

**TRANSCEDENTAL ARGUMENTS
AND SCEPTICISM**

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, a debate has arisen within analytic philosophy concerning the nature, validity and possible uses of Kantian transcendental arguments. This thesis examines two of the main questions within this debate: (i) what is a transcendental argument, and (ii) could there be a successful transcendental argument. The first chapter surveys some recent attempts at definition. A general lack of consistency in the literature makes it impossible to reach any precise conclusion about what a transcendental argument is, but a two-fold working definition is proposed on the basis of two identifiable general approaches to this question. The second chapter looks at two forms of scepticism about our knowledge of the external world in order to set up in a Kantian way the two epistemological problems to which transcendental arguments have been proposed as solutions. One problem concerns how it can be known that the external world exists; the other concerns conceptual relativism and the possibility of transcendental justification of a particular conceptual scheme. The third chapter examines

and expands upon Stephan Korner's forceful argument to show that transcendental arguments are impossible. This argument counts decisively against the possibility of a transcendental solution to the problem of conceptual relativism, but does not touch arguments to demonstrate that we have knowledge of the existence of the external world. The fourth chapter examines several transcendental arguments which attempt the latter demonstration, beginning with Kant's Refutation of Idealism and then turning to some recent variations on this argument.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent analytic philosophy there has been a revival of transcendental terminology and of arguments purported to be similar in form and purpose to Kant's transcendental arguments. The discussion has been diffuse, but has generally centred around two main issues. One concerns the nature of transcendental arguments; the other concerns the possibility of a successful transcendental argument.

Opinions vary widely on just what a transcendental argument is, so there is little that can be said in the way of a preliminary characterization that will be accepted all round. The only point that seems to be generally agreed upon is that any argument labelled transcendental must share some essential features with the arguments Kant developed and called transcendental. This has not been much help, however, since there is no more agreement about what Kant had to say than there is about transcendental arguments in general. In the first place, it is notoriously difficult to isolate and lay out the structure of particular Kantian arguments. Second, even when there is agreement about an argument's essential structure, there is often a lack of clarity about what features are attributable to the transcendental form as such and what

features are attributable to the content and its particular requirements. Third, there is disagreement over which of Kant's arguments are, strictly speaking, transcendental. On this last point, a troublesome circularity arises, in that, to establish whether a particular argument of Kant's should be taken as transcendental there must be criteria by which to judge, but to establish appropriate criteria, transcendental arguments must first be identified in order to determine by analysis and comparison their essential characteristics. The way out of this exegetical circle would be, of course, to consider the various characterizations Kant himself provides. The problem persists, however, because Kant's own characterizations are far from clear, so that it is necessary to fall back on the arguments themselves to discover his intentions. The result has been continued disagreement over what exactly makes an argument transcendental.

In one frequently cited passage, Kant describes the Transcendental Deduction as an argument which will demonstrate that the categories "are a priori conditions of the possibility of experience" (A94). This assertion and others like it provide the basis for one starting point for discussions of transcendental arguments; it is usually agreed that, whatever else may be said, a transcendental argument is, at a first approximation, one which demonstrates that the use of some set of concepts is necessary for the possibility of some sort of experience. Disputes arise, however, when this

characterization is used to identify particular transcendental arguments. An important example is Kant's Refutation of Idealism. A number of writers, perhaps daunted by the unwieldiness and obscurity of the Transcendental Deduction itself, have fastened on the Refutation of Idealism, which is short and somewhat more neatly laid out -- though no less obscure -- as a prototypical transcendental argument to be analysed for its essential features (see, e.g., Stroud 1968; Henrich 1979; Kekes 1972). The argument can plausibly be interpreted as one which fits the description just quoted, but other writers have pointed out that Kant never calls the Refutation transcendental, and have argued that it lacks other features which Kant elsewhere claims to be the essence of the transcendental method (Hintikka 1972; Bubner 1975; Gram 1971). It remains unclear which of Kant's arguments should be labelled transcendental.

The field is further opened up by philosophers who have tried to use apparently Kantian methods to arrive at solutions to contemporary formulations of philosophical problems. The most influential of these recent writers is P.F. Strawson, whose book, Individuals, was both the first among a number of recent works to use explicitly transcendental methods (see also Harrison 1974; Sellars 1968; Grayling 1985) and an important cause of recent attempts to find implicit transcendental strategies in the works of Wittgenstein (Bubner 1975; Rorty 1971; Stroud 1968), Shoemaker (Stroud 1968), Quine

(Bubner 1975) and other analytic philosophers. It is natural for Strawson and others to try to take and adapt what is still useful from Kant, and leave what is thought to be bad and outdated -- what Strawson called Kant's dark side, e.g., his cumbersome cognitive apparatus -- to the historians. One of the spinoffs of such projects for the secondary literature has been the problem of determining whether and on what basis these latter-day Kantians can properly be said to be using methods which are transcendental. In this way, the exegetical problem of determining why precisely Kant called some of his arguments transcendental opens up into the broader question of when it is appropriate to label an argument which has certain affinities with Kantian methods a transcendental argument.

It might sound as though this is a merely pedantic debate about how a particular technical term is to be used, and that more open-minded philosophers could adopt a live and let live policy towards the use of the title 'transcendental argument'. In fact, there are real philosophical issues here. Until it is adequately understood precisely what makes these arguments special, or, alternatively, until it is demonstrated that there is no special transcendental mode of argument, it is impossible to say whether or not a transcendental method can be put to good use in philosophy. The issue can only be resolved by laying bare for evaluation the formal structures of the arguments of Kant and those who have borrowed methods from him. So far, these structures have proved intriguingly elusive, a quality

which can be attributed, some might say optimistically, to their subtlety rather than needless obscurity. In any case, labelling disagreements are, or should be, superficial manifestations of deeper issues concerning the form of what for many still appears to be an important and peculiar method of argument.

This estimation of transcendental arguments is not shared by all who have studied them. The other main issue in the recent discussion, which for obvious reasons cannot be separated from the debate over essential features, concerns the possibility of success with such arguments. Strong cases have been put forth to show that transcendental arguments are in principle impossible (Korner 1967; Gram 1968) or that they depend for their effect on a buried and highly dubious verification principle (Stroud 1968; Rorty 1971). Others have argued that those so-called transcendental arguments that do seem to have a reasonable claim to validity are not really any distinctive mode of argument at all, but just obscurely laid out common or garden variety deductive arguments, and thus that the recent excitement has been largely misguided (Gram 1976). Naturally, a more positive view of matters is taken by Strawson and the other latter-day transcendental philosophers, who maintain that sound transcendental arguments are both possible and uniquely suited to solving certain epistemological problems which exercised Kant and are still with us. Kant intended his transcendental arguments -- at least those in the first Critique -- to provide a defense against various forms of

scepticism. He saw that Locke's "physiology of the understanding" could not meet the challenge of Humean scepticism and that a radical re-examination of the question "How is knowledge possible?" was called for. While allowing, with Hume, complete scepticism about metaphysical knowledge concerning the nature of things-in-themselves, he maintained that the transcendental method demonstrated that universal and necessarily certain knowledge existed about the conditions of possible experience (see, e.g., A86-87, B118-119). Thus, a transcendental argument could show that a sceptical challenge was illegitimate by proving that the employment of certain concepts rejected by the sceptic is a necessary condition of thought or experience.

Among these conditions is the "existence of things outside us", so that one result Kant claimed for the Transcendental Deduction, along with the Refutation of Idealism, is the long sought rejoinder to the sceptic's denial of knowledge of the existence of the external world. Much of the recent attention has focussed specifically upon the problem of the external world's existence and the feasibility of a transcendental solution.

Since the search for a rational reason to believe in the world around us sounds to most non-philosophers like a paradigm case of philosophical foolishness, a word in defense of the enterprise is perhaps called for. It is admittedly not manifest -- even to many committed philosophers -- what gain can be had

from questioning what looks to be the most obvious fact of all. Yet, it is often true in philosophy that profound insights come to light through working on problems which on their own seem bizarre or trivial, but which evade solution for long periods of time. The problem of the existence of the external world is a case in point. Those who continue to pursue this problem do so, one hopes, not in order to lay to rest solipsistic fears, but out of a belief that this problem cuts to the core of issues concerning how we are to understand the relations that hold between knowledge, experience and the world.¹

Another, related anti-sceptical purpose to which transcendental arguments have been put is closely tied to the idea of a "conceptual scheme" or "conceptual framework" as used by philosophers of science in their attempts to deal with the problems raised for epistemology by the progress of science. Kant believed that in the categories, along with space and time, he had uncovered the invariant set of fundamental concepts necessary to thought. In our present historical setting, it seems clear that Kant attributed too much stability to the conceptual scheme of his contemporaries; he mistook fundamental assumptions of Newtonian physics for the necessary categorial constraints on thought itself.² In light of the radical conceptual changes which have occurred, for example, with the shift from a Newtonian to an Einsteinian scientific world-view, far more caution is called for in claims about what is conceptually necessary for thought. Yet the idea remains

interesting that it may be possible to separate, within our conceptual repertoire, a core of concepts which could not be overthrown by any subsequent theoretical developments, because they are essential to thought itself.

Those who hold out hope for such a possibility are moving against a strong current of anti-foundationalist, pragmatic interpretations of knowledge. In contemporary philosophy of science, there is a widespread conviction that the search for permanent, sceptically unassailable truth, articulated using a universally valid core of basic concepts, is based on defective notions of truth, knowledge, and their relation to the world. Some of the main sources of this change of fashion are easily traced. Anthropologists have been gradually more successful in bringing home the fact that even the most basic premisses of the modern western scientific world-view are frequently controverted within other cultures. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in linguistics, which suggests that different linguistic groups can have fundamentally different ways of experiencing and conceptualizing the world, has been given a powerful logical defense by Quine with his argument for the indeterminacy of translation (Quine 1962). The work of the historian and philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, has led to attacks on the view, shared by most scientists and laypeople, that later scientific theories constitute more comprehensive and faithful accounts of the way the world is than do their predecessors (Kuhn 1962). Kuhn's notion of paradigm shifts,

though often rejected in its details, has been widely influential in promoting the conceptual relativist view that in the absence of shared concepts, as is the case, supposedly, among scientists whose alternative paradigms clash during scientific revolutions, there can be no rational or objective means of choosing among alternative conceptual schemes. Thus, it is argued, there is no point in attempting to work up an absolutely secure defense for a particular conceptual scheme (or belief system or world-view) against the attacks of a philosophical sceptic.

The renewed interest in transcendental arguments comes from philosophers who want to challenge this broad movement towards conceptual relativism, and who believe that there are still insights to be gained by seeking the permanent legitimization for a particular conceptual scheme through a refutation of scepticism. A sound transcendental argument could demonstrate that any coherent conceptual scheme must be of a particular sort, built around a specified core of concepts, because only such a scheme would be adequate to the conceptual requirements of thought or language or experience.

In this thesis, I shall address both the question of what a transcendental argument is -- i.e., what its aims are, what it presupposes and how it must be structured -- and the question of the possibility or impossibility of such arguments. In the first chapter, I survey some recent attempts at defining a transcendental argument. A general lack of consistency in the

literature makes it impossible to reach any precise conclusions, but a two-fold working definition is proposed on the basis of two identifiable general approaches to transcendental arguments. The second chapter looks at two forms of scepticism about knowledge of the external world in order to set up in a Kantian way the two epistemological problems for which transcendental arguments have been proposed as solutions. (I ignore other possible uses to which transcendental arguments have been put, e.g., in the ethical or aesthetic realm.) One problem concerns how it can be known that the external world exists; the other concerns conceptual relativism and the possibility of a transcendental justification of a particular conceptual scheme. In the third chapter, I examine and expand upon Stephan Korner's forceful argument to show that transcendental arguments are impossible (Korner 1967). I conclude that this argument counts decisively against the possibility of a transcendental solution to the problem of conceptual relativism, but does not touch arguments to demonstrate that we have knowledge of the existence of the external world. The fourth chapter examines several arguments which attempt the latter demonstration. It begins with Kant's famous Refutation of Idealism and then turns to some recent variations on this argument.

