thereby leading us to thorough *self-knowledge*. This is rather close to what the transcendent*al* quietist urges. Hence, the early Wittgenstein writes:

4.0031   All philosophy is a 'critique of language'.

4.112   Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.
           Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity. […]
           Philosophy does not result in 'philosophical propositions', but rather in the clarification of propositions.

4.114   It must set limits to what can be thought[.]

Work on philosophy […] is really more work on oneself. On one's own conception. On how one sees things. (And what one expects of them.)   (CV, p. 24)

However, as I have tried to show throughout the present work, there are also some fundamental differences between Kant and Wittgenstein's respective transcendental philosophies.

The critical-transcendental approach in philosophy is born out of the need to check whether Metaphysics is possible. The recognition of transcendental limits of our point of view may in fact help us in recognizing whether our metaphysical formulations are grounded. For Kant, insofar as these formulations appeal to concepts that *transcend* the limits of all possible human experience, they are *not* grounded. Metaphysics cannot be grounded on mere concepts alone, and so Transcendent Metaphysics is to be repudiated, after a work of conceptual clarification. Yet Kant ends up grounding Metaphysics upon the transcendent*al* conditions that make experience possible in the first place (e.g. space, time, and the categories). Instead of a Transcendent Metaphysics that goes beyond experience, we get a Transcendent*al* Metaphysics

of possible experience, namely (Effable) Transcendental Idealism.

Even though I regard Kant's view as coherent, I have sided with Wittgenstein, in arguing that Transcendental Philosophy's work of clarification of the transcendental conditions of our cognition should not be metaphysical. To be sure, even the transcendental quietist will be exercised *by* Metaphysics, insofar as he tries to understand its very sources. Yet an understanding of the sources of Metaphysics is *not*, on that account, a metaphysical understanding. It need not result in a metaphysical doctrine (*of any kind*).

What, then, are we left with? Was it all in vain? No. A philosophical understanding of Metaphysics, which is not a metaphysical understanding, is a novel understanding of our human point of view. We may feel our finite condition differently, in the light of a different conception of humanity. Our finitude suddenly appears *in a new light*. We won't feel *resigned*, but rather *liberated* by the understanding that Metaphysics only gives us the *illusion* of substantive knowledge.

That is not to say that Metaphysics is incoherent. Even if Metaphysics gives us the illusion of substantive knowledge, it does so by way of metaphysical *thought*. If I did not believe that Metaphysics, at least in some of its transcendental incarnations, is coherent, I probably would not have engaged *with* it. Indeed, as far as I can see, it is also possible to engage *in* Metaphysics, as Kant did by putting forward a transcendental metaphysical position (namely, his transcendental idealism). Yet if similar positions are at bottom unknowable *hypotheses*, and if they are destined to lead us to dissatisfaction and unhappiness for our condition, is it worth clinging to them, as if they were the only available alternative?

With the help of Wittgenstein, and as against Kant, I have answered this question in the negative. And yet… Wittgenstein was mistaken on a vital point, on which Kant saw far more clearly. A non-metaphysical understanding of the transcendental conditions of our cognition, and hence of our transcendental point of view, could not result in the *disappearance* of the problem of Metaphysics (cf. T, 6.521).[701] Metaphysics is not "mere nonsense", of which we may rid ourselves once we are done with it. The sources of Metaphysics lie too deep for a clarification of them to vaporize it. There is an ineliminable metaphysical illusion—a transcendental illusion, as Kant called it[702]—which is born out of the civil war between our thirst for knowledge and our capacity to think.

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[701] Compare Wittgenstein's later remark in the *Investigations*: "For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (PI, § 133; Wittgenstein's emphases).

[702] A297/B353-4.

As a result, the task of the transcendental philosopher will never be "definitive" or "complete". Metaphysical mirages will always come back to haunt us, in different forms. Indeed, the very emergence of Ineffable Transcendental Metaphysics, and particularly of Ineffable Transcendental Idealism, is testament to this. The transcendental quietist is called upon to dispel similar illusions, whenever they crop up. Yet his work of conceptual clarification never comes to an end. Ironically, he will be *quiet* on metaphysical matters, *without ever being idle*.

And that's the philosophical predicament more generally: finite human beings battling against potentially infinite conceptual illusions. The philosopher is the gardener of the mind. Each day anew she is confronted with invasive weeds, feeding on urges that lie deep within the human soil. She may feel resignation and let the garden rot. Or else she may dig deeper, *yet again and again*, to uproot the weeds. For only then, she may hope to plant different seeds. Only then, she may hope to shield the fragile tree of our humanity, and see it flourish.

