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## Skepticism and transcendental arguments.

Jeffrey Stewart Tlumak  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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SKEPTICISM AND TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

A Dissertation Presented

By

JEFFREY STEWART TLUMAK


Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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1975

Philosophy



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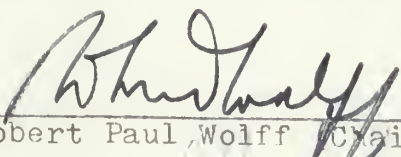
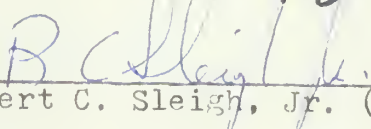

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JEFFREY STEWART TLUMAK

Approved as to style and content by:

  
Robert Paul Wolff (Chairman of Committee)  
Robert C. Sleight, Jr. (Head of Department)  
Vere C. Chappell (Member)  
Herbert Heidelberg (Member)

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## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I examine the use of transcendental arguments for the refutation of epistemological solipsism, the view that we can never know with certainty that objective particulars exist. In the first chapter I explain and motivate epistemological solipsism by comparing it with other forms of epistemological skepticism, and by explicating the central notions of certainty and objective particularity. I also specify various procedural assumptions which I adopt in deference to the skeptic.

In the second chapter I develop and evaluate Strawson's influential anti-skeptical arguments and the allegedly transcendental method which they instantiate. I argue that his project is defective in detail and in principle, offering no redemptive attraction for the purposes at hand.

In the third chapter I consider supplementary anti-skeptical resources, including paradigm case arguments, non-vacuous contrast arguments, verificationist arguments, extensions of Strawsonian-type arguments, and arguments from self-refutation. I argue that none of these methods succeeds in refuting epistemological solipsism.

In the final chapter, after drawing together the results of chapters I-III, and exposing the defects of further extensions of Strawsonian argument -- what I call 'cross-categorical priority arguments' -- I provide a partial account of a more promising, Kantian transcendental method. I develop this

account by critically assessing several accounts of Kantian method explicitly proffered in the recent literature. I argue that my account escapes each of the difficulties which burden the alternatives, and conclude that my version of Kantian transcendental argument offers genuine promise for refuting epistemological solipsism.



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## CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM: EPISTEMOLOGICAL SOLIPSISM  
AND PHILOSOPHICAL CERTAINTY

In this dissertation I shall examine the use of transcendental argument -- argument which elicits the analytic implications of the indubitable fact that an act of judgmental consciousness is occurring -- for the refutation of that version of epistemological skepticism which states that we can never know for certain that objective particulars -- reidentifiable, existentially and attributively independent particulars -- exist. It is my thesis that various influential, alleged instances of Kantian transcendental method, even when maximally supplemented by other anti-skeptical resources, fail to meet this skeptical challenge, but that a more faithfully Kantian transcendental argument offers unique promise in conclusively discrediting the skeptical thesis on its own terms.

In this chapter I shall explain and motivate the skeptical problem with which I am concerned, explicate the central notions of philosophical certainty and objective particularity, and set forth ground rules and procedural assumptions which any adequate solution to the problem must satisfy.

## I

The version of skepticism with which I am concerned, that we can never know for certain that objective particulars

exist, will be referred to as 'epistemological solipsism.'<sup>1</sup> Epistemological solipsism is more restricted than the distinct forms of skepticism which state that we can know nothing for certain, that we can justifiably believe nothing, and that we can never justifiably believe that objective particulars exist. The refutation of epistemological solipsism entails the refutation of these other skeptical positions, but not conversely. There may be alternative methods for refuting these more radical forms of skepticism. It may be that skepticism with regard to everything is successfully impugned by so-called 'argument from self-refutation' or 'argument from self-referential inconsistency' of the sort found in Aristotle, Husserl, and others.<sup>2</sup> And doubts about justified belief in objective particulars may perhaps be dispelled by the sorts of inferences to the best scientific explanation found in Michael Slote's recent book.<sup>3</sup> But there are good reasons, I shall argue, for believing that there is only one viable approach to the refutation of epistemological solipsism.

The epistemological solipsist is a theoretical skeptic. He is a participant in the philosophical debate who puts forth the cognitively significant claim that it is possible to know with certainty all there is to know about subjective experience without knowing with certainty anything about the external world. He is unlike the classical Pyrrhonist as



interpreted via Sextus by Arne Naess,<sup>4</sup> who asserts nothing, does not in principle reject any certainties, but merely conveys that as things seem to him personally, no argument for or against any proposition is sufficiently strong to compel acceptance or rejection. This Pyrrhonist's announcements do not function cognitively, and his complete suspension of judgment is to be explained genetically, not epistemologically. Since he holds no views, his skepticism is ad hoc, raising counterarguments to whatever is affirmed.

In contrast, our theoretical skeptic affirms and attempts to justify some propositions. Consequently, if doubting a proposition entails withholding belief both from that proposition and its negation, we should dissociate the notions of skepticism and doubt. The skeptic need not be a doubter; dubitability is not doubtfulness. One can be persuaded to accept a proposition, yet question the adequacy or reliability of the evidence that could be offered to justify that proposition. Persuasion is not adequate evidence.

It may be that action or behavior implies propositional belief, so that Naess' Pyrrhonism is impossible. But if the implication does not hold, then I wish simply to ignore the Pyrrhonist. The best a philosopher can do is defeat all possible participants in a dispute. He need not fear a forever silent menace.

Philosophers with epistemological proclivities as different as the Cartesian Prichard and anti-Cartesian Wittgenstein have argued that doubting one thing requires being certain of something else.<sup>5</sup> This may mean either that only certainties can render other propositions dubious, or that some propositions or other must be certainties if any propositions are to be dubitable. On the first interpretation, the requirement is obviously false. So long as we are not justified in believing the negation of a proposition, that proposition may be used to cast doubt on another proposition.<sup>6</sup> Not all propositions whose negations we are not justified in believing are certainties. Hence, not all legitimate doubt-makers are certainties. On the second interpretation, the requirement rules out the radical form of skepticism which states that nothing is certain, and may be defensible. But there remains the still weaker demand that one can doubt a belief only in light of other, at least tentatively accepted, beliefs.<sup>7</sup> This refusal to countenance the possibility of universal and systematic doubt does not explicitly require that there be any certainties at all. However, neither this nor the previous requirement poses a threat to the non-radical, theoretical skeptic I have been describing. He can accept them both.

We further delineate epistemological solipsism by noting that its challenge is not the challenge of discovering necessary

and sufficient conditions for establishing the truth of particular objective beliefs. There are well-rehearsed skeptical arguments designed to show that we can never know for certain, at any given time, that what we take to be an objective particular is an objective particular, that perceptual judgments are corrigible, that people who make perceptual knowledge-claims are fallible. After all, the skeptic argues, there is an epistemological gap between representations and the non-representational independent reality one purports to represent; claims about subjective states and claims about objective particulars are on different epistemological levels. But all the evidence for our beliefs must be drawn from states of ourselves; subjective propositions are the basic justificatory premises. Consequently, our knowledge of objective particulars depends entirely on these subjective states. So unless some inferential principle could be validated which would warrant the move from subjective to objective propositions, we could never know any objective propositions to be true.

All deductive principles of evidence can be shown to be defective by showing the evidence presumed sufficient for establishing the existence of some objective particular is consistent with its non-existence. Since the experiences of someone who has a true perceptual belief about an objective particular may be exactly duplicated by the experiences of



someone else whose perceptual belief is exactly similar but false, whether the relation between experiences and belief is a one-one or many-one relation, it is always logically possible that our perceptual beliefs about objective particulars are false. But we cannot be mistaken about that which we know for certain. Hence, we can never know for certain that beliefs about objective particulars are true. The relation between subjective and objective propositions is not deductive.

Classical inductive or experimental inference, even if legitimate, could not be used to justify objective propositions in the needed way. By hypothesis, we cannot perceive the objective particulars, and so cannot check for constant conjunction between subjective data and objective particulars.<sup>8</sup> Further, since there can be no discernible difference between the content of consciousness in the cases of veridical and illusory perception, from the content or nature of individual perceptions we can infer nothing about relations among perceptions or relations among perceptions and, if there be such, non-perceptions. So one can never tell, in a given case, whether one is perceiving objective particulars merely on the basis of inspection of one's subjective states. Still further, inductive inference fails to guarantee preservation of certainty. But again, all the evidence for our beliefs must be drawn from certainly

known subjective states. Hence, the relation between subjective and objective propositions is not classically inductive.

Our knowledge of objective particulars depends entirely on subjective experience, but the relation is neither deductive nor classically inductive. So unless there are certainty-preserving, valid, non-deductive inferences other than classical induction, there is no justification for the certainty of our beliefs about objective particulars.

This line of argument may seem vulnerable at several points. First, it is controversial whether there can be no discernible difference between the content of consciousness in the cases of veridical and illusory perception. For example, Lewis held that the sense meaning of an objective belief, or non-terminating judgment, the experiential criteria of its application to reality, consists in the (infinite) set of direct empirical findings, presentations immediately given in experience (terminating judgments), implied as probable under specifiable conditions of presentation and action.<sup>9</sup> In an effort to save this brand of linguistic phenomenalism from the argument from perceptual relativity, whose central proposition is that there are logically possible conditions of observation under which any statement which refers only to the immediately given would be false even though a particular objective statement were true, Lewis argued that a perceptual presentation

often contains clues to the conditions of observation affecting it. Delusion is possible, but frequently we can detect illusion. By taking into account distorting conditions as they are reflected in experience, and appealing to the relativization of probabilities to the premises from which they are determined, Lewis claims to allow for the relativity of sense perception.<sup>10</sup> But unless we grant the implausible supposition that it is logically impossible for there to be any distorting condition which is not reflected in immediate experience (so that we can unfailingly safeguard our non-terminating judgments by incorporating all distorting conditions into the antecedents of our terminating judgments), we must admit that the degree of reliability of the connection between presentations and objective particulars is never sufficient for theoretical certainty, which is what the skeptical argument demands. Lewis himself explicitly denies that justified perceptual judgments are instances of theoretical certainty, though he thinks perhaps they are practically certain, so that we may act upon them without hesitation.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the truth of Lewis' position does not entail the unsoundness of the skeptical argument just presented.

Second, there do seem to be several valid forms of inductive (non-deductive) inference, valid argument-forms in which the conjunction of the premises and the negation of the conclusion does not imply a contradiction, other than classical induction.<sup>12</sup>



The development of theories of rational belief and evidential support suggest that exclusive use of enumerative inductive generalization, of both categorical and statistical form, eliminative induction, and analogical inference, is unjustifiably restrictive. For example, Kneale presents a theory of responsible evaluation of evidence, in which 'probabilification' denotes the fundamental relation, admitting of degrees from rendering a proposition practically certain to barely more than probabilifying the negation of the proposition.<sup>13</sup> In this theory of rational belief, probability is not quantitative at all, and cannot be incorporated into a formal calculus.

Along these general lines, Chisholm develops in detail a theory of evidential support.<sup>14</sup> Beginning with the undefined concept of epistemic preferability, governed by six axioms, he outlines an epistemic logic in which the notions of reasonable belief and gratuitous belief, favorable presumption and lack of it, acceptability and unacceptability, and other derivative notions, are defined and interrelated. In turn, various 'conferring relations' between propositions, (inductive and deductive) evidence-, reasonability-, acceptability-, unacceptability-, and gratuitousness-conferring relations, may be defined. Then, moving from epistemic logic to epistemology, he formulates epistemic rules or principles describing sufficient conditions under which a proposition (or ordered

pair of propositions, for the appropriate concepts) may be said to have the properties, or stand in the relations, previously defined.<sup>15</sup>

A proper subset of these principles is concerned with justifying propositions about objective particulars on the basis of propositions about subjective ('self-presenting') states. In 'On the Nature of Empirical Evidence,' Chisholm acknowledges Heidelberger's successful criticism of these principles as originally formulated in Theory of Knowledge, and attempts to revise them.<sup>16</sup> I am not here concerned to independently assess these reformulated principles. Suffice it to say that for Chisholm the acceptability of some of these principles is conditional upon the untenability of the sort of skepticism embodied in the lately sketched argument. He argues that the spontaneous act of taking something to have a certain sensible characteristic confers not only reasonability, but evidence, upon the proposition that one does in fact perceive something to have that characteristic, or else skepticism with respect to our perception of the external world is true.<sup>17</sup> But he admits that our takings can be false, that is, we can be mistaken, so that although takings provide a criterion of evidence, it is not a logically sure criterion for distinguishing veridical from illusory perception.<sup>18</sup> In effect, this is to assent to what, since Hume, has been usually taken for granted, that no form of

induction (non-deduction) yields absolute certainty, but only a lower or higher degree of probability in its conclusions. So if we accept the skeptic's presupposed requirement of absolute certainty, the success of Chisholm's program, like that of Lewis', fails to entail the falsity of skepticism.

Of course, the tenability of such theories of evidential support remains an interesting and important problem, and if the demands of the traditional skeptic are rejected as unacceptably stringent, perhaps the only problem in this area worth trying to solve. But if we can defend a distinction between practical and metaphysical certainty, and then pose our anti-skeptical task in terms of metaphysical certainty, these other enterprises will be inadequate to our purposes.

But our moral is not just that moral certainty falls short of philosophic certainty, but that discovering a criterion of truth for objective beliefs is not required for the refutation of epistemological solipsism. The criteriological problem, first raised in theological disputes between the Church and Reformers, where the reliability of Papal authority and appeal to scripture was challenged, was soon raised with respect to natural knowledge, and precipitated the skeptical crisis in modern philosophy. Montaigne's revival of the arguments of Sextus Empiricus evoked attempts at reinforcement, mitigation or accommodation, or refutation, as traced by Popkin, from Descartes, Gassendi, Mersenne, Pascal, Bayle, and Hume, as well as less familiar yet influential men such as Charron, Chanet, Huet, and Campanella.<sup>19</sup>

The criteriological problem is not ours. Each perception-based objective knowledge-claim may be unverifiable, so that at no specified time can we know with certainty that the claim is true. This is compatible with the falsity of epistemological solipsism. I only want to evaluate the success of transcendental argument in showing that we can know with certainty that objective particulars exist, so that the skeptical thesis which denies this is false. Whether transcendental argument can succeed in the face of the concessions I make and procedural assumptions I adopt in deference to the skeptic in section IV of this chapter, awaits further consideration. The purpose of this section was to explain that epistemological solipsism is a non-radical, theoretical skepticism about the possibility of knowing with certainty that any objective particulars exist at all.

## II

I want to assess the prospects of transcendental argument for establishing the thesis that we can know with certainty that objective particulars exist. Two preliminary questions arise immediately. What exactly does 'certainty' mean here? What exactly does 'objective particular' mean? I shall consider the nature of certainty first.

I begin by listing several conditions of adequacy for the explication of philosophical certainty. If  $p$  is a condition of adequacy for a proposed explication of a concept  $C$ ,



then any explication of C which entails not-p must be rejected. My list of adequacy conditions for the explication of philosophical certainty is intended to capture those general beliefs about certainty shared by the disputants in the controversy over epistemological solipsism, so long as those beliefs are mutually consistent. Specifically, I shall elicit a set of demands from Descartes, who paradigmatically posed our skeptical problem, and accept it. In addition to being general, these demands are not intended to be jointly exhaustive. Consequently, we should not be tempted to propose the conjunction of adequacy conditions as the explication itself.

Our first condition states that certainty is not an intrinsic property of propositions, but is a relation between a person or persons, a proposition or set of propositions, and a time or set of times. Descartes insists on this point in several places in his reply to Bourdin's objections (the seventh set), in which he complains that his critic 'treats doubtfulness and certainty not as relations of our thought to objects, but as properties of the objects and as inhering in them eternally. The consequence is that nothing we have once learned to be doubtful can ever be rendered certain.'<sup>20</sup> Another consequence is that a given proposition is (or is not) certain for anyone who entertains it, regardless of his evidence. Very many arguments in Descartes rightly depend upon treating certainty as a relation of the sort described.

Our second condition of adequacy states that a person may



at a time be certain about a logically contingent proposition. Certainties need not be necessary truths. As Descartes argues, the logically contingent propositions, 'I think' and 'I exist,' are certainties for me whenever I pronounce them or mentally conceive them.

Our third condition of adequacy states the converse of the second: Necessary truths need not be certainties. Otherwise, Descartes could not have been, and the atheist geometer could not remain, uncertain about the truths of mathematics; and each person, regardless of his evidence and skills at proof, would be equally certain of all the necessary truths he entertained.<sup>21</sup>

Fourth, the concept of certainty relevant to epistemological solipsism is an epistemic, normative concept. The term 'certain' may have purely descriptive force in some contexts, but it has some standard-setting, evaluative force in the context of the Cartesian problem. Therefore, any analysis on which certainty is not a concept of epistemic appraisal is unacceptable.

Fifth, no satisfactory analysis of certainty should imply that all certainties must be inferentially justifiable. The possibility that there are propositions which are certain for a man at a time, even though there is no available premise-set containing other propositions which are certain and essential to their derivation, should not be ruled out. Descartes held that intuition and deduction were the only two

routes to knowledge with certainty, and that deduction is based on self-evident intuition.<sup>22</sup> And it may be that admission of self-justifying or 'intuitive' certainties is required to avoid the dilemma that all justification is either viciously regressive or circular. But even if not, we legitimately insist on retaining our fifth condition, since we do not want adequacy conditions which beg detailed questions of analysis.

Following what I believe to be the correct interpretation of Descartes, I want to sustain a distinction between knowing and knowing with certainty. Therefore, I lay down a sixth condition of adequacy for the explication of philosophical certainty which states that knowledge does not imply certainty. In reply to the second set of objections, Descartes allows that the atheist geometer can know that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, but denies that such knowledge is knowledge with certainty (constitutes true science), since it can be rendered dubious.<sup>23</sup> Again in reply to the sixth set of objections, he grants the atheist knowledge, but denies that it is 'immutable and certain.'<sup>24</sup> Descartes' various remarks distinguishing the requirements of the search for truth and the practical activities of life, where the moral mode of knowing suffices for the regulation of life, but falls short of the metaphysical mode of knowing, can plausibly be construed as supporting the distinction between 'ordinary knowledge' and metaphysical knowledge or knowledge with

certainty.<sup>25</sup> This distinction will be defended further as the analysis proceeds.

What about the converse of the sixth condition? If certainty does entail knowledge, then, since knowledge entails truth, certainty entails truth. If certainty does not entail knowledge, then we do not establish that we know something with certainty merely by showing that it is certain for us. An additional burden is thereby imposed on our anti-skeptical task. But I see no justification for endorsing a condition which either entails or precludes a knowledge- or truth-entailing analysis of philosophical certainty. We should refrain from anticipating the status of these entailments.

I propose the foregoing six conditions as criteria of adequacy for the explication of certainty relevant to the problem of epistemological solipsism. No satisfactory account of certainty entails that certainty is an intrinsic property of propositions, that all certainties are logically necessary, that all necessities are certainties, that ascriptions of certainty lack all force of epistemic appraisal, that all certainties must be inferentially justifiable, or that knowledge implies certainty.

Descartes' most frequently enunciated account of certainty (indubitability) in terms of irrevisability satisfies these criteria. In the Discourse he resolves to accept only what he 'could have no occasion to doubt,' carefully reflecting 'in each matter that came before me (him) as to anything which

could make it subject to suspicion or doubt...'<sup>26</sup> In the Meditations his announced goal is to establish a 'firm and permanent structure in the sciences,' which requires that he withhold any opinion which 'might even in a small degree be invalidated by reasons,' and hence not be certain and indubitable.<sup>27</sup> He begins The Principles with the recommendation 'to doubt all things in which the slightest trace of incertitude can be found,' suggesting that it is 'useful to reject as false all (these) things as to which we can imagine the least doubt to exist.'<sup>28</sup> In The Search after Truth he strives to attain knowledge 'solid and certain enough to deserve the name of science...'<sup>29</sup> In other places he states that the atheist's knowledge 'is not immutable and certain;' it is subject to metaphysical, hyperbolical doubt, which can be caused by 'the very least ground of suspicion,' lacking that metaphysical certainty which 'all the most extravagant suppositions brought forward by the skeptics were incapable of shaking.'<sup>30</sup>

Descartes is demanding that no proposition be accepted into the body of philosophical and scientific theory unless the evidence for it satisfies his rule of clarity and distinctness. Following Frankfurt, we may say that a proposition *p* is clearly perceived by a person *S* if *S* recognizes that his evidential basis for *p* excludes all reasonable grounds for doubting it. *P* is distinctly perceived by *S* if *S* understands what is and what is not entailed by the evidential

basis which renders  $p$  clearly perceived.<sup>31</sup>

A person cannot regard a belief as altogether solid and permanent if his basis for belief is compatible with a sufficient basis for giving it up. As long as it is conceivable for circumstances to arise in which, given the basis he already has for accepting a belief, it would nevertheless be reasonable for him to reject it, then the belief does not provide him with an absolutely secure foundation on which to build. Foundational propositions must be acceptable without risk; there must be no chance that additional evidence will ever make it reasonable for a person to abandon them. But when a person bases his acceptance of a belief on a clear and distinct perception, he recognizes that he cannot consistently conceive reasonable grounds for doubting that belief. Since he cannot intelligibly foresee any circumstances that would impugn his belief, he is justified in regarding the belief as unshakably solid and permanent.

Goodman seems to be affirming Descartes' irrevisability condition for certainty when he says that 'I cannot be said to be certain about what occurs at a given moment, even at that moment, if I may justifiably change my mind about it at a later moment.'<sup>32</sup> So we might say that  $p$  is certain for  $S$  at  $t$  only if it is impossible that there is a time  $t'$ , later than  $t$ , such that  $S$  reasonably doubts that  $p$  is true at  $t'$ . To avoid the psychological nuances sometimes associated with the notion of doubt, let us explicitly define ' $S$  doubts  $p$  at  $t$ '



as 'S withholds p or believes not-p at t.' Then we can say that p is irrevisable for S at t if, and only if, it is impossible that there is a t' later than t such that S is warranted in withholding p or believing not-p at t', and that irrevisability is a necessary condition of certainty.

If p is a certainty for S at t, it is impossible that further tests on p might yield results which warrant S's retraction of p. Such irretractability would be guaranteed if no new evidence for p will ever become available for S since the current evidence is exhaustive or complete, or if no other proposition could ever be better justified for anyone than p is for S at t, since the evidential warrant for p is maximal. But irrevisable propositions need be neither exhaustively nor maximally evidenced. In fact, the irrevisability condition does not even require that the credibility of p be undiminishable in light of new information we might conceivably have about the future. It does not require that no amount of new negative evidence can count against it to the slightest degree. If p is irrevisable for S at t, not-p cannot become warranted for S. Therefore, there is no conceivable event such that if S were justified at t in believing that it will occur after t, not-p would thereby become warranted for S at t. And if p is irrevisable, the evidence for not-p can never counterbalance the evidence for p (for S), for then S would be warranted in withholding p. But the evidence for p could become less, so long as the loss was insufficient to make p unwarranted. Hence,

certainities need not be ivory-tower propositions whose evidence-bases remain fixed. It is just that their evidence-bases are sufficient to rule out the possibility of subsequent overthrow. For this reason they can provide abiding foundations for our edifice of true science.

But to better understand the irrevisability condition, note that it is stronger than the condition definitive of what Malcolm has called the 'strong' sense of knowledge. Malcolm says, 'When I use 'know' in the strong sense I am not prepared to look upon anything as an investigation; I do not concede that anything whatsoever could prove me mistaken; I do not regard the matter as open to any question; I do not admit that my proposition could turn out to be false, that any future investigation could refute it or cast doubt on it.'<sup>33</sup> But it becomes clear that all this describes the speaker's present attitude towards his proposition, what the speaker would be prepared to admit at the time of statement. 'It does not prophesy what my attitude would be if various things happened.'<sup>34</sup> The irrevisability condition further demands the constancy of my rational attitude at all future times.

Elsewhere, Malcolm denies that if at any time there should be a reasonable doubt that a proposition is true, then at no previous time did anyone make absolutely certain that it is true.<sup>35</sup> In an article otherwise critical of Malcolm, Frankfurt concurs, remarking that statements concerning ancient history for which we have meager evidence may once have been

conclusively established.<sup>36</sup> But this counterexample works only because the formulation of the principle fails to relativize certainty to persons or evidence-bases, as any respectable formulation should.

By relativizing to stock of evidence, we come up with a principle which Frankfurt later affirms, namely that if at any time there should be a reasonable doubt that a proposition is true, then at no previous time did anyone make absolutely certain that it is true, provided that the evidence possessed at the later time includes all the evidence possessed at the earlier time. Evidence is conclusive when it is sufficient to justify the conclusion based on it no matter what further information is obtained. And this is the irrevisability condition.

Now, intuitive certainties or self-justifiers aside, if irrevisability is necessary for certainty, and if only deductive justifications can be conclusive, then it would seem that a proposition can be philosophically certain only if it is entailed by its evidence. If it is not entailed by its evidence, it is possible to conceive circumstances in which, this evidence notwithstanding, it would be reasonable to regard the proposition as false. And this is the skeptic's gambit when he spins tales of contravention of natural law, mysterious causal efficacy, and so on. That such doubts are impractical is confessed, but irrelevant to Cartesian, theoretical certainty.

If there are theoretical certainties, we can see how, supposing knowledge to be something like justified, true belief, there is something different from and epistemically preferable to knowledge. Irrevisability provides an important gain for knowledge with certainty. A man may justifiably believe what is true (and the relation between his evidence and belief be non-accidental -- or whatever fourth condition is needed to complete the analysis of knowledge) at a given time and so know that truth at that time, but then later, due to changes in his evidence base, lose his justification and so his claim to knowledge. Consequently, this ordinary kind of knowledge cannot make the sciences 'secure and lasting.' But for certainties, no future event could possibly dispel their justification; they fulfill the Cartesian ideal of permanency. Hence, even as a practical matter, knowledge with certainty is more desirable than ordinary knowledge.

It may be objected that if a man's evidence for a proposition at a time is really sufficient, then the introduction of no amount of additional evidence bearing on the proposition could result in his loss of warrant. Given the meaning many contemporary epistemologists place on 'sufficient,' this is plainly false. On the other hand, some philosophers have proposed as a fourth condition of knowledge an 'indefeasibility' requirement which is reminiscent of Cartesian irrevisability.<sup>37</sup>

Defeasible justification is justification insufficient for knowing. The problem is providing a non-trivial analysis



of defeasibility in terms of which we can define a suitable notion of indefeasibility. We cannot say that the justification of  $p$  by  $e$  is defeasible if, and only if,  $e$  justifies some falsehood  $f$ , since an irrelevant part of  $e$  might justify  $f$  without defeating  $p$  --  $e$  may mislead about  $f$  but reliably support  $p$ . So we want to say that the justification of  $p$  by  $e$  is defeasible if, and only if,  $e$  justifies some falsehood  $f$  which is relevant to the justification of  $p$ . One attempt to capture this relevance condition states that the justification of  $p$  by  $e$  is defeasible if, and only if, there is some true proposition  $g$ , such that  $e \& g$  does not justify  $p$ . An inference is not defeated merely by the presence of false premises, but rather by the fact that if these false assumptions are replaced with their true negations, the conclusion no longer follows. On this account, a justification can be defeated by any statement that can be added to a given person's knowledge, that is, by any true statement, and not only by statements actually known by the person.

Lehrer and Paxson have shown that this account is too strong. Suppose  $S$  sees the familiar Tom Grabit stealing a book from the library. But suppose further that, unbeknownst to  $S$ , Tom's mother has sworn that on the day in question, Tom was out of town, but that Tom's identical twin brother, John, was in the library. Suppose Tom's mother is a compulsive liar, John is a fiction of her demented mind, and Tom did take the book.<sup>38</sup> According to the account under examination,



since adding the mother's sworn testimony to the original evidence results in an inadequately justified belief, S's justification for believing that Tom stole the book is defeasible, so that S does not know that Tom stole the book. But S does know that Tom stole the book.

Curiously, in a later article Lehrer proposes an account of indefeasibility which is equivalent to the one just refuted.<sup>39</sup> He claims that if S is justified in believing p on the basis of e, the justification is indefeasible if, and only if, for any false proposition f, S is completely justified in believing p on the basis of the conjunction of e and the assumption that f is false -- S would be completely justified in believing p on the basis of e even if he assumed any further true proposition. Hilpinen traces other abortive attempts at revision.<sup>40</sup> But what the issue boils down to for our purposes is whether knowledge is 'extendable,' whether, if S knows that p on the basis of e, then, for any true proposition g, S would be completely justified in believing that p even if he knew that g.

If knowledge is extendable, then the above extendability thesis is a condition of adequacy for the explication of defeasibility (and so indefeasibility). Lehrer's analysis satisfied the extendability thesis but was shown to be too strong. Now Hilpinen argues as follows: Since the extendability thesis does not entail Lehrer's analysis -- it requires only that no true proposition would make p unjustified if S knew it -- we should try to formulate an explication of

indefeasibility which is weaker than Lehrer's yet satisfies extendability. Such a formulation is this: If S is completely justified in believing that p on the basis of e, the justification is indefeasible if, and only if, for any true proposition g, S would be completely justified in believing that p even if he were completely justified in believing that g.<sup>41</sup> Hilpinen goes on to claim that his definition is not equivalent to Lehrer's, that the extendability thesis does not entail Lehrer's analysis, and that the extendability thesis does entail his own analysis.<sup>42</sup>

The extendability thesis says that justification would be preserved even if the man acquired new knowledge. Hilpinen's indefeasibility condition says that justification would be preserved even if the man acquired new, justified true beliefs. Lehrer's indefeasibility condition says that justification would be preserved even if (for the sake of argument) some additional truth were assumed. Hilpinen is right in arguing that his analysis is not equivalent to Lehrer's, and that extendability does entail his analysis. But he is wrong to say that extendability does not entail Lehrer's analysis. If I would still be justified in believing a proposition on the basis of specified evidence, even if I were to come to know other propositions, then I would still be justified in believing that proposition on that original evidence, even if I were merely to assume some further truths. 'No true proposition makes p unjustified' entails 'No known proposition makes p unjustified,' but not

conversely. To conclude from this that extendability does not entail Lehrer's analysis is to confuse two categorical assertions with their corresponding subjunctive conditionals. For notice that if we improperly render the subjunctive formulations of extendability and Hilpinen's thesis as categorical claims, since 'No known proposition makes  $p$  unjustified' fails to entail 'no justified true proposition makes  $p$  unjustified,' we cannot say that extendability entails Hilpinen's condition either.