CHAPTER ONE
THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

A good way to begin a treatment of the question concerning the nature of a transcendental argument is with a survey of some recent attempts at definition. This will serve to demonstrate how great is the extent to which current writers disagree, and will help to justify my own reluctance to enter the debate on this level, either by offering further arguments in favor of one of the many already available definitions, or by formulating my own -- umpteenth -- proposal as to what exactly makes an argument transcendental. In this chapter, I want only to compare and contrast some of the current opinions in order to bring out the main issues, and to arrive at a tentative working definition that will serve for what follows. Here, then, is a broad though by no means comprehensive sampling:

- i) Thus a transcendental argument is for Kant one which shows the possibility of a certain type of synthetic knowledge a priori by showing how it is due to those activities of ours by means of which the knowledge in question is obtained. This is, I take it, what Kant means by saying that a transcendental proposition 'makes

possible the very experience which is its own ground of proof.' (Hintikka 1972:275)

- ii) I take transcendental arguments in general to be arguments which establish the logical presuppositions of something being the case, and of our being able to say, truly or falsely, that it is the case. They exhibit the necessary presuppositions without which something we say, or want to be able to say, cannot be said at all. Such arguments, therefore, include, but need not be restricted to, arguments eliciting the preconditions of conceptualizing experience in the way in which it is conceptualized by us, i.e. the necessary presuppositions of empirical inquiry as we know it. (Schaper 1972:101)
- iii) The whole point, or trick, involved in ... transcendental arguments ... [is] to take attention away from the object of apprehension and apply it to the medium by which it [is] apprehended. By study of the medium, the idea is to discover the nature of any objects that can be apprehended by use of this medium. (Harrison 1974:44)
- iv) I take a 'transcendental argument' to be one which aims to rebut some form of scepticism by proving something about the necessary conditions for self-knowledge, self-consciousness, or the like. (Bennett 1979:50)
- v) Transcendental arguments are supposed to demonstrate the impossibility or illegitimacy of this sceptical challenge [against the view that there is a world of material objects] by proving that certain concepts are necessary for thought or experience. (Stroud 1968:242)
- vi) The sceptical challenger contends that this state of affairs...[in which there exists] ... a language [which] has in it some expressions that are used to describe what is taken to be the external world ... is compatible with the non-existence of the external world; there is no rational way of choosing between the common assumption that some expressions truly describe the external world and the sceptical alternative that none do, because there is nothing external to describe. Transcendental arguments are attempts to demonstrate that there could not be the language in which the sceptical challenge is stated unless some of the expressions used in the language successfully refer to features of the external world. Thus the statement of the sceptical challenge implies that the challenge is met. The correctness of the distinction between oneself and the external world -- the target of the challenge -- is an essential feature of the presentation of the challenge: the sceptical

challenge is self-refuting. (Kekes 1972:514)

- vii) A transcendental deduction can ... be defined quite generally as a logically sound demonstration of the reasons why a particular categorial schema is not only in fact, but also necessarily employed, in differentiating a region of experience. (Korner 1967:318)
- viii) ... this more traditional outlook tries to revive something like the Kantian notion of 'transcendental arguments' which are supposed to refute the sceptic by showing, as against conceptual relativism, that certain conceptual linguistic frameworks have priority over others, and that the application of certain concepts or linguistic structures is a necessary condition for all talk about 'knowledge and 'experience'. (Bieri, Horstmann and Kruger 1978:vii)

It would be impossible, I think, to argue convincingly that all these writers have in mind the same sort of argument, no matter how broadly construed. There are, however, some main lines that can be distinguished in the debate. One general point of contention concerns the manner in which Kant himself should be brought in. Different writers show different degrees of concern for the historical soundness of their reconstructions of Kantian aims and arguments. A strict concern for historical accuracy leads to the view that, since Kant invented the idea, the only truly transcendental arguments are those which would be judged so by Kant himself, and that any issues which arise are to be resolved through exegesis and critical analysis. Freer thinkers propose to take a certain amount of inspiration and direction from Kant but maintain the right to apply the term 'transcendental' to arguments which may bear only a family resemblance to Kant's

originals.

Both attitudes are represented in the above quoted passages. Schaper (ii) is at the extreme end of historical and terminological insouciance. She wants to call any argument transcendental which establishes the logical presuppositions of our being able to say truly or falsely that something is the case. This (rather recklessly) broad definition, on its own, is of no help at all. It would include, for example, the trivial argument from the existence of meaningful propositions to the existence of something which asserts or understands these propositions.

A little more direction is provided by Bennett (iv), for whom a transcendental argument is just one which (a) uses a certain general strategy, in order to (b) rebut some form of scepticism. The strategy is to show that a certain proposition called into question by the sceptic articulates "necessary conditions for self-knowledge, self-consciousness or the like." Similar views, though with important individual twists, are discernible in Stroud (v), Kekes (vi), and Bieri, Horstmann and Kruger (viii). In each case, a similar sort of anti-sceptical strategy is described, according to which a conclusion is proved true by demonstrating that it asserts a "presupposition" or "a condition for the possibility of" experience (Stroud; Bieri, Horstmann and Kruger) or empirical inquiry (Kekes) or thought (Stroud).

It is readily apparent that there is something Kantian

about these proposals. The Critique of Pure Reason is full of descriptions of a similar sort of strategy. In describing the transcendental method of proof, for example, Kant states:

In transcendental knowledge, so long as we are concerned with concepts of the understanding, our guide is the possibility of experience. Such proof does not show that the given concept (for instance, of that which happens) leads directly to another concept (that of a cause); for such a transition would be a saltus which could not be justified. The proof proceeds by showing that experience itself, and therefore the object of experience, would be impossible without a connection of this kind. (A783, B811; emphasis added)

It is tempting to adopt an initial working definition such that a transcendental argument is one which refutes a sceptic's claim to doubt a certain proposition or set of propositions by demonstrating that truth of the proposition(s) is a necessary condition for the possibility of something which the sceptic acknowledges to be beyond doubt -- a certain sort of experience, for example, or, to take Kekes' strategy into account, the intelligibility of the proposition which expresses the sceptic's doubt. There are, however, two reasons for thinking that this proposed definition of general strategy plus an anti-sceptical aim provides insufficient criteria for transcendentality. Both reasons are indicated in the passage from Hintikka, who elsewhere advocates strict historical accuracy through attention to Kant's usage (Hintikka 1972:274). First, the conclusion of a transcendental argument is, according to Kant, a transcendental proposition, that is, a

principle which is synthetic and a priori. Kant believed that transcendental arguments provide justification for propositions which cannot be justified by either purely logical or empirical means, as, for example, the proposition "Every event has a cause". If this is so, then it seems to follow that such arguments are not formally analytic, i.e. they do not express logical truths as do deductively valid arguments. The problem of transcendental arguments then involves the problem of explaining this new method of reasoning, which is not part of any standard deductive logic. A number of writers have taken this to be the central problem of transcendental arguments (see, e.g., Wilkerson 1970). Others either ignore this issue or argue that transcendental arguments are in fact analytic (see, e.g., Strawson 1966; Bennett 1979; Stroud 1968). On the strictly historical view that Hintikka takes, the latter approach is unacceptable.

The other reason for thinking that the general strategy outlined above, combined with anti-sceptical aim, provide insufficient criteria for transcendentality is that, as Hintikka points out, this strategy ignores the fact that Kant intended the term 'transcendental' to be used to refer to the activity of the knower in the making of a priori knowledge; a transcendental argument succeeds by discovering the cognitive faculties by means of which we come to know the world. (This is also the feature of transcendental arguments that Harrison (iii) focusses on.) Now, the question of whether an appeal to

cognitive faculties is essential to transcendental arguments cannot be separated from the question of whether transcendental arguments are necessarily linked to Kant's transcendental idealism and the unknowability of the thing-in-itself. Kant insists that knowledge is only possible through transcendental argumentation because what we come to know are only appearances, not things-in-themselves; it is the idealism which supposedly makes the whole enterprise possible (Williams 1968:217-18). So, a concern for historical accuracy may require that a good deal of Kant's overall philosophical position be incorporated into an acceptable characterization of a transcendental argument.

The issue of whether or not transcendental arguments must be deductively valid within any standard logic is an important one which goes beyond questions of historical accuracy. However, it is not a line I wish to pursue. I shall accept as given that transcendental arguments employ no 'special' logic. As far as Kant goes, I think a good case can be made for the view that there was never an intention to develop a new formal system to stand alongside Aristotelian logic. Kant is quite clear on this point. General logic, comprised of the rules of deductive inference first formalized by Aristotle, "contains the absolutely necessary rules of thought without which there can be no employment whatsoever of the understanding." (A52, B76) Kant's use of the term "transcendental logic" has led to the idea that he thought he

had struck upon a new special logic which would lead to knowledge in areas inaccessible to general logic. This is a mistake. Kant's idea of transcendental logic has nothing to do with any new formal system, but rather with the manner in which logic is employed in the particular branch of knowledge which is brought under logical analysis within a critical philosophy, viz., "knowledge which belongs to pure understanding and reason, whereby we think objects entirely a priori." (A57, B81) Of course, that Kant did not intend to employ an alternative logic does not demonstrate that his arguments do not in fact employ a new, transcendental logic, or that such a logic would not be required in order to accomplish a transcendental task. But, as I say, these are not questions I wish to consider. The issue I pursue is whether or not a transcendental argument can succeed using only the means available within standard deductive logic.

I now want to consider briefly and then also set aside the question of whether, as Hintikka insists, a transcendental argument must be, by definition, an argument which proceeds by laying out the necessary structure of the cognitive faculties which make experience possible.

There is no denying that Hintikka does have a point about the content of transcendental arguments when it comes to Kant's overall intent. A fundamental presupposition in Kant's critical philosophy is that universality and necessity cannot be reached by any empirical process; a priori knowledge can

only be due to an activity of the mind (B3-B6). It is the cognitive faculties in which this activity takes place that are purportedly brought to light by many of Kant's transcendental arguments. There is ample evidence that this was Kant's view. In the Prolegomena, Hintikka points out, Kant asserts that "the word 'transcendental'... with me never means a reference to our knowledge of things, but only to the cognitive faculty." (Prolegomena:294). And in the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant states explicitly that "the explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate a priori to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction." (B117, emphasis added). The Transcendental Deduction itself, believed by many to contain the core transcendental arguments in the first Critique, at times relies heavily on descriptions of the cognitive apparatus by means of which the various synthetic activities produce synthetic a priori knowledge.

Within the Transcendental Deduction are found the two principle proofs of the book; one demonstrates that systematic knowledge of experience is possible, the other that knowledge beyond the limits of experience is impossible (Henrich 1969:640-642). Together these provide Kant's solution to the central problem of the section, which is to explain how we can have knowledge of objects, i.e., how it is that we experience objects as unified entities which are in various ways connected to each other. Prima facie, Kant asserts, there are two possibilities (A92, B124). Either I am passive, and my

representations are determined by objects which exist separately from me, in which case my representations are just copies of these objects, or I play an active role in the formation of my representations and construct objects for myself. Neither point of view is adequate. The passivity thesis cannot account for a priori knowledge. There is nothing in experience alone, for example, to account for my a priori knowledge of causal necessity. The activity thesis cannot account for the fact that my knowledge about things external depends upon sensations which I cannot control but which are forced upon me from without. Kant's solution is that we are partly active and partly passive. The sensible content of my representations comes to me from the outside. Sensation constitutes the empirical relation between objects and our representations. In addition there is an a priori element in the representation of an object. This has two aspects. First, as laid out in the Aesthetic, there are the pure forms of intuition, space and time. Second, there are the a priori concepts through which we think objects. These are the pure concepts of the understanding, the categories. Human knowledge thus depends upon the synthetic cognitive activities by which the empirical conditions of sensation and the intellectual conditions of the categories plus space and time are brought together within consciousness. What is sought in the Transcendental Deduction is an understanding of the cognitive apparatus necessary for this fusion into a unified experience.

Now the drawback to a strictly historical attitude towards transcendental arguments is that it threatens to render the whole idea less interesting than it might otherwise be. It is fair to say that Kant's choice of method was influenced by his intellectual milieu. In attempting to establish the possibility of a ground for knowledge claims, it was natural, in the eighteenth century, that he should look to the workings of the mind, as did Locke and Hume before him. Both Hume's sceptical method and Locke's "physiology of the understanding" aim for a grasp of the limits of our knowledge through an examination of the faculties and principles of the human mind. Certainly Kant's approach is very different, but not because he attempts to find quasi-psychological solutions to epistemological problems. If we are looking to Kant for the key to a distinctive form of defence against empiricist scepticism or post-positivist conceptual relativism, we must admit that the appeal to cognitive faculties is not what makes his method original. Nor, most would say, is it what makes him interesting when it comes to modern formulations of epistemological problems. There have been radical changes in philosophical fashion since the eighteenth century, and transcendental psychology, at least in the modern analytic tradition, is no longer thought to be a plausible undertaking.³ So, to argue that it is an essential element in transcendental arguments would entail treating the whole idea of a transcendental argument as no more than a historical curiosity.

