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# Philosophy as Rational Anthropology

*A Perspective on Kant and Wittgenstein*

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## *I.* Introduction

To the minds of many commentators, there appears to exist tantalising similarities embedded in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein, waiting to be clarified. However, continued disagreement as to how these similarities are to be articulated, and consequently quite what they should amount to, has led some to suspect such musings to be a sophistical mirage. Additionally, further complicating their comparison is also the interpretive disagreements that have persisted in relation to the writings of both philosophers, respectively. Nevertheless, both figures are undoubtedly responsible for framing large swathes of modern philosophical thought – perhaps none more so than Kant in the course of his *Critique of Pure Reason.* As Putnam attests, "almost all the problems of philosophy attain the form in which they are of real interest only with the work of Kant."[1] Despite this accolade however, it can be stated with only the odd contrarian objection that in their respective attempts to establish *Transcendental Idealism* in the course of the *Critique,* and *Logical Atomism* through the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, that both Kant's and Wittgenstein's doctrines constitute technical failures. That being said, both figures also sought to change our fundamental understanding of the task of philosophy, and in this sense, their works should remain valuable points of reference in the continuing discourse on meta-philosophy. Hence, it is here considered in what sense this latter perspective of them has been retained in the contemporary reflections upon either philosopher. For, might it be possible that part of what motivates the acutely nuanced and conflicting interpretations derives from an obsequious scholarly commitment to saturate the intellectual space surrounding either doctrine? Perhaps. In that, so alluring has the prospect of a definitive elucidation of either philosophers' work become that no interpretative stone is being left unturned, despite the strenuous cataloguing of references required to lift each new interpretive claim beyond mere speculation, or regardless of the mounds of secondary literature that now demand climbing in order to simply join the expedition. As such, rather than to engage at length with divergent readings, it is the intention of this thesis to consider what it is possible to garnish from an interrogation of both philosophers regarding the appropriate task of philosophy as a whole.[2] Both Kant and Wittgenstein, through their respective *Copernican* and *Linguistic* turns (CPR A11/B25, A735/B763, A850-1/B878-9; TLP 4.112, 6.53)[3] radically reoriented the prevailing theories of knowledge in their time, ushering in successive movements of increasing metaphysical and epistemological modesty since the Enlightenment; and with it, a gradual procession toward a self-reflexive and self-critical philosophical post-modernity.[4]

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[1] Putman, H., 1992. *Realism with a Human Face*, p.3.

[2] As Kant himself warns, about the "apparent contradictions" in the first *Critique*, these can "easily be resolved by those who have mastered the idea of the whole" (B*xliv*). I would direct the reader to a passage in Yovel's *Kant's Philosophical Revolution* to elucidate Kant's meaning here: "The critique of reason in the negative sense refutes reason's ability to draw from itself a rationalist theory of the soul (psychology), of the world (cosmology), and of God (theology). The adjective "rationalist" is used in this context negatively, as knowledge derived from reason alone without the participation of the senses; hence, from a critical viewpoint the positions promoted by these alleged "rational" sciences are rather irrational. Does this mean that the concept of totality that underlies the Dialectic has no positive use? Kant's answer: no, there is a positive use, but it is *regulative* and not constitutive. The various concepts of totality cannot take part in the constitution of the objective world, yet they have a vital role in marking the open-ended horizons that call for the unending extension of our empirical knowledge of the immanent world, and the deepening of its systematic coherence." (2018, p. 101)

[3] For direct references from the works of both Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein, common abbreviations will be given as in-text references, with the source editions stated in the bibliography.

[4] The term 'postmodern' was first applied in a philosophical setting in Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* (translated to English as *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, 1984). Lyotard states, "I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward meta-narratives" (xxiv); these being the large-scale, universal theories that sought to characterise the progress of history or define the knowability of the world through science. With the dissolution of these meta-narratives comes the compartmentalisation of knowledge and the loss of epistemic coherence between disciplines. As Lyotard reflects, "Lamenting the 'loss of meaning' in postmodernity boils down to mourning the fact that knowledge is no longer principally narrative" (*ibid,* 26). The *Critique,* in its attempts to

To successfully retrace this procession, this thesis will consider the perils of relevancy facing contemporary philosophy (II); subsequently detailing the developments in perspective made by Kant in the course of the *Critique*, amongst other works (III); the 19th-century response to neo-Kantianism by Frege, Russell, and the earlier Wittgenstein (IV); before returning to isolate the aspects of Kant's methodology (V) that remain relevant to grounding the later Wittgenstein's developments in his meta-philosophical perspective (VI); resulting in a concluding endorsement of the present expression of philosophy as rational anthropology expressed in contemporary literature (VII).

## *II.* The Problem of Practice for Philosophy

Since Socrates, western philosophy has pursued under different guises the nature of our reality, its objects, and our proximity to them; whilst at the same time seeking to analyse, define, and explain the concepts that constitute our assumed knowledge of reality so revealed. Recognition of this distinction – between the conceptual and empirical inquiries of philosophy – will be of paramount concern throughout the course of this discussion. Observe, that for any given inquiry into object *X,* of the form '*What is X?'*, the *meaning* of such an interrogative sentence depends on both the contingent facts considered in the novel identification of *X(s),* typically established through the experimental observations of empirical science; as well as the concepts that are then subsequently employed to populate the term '*X'* as a result. Hence, by extension, the *truth* of an assertoric sentence '*X is …'*, given in response, likewise depends on either the results of empirical investigation into the phenomena *X* or the set of concepts that stand under '*X'* in ascribing certain properties to it. However, concepts are not synonymous with meanings. Rather, to specify what a given term '*X' means* is often to specify which concepts are connoted by '*X',* and vice versa.[5] Given here in the interest of prescience, it will suffice for now to simply acknowledge the presence of this distinction as an undercurrent that will pull in the direction of our understanding the task philosophy as being concerned with conceptual analysis, not phenomenal inquiry. Yet, given the aeons in which philosophy has appeared to dance down both sides of the aisle one might reasonably ask, why impose such a restriction now?

Philosophy, in likeness to the once great Byzantine Empire, has for centuries seen its authority decline. Accepting serfdom under subjects it once consisted of and ceding territory to the advances of its institutional neighbours. Through the epistemological encroachment of the empirical sciences, and the maturation of the analytic tradition, the historical competencies of philosophy have been restricted from without and eroded from within. Beginning in the eighteenth century, an intensifying of specialised techniques and practices of empirical inquiry in disciplines traditionally residing under the umbrella of 'philosophy' increasingly sought institutional emancipation for themselves as independent disciplines. Most recently perhaps in the case formal semantics and the cognitive sciences. This "kicking upstairs" of empirical method to the specialised sciences, certainly limited philosophy's epistemic reach, but need not mark it out as redundant.[6] Glock keenly remarks that "disciplinary secession from philosophy is no panacea for philosophical perplexities".[7] So, like Byzantium's Black Sea, shelter may exist for philosophy in retreat, by its ability to fashion practitioners adeptly suited to the task of conceptual analysis, as a challenge that persists in all subjects despite their liberation by empirical inquiry. As G.E. Moore articulates, many of the "difficulties and disagreements" that have persisted throughout the philosophical tradition are due primarily "to the attempt to answer questions without first discovering precisely *what* question it is which you desire to answer." The consequence being one's argumentative condemnation, "constantly endeavouring to prove the "Yes" or "No" will answer

ground the universality of certain knowledge across cultural boundaries, in the nature of human reason, speaks to this contemporary issue directly. Though the disillusion from metanarrative will not be discussed directly, it stands as another point of validation in encouraging a continued engagement with Kant and the *Critique.*

[5] See Glock, H.J., 2017. *Impure conceptual analysis*, pp. 79-82 for a more extensive discussion of this distinction.

[6] Austin, J.L., 1970. *Philosophical Papers*, p. 231.

[7] Glock, H.J., 2017. *Impure conceptual analysis*, pp. 81-82.

questions, to which *neither* answer is correct." The suggestion here is that this necessity, to be able to understand how to construct and present the right questions, questions that will direct our empirical investigations best toward knowledge yet to be acquired, requires being able to order and articulate what we purport to already know. Such a task, according to Moore, requires the "hard work" of conceptual "analysis and distinction" – a labour best suited to the skillset of philosophers no doubt.[8]