The upshot is this. The extendability thesis entails both Lehrer's and Hilpinen's versions of the indefeasibility requirement. Lehrer's condition was shown to be unnecessary for knowledge (in the ordinary sense). And, by the way, since the Grabit counterexample succeeds in refuting Hilpinen's analysis as well, Hilpinen's condition is unnecessary for knowledge. Since the extendability thesis entails propositions whose truth is not a necessary condition of knowledge, the truth of the extendability thesis is not a necessary condition of knowledge. And the ultimate upshot is this. Although ordinary knowledge need not be extendable, knowledge with certainty must be extendable, since certainty implies irrevisability, and irrevisability implies extendability. Consequently, we have sustained the legitimacy of the ordinary knowledge--knowledge with certainty distinction. Knowledge with certainty is irrevisable.

Very many philosophers would say that if certainty implies

immunity from subsequent revision, then nothing (synthetic) is certain for anybody. Instance Scheffler's remark that certainty 'imports the notion of fixity, a freedom from error and consequent revision, which cannot be defended for it is nowhere to be found.'<sup>43</sup> And Peirce may be interpreted as holding the following view.<sup>44</sup> There are three senses of 'knowledge.' Relative to the body of presently available information and our current conceptual framework, knowledge is the opinion we are fully authorized in asserting, which we do not and cannot really doubt on the available evidence. (Compare Rorty's definition that 'S believes incorrigibly that p at t if and only if (i) S believes that p at t, and (ii) There are no accepted procedures by applying which it would be rational to come to believe that not-p, given S's belief that p at t,' and his various recent endorsements of historicism.<sup>45</sup>) Call this 'knowledge<sub>1</sub>.' Relative to the complete body of information and the final conceptual framework, knowledge is the final and irreversible compulsory belief destined to be agreed upon by the community of scientific inquirers. Call this 'knowledge<sub>2</sub>.' Knowledge<sub>3</sub> is the opinion which is absolutely certain, which 'completely corresponds' with reality. Since we cannot be absolutely certain that we have attained to the final opinion on any given matter, we must assume that whatever we are authorized in asserting is subject to future possible impeachment. We cannot profess knowledge<sub>2</sub> although we know<sub>1</sub> that such knowledge must obtain



sooner or later. Final, irreversible opinion is different from absolute certainty. Knowledge<sub>3</sub> can never be had, but only approached indefinitely as one would a mathematical limit.

I choose these two philosophers as examples because both, though one in confusion and the other in recognition of distinctness, use the notion of immunity from error as well as that of immunity from revision. And Descartes himself seems occasionally to slip into this confusion, as when he says, 'More especially did I reflect in each matter that came before me as to anything which could make it subject to suspicion or doubt, and give occasion for mistake...'<sup>46</sup> Others, such as Lewis and Malcolm, urge that what is essential to certainties is that they cannot be mistaken; but here again, as Firth persuasively argues, they seem to mean 'unfalsifiable,' not 'unmistakable.'<sup>47</sup>

Still, one might argue that Cartesian certainty requires the impossibility of being mistaken. Now this may mean either that it is impossible for a person both to certainly know something yet be mistaken about it, that knowing with certainty entails not being mistaken, or that knowing with certainty entails the impossibility of being mistaken. The first reading is equivalent to the claim that if a man both knows with certainty and believes a proposition, then that proposition is true, or, given that certain knowledge entails belief, that certain knowledge entails true belief. But this does nothing to distinguish knowing from knowing with certainty. The



second reading is equivalent to the claim that if a person knows a proposition with certainty, the proposition's truth is entailed by the fact that he believes it.

After all, doubt is possible if error is possible. Error is false belief. So error is possible whenever believing does not entail truth. Hence, since a certain or indubitable proposition is one about which the possibility of error is excluded, a proposition is certain only if believing it logically implies its truth.

And there is no non-logical way of excluding the possibility of error. Checking against error cannot eliminate the possibility of error, since, as Hume noted, every act of checking can itself be in error.<sup>48</sup> Each new test has its own presumptions. Further, there are conceivably possibilities of error of which I am ignorant and so cannot check against. So if a judgment is logically bound to succeed, its truth must follow from the circumstance of its being made.

On the unmistakability requirement, there is no possible world in which the allegedly certain proposition is believed yet false. It does not imply that there is no possible world in which the proposition is false. As adequacy condition (2) tells us, certainties need not be necessary truths. Note further that unmistakability is not a sufficient condition of certainty. All necessary truths satisfy the unmistakability condition. But adequacy condition (3) states that not all necessary truths need be certainties.

As I shall argue shortly, I do not think that unmistakability is a necessary condition of Cartesian certainty either. But the anti-skeptical demand that truth be entailed by believing (or variations on this theme, such as truth being entailed by doubting, or understanding) is prima facie logically coherent, and should not be merely laughed out of court.<sup>49</sup> For example, Danto has belabored the scope ambiguity and consequent scope fallacy in the move from 'necessarily, if S knows, then he is not in error,' to 'if S knows, then necessarily he is not in error,' and accordingly cavalierly relieved us of the onus of isolating a class of Cartesian indubitables.<sup>50</sup> His only argument is argument by comparison. If I am healthy, I cannot be sick. Yet I am human, and can be sick. But the issue is whether the proposed analogues are relevantly similar. To infer the necessity of the consequent from the necessity of the consequence is fallacious, but what reason do we have for thinking this the sole attempted justification for the Cartesian enterprise?

Some other philosophers who have engaged in the Cartesian enterprise seem to have understood philosophical certainty as requiring some sort of maximal warrant or minimal dubitability. Russell held that a proposition is certain only if it is as indubitable as any other proposition, so that if one proposition is for some reason more dubitable than another, the first is not certain.<sup>51</sup> And Chisholm has employed such a notion when he defines the 'evident' (which he uses in a

preferred analysis of knowledge) as 'that which it is more reasonable to believe than withhold and which is such that there is nothing else more reasonable to believe.'<sup>52</sup>

The notion of minimal dubitability or maximal warrant may be explicated in various non-equivalent ways, depending on the classes of comparison to which one appeals.<sup>53</sup> That is, various definitions of maximal warrant can be formulated by changing the range of the three variables of persons, propositions, and times, which must be included in virtue of adequacy condition (1). For example, we might say that a man S is maximally warranted in believing a proposition p at a time t if, and only if, (a) p has at least as much warrant for S at t as p ever has for anyone who asserts p; or, somewhat stronger, (b) it is unimaginable that p would have more warrant for someone asserting it than it has for S at t; or, still stronger, (c) it is unimaginable that any proposition would have more warrant for anyone than p has for S at t.

On analyses (a) and (b), maximal warrant fails to coincide with minimal dubitability, as understood by Russell and others. (a) and (b) are too weak. They are satisfied if p has no (imaginable) warrant for anyone at any time. On the other hand, it may seem that (c) is too strong. For example, Unger uses the slightly stronger notion that a proposition is certain for a man only if it is impossible for there to be anything of which he is more certain to try to prove that nothing is certain.<sup>54</sup> To determine the status of (c), as well

as the previously discussed unmistakability condition, we must determine the entailment-relations between these two notions and that of irrevisability. Restating the conditions as explicitly as possible:

(Maximal warrant)  $p$  is maximally warranted for  $S$  at  $t$  iff it is unimaginable that there exists a  $p'$ , a  $t'$ , and an  $S'$ , such that  $p'$  is more warranted for  $S'$  at  $t'$ .

(Unmistakability)  $p$  is unmistakable for  $S$  at  $t$  iff it is impossible that  $S$  believes  $p$  at  $t$  and  $p$  is false.

(Irrevisability)  $p$  is irrevisable for  $S$  at  $t$  iff it is impossible that there exists a  $t'$  later than  $t$  such that  $S$  is warranted in withholding  $p$  or believing that not- $p$  at  $t'$ .

If each of these conditions were held only to be necessary conditions of certainty, then all that is required is that they be mutually compatible, which apparently they are. There need be no entailment-relations between them. But, if any one is held to be sufficient for certainty, then it must entail the others (if they truly be necessary).

As regards the necessary conditions of certainty, I have argued only in favor of irrevisability. I now affirm the sufficiency of irrevisability for certainty. Irrevisability satisfies the six conditions of adequacy for the explication of philosophical certainty. It is the only extensively documented account discoverable in Descartes. It is strong enough to entail extendability, strong (Lehrer's) indefeasibility, and any other requirement of 'conclusiveness' of justification.<sup>55</sup> Yet it is not so strong as to require utterly exhaustive or complete, undiminishable evidence, which seems to be a fiction.



Irrevisability is necessary and sufficient for certainty. In our initial discussion of irrevisability, we claimed that a sufficient reason for irrevisability was maximal warrant. Maximal warrant does entail irrevisability, and so is a sufficient condition of certainty. The proof is as follows. Suppose that  $p$  is maximally warranted. The proposition  $\text{not-}p$  is distinct from the proposition  $p$ . If  $p$  is maximally warranted, then it is unimaginable that there exists a  $p'$ ,  $t'$ , and  $S'$  such that  $p'$  is more warranted for  $S'$  at  $t'$ . If  $p$  were revisable, if  $p$  could be warrantably withheld or disbelieved by  $S$  in light of future evidence, then the evidence for  $\text{not-}p$  is stronger than or equal to the evidence for  $p$ . But then  $p$  would not be maximally warranted. Hence, revisability entails not maximally warranted. Hence, maximal warrant entails irrevisability.

It may be counterargued that all maximal warrant says is that it is unimaginable that there exists some proposition distinct from  $p$  which is more warranted than  $p$  for  $S$  at some given time  $t$ . Now the irrevisability condition would be false if (A) there exists a proposition distinct from  $p$  which is more warranted than  $p$  for  $S$  at some later time  $t'$ . It is possible that both maximal warrant and (A) are true. Therefore, maximal warrant does not entail irrevisability.

The dispute rests on the reading of 'unimaginable.' If it means 'unimaginable for  $S$  at  $t$ ,' then the conjunction of maximal warrant and (A) is possible, simply because  $S$  can

forget his original evidence and later be rationally persuaded to accept not- $p$ . On the other hand, if 'unimaginable' means 'unimaginable for anyone,' in the impartial sense used by philosophers, then the derivation of irrevisability from maximal warrant succeeds. Since the 'objective' sense is intended, maximal warrant entails irrevisability.

Unmistakability does not entail irrevisability. All necessary truths are unmistakable. Some necessary truths are revisable. One can well imagine a persuasive argument coming along warranting suspension of judgment on a necessary truth. Therefore, some revisable truths are unmistakable. Therefore, unmistakability does not entail irrevisability.

One might insist, 'But of course revisability entails mistakability. How could any future evidence generate warrant for withholding or believing the negation of a proposition whose truth is entailed by the fact that it is believed?' This objection confuses the obtaining of the entailment between belief and truth and the knowledge that the entailment obtains. If one knew that belief guaranteed truth, presumably one could not reasonably disbelieve that proposition. But such knowledge is not implied by the unmistakability condition.

Irrevisability does not entail maximal warrant. For suppose that no evidence over and above that which supports  $p$  for  $S$  at  $t$  could conceivably overturn  $p$ , that is, suppose  $p$  is irrevisable for  $S$  at  $t$ . Then perhaps one could argue that  $p$  has maximally good evidence (of the relevant sort of

evidence) bearing on it -- although I argued in my original discussion of irrevisability that even this need not be true. But in any event, other propositions of other kinds, for which other kinds of evidence are relevant, could conceivably have still more impressive credentials. Constant rational acceptance of *p* is compatible with greener pastures in any entirely different ball park.

One might try to prove that irrevisability entails unmistakability as follows: Suppose that irrevisability does not entail unmistakability. Then three condition must hold: (i) *S* believes that *p* at *t*, (ii) *p* is false, and (iii) (at *t'*) it is logically impossible to warrantably believe not-*p* or withhold *p*. But (ii) and (iii) are inconsistent. Therefore, irrevisability entails unmistakability.

The question is whether it can be unwarrantable to believe a truth or withhold a falsehood; more precisely, whether there could never be a time during which believing the truth or withholding the false is warranted. The argument rests on the assumption that for any proposition whatsoever, it is possible to warrantably withhold it if it is false, and possible to warrantably believe it if it is true. This assumption is false. It falsely rules out the possibility of unconfirmable truths. Generalizing, since truth conditions, justification conditions, and belief conditions are not invariable, irrevisability does not entail unmistakability. For suppose mistakability, that is, the possibility of false belief. Revisability does not follow,

since just because you can be mistaken, it does not follow that you can be warranted in thinking so or withholding on the matter.

At first blush it would seem that unmistakability entails maximal warrant. If believing a proposition entails its truth, of what concern is the possible intrusion of evidential slip-page? Yet, in one sense of 'belief' at least, propositions seem to satisfy the unmistakability condition without satisfying the maximal warrant condition. Consider the proposition 'I am believing.' If I believe that I am believing, then it follows that I am believing. But circumstances could be imagined in which 'I am thinking' (understood in the broad, Cartesian sense of 'I am conscious') is more warranted and safer to say than 'I am believing.' Suppose all this reporting is going on in a psychoanalyst's office, where eventually the analyst elicits the patient's realization that at the time of utterance, he was not believing anything at all, but refusing to commit himself to any of the alternatives. The claim to believe was revisable, hence not maximally warranted, though its truth is entailed by the fact that it is believed.

A little further thought, however, will save us from being hoodwinked by this spurious counterexample. An unmistakable proposition is one about which it is impossible to be mistaken. So if the patient was mistaken about believing, then his claim to believe was not logically guaranteed. 'Believe,' in its two occurrences above, was being used equivocally.



There is a good proof that unmistakability does not entail maximal warrant. All necessary truths are unmistakable. Some necessary truths are such that their warrant is weaker than the warrant for some other proposition. Even the fact that some necessary truths are more warranted than others suffices to show this. Therefore, some non-maximally warranted propositions are unmistakable. Therefore, unmistakability does not entail maximal warrant.

The status of the final entailment from maximal warrant to unmistakability is of no concern to us. Certainty is ir-revisability. Maximal warrant is sufficient, but not necessary for certainty. Unmistakability is neither necessary nor sufficient for certainty. It is irrelevant to our concerns whether, whenever maximal warrant guarantees certainty, it also guarantees unmistakability. Presumably, since justification and truth conditions are distinct, the entailment does not hold.

To foreclose a source of future misunderstanding, let me explicitly note that various probabilistic, behavioral, introspective, and other accounts of certainty are unsuited to the anti-skeptical project of this dissertation. Probability calculi in which certainty is identified with probability value of 1, and only tautological truths are assigned the value 1, do not provide us with an acceptable notion of Cartesian certainty. On such accounts, a man can never be certain of any logically contingent proposition. Since it is logically contingent that objective particulars exist, we

could never be certain, in this sense, that objective particulars exist.<sup>56</sup> But this account of certainty violates adequacy condition (2).

Neither purely behavioral nor purely psychological or introspective analyses of certainty are appropriate to our epistemic concerns. To say that someone is certain about a proposition just in case he is indisposed to inquire whether that proposition is true, or just in case he is indisposed to seek out or consider further information that bears on that proposition, or just in case he takes no precautions against the possibility that the proposition is false, or just in case he is free from doubt about the proposition, is to give a defective account of certainty as it is used by the epistemological solipsist. Aside from the internal difficulties of these views -- the man's indispositions may be the result of apathy, his unwariness and freedom from doubt the result of ignorance, and so on -- they violate adequacy condition (4).

And we should reject identifying Cartesian certainty with knowing that one knows. If the principle (KK) that whenever a man knows a proposition, he knows that he knows it, is true, then knowledge would entail certainty, and condition of adequacy (6) would be violated. But, it may be argued, (KK) is false, so that explicating certainty as second-order knowledge is not precluded by condition (6). After all, if a man knows a proposition, he understands it.

'S knows that he knows that p' must satisfy a truth condition in excess of the truth conditions for 'S knows that p' alone. To know that he knows p, S must understand 'S knows that p'; to know p, he must understand p, but need not understand 'S knows that p.' A man might not know what 'knows that' means, yet know a good deal; one need not have the concept of knowledge in order to know things.<sup>57</sup> Since the truth conditions for first-order knowledge are weaker than those for second-order knowledge, first-order knowledge-claims do not entail the corresponding second-order claims. Therefore, (KK) is false.

Further, if a proposition q is compatible with all a man knows, then if he knows that p, q is compatible with p. But it does not follow that q is compatible with the man's knowing p. So it is possible for q to be used to overthrow the claim to knowledge. In the case of the timorous student who is uneasy about the acquisitions that are genuinely his, though he knows that p, he does not have adequate evidence for his claim to know, and so does not know that he knows.<sup>58</sup>

But even if (KK) is false, the second-order knowledge account of certainty is too weak. Many times when a man S knows a proposition p, another person T knows that S knows that p. Since S is not always in an epistemically inferior position to T with respect to p -- S does not suffer 'logically privileged non-access' -- S sometimes knows that he knows p. More, a little thought will reveal how infrequently S suffers privileged non-access. Hence, very many cases of ordinary

knowledge are cases of philosophical certainty, if the second-order knowledge account of certainty were right. Therefore, unless all sorts of mundane propositions are Cartesian certainties, it is false that if someone knows that he knows that  $p$ , he is certain that  $p$ .<sup>59</sup>

Having discussed the notion of certainty as it occurs in the epistemological solipsist thesis, I should conclude this section by noting that the correlative notion of possibility used in the skeptical claim that it is possible that no objective particulars exist, is a weak sense of epistemic possibility.<sup>60</sup> A proposition is weakly epistemically possible for a man  $S$  at a time  $t$  if, and only if, it is compatible with everything that is certain for him at  $t$ . Hence, a proposition is weakly epistemically impossible for  $S$  at  $t$  if, and only if, it is incompatible with something certain for  $S$  at  $t$ . But if a proposition is epistemically impossible for  $S$  at  $t$ , then, and only then, is its negation epistemically certain for  $S$  at  $t$ . Therefore, a proposition is epistemically certain for  $S$  at  $t$  just in case its denial is incompatible with something which is certain for  $S$  at  $t$ . And this is equivalent to saying that  $p$  is epistemically certain for  $S$  at  $t$  provided that  $p$  is entailed by premises which are epistemically certain for  $S$  at  $t$  (or is identical with such a premise). Therefore, the way to refute epistemological solipsism is to logically deduce its denial from philosophical certainties inevitably acknowledged as such by the epistemological solipsist.



## III

Since we are trying to refute the epistemological solipsist, we must either understand by 'objective particular' what he does, so that our argument is not simply an ignoratio elenchi, or we must show that the meaning he wishes to impute to 'objective particular' is incoherent, replace it by a suitable, coherent notion, and then proceed to establish the existence of objective particulars in the legitimate sense. If this legitimate sense can be shown to be the only legitimate sense, then it seems that we have met the skeptical challenge. If there are alternative, coherent conceptions of objective particulars, then in establishing the existence of objective particulars in one sense we have not thereby established their existence in all the legitimate senses, and so have not unequivocally refuted the skeptic, unless something's being an objective particular in the proffered sense entails that it is an objective particular in all the alternative senses.

I mention the second, circuitous strategy because the reader may wonder whether, if I take seriously the idea that the uniquely promising anti-skeptical method is Kantian transcendental argumentation, the straightforward strategy is available to me. Kant seems to have argued, roughly, as follows. The Copernican revolutionary or transcendental idealist thesis shows that the only object of which we can meaningfully speak is the object apprehensible by consciousness. Appreciation of the transcendental or epistemological

turn enables us to understand that we cannot get beyond our representations and compare them with an 'independently real' object. The distinction between subject and object must lie within consciousness and must be seen as the result of a process of objectification. This process, the activity of judgment, consists essentially in the conceptualization of the contents of the mind in terms of certain universal and necessary rules. Objectivity can only be understood (consistently) in terms of the necessary synthetic unity or combinatory coherence of the representations or mental contents themselves. Only by this mental activity can a person become aware of a unified objective world distinct from his representations. The truth of judgments about objects must be verified in terms immanent to consciousness.

Kant's view seems to imply that it is misguided to pose the problem of knowledge as the task of bridging the epistemological gap between representations and the non-representational independent reality one purports to represent, and that the problem is properly conceived only in terms of establishing lawlike features among representations. And this requires reinterpreting what is meant by 'real objective particular.' So Kant's is a resolution by redefinition of 'objective particular.'

It may be countered that only the problem of empirical verification of objectivity beliefs, which is not even the skeptical worry of the dissertation, demands any sort of

redefinition, but not redefinition of 'objective particular.' If truth is a relation of correspondence between what is said or what is thought and some state of affairs or fact, then presumably one verifies objectivity beliefs by comparing one's representations with that which one purports to represent, to see if they fit. Kant rejects this comparative method of verification. But no redefinition of 'objective particular' is called for; the standard definition already refuses to countenance anything but objects of possible consciousness as objective particulars, objects whose existence is, nevertheless, independent of all actual mental acts. By 'object of possible consciousness' all is meant is 'object which thinking beings, were there any, could become aware of,' not 'object which exists only if some thinking being can become aware of it.' Kant is not a phenomenalist idealist. He does not hold that objective particulars exist only if thinkers exist. It is not as if objects exist if one person survives a nuclear holocaust, but perish as soon as he dies. He does hold, however, that if thinkers exercising their capacity for thought exist, then objects exist.

To reject the comparative method of verification is not to grant that we always only directly perceive sense data (Lockean ideas, Humean perceptions, Kantian representations), and that objective particulars must therefore be collections of, or constructions out of, sense data. Additional, controversial

considerations, such as arguments from perceptual relativity, time-gap, hallucination, and so on, are needed to establish even that the objects of direct perception are person-private and so not intersubjective. It is the appearance-reality gap, an instance of the known-not known gap, that is essential to the skeptical thesis. The introduction of sense data is not needed for skepticism. There is still the gap between things as they seem and things as they are. Therefore, Kant's response to Cartesian or Humean epistemological solipsism need not involve an idealistic redefinition of 'objective particular.'

In rejoinder, it may be insisted that any credible Kant exegesis requires that transcendental idealism imply the collapse of the knowing--being distinction, and the consequent preclusion of meaningful talk about things as they are in themselves. But again, this insistence rests on confusion concerning the nature of objective particulars. Being a reality which could exist even if nobody could become conscious of it, is not a necessary condition of objective particularity. In fact, I suggest it contradicts the analysis which faithfully depicts the skeptic's concern. The unknowability of things as they are in themselves is not the unknowability of objective particulars.

But even if I am mistaken about this strain in Kant's thought, I contend that there is to be found in Kant an argument designed to defeat the skeptic in his own playground,



where there is no attempt at hollow victory by low redefinition.<sup>61</sup> And so I simply will stipulate that it is that argument innocent of the fallacy of irrelevance that I intend to pursue.

I have spoken of the ordinary notion of an objective particular in terms of which the skeptical thesis is formulated. Strictly speaking, historically, no such notion exists. External world skepticism has centered on the existence of physical objects. But although all physical objects are objective particulars, the converse is untrue. Some kinds of events, Quinean process-things or space-time worms, and the like, may be objective particulars also.<sup>62</sup> In The Analysis of Matter Russell even identifies physical objects with groups of events arranged about a center, arguing that the only permanences science needs are the four-dimensional space-time continuum and perhaps the conservation of energy, but that in neither case must the permanence be supposed substantial.<sup>63</sup> And in Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science, Kant himself, after defining 'physical body' as 'matter between determinate boundaries (with figure)' and characterizing matter as 'the movable in space,' goes on to further specify that matter is a repulsive force resisting penetration, together with an attractive force for bodies situated elsewhere. He holds that extension, which is itself a force, is a consequence of the repulsive forces of each point in space filled with matter. And he elaborates his theory quite elegantly.<sup>64</sup> Even in the first Critique Kant argues that it is

mere prejudice to assume that matter must exist in parcels differing only in amount.<sup>65</sup>

Essential to epistemological solipsism is the problem of objectivity. But that objects be Aristotelian parcels of enformed matter is inessential. As far as our forthcoming analysis is concerned, objects may be loci of concentrated force fields, or any one of a number of other things. Transcendental arguments encroach minimally on scientific theory and discovery. No substantive propositions of physics follow from their conclusions. As we shall see, transcendental propositions are not axiomatic and need have no, non-trivial deductive consequences, imply no empirical claims. They only assert the satisfaction of a general predicative function; in the present case, that function specified by the analysis of objective particularity.

Although not all objective particulars are physical objects, an account of physical objects naturally approximates an account of objective particulars. Candidates for physical objects, as ordinarily understood, must satisfy various conditions. First, they must be spatiotemporally extended. Temporal extension rules out the momentarily present, particular entity which instantly arises and instantly perishes. The discrete, transitory atomic entity, the Humean impression, cannot be a physical object, since physical objects are at least relatively stable continuants. Spatial extension rules out mental acts or representings.

Since no mental events are spatially extended (even if, in a derivative sense, they are spatially locatable), no acts of consciousness are physical objects.

Second, physical objects are mind-independent. Sense data, which on some views are spatiotemporally extended, are not counted as physical objects because they are mind-dependent; they exist only if someone is conscious. But something is a physical object only if its existence at any given time is independent of anyone's perception of it at that time. It is possible that such an object existed before anyone perceived it, and that it will continue to exist even if everyone ceases to perceive it; it might exist at a time at which nobody was conscious.

Physical objects, as ordinarily understood, must be perceivable by the senses. It seems as if something of which we can know only that it causes our experiences could fulfill the two, aforementioned conditions. But our latest condition rules out entities to which we can have no sensuous, cognitive access.

Finally, something is a physical object only if it is possible for more than one person, suitably placed, to perceive the numerically identical object. This publicity requirement rules out the kind of entity that has been called 'sensibilium.' Sensibilia are sense data capable of existing unsensed.<sup>66</sup> As a species of sense datum, sensibilia are person-private, and hence, not physical objects.

By recalling Moore's distinctions between objects 'presented in space,' 'to be met with in space,' and 'external to our minds,' we recognize that the foregoing provides an inadequate test for physical objects.<sup>67</sup> Shadows, for example, are spatiotemporally extended and publicly perceivable, yet, ordinarily, they are not regarded as physical objects. But, shelving the dubious point that shadows must be shadows of something, the existence of, the the possession of knowledge about, shadows, are fully germane to the truth of metaphysical and epistemological solipsism, respectively. Shadows are respectable members of the class of objective particulars.

Further, objects external to our minds need not be objects to be met with in space. The images of animals exemplify this sort of object. But by acknowledging the truth of the converse-entailment, and abstracting from the peculiarities of the Aristotelian conception embodied above, we can arrive at a more useful and refined account of objective particulars.

Strawson, Hampshire, Chappell, Woods, and others have examined the distinction between identification as a member of a class and identification as some particular member of a class.<sup>68</sup> In its first use, to identify (as) is to classify or describe sortally; in its second use, to identify (identifyingly refer) is to pick or single out from other things of a class, as names and definite descriptions are typically used to do. Principles of classification, for sorting objects



into kinds, and principles of individuation, for distinguishing objects of a given kind, are appealed to in the two species of identification. As 'individuation' and 'classification' have been defined, individuatability implies classifiability. But on definitions lacking reference to class membership, the implication is more controversial, and is tantamount to the thesis that there cannot be unconceptualized or unsynthesized intuitions, or, as Sellars puts it, there cannot be a this which is not a this-such.<sup>69</sup> So far I have only affirmed that objective particulars must be individuatable.

But objective particulars must not only be individuatingly identifiable, they must also be reidentifiable, that is, identifiable as the numerically same thing in different perceptual situations at different times. Now if reidentifiability implies identifiability in both its senses, then, whether or not individuatability implies classifiability, all objective particulars, since reidentifiable, are classifiable as well as individuatable.<sup>70</sup> And although questions of reidentity, 'Is this X the same X which...?' seem to presuppose classifiability, the issue remains controversial, and can at present, I think, be left unresolved.

Two other properties essential to objective particulars are existential and attributive independence. Something is existentially independent if, and only if, its existence at any given time is independent of anyone's perception of it at that time. Something is attributively independent if, and

only if, it can have properties other than those it seems to have to the perceiver.

Concerning existential independence, I must make a confession which may, although I think ought not, disillusion the reader as to the prospects of this dissertation. As I understand this condition, it requires independence from the conscious activities of finite, sensible creatures like us. Supposing God to have the power to create and sustain objects by thinking about them -- objects perceivable by the rest of us in the usual way, obeying the laws of physics, and so on -- I would not want to disallow that such objects are objective particulars. Current scientific theory about the ultimate constituents and likely origins of matter is in no way circumscriptive of the nature of objects. Descartes himself, who paradigmatically posed the very skeptical challenge with which we are concerned, maintained an atomic theory of time which required God's recurrent sustenance of his creation. It seems perverse to admit that the Lockean inert, senseless, matter which God once for all created by an act of thought (will) is an objective particular, but that the same sort of thing which is constantly preserved by his thinking is not. Most important, the view that for all I know to the contrary, my mental states constitute the universe, that for all I know, the world is my dream, would be refuted by the known existence of objects of the kind just envisaged.<sup>71</sup>

Summing up, a particular is an objective particular if,

and only if, it is (i) identifiable, (ii) reidentifiable, (iii) existentially independent, and (iv) attributively independent. Since reidentifiability entails identifiability -- you could not pick something out as persisting if you could not pick it out at all -- condition (i) is redundant and may be deleted. Striving for elegance of definition, one might try to show that reidentifiability entails both existential and attributive independence as well, so that an objective particular is a reidentifiable particular.