Since a fundamental premiss of this thesis is that Kant's goal in arguing transcendently remains of theoretical and not just historical interest today, it seems we must take up a more historically open-minded perspective than Hintikka's or risk being brought to an early halt.

This is not to offer a rebuttal to Hintikka's characterization of transcendental arguments, but to opt for a different approach. Hintikka may be right that from an historical point of view, it is problematic that many recent discussions of the form and use of transcendental arguments pass over the Kantian idea of cognitive faculties to be revealed by a transcendental investigation, while referring back to Kant as the originator of the sort of argument being discussed. At the same time, it cannot be denied that these arguments, although they manage to avoid the idea of transcendental cognitive processes, not only have a Kantian style, but, in at least one important sense, fit Kant's idea of transcendental: their conclusions pass beyond the world of experience to say something about the necessary preconditions for our knowledge of, or as it is sometimes put, our ability to speak intelligibly about, the world. From our point of view, then, it would be unproductively narrow-minded to insist that such arguments are not transcendental because they lack a particular content -- reference to cognitive faculties -- even if Hintikka is right that this was for Kant a defining characteristic. The important theoretical question today is

not whether Kant's goal of epistemological justification for the use of a priori concepts can be accomplished using methods which are strictly Kantian in both form and content, but whether the goal can be accomplished by any means at all. It is at least conveniently suggestive, if not strictly accurate historically, to label the sorts of arguments designed for this purpose transcendental. It will be in the nature of a discovery -- not a preliminary assumption -- if it turns out that certain elements of the Kantian form and content are essential to transcendental argumentation. What we seek, then, is a mode of argument that genuinely reflects Kant's procedure, and at the same time can claim the attention of contemporary epistemologists; the issue of historical validity will be set aside.

I want to return now to the selection of quotations in order to bring out an important line of division which is generally ignored in the literature. Compare Stroud (v) and Kekes (vi), on the one hand, with Korner (vii) and Bieri, Horstmann and Kruger (viii). There is a clear disjunction in the aims specified for a transcendental argument. For Stroud and Kekes, it is the problem of the existence of the external world which is to be solved. The sceptic denies the legitimacy of any knowledge claim about the independent existence of material objects and a transcendental argument attempts to meet this challenge by demonstrating either that it is impossible to coherently express this denial (Kekes), or that what the

sceptic denies is a necessity of thought (Stroud). Korner and Bieri, Horstmann and Kruger, on the other hand, look on transcendental arguments as attempts to prove something about "categorial schemas" or "conceptual or linguistic frameworks". The idea here is, roughly, that it is possible to show that certain networks of concepts are fundamental to human thought and are necessarily employed whenever language is used to differentiate or describe or theorize about experience.

These are two broadly distinguishable approaches to the modern use of transcendental arguments. On the one hand are those who are looking for proofs that our knowledge of the existence of the external world is necessary for the possibility of experience, and on the other hand, those who are interested in proofs that we can have knowledge that a certain conceptual mode of description of the external world is necessary for thought or experience, and thus uniquely justified. In what follows, I shall refer to these as 'ontological transcendental arguments' and 'descriptive transcendental arguments'.

The distinction is not altogether clear-cut. Both approaches are, at bottom, attempts to undermine sceptical denials of the possibility of knowledge of the external world, and a reply to one side of the sceptical challenge will have implications for the other side. To prove that we necessarily think of the world as existing independently of us is to prove something at the most basic level about our conceptual scheme.

And, we can reasonably expect -- and Kant certainly thought -- that any conceptual scheme which is proved necessary to thought will carry with it assumptions about the ontological status of the external world. Nonetheless, the two problems are separable, although there is a puzzling tendency in the recent work on transcendental arguments to either conflate them (see, e.g., Rorty 1979; Schaper 1972) or entirely ignore one or the other (Stroud 1968).⁴

It should now be clear that, given the state of the current debate, there is no possibility of a single, precise definition of a transcendental argument that will please everyone or even be of much use. To get on with the task at hand, however, some characterization is required. I propose the following two-fold definition: transcendental arguments are anti-sceptical strategies which either (i) demonstrate that we have knowledge that, or cannot intelligibly suppose or believe other than that, the world exists; or (ii) demonstrate that some set of basic concepts is uniquely suited to describing the way the world is, or is a part of any conceptual framework that can be intelligibly employed in describing the world. In both cases, a transcendental argument demonstrates that some proposition asserts a necessary condition for the possibility of some universally shared aspect of our experience.

I turn next to an examination of the two sceptical problems to which transcendental arguments are applied.

CHAPTER TWO

SCEPTICISM AND THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Many philosophers, especially since the seventeenth century, have taken the ultimate test of success in philosophy to be the permanent removal of any rational grounds for doubt with regard to some philosophical position. But for as long as philosophers have been giving accounts of ultimate reality, sceptics have been poking holes in the arguments devised to support claims to philosophical knowledge.

There are various degrees and forms of philosophical scepticism. At the extreme end, we are told of Cratylus, the pre-Socratic, who was moved by the metaphysical theory of Heraclitus that everything is in flux to conclude that communication is impossible because in the time it takes for words to pass from speaker to listener their intended meanings would change. Whereupon, Cratylus henceforth refused to discuss anything and only wiggled his finger when spoken to, indicating that he had heard something, but he knew not what (Popkin 1967).

The sceptic who is supposed to be brought around by

transcendental arguments is of the less radical sort that Descartes let loose in the seventeenth century. This sceptic, who has various incarnations, is recognizable by his willingness to admit from the start the possibility of knowledge about logical truths and the immediate empirical data of sense experience. Because he takes his own inner states to be the only sure basis for knowledge, he reasons that we can be certain only of what we directly experience, viz., the ideas, images and sensations of inner consciousness, and of what can be logically inferred from these phenomena. Thus, any knowledge claims about the world outside the self are only justified if they can be logically inferred from immediate experience. But no sound logical inferences at all about the outside world can be made from the qualities of inner mental experience alone; hence, since there is no other source from which indubitable premisses can be formulated, it follows that the only rational position open to human beings is complete scepticism about the outside world. This was not Descartes' own ultimate conclusion, of course, but his appeal to God as guarantor of the veracity of beliefs about the external world is less convincing than his initial sceptical position.

The problem that this sort of sceptic raises about our knowledge of the external world is, I have said, two-fold. First, the sceptic can challenge the claim that it is possible to know what the external world is like. Second, and more radically, the sceptic can argue that there are no rational

grounds for believing that the external world exists at all. Kant tried to undermine both of these sceptical challenges in the first Critique. To understand how he formulated and tried to solve the two problems, we need to distinguish two sorts of sceptic. In treating the problem of the existence of the external world, Kant was primarily aiming at a Cartesian sceptic. His solution to the problem concerning the possibility of knowledge about what the world is like is most easily understood as a response to Humean scepticism.

Consider first the problem of the outer world's existence. In the preface to the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant asserts that:

it still remains a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence of things outside us ... must be accepted merely on faith, and that if anyone thinks good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubts by any satisfactory proof. (Bx1)

This unacceptable state of affairs prompted Kant to write what he considered to be the only substantive addition to the second edition of the Critique, The Refutation of Idealism, in order to establish rational grounds for our common sense belief in the external world. But the problem is already on his mind in the first edition; one of the virtues he claims for transcendental idealism is that it removes the basis for Cartesian metaphysical scepticism.

His clearest formulation of how the problem arises and why it remains insoluble within all non-transcendental philosophies is contained in the Fourth Paralogism (A367).

Here he takes the sceptic to reason as follows. The only way I can know immediately, i.e. without inference, that something exists is if I perceive that thing immediately. But the only things I perceive immediately are my own inner states; in other words, I have immediate perceptions only of myself. Therefore I can have immediate knowledge only of myself. An external object is, by definition, something other than myself. Therefore I can have no immediate perception of an external object and hence no immediate knowledge of it. I can only know by inference of the existence of things which I do not perceive immediately. The only inference by which I can adduce the existence of external objects is a causal inference. That is, given the existence of an inner perception of an object, I can infer the existence of an external object which is the cause of that perception. But causal inferences are always uncertain, since any effect may be due to more than one cause. Therefore it is always doubtful whether the cause of my inner perception of an outer object is an actual outer object or itself another of my inner perceptions. Therefore no knowledge is possible of the existence of things other than myself.

This is essentially the problem Descartes raises in the first and second Meditations. The arguments from dreams and deceiving demons seem to demonstrate that there is no logical defense against alternative accounts of the etiology of our experience of the external world and hence no way to be quite sure that one has ever had perceptions of independently

existing outer objects.

Kant goes on to argue that a shift from a Cartesian pre-transcendental standpoint to transcendental idealism removes the problem. The reasoning of the Cartesian sceptic -- whom Kant labels a "transcendental realist" -- is correct given his assumption that objects of the senses, if they are external, must have an existence which is entirely independent of perceptions. The transcendental idealist rejects this assumption, taking all objects of the senses, whether internal or external, to be representations, that is, appearances only, not things-in-themselves. Thus the distinction between an external object and my perception of an external object is dropped. Only the thing-in-itself can be said to exist independently and of this I can have neither perception nor knowledge. Thus I can have immediate knowledge of the existence of external objects in the same way that I have immediate knowledge of my inner states, because an external object is nothing but a species of representation:

In order to arrive at the reality of outer objects I have just as little need to resort to inference as I have in regard to the reality of the object of my inner sense, that is, in regard to the reality of my thoughts. For in both cases alike the objects are nothing but representations the immediate perception (consciousness) of which is at the same time a sufficient proof of their reality. (A371)

By itself, of course, the Fourth Paralogism is not a rebuttal of the sceptic's position. Kant's claim here is just that if the presuppositions of transcendental idealism

concerning the relation between perceptions and objects of perception are substituted for the assumptions of the Cartesian sceptic -- the transcendental realist -- then the problem disappears. In fact, however, things are not so simple, as Kant apparently realized at some point between the first and second editions of the first Critique, since he later added the Refutation of Idealism. Prima facie, it seems possible to adopt a transcendental idealist position and still entertain sceptical doubts about the outside world. For it is still possible to be misled by one's own representations. A vivid hallucination or dream of an external object might mistakenly be taken for a veridical representation of an external object when in fact it is an inner representation existing, as Kant would say, only in the imagination and not in reality. Once this possibility is recognized, it looks as though it is logically possible that all our representations of external objects could be of that sort. It could be that I am so constructed as to experience a play of representations of purely inner objects of the imagination, some of which appear to me as such and some of which lead me to believe that the objects represented are external, existing in space around me.

So, transcendental idealism seems only to shift the problem, not solve it. What is required in addition, and what the Refutation of Idealism attempts to provide, is a proof to demonstrate that there is no real possibility of this massive ontological error. This proof must:

show that we have experience, and not merely imagination of outer things; and this, it would seem, cannot be achieved save by proof that even our inner experience, which for Descartes is indubitable, is possible only on the assumption of outer experience. (B275)

This proposed strategy fits one of the general forms we have adopted for an ontological transcendental argument. The plan is to remove any basis for doubt by showing that the truth of the conclusion -- that the external world exists -- is a necessary condition for the possibility of inner experience.

I will put off for now an examination of this argument, since I am here concerned only with setting up in a Kantian way the two-fold problem of the external world, in order to make clear the nature of the task set for transcendental arguments. Whether and how ontological transcendental arguments such as the Refutation of Idealism can accomplish their task I consider in Chapter Four.

The second aspect of the external world problem -- the possibility of knowledge of what the world is like -- does not arise for the transcendental idealist in the same way that it does for the Cartesian transcendental realist. In one respect, the problem disappears. The transcendental realist can always wonder whether things are what they appear to be. For the transcendental idealist, such a doubt cannot arise; if an object seems, in the light of all actual and possible experience, to be a red ball, then it is a red ball, since

external objects just are our representations of them. Thus, our direct, experiential knowledge of the external world is not in jeopardy.

The problem is raised in another form, however, by a Humean sceptic who questions the legitimacy of our application of certain concepts to the world, and hence the legitimacy of knowledge claims about either common sense explanations or scientific theories to describe and account for the activities and interactions of the objects of external experience. It is this Humean problem that Kant faces up to in the Transcendental Deduction. In the introduction to this central chapter, he sets up the problem using a juridical metaphor, adapting his use of the term 'deduction' from the sense it had in juridical literature of the time (A84, B116). A legal deduction consisted in an argument that established the legitimacy of a plaintiff's claim of right or legal entitlement by demonstrating that a certain law is legitimately applied, given the particular facts of a case. In the "complicated web of human knowledge", concepts are applied to experience. The problem for epistemology, analogous to that of the jurist, is to establish the legitimacy of this application, that is, to establish our epistemological right to employ the concepts we do when we think about the world.