So, lest philosophy is to remain as it increasingly stands in the 'post-analytic era', either destined since W.V. Quine's devastation of Kant's *synthetic/analytic* distinction to be granted practice as mere *scientific naturalism* – the reductive logical, epistemological and metaphysical "underlabourer" to the exact sciences;[9] or to be falsely granted a similar empirical charter to that of the natural sciences, through a revival of *metaphysical essentialism* – in which 'realist semantics' purports to be capable of ascertaining Lockean 'real essences', predicated of natural kind terms – once again encouraging philosophy to reach for the ontological top-shelf for which Kant had given it a slap on the wrist.[10] In both instances, the prevailing view is that philosophy ought to concern itself with discerning *reality*, rather than structuring and clarifying concepts. But as Glock insists, "In strict terms, the task of philosophy is *second-order* investigation into the *conditions of application* for any concept; (by contrast) the task of the empirical sciences then, is to ascertain whether such concepts *do in fact apply,* and *how the instances of these concepts* come to satisfy these conditions of application."[11] The role of philosophy by this understanding is then neither in competition nor in service to science, but rather sits alongside it. Referring to this view as Kant's "regulative idea", Yovel concurs that philosophy "deals with the products of the scientific understanding, which it seeks to endow with second-order patterns of order, organisation, and classification that do not affect the constitutions of objects but allow for more unity, continuity, and affinity between the separate domains of science (physics, chemistry, biology, geology, etc.), between the various natural laws, and between the many species and genera discovered in nature."[12] So, whilst science endeavours to contribute to human knowledge, philosophy plays a commensurate role in the curation of human understanding. To caveat, science and philosophy both engage in the construction of novel concepts of course, but the division of labour between second and first-order considerations, upon observation, remains. In the case of science and mathematics, concept creation is required when describing novel empirical observations of phenomena, perhaps most feverishly during the establishment of new paradigms at the point of revolution. The legitimacy of prior concepts is called into question once novel data begins to strain and destabilise the underlying links between concepts that have previously described a given phenomenon. Take for example Hippocrates' theory of the four bodily humours, used to describe differences in age, gender, emotions, and dispositions for centuries until finally uprooted by the bodily investigations of Andreas Vesalius (1543) and William Harvey (1628). Our concepts for describing the body changed because our understanding of the body *as object* changed through empirical investigation. Meanwhile, philosophy – to take Kant's *synthetic/analytic* and *a priori/a posteriori* as examples – can also reasonably coin terms, but such terms should serve to clarify the respective logical and epistemic status of a particular belief, as a second-order investigation, not with revealing reality through the empirical investigation of phenomena. That being said, Kant is also sceptical of coining new words, believing such attempts as constituting "a claim to legislation in language that seldom succeeds" (B368f.) Yet, having appeared to lament the restriction of philosophical practice, this may appear as merely another, but it is essential to grasping the appropriate task of philosophy. So, in the course of what follows it is intended to be shown the necessity of conforming to such a distinction to establish the legitimacy of philosophical practice, revealed by means of tracing the intellectual insights of Kant and Wittgenstein.

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[8] Moore, G.E., 1903. *The refutation of idealism*, p. vi.

[9] As Quine (1951) expresses, "a boundary between analytic and synthetic statements simply has not been found. That there is such a distinction to be drawn at all is an unempirical dogma, a metaphysical article of faith." (p.37)

[10] Locke, J., 1847. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; p.3. Additionally, see also Kripke, S. 1980. *Naming and Necessity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

[11] Glock, H.J., 2017. *Impure conceptual analysis,* p.80.

[12] Yovel, Y., 2018, p.102.

Yet, as has been alluded to, the body of scholarship comparing both philosophers' works in conjunction is riddled with interpretive disagreement. Whether it is recognising the strong Kantian motifs in Wittgenstein – early or late – as in the efforts of Garver, Hacker, Pears, Schwyzer and Stenius;[13] or choosing to selectively modernise Kant – as in the analytical sanitizing of P.F. Strawson and Jonathan Bennett, the amassing of contradictory catalogues of quotations defies consensus. Consequently, the following discussion will attempt, where possible, to pass over interpretative conflicts that persist in contemporary discussion regarding the *doctrines* of the *Critique* and the *Tractatus,* both in isolation *from* and in conjunction *with* one another, in order to examine the subordinate and complementary conception of the appropriate task of philosophy implicit in the writings of both authors.[14] Whilst this is no doubt an elusive perspective to acquire, testimony to such a perspective can be found in the work of Peter Hacker, who in 1986 – having rescinded his earlier 1972 Kantian interpretation of Wittgenstein – nevertheless maintained that "more than any other philosophers, Kant and Wittgenstein were concerned with the nature of philosophy itself and sought to curb its metaphysical pretensions by clarifying its status and circumscribing what one may hope for in philosophical investigation. Both saw philosophy and metaphysical *pretensions of reason* as at least a large part of the subject, and the eradication of such illusions as a major goal of their work."[15] To leaf further through Hackers anthology, we find Glock's assessment mirrored as "both agreed that philosophy…is not continuous with the natural or mathematical sciences. Both argued that it is a second-order, reflective discipline."[16] So, though this discussion will not deal in detail with the nuanced similarities and dissimilarities comparable between both writers, it is perhaps worth acknowledging that such a convergence of view does beg the question: what familiarity did Wittgenstein have "with the Kantian solution to the problems of philosophy"? (CV10)

As a philosophical work, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* scarcely requires an introduction. Whether one is concerned with the restriction of the bounds of reason; the reorientation in understanding the objective through the 'subject'; the concepts of *synthetic, analytic, a priori*, and *a posteriori*; the refutations of theological proofs for the existence of God; mathematics as the foundational language of natural science; or the transcendental conception of Descartes *cogito*, the first *Critique* is undoubtedly the founding and most influential work of philosophical modernity. Hence, it is immediately striking that despite this, Wittgenstein appears to have given only peripheral dues to Kant's writings. Having been known to have read the first *Critique* as a prisoner-of-war at Cassino.[17] But subsequently omitting Kant from a detailed list of his philosophical influences noted in 1931.[18] Indeed, in the pre-*Tractatus Notebooks 1914 – 1916*, we find Kant only mentioned once (NB 19.10.14). However, a significant clue in unravelling the origins of Wittgenstein's Kantian themes makes itself apparent through his direct allusions to Schopenhauer (cf. TLP 5.6 – 5.641; 6.4 – 6.45).[19] Further, as von Wright recalls being told by Wittgenstein in person, "he had read Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* in his youth and that his first philosophy was a Schopenhauerian epistemological idealism".[20] So, though Wittgenstein omits of any strong influence from Kant, an indirect avenue of influence does appear to exist through

[13] With a continuation of this endeavour visible in the work of Arthur Collins, Paul Guyer, Robert Hanna, and Kenneth Westphal in more recent years.
[14] This extending in Wittgenstein's case to his later writings in *Philosophical Investigations.*
[15] Hacker, P.M.S., 1986. *Insight and illusion: Themes in the philosophy of Wittgenstein*, p. *ix;* pp. 206-14.
[16] Hacker, P.M.S., 2013. *Kant and Wittgenstein: The Matter of Transcendental Arguments*, p. 34.
[17] Sources appear to differ regarding the specific date of this reading (Monk 1990, p. 158 (*1918*); Hacker 2013, p.32 (*1919*)). However, regardless of the timing of this reading specifically, it is safe to say that it would have had little effect on the contents of the *Tractatus*, as it appears that no edits were made to its manuscript between this time and its initial publication in 1921.
[18] In which Wittgenstein includes "Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa" (CV19).
[19] McGuinness, B., 1988. *Wittgenstein, A Life: Young Ludwig*, p. 38.
[20] Von Wright, G.H., 1984. *A biographical sketch*, p.6.

Schopenhauer's not insignificantly Kantian doctrines.[21] However, to begin to understand quite where Wittgenstein builds on the insights of Kant into the appropriate task of philosophy will initially demand our familiarising ourselves with the sage of Königsberg himself.

### *III.* Kant's Ambitions for the *Critique of Pure Reason*

Kant maintained that every great advancement in humanities' intellectual progression arises from a "revolution in our mode of thinking" (B*xi*), elevating a particular domain of knowledge to the level of an apodictic science. In Kant's day, mathematics and physics had ascended to such a seat, with their apparent ability to demonstrate and quantify the necessary relations existing between objective states of affairs through laws of necessity then beyond question.[22] Kant's intentions for the first *Critique* was to secure this same revolution for what he thought to be the legitimate claims of metaphysics, but to do so would require subjecting philosophy to a trial. As Kant describes, the *Critique* was "to institute a court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions, and this not by mere decrees but according to its own eternal and unchangeable laws" (A*xi–xii*). Following Locke and Hume, Kant was concerned with rejecting what he considered to be the "*dogmatism*" of traditional (transcendent) metaphysics, exemplified by the rationalist schools of Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten; idealists, whom for Kant, sought to grant human reason knowledge it could not conceivably possess (A3/B7).[23] That is not to suggest that Kant was not sympathetic however, to the temptations of pursuing knowledge of objects beyond the limits of our cognitive faculties. Rather, he saw it as almost an inevitable pitfall of human nature. For "reason has this peculiar fate in one species of its cognitions which it cannot dismiss, since they are given to it as problems by the very nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason…The battlefield of these endless controversies is called metaphysics" (A*vii–viii*).

The first *Critique* aspired to elevate philosophy beyond the "random groping" (B*vii*) of traditional metaphysics, whilst at the same time seeking to establish what Kant considered to be the legitimate claims of metaphysics, and so grant it the status of a "thorough science" (A*ix*). Thus, whilst dismissing the misunderstandings of prior metaphysics, Kant also sought to defend his own critical, or scientific metaphysics, against Locke's empiricism and Hume's scepticism, in their respective denial of the possibility of all synthetic *a priori* knowledge. Like the synthetic *a priori* propositions of mathematics, and the subsequent proofs on which Newtonian physics depends, Kant believed the path to a truly scientific metaphysics could be established by defending its right to make synthetic *a priori* claims – albeit in the *Critique's* restricted experiential domain. Explicitly then, this was the central task of the *Critique*: To answer in the affirmative the question – are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible? To have answered this question would subsequently determine whether it was possible to establish metaphysics as a science – as was Kant's intention (*Proleg.* 4: 365-71). By synthetic, Kant intends a proposition that is neither *analytic* nor self-contradictory (A150-6). Of *analytic* propositions, Kant states that if "affirmative, I only predicate of a concept what is already contained in it; if it is negative, I only exclude from it its opposite" (A154). So, for Kant's synthetic *a priori* judgments the predicate, independent of experience, asserts something that is neither contained in, nor stands in contradiction to, the subject.

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[21] This being perhaps unsurprising, given Schopenhauer's reverence for the *Critique* as "the most important book that has ever been written in Europe" (cf. Höffe, O., 2010, p. xv).

[22] What had allowed mathematics (more specifically Euclidean geometry) to do this in Kant's view was that it was derived synthetic *a priori* from the "pure intuition" (B15-16). Likewise, Newtonian physics had ascended on the basis of mathematical proofs in kind.