One strategy for showing that reidentifiability entails existential independence proceeds as follows: The notion of an 'existential- or mind-dependent datum' is properly defined in terms of a perceptual situation at a time. Since it can be shown that specifically identical perceptual situations cannot recur, identification in different perceptual situations at different times must be identification of different existential- or mind-dependent data, so that what is mind-dependent cannot be what remains numerically the same over time.

A natural challenge to this strategy, and the entailment from (ii) to (iii), is to argue that there are existentially dependent entities, such as pains, which are nevertheless reidentifiable. Pains do not exist when nobody is conscious, yet I can refer to my self-same pain in cases of discontinuous perception. And it is not only generic sameness that I can attribute to the pain I had last night and the one I am having this morning.

I think such counterexamples are spurious. Numerical reidentity-claims about pains rest upon identification of their physical sources, which sources may persist. For suppose that I complained about a shoulder pain on Monday, and a physician diagnosed its cause as bursaitis. He treats me medicinally, I go home, sleep, and awake Tuesday, my shoulder still hurting. I return to the doctor and complain, 'I still have the same pain in my shoulder.' Would I not unhesitatingly retract the claim of numerical identity if the doctor truly told me that the bursaitis had cleared, and that my current discomfort was caused by a recently sustained bruise?

So I believe that Hume was right in arguing that continued existence implies independent existence.<sup>72</sup> But again, the issue remains controversial, and need not be resolved. Proceeding cautiously, we can retain (iii) as a non-redundant condition of objective particularity. Then even if pains are reidentifiable, their candidacy as objective particulars is ruled out by their existential dependence.

Similarly for attributive independence. If all and only mind-dependent data have all those characteristics which they seem to have to their owners, then if reidentifiability entails existential independence, reidentifiability entails attributive independence. There seem to be direct routes from reidentifiability to attributive independence, but they rest on premises as controversial as the conclusion they are intended to establish. With prudence over elegance, let us retain condition (iv).



## IV

I want to make explicit the ground rules and procedural assumptions which will guide our search for a successful anti-skeptical, transcendental method in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. First, since we wish to establish that we can know for certain that objective particulars exist, it is insufficient to demonstrate that we do not, or even cannot, know that we do not know with certainty of the existence of objective particulars. Joad has argued that if a man can only know the content of his own consciousness, he cannot know anything other than his own consciousness, and so cannot know any arguments for solipsism. If there are any arguments for solipsism, we cannot, if solipsism is true, know them.<sup>73</sup>

Even if Joad's argument were sound, it would be inadequate to our purpose. It is not enough to argue that the skeptical thesis has not been, or even cannot be, established, since it does not follow from the fact that some proposition is unprovable that it is false. Universal, empirical generalizations attest to this. So even if epistemological solipsism cannot be proved and we know it, we cannot conclude that it is false.

Not only must we try to develop a method which can be used to prove the anti-skeptical thesis, but we should try to join the battle on the skeptic's own terrain, granting those assumptions which reputedly generate the skeptical

conclusion. This means, first, accepting the egocentric predicament as the original position from which we must philosophize. We need not ennoble the position with claims of self-evidence, as when Stace repeatedly tells us that 'It is evident that, however we may wish otherwise, we cannot, if we are honest, escape the conclusion that the initial position of every mind must be solipsistic,' and 'that I am, to start with, only aware of my own thoughts and experiences, appears to be self-evident.'<sup>74</sup> We need only stipulate that, for dialectical purposes, we accept it.

If we add that, second, all inferences from the hard, introspective data must be deductive, or, perhaps more guardedly, all inferences must guarantee preservation of certainty, and, third, that all our premises must be philosophical certainties, since 'everything which bears any manner of resemblance to an hypothesis is to be treated as contraband; it is not to be put up for sale even at the lowest price, but forthwith confiscated, immediately upon detection,'<sup>75</sup> we have already imposed significant restrictions on the range of epistemological approaches. We must repudiate naïve realism, which insists that there is no need to appeal to experiences as evidence for the existence of objective particulars, and so no transition from subjective to objective to justify. We cannot assume that empirical knowledge is a community phenomenon necessarily based on data available to all, that the secure data for

analysis are publicly observable, and then proceed to argue that subjective experiences are insufficient to constitute the foundations of empirical knowledge, both because the world of public things cannot be adequately characterized in exclusively phenomenal terms, and because Hume and Descartes were wrong to believe that a man cannot possibly be mistaken about the character of his subjective experiences.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, we cannot follow scientific realists such as Sellars, holding that subjective impressions are postulated after reflecting on certain features of our view of public reality, such as the need to explain aberrant perception. We cannot argue that if subjective appearances are to be postulated, they must have outer, public criteria, since otherwise they could not be encompassed in an intersubjective language needed for the scientific enterprise.

The viability of pursuing a rationalist course such as Plato's depends largely on what we take the extension of 'appearance' to be. Plato embraced the unbridgeability of the appearance-reality gap, while assuming direct cognizability of the non-sensuous, independently real. If Plato were arguing that we cannot know reality via sense-perception just because we cannot know appearances, meaning that any argument from the nature of subjective states must fail, then obviously he would be violating one of our concessions. If he were contending that no argument from premises about how the world seems could establish how it is, that arguments from the

content of consciousness to objectivity must fail, then none of the procedural assumptions need be revoked. Egocentrism demands that we argue from our thoughts and/or perceptions. Argument from the nature of our thoughts is consonant with this demand. If Plato is rejecting representationalism altogether, substituting a faculty for intuitively apprehending the real, then again there has been an infraction of the rules. Whether the licit argument from the nature of our thoughts can succeed, and whether this is a priori argumentation in the rationalist tradition, remains to be seen. Here I only strike the precautionary note that a later rationalist such as Leibniz seems to have argued as to how the external world must be, if there is a world; that there is a world is established by sense-perception.

Just as we have dismissed realism, which denies the representational nature of consciousness, for its disregard of the egocentric predicament, so we must dismiss phenomenalism, subjective-objective reductionism, for its disregard of the egocentric predicament. Reductionism tries to show that objective particulars are really experiences, or, in its linguistic version, that objectivity statements are analytically equivalent to conjunctions of hypotheticals expressive of personal experience. In either case, the quandary over objectivity dissolves.

We must also rule out the Aristotelian view that when our senses are functioning properly, under proper conditions,



we acquire true information, and that, when necessary, our intellect can correct our sense reports and therefore, gain reliable knowledge about the external world. Since skeptics challenge the reliability of our natural faculties under the best of conditions, denying Aristotle's criteria for deciding when our faculties are operating properly, response by appeal to The Philosopher would be question-begging. As documented by Popkin, Pierre Chanet, Father Yves de Paris, and Jean Bagot, and, to a lesser extent, Mersenne, Herbert of Cherbury, and Charles Sorel, used this tack to bypass the skeptical problems raised by Montaigne and Charron.<sup>77</sup>

For similar reasons, we must renounce the following, contemporary line of argument.<sup>78</sup> As regards any particular belief, any genuine, cognitive doubt requires that there be formulable grounds for removing that doubt, so that only determinate, resolvable doubts are genuine. Determinate doubt is resolved in accordance with accepted standards of justification; hence, the correlative notion of certainty is understood in terms of currently accepted norms governing the resolution of determinate doubts. Therefore, the more pervasive doubts of the epistemological solipsist are bogus. Since our skeptic's doubts are non-radical and determinate, and since the primary target of his attack is the standards of justification themselves, this argument begs the question.

Again, similarly, we must forswear allegiance to any pragmatic perspective which either rejects the foundational picture of knowledge or loosens beyond recognition the strictures traditionally imposed on that foundation. For example, Mersenne, instead of trying to resolve skeptical doubts, tried to rescue knowledge by showing that its practical verifiability and usefulness do not depend on any unshakeable grounds. He invites the 'reasonable' skeptic to abandon doubt, and join in the quest for the most convincing, most useful presentation and organization of the information of which we are all obviously aware.<sup>79</sup> Since the skeptical attack is developed in terms of the dogmatist's strong demands on genuine knowledge, mitigating those demands simply pulls the rug from underneath the contestants.

It is important to appreciate that the preceding discussion embodies methodological assumptions by which a solution to the problem of epistemological solipsism is intended to abide. It is not as if we exclude the possibility of discovering that, for example, all reasons considered, we do sometimes directly perceive objective particulars. Far from it. It is just that we should strive to do as honest and sympathetic a job as possible. But since others may think that what I call 'sympathy' is another name for mania, I shall not attempt to apply the same stringent requirements to the alternative solutions I criticize.

To recapitulate, anyone who assumes the egocentric predicament and accepts the view that all justified knowledge-claims are either self-justifying or deductive consequences of justified premises, is susceptible to epistemological skepticism regarding the external world. It seems that 'objective particular' is a concept whose applicability cannot be empirically deduced by reference to the content of individual perceptions or sets of them; consequently, it is a concept whose employment assumes what no experience could establish. This threat confronts rationalist and empiricist alike. Descartes sought to overcome it by appeal to the veracity of God; Hume concluded that it could not be overcome; and Pascal agreed that as long as there are dogmatists, the skeptics are right.<sup>80</sup> Respecting the boundaries of the circle of our ideas and supposing the rigorous view of rational justification to be correct--but mindful of Pascal's warning, and appreciative that proof of objective knowledge is the next best thing to proof of objective knowledge with certainty--our project is to examine the role of transcendental argumentation in the refutation of epistemological solipsism.

## NOTES

## CHAPTER I

1. Kant calls this thesis 'problematic idealism,' in contrast to dogmatic idealism, which asserts the provable non-existence of a reality independent of consciousness. See Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1964), p. 244. Russell's 'skeptical solipsism' and 'dogmatic solipsism' capture the same distinction. See Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948), p. 176. C.D. Rollins, in 'Solipsism,' The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan & Co. and Free Press, 1967), VII, 487-491, uses my chosen terminology of 'epistemological solipsism' and 'metaphysical solipsism.'
2. See Aristotle, Metaphysics, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), Book IV, chapter 4, pp. 737-743; and Edmund Husserl, Logical Investigations, trans. J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Vol. I, chapter 1, para. 32.
3. Michael A. Slote, Reason and Skepticism (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1970), especially chapter 2.
4. Arne Naess, Skepticism (New York: Humanities Press, 1969). But compare A.A. Long, Hellenistic Philosophy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), chapter 3, who, drawing on Timon and Diogenes Laertius as well as Sextus, interprets Pyrrhonism as a doctrine much like epistemological solipsism.
5. H.A. Prichard, Knowledge and Perception (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 86; Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 18, 39, and 44.
6. Descartes says, 'For we may well enough be compelled to doubt by arguments that are in themselves doubtful, and not to be afterwards retained, as we noted above. They are indeed valid so long as we do not possess any others to remove our doubt and introduce certainty.' See The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, vols I & II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), II, 277. Elaboration of this point, and discussion of the concepts of metaphysical and practical certainty and possibility, appears in Fred Feldman, 'Epistemic Appraisal and the Cartesian Circle,' unpublished at this writing.



7. Anthony Kenny argues for this in Descartes: A Study of His Philosophy (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 18-21.
8. David Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Charles W. Hendel (Indianapolis: The Liberal Arts Press, Inc., 1955), pp. 161-162.
9. C.I. Lewis, An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation (La Salle: Open Court Publishing Co., 1946), chapter VIII, pp. 203-253. Reprinted in Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing, ed. Robert J. Swartz (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 289-346.
10. C.I. Lewis, 'Professor Chisholm and Empiricism,' in Swartz, pp. 355-363.
11. Ibid., pp. 359-360.
12. The best introductory treatment of this topic with which I am familiar is Henry E. Kyburg, Jr., Probability and Inductive Logic (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada, Ltd., 1970).
13. William Kneale, Probability and Induction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).
14. I sketch the strategy of a recent presentation of his theory in 'On the Nature of Empirical Evidence,' in Experience & Theory, ed. Lawrence Foster and J.W. Swanson (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), pp. 103-134.
15. Ibid., pp. 122-134.
16. Herbert Heidelberger's criticisms appear in 'Chisholm's Epistemic Principles,' Nous, III, 1 (February, 1969): 73-82.
17. Roderick M. Chisholm, '"Appear," "Take," and "Evident",' reprinted from The Journal of Philosophy (LIII, 1956) in Swartz, pp. 473-485, especially 482, and Foster and Swanson, p.12
18. Swartz, p. 485.
19. Richard H. Popkin, The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Company, N.V., 1960), chapter 1.
20. Haldane and Ross, II, 276-277.
21. Descartes explains why the atheist geometer cannot be certain about what he knows in Haldane and Ross, II, 39.

22. Ibid., I, 7-8.
23. Ibid., II, 39.
24. Ibid., II, 245.
25. Ibid., II, 206, 266, and 278.
26. Ibid., I, 92 and 101.
27. Ibid., I, 144 and 150.
28. Ibid., I, 219. 'Descartes makes clear that by 'reject as false' he does not mean 'affirm the denial of.'
29. Ibid., I, 314.
30. Ibid., II, 245 and 266; I, 101.
31. Harry Frankfurt, Demons, Dreamers, and Madmen (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 134-137. Frankfurt goes on to note that distinctness admits of degrees. Human beings cannot have completely distinct perception, that is, adequate knowledge; a high degree of distinctness suffices for certainty. See pp. 139-145.
32. Nelson Goodman, 'Sense and Certainty,' The Philosophical Review, LXI, 2 (April, 1952): 161.
33. Norman Malcolm, 'Knowledge and Belief,' in Knowledge and Belief, ed. A. Phillips Griffiths (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 74. Cf. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, p. 47, on the one hand, and pp. 33, 46, and 87, on the other.
34. Ibid., p. 78.
35. Norman Malcolm, 'The Verification Argument,' in Knowledge and Certainty (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 1-57; also in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Max Black (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), see pp. 258-261.
36. Harry G. Frankfurt, 'Philosophical Certainty,' The Philosophical Review, LXXI, 3 (July, 1962): 304.
37. See Risto Hilpinen, 'Knowledge and Justification,' Ajatus (1971), in which the main attempts at formulating an infeasibility condition are discussed. The paragraph which follows summarizes part of Hilpinen's essay. Since I have used a copy of Hilpinen's pre-publication manuscript, I shall footnote by section heading, not pagination.

38. Keith Lehrer and Thomas Paxson, Jr., 'Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXVI, 8 (April 24, 1969): 225-237. See p. 228.
39. Keith Lehrer, 'The Fourth Condition of Knowledge: A Defense,' The Review of Metaphysics, XXIV, 1 (September, 1970): 122-128. See p. 127.
40. Hilpinen, sections III and IV.
41. Ibid., section VII
42. Ibid.
43. Israel Scheffler, Science and Subjectivity (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 115-116.
44. See Robert Almeder, 'Fallibilism and the Ultimate Irreversible Opinion,' American Philosophical Quarterly (October, 1974).
45. Richard Rorty, 'Incorrigibility as the Mark of the Mental,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXVII, 12 (June 25, 1970): 399-424. See p. 417. See also his 'Criteria and Necessity,' Nous, VII, 4 (November, 1973): 313-329, and 'The World Well Lost,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXIX, 19 (October 26, 1972): 649-665.
46. Haldane and Ross, I, 99.
47. Roderick Firth, 'Lewis on the Given,' in The Philosophy of C.I. Lewis, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (La Salle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 329-350, and 'The Anatomy of Certainty,' The Philosophical Review, LXXVI, 1 (January, 1967): 3-27. Others, however, do explicitly use the notion of unmistakability. See, for example, David Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of the Mind (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Humanities Press, 1968), p. 101, and Joseph Margolis, 'Indubitability, Self-Intimating States, and Logically Privileged Access,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXVII, 21 (November 5, 1970): 918-931. They refer to unmistakability as 'logical indubitability.'
48. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), Book I, Part IV, section 1, pp. 180-184.
49. A.J. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1956), pp. 44-45, and Prichard, p. 86, ascribe the unmistakability condition, or some variant of it, to Descartes. As we shall see in chapters II and III, several allegedly transcendental arguments rely on these sorts of entailments.

50. A.C. Danto, Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), chapter 3.
51. Bertrand Russell, An Outline of Philosophy (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1927), pp. 171, 214; cited in G.E. Moore, 'Four Forms of Skepticism,' in Philosophical Papers (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 193-222. See p. 198.
52. Roderick M. Chisholm, Theory of Knowledge (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 22.
53. This paragraph summarizes a portion of Firth's excellent article, 'The Anatomy of Certainty.'
54. Peter Unger, 'A Defense of Skepticism,' The Philosophical Review, LXXX, 2 (April, 1971): 198-219.
55. See Jaakko Hintikka, Knowledge and Belief (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 20-21, for one defense of a conclusiveness of justification requirement for knowledge.
56. Any particular whose temporal extension is finite exists only contingently. For such particulars, since there is a time at which they do not exist, they do not exist at all times, and so do not exist necessarily. I need not here decide whether some things, such as the number five, the set of dogs (read de dicto), and God, do exist necessarily.
57. See Arthur C. Danto, 'On Knowing that We Know,' in Epistemology: New Essays in the Theory of Knowledge, ed. Avrum Stroll (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 32-53.
58. See E.J. Lemmon, 'If I Know, Do I Know That I Know?', in Stroll, pp. 54-82.
59. Saul Kripke presented this argument in a talk given at the University of Massachusetts, in February, 1973.
60. The notion of epistemic possibility seems to have been introduced by Moore in 'Certainty,' chapter 10 of Philosophical Papers. Hintikka uses the notion (though not so called) in Knowledge and Belief, as does Sellars in 'Phenomenalism,' in Science, Perception and Reality, pp. 60-105, see p. 77. Recently the concept has enjoyed greater currency; see, for example, Joseph L. Camp, Jr., 'Plantinga on De Dicto and De Re,' Nous, V, 2 (May, 1971): 219-220, and Fred Feldman, 'Epistemic Appraisal and the Cartesian Circle.' Actually, study of Moore, pp. 228-229, and 235-237, reveals that he does not identify epistemic



possibility with consistency with all S knows, for he argues that saying 'it is possible that p is true' requires that I should not know p is false, but my not knowing is not sufficient for the truth of what I say. Feldman does not use epistemic possibility (his 'practical possibility') in the proffered sense either.

61. The expression 'low redefinition' derives from Paul Edwards' use of 'high redefinition' (where demands are too stringent) in his 'Bertrand Russell's Doubts About Induction,' Mind (1949), reprinted in Logic and Language, ed. Antony Flew (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 59-85.
62. See Willard Van Orman Quine, 'Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis,' in From A Logical Point of View (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 65-79.
63. Bertrand Russell, The Analysis of Matter (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954), pp. 152, 244 and 355.
64. Immanuel Kant, Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science, trans. James Ellington (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), chapter 2.
65. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A173-175, pp. 206-207.
66. Such things appear impossible, if 'unsensed' means 'unsensed by anyone.'
67. G.E. Moore, 'Proof of An External World,' Philosophical Papers, pp. 126-148. Afterimages are presented in space but are not to be met with in space. The images of animals are external to our minds, but are not to be met with in space. Note that we cannot, with Jonathan Bennett, Locke, Berkeley, Hume (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 314, construe 'external' so that an object is external to me if it and I are in different places. This requires that I be in a place, and, therefore, that I have or be a body.
68. P.F. Strawson, 'Singular Terms, Ontology and Identity,' The Philosophical Review, LXV, 4 (October, 1956): 433-454, and Individuals (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1959). Stuart Hampshire, Thought and Action (New York: The Viking Press, 1959). V.C. Chappell, 'Sameness and Change,' The Philosophical Review, LXIX, 3 (July, 1960): 351-362. M.J. Woods, 'Identity and Individuation,' in Analytical Philosophy, second series, ed. R.J. Butler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 120-130.

69. Wilfrid Sellars, Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 4-7.
70. The claim that reidentifiability implies classifiability is not equivalent to the stronger, Geachian thesis that strict, absolute, Russell-Leibniz identity is incoherent, and that all reidentity statements are count noun- or sortal-relative, so that something can remain the same under one description while changing under another description, where both descriptions are truly applicable. Geach first stated this view in Reference and Generality (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962, emended, 1968), pp. 39-40. The view is developed in 'Identity,' The Review of Metaphysics, XXI, 1 (September, 1967): 3-12, and 'Ontological Relativity and Relative Identity,' manuscript written March-April, 1971. The view is persuasively criticized by Fred Feldman, 'Geach and Relative Identity,' The Review of Metaphysics, XXII, 3 (March, 1969): 547-555, and by David Wiggins, Identity and Spatiotemporal Continuity (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), chapter 1. Quine also criticizes Geach's view in his review of Reference and Generality, in The Philosophical Review, LXXIII, 1 (January, 1964): 100-103.
71. The latter formulation is Karl R. Popper's statement of epistemological solipsism, in Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 198. Incidentally, the skeptic is not threatened by the argument that if he uses as a premise that current experiences may be mere dream-images, he claims he knows dreams have occurred, which entails that he is not dreaming, since one cannot know while dreaming. The first premise of the argument is false. 'For all I know, I am dreaming' does not entail 'I know dreams have sometimes occurred.' It does require that I understand what a dream is, and non-vacuous contrast arguments latch on to this. But as we shall see in chapter III, such arguments fail. Further, even if the dreaming--not dreaming distinction breaks down, the appearance--reality distinction, which is sufficient to sustain the skeptical arguments, is preserved.
72. Hume, Treatise, pp. 187-218.
73. C.E.M. Joad, Guide to Philosophy (New York: Dover Publications, 1936), p. 72. The argument assumes that to know that a thought is true we must know that it refers to or applies to something other than itself, and that one thought cannot be the subject of another.

74. W.T. Stace, The Theory of Knowledge and Existence (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 66; see chapters II and V.
75. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Axxv.
76. This is so even on Humean principles, since an experience is distinguishable from the belief about the experience, so that the two can occur apart, so that the belief cannot guarantee its own truth.
77. Popkin, chapter 6.
78. Thompson Clarke rehearses this sort of argument in 'The Legacy of Skepticism,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXIX, 9 (November 9, 1972): 754-769. The argument also appears in Joseph Margolis' Knowledge and Existence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 85-89.
79. Popkin, chapter 7.
80. Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, in Haldane and Ross, I, 133-199; David Hume, Treatise and Inquiry; and Blaise Pascal, Pensees (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958), p. 102 (Thought 374).

## CHAPTER II

### STRAWSONIAN TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

P.F. Strawson is an influential advocate and alleged practitioner of Kantian transcendental method. In pursuit of a satisfactory refutation of the skeptical thesis, in this chapter I examine Strawson's writings. In chapter III I shall try to supplement Strawsonian argumentation with other anti-skeptical resources. We shall discover that there are several closely related and easily confused conclusions for which one might argue. In carefully distinguishing these conclusions and exposing the inadequacies of the arguments designed to establish them, we shall make great progress towards a positive theory of the successful anti-skeptical method.

At the same time, however, we will generate worries, since some of the arguments to be attacked may seem faithfully Kantian. The reader may doubt that an historically or philosophically viable alternative survives. Chapter IV attempts to allay those doubts.

#### I

In The Bounds of Sense Strawson argues for the 'objectivity thesis' that all experiencers must use concepts of objective particulars.<sup>1</sup> An objective particular is a reidentifiable particular, that is, a particular identifiable as the same thing in different perceptual situations at different



times. The argument for the objectivity thesis, the objectivity argument, is, for Strawson, a paradigm of metaphysical reasoning -- a sound instance of a transcendental argument. Yet Strawson never fully explicates the nature of such reasoning. I shall give a general account of his transcendental method, clarify it by considering a defective criticism of Richard Rorty's, outline the objectivity argument, and then criticize both the argument and the method in general.

But first, to better understand the objectivity thesis, four points about Strawson's use of 'identification' should be noted. First, recall that 'identification' here means 'individuation,' not 'classification.' Second, referring (or 'introducing a term in a substantive style') is not something that expressions do, but something that an expression can be used to do; referring is a characteristic of a use of an expression.<sup>2</sup> Third, Strawson distinguishes the making of an identifying reference from identifying. A speaker may identifyingly refer to a particular without identifying it; identification occurs only if the speaker successfully communicates the identity of the referent to his audience. More precisely, a speaker identifies a particular to a hearer if, and only if, the speaker uses an appropriate referring expression (such as most proper names, pronouns and definite descriptions) to refer to the particular, and the hearer picks out the particular as what the speaker referred to. Consequently, publicity is built into the notion

of identifiability.<sup>3</sup> Fourth, a sufficient but not necessary condition of the hearer's success in identifying the particular is his sensibly discriminating it, knowing it is the one referred to by the speaker. For Strawson, all cases of particular-identification are ultimately linkable to cases where the particular is sensibly present.

Strawson wants to prove that any creature capable of experience must be able to use concepts of particulars which are identifiable, in the sense just characterized, as the same in different perceptual situations at different times. He thinks this can be proved by the legitimate method of metaphysical reasoning. For him, the proper task of metaphysical reasoning is the articulation of those principles analytically implied by any coherent conception of experience we can form.<sup>4</sup> The truth of these principles is deducible from any actual or hypothetical description of an experience, so long as the description is coherent.

The notion of coherence here is a technical one. Syntactic well-formedness and internal consistency are necessary but not sufficient conditions of coherence. A description is coherent just in case, in addition to being syntactically correct and free from contradiction, it is formulable within a language that is coherent. A language is coherent (or self-sustaining) just in case it does not presuppose, is not parasitic upon, terms in some other language not available to the user in question. The terms of one language *L* are

parasitic upon the terms of another language L' if, and only if, the meanings of the terms of L cannot be understood unless the meanings of the terms of L' are understood. And, for Strawson, the meaning of a term is understood by a person (or, equivalently for him, a concept is possessed by a person) only if the person could use the term in forming judgments about some real or imagined entity.<sup>5</sup> Finally, for those like Strawson who take the Wittgensteinian variant of the linguistic turn, a person is able to form judgments about a kind of entity provided that he is able to experience that kind of entity; hence, there is no non-judgmental experience.

There is an important unclarity about the relation of parasitism or presupposition between languages. Do only some of the terms of L lack meaning for its user when not supplemented by the resources of L'? This condition would be too weak. Some proper subset of the language, with incomprehensible terms expurgated, would then be self-sustaining. Hence, such a subset could be used to form judgments. Hence, such a language-user could have experience. But Strawson intends the incoherence of a language to be the test of its user's inability to have experience. Therefore, he must insist that the meaning of no term of L can be understood unless the meanings of the terms of L' are understood, if L is parasitic upon L'.

But do the terms of L depend on some or all of the terms of L'? I think we must say only some. To take the relevant

case, suppose we are anxious to show that subjectivity concepts require objectivity concepts, that a purely phenomenal language of the sort the solipsist boasts enjoying presupposes a language with terms designating objective particulars. It is not that we are precluded from understanding the meaning of, say, the subjective, sensory expression 'redlike' unless we have use of, say, the term 'house.' To deny this would be to disallow differences among people's vocabularies. Consequently, only some of the terms of L' are needed to support L. Which some? If we specify some particular set, then vocabularies cannot vary with respect to that set. But this is what is required by the Strawsonian method, since if we liberally allow any set, we shall be unable to establish conclusions concerning the necessity or indispensability of some selected concept. Let us temporarily leave unspecified the constitution of the set by using the vague notion of a 'suitable set.' We can then say that one language L is parasitic upon another language L' if, and only if, none of the terms of L could be understood unless some suitable set of terms of L' were understood.

This is still not quite right, if languages like natural languages are possible substituends for L', since fully intertranslatable languages have the same conceptual resources but different words. We do not want dependency on particular terms but on the concepts those terms express -- the ability to use the German word 'rot' is as good as the ability to



use the English word 'red.' Consequently, we should amend our definition to read: A language  $L$  is parasitic upon a class of languages  $K$  if, and only if, none of the terms of  $L$  could be understood unless some suitable set of terms of some  $L'$  which is a member of  $K$  were understood. Then a language  $L$  is self-sustaining or coherent if, and only if, it is not parasitic upon any class of languages  $K$ , each member  $L'$  of which is different from  $L$ . The last qualification is necessary since, according to the definition of 'parasitic,' every language is parasitic upon itself and may, depending on how we fill out the notion of sufficient set, be parasitic upon some or all of its parts.

For convenience, we may also explicitly relativize coherence to acts of description, or any other linguistic activity, by saying that  $L$  is parasitic upon  $L'$  relative to linguistic activity  $A$  if, and only if,  $A$  is impossible in  $L$  but possible in  $L+L'$ . Such an  $L$  is incoherent relative to that  $A$ . An  $L$  is absolutely incoherent if, and only if, it is adequate for no linguistic activity. For descriptions, then, a description  $D$  is coherent or self-sustaining if, and only if, the  $L$  in which  $D$  is formulated is coherent relative to  $D$ , that is,  $L$  is not parasitic upon some  $L'$  relative to  $D$ .

Strawson thinks the truths of scientific metaphysics are deducible from any coherent description of a form of experience. And he thinks that experience minimally entails recognition of particular items by means of general concepts;

something is an experience only if it is a recognition of particular items as being of such and such a general kind.<sup>6</sup> But to have a concept is to be able to use a term. Hence, to assess a purported description of a possible form of experience is to evaluate a language which might be used by someone having such an experience. A form of experience is possible provided that some language corresponding to it is coherent or self-sustaining, as just defined.

## II

Rorty criticizes Strawson's method by arguing that 'it is a mistake to think that we can begin by imagining an experience which we might think possible and then go on to show by transcendental argumentation that it is not possible after all. If it is not possible, it is not imaginable either.'<sup>7</sup> This criticism is defective on two counts. First, Strawson is not arguing that an experience is possible if, and only if, we can coherently describe it. He holds that any possible form of experience is coherently describable. He does not hold that every coherently describable form of experience is possible. That we have the conceptual resources to describe a particular form of experience does not imply that the subject of such experiences could exist. The question is whether the man's language is comprehensible to himself; whether the language of the purported experiencer is coherent and not whether ours is. So we can begin by considering a

candidate form of experience and then go on to show that it is impossible since incoherent.