Conclusion

In this work, I investigated the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics through the critical lenses of Kant and Wittgenstein. Specifically, I have asked whether the early Wittgenstein, as Kant before him, committed to Transcendental Idealism, as a doctrine meant to show that Metaphysics is in some way possible. I have argued that while

> (α) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher (or transcendentalist),
>
> (β) the early Wittgenstein is *not* an effable transcendental idealist, and
>
> (γ) the early Wittgenstein is *not* an ineffable transcendental idealist.

Hence, differently from Kant, the early Wittgenstein does *not* attempt to (dis)solve the problem of the possibility of Metaphysics by committing to Transcendental Idealism.

This, however, prompted the issue of what kind of transcendental philosopher the early Wittgenstein is, if not a transcendental idealist, and how his view may bear on the prospects of Metaphysics. In the final Chapter of the present work, I argued that

> (δ) the early Wittgenstein is a transcendental quietist,

who accepts transcendental conditions, refraining from commitment over their metaphysical nature and status. Indeed, *for the early Wittgenstein*, Metaphysics is simply nonsense, as is the whole of Philosophy (including his own). Still, his transcendental quietism is meant to lead us to recognize the transcendental conditions of sense.

This is a significant contribution to Wittgenstein scholarship for at least three reasons. First, my thesis demonstrates that a middle way is possible between anti-Kantian interpreters of the *Tractatus* (who take it that the early Wittgenstein is not a transcendentalist), and Kantian interpreters of the *Tractatus* (who take it that, since the early Wittgenstein is a transcendentalist, he must also be a transcendental idealist of some kind). This middle way, as I have argued, is a golden mean.

Second, my thesis demonstrates that the debate between realist and idealist interpretations of the *Tractatus* is ill-suited, since realists prioritise the world, whereas idealists prioritise language. I have argued that none of these options is available to the early Wittgenstein. No alleged priorities between language and reality are either said or shown. Rather, for Wittgenstein,

all we have in the end is the (transcendental) relation of language and the world, regarding which we must be silent.

Third, and relatedly, my thesis demonstrates that the debate between traditional and resolute readers of the *Tractatus* does not exhaust the systematic ways to assess Wittgenstein's engagement with Metaphysics. It is neither the case that, for Wittgenstein, quasi-propositional metaphysical truths cannot be said but are shown with the help of some nonsense (traditional reading), nor that Wittgenstein's say/show distinction is a "mock doctrine", so that all that can be shown, if anything at all, is the nonsensicality of certain strings of signs (resolute reading). In my interpretation of the early Wittgenstein, by processing Tractarian nonsense, we are perspicuously shown the transcendental conditions that make it possible for us to say all that we can say, but we are not therewith shown anything concerning their metaphysical nature and status.

These, then, are the contributions of the present work to Wittgenstein scholarship. However, as I conceive of it, this work more generally constitutes a contribution to contemporary debates about the nature of Transcendental Philosophy and its relationship to Metaphysics. In particular, in the Kant Part of the work (Part$_K$), I have given a general characterization of Transcendental Philosophy, clearly distinguishing it from Transcendental Idealism. And I have further argued that Metaphysics, at least in its transcendental guise, may be regarded as coherent and, thereby, *possible in a straightforward sense.* Still, in Chapter 7, I have argued that even though Transcendental Metaphysics is possible, it is not *advisable* to put forward transcendental metaphysical doctrines (whether effable or ineffable). On the contrary, on the final view I have sketched, namely Effable Transcendental Quietism, we should *suspend judgement* over the metaphysical nature and status of the transcendental conditions that we can see to be necessary for us to represent the world at all (even though we may *think* about metaphysical issues pertaining to these conditions.) This view may lead us to a more humane understanding of ourselves, and of (Transcendental) Philosophy at large, as a work of clarification and self-understanding.

GLOSSARY

In this Glossary you may find some, though not all, the definitions given throughout the work. In particular, I have restricted myself to those definitions that may be relevant for a general characterization of Transcendentalism and Transcendental Idealism.

TRANSCENDENTAL: Anything that is or concerns a necessary ground of the possibility of our representation of empirical reality, which is known a priori.

Such grounds are called TRANSCENDENTAL CONDITIONS.

TRANSCENDENTALISM: Any philosophical outlook that, starting from our representations of empirical reality ("from within"), recognizes their transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL FEATURES: Transcendental conditions *shared* by empirical reality and our representation of it.