[23] To substantiate earlier remarks, the Critical Kant saw the scope of philosophy more modestly than thinkers of the 'Age of Enlightenment' and earlier German Idealism, characterising these earlier positions as achieving the mere "semblance of science", and their claims only the "delusion of knowledge" (cf. Höffe, O., 2010, p. 3). Kant famously credits Hume in the Prolegomena for waking him from his own dogmatic slumber prior to his Critical Period (*Proleg.* 4: 258-59).

Accordingly, Kant believed that all previous systems of metaphysics had failed to demonstrate how particular synthetic *a priori* judgements regarding nature could be known – but believed certain propositions could be. Such judgements included the laws of causality or the persistence of substance through material change. Yet, how is it that we could know such things to be true, independent of sensory experience? If such knowledge was to be granted more than Hume's conception of them as mere projections of associative habits, they would have to be derived separately from experience – since Kant followed Hume in stating the contingency of experiential knowledge.[24] Hence, Kant needed to map out a middle ground for his metaphysics as science, choosing to craft his defence for synthetic *a priori* claims through an appeal to the modest and restricted domain of *possible* experience (A783/B811) – knowledge which pertained rather to the *modes* of our knowledge of objects rather than to the objects themselves (A12/B15); whilst distancing himself from the transcendent claims of traditional metaphysics. Kant's radical solution was in believing that the synthetic *a priori* knowledge we could acquire should concern the structural forms our mind imposes on objects as a precondition of our experience of them. "Nothing in a priori knowledge can be ascribed to objects save what the thinking subject derives from itself" (B*xxiii*); for, "we can know a priori of things only what we ourselves put into them" (B*xviii*). In defining this restricted domain, Kant can be understood as bifurcating prior metaphysics into two parts.[25] Of the legitimate restricted domain of metaphysical enquiry – the first part – Kant states that the *Critique* "promises to metaphysics the secure course of a science in its *first part* where it concerns itself with concepts a priori to which corresponding objects appropriate to them can be given in experience" (*ibid*, italics added). As for 'transcendent' metaphysics and its dogged epistemic pursuit of God, freedom, immortality, and the soul, Kant discredits it as folly, concluding that "we can never get beyond the boundaries of possible experience" (B*xix*).[26] Hence, Kant's position in the *Critique* attempts to balance the opposing metaphysical and epistemological extremes of his contemporaries, with his success dependent on resolving this question: how are the synthetic *a priori* judgements (of this restricted *first part* of metaphysics) possible?

The balance beam Kant employs to walk the tightrope between these opposing extremes comes in the form of a reversal in our understanding of how objects, or objective being, is constituted. Since Plato, the nature of spatio-temporal objects had traditionally stood anterior to and independent from the human mind – and so dictated the very structure of our knowledge. Any knowledge of the empirical world appeared to logically follow from our investigation into it, and hence the form of our knowledge must subsequently reflect the form of the world in kind. But according to Kant's thinking such an orientation requires inverting. Hence, the structures and patterns of the empirical world are not derived from the objects that appear to populate it, but are rather conceived *a priori* – free from, or prior to – our empirical experience, through the *a priori* forms of our intuition and the categories of the understanding.[27] Indeed, amongst these intuitions are our forms of time and space themselves, and

[24] Commonly known as Hume's "problem of Induction". See Hume, D. 1739/2003. *A Treatise on Human Nature.* Vol. I, part iii, section 6.

[25] This partition is most explicitly stated in the course of his *Lectures on Metaphysics,* when Kant distinguishes between different parts of metaphysics from the perspective of possible experience, as "in cosmology and also in ontology there are propositions which have objects in experience, and also those which do not – hence the critique of reason must assume quite different basic propositions with respect to its immanent as opposed to its transcendent use. We have classified metaphysics into the part which contains the immanent use of reason and that which contains the transcendent" (LM 29: 768; also see 29: 793-94).

[26] A later passage perhaps serves to exemplify Kant's opinions on pursuing this 'second part' of metaphysics: "Thus the famous ontological (Cartesian) proof… is so much trouble and labour lost, and a human being can no more become richer in insight from mere ideas than a merchant could in resources if he wanted to improve his financial state by adding a few zeros to his cash balance"(A602/B630). This being a criticism of rational psychology, in its claim to knowledge of the soul as a simple and substantial thing-in-itself (A341-405/B399-432).

[27] "How is nature possible in the formal sense, as the sum total of the rules to which all appearances must be subject if they are to be thought as connected in one experience? The answer cannot come out otherwise than: it is possible only by means of the constitution of our understanding, in accordance with which all these representations of sensibility are necessarily referred to one consciousness, and through which, first, the characteristic manner of our

hence spatio-temporal sensible objects are as such mind-dependent phenomena. Though we receive sensory data from the external world – and thus do not create it *ex nihilo* – the world acquires its form, as we comprehend it, from a transcendental synthesis of sensory data. The very unity of experiential objects is afforded through "the act of combining different representations and grasping their multiplicity in one cognition" (A77/B103), an ability Kant justifies as possible *a priori* through a repurposing of Descartes *cogito,* or the unity of the "I think" (B131).[28]

Objectivity is then not something that characterises objects as they are independent of their interaction with the mind, but is rather radically reinterpreted in Kant's view, to describe the process whereby the understanding alone synthesises objects, and so governs the necessary laws and relations that obtain between states of affairs as they appear to us. It is from this synthesis that we constitute empirical reality. This is Kant's revolutionary *Copernican turn*.[29] So, in a manner of speaking, despite the Copernican reversal of the Ptolemaic system – so invoked – forever diminishing our *physical* importance amongst the starry heavens, Kant's redefining of our *metaphysical* place in it certainly carries with it more than enough gravitas to compensate. The objective nature of our world is, by this view, radically redefined through the subject, with the now *subjective* definition of objective epistemic claims dependent on intersubjective reliability. Since, one can be assured of their knowledge of the world, not through any direct access to its objects, but because our presumed knowledge of its objects *as appearances*, "holds for everyone as long as they can be said to possess reason" (B848). Thus, the view of metaphysics Kant seeks to establish through the *Critique* is inherently *anthropocentric*; seeking to reject the notion of philosophy as capable of only acting in subordination to the exact sciences, as scientific naturalism pursued under mathematics and physics.[30] The philosophical doctrine Kant lays out to establish this critical metaphysics he terms "transcendental idealism" (A369, B519),[31] with the *Critique* envisioned as a "propaedeutic (preparation)" work, necessary to secure the objective validity of non-analytically, non-logically necessary, synthetic *a priori* propositions as the foundation of all scientific theories of mathematics and physics governed by transcendental laws (B869; cf. B25, B310-11, B878).[32]

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thinking, namely by means of rules, is possible, and then, by means of these rules, experience is possible – which is to be wholly distinguished from insight into objects in themselves." (*Proleg.* 4: 318)

[28] Implicit in this idea was the belief that all our perceptions are constructed from mental images (referred to as "representations" by Kant; an idea not dissimilar to Hume and Descartes "ideas"). Consequently, as objects are constructed by the understanding as a result of the *a priori* unity of the "I think", Kant states, "The 'I think' must be able to accompany all my representations" (B131), and hence, "'I Think' is thus the sole text of rational psychology, from which it is to develop its entire wisdom" (A343/B401). But it is also worth noting Kant's lack of clarity handing the "I think", as Hacker does, noting that "Kant equivocates between characterizing the 'I think' as a *concept* (although not a concept signifying a thinking being in general (A354)), and characterizing it as a *judgement* (although by itself it has no content). It is not a category, but it belongs to the table of categories in as much as it is the 'vehicle of all concepts' – serving only 'to introduce all our thought as belonging to consciousness' (A341/B400)." It is "a representation that another representation is within me" and, "the form of apperception, which belongs to and preceded every experience" (A354). So, to Kant it appears as both *form* and *possible accompaniment* to all his experiences – but more will be considered on this point later in the discussion.

[29] "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 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." (B*xvi*) Though Kant does not strictly speak himself of it as a 'Copernican Turn', he nevertheless does refer to a "changed point of view" in the context of a discussion of Copernicus, hence the colloquial expression.

[30] This in stark contrast to Wilfred Sellars famous characterisation of mathematics and physics as "the measure of all things." Sellars, W., 1956/1997. *Empiricism and the philosophy of mind,* p.173.

[31] Kant suggests in the *Prolegomena* that it would have been preferable to term it 'formal idealism', or 'critical idealism' (*Proleg.* 4: 337, 375).