Second, Rorty's argument is unsound. We can suppose that a proposition is possible, deduce that it is impossible, and conclude that it is impossible. There is no difference in rejecting this form of argument and rejecting uses of reductio ad absurdum with non-modal suppositions; the modal case is just an instance of the general method. One might think, 'how could we suppose something to be possible if it can be proved to be impossible?' But compare, 'how can you suppose something to be true when you can show that it is false?' The second task might seem easier in that we must only suppose that the proposition fails to be true of the actual world -- at least we have access to a host of possible worlds of which it is true -- whereas the first method asks us to suppose something true of no possible world, to consider a possible world of which something true of no possible world is true. But the ordinary, non-modal reductio has the same status, since what we are ultimately doing is considering an impossible set of propositions, a set of propositions jointly true of no possible world. That is, an ordinary reductio shows that some conjunction is inconsistent, not merely that it is false. So even in the ordinary case we start out with an impossible supposition.

It might be thought that the connection between possibility and imaginability resuscitates at least the correctness,

if not the relevance to Strawson, of Rorty's argument. In some psychological sense of 'imaginable,' it is claimed, if something is not possible, it is not imaginable either.<sup>8</sup> Since Strawson consistently talks of coherently conceivable states of affairs, presumably Rorty is using 'imaginable' as interchangeable with 'conceivable.'<sup>9</sup>

But the inference from conceivability, construed psychologically, to possibility, seems unwarranted. Impossibilities can be and are conceived. Kneale shows that if the inference were valid, certain mathematical problems could be solved by mere appeal to the attitudes of mathematicians.<sup>10</sup> Certain mathematical propositions have not been established nor refuted. Take Goldbach's conjecture that every even integer greater than two is the sum of two distinct primes. The truth of this proposition is an open question. So mathematicians find it conceivable that it is true. Therefore, by the principle that anything conceivable is possible, the conjecture is possible. But the conjecture, being a mathematical proposition, is true if possible, since false necessary propositions are necessarily false. Therefore, Goldbach's conjecture is true. All the premises justifying this unacceptable result, except the principle that imaginability entails possibility, are known to be true. Hence, we should reject the principle.



With the general theory in mind, I think we can represent the overall structure of Strawson's objectivity argument as follows: Any describable experiencer must use concepts (a 'recognitional component' in judgment).<sup>11</sup> The use of concepts entails the ability to use the concept 'my experience' or 'seems to me' -- consciousness requires potential self-consciousness. But the ability to use the concept 'my experience' entails the ability to use objectivity concepts. Hence, all experiencers which we can describe must be able to use objectivity concepts. (We can now say that a suitable set of terms includes terms expressing the concept 'my experience' and some concepts of objective particulars.) Experience is judgment, which is what is reported by assertion. A concept is the ability to use an expression in making assertions. If experience of Xs is possible, then assertions about Xs are possible. Now if one's language is inadequate for the expression of a certain kind of assertion, if a richer language is needed, then the language is incoherent with respect to that kind of assertion. Hence, if a kind of assertion is not expressible in a coherent language, then the putative form of experience reported by such assertions is really unexperiencable. Hence, to argue that all describable experiencers must be able to use objectivity concepts is to argue that no describable language-user could assert anything unless he could make assertions about objective particulars.

If making any assertion at all requires the ability to make assertions about objective particulars, then any skeptical philosopher who denied the indispensability of thought about objects would refute himself the moment he entered the debate. A fortiori, anyone denying the possibility of making sense of the concept of an object would be refuted. Even if such a skeptic refrained from judging, the fact that I am now asserting things would prove him wrong.

Formulated linguistically, the objectivity argument is an argument against the possibility of a private language. A language is private if, and only if, it is a language that only its speaker (logically) can understand.<sup>12</sup> But if we show that all languages must contain terms purporting to designate objective entities, then publicly observable phenomena are not conceptually independent of the use of such terms. And if publicly observable phenomena are evidentially relevant to the use of such terms, then, since a term is understandable provided that it is empirically applicable, it must be possible for persons other than the speaker to understand such terms.

Again, the concept of an object is the concept of something that can be other than it seems to someone. But if all experiencers must be able to use such concepts and so have the appropriate words in their linguistic repertoire, then none of them could use a language in which what seemed to them was logically all that counted. But if something

to which others have access also counts, then it is possible for those others to understand the language as well, in which case the language is not a private language.

The argument as stated is not quite right. If two things count for understanding a language, where 'count' means 'is necessary,' and a man satisfies exactly one of them, then the man fails to understand the language. Consequently, if what seems to the speaker counts, then if the speaker has privileged access to this, no matter what else counts, something in his language is private. If the objectivity thesis is true, then some of the terms of every language must be non-private. It does not follow, however, that some proper subset of the language is not private. Hence, if part of a language is itself a language, then there must be private languages.

Strawson has a ready reply to this attempt at turning the tables. He will say that he never wished to argue that no language, that is, no set of terms and formation rules, can be private. He wants to establish that no coherent or self-sustaining language can be private. The private subset of the language envisioned above is incomprehensible in isolation, although when embedded within the language permitting talk about objects it makes sense. It is a consequence of the objectivity thesis that no non-parasitic private language is possible.

That my account of the overall structure of the objectivity

argument correctly instantiates a more generally employed method of Strawson's, can perhaps most clearly be seen by comparing the structure of his argument against Quine in 'Singular Terms, Ontology and Identity.'<sup>13</sup> There he argues against the possibility of a language containing no demonstrative, token-reflexive, or egocentric elements, a language in which no individuating, identifying references to things are made, by arguing that such a language would be one in which no reference to any particulars at all could be made.<sup>14</sup> Distinguishing the set of sentences containing singular terms and the set of sentences not containing singular terms, he objects, in a preliminary way, that 'there is simply no guarantee whatsoever that a description of the general logical character of the second set of sentences, which is an appropriate description so long as that set of sentences is considered in the context of a language which also contains the first set, remains an appropriate description when the set of sentences in question is deprived of this context.'<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, he intends to establish that 'it is impossible in principle that the language of the paraphrases should be interpreted as Quine and the rest of us interpret it, unless it is seen as a paraphrase-language, i.e. unless language also contains singular terms.'<sup>16</sup> And later he rhetorically asks "how the words 'treating an ostensibly learned word as a predicate true of the shown object' can be regarded as anything but an empty description in the



case of a language which contains no devices for making demonstrative references to objects."<sup>17</sup> Concerning Quine's notion of a language containing reference to particulars carried by the variables of quantification, but no reference by (the non-existent) singular terms, Strawson concludes that 'this description I have argued to be inadmissible.'<sup>18</sup>

Compare all this to one of Strawson's closing remarks concerning the objectivity argument in The Bounds of Sense.

Even in the face of the argument, we might still be tempted by the final objection that each one of us can perfectly well imagine a stretch of his own experience as being such as the sense-datum theorist describes, and hence can perfectly well conceive of a plurality of other similar stretches, not his own. What more could be required to demonstrate the possibility of an entire experience having, throughout the whole of its temporal extent, the character of such a stretch? And this is precisely the sense-datum theorist's conception of a possible experience. But of course it is not enough that, equipped with the conceptual resources that we are equipped with, we can form such a picture. What has to be shown is that the picture contains in itself the materials for the conception of itself as experience. What has been shown is that it does not.<sup>19</sup>

The strategies of both arguments conform to the account of Strawson's method I have offered.

As implied in the above quotation, the objectivity thesis and the thesis of the impossibility of a pure sense-datum experience are logically equivalent. A pure sense-datum experience is an experience of a man who, lacking object concepts, is unable to distinguish the order and arrangement of objects and the order and arrangement of his experiences of objects, is, in the terminology of Individuals,

a solipsistic consciousness.<sup>20</sup> But since the expression 'pure sense-datum experience' may be used in various ways, let us introduce the univocal term, 'purely inner experience,' and call any experience requiring the use of concepts but not the ability to use objectivity concepts a 'purely inner experience.'

Rorty identifies a pure sense-datum experience with the kind of experience which can be described solely by use of adjectival expressions or sensory concepts, requiring no substantives.<sup>21</sup> By 'substantive' Rorty sometimes means something like 'term designating a reidentifiable particular' and not merely 'singular term which purports to refer.' So understood, items such as sense data, which can be objects of reference but lack criteria of reidentification, cannot be the designata of substantives. Hence, so understood, it would seem that the kind of experience requiring no substantives would be a purely inner experience.

But a language without substantives in this sense need not be an exclusively adjectival language. Substantives and adjectives do not exhaust the elements of syntax. The sense-datum theorist can make use of non-sensory relational predicates, adverbs, and indexical expressions such as 'here,' 'now,' and 'this.' And sense data are legitimately the kind of egocentric particular picked out by the man's use of 'this.'

Rorty himself employs the weaker notion of 'substantive' when arguing that an experience using only concepts of sensory

qualities is impossible. To use a concept is to be able to make a judgment, which involves having a thought expressible by a complete sentence. But if one's resources consist exclusively of names for sensory qualities, one will not be able to construct a sentence. Substantives as well as adjectives are needed to form a judgment, since to understand a predicative expression and so possess the corresponding concept, one must know to what sort of thing the predicate is ascribable.<sup>22</sup>

We can discount two problematic features of Rorty's argument. First, there is the curious suggestion that adjectives are names of qualities. But the supposition of a Platonic, relational or 'Fido'--Fido theory of meaning is so antipathetical to Rorty's Wittgensteinian--Deweyan--Heideggerian philosophical temper, that I dismiss the suggestion as the result of unfortunate phraseology.<sup>23</sup> Second, he does seem to suppose that all the qualities designated by adjectives are sensory, as revealed in his move from the inadequacy of a language consisting only of terms for sensory concepts to the inadequacy of a language consisting only of adjectives. But this supposition is gratuitous; very many adjectives designate non-sensory qualities. To exclude these from the language is to be restrictive without reason.

The main difficulty with Rorty's argument, however, is that in the sense in which its conclusion might be true, the concept of a sense-datum or afterimage, the concept of an

entity whose being depends upon being perceived, is a suitable instance of a substantival concept. Consequently, the conclusion is not equivalent to the objectivity thesis. It is a very weak conclusion which the skeptic need not avoid. Rorty recognizes that additional argumentation is required to get to the objectivity thesis, and later maintains that even a language with both substantives and adjectives is impossible unless the speaker can interpret the substantives as names of objects.<sup>24</sup> The best route to this conclusion is Strawson's argument, which, having clarified his overall strategy, we are now in a position to examine.

#### IV

Strawson's argument begins with the fundamental thesis that experience is recognition of particular items as being of such and such a general kind -- the conceptualizability thesis. He identifies this with the Kantian claim that experience requires both concepts and intuitions. But, the argument proceeds, these acts of subsuming individuals under general concepts would not be possible unless they belonged to a single consciousness (unity of consciousness). And the diverse recognitional acts could not belong to a single consciousness unless it was possible for the agent to be conscious of the identity of that to which he ascribes these various acts, unless the agent was potentially aware of himself as having experience. But this possibility of self-



ascription of experiences (transcendental self-consciousness) implies the possibility of empirical knowledge of objects, conceived of as distinct from any particular states of awareness of them, which in turn implies the possibility of objectively valid judgments. This last possibility implies the existence of a 'rule-governed connectedness of perceptions which is reflected in our employment of empirical concepts of objects conceived of as possessing an order and arrangement of their own, distinct from the order and arrangement of the subject's experiences of awareness of them.'<sup>25</sup> Therefore, experience is possible only if our perceptions are connected according to rules, and objectivity concepts provide (or better, are) such rules.

Before evaluating the argument, I think we can simplify it. First, the unity of consciousness lemma which intervenes between the conceptualizability premise and the thesis of transcendental self-consciousness is, for Strawson, superfluous. In one place he explicitly says that the unity of consciousness statement only expresses a coherent thought when interpreted as the transcendental self-consciousness statement.<sup>26</sup> He provides no explanation for this obscure remark, but we may try the following support: Items do not belong to consciousness like stones in a heap; consciousness is active; and an activity requires an agent. Consequently, if diverse classificatory acts 'belong' to a single consciousness, there is an agent performing some activity with

respect to them, and the activity in question is that of being aware. And since, to repeat, an act requires an agent, if the agent is aware of his acts he is aware of himself as performing those acts.

I confess that this reasoning is strained; in fact, the final conditional claim is almost certainly false. Further, it proves too much. Neither Strawson nor Kant holds that a man has an experience only when he is actively aware of himself as having that experience. It is enough that he be potentially self-aware. But I do not want to tarry here, since I do not believe we can fully understand what Strawson is up to until we examine the inference from conceptualizability to this requirement for the possibility of self-ascription of experiences. In the meantime, let us uncritically follow the argument's author and delete the lemma concerning the unity of consciousness.

The second simplification results from the realization that, intrasystematically, the possibility of experience of objects, the possibility of objectively valid judgments, and the possession of objectivity concepts for organizing perceptions, are intended as expressions of the same thesis. To experience something as X is just to judge it to be an X, which involves the concept of X. Hence, to experience objects is just to make objectively valid judgments, which involves using objectivity concepts. Hence, to be able to experience objects is just to be able to make objectively

valid judgments, which involves the possession of objectivity concepts, since the possession of a concept is the ability to use it.

The simplified objectivity argument begins with the conceptualizability thesis, infers the truth of transcendental self-consciousness, and concludes with the objectivity thesis. That this is the crux of the matter is reflected in Strawson's final recapitulation of the chapter: 'Anything we could understand by a possible experience must be, potentially, the experience of a self-conscious subject and must therefore have the internal connectedness, carried by concepts of the objective, which is necessary to constitute it a single course of experience of an objective world.'<sup>27</sup>

The objectivity argument must show that transcendental self-consciousness, and so our very conception of experience, requires fulfillment of the objectivity condition. That objectivity concepts suffice for these things is irrelevant to the controversy. Yet Strawson sometimes talks as if all he has shown is the adequacy of the objectivity condition. For example, he says that transcendental self-consciousness means 'that experience must be such as to provide room for the thought of experience itself. The point of the objectivity-condition is that it provides room for this thought.'<sup>28</sup> Even in his lately quoted recapitulation it is not clear whether the required internal connectedness, carried by concepts of the objective, is exclusively carried by such concepts.

These statements notwithstanding, we must understand the argument as designed to establish the necessity, and not merely the sufficiency, of objectivity concepts for the possibility of any form experience we can make intelligible to ourselves. With this understanding, let us evaluate the argument.

The sole premise, the conceptualizability thesis, states that experience is recognition of particular items as being of such and such a general kind. This is tantamount to the claim that experiential judgment is subsumption of individuals under general concepts; that sentences used to make empirical statements have general terms or descriptive predicates predicated of (either affirmatively or negatively) the denotata of singular terms or referential expressions. It is assumed from the start that all experiencers possess particularity concepts, that all language users are able to use singular terms. What must be argued is that particularity requires objectivity, that individual concepts presuppose objectivity concepts, that we can use singular terms purportedly to refer to identifiables only if we can use them to intend to refer to reidentifiables.

Consequently, the notion of experience used in the premise cannot be the loaded one of experience of objects. If it were, the premise would be question-begging. Unfortunately, both Kant and Strawson are suspect on this count, and Kant at least sometimes is guilty as charged. In the objectivity



argument, however, Strawson is innocent. He follows Kant in explicating 'experience' as 'empirical knowledge,' but not in using 'experience' as elliptical for 'experience of objects.'

The crucial feature of the conceptualizability premise is that experience requires a 'recognitional component' or the use of concepts; where the recognitional component is further identified with the general or descriptive part of a judgment.<sup>29</sup> This component compares (or better, can compare, since there may be uniquely instantiated predicates) the particular designated by the referential part of the judgment with other particulars. The strategy is to show that the use of concepts entails the usability of the concept 'seems to me' or 'my experience,' which entails the usability of the concept 'is' or 'object.' Let us examine these moves in turn.

Is it true that any experiencer must be able to use the concept 'seems to me' or 'my experience'? Does the existence of a recognitional component in experience require the possibility of referring different experiences to one identical subject, the potential acknowledgement of the experience as one's own? Must experience provide room for the concept of itself as experience?

The fact that there are entities whose being depends upon being perceived provides Strawson with a path from conceptualizability to transcendental self-consciousness. He argues that in such cases, the item recognized does not exist

independently of the act of recognition. But experience requires the ability to discriminate between the recognitional component and the item recognized. Since the item recognized is the object of awareness, the recognitional component is the awareness itself. Hence, experience requires the ability to discriminate between the awareness and the object of awareness. Therefore, experience requires the ability to be aware that we are aware. We can experience mind-dependent entities for which there is no act-object distinction by being aware of our act of awareness; this self-awareness is the recognitional component in such experiences.<sup>30</sup> Since, as I suppose the argument might conclude, in all cases of experience there occur such subjective states, all experience requires the ability to be aware that we are aware; all consciousness requires potential self-consciousness. Alternatively, it might be continued that to experience an object requires objectivity concepts, which are concepts of things which can be other than they seem, and so which imply the ability to use subjective concepts; hence, in such cases it is unproblematic that we can be aware that we are aware. And since the anomalous cases were handled above, all instances of experience require potential self-awareness.

There are some illicit transitions infecting this line of reasoning which are symptomatic of a more pervasive failing of the objectivity argument. Throughout, we have allowed,

for the sake of argument, that experience requires concepts and language, and now we are to be shown that it requires the thought of itself as experience. The original premise of the argument stated that experience requires that there be a recognitional component. The foregoing, however, unwarrantedly assumes that experience requires that we can distinguish a recognitional component. At least this stronger claim is needed to show that experience must provide room for the concept 'experience,' which is Strawson's restatement of the thesis of transcendental self-consciousness.

But even this stronger premise is inadequate, indeed irrelevant, to establishing the desired conclusion by an argument of the sort under consideration. In the original premise the recognitional component was identified with a concept or ability to use a general term. Now, without any justification whatsoever, the recognitional component is identified with the subjective portion of experience, the act of awareness.<sup>31</sup> By transitivity of identity, the concept of something is identified with the awareness of it. But this identification is not only gratuitous, it begs part of the question as well. The premise talks of descriptive predicates and general concepts, the conclusion of second-order awareness. Simply to assume that concepts are awarenesses is to assume an important part of the conclusion.

It is interesting to note an ad hominem argument that can be used against Strawson's move here from 'items can

enter consciousness only if they are somehow classifiable' to 'items can enter consciousness only if they are classifiable as 'experiences' (only if we can be aware that we are experiencing them). In Individuals he argues that a condition of a non-solipsistic consciousness (one which can draw 'the-my-experience--the-object-of-my-experience' distinction) is possession of the concept of a reidentifiable particular. He then considers and rejects an argument for the truth of the converse, explaining that it seems as if no distinction between a personal and impersonal pronoun is needed, as if a personal pronoun is superfluous to the purpose of describing one's experiences of persisting objects.<sup>32</sup> The impersonal 'it is thought' may be substituted for the 'I think.' But here seems to be a form of experience which need not be aware of itself as having experience. Impersonal description suffices. Here is a case in which the argument's premise is true but the lemma requiring the possession of the concept 'my experience' is false. Therefore, on Strawson's own showing, the inference is invalid.

If my diagnosis is correct, the weight of Strawson's premise increases as follows. The project begins optimistically. The use of concepts, the making of judgments, is alleged to be essential to experience. It is then contended that someone lacking the concept 'my experience' lacks the means for making judgments, using concepts, and thus lacks experience. The project is challenged: For example, 'How do



you know whether a man is having an experience but just not saying? Perhaps there are ineffable experiences. Etc.'

The Strawsonian rejoins that he is concerned with describable or judgable experience, with forms of experience which can be coherently described. The reply is to condemn as absurd the suggestion that one could not have describable experience unless he understood what experience was. To foreclose this reply, the Strawsonian decides to restrict his attention to forms of experience which are aware of themselves as having experience, to self-conscious experiencers. But if this is the starting-point, we have started at the end. Strawson identifies describable and self-conscious experience; but this is a mistake.

A direct move to the objectivity thesis is invalidated by the same difficulties noted above. The need for a recognitional component, asserted by the premise, is supposed to rule out the possibility that all judgments are about sense data or entities whose esse is percipi, and so establish that some judgments are about objects, and hence that objectivity concepts are required. But sense-data judgments can have recognitional components and so satisfy the demands of the premise. Predicates such as 'redlike' are suitable instances of descriptive predicates. It is only the surreptitious identification of the recognitional component with the act of subjective awareness that makes the argument seem plausible. If 'recognitional component' is given this latter

sense, it obviously follows that the kind of objects which does not allow of the subjective awareness--independent object distinction cannot be the only objects of experience. But this is not the sense of the premise. Subjective judgments have a general component and a particular, referential component, and this is all that is needed for experiential judgments. Subjective judgments do lack the ground for distinguishing the subjective awareness of an object and the independent object itself, but this is not a requirement of experience. So a purely inner experiencer, one with the use of concepts but not the ability to use objectivity concepts, is not ruled out by Strawson's sole premise.

It may be that the existence of a general component (with comparative function) in judgments of experience requires the distinction between an experiencer and his experiences. Comparing is a species of relating, items are relatable only in a unified framework, and so, in the present case, a single experiencer must be distinguishable from the diverse experiences which are interrelated. But the experiencer--experiences distinction is not the same distinction as that between the portion of experience contributed by the experiencer and the portion contributed by the independent object. And as I have argued, only if it must be possible to distinguish within experience a part of experience due to the subject and a part due to the independent object does it follow that a purely inner experience is impossible. The

acceptable distinction does not imply the objectivity condition.

Consistent with his theory of metaphysical reasoning, Strawson may respond as follows: I admit that the experienter--experience distinction is different from the subjective awareness--independent object distinction. But the first distinction could be made only if the second could. Any language adequate to describing the existence of the first distinction must include terms like 'experience' and 'subject of experience.' But these terms would be unavailable if the speaker could not, within experience, distinguish what was due to the object and what was due to himself. The language describing the first distinction is parasitic upon a language describing the second. The language lacking the resources for making the second distinction is incoherent; consequently, the putative form of experience associated with it is impossible. The objectivity thesis is deducible from any coherent description of a possible experience. Since the sense datum language is incoherent, it is of no concern that it fails to entail the objectivity thesis.

Even if sound, all this argument would show is that the purely inner experienter is unable to describe, as we might, that his judgments contain general and particular components, or that he only experienced subjective states and not objective particulars.<sup>33</sup> The argument does not establish that such a man could not actually judge which experiences he was having at any one time, which ability is sufficient for experience.

The ability to describe or classify one's experiences is enough, by the argument's own starting-point;<sup>34</sup> one need not be able to classify them as 'experiences.' So at best Strawson's objectivity argument shows that inner experiencers are unable to do the philosophy of their own situation.

In sum, we have been given no reason to believe that there could not be a language (i) not employing objectivity concepts, (ii) usable by itself, but (iii) describable only by means of a richer language with objectivity concepts. It has not been shown that any subject of experience we can make intelligible to ourselves must be a user of objectivity concepts, though it is true that to make it so intelligible to ourselves we must use such concepts. But that is trivial, since we are drawing the object-subject distinction in describing the experience. Therefore, the possibility of experience has not been shown to entail the ability to use objectivity concepts.

## V

The limitations of the objectivity argument can be generalized to Strawson's entire method of metaphysical reasoning. Transcendental arguments are typically construed as arguments showing the deductive consequences of the possibility of experience (or, for some, the presuppositions of the possibility of experience, where presupposition is a different relation from that of deductive consequence).



Strawsonian transcendental arguments articulate the analytic implications of any experience we are able to describe, the invariant features of our conception of experience. But if something is entailed by the fact that we can conceive of a possible experience but not by the nature of possible experience itself, there is no reason to suppose it is true in all worlds in which there is experience.

This Strawsonian method of articulating the subjective conditions of thought so far as we can describe it, that is, the conditions of our description of thought, is the method characterized as 'descriptive metaphysics' in Individuals. The main argumentation of Individuals is an instance of this method which I have tried to elucidate, except there objectivity is assumed and spatiality is deduced. The question is this: What are the conditions of the possibility of identifying thought about objective particulars? Could a non-spatial scheme provide for objective particulars, so that material bodies need not be the basic particulars of any scheme capable of making identifications and reidentifications?

Strawson argues that directly locatable particulars which are or possess material bodies are, from the point of view of identification, the 'basic' particulars of our conceptual scheme. A class of particulars is 'basic' if, and only if, it is possible to make identifying references to particulars of other classes (those classes of particulars

to which we do in fact identifyingly refer) only if we make identifying references to particulars of it, but not conversely.<sup>35</sup> The class of directly locatable particulars which are or possess material bodies, and only this class, satisfies the criterion of basicness. Therefore, these are the basic particulars of our conceptual scheme.

So far, the overall method of argumentation parallels the method of parasitism. The talk of identification of a type of particular without dependence on particulars of other types corresponds exactly to the talk of recognizing a type of particular within a non-parasitic or coherent language. But I want to study and develop some details of the argument, both to better appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the method, and to discover whether any of its instances are correct.

Relativizing the notion of identificational basicness, let us say that Xs are identifyingly prior to Ys for a person S if, and only if, S could not identify things of kind Y without reference to things of kind X, but not conversely. And Xs are reidentifyingly prior to Ys for S if, and only if, the reidentification criteria for things of kind Y turn in part on the identities of Xs, but the reidentification criteria for Xs do not turn on the identities of particulars of kind Y. Mirroring in simplified form our discussion of self-sustaining languages, let us say that X is conceptually prior to Y for S, just in case S could not grasp the concept

Y (use the word 'Y' or some synonym or translation) without grasping the concept X, but not conversely. Finally, let us say that Xs are epistemologically prior to Ys for S, provided that if S did not know that things of kind X existed, he could not know that things of kind Y existed, but if S did not know that things of kind Y existed, he might still know that things of kind X existed.

Strawson seems to argue that identificational priority implies conceptual priority, and then, at first blush, that identificational priority implies some sort of ontological priority. In support of his claim that material bodies alone satisfy the criterion of identificational basicness (that material bodies are identificationally prior to all other kinds of particulars), he argues that if some sorts of particulars, Y, are in some general way asymmetrically dependent on the identification of particulars of another sort, X, then it would be a general characteristic of our conceptual scheme that the ability to talk about Ys at all is dependent on the ability to talk about Xs, but not conversely.<sup>36</sup> If Xs are identificationally prior to Ys, then Xs are conceptually prior to Ys. He then adduces considerations such as the following: The admission into our discourse of the range of particulars, births, conceived as we conceive them, does require the admission into our discourse of the range of particulars, animals, conceived as we conceive them, but not conversely. Hence, 'animal' is conceptually prior to 'birth.'

Therefore, animals are identificationally prior to births.  
 Therefore, animals are, in some sense, ontologically prior  
 to births.<sup>37</sup>

This argument fallaciously affirms the consequent. The easiest emendation would be to change the major premise to its converse -- conceptual priority implies identificational priority. But this seems to conflict with Strawson's stated enterprise of seeking the conditions of the possibility of identification (and reidentification) of objective particulars. It seems as if truths about procedures of identification should serve as premises of the argument. On the other hand, I noted that the argument of Individuals assumes the truth of the objectivity thesis. This is tantamount to assuming that concepts of objective particulars are conceptually basic (no other concepts are conceptually prior to object concepts). The argument of Individuals could then be most sympathetically viewed as an effort to establish the inferences from the conceptual basicness of objectivity concepts to the conceptual basicness specifically of physical object concepts to the identificational basicness of physical objects.

What of Strawson's apparent imputation of ontological force to the claim of identificational basicness? Both Bergmann and Leclerc have interpreted Strawson as mistakenly supposing that the hierarchy of communicating is the hierarchy of being.<sup>38</sup> Evidence that Strawson moves from talk about language to talk about the world includes his opening remark



that one way of saying 'we think of the world as containing objective particulars' is 'our ontology comprises objective particulars';<sup>39</sup> his claim, 'That it should be possible to identify particulars of a given type seems a necessary condition of the inclusion of that type in our ontology', and his inferences from identifiability-dependence of types to truths about ontological types;<sup>40</sup> and his argument in the final chapter that appearing as a logical subject is not a sure mark of being an individual.

Usually, philosophers regard the ontologically basic entities, or substances, either to be those which are simple and can only be named, but not analyzed, or <sup>to be</sup> those which exist independently. On the first test, material objects are not, on Strawson's own showing, ontologically basic. For him, all names of locatable particulars with which we are not presently acquainted are complex; reference to all such items requires the backing of some set of descriptions. Since the perceptually absent members of the class of material bodies are non-simple, it would be entirely gratuitous to assign privileged ontological status to the perceptually present members of that class.

It is difficult to provide an analysis of the locution 'exists independently' as used in the second test of ontological basicness. The most natural candidate confers ontological basicness on all and only those things which exist in all worlds in which anything exists. (Relativizing, Xs

would be ontologically prior to Ys if, and only if, Ys could not exist unless Xs did, but not conversely.) If, however, it is, as some have claimed, a necessary truth that something exists, then it would be a necessary truth that the ontologically basic entities existed. Ontologically basic entities would exist in all possible worlds. But then, one might conclude, the distinction between ontology and logic would be obliterated (given that in a possible worlds semantics, logical truth is also defined as truth in all possible worlds).

But why should we blame the account of basicness for this, perhaps overbold, conclusion? The troublemaker is the renunciation of empty worlds. After all, if particulars and universals most generically exhaust the ontological categories, all particulars are either subjective or objective, and independent argument showed that objective particulars were ontologically basic, then, if we further accept the thesis that something or other must exist, we should not balk at the conclusion that objective particulars exist necessarily. It is not as if we wish to preserve the possibility that subjective particulars could exist in the absence of objective particulars -- it is the goal of the dissertation to rule out this possibility. So if all particulars are either subjective or objective, and every possible world contains at least one particular, then objective particulars must exist.