IDEALISM: A metaphysical doctrine by which reality in some way *depends* upon the point of view of (one or more) Subjects.

PERSPECTIVE / POINT OF VIEW: A way of considering (seeing/thinking) things. Perspectives are such only relative to other perspectives. There may be external perspectives, belonging to different Subjects (e.g. humans vs. non-humans) and internal perspectives, belonging to the same Subject (e.g. the human Subject). All possible internal perspectives of a Subject, considered jointly, are *the* point of view of that Subject (i.e. its cognitive scheme).

PERSPECTIVISM (External and Internal): The broad philosophical view that there are different—at least two—fundamental perspectives. Perspectivisms can focus on external perspectives (External Perspectivism) or internal perspectives (Internal Perspectivism). For example, views by which humans and aliens have different points of view are forms of External Perspectivism; conversely, a view by which a human Subject can take different perspectives upon its point of view is a form of Internal Perspectivism.

TRANSCENDENTAL PERSPECTIVISM: A transcendental variant of Internal Perspectivism. In Transcendental Perspectivism, the human Subject can attain a non-empirical perspective over the transcendental conditions. This perspective may be merely logical (e.g.

Kant) or aesthetic (e.g. Wittgenstein).

TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM: A metaphysical doctrine by which the human Subject has a priori knowledge of the *dependence* of transcendental features upon its point of view. Such knowledge would require a particular kind of non-empirical perspective, which I call *extra*-empirical perspective, since it must range over a wider space than that of the ordinary empirical perspective. Not all non-empirical perspectives, however, are extra-empirical. Further, not all extra-empirical perspectives need to result in a form Idealism (they may result in Realism, or for that matter in Quietism).

EFFABLE TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM: A metaphysical doctrine by which the human Subject has *propositional* a priori knowledge that transcendental features *depend* upon its point of view. Such knowledge would require the human Subject to attain a (merely logical) extra-empirical perspective.

INEFFABLE TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM: A metaphysical doctrine by which the human Subject has *ineffable* a priori knowledge of the *dependence* of transcendental features upon its point of view. Such knowledge would require the human Subject to attain an (aesthetic) extra-empirical perspective.

QUIETISM: A non-doctrinal philosophical position that aims at calling into question, or even getting rid of, doctrinal metaphysical positions, by suspending judgement on them or, more generally, by practicing silence with respect to them.

TRANSCENDENTAL QUIETISM: A philosophical stance that accepts transcendental conditions, while refraining from advancing a metaphysical doctrine (effable or ineffable) on their metaphysical nature and status. Transcendental Quietism is a species of Transcendental Perspectivism (though the non-empirical perspective over the transcendental conditions need not be extra-empirical here).

EFFABLE TRANSCENDENTAL QUIETISM: A philosophical stance that accepts that there are transcendental conditions, while *suspending judgement* on their metaphysical nature and status. (Here, the non-empirical perspective is merely logical).

INEFFABLE TRANSCENDENTAL QUIETISM: A philosophical stance that accepts transcendental conditions, while *remaining silent* over their metaphysical status, questions about which cannot so much as arise. (Here, the non-empirical perspective is aesthetic).

TRANSCENDENTAL POSSIBILITY: The possibility of our representation of empirical reality, insofar as it is based on transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL NECESSITY: The (relational) necessity pertaining to the transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENT: Any argumentative procedure that (*i*) starting "from within" aims at (*ii*) recognizing transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL ONTOLOGY: A philosophical investigation that (*i*) starting "from within" aims at (*ii*) recognizing transcendental features.

TRANSCENDENTAL CONSTRAINTS: A species of transcendental features that *constrains* empirical reality to our point of view (Transcendental Idealism) or our point of view to empirical reality (Transcendental Realism).

TRANSCENDENTAL METAPHYSICS: A philosophical investigation that (*i*) starting "from within" aims at (*ii*) recognizing transcendental constraints.

TRANSCENDENTAL RULES: A priori rules that are necessary for the possibility of *thought* about empirical reality.

TRANSCENDENTAL LOGIC: A philosophical investigation that (*i*) starting "from within" aims at (*ii*) recognizing transcendental rules.

TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT: An a priori feeling of thinking, that is (*i*) experienced "from within" as the (*ii*) recognition of the unity of the transcendental conditions, which is itself a transcendental condition.

TRANSCENDENTAL ETHICS: A philosophical investigation that (*i*) starting "from within" aims at (*ii*) recognizing necessary conditions of the good life, which are at the same time (related to) transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL LIMITS: See transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL LIMITATIONS: Transcendental limits that can be known (whether propositionally or non-propositionally) to be metaphysically "restrictive".