[32] By 'propaedeutic', Kant does not intend the *Critique* to be understood as containing an incomplete system for transcendental philosophy, as the likes of Reinhold, Fichte, and Hegel appear to have presumed in their subjugation of the *Critique* under systems they themselves sort to construct. On the contrary, Kant contests

Our mental representations are by Kant said to be *transcendental* owing to the fact that, although empirically triggered, they are derived from our cognitive capacities (A11/B25). The objects we cognise are then said to be *ideal* due to their mind-dependent spatiotemporal form, and hence are never directly representative of *things-in-themselves*, or *noumena* (A369; *Proleg*. 4: 293 – 4:375). Putting the doctrines of representational transcendentalism and cognitive idealism together, we arrive at Kant's profoundly anthropocentric demarcation of the bounds of knowledge. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we distinguish Kant's transcendental idealism, as he does, from both Berkeley's phenomenal, or "dogmatic" idealism – in its association with immaterialism, by which it "boldly denies whatever transcends the sphere of sensuous intuition" (B499) as "merely imaginary" (B274); and likewise from Cartesian sceptical, or "problematic" idealism – which Kant keenly recognised as being an inevitability of empiricism (B434), through our supposed "incapacity for proving an existence outside us" (B275). Distinguishing his own idealism from these previous accounts then, Kant characterises them as such: "By an [traditional] idealist, therefore, one must understand not someone who denies the existence of external objects of sense, but rather someone who only does not admit that it is cognized through immediate perception and infers from this that we can never be fully certain of their reality from any possible experience." (A369) Transcendental idealism necessarily involved the refutation of both prior variants of idealism, in its commitment to empirical realism, as Kant "grants to matter, as appearances, a reality which need not be inferred, but is immediately perceived"(A371), insisting that "empirical realism is beyond doubt, i.e., to our outer intuitions there corresponds something real in space." (A375)

Having liberated our knowledge of universal and necessary truths from any conformity to external objects through the *Copernican turn*, Kant must further show how the concepts of *synthetic* knowledge, and thus ampliative knowledge, are necessarily linked – if this is indeed not due to our prior acquaintance with *things-in-themselves* directly. As noted, Kant rather ingeniously crafts this link by appealing to the *possibility* of experience (A783/B811). In the course of the 'Transcendental Deduction of the Categories', Kant asserts that the appearance of objects as they are presented to us by the understanding "must stand under conditions of the necessary unity of apperception" (A110).[33] Owing to this, 'Experience' – Kant averred – must consist of a "twofold" unity. First, the unity of the object given in our intuition must be synthesised into the perception of a unified object. But further, there must be a unity of consciousness in the experiencing subject – in me – across time. My experience must be such that it is self-ascribable to a single persisting subject – namely, to myself. Yet, "[t]his persistent thing, however, cannot be something in me, since my own existence in time can first be determined only through this persistent thing." (B275) Kant thus paints a cyclical relationship between the positions of transcendental idealism of *things-in-themselves* and empirical realism of appearances. "The transcendental idealist, [contrary to traditional idealists] can be an empirical realist, hence, as he is called, a dualist**,** i.e., he can concede the existence of matter without going beyond mere self-consciousness and assuming something more than the certainty of representation in me, hence the

explicitly "the presumption of claiming that I have intended simply to provide a *propaedeutic* to transcendental philosophy rather than the *system* of this philosophy itself". Kant, I., 1922. *Notice concerning Fichte's 'Science of Knowledge'*. AA, XII: 370f; B27.

[33] Origin of Apperception: this particular quote exposes the lineage of Kant's conception of consciousness as being the heir to the concept of consciousness introduced by Descartes, developed by Locke, and refined into the concept of apperception by Leibniz (originally in *Nouveaux Essaies,* published 1765). Though Kant detracted from Descartes use of the *Cogito* to demonstrate the nature of the subject, he nevertheless failed to question the fundamental assumptions implicit in the cartesian conception of self-consciousness. Namely, that the self-ascription of experience was logically independent from our mastery of ascribing experience to others. By believing that the concepts of experience are determined by inner sense alone, Kant necessarily commits himself to the logical possibility of a *private language*, in which our concepts of experience are themselves defined through private representations. Though this will not be discussed further here, such a commitment stands as a significant point of departure between Kant and Wittgenstein. See *Philosophical Investigations §§244–271* for Wittgenstein's main discussion of this topic.

*cogito ergo sum.*" [34] (A370) Further yet, because of this cyclical relationship, the "consciousness of my existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me." (B276) For, "inner experience in general is possible only through outer experience in general" (B278). As Kant concludes, "our doctrine removes all reservations about assuming the existence of matter based on the testimony of our mere self-consciousness, and it declares this to be proved in the same way as the existence of myself as a thinking being. For I am indeed conscious to myself of my representations, thus these exist, and I myself, who has these representations." (A370) Thus, by confronting sceptical empiricism with restricted rationalism, Kant purports to have successfully addressed the opposing traditions.

Thus for Kant, synthetic *a priori* judgements about the nature of experience are possible because, "we relate the formal conditions of a priori intuition, the synthesis of the imagination, and its necessary unity in a transcendental apperception to a possible cognition of experience in general, and say: The conditions of the possibility of experience are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and on this account have objective validity in a synthetic judgement a priori." (A158/B197) To clarify this, Hanna succinctly summarises that, "In other words, he is saying that when we eliminate things-in-themselves as possible objects of human sensible cognition (although we remain capable of *thinking* about them abstractly), focus exclusively on appearances instead, and then identify *them* with the real material objects in space, it follows that we perceive real material objects in space through our senses without any further intermediary, and also that all the essential properties of real material objects in space are macrophysical directly perceivable or observable properties. In other words, for Kant, the classical "veil of mere appearances" becomes *the field of authentic appearances*, in which all things are precisely what they seem to be. In this sense, his idealism is also paradoxically the most robust realism imaginable." [35] Thus, through Transcendental Idealism, Kant purports to have shown his synthetic *a priori* judgements to be semantically possible and objectively valid (B19), with these restricted to being only propositions that express the transcendental conditions for the possibility of our experience of appearances. And with this, Kant presumes to have successfully reconciled "the philosophical interest in autonomous rational knowledge with the fervent commitment to experience of an epoch that has effectively been defined by the successes of the sciences." [36]

## *IV.* Kant's Error and Wittgenstein's Insight

Rather tragically for such an ingenious manoeuvre, it is owing to the interpretive expanse of metaphysical and epistemological variations that subsequent readers have ascribed to this complex form of his idealism, that "Kantian scholarship has yet to have been overcome by consensus" on quite how to interpret Kant's doctrine of Transcendental Idealism.[37] To briefly canvas the scope of this lack in consensus, contemporary commentary continues to host disagreement as to whether Kant should be taken to be an idealist or not; [38] a phenomenalist, or noumenalist – or through deflationary readings –

[34] However, contrary to the Cartesian rationalist doctrine, this is taken by Kant to be a purely *formal* condition for the unity of consciousness. As noted in his Third Paralogism, "[t]he identity of the consciousness of myself at different times is […] only a formal condition of my thoughts and their coherence, and in no way proves the numerical identity of my subject" (A363).

[35] Hanna, R., 2008. *Kant in the Twentieth century*, p. 154.

[36] Höffe, O., 2010, p.10.

[37] Ameriks, K., 1992. *Kantian Idealism Today*, p.329.

[38] As in the opposing positions of James Van Cleve and Arthur Collins. With Van Cleve discerning, "As I interpret him, then, Kant's transcendental idealism is idealism indeed, at least regarding everything in time and space." (*Problems from Kant,* 1999, p.4); whilst Collins recounts that "Kant is not an idealist", and any "interpretation that finds a kind of idealism in Kant, that ascribes to him a reduction of objects to mental representations…fails to capture the originality, profundity, and merit of his thought." (*Possible experience: understanding Kant's Critique of pure reason,* 1999, p.2-3) Interpreting Kant as an Idealist in fact has a long heritage in the secondary literature, with the first such interpretation appearing soon after Kant's publication of the A edition, in Feder, J.G.H. and Garve, C., 2000. *The Gottingen Review*.

neither; whether his distinction between *things-in-themselves* and *appearances* warrants an epistemological (methodological), or metaphysical reading; [39] or whether any combination of these opinions necessitates a 'two-aspect' (see B*xxvii*), 'one-world', or 'two-world' (see A288/B344; A249; A372) commitment of Kant's doctrine – or even if this terminology is appropriate.[40] Necessarily, to echo Schulting, "[i]n the space of a single paper, it is impossible to do full justice to the richness of the articles [above], or to exhaustively address all the minutely or not so minutely different avenues that are being pursued (or could be pursued)."[41] In fact, given the archival arsenals available to both sides, with each being taken as a negation of the others, "[t]he existence of strong considerations in favour of both sides as well as serious problems with both sides seems to keep the literature in a state of oscillation."[42] However, despite the persistence of interpretative disagreements it remains possible to determine whether Kant is successful in his underlying ambitions for the *Critique* – to transcendentally ground the natural laws by way of legitimising synthetic *a priori* claims of reason in the restricted domain of experience. For, if so, Kant's assertion that "there is not a single metaphysical problem which has not been solved, or for the solution of which the key at least has not been supplied" (A*xii*), would surely serve to outweigh the aforementioned issues of differing interpretations.

Definitively however, one can say without hesitation that the doctrine of the 'Transcendental Ideality of Time and Space' as the intuitions of pure reason and of sensible objects as phenomena in them is not successfully established by Kant.[43] Its governing conception of the synthetic *a priori* is contemporarily regarded as being highly questionable in the wake of such discoveries as non-Euclidean geometries. Despite Kant's astonishing insights into both the rationalist and empiricist traditions – exposing fault in the Cartesian/Lockean conception of empirical knowledge; realising that one's ability to subscribe to oneself subjective experience does not in itself grant knowledge of a persistent *substance*. Thus, Descartes' argument for the soul, seeking to establish its persistence, its indivisibility, and its independence of mortal flesh – hence its immortality – was a spurious paralogism. That Hume's establishing of the unity of experience by way of an appeal to causation, or familiarity with the ego through inner experience were likewise incoherent pursuits. Momentous though these achievements were, Kant remained trapped by several Cartesian presuppositions he had failed to question.[44] Chief amongst these, was Kant's assumption that our ability to conceive of our own experience was logically independent of ascribing experience to others. "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." (A 347/B 405) Likewise, "It is obvious that if one wishes to represent a thinking being, one must put oneself in its place, and thus substitute one's own subject for the object one wants to consider (which is not the case in any other species of investigation)." (A 353) Seemingly unwittingly however, by separating these acts of ascription of experience, Kant commits himself to the possibility of our mastery of the concepts involved in ascribing to oneself their own experience as being logically prior to any constitutive behavioural grounds that might influence our ascription of experience to others. Thus, our concepts of experience must then assume private definitions derived from inner experience alone, consequently committing Kant to the logical possibility of a private language. According to Hacker, Kant's methodology and initial framework suffered from three additional Cartesian hallmarks:

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[39] Metaphysical: Langton, R., 1998; Van Cleve, J.J., 1999; Allais, L., 2006, 2007. Epistemological: Allison, H.E., 1983/2004; Prauss, G., 1971/2011, 1975; Bird, G., 2006.