What sort of right could this be which is neither legal nor moral, but epistemological? A short answer is that whereas there exists a legal right to apply a particular legal

principle to a case when that application is recognized by the courts as legitimate, and a moral right to apply some principle for action when that principle is contained in an acceptable moral theory, we have an epistemological right to apply a concept to experience if that application can be demonstrated to lead to genuine knowledge about the world. This answer helps to elucidate the metaphorical use of 'right' with reference to epistemology, but does not take us behind the metaphor. Perhaps a closer look at the problem Hume raised will.

Hume, following Berkeley, called into question the use of certain key concepts of Cartesian metaphysics and Newtonian mechanics: substance, causation, space and time, and so on. His doubts arose out of his empiricist claim that all knowledge is derived from experience, and that, therefore, the only way to justify our employment of an idea is to show from what impression it is derived. Such a proof, which Kant called an empirical deduction, legitimizes our use of a complex idea by analytically breaking it down into its simple component ideas, and then tracing each of these back to its original impression. This sort of legitimization works for empirical concepts, but is not possible for ideas which make use of a priori concepts, because no prior impressions exist from which these concepts derive. Hume concluded that these must be not legitimate ideas, but meaningless fictions with no justifiable place in any explanatory theory (Hume, Inquiry, sec. iv).

Kant accepted Hume's formulation of the problem of justification which arises out of the fact that a priori concepts cannot be given an empirical deduction. He also recognized that Hume's psychological explanations for why we apply a priori concepts to experience gave no solution to the epistemological conundrum. Unwilling to deny our epistemological right to employ a priori concepts, he sought to undermine Humean scepticism by developing a form of deduction that was not empirical but transcendental. Such an argument would succeed in establishing our right to employ a priori concepts by showing that these concepts, though not derived from experience, are necessary for the possibility of experience. If it could be demonstrated that our experience of an external world, ordered in time, would not be possible if we did not employ, for example, the concept of causality, this would be sufficient, Kant thought, to remove the grounds for Humean scepticism and show that we are justified in employing this concept in experience. In other words, it would be proven possible to know, given appropriate experience, that a particular sequence of events was a causal sequence.

We do not need to accept the whole of Hume's theory of knowledge to recognize with Kant that there is a problem for which a transcendental deduction might provide the solution. However, I think we do need to accept a certain conception of truth, entailed by what has been broadly called the correspondence theory, the central claim of which is the

realist one that truth is 'agreement with reality', that is, that truth consists in some sort of correspondence between a statement, belief, theory, etc., and the way things are in the world. This is not the place to begin a detailed examination of this philosophical position, which has persisted in various forms through many centuries, but which (most would agree) has yet to receive an adequate formulation. However, I take it that some version of a correspondence theory is essential to the framing of the problem which Kant thought transcendental deductions might solve.

I can sketch a version that I think would be considered plausible at least in some quarters today. One of its strengths is that it does not bring in the seventeenth and eighteenth century representative realist account that has often gone along with correspondence theories, according to which true ideas are accurate copies of the objects they represent. No direct correspondence is posited between empirical data and the world. Rather, the correspondence claim that is grounded by a transcendental argument concerns the relation between the world and the conceptual means by which we understand it. We can think of the world as having a structure that a scientific theory tries to capture. The theory, for its part, relies upon a certain conceptual structure which, if it truly describes the world, must match the structure of the world. A common analogy for this correspondence relationship is the structural isomorphism between an accurate map and the territory the map

depicts. The central point is that all thought involves some framework of concepts, and for genuine knowledge to be had, this framework must possess a structure that corresponds to the structure of the world. To give an example of what I mean, the legitimation of the concept of causality would have to demonstrate that the external world, whatever it is like, will be most accurately described by a theory that employs a conceptual framework which contains the concept of causality.

I am not about to defend this general theory; I am not sure that I would want to. I provide the sketch because I take it that those who find nothing attractive about it will also have little use for descriptive transcendental arguments. The most serious challenge today to the notion of a correspondence between the conceptual structure of a true theory and the actual structure of the region of the world that that theory describes, comes from pragmatists, who argue that the only philosophically legitimate reason for calling any theory true is that it is more successful than any other theory in predicting and giving a coherent account of the world. Pragmatists deny that there are any further criteria for the truth of a theory, over and above criteria based upon practical advantages enjoyed by those who subscribe to it. If some theory provides a coherent picture of reality and thereby allows us to effectively think about and act upon our environment, then it is, from a practical point of view, a good theory -- and there is no legitimate point of view other than a practical one.

available from which to judge a theory's worth. Therefore, it is argued, there could be no theory which most accurately described the world, nor any conceptual scheme whose structure correctly matched the structure of reality.⁵

Rorty has recently suggested, following Putnam, that the disagreement between the realist, with his correspondence theory, and the pragmatist comes down to a disagreement over whether "we can give sense to the question 'Is our best explanation true?'" (Rorty 1979b:84; see also Putnam 1978:125). I think Rorty is correct in arguing that only if the question does make sense -- because even an ideally coherent, elegant and economical theory might still fail to match up with the way the real world is -- can there be a problem in epistemology which calls for a transcendental solution.⁶

The general form of the problem is this. Our theoretical reasonings about and descriptions of the world sometimes employ concepts which prima facie are unlike empirical concepts, in that they have no direct, pre-theoretical link to the world we experience. The theoretical statements which contain these concepts are purported truths about the world, but the correspondence between statement and reality cannot be directly, i.e., empirically, established as can be done with statements which employ only empirical concepts. In Kant's terms, the objective reality of these a priori concepts remains open to question. We know that

empirical concepts have objective reality, i.e., that there is a relationship of correspondence between these concepts and the world, because we have immediate experience of what corresponds to the judgements in which the concepts appear. Thus we can know that at least some judgements containing these concepts give true accounts of reality. A priori concepts are employed in the absence of such direct evidence. Hence their objective reality must be demonstrated indirectly, through a deduction which is transcendental, in that it passes beyond experience, language and the relationship that holds between them, to reveal the necessary conditions for their possibility.

It must be admitted that this discussion of how Kant supposed a transcendental deduction might solve Hume's problem fails as an attempt to make fully clear Kant's analogy with legal deductions. For, it may be said, a transcendental argument does not demonstrate that we are justified in our use of a priori concepts -- that we enjoy an epistemological 'right' to their use -- but rather that we are bound to use them, whether we will or not.⁷ Whether this point is legitimate will depend upon the nature of the conclusion that a transcendental argument is used to establish. Discussion so far has not distinguished between two sorts of possible conclusions to transcendental arguments, viz., (i) that a certain proposition which employs an a priori concept is necessarily true, given the nature of experience, and (ii) that a certain a priori concept is necessarily employed by any being

with our sort of experience. If the conclusion is (i), e.g., 'Every event must have a cause', then the objection does not follow; if we know that every event must have a cause, then we are epistemologically justified in applying the concept of causality to experience, because it has been demonstrated that that application leads to genuine knowledge about the world. If the conclusion is (ii), the objection is valid. Given the necessity of our employment of the concept of causality, it does not follow in any immediately apparent way that there are actual causal relations in the real world. Now, I think it would be a very odd claim indeed to say that we are not justified in using some concept, if that concept is demonstrably a necessary component of our conceptual apparatus. I cannot imagine how such a view might be arrived at. But I nevertheless fail to see how a transcendental proof of necessity could be construed as a justifying demonstration of a 'right'. We can set this problem aside however; it is enough here that we be clear about how Kant set up the Humean sceptical problem, and why this problem -- at least on some accounts of the nature of truth -- remains with us today.

In this chapter, I have distinguished two problems concerning knowledge of the external world, and have discussed two sorts of scepticism, one Cartesian and the other Humean. I have tried to show how Kant used these sceptical standpoints to formulate the epistemological problems to be solved by transcendental arguments. In presenting the two sceptics in

this way, I do not mean to suggest that either the Cartesian sceptic or the Humean sceptic could consistently limit his doubts to the one aspect of the external world problem on which I have in each case focussed. This would be obviously false. The Cartesian arguments from demons, dreams and hallucinations do not call into question only our belief in the existence of the external world. They equally invoke the possibility that all our perceptions of external objects are misrepresentations, and hence that all our beliefs about what the world is like are false. And Hume, of course, was not only concerned with the apparent impossibility of grounding the concepts we apply in our understanding of the nature of the world. He also has his own reasons for asserting that there is no rational basis for belief in the existence of things outside us. Given his two fundamental assumptions, that (i) every meaningful concept can be directly correlated, as copy to original, with a previous sense impression, and (ii) "nothing is ever present to the mind but its own sense impressions", it follows that the "real content" of our beliefs must be reducible without remainder to their original impressions. Since our belief in the independent existence of external objects cannot be reduced to any judgement about sense impressions, it follows for Humean scepticism that this belief is baseless, deriving from some sort of "fallacy or illusion" of the senses (see Hume, Treatise, Book I, part II, sec. vi; also Book I, Part IV, sec. ii). Since I have here been concerned with the manner in which

Kant formulated the epistemological problems, I have looked only at the use to which he put these two sceptics, not at the full implications of the positions they represent.

Having outlined the problems, I shall next consider the question of the possibility of a successful transcendental argument.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTIVE TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

Stephan Korner has argued that a successful transcendental deduction is a logical impossibility (Korner 1967). His method of attack provides a useful framework for analysis. In this chapter, I shall make use of this framework in order to examine the logical feasibility of transcendental arguments.⁸

Korner's general notion of a transcendental deduction uses the idea of a "categorial schema", of which he takes Kant's scheme of the categories plus space and time to be an example. This idea can be explained as follows. In order to think and make statements about the external world, we must classify objects on the basis of their characteristics. For this, we require a "method of external differentiation" which, at a minimum, will allow us to differentiate within experience objects and their properties and relations. Among the attributes applied to external objects will be two special kinds. First, there will be "constitutive" attributes, which are "comprehensively applicable" to external objects. That is,

a constitutive attribute applies necessarily to every external object. Second, there will be individuating attributes, which "exhaustively individuate" external objects. An attribute is individuating if it is applicable to every external object and if it is by virtue of its application that the object is considered distinct from all other external objects. In a Kantian schema, according to Korner, the categories are constitutive attributes; to be an external object is, necessarily, to be that to which the categories are attributed. Position in space and time is an individuating attribute for external objects; to attribute a specific spatio-temporal position to an object is to distinguish it from all other external objects.

Korner defines a transcendental deduction as "... a logically sound demonstration of the reasons why a particular categorial schema is not only in fact, but also necessarily employed, in differentiating a region of experience." (ibid:318). He takes Kantian transcendental deductions to be special cases within this general definition. This claim however, requires two qualifications which bring out important developments in the modern conceptions of transcendental arguments.

First, it is clear that Korner has in mind what I have called a descriptive transcendental argument, i.e., an argument which refutes scepticism about the legitimacy of a particular conceptual mode of description for the external world (see pp.

23-25 above). Since we are concerned with the possibility of ontological transcendental arguments as well, we will also have to consider the implications of Korner's argument for these. For now, though, we can set this further question aside.

Second, there is an unacknowledged difference between a Kornerian categorial schema and the Kantian schema of space-time framework plus the categories. For Kant, experience, that is, "knowledge by means of connected perceptions" (A51), is made possible through the cooperation of the understanding and sensibility. The understanding is the source of concepts through which intuitions, supplied by sensibility, are thought. Without thought, there can be no experience. Thus, for Kant, there is no logical possibility of what Korner calls "undifferentiated experience", to which a "method of differentiation" is applied. The pure concepts of the understanding are not brought to experience, but are logically prior to experience; they are "conditions for the possibility of experience" (B161), which, of course, is why their deduction is transcendental.

Korner, it seems, has things logically reversed. When he speaks of a schema as a "method of prior differentiation of a region of experience", he has in mind a classification system which is logically prior to statements about experience, but not logically prior to experience itself. A categorial schema is the basic theoretical underpinning of a linguistic framework by which a pre-existing experience is differentiated in thought

and language. Thus a Kornerian transcendental deduction cannot aim to determine the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience, since experience is presupposed by any schema. In short, there cannot be, logically, any schema without experience, but there can be experience without a schema. Kant has it just the other way around, which suggests an important difference between Kant's aim in arguing transcendently, and what Korner takes to be the aim of a transcendental deduction. For, whereas a Kornerian transcendental deduction aims to prove the necessary conditions for the linguistic interpretation of experience, a Kantian deduction aims to uncover the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience itself. We cannot simply assume, therefore, that Korner's attack on transcendental deductions as he conceives them, if successful, is also effective against an argument with a strictly Kantian aim. Korner's strategy is, nevertheless, a useful one to follow, for I think it can be fairly easily established that the difficulty Korner raises is essentially the same for any argument which attempts to prove the necessity of some conceptual scheme.