TRANSCENDENTAL NONSENSE: Nonsensical strings of signs that masquerade as sense-endowed propositions about the transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL THOUGHT EXPERIMENT: A thought experiment aimed at recognition of transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL DIALLELUS: a skeptical circle whereby the ("proofs" that there are) transcendental conditions are supposed to be grounded by transcendental conditions.

TRANSCENDENTAL TRUTH: our cognition's agreement with, or fulfilment of, the transcendental conditions.

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A/B   *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge, 1998: Cambridge University Press.

Anthr   *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*. In: G. Zöller and R. B. Louden (eds.). Anthropology, History, and Education. Cambridge, 2007: Cambridge University Press.

Anthr$_L$ *Lectures on Anthropology*. Edited and translated by R. B. Louden. Cambridge, 2012: Cambridge University Press.

BL   *The Bloomberg Logic*. In: M. Young (ed.). Lectures on Logic. Cambridge, 1992: Cambridge University Press.

C   *Correspondence*. Edited by E. Zweig. Cambridge, 1999: Cambridge University Press.

CPJ   *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Edited by P. Guyer. Cambridge, 2002: Cambridge University Press.

CPR   *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated and edited by M. Gregor. Cambridge, 2015: CUP.

D   *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*. In: D. Walford (ed.). Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770. Cambridge, 1992: Cambridge University Press.

G   *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated and edited by M. Gregor. Cambridge. CUP.

Idea   *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*. Translated by A. Wood. In: Kant's Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide. Cambridge: CUP.

JL   *The Jäsche Logic*. In: Lectures on Logic (see above).

Log/D   *The Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*. In: Lectures on Logic (see above).

LoM   *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Edited by K. Ameriks and S. Naragon. Cambridge, 1997: Cambridge University Press.

MoM   *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated and edited by M. Gregor. Cambridge, 1991: Cambridge University Press.

OAD   *On a discovery whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one*. In: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781.

Orient	*What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?* In: A. Wood and G. Di Giovanni (eds.) Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. Cambridge: CUP.
Prol	*Prolegomena to any future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as science.* In: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781 (see above).
R	*Notes and Fragments.* Edited by P. Guyer. Cambridge, 2005: Cambridge University Press.
Settlement	*Settlement of a mathematical dispute founded on misunderstanding.* In: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781 (see above).
WRL	*What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?* In: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781 (see above).

Wittgenstein

BB	*The Blue and the Brown Books.* New York, 1965: Harper Collins.
BT	*The Big Typescript.* Edited and translated by C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue. Oxford, 2005: Blackwell.
CV	*Culture and Value.* Revised edition. Edited by G. H. von Wright. Oxford, 1998: Wiley Blackwell.
LC30-33	*Lectures, Cambridge 1930-1933.* From the Notes of G. E. Moore. Edited by D. Stern et alii. Cambridge, 2016: Cambridge University Press.
L&C	*Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief.* Edited by C. Barrett. Berkeley: University of California Press.
LoE	*Lecture on Ethics.* Edited by E. Zamuner et alii. Oxford, 2014: Wiley Blackwell.
MS	Manuscripts in Wittgenstein's Nachlass. Bergen Electronic Edition.
NB	*Notebooks 1914–1916.* Edited by G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe. New York and Evanston, 1961: Harper and Row.
NdM	*Notes dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway.* In: *Notebooks 1914 – 1916.*
OC	*On Certainty.* Edited by G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford, 1969: Blackwell.
PI	*Philosophical Investigations.* English translation by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
PG	*Philosophical Grammar.* Edited by Rush Rhees. English Translation by Anthony Kenny. Oxford, 1974: Basil Blackwell.

PR	*Philosophical Remarks*. Edited by Rush Rhees. Oxford, 1975: Basil Blackwell.
PT	*Prototractatus, An Early Version of Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* Edited by B. McGuinness and G. H. von Wright. English translation by B. McGuinness and D. Pears. London, 1971: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
SRLF	'Some Remarks on Logical Form'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society.* Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 9, Knowledge, Experience, and Realism (1929), 162-171.
T	*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* English translation by D. Pears and B. McGuinness. London and New York, 1974: Routledge.
WLC	*Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1930-1932.* Edited by D. Lee. Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield.
WWK	*Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle.* Edited by B. McGuinness. Oxford, 1979: Basil Blackwell.

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