[40] The 'material' or 'two-world' view: Strawson, P. F., 1959; Guyer, P., 1987; McDowell, J., 1994. For a complete overview of Kant studies since 1945, see Natterer, P., 2003.

[41] Schulting, D., 2010. *Kant's idealism: the current debate. In Kant's Idealism*, p.3.

[42] Allais, L., *Manifest Reality*. 2015, p.10; Similarly to Schulting, Allais also caveats her attempts to climb the mountain of Kantian commentary, "Despite the length of the book, the enormous amount of writing there is on Kant means that there is much that I leave out, and my use of literature is necessarily selective" (*ibid*, p.15).

[43] Walsh, C.M., 1903. Kant's Transcendental Idealism and Empirical Realism, p.456.

[44] See Hacker, P.M.S., 2013. *Wittgenstein: Comparisons and context*, Ch. 2,3.

*i)* The *Critique's* primary concern is epistemological. His approach to resolving his central question "How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?", involved considering the conditions of the possibility of empirical *knowledge* of experience. Hence, Kant innovatively went in search of natural laws, of "the necessary conformity to law *of things* as objects of experience" (*Proleg* 4: 295), by appealing to the *a priori* conditions of experience. But with the emphasis squarely on acquiring *knowledge* of natural laws the inquiry remains epistemic, contrary to Wittgenstein's later view that such insights were rather into the contingent linguistic norms of description employed by a language-using community.

*ii)* Likewise, Kant's approach is steadfastly subjective and egocentric. "In transcendental science everything must be derived from the subject" (*Notes and Fragments* 5058). His perspective is rooted in the 'I', not the 'We', and so excludes the possibility that some aspects of the possibility of empirical self-consciousness might be best explained by a consideration of our ascription of experience to others.

*iii)* Finally, Kant's conception of consciousness in the 'Transcendental Deduction' is the heir to a lineage established by Descartes and Locke and developed by Leibniz and Wolff visible through Kant's adopted notion of *apperception* (fn. 27). As has been noted regarding Kant's handling of the "I think", consciousness is, on the one hand, an accompaniment to all my representations; whilst also being referred to as "the universal condition of all cognition in general", akin to being "really a representation that another representation is in me" (*JL* 9: 33). With this conflation, consciousness would appear to be both the *form* and an *object* of my experience.[45]

Whilst a full elucidation of the consequences of such a confusion is beyond our scope here, in short, Kant appears to have conflated the *a priori* knowledge of subjective experience and the self-ascribability of such an experience to oneself. From Wittgenstein's perspective, the Cartesian tradition from which Kant suffers likewise confuses the *logico-grammatical* exclusion of doubt in "*knowing how things sensibly seem to me*" for certainty, and the exclusion of the possibility of being mistaken as infallibility.[46] Suffice it to say, Kant's attempts to establish the *a priori* conditions for experience without first scrutinizing the conception of consciousness he had inherited stands as the Achilles' heel in an otherwise Trojan effort to advance our meta-philosophical perspective. As alluded to, the fated arrow that would find its mark against Kant came in the form of another revolution in perspective, this time dependent on the import of language and language-use into the picture. So, it is on that note that we now turn to Wittgenstein.

In the wake of Kant's vision of transcendentally grounded natural laws faltering, philosophy lapsed into various flavours of neo-Kantianism. Subsequently, in a period spanning the 1870s to 1920s, scientifically-oriented neo-Kantianism would agitate Frege to seek the foundations of mathematical theorems in pure logic through *Logicism*; Russell and Whitehead to advance this pure and symbolic logic through *Logical Atomism*; and ultimately resulted in the consolidation of the analytic tradition, with its focus on the philosophy of language anticipating Wittgenstein's *linguistic turn*.[47] As was enduringly summarised by A.J Ayer in *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936), all this amounted to the rejection of Kant's synthetic *a priori* intuitions, [48] in favour of the logico-mathematical reduction of

[45] Hacker, P.M.S., 2013. *Wittgenstein: Comparisons and context*, pp. 38-40.

[46] *ibid,* p.42.

[47] Though considerable dues should be granted to Johann Georg Hamann, in asserting "the genealogical priority of language", as in his view, language should be regarded as the "centre point of reason's misunderstanding with itself". Hamann, J. G., *Metakritik,* p.286. As well as Herder's subsequent recourse to the philosophy of language in attempting to overcome Kant's doctrine, believing the contradictions of reason to be a consequence of the "inadequately employed instruments of language" Herder, J. G., *Against Pure Reason: Writings on Religion. Language, and History.* VIII, 19f.

[48] "[T]he Kantian view… asserted that mathematical reasoning is not strictly formal, but always uses intuitions. *i.e.* the *a priori* knowledge of space and time. Thanks to the progress of Symbolic Logic, especially as treated by

natural language through symbolic logic. But whilst certain critics might lament Kant's failure to enact such a linguistic turn himself, it would be pertinent for us to refrain from the contemporary dogma of assuming all philosophy prior to the linguistic turn as somehow obsolete in its wake. Notably, analytic philosophy has since relieved itself of its 20th-century fixation with logico-mathematical analysis, following its own failure to find a sure foundation. Indeed, understanding the failures of the *Tractatus* and the analytic tradition's handling of logical analysis is where the *Critique's* resounding contemporary relevance resides. As the work of Gottlob Frege founded the analytic tradition through an attempted refutation of Kant, namely in his taking of arithmetical knowledge to be synthetic *a priori*.[49]

In anticipating the writings of Frege, Moore, Russell, Whitehead, and the early Wittgenstein – taking mathematics as the methodological paradigm for the construction of a logically 'ideal' language – Kant had understood his *Physical Monadology* (1756) to be "an example of the use of metaphysics insofar as it is intrinsically connected with geometry". However, by the writing of *The Introduction of Negative Quantities into Philosophy* (1763), Kant retracts his endorsement of any such logical reductions of mathematics and natural language alike, prophetically citing its failure to produce results when put into practice (*AA*, II, p. 289). It is perhaps then a little ironic that the form of conceptual analysis that Kant introduces in place of such methods throughout the course of the *Critique,* as well as in his *Jäsche Logic,* is subsequently the target for replacement by the logico-mathematical theory of analysis presented by *Logicism* – given that it appears Kant had entertained, and dismissed, at least some proto-conception of such a method himself. As will be elucidated, the irony is then most acute in the case of early Wittgenstein himself, advancing in the course of the *Tractatus* the most radicalized formulation of Russell's original logical atomism, which, in logically reducing the world to the metaphysical ego (*TLP* 5.6-5.62, 5.631-5.641) lapses into a profound solipsistic idealism of its own.

With Wittgenstein expressing that, "I am my world" (*TLP* 5.63), and that, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (*TLP* 5.6), the entirety of metaphysics is logically reducible to the language-using metaphysical subject. Following Moore, Frege, and Russell, the earlier Wittgenstein rejects the *Critique's* form of conceptual analysis but maintains that "Logic is not a theory but a reflexion of the world. Logic is Transcendental" (*TLP* 6.13) Hence, like the Kantian transcendental arguments for the synthetic *a priori* principles of reason, for Wittgenstein, logic is a necessary condition of the possibility of our ability to reason. Further, through logical analysis so conceived, "Philosophy is not a theory" either, "but an activity" (*TLP* 4.112), taken to "display" the "scaffolding of the world" (*TLP* 6.124). Wittgenstein's commitment to a transcendental conception of logic, despite his abandonment of Kant's epistemology and metaphysics, betrays his alignment with "the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy". Yet diverging from Kant, Wittgenstein considers this activity to be a "critique of language" (*TLP* 4.0031) through the exposition of the logical grammatical structure of our natural language, as opposed to the psychological conceptual analysis proposed by Kant.[50] In Wittgenstein's view, "[h]ere we see that solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The I in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it… There is therefore

Professor Peano, this part of the Kantian philosophy is now capable of a final and irrevocable refutation." Russell, B., *Principles of Mathematics,* p.4.

[49] Lengthy attention will not be given to Frege or the project of *Logicism* in the course of this discussion, other than to acknowledge its presence in the progression toward Wittgenstein's later thought. However, I would again defer to Hanna for a summary of Frege's pursuits, "According to Frege in the Foundations, a proposition is analytic if and only if it is either provable from a general law of logic alone, or else provable from general laws of logic plus "logical definitions." One problem with this account is that unless general laws of logic are provable from themselves, they do not strictly speaking count as analytic. Another and more serious problem is that the precise semantic and epistemic status of logical definitions was never adequately clarified or settled by Frege. But the most serious problem is that Frege's set theory contains an apparently insoluble contradiction discovered by Russell in 1901, as a direct consequence of the unrestricted set-formation axiom in Frege's Basic Laws of Arithmetic: Russell's Paradox, which says that the set of all sets not members of themselves is a member of itself if and only if it is not a member of itself." Hanna, R., *Kant in the Twentieth Century*, fn. 34.