Korner's conclusion is that the possibility of a transcendental argument must be rejected because it could at most be shown that a certain schema is sufficient -- not that it is necessary, i.e., uniquely sufficient -- for the linguistic interpretation of experience. His proof of this impossibility proceeds by exhaustively listing the possible

strategies for a demonstration of a schema's uniqueness (there are three), and showing that each of these must fail.

The first strategy compares the schema with "experience undifferentiated by any method of prior differentiation." (Korner 1967:320) This will not work, Korner claims, because no statement could be made about undifferentiated experience, since all statements presuppose some method of prior differentiation. Therefore, no such comparison is possible between a schema and undifferentiated experience.

It seems clear enough that this approach is not a reasonable one to pursue. In the first place, it is difficult to see what sense is to be made of the notion of "undifferentiated experience". And, even if the notion does make sense, in order to actually compare a schema with undifferentiated experience, the latter would have to be first described using language, which would require that it be differentiated in language. Thus no comparison with undifferentiated experience could ever be conducted.

The second strategy for demonstrating a schema's uniqueness is to compare it with possible competitors. Korner dismisses this idea as "self-contradictory in attempting a 'demonstration' of the schema's uniqueness, by conceding that the schema is not unique." (ibid:321) Now, taken literally, this strategy is self-contradictory. To admit that there are possible competitors to a schema is to admit from the start

that the schema is not unique. This, however, could be said of any argument for uniqueness which attempted to proceed by ruling out alternatives. But there is nothing contradictory in attempting to show, for example, that there is but one True Church by demonstrating the inauthenticity of all other contenders. Similarly, in the case of a schema, the point would be to examine anything that looks like an alternative schema and demonstrate that it in fact is not. There is no need to admit in advance that it is a real alternative, but just that it might be.

There may still seem to be some force to Korner's point, though. If the conclusion of a transcendental argument is supposed to be that some schema is necessary to thought, it could be argued that if it is possible to even think of the possibility of alternatives, then, ipso facto, the schema could not be a necessity of thought. By similar reasoning, if a particular schema is necessary for language, then it seems to follow that it would be impossible to articulate even a defective alternative. If we can hypothetically try on, as it were, apparent alternative schemas, then, even if only one turns out to be satisfactory, it is not a necessity for thought or language. If this is what Korner's objection amounts to, then it is still unconvincing. Even if it is true that a schema is a necessity of thought, it does not follow that it is impossible to contemplate the general possibility of alternatives. Nor, it seems to me, should it be impossible to

attempt to think up specific hypothetical alternatives. If there is but one possible schema, then these will turn out, on careful examination, not to be legitimate alternatives, either because they reduce to the original schema, or because they are incoherent.

Korner's other objection to the second strategy is that it presupposes that all possible competitors can be exhibited, i.e., that it will be possible to provide a complete and explicit enumeration of the constitutive and individuating attributes which belong to anything proposed as an alternative schema. I see no problem here. To be in a position to say that X is a possible alternative schema, one must, presumably, first have succeeded in exhibiting X. In any case, Korner gives no reason to suppose otherwise.

The real problem with attempting to prove the uniqueness of a schema by ruling out alternatives is that any such attempt, it would seem, cannot rule out the possibility of an overlooked alternative. If we must rely on our powers of imagination to provide alternative schemas for comparison with the one we presently employ, we can never know that all possibilities have been exhausted. Unless there is some effective procedure for generating all possible alternatives, there can be no way of determining that there does not exist in logical space some alternative method of differentiation which does not belong to the schema in question. In science, this perpetually open possibility is the reason for a measure of

scepticism toward any explanatory theory for some region of experience; a new theory may come along which is as good as or superior (in terms of power, simplicity, conceptual unity, etc.). But the point of a transcendental argument is to remove any grounds for such scepticism with respect to the employment of some set of concepts. We want to be able to say that no matter what new explanatory theories are thought up in the future, they will have to employ these concepts.⁹

This problem seems to me to count decisively against a Kantian deduction to demonstrate that some schema is necessary for the possibility of experience, unless there is some way of proceeding other than as Kant does, by setting out a system of cognitive faculties through which experience is produced. (Although I can see no way of proving that no other method could serve, I cannot imagine how it could proceed and so will ignore the possibility.) The conclusion to any such argument could only be speculative. That is, at best it could be shown that some structure of cognitive faculties would be sufficient to explain the possibility of experience, not that it was necessary for the possibility of experience. For, such an argument would inevitably be at the mercy of an overlooked possibility; one's conclusion could at most be of the form, 'it looks as though experience would not be possible unless X is the case.'

The next question is whether Korner is correct in claiming that his second proposed strategy is also ineffective

against a Körnerian transcendental deduction; that is, whether it could at most be shown that a certain schema provides sufficient conceptual conditions for the possibility of linguistic interpretation of experience, but that it could not be demonstrated that every alternative schema is insufficient to provide for the linguistic interpretation of experience.

Here as well, there can be no trust in any purely creative strategy of thinking up as many possible alternatives for testing as we can. What is required for success is a procedure which will generate all possible alternative schemas. The only sort of systematic procedure I can think of for generating new schemas would proceed by a process of deletion. Having established the schema currently employed, we could generate a new schema by removing some conceptual component from it. We could then determine whether what was left constituted a possible alternative schema; that is, whether it was self-consistent and contained the conceptual resources adequate to the task of linguistic interpretation of experience. This would produce a finite number of such candidates and each could be examined in turn. This route, however, does not look promising, because the problem remains that there always could be some schema yet to be imagined which employs not just new combinations of old concepts, but new concepts to differentiate experience. The deletion method assumes what must be proven: that the concepts now employed are logically irreplaceable.

Still, such a procedure would be interesting in a negative way since it would allow us to draw up a short list of 'perhaps necessary' concepts. This raises a general point for consideration. It may turn out that a transcendental deduction demonstrating the necessity of a complete schema is, as Korner argues, logically impossible. In that case, it might yet be possible to demonstrate the necessity of some portion of our schema. This would require an argument which demonstrated, not the necessity of a particular schema, but rather the necessity of some schema or other which belonged to a certain set of schemas, namely, the set of schemas which employ the core of necessary concepts. Perhaps this less ambitious project, which Korner does not consider, could succeed where a full scale deduction could not.

Of course, even such a limited transcendental deduction could not succeed by the strategy of comparison with all possible alternatives. For, we must always allow that any concept which seems indispensable from our present perspective (limited as it is to an unknown degree by our powers of imagination) might be unnecessary within some future conceptual schema which employed new and as yet unimagined concepts. We are left, then, with the third and last strategy which Korner suggests and rejects. According to this approach, the schema and its application are examined "entirely from within the schema itself, i.e., by means of statements belonging to it." (ibid:321) Such an examination cannot serve the aim of a

transcendental deduction, Korner maintains, because "at best it could only show how the schema functions in the differentiation of a region of experience, not that it is the only possible schema to which every differentiation of the region must belong." (ibid:321) The problem, as I understand it, is that the only means available for determining logical necessity are those provided by the conceptual schema we employ. A relation of necessity can hold between concepts within a schema, but any attempt to establish the necessity of the schema as a whole on the basis of necessities which hold only within the schema would beg the question, since it would have to presuppose the necessity it sought to prove.

Our present situation is this. We wish to determine whether or not it could be demonstrated that a particular conceptual schema, or one from a particular species of schema, is necessary for either the possibility of experience (Kant), or the possibility of linguistic interpretation of experience (Korner). Three broad strategies have been suggested which together are said to exhaust the possible forms of argument: a comparison of our schema with pre-conceptual experience; a comparison with possible alternative schemas; an internal examination of the schema itself. Each approach has been rejected.

As a possible way out of this impasse, I now wish to consider a fourth method which perhaps amounts to a variation on the second and third methods combined. I will suggest that

this method, the form of which can be found in Kant's Refutation of Idealism, might serve to prove an ontological transcendental conclusion, i.e., that we have knowledge of the existence of the external world.

The reason for the failure of the third method -- internal examination of the schema itself -- is that the entire schema is brought into question at once, leaving us completely barren of conceptual resources with which to formulate an argument, a situation similar to that of Descartes in the depths of his radical doubt. Suppose, however, that certain features of the schema can be accepted in advance as beyond question. Then, it might be possible to demonstrate the necessity of certain other features by an internal examination of the schema. This examination could proceed by the process of deletion suggested earlier. Thus, we could determine whether certain features are necessary to the schema by hypothetically removing these features and seeing if a possible schema remains. This would be an attempt to create a new hypothetical schema for comparison, which is how Korner's second method comes into play. However, now we no longer need to worry about the possibility of an overlooked alternative. We have determined in advance that the only putative schemas worth considering are those which have a certain feature, call it X, and what is to be determined is whether some further feature, call it Y, is a necessary requirement for any schema with X. So we are comparing not particular schemas, but two

suggested species of schema, which together exhaust the alternatives -- species A, whose schemas, like our own, contain features X and Y, and species B, whose schemas contain feature X but not feature Y. The necessity demonstrated (the necessity of Y given a schema with X) will lie within the schema, so we avoid the circularity of method three which sought to prove the necessity of the schema as a whole on the basis of the schema's internal necessities. However, the conclusion will be transcendental. The argument will demonstrate that a certain species of schema is necessary for the possibility of linguistic interpretation of experience. Obviously, this exercise will be of little interest unless feature X is such that we are justified in ignoring the possibility of a schema which does not employ it.

In the Refutation of Idealism, Kant argues for the thesis that "consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me." (B275). The proof can be taken as an argument to prove the illegitimacy of any schema which does not employ the concept of an object existing independently of the mind. In effect, Kant argues that any putative schema which lacks a distinction between mind and that which is not mind, as does the schema implicitly suggested by the Cartesian sceptic, will turn out not to be a coherent schema at all. This is not the only plausible interpretation of the text, but I will argue in the next chapter that it is the most appealing.

The argument fits the form I have just outlined. It begins with the premiss, "I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time." (B275) This provides what I have called feature X. It indicates that the only schemas under consideration for the purposes of the argument are those which allow for a concept of a self existing through time -- Kant's "empirical self-consciousness." Tactically, this presumption is justified, because the argument is primarily aimed at the Cartesian sceptic who insists upon the indubitability of the existence of the self. There is no dispute over whether this is a necessary conceptual requirement for a schema. The dispute is over whether there is a further conceptual requirement for a possible schema (what I call feature Y), viz., an objective world of things existing in space and time, independent of the self. So, there are two possible species of schema, the sceptic maintains; both must allow for a concept of the empirical self (feature X) but only one allows for an objective realm (feature Y). Thus the sceptic arrives at a putative alternative schema by negating feature Y. The Refutation of Idealism, if sound, demonstrates that there is in fact just one possible species here, because features X and Y are both necessary: any schema which contains a concept of the self, enduring through time, will necessarily contain the concept of an enduring object, existing external to the self in space and time.

The Refutation of Idealism, then, does not fall foul

of any of the reasons Korner gives for thinking that all transcendental deductions must fail. First, the argument does not use the problematic notion of pre-conceptual, undifferentiated experience. Second, it avoids the problem raised by the possibility of an as yet unimagined alternative because (i) it attempts to prove not the necessity of a particular schema but the necessity of a particular sort of schema, with certain specifiable features; (ii) it exhaustively divides the set of all schemas into two sorts, those which possess and those which lack the particular feature whose necessity is questioned; and (iii) it attempts to prove the necessity of the feature in question on the basis of its relation with some other feature of the schema which is already taken to be necessary to any possible schema. Third, because the argument does not try to establish the necessity of a particular schema, it avoids the circularity of attempting to demonstrate the necessity of a schema on the basis of necessary relationships between concepts within that schema.

If I am right, I have shown that Korner's argument does not succeed in demonstrating the logical impossibility of a successful transcendental argument to block Cartesian scepticism about the external world. Korner's argument does seem decisive, however, against the possibility of any particular schema being demonstrably unique, so I shall now set aside the problem of descriptive transcendental arguments.

In the following and final chapter, I will examine

the form and possibility of ontological transcendental arguments, beginning with Kant's Refutation of Idealism.

CHAPTER FOUR
ONTOLOGICAL TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

In the Refutation of Idealism, Kant moves from the existence of the self in time to the conclusion that there exist objects in space outside the self. It would be overly generous to say that there is a completed argument in the single compressed and highly obscure paragraph which contains the proof. At most we are given the tip of an iceberg. Numerous attempts have been made to go below the text to reconstruct a sound argument which can plausibly be said to carry through the intention and line of thought Kant expresses in the fragment he provides. I propose to begin with an outline of the strategy Kant purports to undertake, and an examination of the steps in the argument as it stands, in order to make clear just where the gaps and unclarities lie. I will then look at the influence this argument has had on the modern understanding of transcendental arguments. Finally, I will consider recent attempts by Strawson and Bennett to bring the argument -- or at least similar arguments -- to completion.