Unfortunately, the preceding argument suffers from an

unsupported shift from 'something must exist' to 'some particular must exist.' It does not preclude an exclusive world of abstract entities. In fact, since abstract entities reputedly exist in all possible worlds, objective particulars could not, according to the proffered definition of 'ontological basicness,' be the only ontologically basic entities. So the account of basicness does contribute to the trouble. No one thinks Platonic realism compromises the autonomy of metaphysics.

The source of difficulty is the generality of the account of basicness. Ontological basicness was to be a consequence of identificational basicness. But identificational dependencies obtained between classes of particulars only. Non-particulars do not exhibit a dependence on particulars as non-basic particulars do with respect to basic particulars.<sup>41</sup> So any thesis concerning ontological priority ascribable to Strawson must be restricted to types of particulars

Whatever 'exists independently' means, it has something to do with the way the world is. Now suppose it is true that, relative to our conceptual scheme, the class of material bodies, and only that class, satisfies the criterion of identificational basicness. Can we infer from the fact that the identifiability of Ys depends on reference to Xs, that such identifiability also depends on the existence of Xs? And does Strawson believe we can? Or is Strawson more conservatively concerned to establish an implicative relation between iden-

tificational priority (basicness) and priority (basicness) of ontic commitment? Or is the introduction of ontic commitment a spurious complication? These are the conspicuous questions at this juncture.

After all, the evidence that Strawson moves from claims about language to claims about the world is shamefully weak. It is true that in the cited passages he talks about the constitution of, and conditions for inclusion in, our ontology. But elsewhere he identifies an ontology with a conceptual scheme, and in still another place he explicitly disavows claims to primary existence, sole reality, or reducibility (while suggesting that identificational basicness may underlie these more powerful claims).<sup>42</sup>

And why do we think he is arguing from identificational priority to (the unexplained) priority of ontic commitment? Well, Strawson said that, relative to our conceptual scheme, we can talk about births only if we can talk about animals, but not conversely. Supposing that the inference from conceptual to identificational dependence is warranted, it follows that we can identify births only by reference to animals, but, even though being an animal entails being born, we can identify animals without reference to births. Strawson says, 'We can paraphrase one entailment ('This is an animal' entails 'There is some birth which is the birth of this' paraphrased as 'This is an animal' entails 'This was born') so as to eliminate what logicians might call quantification over births;



but we cannot paraphrase the other ('This is a birth' entails 'There is an animal of which this is the birth') so as to eliminate quantification over animals.<sup>43</sup>

Construing 'we can eliminate quantification over births' as 'we are not compelled to hypostatize births' or 'we need not be ontically committed to births,' we generalize, arguing that, since we can eliminate quantification over all but the identificationally basic entities, we need not reify anything identificationally dependent. In particular, we attribute to Strawson the conclusion that we need not be ontically committed to anything but material bodies (and persons). But the notion of priority of ontic commitment here is trivially equivalent to the notion of identificational priority, so that any arguments from the one to the other would be otiose. On the Russell-Quine view, commitment is carried by the quantified variables (function-satisfiers, for Russell) of the canonical language because this happens to be the referential apparatus of the language. And so the general point would be that we need not countenance the existence of anything we need not refer to. One can say what needs saying by picking out other referents. But identificational dependents are just those things we need not refer to. Therefore, to say that the variables of the canonical language must range over Xs is just to say in a particular, theory-laden way, that Xs are identificationally basic.

So compromise talk of ontic commitment is vacuous. The

issue again boils down to whether we can infer from the fact that the identifiability of Ys depends on reference to Xs, that such identifiability also depends on the existence of Xs. The inference is invalid unless we add the premise that we can refer to Xs only if Xs exist. The truth of this premise is a controversial question; in chapter III I shall urge its falsity. And Strawson's own theory of reference is too complex to pursue here. But let these two points suffice. If Strawson accepts the premise, then Bergmann's and Leclerc's interpretation of his enterprise is correct. And although there is massive prima facie evidence for acceptance -- claims that a necessary condition of speaker-hearer identifying reference to a particular is the existence of that particular,<sup>44</sup> that expressions functioning in the referring role presuppose the empirical fact of existence,<sup>45</sup> and so on<sup>46</sup> -- I shall express my unargued, but arguable belief that he rejects the premise, happy to remain on the level of identificational and conceptual dependencies.

Finally, if we could argue from conceptual priority to epistemological priority, an important link to the anti-skeptical conclusion would be established. Then, if the objectivity thesis could be proved, we could directly infer the impossibility of knowing subjective states but not objective particulars. The best argument I can think of fails: Knowledge requires judgment and judgment requires the use of concepts. Hence, if you could not use various concepts

unless you could use X-concepts, you could not make the various, corresponding judgments or knowledge-claims unless you could make judgments about Xs, and so could not know that the various things in question existed unless you knew that Xs existed. The final inference is fallacious; what follows is only that you could not know that the various things in question existed unless you could make judgments about Xs. Knowledge is not required.

## VI

In the last section I have tried to show that instances of the method of parasitism, or descriptive metaphysical variations on that method, to be found in Individuals, are defective. Of course it does not follow that the method itself is faulty. Are there in Individuals arguments in favor of the method? In chapter 2 Strawson considers whether the conditions of a non-solipsistic consciousness can be satisfied in a purely auditory universe.<sup>47</sup> By replacing occurrences of 'auditory particular' with the schematic 'E-particular,' I think we can here find a candidate for a general argument in support of parasitism.

The argument goes as follows: (1) Necessarily, if a man S's E-experience (experience of Es) is such that he can make sense of the distinction between himself and his states, and something other, then S's experienced world contains reidentifiable E-particulars, since the existence of Es is then

logically independent of the existence of one's states or self, so that for any such scheme it is logically possible that Es should exist whether or not they were being observed.

(2) It would not make sense to say there logically could be reidentifiable particulars in a purely E-world (a world with only Es in it) unless criteria of reidentification can be framed in purely E-terms (exclusively in terms of E-expressions). Hence, (3) the conditions of an act--object consciousness can be satisfied in an E-world only if we can describe in purely E-terms criteria for reidentification of E-particulars.

Premise (1) is not an instance of any true, general principle such as: Necessarily, if S can within experience make sense of the X--Y distinction, then the existence of Ys is logically independent of the existence of Xs, so that for S's scheme it is logically possible that Ys exist whether or not accompanied by Xs. The classical distinction between ens rationis and ens reale is useful here. For example, we can mentally abstract at least some properties from the individual things which instantiate them, but such properties cannot exist separately.<sup>48</sup> This particular instance aside, it certainly seems to be generally false that just because a distinction is meaningful to a man, the relata of the distinction can exist apart. The contradictory view is much like the conceivability--possibility entailment I criticized in section II of this chapter.



It may be urged that the kind of premise which would be justified by such a strong general principle is unneeded. Since parasitism arguments are intended to establish truths about how we must think, perhaps what we desire here is the claim that if the X--Y distinction makes sense to S, then S must think of the world as containing Ys that can exist independently of Xs. But even this is too strong. The person--states of a person distinction makes sense to Strawson, but Strawson rejects a view of the world in which states can exist independently of persons. Hence, Strawson need not think of the world as containing mental states that can exist independently of persons, even though he can make sense of the person--states of a person distinction.

What about a weakened conditional premise the consequent of which states merely that S must be able to think of the world as containing Ys that can exist independently of Xs? We might provide a reading for the antecedent, 'the X--Y distinction makes sense to S,' so as to render the conditional tautologous. But if 'makes sense' simply means 'is understood,' the premise is problematic. Again, given Strawson's own theory of persons, it is false. Strawson finds it inconceivable that mental states are independently reidentifiable. In chapter 3 of Individuals he argues that particular states of consciousness cannot be identifyingly referred to except as the states of some identified person. In fact, one of the main contentions of the book is that the minimum

conditions of independent identifiability for a type of particular is that its members be neither private nor unobservable.

Still more decisively, in our conceptual scheme, states of consciousness cannot exist independently. Therefore, they cannot be independently identifiable. But conceptual priority implies identificational priority. Therefore, we cannot think of the world as containing states of consciousness existing at a time at which no person exists. If the first premise of Strawson's argument were true, it would follow that we cannot make sense of the distinction between a person and his mental states. But we can. Therefore, the first premise of the argument is false.

If we reject the idea that (1) is justified by appeal to a more general principle, and if we give a stronger reading to its antecedent, it seems that we can escape the above criticism. Let us read (1) as stating that, necessarily, if S can, solely on the basis of his experience of Es, understand the subject--object distinction, then the Es S experiences are reidentifiable (and so existentially independent). The above criticism starts with the supposition that S understands the person--state of a person distinction. But it fails to delineate the genesis of this ability. So if, for example, S has use for the distinction even though he has experienced only persons, all that follows is that persons are reidentifiable particulars, which is as Strawson

wishes it.

The reformulated premise (1) remains problematic, since earlier I argued that the sense-datum theorist, who experiences only sense data, can understand the difference between himself and what he is at any given moment being presented with (though not the difference between that part of experience determined by him and that part determined by the independent object). Yet sense data are not reidentifiable; they lack existential independence. I can adduce no considerations additional to those offered earlier, so let us proceed to examine premise (2).

Premise (2) states that it would not make sense to say there could be reidentifiable particulars in a purely E-world unless criteria of reidentification can be framed in purely E-terms. For whom would it not make sense -- us or the E-experiencer? Clearly not for us. For example, it would make sense for us to say there could be objective particulars in a pure sense-datum world even though the (our) criteria for reidentifying objective particulars cannot be framed in a pure sense-datum language. We formulate the criteria in our conceptually richer language.

The insight is supposed to be that if there are reidentifiables in a world with only Es, so Es must be them, then the criteria for reidentifying these items must be formulated with exclusive use of expressions about Es. What is supposed to be impossible is that a purely E-experiencer, an inhabitant



of a world in which all things are conceived to be Es, sensibly say there could be reidentifiable, hence existentially independent, E-particulars, by appeal to a criterion formulated in some language some of the terms of which purport to designate particulars which are not E-particulars.

If we lose sight of other features of Strawson's theory, this premise might appear controversial. It might be construed as saying that a man who thinks that Es are all there is cannot, by appeal to a test formulated partially or wholly in non-E terms, judge whether he is observing a different E from the one he observed previously, or observing the same E again. But suppose someone thinks that sensible macro-entities are the only things that exist, yet allows that atomic micro-entities are convenient constructs. Such a person might meaningfully formulate a principle of macro-entity identity over time in terms of these theoretical constructs. If so, the premise seems to be falsified.

On a better interpretation, premise (2) is trivially true. If a man conceives everything to be an E, then all his individual concepts are E-concepts and, for Strawson, all the referential terms of his language are E-terms. It follows that such a man could not meaningfully formulate a principle by use of a sentence including non-E terms. Such terms are empty vocables or concatenations of letters for him.

So, (1) necessarily, if S is a purely E-experiencer who understands the subject-object distinction, then Es are for



him reidentifiable; and (2) if S can reidentify these Es, then the principle by which he does so must be formulable within his own, pure E-language. By transitivity of implication one may conclude that (3') if S is a purely E-experiencer who understands the subject--object distinction, then S can formulate criteria of reidentity of Es in his own language. Strawson concludes that (3) if S is a purely E-experiencer who understands the subject--object distinction, then we can describe criteria for reidentifying Es in exclusively E-terms. If (3'), then (3), since, according to Strawson, if someone can formulate a criterion, we can describe it. Analogous to his earlier affirmed thesis that all possible forms of experience are coherently describable and so describable by us, we now have the principle that all formulable criteria of reidentity are describable by us.

One might object that conceptually and epistemologically privileged beings cannot be ruled out a priori, and there is no reason to believe that we could describe the relevant linguistic (conceptual) activity of such beings. In fact, given the restricted abilities of creatures conceptually inferior to us, we have good reason to disbelieve we could describe such activity. To undermine this criticism, we could restrict the range of E-experiencers to exclude conceptually superior beings, noting that such a qualified Strawsonian argument is interesting enough.

It is doubtful that the point of the criticism is really

undermined. If we take seriously the essential role of conceptual schemes in interpreting reality, then we will allow the possibility of our inability to describe the criteria of reidentity of even conceptually primitive people. If, on the other hand, 'conceptual inferiority' simply means 'having some proper subset of the conceptual resources of the standard (us),' then the criticism is parried.

In sum, premise (2) and the inference from (3') to (3) may be exonerated, but premise (1) remains guilty. But even if (1) were true, it would be unsuitable support for the kind of anti-skeptical parasitism arguments we have been considering. Its antecedent is satisfied provided that someone both experiences only Es and makes sense of the subject--object distinction. But if someone understands the subject--object distinction, he has the concept of an object. But Strawson's anti-skeptical arguments are supposed to prove that object concepts are indispensable. Those arguments tried to show that certain kinds of pure experiencers are impossible since the description of such experiencers is incoherent, since the description requires the ability to use concepts (words) other than those accessible to the pure experiencer himself. For example, experience of just sense data was argued to be impossible on the grounds that the description of such an experience required objectivity concepts, but that, ex hypothesi, the sense-data experiencer lacked those concepts. On the contrary, the present argument assumes that all the pure

experiencers with which it is concerned possess those concepts. So what first appeared to be Strawson's best general argument in favor of the anti-skeptical parasitic method turns out to be an ignoratio elenchi.

## VII

In this section I shall evaluate Strawson's well-known argument that the skeptical assertion that we can never know that objects persist through time has a self-refuting denial, and draw my most general and powerful conclusions in criticism of Strawson's method. The skeptic asserts that we can never know for certain that the various 'distinct' existences which we immediately apprehend are numerically identical, that objects persist through time. Roughly, Strawson argues that since existents must be compared, comparison requires relation (the existents must be brought within the same frame of reference), and such relation requires the existence of some relatively stable objects maintaining their identity over time, the skeptic's assertion guarantees the truth of what he professes to deny.<sup>49</sup>

So far as I can see, the anti-skeptical argument of Individuals just amounts to saying that the skeptic cannot both agree and disagree with us, cannot accept our conceptual scheme which allows for reidentification of objects and then always doubt or deny particular-identity claims about objects. This is where descriptive metaphysics rears its head. We do



have, says Strawson, the idea of a single spatiotemporal system of material objects. A condition of having this scheme is the unquestioning acceptance of particular identity in at least some cases of non-continuous observation.

Strawson claims that the skeptic 'pretends to accept a conceptual scheme, but at the same time quietly rejects one of the conditions of its employment.'<sup>50</sup> He says that the skeptic's doubts are unreal since they amount to the rejection of the whole scheme within which such doubts makes sense. This is so because a unified framework of identification encompassing distinct observation situations is required in order even to sensibly raise the question of particular identity over time, which in turn requires the existence of 'satisfiable and commonly satisfied' criteria for the identity of at least some items in various 'subsystems' (that is, frameworks of present, continuous observation). Since he holds that the fundamental topological properties of a framework must have their analogue in the features of the reidentifiable particulars, he concludes that the skeptic cannot legitimately doubt or deny the existence of these analogue particulars, which are material bodies.

First, the final stage of this argument is untenable. It requires that the salient topological properties of a framework have their analogue in the reidentifiable particulars housed by this framework. But the locational relations between the particulars, and not the dimensions of the



particulars themselves, are to be correlated with the number of dimensions of the framework in which they are located.<sup>51</sup> So, for example, the establishment of a three-dimensional framework does not entail the existence of three-dimensional reidentifiable particulars. Perhaps more strikingly, the assumption of a four-dimensional spatiotemporal framework does not commit one to the existence of space-time worms in supersession of three-dimensional material bodies.

Second, and more generally, Strawson fails to realize that the skeptic need not deny the actuality of our practices. The skeptical question is one of justification. And so you cannot refute the skeptic about some proposition *p* by arguing that if not-*p*, then not possibly *h*, where *h* describes various (perhaps habitual) practices we share. The question is whether we ever justifiably engage in *h*.

In particular, Strawson tells us that the skeptic pretends to accept a scheme which he really quietly rejects. But the skeptic's activities are neither surreptitious nor illicit. In rejecting the scheme in which objective particulars exist, the skeptic is not denying that it can be used. Upon entering the debate and formulating his philosophical views, he himself may openly use such a scheme. But he is using concepts which he thinks may be unnecessary for describable experience, and which he thinks are employed without rational credentials. His view is not that we cannot use objectivity concepts. We often do. But their designata

cannot be shown to be better than fictions.

We can gain perspective by comparing three levels of argument. We can articulate the subjective conditions of experience, thought, or judgment, that is, show which concepts are indispensable for thought or judging to be possible. This has some anti-skeptical bite. It shows that the referents of the concepts in question are not merely useful fictions. But, for all such an argument shows, they may still be fictions, even if indispensable ones. Natural beliefs, indispensable elements in our mental makeup, need not be rationally defensible. We may call this procedure a 'metaphysical deduction' of such concepts; Kant thought this task was accomplished by his Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories. A transcendental deduction is needed to show, as Kant puts it, 'that subjective conditions of thought have objective validity,'<sup>52</sup> that is, that the concepts everyone must use in order to make judgments are rightfully or justifiably so used.

Strawson's method, articulating the subjective conditions of thought so far as we can describe it, that is, the conditions of our description of thought (the descriptive metaphysical method), is the weakest enterprise of all, and misguided as a response to epistemological solipsism. Strawsonian transcendental arguments, parasitism arguments, are regressive or analytical like Kant's argument of the Prolegomena. They assume the general structure of our conceptual

scheme and beg questions of justification. This misdirected focus on the questio facti and neglect of the questio juris makes Strawson's an inappropriate response to the skeptical thesis.

But we have not only discovered the method's unsuitability. Evaluation of the objectivity argument showed that the sorts of results which the method possibly could issue in are completely trivial. That any self-conscious experienter, or self-describing language-user, must be a user of the concept 'my experience,' or 'my language-use' (from which we try to elicit objectivity concepts), is absolutely trivial. The conceptual needs of the self-reflective epistemologist are not the same as those of the minimally inquisitive experienter; yet the latter is a conscious, judging agent nonetheless. Metaphilosophy is not the weapon to compel the solipsist's surrender.

And in this metaphilosophical task, descriptive metaphysics is no better off than revisionary metaphysics. For the structure of human thinking is either prereflective or not. If it is, then the descriptive metaphysician, in revealing and describing this structure, must also be helping to create it. If it is not, thinking must start with categorical presuppositions, must operate on a level which is already philosophical. In neither case can it be immune to attack on the level of revisionary metaphysics.

And it does not follow from the fact that the structure



of human thinking is prereflective, that the categorial structure is specifically determined in advance, any more than it follows from the fact that I ordinarily talk about the world by using spatial, temporal, causal and mental concepts, that I am committed to any particular analysis of these concepts.<sup>53</sup> So specific conclusions about our view of the world, based on the mere study of language in use, is also unwarranted.

Finally, not only is the Strawsonian method unsuitable to our project and its potential results uninformative, it is questionable whether it can establish any conclusions concerning the possibility of experience. Even if concept C is parasitic upon concept C', it does not follow that experiencing Cs presupposes the ability to experience C's; although to experience Cs as Cs requires the grasp of C' (or the ability to use 'C'' or some other word synonymous with, or a translation of, it), Cs may be experienced under some other coextensional but not cointensional description not requiring the grasp of C'. So, for example, even if experiencing my subjective states as 'states' requires the ability to use objectivity concepts, those states may be experienced under another description, such as 'redlike and roundlike,' which does not entail the ability to use objectivity concepts.

I see no redemptive attraction in following Strawson's path. Hampshire, whose method is very much like Strawson's, sums up the fundamental strategy by arguing that a language



which we cannot imagine being used is not a language, and that the sort of language we can imagine being used is determined by the language we ourselves use, so that we can fairly infer from features of our own language to features of anything that we shall ever describe as a 'language' (and so allow as a possible form of experience).<sup>54</sup> My ability to envisage alternatives, my capacity for thought-experiment, is obviously limited by my present conceptual and attitudinal equipment, and so depends on my present conceptual scheme. But it cannot be assumed that the structure of the scheme is non-contingent. And metaphysical possibility should not be relativized to the actual world. And since, as Gombrich has shown,<sup>55</sup> conceptual apparatus creates expectation, and expectation creates illusion, Strawsonian transcendental argumentation seems to me an unsanctionable way of doing metaphysics.

## NOTES

## CHAPTER II

1. P.F. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1966), pp. 98-111.
2. See P.F. Strawson, 'On Referring,' Mind, 59 (1950): 320-344, reprinted in Essays in Conceptual Analysis, ed. Antony Flew (London: Macmillan, 1956), pp. 21-52. See p. 29. Also reprinted in Contemporary Readings in Logical Theory, eds. Irving M. Copi and James A. Gould (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 105-127. Robert Price, 'Descriptive Metaphysics, Chinese, and the Oxford Common Room,' Mind (1964): 106-110, makes use of this distinction in trying to defend Strawson's descriptive metaphysics against language-relativists.
3. Strawson, Individuals, p. 16.
4. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, pp. 15, 44, 72, and 86. Cf. p. 114.
5. Ibid., p. 114. Concepts require empirical criteria of application.
6. Ibid., pp. 20, 25, 47, 72, 100, and 117, especially 100.
7. Richard Rorty, 'Strawson's Objectivity Argument,' The Review of Metaphysics, XXIV, 2 (December, 1970): 231.
8. As Hume put it, 'to form a clear idea of any thing, is an undeniable argument for its possibility, and is alone a refutation of any pretended demonstration against it.' See Treatise, p. 89. Hume identified the clearly conceivable with the imaginable, and affirmed the equivalence of the imaginable and the logically possible. For evidence, see Treatise, pp. 32, 43, 29, and 80. Arguments from conceivability have played, and continue to play, an important role in philosophy.
9. We should really distinguish conceivability and imaginability. Being able to produce imagery is not necessary to conceiving the truth of a proposition. For example, we can conceive but not imagine there being creatures inhabiting other galaxies unlike anything that we can imagine. So we can conceive propositions the associated states of affairs of which we cannot imagine.
10. William Kneale, Probability and Induction (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), pp. 79-80.
11. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, p. 110.

12. See John Turk Saunders and Richard Henze, The Private-Language Problem (New York: Random House, 1967).
13. Strawson, 'Singular Terms, Ontology and Identity,' The argument itself is summarized by Strawson on p. 446 as follows: 'Some universal terms must be connected with our experience if any are to be understood. And these universal terms must be connected with particular bits or slices of our experience. Hence, if they are to be learnt as predicates of particulars, they must be learnt as predicates of demonstratively identified particulars. But no meaning can be attached to the idea of their being learnt as predicates of demonstratively identified particulars unless the language contains expressions used for making demonstratively identifying references to particulars, i.e. unless it contains singular terms for particulars. If this condition is not fulfilled, there is no place for the general notion of predicating something of a particular and hence no place for the general notion of referring to a particular.'
14. Ibid., pp. 445, 447, and 451. This argument has no bearing on the one concerning us about the need for reference to reidentifiable particulars. Strawson's result here is assumed by the objectivity argument.
15. Ibid., p. 435. My underlining.
16. Ibid., pp. 436-437.
17. Ibid., p. 447.
18. Ibid., p. 448.
19. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, p. 109. Compare our answer to Rorty's criticism in section II.
20. Ibid., p. 99.
21. Rorty, 'Strawson's Objectivity Argument,' pp. 219-220.
22. Ibid., pp. 219-220.
23. The 'Fido'--Fido' epithet is Gilbert Ryle's, in his 'Discussion -- Meaning and Necessity,' Philosophy, XXIV (1949), 69-76. Sellars, for example, has powerfully argued that semantic statements are non-relational (in any but a purely grammatical sense); that predicates are not names at all. See especially his 'Empiricism and Abstract Entities,' in The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap, ed. P.A. Schilpp (La Salle: Open Court, 1963), pp. 431-468.



24. Rorty, 'Strawson's Objectivity Argument,' p. 233.
25. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, p. 98.
26. Ibid., p. 111. Cf. Kant, B134.
27. Ibid., p. 114.
28. Ibid., p. 107.
29. It is curious that Strawson chooses the term 'recognitional component.' Geach, who shares Strawson's anti-Lockean-abstractionist view of concept acquisition and use (following Wittgenstein), asserts that 'having a concept never means being able to recognize some feature we have found in direct experience; the mind makes concepts, and this concept-formation and the subsequent use of the concepts formed is never a mere recognition or finding....not a picking out (of) the feature I am interested in from among other features given simultaneously.' See Geach's Mental Acts (New York: Humanities Press, 1957), p. 40.
30. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, pp. 100-101. The argument is presented clearly, for slightly different purposes, by Rorty, pp. 216-218.
31. As successfully argued by Ross Harrison, 'Strawson on Outer Objects,' Philosophical Quarterly, 20 (July, 1970): 213-221. See especially 216-217. The shift becomes evident in Strawson on p. 101, when he explains that the recognitional component requires potential acknowledgment of experience as one's own. There is no reason to think this potentiality is needed to save the general term or concept from 'absorption' into the 'item recognized' (the object of reference or topic of judgment).
32. Strawson, Individuals, pp. 81-84. Notice that since Strawson also argues that if one has no concept of other persons, one has no concept of persons and so no concept of myself or my experience, then, if the concept of my experience is necessary for me to have any experience or do any judging at all, it follows that possession of the concept of other persons is necessary for experience or judging. A man can have conscious experience only if he has, not only some objectivity concepts or other, but the concept of other persons. If one could prove this conclusion false, then, if the ascribability argument (so called by Saunders and Henze, chapter 4) is sound, it follows that the objectivity argument is unsound.



33. Harrison, pp. 219-220.
34. Strawson, The Bounds of Sense, p. 20.
35. Strawson, Individuals, pp. 38-39.
36. Ibid., p. 17.
37. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
38. Gustav Bergmann, 'Strawson's Ontology,' The Journal of Philosophy, LVII, 19 (September 15, 1960): 601-622.  
Ivor Leclerc, 'Individuals,' Philosophy, XXXVIII, 143 (January, 1963): 20-39.
39. Strawson, Individuals, p. 15; and see pp. 119 and 247.
40. Ibid., p. 16; and throughout.
41. Nancy D. Simco makes this point in 'Strawson's Ontology in Individuals,' The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 9, 4 (Winter, 1971): 423-432.
42. Strawson, Individuals, pp. 119 and 59.
43. Ibid., p. 52.
44. Ibid., pp. 181 and 183.
45. Ibid., pp. 227, 228 and 236.
46. Ibid., pp. 237-239. See also 'On Referring.'
47. Ibid., see p. 72.
48. Or so I would argue. There are some who hold that properties can exist separately. Also, an anti-abstractionist such as Berkeley would hold that the idea of X is abstractable from the idea of Y if, and only if, it is possible that X exists unaccompanied by Y, which, for Berkeley himself, is when and only when it is possible that X is perceived at some time and Y is not perceived at that time, accompanying X. See The Principles of Human Knowledge, Introduction, sections 10 and 5.
49. Strawson, Individuals, p. 35.
50. Ibid., p. 35.
51. B.A. Brody, 'On the Ontological Priority of Physical Objects,' Nous, V, 2 (May, 1971): 155.

52. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, B122.
53. These points are made by Derek A. McDougall, "'Descriptive' and 'Revisionary' Metaphysics," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XXXIX, 2 (December, 1973): 209-223.
54. Hampshire, pp. 66-67. I add the parenthetical tie with experience for continuity. All of chapter 1 of Hampshire's book well exhibits his methodology. T.E. Wilkerson, 'Transcendental Arguments,' The Philosophical Quarterly, 20 (July, 1970): 200-212, shares this procedural procedural proclivity as well.
55. E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1960). See p. 204, for example.

### CHAPTER III

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ANTI-SKEPTICAL RESOURCES

Strawson's method could not get us beyond the circle of our ideas. A fortified anti-skeptical artillery may fare better. Paradigm case (with and without Moorean variations), non-vacuous contrast, and verificationist arguments have been fashionable anti-skeptical methods. Stroud has argued that verificationism is sufficient to refute skepticism, and necessary for transcendental arguments; hence, transcendental arguments are superfluous.<sup>1</sup> And Nielsen has quite recently argued that the conjunction of all three methods refutes epistemological solipsism, and if not, neither can transcendental argument.<sup>2</sup> Arguments from self-refutation have also captured the fancy of many enemies of the skeptic, and some of these foes think that transcendental argument just is argument from self-refutation. Recall, for example, Strawson's remarks in chapter 1 of Individuals.<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter I shall argue that none of these methods successfully impugns the skeptical thesis. The proof that paradigm case, non-vacuous contrast, or verificationist resources are not required by Kantian transcendental method, and that arguments from self-refutation are different from transcendental arguments, comes in chapter IV, where a theory of transcendental argument, untainted by any of these suggestions, is provided, and the method is correctly instantiated.

## I

There is a family of paradigm case arguments: There exist As because here is X and X is a standard case of an A; Ys are not Bs because certain paradigmatic predicates of Bs do not apply to Ys in standard usage; Zs are not to be identified with Cs because here is a paradigm Z which lacks a necessary condition for being a paradigm C.<sup>4</sup> Traditional versions of the argument proceeded as follows: Some person asserts 'There is at least one F thing,' where substituends for 'F' are certain descriptive predicates. The person understands the sentence he utters, and since understanding a complex designator requires understanding its constituents, he understands its constituents; in particular, he understands 'F.' But 'F' is only definable ostensively. Therefore, there must have existed at least one F thing.

There are two ways the argument might proceed from here. It might continue that since 'objective particular' is a descriptive expression of the appropriate kind, and since the person understands what it means, it follows that some objective particulars have existed. Typically, though, the strategem has been to force translation of the skeptical issue into the concrete. It has been argued, for example, that there exist trees and houses (or hands!), from which it has been inferred that, since trees and houses are exemplars of objective particulars, objective particulars exist.<sup>5</sup>

A notable instance of appeal to standard examples is Moore's.<sup>6</sup> Moore holds up his hands and says to his audience,



while gesturing with one hand, 'Here is one hand,' and, gesturing with the other, 'Here is another hand.' He concludes from this that two human hands exist at that time and that, therefore, there at that time exist objective particulars. Moore anticipates the dissatisfaction of philosophers concerning the first premise, but claims they have no good reason for their dissatisfaction, since although the first premise is unprovable (since he cannot prove he is not at the relevant time dreaming, for example), it is nevertheless known for certain.