[50] Hanna, R., 2010. *Kant, Wittgenstein and the fate of analysis*, p.166.

really a sense in which in philosophy we can talk of a non-psychological I. The I occurs in philosophy through the fact that "the world is my world". The philosophical I is not the man, not the human body or the human soul of which psychology treats, but the metaphysical subject, the limit – not a part of the world." (*TLP* 5.64 - 5.641) In the course of the *Notebooks 1914-16*, Wittgenstein explains succinctly how he arrives at Kant's defence of realism through idealism for his part, "This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles men 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) However, emboldened by the fervour of early 20th-century faith in foundational mathematics, the early Wittgenstein dispenses of Kant's metaphysical humility. By revealing the deeper structure of natural language, Tractarian logical analysis, he believed, enabled some manner of epistemic bridge to the things that "form the substance of the world" (*TLP* 2.021), with Wittgenstein epistemically reaching for this substance through his 'objects' (*TLP* 2.0123-2.0232). But needless to say, from Kant's perspective, such a claim to direct knowledge of *things-in-themselves* or *noumena* beyond merely an indirect validation of their existence, undoubtedly constitutes a dogmatic violation of the bounds of reason (A235-60/B294-315). But in the opinion of the earlier Wittgenstein, Kant failed to "put the question marks deep enough down" (CV 62) Asking, "Does not my study of sign-language correspond to the study of thought processes which philosophers hold to be so essential to the philosophy of logic? Only they got entangled for the most part in unessential psychological investigations" (*TLP* 4.1121). The apparent duality of allegiances exhibited in the *Tractatus,* in both its preservation of the notion of transcendental logic, whilst revolutionising Kantian epistemology and metaphysics, leads Hanna to suggest "that the *Tractatus* is every bit as much a neo-Kantian idealistic metaphysical treatise directly inspired by Arthur Schopenhauer…as it is a logico-philosophical treatise inspired by Frege's *Begriffschrift* and Russell's and Whitehead's *Principia.*"[51]

By contrast, the later Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* cautions that "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. It cannot give it any foundation either; it leaves everything as it is, and no mathematical discovery can advance it." (*PI* §124) Rejecting his earlier "dogmatism", in projecting onto objects the features of our representation, and extrapolating to conclude that certain features *must* necessarily be a certain way. Notably then, Wittgenstein was destined to mirror Kant's intellectual development regarding philosophical analysis. Himself rejecting his former Tractarian doctrine of logical atomism and picture theory of meaning in the course of the *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI* §§46–49, §81, §91). Returning as it were full circle, to a conception of philosophical analysis that we shall come to see as resembling Kant's own analytic conceptual analysis, presented primarily in the course of the *Critique* and the *Jäsche Logic.* In a fleeting acknowledgement of Kant, Wittgenstein concedes that "The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact which corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence. (This has to do with the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy.)" (CV 10) So, if we are to foreshadow the later Wittgenstein's developments for a moment, "the first *Critique* offers not merely an alternative to the linguistic or communicative turn in modern thought, but rather a proper foundation for it (even if this is not often recognised). For anyone who binds knowledge directly to language or to the 'communicative community' has already repudiated any possible appeal to an objectivity 'in itself'."[52] The crucial point here is that in order to understand Wittgenstein's intellectual progression, one is best served doing so against a Kantian backdrop, not in isolation from or in opposition to it. But then what comes into focus at the vanishing point of their apparent convergence of views?

[51] Hanna, R., 2008. *Kant in the Twentieth century*, p.171.
[52] Höffe, O., 2010. *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: The Foundation of Modern Philosophy*, p. 41.

Their eventual shared conception of the task of philosophy amounts to something akin to *transcendental anthropology* [53] or *rational anthropology*,[54] and is most explicitly characterised by Kant in the *Jäsche Logic*: "Philosophy [...] is in fact the science of the relation of all cognition and of all use of reason to the ultimate end of human reason, to which, as the highest, all other ends are subordinated, and in which they must all unite to form a unity. The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions: 1. *What can I know?* 2. *What ought I to do?* 3. *What may I hope?* 4. *What is man?* Metaphysics answers the first question, morals the second, religion the third. Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one." (*JL* 9: 24-5; cf. B833) In a similar vein, the later Wittgenstein expresses that "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*." (*PI* §226) This question, "*what is man, in his forms of life?"* thus presents the abstract foundation upon which Kant, and ultimately the later Wittgenstein of the *Investigations,* strike an accord in perspective. To both elucidate the implications of, and to ourselves arrive at this conclusion will necessarily require an examination of the methods of analysis advocated for by both Kant and the later Wittgenstein.

## *V.* Kant's Conceptual Analysis

Kant's proposed philosophical methodology is conceptual analysis, and so naturally depends on 'concepts' (*Begriffe*), which Kant in turn situates within his theory of mental 'representations' (*Vorstellung*). Such that, a concept is a "mediate", "objective" and "general" conscious mental representation (A68/B93; A320/B376; cf. A19/B33; *JL* 9: 34-35; 62). To say that concepts are mediate, as opposed to immediate, is to say that they represent objects indirectly by means of descriptive attributes called 'marks' or 'characteristics' (*JL* 9: 58-62). Contrary to 'intuitions', which represent an object directly, non-descriptively, and in the "singular" (A320/B377). Hence, a concept is constituted by an ordered set of inherently general or universal marks or characteristics (A25/B40; JL 9: 58), with this set representing the concepts 'intension' or intensional 'content' *(Inhalt)*, and correspondingly an 'extension' *(Umfang* or *Sphaere)* consisting of all the actual and possible objects that fall under that content by satisfying the descriptive criteria of the characteristics that constitute it (*JL* 9: 91). This ordering of a particular concept, according to Kant, is then said to be reflective of the structuring of concepts more generally (*JL* 9: 58–61) Hence Kant's theory of conceptual ordering can be understood as pertaining to the general structure of concepts as a whole. Further, this ordering can be seen to be structured both *horizontally* and *vertically*. Vertically, 'Higher' or superordinate concepts reside over subordinate concepts within their set, and as such have broad extensions. Whilst 'Lower' or subordinate concepts reside as constituents of higher concepts, and so typically have narrower extensions. Hence, Kant distinguishes higher concepts as being "contained in" *(enthalten in)* their lower concepts, and lower concepts as "contained under" *(enthalten unter)* their higher concepts (A6-7).[55]

Thus, to use the established example "every bachelor is an unmarried male", the concept 'male' is contained *in* the concept 'bachelor', with the concept 'bachelor' being contained *under* the concept 'male'. Horizontally, two concepts are coordinate if they are both lower concepts of the same higher concept, but do not have identical extensions themselves. For instance, 'male' and 'unmarried' would represent partially overlapping lower concepts contained under 'human'; whereas, 'adult' and 'child' would represent mutually exclusive concepts under 'human'. To enact this form of conceptual analysis constitutes for Kant a 'decomposition' (*Zergliederung*) of that concept, in the sense that it displays the internal ordering and structuring of the concepts that constitute a higher one, hence offering insights into the meaning of the higher concept. Further, any two concepts (simple or complex) that are shown

[53] See Lear, J., 1982; Lear, J. and Stroud, B., 1984; and Lear, J., 1986.

[54] See Hanna, R., 2017b. *Life-Changing Metaphysics: Rational Anthropology and its Kantian Methodology*. The Cambridge Companion to Philosophical Methodology, pp.201-226.

[55] For an expanded discussion on the subject of Kant's conceptual analysis see Hanna, R., 2017a. *Wittgenstein and Kantianism*, pp.682-698; and De Jong, W.R., 1995. *Kant's analytic judgements and the traditional theory of concepts,* pp.613-641.

to share the same extensions, Kant calls 'convertible' or 'reciprocal' concepts (*JL* 9: 98). Thus, a conceptual analysis of 'bachelor' yields the extensional content 'adult' + 'unmarried' + 'male'. With 'bachelor' and 'unmarried adult male' presenting an example of reciprocal concepts. By finding one or more of the constituent marks or characteristics of higher concepts in this way, one can be said to have given an 'exposition' of a concept (A729/B757; *JL* 9: 141-43).

According to Kant, each such exposition of a concept requires a corresponding judgement, that predicates the constituent characteristic or mark of the given concept, so defining the relation or connection of cognitions (*Erkenntisse*).[56] Here we encounter Kant's *synthetic-analytic* distinction again in the course of the *Critique*; as, "In all judgements in which the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought (I take into consideration affirmative judgments only, the subsequent application to negative judgements being easily made), this relation is possible in two different ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or B lies outside A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it. In the one case I entitle the judgement analytic, in the other synthetic." (A6-7/B10) Though this distinction is elsewhere applicable to judgements of all forms (*Proleg.* 4: 266; cf. A151/B190), Kant is conscious in the case of conceptual decomposition to restrict the *synthetic-analytic* qualification to judgements. A necessary restriction, as only in categorical judgments is the relation of thought in subject-predicate form; with subject-predicate form necessary for the linking of two concepts in this instance (A73/B98).[57] Whilst Kant is primarily concerned in the course of the *Critique* with establishing synthetic *a priori* judgements, neither *a priori* nor *a posteriori* synthetic judgements are grounded through conceptual analysis: "There are synthetic judgements *a posteriori,* which have an empirical origin; but there are also synthetic judgements which have *a priori* certainty, and have their origin in pure understanding and reason. Both agree in that they can never originate according to the principle of analysis alone, namely the principle of contradiction" (*Proleg.* 4: 267; A151/B191).[58]

So, in dispensing with Kant's commitment to the synthetic *a priori*, the resultant *analytic* categorical judgement is ensured of three things: *i*) that the predicate concept of the judgement is contained in the subject concept; *ii*) the predicate concept is identical with at least one of the constituents (*JL* 9: 111), and; *iii*) the denial of that judgement entails a formal contradiction between the negation of the predicate and some constituent mark of the given concept (A150-53/B189-93).[59] The complete analysis of a given concept yields an analytic *definition* (*JL* 9: 140-45).[60] But Kant acknowledges that such a complete analysis is more of an ideal than a practical reality of conceptual analysis: "Since one cannot become certain through any test whether one has exhausted all the mark of a given concept through a complete

[56] Kant describes both concepts and judgements as kinds of cognitions in this way (B140-41).

[57] The other forms of judgement Kant enumerates under 'relation' in a table of judgements are *hypothetical* and *disjunctive*; articulating relations between judgements, or cognitions, that do not serve to link to concepts in a predicate-subject judgement (A73/B98).