The target of the Refutation, we have seen, is the

"problematic idealism" of the Cartesian sceptic, who denies that we can have any immediate experience, and hence certainty about the existence of outer objects. The sceptic begins from the claim that "there is only one empirical assertion that is indubitably certain, namely, that 'I am'" (B274), and argues that no "sufficient proof", i.e., no valid inference, can be made from the premiss 'I am' to the conclusion 'There are outer things'; hence the latter is, at best, doubtful.

The thesis for which Kant argues is that "the mere but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me" (B274). The so-called proof appears in the text as follows:

I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time. All determination of time presupposes something permanent in perception. This permanent cannot, however, be something in me, since it is only through this permanent that my existence in time can itself be determined. Thus perception of this permanent is possible only through a thing outside me and not through the mere representation of a thing outside me; and consequently the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things which I perceive outside me. Now consciousness of my existence in time is necessarily bound up with consciousness of the condition of the possibility of this time-determination; and it is therefore necessarily bound up with the existence of things outside me, as the condition of the time-determination. In other words, the consciousness of my existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me. (B275-276)

This paragraph is often taken to contain a single argument, which is accomplished in the first eleven lines; the second half of the passage (beginning with "Now

consciousness...") is thought simply to drive home the point already made. I shall argue that the latter portion contains a significantly altered version of the initial and primary proof, and that this second argument is important to understanding the influence of Kant's Refutation on modern interpretations of transcendental arguments.

Consider the first proof, which I shall label the A argument. The initial proposition provides the premiss that the Cartesian sceptic supposedly accepts as impervious to doubt. Kant employs several apparently equivalent expressions in his various restatements of this premiss: "consciousness of my own existence as determined in time", "the empirically determined consciousness of my own existence", "inner experience", "determinate consciousness of the self". There are two claims here, both crucial to what follows. The first is that I have a certain sort of self-knowledge which arises out of my experience of my inner mental states. This is the knowledge of the empirical fact that there is a sequence through time of these states; my immediate experience is of a series of mental occurrences, heterogeneous experiential moments which succeed each other across time and within which various representations co-exist simultaneously. Second, I am aware of this subjective series of states as mine. I am a unitary subject, represented as the owner of successive and co-existent representations. Thus there is an identity which persists through time, an experiencer living a single history of mental

events. In this sense, then, (i) I am "conscious of my own existence", and (ii) I am conscious of this existence as "determined in time".

Someone could, of course, raise sceptical doubts even about this two-fold claim regarding self-knowledge. A Humean sceptic, for example, might suggest that there is no consciousness of a unified self and thus that (i) is unjustified. Kant was well aware of a threat from this quarter and went to great lengths to establish that there does exist in consciousness a representation of the self as an empirical object and that it is this which enables me to think that all these various mental events form a unity as mine: "self-consciousness is of such a nature that ... the subject which thinks is at the same time its own object ..." (A443, B471; see also B157-158, B428-429). However, we need not consider here whether his justification for this claim is successful. Any criticism of the initial two-fold assumption in the Refutation is beside the point since the argument is specifically directed at a Cartesian sceptic, who accepts the premiss.

The grounds for accepting the second premiss are less obvious: "All determination of time presupposes something permanent in perception." In order to be aware of my changing mental states as sequential or co-existent relative to one another in time, Kant asserts, I must perceive something that is permanent through time. As this is neither a claim generally associated with Cartesian scepticism, nor a claim

whose truth is in any way obvious, and since no support for it is forthcoming in the argument itself, it is necessary either to devise a supporting argument, or to find one elsewhere in the Critique. Both routes are well travelled by commentators. The ancillary argument will itself be transcendental, since it must demonstrate the necessity of something -- a permanent in perception -- for the possibility of a certain sort of experience, namely, the time orderedness of my representations.

The most frequently cited support within the text is the First Analogy (see, e.g., Allison 1983; Paton 1936; Strawson 1966). There Kant's professed aim is to prove the Newtonian thesis that the quantum of substance in the universe is constant, but there is also an argument for what Allison calls "the Backdrop Thesis", viz., that it would not be possible to experience either the succession in time of changing appearances, or the co-existence in time of simultaneous appearances, unless there were something at least relatively permanent against which these events in time could be experienced (Allison 1983:201-203, 298).

Whether it is the First Analogy or some other argument that is brought in to support the second premiss, it is clear that this proposition is one of the cornerstones of the A argument and that securing it will be one of the more difficult tasks to accomplish in any fully developed version of the argument.

The other cornerstone is the third proposition: "This permanent cannot, however, be something in me", or,

alternatively, as restated in the preface, "This permanent cannot be an intuition in me" (Bx1). For this step, Kant provides two sub-arguments, one in the Refutation and one in an elucidatory note added to the B preface. The latter seems the clearer, and is Kant's stated preference:

For all grounds of determination of my existence which are to be met with in me are representations; and as representations themselves require a permanent distinct from them, in relation to which their change, and so my existence in time wherein they change, may be determined. (Bx1, n.)

There is a common and, I think, plausible interpretation of what Kant means here. It has the advantage of being a fairly straightforward empirical argument, and, at least from my phenomenological viewpoint, seems true. All the contents of my inner experience are representations that change through time. The entire tableau of my consciousness is in continual flux; there are no constant features. Hence, the permanent required for the possibility of time determined consciousness is not anything which is a part of that consciousness (see Kemp Smith 1923:309ff; Paton 1936:378-379; Allison 1983:99). The representation of the self as empirical object might seem a suitable candidate for the permanent, but in fact it is no more lasting than any other representation. It is not a standing feature which abides in consciousness, but one which comes and goes as do all my other representations of objects.

If we are with Kant to this point, then the conclusion

that I am conscious of something permanent outside my consciousness follows without difficulty. Since there must be something permanent in perception if my experience of my existence as determined in time is to be possible, and since this permanent is not part of my inner experience, which consists of merely fleeting representations, it follows that what is perceived as permanent must be perceived as something outside me. For there is no third possibility: the territory is exhausted by that which is within and that which is outside my consciousness.

On the above analysis, then, the argument thus far can be fashioned into a valid five step proof:

- i) I am conscious of my existence as determined in time.
- ii) All determination of time presupposes something permanent in perception.
- iii) This perceived permanent is not a perception of any part of the contents of my inner experience, for this consists solely of representations that change continually through time.
- iv) Things can be perceived as existing either in my consciousness or outside my consciousness.
- v) Therefore, there must be something perceived as permanent and outside my consciousness.

On this account, the conclusion is a straightforward deductive consequence of the premisses (i) through (iv).

Premisses (i) and (iii) can be understood as statements of empirical fact, and premiss (iv), which is suppressed in Kant's statement of the argument, is, according to Kant's usage of the terms, analytic. The problematic step occurs with premiss (ii), which is neither empirical, nor analytic in any obvious way. One main problem in bringing the A argument to completion is to establish the truth of the second premiss.

But the final conclusion is not yet reached. The other key (and, as we shall see, insoluble) difficulty is to find a way to move from this portion of the argument to Kant's final conclusion, which is that there exist outside me "actual things", which are not "mere representations". It is hard to see how the five step argument even makes progress toward bridging the gulf between how the world seems to be and how the world is, since the Cartesian sceptic can still come back with his original suggestion that what is perceived as existing permanently outside my consciousness may have no actual existence beyond this consciousness.

This problem must be looked at in relation to a problem of interpretation which cuts to the heart of Kant's philosophy. The conclusion, that I perceive "actual things", existing "outside me", which are not "mere representations", looks like a direct contradiction of a fundamental tenet of Kant's transcendental idealism, viz., that the objects we perceive in the space around us are mere representations, not things-in-themselves. Transcendental idealism is the doctrine

that "everything intuited in space or time, and therefore all objects of any experience possible to us, are nothing but appearances, that is, mere representations, which in the manner in which they are represented, as extended beings, or as series of alterations, have no independent existence outside our thoughts." (A490-491, B518-519) Or again: "It is ... false that the world (the sum of all appearances) is a whole existing in itself ... [A]ppearances in general are nothing outside our representations -- which is just what is meant by their transcendental ideality." (A506-507, B534-535) Now the problem with statements like these, as Kant well knew, is that they are apt to be taken as assertions of an idealism of a phenomenalist, Berkeleyian sort. A major motivation for the addition of the Refutation in the second edition of the Critique was to distance transcendental idealism from Berkeley's "dogmatic" idealism. The trouble is, in doing so, Kant seems in his conclusion to have left idealism behind altogether.

Obviously, this is not the intended result. One is tempted to dismiss the problem as no more than a terminological confusion, by saying that Kant has simply gone too far in his denial that external objects are representations. It is this denial alone which creates the problem; if we cut out the single reference to representations, then the argument can go through on an idealist interpretation. Things are said to exist in space outside us, but space itself is transcendentally

ideal, i.e., "does not represent any property of things in themselves, [but is] ... the form of all appearances of outer sense." (A26, B42) Thus, the claim that there must be objects existing in space becomes, not a metaphysical assertion about the ontological status of objects we perceive, but a claim about what is necessary in our experience of these objects.

The problem with this line of interpretation is that the argument is no longer of much interest to the Cartesian sceptic. The sceptic knows that he has experience of outer as well as inner objects. What he wants is proof of an external world that corresponds to this outer experience, not a proof that his experience of an external world is a necessary part of his experience as a whole.

Thus we are left with a dilemma. Either Kant's conclusion is that there exists an external world independent of, but corresponding to, our awareness of an external world, in which case the conclusion is a non sequitur, and in apparent conflict with transcendental idealism, or his conclusion is that the experience of an external world is a necessary condition for experience of inner objects, in which case the intended beneficiary of the argument, the sceptic, remains unsatisfied.

There is another way past the apparent difficulty. Although the Refutation is generally held to contain a single proof, another version of the argument is imbedded in the paragraph containing the proof just analysed. This argument,

which I shall label argument B, can be laid out as follows:

- (i) I am conscious of my existence as determined in time.
- (ii) Consciousness of my existence in time is necessarily bound up with (i.e. includes) consciousness of the condition of the possibility of this time determination.
- (iii) Therefore, I am conscious of the condition of the possibility of this time determination.
- (iv) This condition is the existence of things outside me.
- (v) Therefore, I am conscious of the existence of things outside me.

This argument begins with the same initial premiss as argument A. Step (iii) is established by modus ponens from (i) and (ii). Step (iv) is supposedly established by argument A. The grounds for step (ii) are less clear. One is tempted to suppose that Kant has made the logical error of supposing that 'X is conscious of Q' follows from 'X is conscious of P' and 'P implies Q'. But it is the conclusion that concerns us at present. In contrast to the conclusion in A, which seems to be a metaphysical claim about the ontological status of the external world, the conclusion in B is about the nature of consciousness; it need not carry any metaphysical implications.

This opens up the possibility of what I will call a

'conceptual' as opposed to a metaphysical interpretation of the Refutation. This approach is favored, for example, by Strawson, who understands the conclusion of the Refutation to be that we must necessarily conceive of and believe in a distinction between ourselves as subjects, and an external objective world through which we navigate an "experiential or subjective route." (Strawson 1966:125ff)

The problem of how to reconcile transcendental idealism with the stated conclusion of argument A remains, but the presence of argument B opens up the possibility that Kant's real intention is accomplished there. I now want to leave the exegetical question of just what Kant's intent was in the Refutation and turn to the influence it has had on the modern understanding of ontological transcendental arguments. We find today a multiplicity of arguments bearing various degrees of resemblance to the original passage in the Critique. However, the above analysis of the passage into arguments A and B provides some basis for a classification of the current views.

To begin with, we can distinguish between a 'metaphysical' understanding of an ontological transcendental argument, and a 'conceptual' understanding.

The metaphysical view is in sympathy with argument A in the Refutation. Transcendental arguments are taken to be attempts to demonstrate an ontological conclusion about objects in the external world, viz., that the objects we perceive in space around us are not in any way reducible to our experiences

of them, but have a separate existence which is entirely independent of the manner in which we represent them. An example of this view is contained in Professor Stroud's influential article "Transcendental Arguments" (Stroud 1968).