First we must raise some questions about the generalized version of the argument. Must a man understand all the constituents of an understood, complex designator? Someone may understand the French sentence 'Je ne sais pas' but understand no French words, and so none of the constituents of the sentence. And the same kind of situation can arise within one's own language. One may understand some idiomatic or technical expression without understanding all, or even any, of the words making it up. And more generally, it is arguable that whole declarative sentences, or the statements which token them at a given time, are the fundamental units of communication, and that one can (and must) understand assertions before understanding (being able to define) isolated words. But even if this objection is correct, I do not think it does serious damage to the thrust of the argument. The paradigmist can reformulate the argument so

as to avoid it. For example, Moore need not have used the sentence, 'Here is a hand.' Uttering 'hand' and using an indicative gesture would have sufficed to convey the same information.

The claim that certain descriptive phrases are only definable ostensively recalls to mind the more general, Humean concept empiricist thesis that all ideas are copies of impressions, that all empirical concepts are derived from instances of the things characterized. So stated, as Hume himself realized, the principle is clearly false. You do not give meaning to the description 'the New Jerusalem' by pointing to its purported referent. The claim is rather that all simple ideas, which comprise such complex ideas, are acquired through experience of instances. The ideas of gold, ruby, etc. are derived from experience, but the imaginative idea of the New Jerusalem is derived only indirectly through combination of simple constituents.

But even in its restricted form, this thesis seems to identify the meaning of a descriptive expression with its reference.<sup>7</sup> But Frege has shown such a referential or denotative theory of meaning to be untenable.<sup>8</sup> Not all coextensional descriptive expressions are synonymous, and so the meaning of an expression is not its reference.

It may be rejoined that to assume the meaning is never the reference is question-begging, and that Fregean considerations are inapplicable to predicates designating sensible

qualities, or to any general terms for that matter. But rather than plunging into Platonistic semantics, a better response is that 'only definable ostensively' here means 'must be learned by reference to cases;' the issue is one of concept-acquisition, not meaningfulness. When Malcolm says that there are words in ordinary language whose use implies that they have a denotation, he does not mean that those terms mean what they denote, but that they could never have been learned (and so used) unless examples in which they apply and do not apply were exhibited.<sup>9</sup>

But even if we are prepared to accept a restricted concept empiricist thesis such that all simple, sensible qualities are derived from experience, the move to objective particulars such as trees, houses, and hands is problematic. There is a difference between the compresence of redness and rectangularity and..., and the red, rectangular house over there. Unless objective particulars are identified with collocations of sensible properties, it remains unclear whether the paradigmist's 'objective particular' is a legitimate instantiation of the thesis.

Now we have arrived at the real issue. Some expressions can be learned through descriptions; some must be learned by reference to cases. Malcolm (and the other anti-skeptical paradigmists) maintains that 'objective particulars' ('material things') and 'it is certain that' are members of the latter class -- expressions comprehensible only by showing,



by exhibiting instances of their application. It is possible for everyone to say what is wrong since mistaken about the facts, but it is impossible for everyone to be mistaken about the correct use of words -- ordinary language is correct language. So 'whenever a philosopher claims that an ordinary expression is self-contradictory, he has misinterpreted the meaning of that ordinary expression.'<sup>10</sup>

First, we should notice that Malcolm's specific attack leaves the problematic idealist unscathed. Our skeptic does not hold that, since nothing inconsistent is to be found in nature, it is a necessary truth that objective particulars do not exist. He merely professes a universal incapacity to prove that they do. To say that for all I know, there are no objects, is to say that it does not follow from what I know that there are objects. It is not to say that it does follow from what I know that there are no objects, so that I know there are none.

Also, his criticism bears only on philosophers who hold there are no instances to which the descriptive expressions in question apply, and only to those who intend ordinary use. The problematic idealist escapes on both counts. He does not defend the radical skeptical contention that no statements are certain; he rejects such a view. He just claims that we can never know for certain that objective particulars exist. And the philosophical, theoretical sense of 'certainty' he uses is not intended to coincide with the ordinary, practical



sense. Hence, the skeptic could grant with equanimity that the ordinary concept of certainty is explicable only ostensively.

But the skeptic need not grant even this. As both Flew and Urmson have argued, the paradigm case argument applies to descriptive language only, and not to evaluative language.<sup>11</sup> 'Certain' is a term of epistemic appraisal; it is not a purely classificatory expression. Therefore, the existence of certainties cannot be established by appeal to standard cases.

What about 'objective particular'? Is it true that a person could not acquire the concept of objective particularity or the intelligent use of the expression 'objective particular' unless there existed actual instances of objective particulars; or, perhaps more, that acquisition was causally dependent on those instances? Since the combination of two or more (mutually consistent) descriptions is itself a description, and compound, fictitious descriptions are readily constructible, it is false that all descriptive phrases describe actual entities; and generally, one can learn the meaning of phrases designating non-existent things. Is 'objective particular' ('material thing') one of those expressions whose meaning must be explained by exhibition of actual instances?

Passmore's remark that 'material thing' is a philosopher's phrase which plays no part in ordinary language (and so is not within the purview of the paradigmist) seems off target.<sup>12</sup>

Even if this is right, 'tree,' 'house' and 'hand' are not exclusive property of anyone's technical vocabulary, and if it could be established that any of these terms have denotation, it could be inferred that objective particulars exist. On the other hand, it seems undeniable that words such as 'tree' and 'house' can be learned descriptively, and need not be learned ostensively. So perhaps the paradigmist's only hope is to work directly on 'objective particular.'

But as Chisholm was the first to point out, not only can the acquisition of various philosophical words such as 'imaginary,' 'possible' and 'nonexistent' (for which we could not produce instances of true application) be explained by appeal to methods of contrast (learn 'certain' by contrast with 'doubt') and limit (learn 'perfect circle' by exhibiting a sequence of shapes approaching circularity as a limit), but the method of illusion may be used too. That is, words can be taught by false or deceptive examples. We can learn how to use 'certain' and 'material thing' ('objective particular') by observing situations which we mistakenly take to have characteristics they do not in fact have.<sup>13</sup> For the learning of terms, an apparent example is as good as a real one. Therefore, paradigm case arguments cannot demonstrate the reality of objective particulars.

Flew says with favor, 'As that famous Broadway philosopher Mr. Damon Runyon might have said: 'If this is not a so and so it will at least do until a so and so comes along.''<sup>14</sup>

By now we should realize that this is misplaced understatement vis a vis the skeptical issue of this dissertation. Hume does not deny that our mental fictions will do. In the case of every paradigm case argument, the question is whether the paradigm features appealed to are supported by good reasons for the usage in question being what it is. This question of justification is not answered by appeal to cases.

Does Moore's previously presented proof add anything to the approaches we have just assessed? As an allegedly rigorous proof, Moore's argument begs the question. One could not know the premise to be true without first knowing the truth of the conclusion. If the premise is to be sufficiently strong for the deduction, it must be tantamount to the claim that there here exists exactly one objective particular which is a hand and here (elsewhere) exists another objective particular which is also a hand. After all, part of the demonstration is the waving of the hand, but what else but an objective particular is perceptually accessible to various members of the audience, and so on? I wonder if Moore would think his proof equally successful if done privately? Then it would be clear that if the premise stated merely that I am now acquainted with a group of percepts which in ordinary language is denominated 'hand,' then the conclusion would not follow; while if the premise stated more, it would beg the question.

There is another, less rigoristic interpretation of



Moore's proof, offered by Nielsen, which goes as follows: Both skeptic and non-skeptic can formulate valid arguments for their respective conclusions. The question then is, Whose premises are more acceptable? Clearly it is more plausible and reasonable to accept the empirical truisms of the non-skeptic than the esoteric premises of the skeptic. Therefore, it is more reasonable to accept the common sense view of our knowledge of the world than the skeptical view.<sup>15</sup>

This version of the argument is question-begging too. But suppose it actually showed, and not merely assumed, that it is more reasonable to believe the favored proposition than some other proposition. From this fact, even if the propositions are contradictories, it does not even follow that the favored proposition is reasonable simpliciter, let alone that it can be known for certain. So this argument poses no threat to epistemological solipsism.

## II

Introduction of a non-vacuous or significant contrast principle is intended to support the faltering paradigm case argument. The final objection to that argument was that apparent Fs (or the idea of F) are as good as real ones (or the veridical experience of F) for acquiring the use of or giving coherent content to the expression 'F.' The non-vacuous contrast principle states that 'F' is meaningfully applicable to some thing a only if there are possible cases



of as which are not F. So, to put it crudely, just as all coins cannot be counterfeit, all ducks cannot be decoys, all experiences cannot be dreams, so all Fs cannot be apparent.<sup>16</sup> If there are apparent houses, there are real ones; and since houses are objective particulars, there are objective particulars. Or, more directly, there are apparent objective particulars only if there are actual objective particulars. Descriptive expressions are meaningful only if there are at least apparent instances of the things described. The descriptive expression 'objective particular' is meaningful. Therefore, there are actual objective particulars. Or still more directly, the expression 'apparent objective particular' makes sense; therefore, non-apparent, actual objective particulars exist.

The principle is somewhat obscure. One may wonder whether, for example, if 'F' is replaced by 'existent at some time or other,' it follows that there are possible but non-actual objects. Perhaps this just supports the claim that existence is not a (descriptive, first-order, 'determining') predicate. But let us ignore these technicalities and suppose the principle is properly formulated.

In its full generality, the non-vacuous contrast principle is false. Let 'F' be any predicate which is such that, when ascribed to a subject, it becomes an instance of a logical truth; for example, 'lives in Massachusetts or does not.' Such predicates are meaningfully applicable to the

appropriate kind of thing, yet there cannot be any instances of that kind which lack the property expressed by the predicate.

To avoid this difficulty, let us restrict the principle to non-logical, descriptive predicates; that is all we need to strengthen the paradigm case argument anyway. But the principle is still false. The existence of necessary truths discredits the principle. For example, let 'F' be 'sibling' and 'a' be 'brother' (or 'John's brother,' if we insist on a singular term as replacement for 'a'). There can be no brothers who are not siblings, yet sibling is a descriptive predicate. To continue to defend the principle by ruling out necessary truths would be tantamount to reducing it to an explication of 'logically contingent,' rendering it useless.

Most important, even if the principle were true, it could not establish the conclusion we seek. The most we could conclude, using the principle, is that it is possible, for all we know, that objective particulars exist. We could not conclude that objective particulars do exist, and so could not conclude that we can know for certain that objective particulars exist. At best it shows that we cannot know that objective particulars do not exist. It would show that skepticism cannot be established, not that anti-skepticism can be established.

Finally, careful diagnosis of the two recently considered brands of anti-skepticism <sup>exposes</sup> a failing in common with parasitism.

They rest their case on the need to make various empirical distinctions -- that between the spurious and the genuine, the apparent and the real, and so on. But they fail to realize that the skeptic need not be (and typically is not) blind to the actual use of any of these. Again, he worries about justification, not practice.

### III

A representative version of the verificationist principle of meaningfulness asserts that a sentence expressing a non-analytic statement is cognitively meaningful if, and only if, it expresses a statement that can, at least in principle, be shown to be true or shown to be false, by reference to empirical observations. The history of attempts at satisfactorily formulating a verificationist principle is notorious; the list of counterexamples is as long as the list of proffered formulations. Universal statements such as scientific laws, statements about the past and the future, statements about the experiences of other people, negative existential statements, as well as singular statements about objective particulars themselves, provide falsification of (various forms of) the principle.<sup>17</sup> As perennially attractive as the principle may be, no good reasons have been given for accepting any strong version -- any version which requires the possibility of conclusive verifiability and not merely degree of evidential support. I cannot in this context hope



to contribute much to the extensive literature on verificationism per se, but I must face the question of its relation to transcendental arguments and skepticism.

In his germinal article on this question, Stroud argues that a transcendental argument without a verificationist premise fails to refute skepticism, while a transcendental argument with a verificationist premise is superfluous, since verificationism alone directly refutes skepticism.<sup>18</sup> So whether or not verificationism is tenable, I must show that transcendental arguments do not require appeal to it. For if transcendental arguments require a verificationist premise and verificationism is untenable, then transcendental arguments are unsound. And if transcendental arguments require a verificationist premise and verificationism is tenable, then, given that verificationism by itself suffices to refute skepticism, transcendental arguments are superfluous.

This question takes on added interest if Thomson is right in arguing that the conjunction of premises constituting the private language argument amounts to a version of the principle of strong verifiability.<sup>19</sup> Then transcendental arguments can be sound only if (the) private language argument(s) are sound. Since I argued in chapter II that the private language argument is a parasitism argument, and that parasitism arguments are unsound, it would follow that transcendental arguments cannot be sound.

Stroud's skeptic claims that (i) a particular class of



propositions makes sense, and (ii) we can never know whether any of them are true. Stroud's transcendentalist claims that (1) the truth of (i) is a necessary condition of the meaningfulness of the skeptical position expressed in (ii), and (2) the falsity of (ii) is a necessary condition of the truth of (i). (2) says that if propositions of a certain kind are meaningful it must be possible to know if they (some of them) are true or false. This is a version of verificationism. The precise statement of this principle as applied to the skeptical thesis is given as follows: 'If the notion of objective particulars makes sense to us, then we can sometimes know certain conditions to be fulfilled, the fulfillment of which logically implies either that objects continue to exist unperceived or that they do not.'<sup>20</sup>

Stroud holds that this principle provides a direct and conclusive answer to the skeptic since it follows from the principle that if the skeptic's claim that we can never know that objects continue to exist unperceived makes sense, it must be false, since if the proposition that objects continue to exist unperceived could not be known to be true or known to be false, it would make no sense. But Stroud's inference is invalid. If the proposition that objects continue to exist makes sense, then, according to his explicitly formulated principle, either it or its contradictory can be conclusively verified. But nothing in the verificationist principle guarantees that the realist proposition rather

than its skeptical denial will turn out to be the knowable truth. And so nothing in the principle conclusively refutes the skeptical thesis.

If a class of propositions makes sense only if it is false that we can never know whether any one of them is true, it follows at best that complete suspension of judgment on all questions of particular reidentity is illegitimate. But to deny our knowledge of persistence is, on these grounds, as respectable as affirming it. To avoid this criticism, Stroud's verificationist must delete the final disjunct of his principle and so maintain that the notion of objective particulars makes sense to us only if we can sometimes know that certain criteria entailing the existence of unperceived objects are satisfied. Generally, all meaningful claims would have to be conclusively verifiable, and not merely verifiable or falsifiable. But the general principle is obviously wrong; it entails that everything understood is true, everything meaningfully talked about exists. If so, the claim about objective particulars cannot be justified as an instance of (this version of) verificationism.

Rorty has argued that Stroud is wrong to require that all transcendental arguments be supplemented by strong verificationism. He argues that a weakened brand of verificationism which makes meaningfulness depend, not on word--world connections, but on connections between various pieces of linguistic behavior, is acceptable and sufficient supplemen-

tation of transcendental arguments.<sup>21</sup> But Rorty's transcendental arguments are parasitism arguments of a sort even weaker than Strawson's. Strawson allowed for a general argument that we cannot think the way we do unless we can think about objective particulars. Rorty claims that we cannot know in advance whether an alternative scheme (language) will be parasitic upon the conventional one, but that we must evaluate each alternative separately. Parasitism arguments were seen to be too weak. They at best establish relations among our beliefs (conceptual dependencies), and cannot show anything about what there is or what we know there is. Consequently, for our purposes, Rorty's answer to Stroud is besides the point.

Hacker provides the skeptic with another, though not very attractive, way of slipping the verificationist punch. He argues that verificationism, even if correct, cannot refute skepticism with respect to a restricted class of propositions, since it remains open to the skeptic to reject the whole, restricted class as meaningless while retaining the class of propositions he endorses as meaningful and true.<sup>22</sup> This does appear to be a logical option. Where the rejected class is the class of objective judgments, this possibility is equivalent to the possibility of a purely inner experience. Since we have not yet established the impossibility of a purely inner experience, we cannot yet rule out Hacker's escape route from verificationism. On the other hand, if



verificationism is correct and if the skeptic acknowledges that it is (and so understands it), but denies the meaningfulness of objective judgments, then we seem to have a reductio ad absurdum of such a skeptic. Of course another skeptic could say, 'I doubt that objective judgments are true; they may be either false or meaningless.'

I shall show that successful transcendental arguments do not rest on any version of strong verificationism. By doing this I meet Stroud's challenge, show that Rorty is wrong to say that transcendental arguments are at best parasitism arguments, and escape appeal to Hacker's distasteful suggestion. I engage this task in the final chapter.

#### IV

Before trying to achieve a general, unified understanding of arguments from self-refutation, it will be instructive to consider two specific, allegedly transcendental, attacks on epistemological solipsism -- Srzednicki's and Bennett's. Srzednicki's argument provides us with a useful bridge between the appeals to conditions of language-acquisition discussed in sections I and II, and the strict arguments from self-refutation discussed in section VI. Bennett's argument is a challenging version of parasitism which tries to go beyond concept dependencies and escape the circle of our ideas.

Srzednicki's overall strategy is to show that if solipsism were true, its statement would be unintelligible; hence, the



falsity of solipsism is a necessary condition of its meaningfulness. His argument is presented in the last two pages of his article.<sup>23</sup> Solipsism is the view that (A) I am the only object in the world, and (B) all appearances of the existence of other things are misleading. Pluralism, the contrary view, denies both (A) and (B). We wish to show that solipsism is false.

Suppose that (1) solipsism is true and provides a description of the nature of the world as such. Then (2) I am identical with the world. Hence, (3) 'I' has reference, and (4) 'Object other than I' lacks reference. Hence, (5) the concept 'object other than I' cannot be formed by anybody nor (if per impossible it was formed) could it have application. So (6) it is impossible to state in the terms provided the possibility that in this world something other than I, viz. this world, could exist. Hence, if solipsism is true, then (7) neither solipsism nor pluralism can be stated. The falsity of solipsism is a necessary condition of the possibility of any discussion of the problem. But (8) the solipsism--pluralism controversy can be stated and argued about. Therefore, (9) solipsism is false.

The argument is at best enthymematic. Minimally, (5) does not follow from its predecessors. (4) does not imply (5). We correctly use many non-denoting expressions, and form and use intelligently many empty, fictitious concepts. Presumably, the supposition (1) is intended to reveal something

peculiar in the present case which warrants the move from (4) to (5). We must try to elicit suitable suppressed premises to justify the inference. Since Srzednicki addresses this task in somewhat desultory fashion, I shall try to systematize those considerations which seem to underlie his argument.

A concept is 'borrowed' relative to a world or segment of a world if it could not be framed given only the resources of that world or world-segment, that is, could not be framed in that world.<sup>24</sup> Borrowed concepts cannot be 'used' or applied in the borrower's world, where to say that a concept cannot be 'used' in a world is to say that it could mark no discriminations in that world, or, more broadly (and more vaguely-- but this is Srzednicki's own phrase), that no idea would be conveyed by it.<sup>25</sup> Given this understanding of 'concept-usability,' we note that although all borrowed concepts may be unusable, perhaps not all unusable concepts are borrowed. Consider our concept 'thing,' construed in its broadest sense. If everything is a thing, the ascription of thinghood fails to discriminate among items of the world. Hence, according to the definition offered, the concept 'thing' would be unusable. But we can frame or acquire the concept 'thing' (in our world). Hence, it is not borrowed.

Using these notions, during the course of his article Srzednicki seems to affirm the following principles:

- (P1) If a concept occurs in a world, it must be usable in that world.<sup>26</sup>

- (P2) If a concept is unusable in a world, then the inhabitants of that world cannot maintain that they have that concept.<sup>27</sup>
- (P3) A (complex) concept may be unusable even when the concepts of which it is formed are usable.<sup>28</sup>
- (P4) The acquirability and intelligibility of any concept depends on certain conditions obtaining in the world in which it operates.<sup>29</sup>
- (P5) A concept is usable in a world only if inhabitants of that world have some idea of how it can be applied; only if they have at least an idea of something that comes under the concept and something that fails to.<sup>30</sup>
- (P6) If someone affirms that an account specifies fully all the relevant features of the present actual world, then he must affirm that concepts necessary for giving the account cannot be borrowed.<sup>31</sup>

Recall that the strategy of the proof is to show that if solipsism were true, the conditions necessary for the formation and/or employment of the concept 'object other than I' would not be fulfilled, so that solipsism would be unintelligible. The mere intelligible statement of the solipsism--pluralism controversy (or of either position separately, for that matter) would then constitute a proof of the falsity of solipsism.

Given (1), (2) follows by simplification, and (3) and (4) follow by the semantic definition of reference. And premise (8) is a matter of fact. The question, then, is whether (5)-(7), given supportive principles (P1)-(P6), are derivable from (1). If they are, then we must ask whether all the members of the set of principles necessary and sufficient for the derivation are true.



Lemma (5) is the conjunctive claim that the concept 'object other than I' cannot be formed by anybody and conveys no idea to anybody (in a world correctly described by solipsism). Focussing on the second conjunct, how do we get that the concept 'object other than I' conveys no idea from its lack of reference and the fact that solipsism describes the world? (P1) tells us that a concept must convey an idea. The notion of 'conveying an idea' is so vague that, in the absence of explication, (P1) says little more than that concepts must be concepts. If by 'conveys an idea' Srzednicki means 'is associated with a mental image,' then the principle is untenable. On other readings it might fare better. The point is that a careful assessment of (P1) requires a preliminary determination of the theory of concepts presupposed. Some of the other principles provide sufficient clues to this. So tentatively, let us suspend judgment on (P1).

(P2) states that it is impossible to attribute the possession of unusable concepts to oneself. If an alleged concept 'conveys no idea' to a man, then that man cannot use it in making intelligible assertions at all, and so, instantiating, cannot use it in making intelligible assertions about itself (or himself). But (P2) tells us that certain things are true, if a certain concept conveys no idea. Since we wish to establish that a certain concept, the concept 'object other than I,' conveys no idea, and since we have no independent way of determining the truth value of the claim



that people in a world in which 'object other than I' conveys no idea cannot ascribe to themselves the ability to use that concept, (P2) cannot help to provide the justification we seek.

(P3) states that a complex of concepts, each of which conveys an idea, may itself fail to convey an idea. Examination of Srzednicki's remarks in connection with this principle helps pin down the meaning he gives to 'conveys an idea.' Srzednicki holds that all impossible or uninstantiable predicates express the same concept.<sup>32</sup> For example, 'round square' and 'female father' express the same concept. But he also holds that these predicates differ in sense or meaning. This is explained by the difference in sense of their applicable constituents.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, concepts and meanings are dissociated. In particular, terms expressing unusable concepts may still be perfectly meaningful. An expression can be meaningful yet 'convey no idea.'

So, 'is meaningful' and 'conveys an idea' are neither logically nor material equivalent. But this result undermines the line of reasoning we have been pursuing. The argument was to proceed from the borrowedness of 'object other than I' to its unusability to the impossibility of its contributing to the statement of a meaningful solipsistic thesis. But the last link in this chain breaks down -- predicates designating unusable concepts may be meaningful.

(P4) and (P5) cannot save matters. (P4) is a trivial truth which does no work. (P5), that those possessing

usable concepts must be able to conjure up instances and non-instances of those concepts, is a kind of non-vacuous contrast principle for concept-usability (rather than meaningfulness). But if the connection between concepts and meanings is broken, this principle is useless for showing that solipsism is meaningless if true.

We can escape all these difficulties by ignoring Srzednicki's lead and purging the argument of all reference to concept-usability. As a parasitism argument the argument lacks all promise. But if we take the genetic concept of borrowedness as the crux of the argument, take concept-formation and not intelligibility as the issue, then the argument is straightforward and provocative: Because (A) I am identical with the world, I cannot say (B) all appearances of the existence of other things are misleading, since I could not form a concept used essentially in (B). The concept 'object other than I' cannot be formed in the solipsistic universe which, according to the solipsist, is the one, true universe. Assuming the equivalence between having a concept and being able to use and understand words, we conclude that conjunct (B) cannot be stated or understood by anyone if conjunct (A) is true, since if (A), the concept 'object other than I' cannot be formed by anybody, and if a concept cannot be formed by anybody, then (unless it is innate) it cannot be possessed by anybody, and so nobody could use it in making judgments.

(P6) captures this new line of argument. If a description is supposed to be a complete description of everything (relevant) in the world, then no borrowed concepts, concepts which cannot be framed in the world, can be required for providing this description. Instantiating, when the solipsist utters the sounds purporting to express theses (A) and (B), adding that these completely describe what there is and what can be known, all these sounds must be words which express possessed and so acquirable concepts; otherwise the solipsist is merely making noises. But in a world exhausted by the solipsist himself the concept of something other than himself, that is, something other than the world, cannot be acquired and so is not possessed. Therefore, in the solipsistic world, nothing intelligible can be said about any non-self. Thesis (B) is intended to say something about some non-self. Therefore, thesis (B) must fail to express the proposition intended by the solipsist-speaker. But it is rightly agreed by all disputants that (B) does express a proposition about something other than the solipsist-speaker's self. Therefore, the supposition that (A&B) completely and correctly describes the world must be false.

The foregoing argument is defective. The world is identical with the world. So of course it follows that necessarily, nothing exists which is not the world or some part of it. But it does not follow, and it is false, that we cannot frame a concept of something not in the world.



(P6) says that a complete specification of all the relevant features of the world cannot use borrowed concepts. What are the 'relevant' features? Looking at the account given, they are what really exists and what can and cannot be known. (A) is the metaphysical thesis that a complete enumeration of substances contains but one item -- me. (B) is the epistemological thesis that if I think there are substances other than myself, I am wrong. The metaphysical thesis carries the weight of the argument, since it entails the epistemological thesis. But there has been no inconsistency established between (A) and the fact that the subject mentioned in (A) has an extensive repertoire of concepts, including the concept 'object other than I.' The fact that there is but one substance does not rule out a host of truths about non-substances. To succeed, the argument must wrongly assume that all objects of thought must exist.

Anyhow, it seems to me that 'object other than I' is not a borrowed concept in a solipsistic world. Compare Srzednicki's pluralistic account of the world. Presumably it excludes round squares. Yet the concept 'round square' is not borrowed. It is a complex concept with applicable and so frameable constituents. Similarly with the solipsistic account. It excludes the existence of something other than the solipsist's conscious self. Yet the concept of something other than the solipsist's conscious self need not be borrowed for the very same reasons as above -- it is a complex concept



whose constituents can be framed. If we can frame the concepts 'I' and 'diversity,' then we can frame the concept of something diverse from myself. It is acknowledged by the proponent of the argument that the solipsist can frame the concept 'I.' And, simply by inspecting the successive contents of his consciousness and being aware of their successiveness, or the variety of sensory qualities they present, etc., the solipsist can frame a concept of diversity. Therefore, the solipsist can meaningfully assert (A&B).<sup>34</sup>

Finally, we should note that the kind of argument we have been considering is even less plausible against a faithfully formulated version of epistemological solipsism. After all, the epistemological solipsist position is really something like: for all I know, my mental states constitute the universe, or, I am not justified in believing that things other than my mental states exist. It is not a metaphysical thesis. But now it becomes more evident that things other than I or my mental states are thinkable, that claims about these other things are meaningfully expressible. It is just, it is claimed, that the existence of such other things is not knowable. So solipsism is conceivable, and is not to be dismissed as meaningless. Or at least the considerations adduced by Srzednicki do not show otherwise.

V

In Kant's Analytic, Bennett's overall thesis is much

like Strawson's: the most interesting truths Kant calls 'synthetic a priori' are unobviously analytic truths about the conditions under which certain distinctions can be made, or under which certain concepts have a significant use.<sup>35</sup> The unobviously analytic is simply the complex result of a series of elementary analytic steps.<sup>36</sup> Curiously, as Strawson points out in his review, Bennett asserts that some unobviously analytic truths (for example, that objectivity requires spatiality) cannot be conclusively proved since 'one is at the mercy of the overlooked possibility.'<sup>37</sup> But let us overlook this inconsistency and consider Bennett's anti-Cartesian argument.<sup>38</sup>

A man having a purely present tense language in which he describes each of his inner states as it occurs cannot describe his states at earlier times. He can have grounds for saying 'I was thus at t' if, and only if, he has grounds for saying 'I recollect being thus at t,' so there is a one-one correspondence between what is said about past states and present recollections. Hence, his concept of the past is non-functional; none of his present states could intelligibly be described as 'recollections. In contrast, for the ordinary man several of his present recollections may bear an evidential relation to a single judgment about his past, so that his concept of the past is not idle, being at least useful in summing up data. Hence, since in the solipsist's scheme the past collapses into the present, he cannot make

judgments about his past; he has no concept of the past.

The solipsist's perceptions cannot be brought under the concept of the past; his purely private language cannot have a past tense. Now it is impossible that a man S knows that he is so-and-so if being so-and-so excludes self-consciousness; 'Being so-and-so excludes self-consciousness for S' entails 'S does not know that he is so-and-so.' But S is self-conscious only if S can use the concept 'this is how it is with me,' or, equivalently for Bennett, the concept 'my experience now.' And the ability to use the concept 'my experience now' requires the ability to use the concept 'my experience then.' Therefore, self-consciousness requires knowledge of the past. Therefore, nobody could know that anyone, including himself, was having a purely inner experience. No one could know that S both (a) has only immediate experience, that is, knowledge of his present only, and (b) has no knowledge of the past. S could not know (b) of himself. S could not know (a) of someone other than himself, since to know this would require knowledge that there was some objective realm with which both creatures were sensorily confronted. Therefore, it is not possible that S knows what his inner experience is like while wondering whether there is an objective world. If S knows what his inner experience is like, he must know something of its past history, and so inhabit an objective world and know that he does so. This is the refutation of problematic idealism.