[58] Being prior to Frege in his demarcation of the distinction, Kant himself makes little distinction between a proposition's content and its assertion being necessarily true. However, he does nevertheless hint at such a distinction in the course of the *Critique,* stating, "For, *if the judgement is analytic*, whether negative or affirmative, its truth can always be adequately known in accordance with the principle of contradiction" (italics added, A151/B190). Further then, Kant does not employ the principle of contradiction as a means of characterising his notion of analyticity, but rather as a means of confirming an analytic judgment as necessarily true *a priori*. Kant's justification to this end is stated as, "All analytic judgments rest wholly on the principle of contradiction, and it is in their nature to be a cognition *a priori*, whether the concepts that serve as matter for them are empirical or not. For because the predicate of an affirmative analytic judgment has already been thought in the concept of the subject, it cannot be denied of the subject without contradiction. Similarly its contrary is necessarily denied of the subject in a negative analytic judgment, also in consequence of the principle of contradiction. This is the case with the propositions: every body is extended, and no body is unextended." (*Proleg.* 4: 267; cf. A150/B189)

[59] Hanna, R., 2010, p.157.

[60] "In the analytic judgment we keep to the given concept, and seek to extract something from it. If it is to be affirmative, I ascribe to it only what is already thought in it. If it is to be negative I exclude from it only its opposite" (A154/B193) Theoretically, through the exhaustive application of this process in relation to a concept and its characteristics or marks, one could achieve the complete exposition of a concept.

decomposition, all analytic definitions are held to be uncertain." (*JL* 9: 142) Nevertheless, such being the case does not detract from the value of conceptual analysis, in Kant's view, with the value of exposition still realised, if only through a partial exposition of constituent marks. Indeed, for Kant, the presupposition that one requires the complete analysis of a concept, in the form of a definition, in order to employ it in ordinary reasoning is fundamentally mistaken: "Philosophy is swarming with mistaken definitions, especially those that contain elements for a definition but are not yet complete. If we could not make use of a concept until we had defined it, then all philosophizing would be in a bad way." (A731/B759) Through the decomposition of concepts via this analysis, the search for analytically necessary *a priori* truths in the form of *partial* conceptual expositions – but *not* of exhaustive definitions – is a crucial part of philosophy in Kant's view. "[S]ince, however far the elements (of the decomposition) reach, a good and secure use can always be made of them, even imperfect definitions, i.e., propositions that are not really definitions but are true and thus approximations of them, can be used with great advantage." (*ibid*) Whether completely or not, analytic conceptual analysis, nevertheless "develops" an "obscure", or "confused" concept to better "clarify", or "explicate" it (cf. A7/B11; B17; A736/B764; *Proleg*. 4: 266).

In the course of the *Critique* Kant expresses our need to identify and know 'principles'; these being fundamental normative necessary *a priori* laws of nature, logic, morality and aesthetic experience (B19, A50-64/B74-88, A148-62/B188-202, A836/B865). Though Kant considered the majority of these supposed principles to be synthetic and knowable *a priori*, certain analytic truths, including the laws of logic, are amongst these. Crucially, these principles are *normative* because they inform us on how we *ought* to know things scientifically, they are prescriptive rules one must aspire to conform to in order to be perceived as rational by others. On this note, analytic conceptual analysis is likewise by Kant said to be an important and necessary part of the practice of philosophy, because it informs us in the obscured functioning of the very concepts we use to define the world as it is presented to us: "A great part, perhaps the greatest part, of the business of our reason consists in decompositions of the concepts we already have of objects. This affords us a multitude of cognitions that, though they are nothing more than illuminations or clarifications of that which is already thought in our concepts (though still in a confused way), are, at least as far as their form is concerned, treasured as if they were new insights, though they do not extend the concepts that we have in either matter or intensional content but only set them apart from each other…this procedure does yield real *a priori* cognition, which makes secure and useful progress." (A5-6/B9-10) For Kant, conceptual analysis does indeed inform us about the empirical world and our experience of it, but only indirectly through an extrapolation of what it directly informs us in; the nature of human rationality. To reemphasize an important interpretive point, to focus on conceptual analysis in reviewing Kant's *Critique* is somewhat unfaithful to its own hierarchy of convictions. The fundamental aim of the *Critique* was to establish the doctrine of Transcendental Idealism. Itself centred on the aim of establishing that *synthetic a priori* propositions are objectively valid (B19). In the contemporary view Kant fails to argue convincingly for his synthetic *a priori* claims of pure reason, but what should nevertheless be retained is the thoroughly anthropocentric and practical nature of his proposed methodology. Essentially, Kant dissents from the reductionist views of scientific naturalism, opposing Wilfred Sellars' formulation of physics and mathematics as, "the measure of all things." (fn. 25) On the contrary, such scientific reductionism, according to Kant, leads directly to epistemic and moral scepticism (Bxxix). So, whilst science is demonstrably qualitatively and quantitatively successful in its empirical inquiries; philosophy offers clarification when navigating the conceptual scaffolding that subsequently suspends what we collectively laud to be the epistemic fruits of our labour – our "knowledge" of the world (*TLP* 6.124). Whilst Kant equates this limitation to psychology – as "reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own design" (Bxiii). By way of Kant's analysis, we can however obtain insight into not only conceptual decompositions, but also our own "formal intuition" (*formale anschauung*), and the "transcendental synthesis of the imagination" (*synthesis speciosa*) (A5/B9, B151, B160). Critically, in the eyes of the later Wittgenstein, Kant had mistaken the fundamentally *behavioural* insight into our use of language as being insights into the fundamental nature of our experience, or our psychological makeup. So, whilst Kant's approach to

analysis was correct in its focus on experience, what he had attempted to derive from it was found to be unsupported once one decides to inquire *deep enough down*, into our use of language. Thus, with the analytic methodology in place, we will progress to the later Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* to consider what such analysis might truly reveal.

## *VI.* Wittgenstein's Later Development

With intriguing historical symmetry to Kant, Wittgenstein returned to philosophy in the 1930s following his own silent decade after the publication of the *Tractatus* in 1921. It is in his *Philosophical Investigations* then, that Wittgenstein at last enacts his *linguistic turn*.[61] Whereas Kant had promoted philosophers to study thought, Wittgenstein insists its purpose "is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (*PI §*116). Rather than scrutinising the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of our experience, philosophers should be focused on reviewing our linguistic behaviour. By this view, Kant's propositions of geometry, space, and time cease to be synthetic *a priori* insights into the necessary structure of the external phenomenal world, but rather become rules of grammar for the description of spatial relations. Hence, Wittgenstein repudiates the idea of *de re* metaphysical necessities all together. Alternatively, "To know that a proposition *is* a proposition of logic is to know a rule of inference" (LFM 277). Whilst Kant had believed that the "battlefield of Metaphysics" came as a result of "the very nature of reason" (A*vii-viii*); Wittgenstein clarifies the ambiguity and addresses the culprit more directly, with the terrain of philosophy hosting "a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence *by means of language*" (italics added, *PI §*109). So, in further clarifying his remark about Kant not having "put the question mark deep enough down" (CV62), Wittgenstein says that the "problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth…their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language" (*PI §*111). Further, the later Wittgenstein's position fully dispenses with the egocentrism of the Kantian/Cartesian tradition, establishing self-ascription of experience instead upon the mastery of our linguistic ascription of experience to others – dispensing with the troublesome groundless self-ascription necessitated through Kant's views. Thus, for Kant what appeared to be synthetic *a priori* propositions revealing the conditions for the possibility of experience are, in Wittgenstein's hands, reduced to mere norms of representation and communal communication; and the question "how are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?", which Kant had endeavoured so ingeniously to solve, simply evaporates away.

Necessarily, the beliefs of the later Wittgenstein negate many of the formers. For Frege, Moore, Russell, and the "author of the *Tractatus*" – as the later Wittgenstein retroactively refers to himself – all held logic to be *sublime*; that is, universal, a priori, necessary, and essential to the order of objects in the empirical world, as well as essential to language, propositions and thought (*PI §§*89-92, *§*97). Along with dispensing with the directly referential semantics, Wittgenstein identifies his 'Picture Theory of Meaning' and the notion of logically penetrating language to reveal noumenal atomic 'simples' as being a metaphysical artefact, part of the intellect's bewitchment by the norms of language (*PI §§103-15*).[62] Hence, Wittgenstein's later view of analysis, following the desublimation of his own logical doctrine in the *Tractatus,* begins to resemble that of Kant's analytic conceptual analysis in methodology. As for the pangs of reason to reach out for the theorized objects of transcendent metaphysics, Wittgenstein discerns in *On Certainty* that, "We just *can't* investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put. My *life* consists in my being content to accept many things." (*OC §§343-44*) The foundations of sense in our language as such does not lie in its capacity to bind to the objects of the real world, but rather one "must bear in

[61] First so called by Bergmann, G., 1992, *New foundations of ontology*, 64f.

[62] As Medina asserts, "A crucial point of continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy is the attempt to articulate a deflationary account of necessity that does away with the metaphysical view of necessity imagined as fact." (2002, p.156)

mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is there – like our life." (*OC §559*) "The term "language game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of a language is part of an activity, or a form of life." (*PI §23*) So, "what has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say, *forms of life."* (*PI 226e*)

By the time of writing the *Philosophical Investigations,* Wittgenstein had come to see language, and indeed culture as a whole, as the multiplicity of language games that constitute forms of life. For, "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life" (*PI §8*), with such a culture then being the "totality of communal activities into which language-games are embedded".[63] Rather than natural laws, philosophy serves to allow us to perceive and comprehend these forms of life as rational self-knowledge. Crucially then, the later Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy following the desublimation of logic is non-cognitive, normative and practical. "Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us. One might give the name 'philosophy' to what is possible *before* all new discoveries and inventions." (*PI §*126) "The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose." (*PI §*127) The task of the philosopher in assembling these reminders is to "bring words back from their metaphysical use to their everyday use", by asking "is the word actually used in this way in the language which is its original home" (*PI §*116). Resembling Kant's 'decompositions' for the elucidation of concepts, Wittgenstein is subsequently led to conclude that the "misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things by the certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language… can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an "analysis" of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking things apart." (*PI §*90) But ultimately, in putting language back together we acquire an understanding "which consists in 'seeing connections'" (*PI §*122).