Stroud claims that transcendental arguments are supposed to show that scepticism about the existence of anything outside us is impossible or illegitimate "by proving that certain concepts are necessary for thought or experience." (ibid:242) He examines two recent examples of such arguments, by Strawson (1959) and Shoemaker (1963), and compares these with Kant's Refutation. In the course of his discussion of Strawson, it becomes clear that Stroud believes he is dealing with a form of argument which attempts to reach a metaphysical conclusion on the basis of what is conceptually necessary to thought about an external world. Stroud takes Strawson to be arguing for the metaphysical conclusion that 'objects continue to exist unperceived', starting from the initial premiss 'we think of the world as containing objective particulars in a single spatio-temporal system.' (Strawson's argument is contained in Individuals (1959:35-36).) Stroud concludes that this argument relies upon a dubious verification principle, viz., "if we think of the world as containing objective particulars, then it must be possible for us to know whether objects continue to exist unperceived" (1968:256). In essence, Stroud argues that at most it could be demonstrated that, necessarily, objects seem to continue to exist unperceived, or

that we must believe that objects continue to exist unperceived if we are to coherently think about experience.

Stroud puts a similarly metaphysical construction on the Refutation, and thus finds the same reliance on a verification principle in Kant, who, he asserts, "thought that he could argue from the necessary conditions of thought and experience ... to the actual existence of the external world of material objects, and not merely to the fact that we believe there is such a world, or that as far as we can tell there is."
(ibid:256) Stroud's objection makes it clear that he takes Kant's sole conclusion to be a metaphysical claim; he apparently misses the above mentioned difficulty in reconciling what he takes to be the supposed outcome of a transcendental argument with the doctrine of transcendental idealism.

Now, Stroud's objection is sound as a demonstration of the impossibility of reaching a metaphysical conclusion about the existence of the external world from experiential premisses. However, this does not put an end to ontological transcendental arguments, because a metaphysical conclusion is not a sine qua non. Strawson's argument, for one (and, it is suggested, Kant's argument B), is not, as Stroud believes, concerned with the ontological status of the external world, but rather with the necessary conditions for coherent thought about the experience we all share of living in a single spatio-temporal system of material things. The conceptual scheme which we employ in thinking about this experience, Strawson

argues, has as a necessary condition of employment the unquestioning acceptance of the belief that 'objects continue to exist unperceived'. Strawson's conclusion is about how we must think of the world, given how the world seems to us; it is not an attempt to move from the nature of thought and experience to the existence of an external world which is independent of our perceptions.

In stating that Strawson's conclusion is not metaphysical, I mean that he is not concerned with metaphysics in the traditional sense, as the attempt to move beyond the 'veil of perceptions' to grasp the truth of some more ultimate reality. His conclusion is in a peculiar sense metaphysical, in that it concerns what he calls "descriptive metaphysics", which "is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world." (Strawson 1959:9)

The presence of the B argument in the Refutation allows us to put a similar 'conceptual' construction on Kant's argument. We can take Kant to be arguing neither, as Stroud supposes, for an external world, existing independent of our perceptions, nor for what Stroud considers to be the only conclusion that can legitimately be drawn from experiential premisses, viz., "that we believe there is such a world, or that as far as we can tell there is." Stroud overlooks a third possibility: Kant's conclusion may be that a necessary condition for coherent thought about my experience of a self in time is the employment of the concept of an external object

that exists independently of my perception of it.

One advantage of taking transcendental conclusions to be 'conceptual' in this way, i.e., as assertions concerning necessities of coherent thought about the world, rather than as metaphysical assertions, is that it allows for a neutral attitude toward Kant's transcendental idealism, and thus makes possible a relatively neat disentanglement of a transcendental method from the vast reaches of Kantian philosophy.

In order to arrive at a closer understanding of just how this method can be put into use, I want to close this essay by examining two recent attempts -- by Strawson and Bennett -- to develop a rigorous transcendental argument. Both authors present their arguments as finished versions of the proof Kant struggles with in the Refutation. Neither bears a strikingly close resemblance to what is provided by Kant, and there is even less resemblance between the two new arguments. One motivation for looking at these particular arguments is to illustrate the wide range of possibilities opened up by Kant's original suggestive strategy. Another is to show how very difficult it will be to bring Kant's project to completion.

Bennett has proposed a reconstruction according to which Kant's argument is a version of a Wittgensteinian argument against the possibility of a private language (Bennett 1966:202ff). He provides two versions of what he calls the realism argument. In the first, he begins by interpreting Kant's first premiss ("I am conscious of my own existence as

determined in time") as an epistemological claim about the knowledge I have of my own past history: "The 'empirically determined' consciousness of my own existence is my knowing that I have a history and knowing something of what its content has been." (ibid:205) Thus, Bennett claims, the argument presupposes not only that I am aware of a series of mental events -- that I have a mental history -- but further that I have at least some knowledge of the content of that history. This is a stronger claim than the more standard interpretation I suggested earlier, which asserts only that I am aware of a temporal series of mental events.

Starting from this epistemological assertion, Bennett's first version of the realism argument attempts to demonstrate that the empirical knowledge of various past stages of my mental knowledge would only be possible if there are objective states of affairs, occurring in an external world, which can serve as checks on the veracity of memory:

How can I know now what state I was in at an earlier time? One answer is: by remembering. But then why may I trust my memory? The only possible answer to that is: because I sometimes check on it, and by and large find it reliable. So I can base an individual judgement about the past simply on a present recollection only because I can and sometimes do appeal to something other than memory. Such appeals must be to objective states of affairs; if they involved only my inner states they would raise questions of just the sort they were supposed to answer. For example, if I try to check my recollection of having been uncomfortably warm ten minutes ago by recalling that five minutes ago I recalled being uncomfortably warm five minutes before that, I replace a single problem by two others of

precisely the same kind. (Bennett 1966:204)

The employment of the concept of an external world is thus argued to be a necessary condition for the possibility of knowledge of my past mental history.

One problem with this first realism argument is immediately apparent. As noted earlier, the initial premiss is, according to Kant, one which the sceptic willingly accepts, but knowledge of one's past is presumably open to Cartesian doubt for the same reasons that the existence of the external world is open to doubt. All past events, including mental events, can only be causally inferred from present circumstances, and the fallibility of causal inference is precisely what sets off the Cartesian sceptic in the first place. So Bennett's version of the first premiss is less secure than the weaker, more commonly accepted version; a preliminary argument is required to demonstrate that we do have knowledge of our past states, i.e. that we can know that some of our recollections are true.

Bennett seems not to notice this difficulty, but he does admit that the realism argument, in its present form, is wide open to the objection that, logically, objective states of affairs are no more trustworthy as checks on the veracity of recollections than the recollections themselves. For, inferences from present to past are always based on beliefs in certain general lawlike patterns in the ways things change.

But my belief that the world conforms to these patterns is itself based on recollections of past sequences of events, so when I try to verify the veracity of some recollections by appealing to a present objective state of affairs (for example, if I infer that I earlier saw a fire from the fact that I now see ashes), then my appeal ultimately is to a further recollection, which itself (on present reasoning) is in need of an objective verification. This leads to an infinite regress and so an objective external world puts me no farther ahead regarding knowledge of my past.

Bennett's second version of the realism argument is more subtle and avoids both of the above difficulties. It avoids the first problem, arising from the dubious assumption that I have knowledge of my past, by weakening the first premiss from 'I have knowledge of the content of my past history' to 'I am able to form judgements about my past mental history'. The Cartesian sceptic would have to allow this much at least, since my capacity to form judgements about the past is part of my immediate inner experience. The sceptic could doubt whether any of these judgements are true, but could not doubt that it is possible to make them.¹⁰ The new first premiss amounts to another way of stating the original Kantian first premiss that I am conscious of my existence as a series in time of mental occurrences. The argument attempts to prove that it would be impossible for someone who had only inner experience to make any judgements about the past. It avoids the second

problem -- the infinite regress which comes from any attempt to check individual recollections by appeal to objective states of affairs -- because the conclusion is not that memories unsupported by objective corroborating evidence are untrustworthy, but that, if there is no possibility of objective corroborating evidence, then neither is there any possibility of memories, i.e., judgements about the past. What is to be proved is that an external world to which I am sensorily connected is a necessary condition for the possibility of my experience of myself as a being with a past.

Bennett reasons as follows. Consider an individual who has no sensory connections to an external world, i.e., someone whose awareness is limited to 'inner' experience. Give him a purely present tense language, such that he can describe each of his inner states as it occurs. Now ask, is it logically possible for this language to be expanded by adding a concept of the past, and suitable vocabulary, so that he can form judgements about his states at earlier times? If not, then 'outer' experience is a necessary condition for the possibility of a language which can describe the past, and hence for conscious beings, such as ourselves, whose experience includes the formation of judgements about the past. Outer experience is such a necessary condition, given the following maxim concerning when it is legitimate to bring new concepts to a language: "if one has a language L in which to describe a subject-matter S, it is legitimate to add a new concept C to

the stock of concepts in L in proportion as L-with-C can describe S more simply than can L-without-C." (ibid:206) The subject-matter to be described in this case is a purely inner experience; L is a present tense language to which concepts of past experiences are to be added. Given Bennett's concept-utility maxim, a concept of the past cannot legitimately be added in this case, because, "this addition does nothing for him, since there will at any given time be a one-one relation between what he can say about his past states and what he can say about his present recollections." (ibid:207) The point here is that there will be no real difference, no way of distinguishing between, what is meant by (i) 'I was in state X at t' and (ii) 'I recollect being in state X at t'. Bennett acknowledges as his inspiration a famous passage from Wittgenstein: "In the present case, I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about right." (Investigations, sec. 258) Because there is no possibility of any corroborating or contradictory evidence for the truth of (i) beyond the empirical fact that (ii), nothing is added semantically to the language by introducing into L the concept of 'how I was'. In other words, there is no real sense in which (ii) is about the past. Therefore, a concept of 'the past' or of 'how I was' cannot legitimately be added to the language of a purely inner experience consciousness. Only if we provide this hypothetical

consciousness with outer experience (and a concept of an external world) does the concept of the past have a place in the language, because then "his access to objective states of affairs enables him to bring several present data to bear on a single judgement about his past." (Bennett 1966:207) With outer experience comes the possibility of asking meaningfully whether a judgement about the past is true or false.

This second version of the realism argument is stronger than the first, but it is still unconvincing. In the first place, the hypothetical model is impossible on Bennett's own presuppositions. An individual who had no sensory connections with an external world would, for the same Wittgensteinian reasons that Bennett appeals to, be unable to use, or at least understand, any language. Logically, any use of a language requires concepts of and beliefs about the past. Unless I can hold beliefs about the meaning that a particular term or proposition was used to express in the past, there is no sense in which I can be said to understand a language. There could be no distinction for me between correct or incorrect use of any term unless there is the possibility of a past use of the term which can be appealed to. This follows as a direct consequence of the very remark by Wittgenstein to which Bennett appeals. Bennett tries to meet this objection with the observation that "there is no warrant for the common belief that a creature which can correctly say things like 'This is a ship' and 'This is a shoe' must have knowledge of

its past." (ibid:210) This defense misses the point by focussing on the purely behavioral side of language. Parrots and machines can be made to utter 'This is a ship' in the presence of ships, but this is not the sort of language usage which is relevant here. The issue is whether an individual could use and understand a language in the absence of a concept of the past. For understanding, a capacity to recognize consistency of meaning across time is required, and only an individual who could form judgements about the past would have this capacity.

Furthermore, the same problem arises with this argument as with Bennett's first realism argument, though for different reasons. That is, here again, the sceptic against whom the argument is directed must concede more than can justifiably be expected from a Cartesian. He must concede that the theory which is most economical in its use of concepts is always the true theory. But as a transcendental realist, the Cartesian sceptic can always argue that the most economical conceptual organization of experience may or may not be true. The sceptic demands a reason for believing that there is an external world. A transcendental argument addresses this demand with a demonstration that a concept of an external world is a requirement for coherent thought about experience. What Bennett provides is, at best, a demonstration that a concept of external world allows for the most economical conceptual organization of experience, not that no other coherent

organization is possible.

The only way to avoid this objection is through the invocation, once again, of a verification principle. If it is conceded that, in the absence of outer experience, judgements which employ a concept of the past are meaningless, because there can be no criteria for judging their truth or falsehood, then Bennett's conclusion follows. But in that case the argument is no stronger than the verification principle on which it depends, and the principle is unacceptable. It would entail that there could be no concept of any past mental event which did not correlate directly with events in an objective order. Suppose I recall an experience of seeing fire. It is meaningful to ask if this recollection is veridical, on Bennett's account, only because there are various objective criteria which can be brought to bear on the question (ashes, lingering smoke and so on). But many aspects of inner experience do not link up with objectively verifiable events so as to allow for such verification. When I compose a sentence in my head and then write it down, I may wonder if what is on paper matches what went through my mind. On a verificationist view, since "whatever is going to seem right to me is right", the question of whether a thought is correctly or incorrectly transcribed or recollected is meaningless. The only evidence of what I thought, apart from memory, is what I have written down, but this is no evidence to decide the question of whether what I have written down accurately records my thought. A theory of

meaning which must reject a distinction between accurate and inaccurate recollections of all past experiences which were not directly associated with objective states of affairs is implausible. There are poets in the Soviet Gulag who commit their works to memory for years because they are prevented from writing them down. It is absurd to suggest that when these poems are finally recorded, there can be no question as to whether the delayed record accurately matches the original inspiration.¹¹

For these reasons, Bennett's attempt to develop a valid argument out of Kant's Refutation does not succeed.