The first stage of Bennett's argument, which tries to establish that an inner experiencer with a purely present tense language has no concept of the past, rests on the peculiar principle that no one possesses non-functional concepts. Earlier in Kant's Analytic Bennett explicitly endorses a similar principle.<sup>39</sup> Agreeing with Quine that questions about truth always involve questions about conceptual efficiency, that ultimately the true theory is the one which copes most economically with the facts, he derives the consequence that '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.' Instantiating, it is legitimate for the inner experiencer to add a concept of the past to his repertoire of concepts describing occurrent inner states to the extent that this addition will simplify description of certain phenomena (in this case the phenomena of recollection).

Perhaps it is plausible to connect functionality and efficiency with legitimacy, although this flagrantly violates a skeptical tenet which was procedurally assumed in chapter I. But the connection between any of these features and the de facto having of concepts is extremely tenuous. And it is just this latter connection that is required for Bennett's argument, which concludes that the inner experiencer has no concept of the past from the fact that there is no



non-redundant function such a concept would serve such an experiencer. But do no elements of a man's conceptual scheme duplicate capacities? Are all schemes perfectly parsimonious?

That a concept lacks a distinctive use fails to imply that it lacks a use, although it does seem vacuous to say that a man might possess a concept for which he could have no use. So it might be thought that Bennett is arguing not that the inner experiencer can have no concept of the past, but that he cannot have our concept of the past, and this because he could have no use for such a concept. But this cannot be right, if 'could have no use for' means 'must be useless to.' Bennett clearly feels that acquisition of our concept of the past would be immensely useful to the inner experiencer. On the other hand, the inner experiencer with the purely present tense language cannot have our concept of the past, but this is so merely in virtue of the defining characteristics of his position. Hence, if the first stage of Bennett's argument is designed to show that the solipsist of the moment lacks our concept of the past, then argument is uncalled for -- it is true by stipulation. But if its purpose is to prove that such an experiencer can have no backward-looking concepts at all, then I think it has failed to achieve that purpose.

Still, suppose the sub-conclusion is true -- the solipsist has no concept of the past and so cannot make judgments about the past. And let us grant the general principle that

so-and-so excludes self-consciousness for S entails that S does not know that he is so-and-so, and the instantiation that 'Lacking the concept of the past excludes self-consciousness for S' entails that S does not know that he lacks a concept of the past. So far, nothing new of interest follows.

Suppose further, then, that we accept the implicandum that lacking the concept of the past excludes self-consciousness for S. Then S is self-conscious only if he has a concept of the past. Bennett proceeds to conclude that self-consciousness requires knowledge of the past.<sup>40</sup> This move is without justification. The ability to use concepts may be the ability to make judgments, but it is certainly not to be identified with the ability to make justified, true judgments. Self-consciousness may require a concept of the past, but it would suffice to satisfy this requirement that S merely believe, even believe wrongly, even be able to believe wrongly, that he has a past.

Yet if we grant that S can know he lacks a concept of the past only if he is self-conscious, then, since the solipsist lacks a concept of the past (according to the argument), and self-consciousness requires a concept of the past, the solipsist cannot know he lacks a concept of the past. But if he cannot know he lacks a concept of the past, he cannot know he cannot make judgments about his past. But if he cannot know he cannot make judgments about his past, he cannot know he cannot make justified, true judgments about his past,

and so cannot know he has no knowledge of the past. This gives us half of Bennett's conclusion, that S cannot know (b) of himself. But this, as with Strawson's objectivity argument, is just to say that a purely inner experiencer cannot recognize his epistemic status, not that a purely inner experience is impossible.

In order to show that nobody, not even us, could know that anyone was having a purely inner experience, Bennett further argues that no one could know of someone other than himself that he had only immediate experience. The key step here is that if S were able to know that another knows only his present state, S would have to know that there is an objective world with which he and the other are sensorily confronted. But why is this true? If S knows there is another creature, he knows there is an objective world. And S knows this world sensorily affects himself because he sees the other creature. But how does S know the world sensorily affects the other creature? The only available answer is that the other creature is having inner experience. But this is illicit grounding for the conclusion that the inner experiencer's states are caused by the objective world. It begs the question.

Bennett claims that his argument shows that a purely inner experiencer is not a real possibility; but by 'real possibility' he means 'can be known to be realized.'<sup>41</sup> So, by his own account, all that his argument could establish



is that we could not know epistemological skepticism to be true. This is not the anti-skeptical thesis we want; and in the absence of some ill-fated, strong verificationist principle, there is no way of getting from Bennett's to the desired result.

One might complain that Bennett has been unnecessarily sympathetic and I, unnecessarily unsympathetic. Bennett, using the proposition that lacking a concept of the past excludes self-consciousness, argued that a purely inner experience (or purely private language), though not logically impossible, cannot be known to be realized. After criticizing his argument, I protested that, in any event, its conclusion is too weak. But if the argument were reconstructed using the proposition that consciousness (and not just self-consciousness), or the use of any language at all, required possession of a concept of the past, then, mutatis mutandis, we could infer that a purely inner experience is a logical impossibility. And the critic might remind me that I, a defender of Kantian transcendental argument, would not wish to deny that any act of consciousness, any synthesis of the manifold, requires apprehension, reproduction, and recognition in a concept.

The reminder rests on misunderstanding -- as a pre-reflective activity, reproduction of the manifold is not an instance of knowledge of, or belief about, the past. Nevertheless, we did allow that judging (thinking) requires



relating items in a unified consciousness (and so requires distinguishability between haver and items of experience). It is plausible to think that a unified consciousness requires the ability to look backward and compare what occurred with what is now occurring. Suppose pursuing this line of argument succeeded in showing that solipsism of the moment is logically impossible, and not just 'really impossible.' Would this entail the falsity of the skeptical thesis? Not by itself. What is also needed is an argument to show that an experience of past and present mental states alone is impossible, that a language with a functional past and present tense must be non-private.

That the dialectics of the issue have driven me to this point is disquieting, and understandably I shall decline in this dissertation from canvassing sentiment for and against the morass of related questions which comprise the private-language problem. I here offer only a summary statement of the problem which directly confronts us now, and what I think is an appropriate reply.

As discussed by Saunders and Henze, Wittgensteinians have argued that, necessarily, any language all of whose words refer to experiential data (present or past), none of which entails or is entailed by the existence of any publicly observable phenomena, is a language that only the speaker/user could (logically) understand, but that such a private, incommunicable language is impossible.<sup>42</sup>

The most celebrated line of thought in support of this view contends that language requires obedience to rules, but it is impossible to obey a rule privately, since in such circumstances, thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same as obeying it. To determine whether some item is of a particular kind, whether the kind-name properly applies to it, one must appeal to rules specifying the criteria for being something of that kind. But a private language is a ruleless language; hence, even such minimal identifications are impossible in it; hence, it is not really a possible language at all. And again, it is a ruleless language because rule-following implies the possibility of verifying correct and incorrect moves, but a private experiencer would have no possible way of checking up on, or adding credibility to, his introspective claims. And the attempt to check by appeal to memory also fails, since it is impossible to independently check for veridicalness of the memory impression; at best you can believe you believe that a given sensation is the same kind as you had before.<sup>43</sup>

But my descriptions of my experiences being intelligible to others is not a necessary condition of their being intelligible to myself. Granted that if a word applies to something it must apply to it not merely as being this, but as being something of a certain sort. A phenomenal language claims to have appropriate terms for specifying objects. It is not incumbent on the user of such a language to specify

those objects in some language different from his own to prove the meaningfulness of his language. As Aune points out, you do not have to be able to describe semantical rules in order to understand a language, since ultimately the highest level metalanguage must just be understood on its own if any sublanguage is to be understood.<sup>44</sup>

Ayer correctly argues that it is not necessary that the question whether I keep or break any rules should be subject to a social check. The check-argument (against one memory confirming another) is unsuccessful, since the sort of difficulty cited arises with any use of language.<sup>45</sup> If one never accepted any identification without further check, one would never identify anything at all, and so no descriptive use of language would be possible. If one can recognize a word on a page, a sign made by some other person, the person himself, and so on, without further procedures, then why should one not as immediately recognize one's own experiences? And why in that case should it be impossible to describe them in accordance with rules of one's own?

Intra-language rules can be used by the inner experienter to justify his introspective claims; as Aune argues, 'This is an A' can be justified by relating it to B and appealing to the rule that all Bs are As.<sup>46</sup> And, Aune continues, the experienter cannot 'merely think' he has rules, since thinking one thing rather than another is a rule-governed activity, susceptible to inconsistency and error. The inner experienter's



use of rules will be shown by the inferences he draws concerning the features of his experiences; if he draws inferences, he is operating with rules, whether he explicitly formulates them or not.<sup>47</sup>

Aune sums up the situation as follows:

If a wholly general doubt about semantic regularity cannot legitimately be raised within the framework of the system to which it applies, and any other doubt raised within the framework of some other conceptual system is similarly self-stultifying -- in that any specification of the kind of thing to which the terms in question are supposed to apply must be justified with reference to what are considered the semantic regularities governing their use -- it then follows that a general doubt about the consistent application of an entire language cannot possibly be justified. Such a doubt must remain absolutely idle and pointless, with no possibility whatever of gaining empirical support. Since a doubt of this kind is no less idle when directed to phenomenal languages, we must conclude that an external attack on such languages cannot succeed. This, however, seems to be the approach Wittgenstein took in attacking them.<sup>48</sup>

And this is the approach of the refurbished Bennett-argument.

## VI

It has often been urged that solipsism is self-refuting. To determine whether this is so, we should have a clear idea of what self-refutation is. Under the general heading of 'self-refutation,' philosophers have included ad hominem, pragmatic, performative, operational, semantic, and logical inconsistency. The powers of these arguments range from showing that a man ought to accept a given proposition if he wishes to hold a consistent set of beliefs, to showing that what a man asserts is a logical falsehood. Some of



these arguments -- for example, the classic attempts to generate semantic and logical paradoxes -- are not pertinent to the skeptical issue of the dissertation, and shall remain undiscussed. As regards the prima facie relevant argument-kinds, I shall argue that none is adequate to our anti-skeptical task.

The predominant kind of argument from self-refutation discoverable in contemporary philosophical literature is argument from performative or pragmatic inconsistency. There are various ways of formulating the conditions for pragmatic inconsistency. Passmore proposes that a sentence is pragmatically self-refuting (or inconsistent) if, and only if, to utter the sentence is to provide a counterexample to the proposition expressed by that sentence.<sup>49</sup> Ayer defines a 'self-defeating' or 'self-stultifying' proposition as one such that, if it is asserted, then it is false.<sup>50</sup> But it is some feature of the event of assertion that falsifies the proposition; the claim is not that the falsity of the proposition is established by deductive argument. Hintikka and Nakhnikian develop Ayer's account -- a sentence is self-defeating if, and only if, if it is professed, either to oneself or to someone else, then it is false.<sup>51</sup>

Performative or pragmatic inconsistency is a relation between what a sentence is used to express -- the proposition intended by the statement using the sentence -- and some feature of the event of the statement's actual assertion.

It occurs when the way in which something is presented conflicts with what is presented. The truth-value of a pragmatic inconsistency is not independent of whether or not it is asserted. Pragmatic inconsistencies might be true if they were not verbally expressed, but are inevitably (in a sense to be clarified) false if they are verbally expressed.

This sort of self-refutation is called 'pragmatic,' not as meaning 'practical,' but in contradistinction to syntactic and semantic inconsistency. Pragmatic inconsistency is a relation not between propositions, nor between propositions and the (non-linguistic) world, but between speech acts and propositions (the thoughts the sentences used in speech acts are intended to convey). It differs from syntactic (formal, logical) inconsistency in that formal contradiction persists through every uniform substitution of the sentence's subject term, but a change in subject term can turn a pragmatic inconsistency into a normal sentence. The sentence, 'I am not saying anything' is pragmatically inconsistent; if I say I am not saying anything, then it is false that I am not saying anything. But by replacing the subject term 'I' with one of several others, such as 'he,' the performatively self-refuting sentence is converted into a perfectly straightforward report. Hence, pragmatic inconsistency does not depend exclusively on the form of words uttered, but also on the speaker of the statement, and how the speaker refers to himself. And unlike some cases of semantic

self-reference, there are no referential problems in cases of pragmatic self-reference.<sup>52</sup> Statements, concrete events, may refer to themselves as physical events, instances of grammar, uses of language that makes a claim, and so on.

The pragmatic inconsistency between a proposition and its utterance is like the discrepancy between a statement and a state of affairs which falsifies it.<sup>53</sup> Ordinarily, the only way to verify a syntactically well-formed, semantically meaningful descriptive statement is to look at the world; such statements are contingent upon the state of the world. The important peculiarity of pragmatic inconsistencies is that although they cannot be rejected on logical grounds alone, and so in the standard sense are also contingent upon the state of the world, the facts which falsify them are inescapable aspects of their utterance. The utterance of a sentence accompanies the sentence in its concrete uses in discourse. The facts that falsify a pragmatic inconsistency are given along with it as it is uttered. Further, the philosophically interesting characteristics of utterance are those which are pervasive and uneliminable by paraphrase or translation. So whereas 'I cannot properly construct an English sentence,' though pragmatically inconsistent, is not when stated in German, 'I cannot speak' cannot be restated to avoid the inconsistency. There is no concrete context from which the falsifying factor is absent.

So pragmatic inconsistencies are logically contingent;

they demand to be tested by the facts. But they inevitably and immediately fail the test, since they inevitably give us all the evidence we need to falsify them. Thus the rejections of pragmatic inconsistencies are outstanding candidates for philosophical certainties. They are inevitably true, yet still refer to facts.

Following Mackie, we may formally generalize our account of pragmatic self-refutation.<sup>54</sup> Where  $d$  is a proposition-forming operator on propositions,  $p$  is a propositional variable, and  $E$  is the existential quantifier, it is a logical law that, for any  $d$ :  $d(\text{not}-(Ep)dp) \rightarrow \text{not}-(\text{not}-(Ep)dp)$ . Whenever an item occurs which can be symbolized by  $d(\text{not}-(Ep)dp)$ , it is self-refuting in the sense that what  $d$  operates on, what the noun-clause  $\text{not}-(Ep)dp$  represents, must be false. It is not the proposition symbolized by  $d(\text{not}-(Ep)dp)$  that is self-refuting, but the operation it describes; its occurrence refutes its content (its noun-clause).<sup>55</sup> There is nothing to prevent the actual occurrence of this operation; I can type that I am not typing, so that the proposition  $d(\text{not}-(Ep)dp)$  will be true. And what is asserted in the noun-clause could itself be true, at another time. But as I perform the operation in question, I give ample evidence that instances of the operation occur, and that one instance is occurring now.

I embrace the suggestion that the negations of pragmatic inconsistencies are certainties. But it seems obvious that



these can only be what might be called 'subjective certainties' -- not subjective in the sense that their warrant is only a kind of feeling or experience, but in the sense that only truths about a subject, his activities, capabilities, experiences, and so on, can be established by this method. Truths concerning the kinds of entities which constitute the objective realm cannot be demonstrated by showing that the act of asserting their denials immediately falsifies their denials, and so verifies their truth. In particular, we cannot prove that objective particulars exist by asserting that no objective particulars exist and carefully attending to that event of verbal expression. Such attention is not sufficient and immediate proof of the proposition in question; the falsifying feature of the skeptical assertion (in this case, the dogmatic skeptic, but the same applies to our problematic idealist) is not some fact inevitably and immediately given with the utterance.

But I must even qualify my welcome by noting again that the occurrence of the operation refutes its content; the content (proposition) itself is not irremediably refuted. For pragmatic inconsistencies, the most that is shown is that a certain way of presenting a certain view is unsatisfactory. The view itself is not thereby refuted, and may well be presented and supported in other ways. Even the claim that I cannot speak, whose falsification persisted through translation, can readily be presented in writing.

In response to the objection that argument from pragmatic inconsistency cannot establish the truth of objective judgments, the proponent of argument from self-refutation may note that for some operators,  $d$ , if  $dp$ , then  $p$ . 'I know that,' 'I remember that' and 'It can be proved that' are examples of such truth-entailing operators. For such  $d$ 's, it is a logical law that:  $\text{not-}d(\text{not-}(Ep)dp)$ .<sup>56</sup> In these cases, each proposition of the form  $d(\text{not-}(Ep)dp)$  is self-refuting. Given that  $d$  is truth-entailing, its form guarantees its falsehood. Here may be a way to get from the subjective to the objective.

But this form of self-refutation applies to the skeptic only when he becomes a radical dogmatist. 'I know that I know nothing' and 'It can be proved that nothing can be proved' are both self-refuting in the newly-introduced sense. But 'nothing can be known' and 'nothing can be proved' are coherent insofar as the proposed test is concerned. And 'I know that I know that objective particulars do not exist' is also non-deviant. To be self-refuting in the more stringent sense presented, the skeptical position must be both radical and dogmatic. Epistemological solipsism is neither. Therefore, the epistemological solipsist remains unscathed.

In response to the objection that argument from pragmatic inconsistency can never preclude evasion by re-presentation, advocates of the method of self-refutation may try to defend a more powerful principle which issues in inescapable

results. Passmore argues that what he calls 'absolutely self-refuting' propositions are thus inescapable, where to assert such a proposition is equivalent to asserting both that proposition and its negation simultaneously.<sup>57</sup> Since to assert a proposition and its negation at the same time is to assert a contradiction, I take it that one asserts an absolutely self-refuting proposition if, and only if, one asserts a contradiction. Hence, to assert an absolutely self-refuting proposition is to assert a logical falsehood.

Paradigmatic examples of absolutely self-refuting propositions are 'No sentence conveys anything' and 'There are no true propositions.'<sup>58</sup> The line of reasoning is familiar. If a man asserts that there are no true propositions, since what he asserts is itself a proposition, it follows that he also asserts that what he asserts is not true, and hence he asserts that some propositions are true. Therefore, in asserting that there are no true propositions, he asserts both that there are no true propositions and that there are some true propositions.

This line of reasoning is invalid. Even supposing that the man's assertion is included within the scope of the assertion about all assertions (supposing we cannot appeal to a metalanguage, type or category distinctions, or any suitable logic), it only follows that what is asserted is not true, and so that some propositions are true. It does not follow that the man asserts that some propositions

are true. In asserting something of all propositions, one does not assert all (each) propositions. Consequently, the thoroughgoing skeptic in question is not guilty of absolute self-refutation, since although he asserts some proposition, he does not also assert its denial.<sup>59</sup>

Naturally, the problematic idealist is in no danger of absolute self-refutation anyhow. But although Passmore defines 'absolute self-refutation' as indicated, I think his discussion and examples show that his formulation is defective. What really seems to be going on in arguments from absolute self-refutation is the attempt to show that the position in question violates a formal requirement of all discourse, a characteristic of discourse which persists through all paraphrase and analysis.<sup>60</sup> What Passmore's insight comes down to is that there are some principles which are assumed by all who engage in discourse, and that to deny any of those principles, or any other proposition which is entailed by those principles, must be a mistake, since such propositions are assumed to be true. Whether such assumptions are matters of convention, natural propensity, necessity, etc., is, so far as I can see, left an open question. In reality, then, absolute inconsistency turns out to be, not a matter of logical incoherence, but rather more like a species of performative or pragmatic inconsistency. But arguing from that sort of inconsistency was shown to be no threat to the skeptical thesis. The only way to pin such a charge of



inconsistency on the problematic idealist is to assume that the subject term used to express his thesis explicitly refers to embodied existents, and so objective particulars. Then the skeptical thesis would be that 'we objective particulars can never know for certain that objective particulars exist.' But this, of course, is a question-begging assumption.

It seems to me that other methods with intimations of novelty -- whether self-professed or not -- also reduce to argument from pragmatic self-refutation, and so are inadequate to our problem. For example, Kekes argues that the truth of several beliefs is a necessary condition of there being a language, a collection of sentences used for certain communicative purposes.<sup>61</sup> The fact that skepticism can be stated in language implies the truth of some of the beliefs attacked by the skeptic. The conditions for the use of any sentence he calls 'contextually implied' beliefs, and the denials of such conditions he calls 'conceptual absurdities.' If, and only if, the assumptions contradicted by the use of a sentence are necessary for the use of any sentence, conceptual absurdity results. The absurdity derives from the fact that a person uses a sentence to deny that a condition necessary for the use of any sentence obtains, and the act of using the sentence naturally demonstrates immediately the contrary of what is being denied. So if there is to be a language shared by the skeptic and his opponent, contextually implied statements must be true. And so in stating his position the

skeptic demonstrates the truth of some of those contextually implied beliefs which he challenges; consequently, his position is conceptually absurd.

Kekes' argument is just an instance of a strong form of argument from pragmatic self-refutation, and accordingly can prove even less than its weaker cohorts. Suppose his argument persuades us that the skeptic provides the justification he demands by using language. What justification are we talking about? At best the argument shows that some beliefs are justified, thereby refuting the radical skeptic who holds that rational justification for any belief is impossible, a skeptic with whom we are not concerned. And just which beliefs may be included among language's contextual implications? The only example of conceptual absurdity we are offered is the use of the sentence 'No language exists.' So, that there is a language is a contextual implication. So, at least one belief is justified. But we are hard pressed to discover many more contextual implications, and certainly the anti-skeptical thesis is not among them.

Other speech act theories are variations on the same theme. The transcendental phenomenologist's method of establishing a proposition by arguing that doubting or denying the proposition relies on rules incompatible with those needed in formulating the proposition is akin to the species of self-refutation criticized at length in section IV of this chapter.<sup>62</sup> And even most 'presupposition arguments' are

really equivalent to arguments from performative inconsistency. For example, Fitch points out that 'presupposition' often means some hypothesis that cannot be systematically denied without in some sense being already assumed. 'The very denial itself, or some important aspect of it, or some assumption or method involved in presenting or defending it, constitutes an exception to the denial.'<sup>63</sup>

In sum, although versions of argument from self-refutation may help provide us with subjective certainties from which we may try to argue, and may successfully impugn forms of radical, dogmatic skepticism, none is sufficient to prevail over problematic idealism. And as we saw previously, no version of parasitism, verificationism, the appeal to paradigm cases or the need for non-vacuous contrast enjoys the long-sought triumph either. Is there a savior in philosophical heaven or earth?

## NOTES

## CHAPTER III

1. Barry Stroud, 'Transcendental Arguments,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXV, 9 (May 2, 1968): 241-256.
2. Kai Nielsen, 'On Refusing To Play The Skeptic's Game,' Dialogue, XI, 3 (1972): 348-359.
3. Strawson, Individuals, pp. 35 and 40.
4. See John King-Farlow and J.M. Rothstein, 'Paradigm Cases and the Injustice to Thrasymachus,' Philosophical Quarterly, 14, 54 (January, 1964): 17.
5. Nielsen takes the second route.
6. Moore, 'Proof of An External World,' p. 144.
7. J.W.N. Watkins, in 'Farewell to the Paradigm-Case Argument,' Analysis, XVIII, 2 (December, 1957): 25-33, attacks appeals to paradigms as confusing connotation and denotation.
8. Gottlob Frege, 'On Sense and Reference,' in Copi and Gould, pp. 75-92. Also in Feigl and Sellars, Readings in Philosophical Analysis.
9. Norman Malcolm, 'Moore and Ordinary Language.' in The Linguistic Turn, ed. Richard Rorty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 120. Also in The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, ed. P.A. Schilpp (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1942), p. 361. That paradigm case arguments apply only to Lockean simple ideas is argued by H.G. Alexander, 'More About the Paradigm-Case Argument,' Analysis, 18 (April, 1958): 117-120.
10. Ibid., p. 119 (p. 359 in Schilpp).
11. J.O. Urmson, 'Some Questions Concerning Validity,' in Essays in Conceptual Analysis, pp. 126-127. Antony Flew, 'Again the Paradigm,' in Mind, Matter, and Method, eds. Paul K. Feyerabend and Grover Maxwell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), pp. 261-272.
12. John Passmore, from Philosophical Reasoning (New York: Scribners and Sons, 1961; Basic Books edition, 1969), reprinted in Rorty, pp. 183-192. See p. 191.
13. Roderick Chisholm, 'Philosophers and Ordinary Language,' in Rorty, pp. 175-182.



14. Flew, 'Again the Paradigm,' p. 264.
15. Moore uses this sort of strategy against the skeptic in 'Hume's Theory Examined,' Some Main Problems of Philosophy (New York: Collier, 1953), chapter 6.
16. See Gilbert Ryle, Dilemmas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), chapter VII, especially pp. 94-98, and J.L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), chapter VII, especially pp. 67-68 and 71-72.
17. An overview is to be found in R.W. Ashby, 'Verifiability Principle,' in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, VIII, 240-247.
18. See note 1.
19. Judith Jarvis Thomson, 'Private Languages,' American Philosophical Quarterly (January, 1964): 20-31.
20. Stroud, p. 247.
21. Richard Rorty, 'Verificationism and Transcendental Arguments,' Nous, V, 1 (February, 1971): 3-14.
22. Peter Hacker, 'Are Transcendental Arguments a Version of Verificationism?' American Philosophical Quarterly, 9, 1 (January, 1972): 78-85.
23. Jan Srzednicki, 'The Transcendental Impossibility of Solipsism,' Ratio (December, 1972): 131-143. See 142-143.
24. Ibid., p. 133.
25. Ibid., p. 131. According to this transcendental argument, Kantian categories cannot be used in our world!
26. Ibid., p. 133.
27. Ibid., p. 131.
28. Ibid., pp. 141-142.
29. Ibid., p. 131.
30. Ibid., pp. 139-140.
31. Ibid., p. 133.

32. Ibid., p. 140. In support he offers the following:  
'It is the common feature of concepts without application that they have none, and quite clearly if one can be used in virtue of this so can any other. They (presumably the predicates expressing the concepts) are thus functionally equivalent qua tokens without application. Consequently, (they -- he enumerates examples) express the same concept.' Compare: Common to all color concepts is that colored things fall under them. The predicates expressing such concepts are thus functionally equivalent qua tokens applicable to colored things. Consequently, all color predicates express the same concept. Just because predicates share the same role in one certain respect, do they therefore express the same concept?
33. Ibid., pp. 140-141.
34. Note also that unless Srzednicki regards his thesis as a necessary truth, it is perfectly possible for the solipsist to state that the world which happens to be exhausted by him could have been pluralistic.
35. Jonathan Bennett, Kant's Analytic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 42.
36. Ibid., pp. 13-14. Cf. Descartes' discussion of intuition and demonstration in 'Rules for the Direction of the Mind,' Rule VII, Haldane and Ross, I, 19-22.
37. Ibid., p. 43. Noted for criticism by P.F. Strawson, 'Bennett on Kant's Analytic,' The Philosophical Review, LXXVII, 3 (July, 1968): 332-339.
38. Ibid., pp. 207-211, for the 'realism argument.'
39. Ibid., p. 39.
40. Ibid., p. 210.
41. Ibid., p. 211.
42. Saunders and Henze, chapter 1. Of course dualists, phenomenologists, idealists -- in short, anyone who accepts the egocentric predicament -- deny the claim of impossibility.
43. This is a compressed statement of Ibid., chapter 4, and Bruce Aune, Knowledge, Mind, and Nature (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 35-41.
44. Aune, p. 51.

45. Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, pp. 60-61.
46. Aune, pp. 45-46.
47. Ibid., p. 46.
48. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
49. Passmore, Philosophical Reasoning, p.
50. Ayer, pp. 45-46.
51. Jaakko Hintikka, 'Cogito, Ergo Sum: Inference or Performance?' The Philosophical Review, LXXI, 1 (January, 1962): 3-32.  
George Nakhnikian, 'On the Logic of Cogito Propositions,' Nous, III (1969): 197-210.
52. There is much recent discussion on what is acceptable self-reference and what is not. See, for example, W.D. Hart, 'On Self-Reference,' The Philosophical Review, LXXIX, 4 (October, 1970): 523-528.
53. Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., 'Self-Referential Inconsistency, Inevitable Falsity, and Metaphysical Argumentation,' Metaphilosophy, III (1972): 26-44. This and the next paragraph essentially summarize (with improvements) Boyle's views. See also Boyle, et. al., 'Determinism, Freedom, and Self Referential Arguments,' The Review of Metaphysics, XXVI, 1 (September, 1972): 18-20.
54. J.L. Mackie, 'Self-Refutation -- A Formal Analysis,' The Philosophical Quarterly, 14, 56 (July, 1964): 193-203.
55. Ibid., p. 194.
56. Ibid., p. 195.
57. Passmore, p. 60.
58. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
59. As Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. points out in 'Self-Refutation and Validity,' The Monist, 48, 4 (October, 1964): 467-485, even such radical claims are self-refuting only when their use is taken into account, and only when something is being asserted, that is, only when intention is taken into account. Whereas intention may be more fundamental than facts about the speaker, it is only a matter of degree, not kind. So, for example, seeing the untenability of holding that he can inform others that no one can inform anyone of anything, the skeptic is led to distinguish between informing and advising, etc. Since we agreed to discount non-cognitive Pyrrhonism, we are not interested in this maneuver.

60. Passmore, pp. 79-80.
61. John Kekes, 'Skepticism, Rationalism, and Language,' Metaphilosophy, II, 3 (July, 1971).
62. Otto Muck defends this method in 'The Logical Structure of Transcendental Method,' International Philosophical Quarterly, IX, 3 (September, 1969): 342-362. See also his book, The Transcendental Method (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968).
63. Frederic B. Fitch, Symbolic Logic (New York: The Roland Press, 1952), pp. 217-225. Reprinted in Copi and Gould as 'Self-Reference in Philosophy,' pp. 154-160. See p. 157.



## CHAPTER IV

### KANTIAN TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS

In this chapter I want to provide a promising theory of transcendental arguments. But to help develop this theory, and to place the progress of the dissertation vividly before your mind, I shall first recapitulate the salient structure of argument of the first three chapters.