So, relating to our opening distinction between phenomenal and conceptual inquiry, Wittgenstein further concludes that, "[w]e are not analysing a phenomenon (e.g. thought) but a concept (e.g. that of thinking), and therefore the use of a word."[64] (*PI §*383) Continuing in his argumentation, "In philosophy we do not draw conclusions. 'But it must be like this!' is not a philosophical proposition. Philosophy only states what everyone admits. Thus, for philosophy so conceived, "If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to question them, because everyone would agree to them." (*PI §*128) Wittgenstein later asks, "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false? – It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in forms of life." (*PI §*241) "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so." (*PI §*242) Through removing the prior sublimity and noumenalism of *Tractarian* logic and replacing it with the notion of logic as grammar, but nevertheless still embracing the non-classical elements of Kantian 'transcendental logic', *Philosophical Investigations* amounts to a reinvention as well as a recapitulation to Kant's meta-philosophical views expressed in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method *(*A708/B736). Hanna characterises the resultant form of analysis *dialectic conceptual analysis*, in reference to Kant's sense of 'dialectic', meaning "the logical critique of metaphysical illusion in philosophy, as a form of rational self-knowledge."[65] (cf. A61-62/B85-86, A293-98/B349-54) Hence, Philosophy serves to give insight into

[63] Glock, H.J., 1996. A Wittgenstein dictionary, p.125.

[64] At greater length, Wittgenstein writes, "It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones. It was not of any possible interest to us to find out empirically 'that, contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible think such-and-such' – whatever that may mean… And we may not advance any kind of theory… We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place. These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in spite of an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known." (*PI §*109)

[65] Hanna, R., 2010. *Kant, Wittgenstein and the fate of analysis,* p.161.

what we must come to accept about the nature of our experience, "into what lies in front of everyone's eyes" (*PI* §133). As linguistic and behaviourally communicated consensus in our *forms of life*, philosophy reveals our collective agreement to consist in our shared capacity for logical and practical reasoning borne out in shared social practices; which as Kant had begun to approach, "holds for everyone as long as they can be said to possess reason" (B848). This is the unifying thought between Kant and Wittgenstein: that the practice, and indeed the appropriate task of philosophy, should consist of providing insight into the human condition *qua* our mutual agreement in judgements facilitated through the linguistic establishment of norms of reasoning. Hence, Wittgenstein's radical linguistic turn, conceiving of logic as grammar, signalled a return to the meta-philosophy of Kant's transcendental dialectic in the *Critique*; through dialectical conceptual analysis into the norms of language use, we can uncover metaphysical illusions present in our understanding of the experiential world in the form of rational self-knowledge (A61/B85, A293-98/B349-54; *PI* §123-33). To recall Hacker then, it is left to discern specifically what philosophy *can hope for* regarding its place in the continued pursuit of knowledge and understanding; and to consider how the developments in meta-philosophical perspective have been retained in contemporary thinking.

## *VII.* The Modern Task of Philosophy as Rational Anthropology

A comprehensive elucidation of the implications one can derive from the progression of thought traversed in the course of this discussion can be found throughout the various cited works of Robert Hanna and Hans-Johann Glock.[66] Therein, the position identified as *transcendental* or *rational anthropology* is endorsed over those of scientific naturalism or metaphysical essentialism in stating the appropriate task of contemporary philosophy.[67] As Hanna enumerates in *Life-changing Metaphysics*, the conception of philosophy as rational anthropology, and its resultant methodology consists of a number of theses.[68] Novel to us amongst these is:

i) *That there is no fundamental difference in content between the history of philosophy and philosophy.*

That is to say, if one is intending to rehearse the arguments and progression of view regarding any particular subject of philosophical discourse, in order to either dissent from or agree with a previously stated view on any such a matter, one is necessarily required to recall and rehearse the philosophical history of the particular discussion – this being synonymous with an archive of the progression of thought and consensus judgements given on the matter. Hence, by this view, there is taken to be no fundamental difference between contemporary philosophy and the history of philosophy. Hanna expresses that, "every authentic philosophical work is a logically governed attempt to say something comprehensive, illuminating, and necessarily (or at least universally) true about the rational human condition and our deepest values, including our relationships to each other and to the larger natural and abstract worlds that surround us",[69] and as such, on the presupposition that our very ability to reason as a species has not appeared to significantly change over recorded history, it bears no consequence *when* a particular work is written or interpreted.[70] If permitted, Hanna derives that the substantive content of philosophical history necessarily belongs to contemporary philosophy and vice versa. Further to this, and of consequence as we have seen:

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[66] See Hanna, R., 2007, pp.696-697; 2010, pp.162-164; 2017a, pp.191-192; 2017b, pp.188-209; Glock, H.J., 2001, pp.213-217; 2012, pp.105-131; 2017, pp.97-100.

[67] Glock elects to use the somewhat more opaque terminology '*impure conceptual analysis*'.

[68] Hanna, R., 2017b, p.188.

[69] *Ibid,* p.191.

[70] This particular thesis was of significance when considering the means of argumentation for this thesis itself, in that – as will be obvious to the reader by this point – this discussion relies primarily on a review of the historical development of the question of the task of philosophy through the works of Kant and Wittgenstein as a means of persuasion for the position latterly presented as rational anthropology.

ii) *Metaphysics, as far as it is possible, is restricted to Kantian "real" or "anthropological" metaphysics, stating only what is evidentially grounded in human experience.*

Following directly from the discussion of Kant on traditional metaphysics, anthropological metaphysics "rejects the idea of any theoretically meaningful, non-paradoxical ontic commitment or cognitive access to non-apparent, non-manifest, 'really real' entities that are constituted by intrinsic non-relational properties, that is, to 'noumena' or 'things-in-themselves'." Likewise, such entities may be possible to assume but remain strictly unknowable due to our cognitive faculties. So, in this sense rational anthropology denies of any methodological means of approaching noumena; and thus, denies the ontological prospecting of contemporary metaphysical essentialism, or non-naturalistic, intuitionist analytic metaphysics.[71] Whilst at the same time, rational anthropology challenges the reductionist and eliminative views of Sellar's and Quine's scientific naturalism, with regards to the "primitive, irreducible fact of human experience". [72] Contrary to the modelling of philosophy on science, philosophy as rational anthropology "is to provide philosophical explanations that lead to essential, synoptic insights about the rational human condition, guided by the norms of propositional truth and logical consistency, by means of conceptual construction and conceptual reasoning."[73]

Thus, through unearthing the meta-philosophical passages of Kant and Wittgenstein, it is clear that what one can hope for, in conducting philosophical inquiry, is to reveal the logically-guided normative principles of self-legislated social and linguistic practices that fundamentally underlie our collective sense of what constitutes scientific knowledge, thought, volition, action and feeling; that is, the forms of life that constitute rational human activity. That is not to say that such implicitly agreed practices or principles are necessarily successfully adhered to by people all or even most of the time. Rather, our rationality is defined by our *recognition* of such common practices, and our physical or cognitive ability or desire to conform to them – after all, one must *choose* to be rational. Such a view consequently presents a rebuttal to arguments for philosophy being merely a repository for scientific problems yet to be solved, or "the naturalistic assimilation of the conceptual issues of philosophy to the factual issues of science" in scientific naturalism.[74] In committing to Kant's transcendental insight – that the objects of our world gain their form as appearances in some respects from the nature of our cognitive faculties; and Wittgenstein's – in identifying that inquiry into such faculties rather yields insights into human rational normativity, we are led to conclude that: doing both logic and the exact sciences are irreducibly human rational activities, and as such, it would seem exceedingly unlikely that either will be able to provide a coherent epistemological or metaphysical account of the foundations of either philosophy or themselves.[75] Ultimately, what one must accept, is that the natural sciences are inescapably committed to observing the causal relations and intrinsic structures of our perceivable empirical reality, altogether removed from any hypothetical noumenal *world-in-itself*. Indeed, it is constrained by its very presupposition of human rationality, through which all theoretical, logical, and mathematical reasoning necessarily stands under the ontological priority of our normative and practical rationality.[76] Hence, a study of the conditions of the possibility of rational human normativity, through our governing use of language, is the true essence of philosophical analysis; a task which precedes and grounds, at its foundations, our very belief in the legitimacy of scientific inquiry.

**Acknowledgements**

[71] See Lewis, D., 1986; Chalmers, D.J., 2012; Sider, T., 2013.
[72] See Hanna, R. and Maiese, M., 2009. *Embodied minds in action*. Oxford University Press.
[73] Hanna, R., 2017b, p.192.
[74] Glock, H.J., 2017, p.94.
[75] See Hanna, R., 2009. *Rationality and logic*. MIT Press.
[76] See Hanna, R., 2006. *Kant, science, and human nature*.

For all my admiration of Wittgenstein, with his profound expression of what so often appeared to him to be truisms about the bewildering set of experiences we each come to know as our lives, I have nevertheless found one particular piece of his advice to be his most insightful of all – "Never stay up on the barren heights of cleverness, but come down into the green valleys of silliness." (CV 76) Thank you, Leonie, for not only enduring the monotony of such barren heights, but for being the valley from which I could regain my sanity.

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