In The Bounds of Sense, Strawson provides a version of the Refutation which avoids reliance on any verificationist premisses (1966:125ff). Like Kant's argument B, Strawson's conclusion is conceptual rather than metaphysical: the idea of a subject's awareness of himself as an individual having a time ordered series of experiences can only be conceived in relation to an independent, objective system of temporal relations. That is, I can only conceive of myself as a unitary consciousness experiencing a series of mental occurrences across time if I conceive of this consciousness as situated within a larger framework of independently existing objects in time and space.

Strawson finds in Kant's two-fold first premiss the two conceptual components of the Cartesian sceptic's initial position: (i) the concept of a temporal series of representations, ordered only in relation to each other, and

(ii) the concept of a self aware subject, i.e., a subject which is conscious of having this set of temporally ordered experiences. The burden of the argument is to show that in stating his initial position, the sceptic is implicitly committing himself to the employment of the concept of an external world, distinct from the self, because (ii) is only intelligible if (i) is conceptually situated within a larger system of temporal relations, ordered independently of the subject's own experiential episodes.

At the heart of Strawson's argument is this passage:

These internal temporal relations of the members of the series are quite inadequate to sustain or give any content to the idea of the subject's awareness of himself as having such-and-such an experience at such-and-such a time (i.e. at such-and-such a position in the temporal order). To give content to this idea we need, at least, the idea of a system of temporal relations which comprehends more than those experiences themselves. (1966:126)

To say that I am aware of my existence in time must mean, at a minimum, that I can be aware, for example, that experiential episode E_1 occurred before E_2 and after E_0 . But, Strawson claims, such an awareness requires concurrent awareness that this experiential time series is situated within a larger time series.

Why should this be so? Strawson offers no help, but simply asserts that there is this necessary connection. A spatial analogy may help to elucidate the matter. I can only observe my position in a one-dimensional spatial sequence by

looking at this sequence from within two-dimensional space. Similarly, I can only observe my position on a two-dimensional grid if I have access to a three-dimensional perspective. Now, the temporality of my inner experience is, in a sense, one-dimensional: there is a single series of successive experiential moments. Perhaps Strawson's point is that, in order to be aware of the relative positions of these moments, I require a perspective detached from the purely subjective series itself. This is provided by introducing an objective "dimension" in time, i.e., the time relations of events which take place in space outside me. For only with this can there be a distinction between "the order of perceptions occurring in one experiential route through [the objective world] and the order and relations which the objective constituents of the world independently possess." (ibid:123) And this distinction is a prerequisite for my awareness of the ordering of my own subjective series, because it alone provides me a standpoint apart from the one-dimensional temporal series of my experiential moments. Thus, just as I must step out of a queue into a second dimension in order to determine my position in that queue, similarly, in order to be aware of the ordering of past experiential moments, I must conceptually place this subjective series within the larger system of an objective space and time.

This attempt to elucidate the thought behind Strawson's flat assertion is the best I can provide. It falls

short of a rigorous argument but at least provides some force for the claim. If it is granted that for a self awareness of time ordered experience, a wider system of temporal relations is required, it follows, claims Strawson, that I must conceive of at least some of my experiences as experiences of things independent of myself which "possess among themselves the temporal relations of this wider system" (ibid:127). For, my only access to the required wider system is through my own experience. I cannot, as it were, stand outside my own experience in order to view its time orderedness, so I must conceive of my experience as itself providing this external standpoint, and this requires the concept of an external world of objective time relations.

The conclusion then is that "awareness of permanent things distinct from myself is therefore indispensable to my assigning experiences to myself, to my being conscious of myself as having, at different times, different experiences." (ibid:127)

Strawson's argument avoids the invocation of a verification principle, but appears to do so at the expense of logical rigor. Like many of Strawson's thought experiments in Individuals, the argument persuades, rather than demonstrates, by inviting the reader to imagine a stripped down version of experience and thereby see for herself the necessary articulations of elements of our conceptual scheme. In the present case, the concept of independent outer things is

supposedly necessary to give meaning to the concept of self awareness through time, not because meaning depends upon satisfaction of some verification principle, but because without the first concept, the second concept cannot be formed at all. It would seem however, that until a bridging of the gap in Strawson's argument can be provided which is more rigorous than my attempt and which shows why, logically, the formation of the one concept requires the other, the Cartesian sceptic can stand his ground by claiming that he, at least, can be aware of himself in time without applying the concept of an external world.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have attempted to bring some order and clarity to a diffuse and confusing debate within analytic philosophy concerning the nature and role of transcendental arguments. As it turns out, much of the controversy can be reduced to disagreements over what transcendental arguments are intended to accomplish, and it is upon this that the concluding remarks will focus.

In Chapter One, an obvious, but generally ignored, distinction was extracted from a survey of some recent statements of what transcendental arguments are. Such arguments have been understood either (i) as attempts to establish the necessity for thought of certain characteristics of the conceptual or linguistic frameworks which we employ in our descriptions of the world (what I call descriptive transcendental arguments) or (ii) as attempts to resolve the perennial problem concerning the existence of the external world (what I call ontological transcendental arguments).

A descriptive transcendental argument would provide what the broadly based antifoundationalist movement of the last two decades claims to be impossible: a rational demonstration that a

particular conceptual scheme is the single valid basis for any true scientific description of the world. In Chapter Two, I argued that even before the possibility of such an argument can be discussed, a major presupposition is required: It must be accepted that the truth of a theory depends upon a correspondence between description and world. It must also be accepted -- and this was only implicit in the argument of Chapter Two -- that certainty and scepticism are epistemological standpoints which can be legitimately arrived at through an essentially introspective process of reflection upon the logical relationship between one's experience and the world. The "Cartesian paradigm of the solitary thinker" is the point of departure for discussion. The aim of descriptive transcendental arguments thus requires that the debate retain presuppositions of the early modern period in philosophy which are now on shaky ground.¹² It follows that even if a transcendental argument could succeed on these terms, it would be of limited interest since its success would be contingent on widely rejected presuppositions. The argument of Chapter Three, if correct, shows that, in any case, a descriptive transcendental argument cannot succeed even upon its own epistemological presuppositions.

The issue of ontological transcendental arguments remains unclear. Any discussion again presupposes the continuing philosophical force of a Cartesian solipsistic scepticism. From this starting point, the analysis in Chapter Four led to a distinction between two sorts of argument which are frequently

confused or conflated in the literature. Again, the distinction arises from two possible aims of an ontological transcendental argument. On the one hand, the aim has been taken to be the proof that external objects exist independently of any experience of these objects. It seems clear that there can be no success here with a transcendental strategy, which works back from a given sort of experience to the conditions logically necessary for that experience. As Stroud has shown, such an argument could at most prove the necessity for experience that a world seem to exist, not that it actually exist. On the other hand, and more interestingly, the aim has been taken to be the proof of a certain necessity in our conceptualization of experience. The arguments of Bennett and Strawson (and perhaps Kant) each try to show that the solipsistic conceptual scheme which the sceptic puts forward as an alternative to our common sense scheme (which includes the concept of independently existing enduring objects) is not a legitimate alternative because it is internally inconsistent. The sceptic, in stating his position employs the concept of a self which is aware of its existence in time, and in so doing logically commits himself to the employment of a concept of permanent external objects.

The problem of refuting the sceptic thus reduces to the explication of a logical connection between two concepts: (i) a subject in time, and (ii) an object in time and space. Kant's insight lies in his reduction of the problem of the external world to these terms. Whether the required connection can be

found remains unclear. Neither Bennett's nor Strawson's attempts to complete Kant's Refutation are successful. However, the limits of philosophical imagination and ingenuity, as always, remain hidden until mapped by sound logical demonstration. For those who are willing to continue working within the philosophical paradigm of Cartesian epistemology, the problem of the possibility of a successful transcendental argument remains.

NOTES

1. In a recent article, entitled "The Significance of Scepticism", Professor Stroud argues forcefully for the philosophical value of taking seriously scepticism about the external world (Stroud 1979; see also his recent book of the same title (1984)). A number of philosophers, for the most part of a pragmatist bent, insist that attempts to refute the sceptic are futile, and that a more helpful approach to solving problems regarding knowledge is to attempt to describe in a naturalistic way the actual epistemic procedures employed by scientists and other knowledge seekers (see, e.g., Rorty 1979a, esp. Chapter IV; also Quine 1960, 1969). Stroud argues for the superiority of the traditional approach to epistemology, claiming that a full understanding of the force of scepticism and of why it has had such a profound effect on philosophical thought since Descartes, is a prerequisite for any satisfactory theory of knowledge. For other recent works that adopt or presuppose this view, see Johnson (1978); Slote (1970); Mates (1981).
2. This is a common but not uncontroversial view. It is held,

for example, by Korner, who reads Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories as an attempt to show that "the logical forms of traditional logic embody all the a priori concepts of Newton's physics" (Korner 1955:50). Korner also holds that what is required to bring the Critique up to date is a philosophical physicist who could rework the critical philosophy so as to bring it into line with modern physics; a new notion of space-time would be required, for example. Strawson objects to Korner's view of the matter (Strawson, 1966). While admitting that Kant does at times appear mistakenly to take fundamental assumptions of contemporary science as a priori conditions of experience, Strawson believes that there are also to be found valid statements of "generally necessary conditions of the possibility of any experience of objective reality such as we can render intelligible to ourselves." (pp. 118-121; see also Baum, 1979)

3. This is not to say that the idea of transcendental psychology as a method is of purely historical interest. The influence of Kant on, for example, Noam Chomsky's theory of language acquisition and usage has been profound. By postulating a "deep structure" grammar which is common to all languages, and out of which are generated the particular surface grammars of individual languages, Chomsky claims to map the underlying mental structures by which any human mind creates an orderly experience of the world. Both Kant and

Chomsky argue that the order of the phenomenal world can only be explained through the existence of pre-conscious mental activities which create that order. But there is a crucial difference: Chomsky has transformed Kant's idea of a purely logical investigation of this pre-conscious cognitive structure into an empirical investigation of the cognitive structures which enable humans to master the creative use of language and to order experience. See Chomsky 1975:3-10.

4. I am aware of only one writer (Kekes 1972) who draws this distinction explicitly.

5. Pragmatism has enjoyed varying degrees of popularity since its inception more than a century ago. It was first developed as a theory of meaning by C.S. Peirce in the 1870s. It was reworked as a theory of truth by William James in 1898. More developed versions were put forth in the early twentieth century by John Dewey and C.I. Lewis. Since that time, 'pragmatism' has come to stand for a broad philosophical attitude toward both truth and meaning rather than for any particular theory. Its influence can be found in the work of, for example, Rudolf Carnap, Ernest Nagel, W.V. Quine and Richard Rorty.

6. For recent attempts to give a detailed defense of a correspondence theory of truth, see Sellars (1968), especially

chapter four; Rosenberg (1975).

7. A similar point is made by A.C. Grayling (1985:80).

8. Korner uses the title 'transcendental deduction' rather than 'transcendental argument'. In what follows, no distinction is intended between the uses of these two expressions.

9. This apparent limitation on the force of transcendental arguments is much remarked upon in the literature. See, for example, Bubner (1975), Rosenberg (1975, 1977), Bennett (1979), Rorty (1971, 1979b).

10. Admittedly, Descartes does not include memory in his list of indubitable mental characteristics. He says "I am a thing that thinks, that is to say, that doubts, affirms, denies, that knows a few things, that is ignorant of many, that loves, that hates, that wills, that desires, that also imagines and perceives." (Descartes, vol. I, p. 57). I see no problem with adding to this list 'holds beliefs, i.e. forms judgements about, the past'.

11. The verification principle upon which Bennett's argument relies is the same principle explicitly formulated fifty years ago by A.J. Ayer (1936). In his preface to the second edition, Ayer discusses a number of the objections raised against his

original formulation.

12. For a recent summary of post 1960's attacks on this method, see Thomas McCarthy's introductory essay in Habermas (1984).

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