#### I

In the first chapter of this dissertation I explained the epistemological solipsist thesis that we can never know with certainty that objective particulars exist by distinguishing it from other skeptical theses -- showing it to be a theoretical, non-radical, non-criteriological skepticism whose refutation entails, but is not entailed by, the refutation of other versions of epistemological skepticism -- and by explicating the central notions of philosophical certainty and objective particularity. The discussion of certainty may be summarized as follows:

#### Definitions

(Irrevisability)  $p$  is irrevisable for  $S$  at  $t$  iff it is impossible that there exists a  $t'$  later than  $t$  such that  $S$  is warranted in withholding  $p$  or believing not- $p$  at  $t'$ .

(Maximal warrant)  $p$  is maximally warranted for  $S$  at  $t$  iff it is unimaginable that there exists a  $p'$ , a  $t'$ , and an  $S'$ , such that  $p'$  is more warranted for  $S'$  at  $t'$  than  $p$  is for  $S$  at  $t$ .

(Exhaustive warrant)  $p$  is exhaustively warranted for  $S$  at  $t$  iff no new (confirming or disconfirming) evidence bearing on  $p$  will ever become available for  $S$  since the current evidence is exhaustive or complete, and the current evidence is positive.

(Unmistakability)  $p$  is unmistakable for  $S$  at  $t$  iff it is impossible that  $S$  believes  $p$  at  $t$  and  $p$  is false.

(Extendability) If  $S$  knows that  $p$  on the basis of  $e$ , then  $S$ 's knowledge is extendable iff for any true proposition  $g$ ,  $S$  would be completely justified in believing that  $p$  even if he knew that  $g$ .

(Hilpinen's indefeasibility) If  $S$  is completely justified in believing that  $p$  on the basis of  $e$ , the justification is indefeasible iff for any true proposition  $g$ ,  $S$  would be completely justified in believing that  $p$  even if he were completely justified in believing that  $g$ .

(Lehrer's indefeasibility) If  $S$  is completely justified in believing that  $p$  on the basis of  $e$ , the justification is indefeasible iff  $S$  would be completely justified in believing that  $p$  on the basis of  $e$  even if (for the sake of argument) he assumed any further true proposition  $g$ .

Conditions of adequacy for the explication of philosophical (Cartesian) certainty

- (A) Certainty is not an intrinsic property of propositions, but is a relation between a person or persons, a proposition or set of propositions, and a time or set of times.
- (B) Certainties need not be necessary truths.
- (C) Necessary truths need not be certainties.
- (D) Certainty is a standard-setting concept of epistemic appraisal.
- (E) Certainties need not be inferentially justifiable.
- (F) Knowledge does not imply certainty.

Argued claims

- (1) Irrevisability is necessary and sufficient for certainty.
- (2) Maximal warrant entails irrevisability.
- (3) Unmistakability does not entail irrevisability.
- (4) Irrevisability does not entail maximal warrant (nor exhaustive warrant).

- (5) Irrevisability does not entail unmistakability.
- (6) Unmistakability does not entail maximal warrant.
- (7) Maximal warrant does not entail unmistakability.
- (8) Extendability entails Hilpinen's infeasibility.
- (9) Extendability entails Lehrer's infeasibility.
- (10) Hilpinen's infeasibility entails Lehrer's infeasibility.
- (11) Lehrer's infeasibility does not entail Hilpinen's.
- (12) 'No true proposition makes p unjustified' entails, but is not entailed by, 'No known proposition makes p unjustified.'
- (13) 'No known proposition makes p unjustified' does not entail 'No justified true proposition makes p unjustified.'
- (14) Knowledge does not entail Hilpinen's infeasibility.
- (15) Knowledge does not entail Lehrer's infeasibility.
- (16) Irrevisability entails extendability.

Therefore,

- (17) Knowledge is not extendable.
- (18) Knowledge with certainty is extendable.

The upshot of the discussion is this. The extendability thesis entails the infeasibility requirement. But the infeasibility requirement was shown to be unnecessary for knowledge (in the ordinary sense). Since the extendability thesis entails a proposition whose truth is not a necessary condition of knowledge, the truth of the extendability thesis is not a necessary condition of knowledge. But although ordinary knowledge need not be extendable, knowledge with certainty must be extendable, since certainty implies irrevisability, and irrevisability implies extendability. Consequently, we have

sustained the legitimacy of the ordinary knowledge--knowledge with certainty distinction.

In the section on objective particulars, it was argued that objective particulars must be reidentifiable, that is, identifiable as the same thing in different perceptual situations at different times. Conjoined with existential and attributive independence, reidentifiability is sufficient for objective particularity. It was suggested, but not conclusively argued, that reidentifiability entails existential and attributive independence, so that all and only reidentifiable particulars are objective. Cautiously, all three conditions were retained in the analysis.

In the final section of the first chapter I adopted some procedural assumptions in deference to the skeptic: I accepted the egocentric predicament, allowed that the premises of my anti-skeptical argument must be philosophical certainties, and granted that all inferences from certainties must guarantee preservation of certainty (given that the inferences are known). These methodological assumptions required repudiation of naive realism, subjective-objective reductionism (phenomenalism), scientific realism, and any pragmatism which rejects foundationalism, or loosens beyond recognition the strictures imposed on the foundation of knowledge. I renounced the views that empirical knowledge is a community phenomenon necessarily based on data available to all (public), that certainty must be construed in terms of currently accepted norms governing the resolution



of determinate doubts, and the Aristotelian view that properly functioning senses under proper conditions give reliable knowledge of the world. I concluded by stressing the methodological character of my assumptions.

## II

In the second chapter I examined Strawsonian transcendental arguments and their uses. Pursuing the descriptive metaphysical method of exhibiting the invariant features of our conception of experience, Strawsonian transcendental arguments attempt to elicit the analytic implications of any coherent description of experience we can form. A description is coherent if and only if it is not formulable in a language  $L$  which is incoherent, that is, an  $L$  which is parasitic upon some class of languages  $K$ .  $L$  is parasitic upon a class of languages  $K$  if and only if none of the terms of  $L$  could be understood unless some suitable set of terms of some  $L'$  which is a member of  $K$  were understood.  $L$  is coherent if and only if it is not parasitic upon any  $K$ , each  $L'$  of which is different from  $L$ .

Strawson's thesis is that a form of experience is possible only if some language corresponding to it is coherent. He holds that any possible form of experience is coherently describable; he does not hold that every coherently describable form of experience is possible. He proceeds to argue that all describable experiencers (language-users) must be able to

use objectivity concepts (make assertions about objective particulars). His point is that no coherent language can be purely phenomenal or private, not that no language, that is, set of terms and formation rules, can be private.

After showing that arguments for the impossibility of exclusively adjectival languages are irrelevant to Strawson's conclusion, since a language without substantives designating reidentifiable particulars -- a sense datum language -- can also use non-sensory relational predicates, adverbs, and indexical expressions, I marshalled a series of criticisms of Strawson's objectivity argument, and his method in general. First, his argument illicitly shifts from 'experience requires that there be a recognitional component' to the supposition that experience requires that we can distinguish a recognitional component. Second, even this stronger supposition is inadequate to Strawson's purposes, since the argument further equivocates on 'recognitional component,' originally meaning 'the ability to use a descriptive predicate' or 'general concept,' then meaning 'act of awareness' or 'subjective portion of experience.' There is an unjustifiable move from 'items can enter consciousness only if they are somehow classifiable' to 'items can enter consciousness only if we can be aware that we are experiencing them (only if they are classifiable as 'experiences')'. So although the proposition that all forms of experience must be aware of themselves as having experience is allegedly a lemma of the objectivity argument, we see that the question of its

truth is begged in the incipient, unsupported moves from experience, to judgable or describable experience, to self-conscious experience. And I argued that only if it must be possible to distinguish within experience a part of experience due to the subject and a part due to the independent object does it follow that a purely inner experiencer is impossible.

Next I noted that even if Strawson's argument were sound, all it would show is that the purely inner experiencer is unable to describe that his judgments contain general and particular components, or that he only experienced subjective states and not objective particulars -- in short, unable to do the philosophy of his own situation. It would not show that he could not judge which experiences he was having at any one time, which ability is sufficient for experience. Strawson's argument has not given us a reason to exclude the possibility of a language (i) not employing objectivity concepts, (ii) usable by itself, but (iii) describable only by means of a richer language with objectivity concepts. It has not been shown that any subject of experience we can make intelligible to ourselves must be a user of objectivity concepts, though it is true that to make it so intelligible to ourselves we must use such concepts. But that is trivial, since we are drawing the object--subject distinction in describing the experience. Therefore, the possibility of experience has not been shown to entail the ability to use objectivity concepts.

The defects of the objectivity argument were then generalized to Strawson's entire method of metaphysical reasoning. If something is entailed by the fact that we can conceive of a possible experience but not by the nature of possible experience itself, there is no reason to suppose it is true in all worlds in which there is experience. Further, I generated serious doubts about Strawson's appeal to conceivability as the test of metaphysical possibility, since no clear, suitable sense of 'conceivability' was discovered in which conceivability entailed possibility.

The unsuitability of Strawson's method as a weapon against epistemological solipsism became more obvious when we studied the transcendental argument of Individuals. As we saw, this anti-skeptical argument amounted to asserting that the skeptic cannot both agree and disagree with us, cannot accept our conceptual scheme which allows for reidentification of objects and then always doubt or deny particular-identity claims about objects. Strawson says that we do have the idea of a single spatiotemporal system of material objects, and that this requires unquestioning acceptance of particular identity in at least some cases of non-continuous observation.

The argument Strawson provides for establishing this requirement is flawed. It needs the premise that the salient topological properties of a framework have their analogue in the reidentifiable particulars housed. But the locational relations between particulars, not the dimensions of the par-



ticulars, are to be correlated with the number of dimensions of the framework in which they are located

But more generally, Strawson wholly misconstrues the skeptic. The skeptic does not claim the unusability of the ordinary scheme. He uses it in debate. But he uses concepts which he thinks may be unnecessary for describable experience, and which he thinks are employed without rational credentials. The designata of such concepts cannot be shown to be better than fictions.

I distinguished three levels of argument here. We can articulate the subjective conditions of experience, thought, or judgment, that is, show which concepts are indispensable for thought or judging to be possible. This has some anti-skeptical bite, showing that the referents of the concepts in question are not merely useful fictions. But, for all such an argument shows, they may still be fictions, even if indispensable ones. Natural beliefs, indispensable elements in our mental makeup, need not be rationally defensible. Following Kant, I called this a 'metaphysical deduction' of such concepts. A transcendental deduction is needed to show that the concepts everyone must use in order to make judgments are justifiably used. But Strawsonian transcendental arguments, parasitism arguments articulating the conditions of our description of thought, are regressive or analytical like Kant's argument of the Prolegomena. They assume the general structure of our conceptual scheme and beg questions of justification.

Consequently, Strawson's transcendental method is misguided. Further, the sorts of results the method could possibly issue in are completely trivial. For example, that any self-conscious experienter, or self-describing language-user, must be a user of the concept 'my experience' or 'my language-use' is absolutely trivial. The conceptual needs of the self-reflective epistemologist are different from those of the minimally inquisitive experienter; yet the latter is a conscious, judging agent nonetheless. Still further, it is doubtful whether conclusions about the possibility of experience can be established. Even if C is parasitic upon C', it does not follow that experiencing Cs presupposes the ability to experience C's. Although to experience Cs as Cs requires the grasp of C' (or the ability to use 'C'' or some other word synonymous with, or a translation of, it), Cs may be experienced under some coextensional but not cointensional description not requiring the grasp of C'.

Largely for the reasons summarized in this section, I saw no redemptive attraction in following Strawson's path.

### III

In the third chapter I negatively assessed the merits of various, supplementary anti-skeptical resources, including paradigm case arguments, non-vacuous contrast arguments, some variations on parasitism arguments, verificationist arguments, and arguments from self-refutation. As regards

paradigm case arguments, the issue was whether the expression 'objective particular' or specific objectivity expressions must be learned by reference to cases, whether they are comprehensible only by showing or exhibiting instances of their application. First I argued that even if concept empiricism for simple, sensible predicates is true, such a route to objective particulars seems to work only if objective particulars are collocations of sensible properties. But then I argued that paradigm case arguments could never demonstrate the reality of objective particulars, since for the learning of terms, an apparent example is as good as a real one. In the case of every paradigm case argument, the question is whether the paradigm features appealed to are supported by good reasons for the usage in question being what it is. This question of justification is not answered by appeal to cases.

Support for the faltering paradigm is offered by the non-vacuous contrast principle that 'F' is meaningfully applicable to a only if there are possible cases of as which are not F. The principle is impugned. But even if true, all it could establish is that it is possible, for all we know, that objective particulars exist. We could not conclude that objective particulars do exist, and so not that we can know with certainty that they do. At best it shows that we cannot know that objective particulars do not exist, that skepticism cannot be established. Like parasitism, paradigm case and non-vacuous contrast arguments rest their case on the need to make various

empirical distinctions, but they fail to realize that the skeptic need not be (and typically is not) blind to the actual use of any of these. He worries about justification, not practice.

As regards verificationism, Stroud argued that a transcendental argument without a verificationist premise fails to refute skepticism, while a transcendental argument with a verificationist premise is superfluous, since verificationism alone directly refutes skepticism. So whether or not verificationism is tenable, I must show that transcendental arguments do not require appeal to it. For if transcendental arguments require a verificationist premise and verificationism is untenable, then transcendental arguments are unsound. And if transcendental arguments require a verificationist premise and verificationism is tenable, then, given that verificationism by itself suffices to refute skepticism, transcendental arguments are superfluous.

In this chapter I shall meet Stroud's challenge by showing that transcendental arguments do not rest on any version of verificationism. But in chapter III I argued that Stroud's verificationist cannot refute the skeptic. Stroud's skeptic claims that (i) a particular class of propositions makes sense, and (ii) we can never know whether any of them are true. Stroud's transcendentalist claims that (1) the truth of (i) is a necessary condition of the meaningfulness of the skeptical position expressed in (ii), and (2) the falsity of (ii) is a



necessary condition of the truth of (i). (2) says that if propositions of a certain kind are meaningful it must be possible to know if they (some of them) are true or false. This is a version of verificationism. The precise statement of this principle as applied to the skeptical thesis is given as follows: If the notion of objective particulars makes sense to us, then we can sometimes know certain conditions to be fulfilled, the fulfillment of which logically implies either that objects continue to exist unperceived or that they do not.

Stroud holds that this principle provides a direct and conclusive answer to the skeptic since it follows from the principle that if the skeptic's claim that we can never know that objects continue to exist unperceived makes sense, it must be false, since if the proposition that objects continued to exist unperceived could not be known to be true or known to be false, it would make no sense. But Stroud's inference is invalid. If the proposition that objects continue to exist makes sense, then, according to the principle, either it or its contradictory can be conclusively verified. But nothing in the verificationist principle guarantees that the realist proposition rather than its skeptical denial will turn out to be the knowable truth. And so nothing in the principle conclusively refutes the skeptic.

If a class of propositions makes sense only if it is false that we can never know whether any one of them is true, it follows at best that complete suspension of judgment with

respect to all the members of that class is illegitimate. But, instantiating to propositions about particular reidentity, on these grounds, to deny our knowledge of persistence is as respectable as affirming it. To avoid this criticism, Stroud's verificationist must delete the final disjunct of his principle and so maintain that the notion of objective particulars makes sense to us only if we can sometimes know that certain criteria entailing the existence of unperceived objects are satisfied. Generally, all meaningful claims would have to be conclusively verifiable, and not merely verifiable or falsifiable. But the general principle is obviously wrong; it entails that everything understood is true, everything meaningfully talked about exists. If so, the claim about objective particulars cannot be justified as an instance of (this version of) verificationism.

Notice that several of the argument-kinds we have considered are designed to show that if epistemological solipsism were true, its statement would be unintelligible; hence, the falsity of solipsism is a necessary condition of its meaningfulness. Srzednicki's variation on Strawson was a putative instance of this strategy. Because (A) I am identical with the world, I cannot say (B) all appearances of the existence of other things are misleading, since I could not form the concept 'object other than I' in a solipsistic universe. Assuming the equivalence between having a concept and being able to use and understand words, we conclude that (B) cannot be stated or understood by anyone if (A) is true, since if (A),

the concept 'object other than I' cannot be formed by anybody, and if a concept cannot be formed by anybody, then (unless it is innate) it cannot be possessed by anybody, and so nobody could use it in making judgments. But it is rightly agreed that (B) does express a proposition about something other than the solipsist-speaker's self. So the supposition that (A&B) completely and correctly describes the world must be false.

In criticism, I argued that 'Necessarily, nothing exists which is not the world or some part of it' does not entail (the falsehood that) we cannot frame a concept of something not in the world. (A) entails (B). But no inconsistency has been established between (A) and the fact that the subject mentioned in (A) has an extensive repertoire of concepts, including 'object other than I.' To succeed, the argument must wrongly assume that all objects of thought must exist. Further, I argued that 'object other than I' is not unframeable given the resources of the solipsistic universe; it is a complex concept which frameable constituents. Anyhow, I note that epistemological solipsism is not a metaphysical thesis (and the metaphysical thesis (A) does all the work in the above). And so it becomes more evident that things other than I or my mental states are thinkable, and that claims about them are meaningfully expressible. It is just, the claim is, that their existence is not knowable (with certainty).

Next I considered Bennett's attempted refutation of epistemological solipsism. Based on a theory of concept-utility,

Bennett argued that the solipsist can have no concept of the past. Now it is impossible that a man S knows that he is so-and-so if being so-and-so excludes self-consciousness; 'Being so-and-so excludes self-consciousness for S' entails 'S does not know that he is so-and-so.' But S is self-conscious only if he can use the concept 'my experience now.' And the ability to use the concept 'my experience now' requires the ability to use the concept 'my experience then.' Therefore, he concludes, self-consciousness requires knowledge of the past. Therefore, nobody could know that anybody, including himself, was having a purely inner experience. Therefore, it is not possible that S knows what his inner experience is like while wondering whether there is an objective world, since if S knows what his inner experience is like, he must know something of its past history, and so inhabit an objective world and know that he does so.

The initial stage of Bennett's argument was seen to rest on the falsehood that no one possesses non-uniquely-functional concepts. He infers that the inner experiencer has no concept of the past from the fact that there is no non-redundant function such a concept would serve such an experiencer. But lacking a distinctive use does not imply lacking a use. Still, suppose the solipsist can make no judgments about the past. The move from 'S is self-conscious only if he has a concept of the past' to 'self-consciousness requires knowledge of the past' is unwarranted; it is enough that S believe, even wrongly, or



even be able to believe wrongly, that he has a past.

Yet if we grant the early stage of the argument, allowing that S can know he lacks a concept of the past only if he is self-conscious, that the solipsist lacks a concept of the past, and that self-consciousness requires a concept of the past, we can validly infer that the solipsist cannot know he lacks a concept of the past. But then he cannot know he cannot make judgments about his past, and so cannot know he cannot make justified, true judgments about his past. Hence, he cannot know he has no knowledge of the past. But suppose we still further grant that knowledge of the objective world requires knowledge of the past, so that the solipsist, since he cannot know he has no knowledge of the past, cannot know he has no knowledge of the objective world. This just shows that the epistemological solipsist could not know that epistemological solipsism was true. As with Strawson, this just shows that a purely inner experiencer cannot recognize his epistemic status, not that a purely inner experiencer is impossible. And again, not knowing the truth of skepticism is different than knowing the truth of anti-skepticism. So Bennett's variation on Strawson was shown to be too weak.

Extending my criticism to an improved version of Bennett's strategy, I urged that even if solipsism of the moment is impossible, it does not follow that a purely inner experiencer is impossible. To show otherwise is to show that an experience of past and present mental states alone is impossible, that a

language with a functional past and present tense must be non-private. This lead to a discussion of the private language argument, the response to which was essentially this: My descriptions of my experiences being intelligible to others is not a necessary condition of their being intelligible to myself. The purely inner experienter claims to have appropriate terms for specifying things; it is not incumbent on him to specify those things in some language different from his own to prove the meaningfulness of his language. One need not be able to describe semantic rules to understand a language, since the highest metalanguage must just be understood on its own if any sublanguage is to be understood. Further, it is not necessary that the question whether I keep or break any rules should be subject to a social check. Some identification or recognition must be accepted without further check, so the realist is in the same boat as the solipsist. The solipsist's use of rules will be shown by the inferences he draws concerning the features of his experiences; if he infers, he is operating with rules, whether he explicitly formulates them or not.

In the final section of chapter III various accounts of performative or pragmatic inconsistency are stated. Pragmatic inconsistency is a relation between what a sentence is used to express (the proposition intended by the statement using the sentence) and some feature of the event of the statement's actual assertion -- a relation between a speech

act and a proposition. Propositions which stand in this relation, though logically contingent, are falsified by inescapable aspects of their utterance, aspects which are ineliminable by paraphrase or translation. But I argued that (i) the negations of such propositions can at best be certainties only about a subject, his activities, capabilities, experiences, and so on, and not about the objective world. In particular, we cannot prove that objective particulars exist by asserting otherwise and carefully attending to that event of verbal expression. And (ii) when the occurrence of the assertive operation refutes its content, the content itself is not irremediably refuted; it is just shown that a certain way of presenting a certain view is unsatisfactory -- the view may be presented and supported in other ways.

I concluded the chapter by arguing that various speech act theories and presupposition arguments, intended as interpretations of transcendental argument, are variations on the same theme, and are subject to the same limitations.

#### IV

In chapter II I argued at length that parasitism or concept-dependency arguments to conclusions about conceptual indispensability were ineffectual weapons against epistemological solipsism. I also criticized instances of a different strategy -- that <sup>of</sup> arguing for the priority of one kind of entity to another from the priority of one kind of entity to another, where the

priority claimed in the premises differs from the priority claimed in the conclusion. In an effort to generalize my criticism, and rule out another candidate for transcendental argument, in this section I shall define eight important senses of 'priority,' and then argue that no interesting inference from one sense to another is permissible.

The senses of 'priority' I want to define are (1) conceptual, (2) identificational, (3) reidentificational, (4) doxastic, (5) epistemic, (6) ontic commitment, (7) experiential, and (8) ontological. The definitions are as follows:

- (D1) X is conceptually prior to Y for a person S iff S could not grasp the concept Y (or intelligently use the word 'Y' or some synonym or translation) without grasping the concept X, but not conversely.
- (D2) Xs are identificationally prior to Ys for a person S iff S could not identify things of kind Y without reference to things of kind X, but not conversely. ('To identify' here means 'to individuate,' that is, 'to pick or single out some particular member of a class,' as names and definite descriptions are typically used to do, and not 'to classify or describe sortally.')
- (D3) Xs are reidentificationally prior to Ys for a person S iff the reidentification criteria for things of kind Y turn in part on the identities of Xs, but the reidentification criteria for Xs do not turn on the identities of particulars of kind Y. (Again, reidentification is identification as numerically the same in different perceptual situations at different times.)
- (D4) Xs are doxastically prior to Ys for S iff if S did not believe that things of kind X existed, he could not believe that things of kind Y existed, but if S did not believe that things of kind Y existed, he might still believe that things of kind X existed.
- (D5) Xs are epistemically prior to Ys for S iff if S did not know that things of kind X existed, he could not know that things of kind Y existed, but not conversely.



- (D6) Xs have priority of ontic commitment to Ys for S iff S must countenance the existence of Xs if he is to countenance the existence of Ys, but not conversely.
- (D7) Xs are experientially prior to Ys for S iff Ys are experienceable only if Xs are, but not conversely.
- (D8) Xs are ontologically prior to Ys iff Ys could not exist unless Xs did, but not conversely.

Many notions of derived reality, dependence and independence, parasitism and self-sustenance or coherence, indispensability, primitiveness, simplicity or unanalyzability, are definable in terms of the resources just given. In particular, a basic kind of entity -- the kind of entity metaphysicians and some epistemologists seek -- is simply a kind of entity that is more basic than (prior to), or at least no less basic than (not posterior to), any other kind of entity.

We are now in a position to assess the various forms of inference from one sense of 'priority' to another. First, recall the simplifying fact that identificational priority and priority of ontic commitment, as commonly construed, are equivalent. On the Russell-Quine view, commitment is carried by the quantified variables (function-satisfiers, for Russell) of the canonical language because this happens to be the referential apparatus of the language. And so the general point would be that we need not countenance the existence of anything we need not refer to. One can say what needs saying by picking out other referents. But identificational dependents are just those things we need not refer to. Therefore, to say

that the variables of the canonical language must range over Xs is just to say in a particular, theory-laden way, that Xs are identificationally basic.

Even after this reduction, the remaining seven senses of 'priority' allow of forty two pairwise permutations. I shall focus on some key inference-forms, and after showing that they are invalid, explain why pursuit of the others is uninteresting.

I have already shown that conceptual priority does not imply experiential priority. Even if understanding concept Y requires understanding concept X, it does not follow that experiencing Ys presupposes the ability to experience Xs. Although to experience Ys as Ys requires the grasp of X (or the ability to use 'X' or some other word synonymous with, or a translation of, it), Ys may be experienced under some other coextensional but not cointensional description not requiring the grasp of X. In our earlier example, even if experiencing my subjective states as 'states' requires the ability to use objectivity concepts, those states may be experienced under another description, such as 'redlike and roundlike,' which does not entail the ability to use objectivity concepts.

By similar reasoning, identificational priority does not imply conceptual priority. Because even if individuatability does imply classifiability, there is in general nothing to prevent the use of coextensional but not cointensional classificatory concepts in individuation.

Nor does identificational priority imply epistemic priority. For suppose identification of Ys requires reference to Xs. Since I can refer to non-actual possibles, the Xs I must refer to may not exist. But if the Xs do not exist, then I cannot know that they do exist. But then it is possible to know that the Ys I am identifying exist without knowing that Xs exist. Therefore, identificational priority does not imply epistemic priority.

Doxastic priority does not imply epistemic priority -- that belief in the existence of Ys requires belief in the existence of Xs does not entail that knowledge that Ys exist requires knowledge that Xs exist. From the doxastic priority of Xs all that follows is that, if S knows that Ys exist, he must believe that Xs exist. The doxastic priority of Xs does not give us the materials for eliciting that S's belief about Xs is true or justified.

This same line of reasoning shows that conceptual priority does not imply epistemic priority. The best argument in favor of the implication fails: Knowledge requires judgment and judgment requires the use of concepts. Hence, if you could not use various concepts unless you could use X-concepts, you could not make the various, corresponding judgments or knowledge-claims unless you could make judgments about Xs, and so could not know that the various things in question existed unless you knew that Xs existed. The final inference is fallacious; what follows is only that you could not know that the various

things in question (Ys) existed unless you could make judgments about Xs. Knowledge is not required.

And again, by parity of reasoning, conceptual priority does not imply doxastic priority. For suppose that grasping the concept X is required for grasping the concept Y. Then, supposing that belief requires the use of concepts, believing that Ys exist requires understanding the concept Y. (Even this is unwarranted, as the coextensionality argument shows.) By transitivity of implication, all we can deduce is that believing that Ys exist requires understanding the concept X -- belief that Xs exist is not required.

Since belief is "weaker" than knowledge, one may have anticipated the failure of doxastic priority to imply epistemic priority. But it may be surprising to observe that the converse entailment does not hold either. Even though knowledge implies belief, from the premise that knowing that Ys exist requires knowing that Xs exist, we cannot conclude that believing that Ys exist requires believing that Xs exist. Knowing p entails knowing q is not equivalent to knowing that p entails q. The latter --  $K(p \text{ entails } q)$  -- conjoined with the assumption that p is known, entails that q is known.<sup>1</sup> And  $K(p \text{ entails } q)$  obviously entails  $B(p \text{ entails } q)$  -- where B is the belief operator -- which if conjoined with Bp, entails Bq (where we are dealing with minimally rational belief). So if S knows that p entails q, then p is doxastically prior to q. But epistemic priority asserts that S's knowing p entails



his knowing  $q$ , which does not entail that  $S$  knows that  $p$  entails  $q$ . And there are no other grounds for getting from epistemic to doxastic priority.

What about inferences to ontological priority? Epistemic priority does not imply ontological priority. For example, a person could not know subatomic particles existed unless he knew that macro-objects existed, but the existence of subatomic particles does not depend on the existence of macro-objects.

Nor does identificational priority imply ontological priority. We can infer from the fact that the identifiability of  $Y$ s depends on reference to  $X$ s, that such identifiability depends on the existence of  $X$ s only if we add the premise that we can refer to  $X$ s only if  $X$ s exist. But as above, the additional premise is false.

Finally, the thrust of very many of my arguments in chapters II and III was to show that conceptual priority does not imply ontological priority.

The above ten entailment-failures are the crucial ones. I have shown that identificational priority does not imply conceptual, epistemic, or ontological priority. So, for example, it is uninteresting to our enterprise whether conceptual priority implies identificational priority, since nothing of interest follows from identificational priority. And other inference-forms, even if valid, would be useless in establishing the kind of existential conclusions we are seeking. For example, it is clear that neither doxastic, epistemic, nor experiential

priority is implied by ontological priority, but even if they were, they would be for us impotent forms of reasoning.

In this section I have argued that a central method of metaphysical reasoning, cross-categorical priority arguments, is defective. If the argument is sound, then certain versions of transcendental arguments ought to be abandoned. I stress 'certain versions' because I am not disposed to a conclusion of despair. Rather, I await consideration of what Kant thought he was up to, because I think that he was up to none of these things, but things much better.

# V

If a Kantian transcendental argument is to refute skepticism on its own terms, then, trivially, it must minimally use premises whose truth is acknowledged by the skeptic. So if the skeptic acknowledges his consciousness of a succession of diverse perceptions, but, noting the logical gap between the character of this accepted evidence and the character of external continuants, refuses to acknowledge knowledge of objective particulars, a successful refutation may perhaps begin with the fact of consciousness. But if transcendental principles are deducible from the fact of consciousness as well as the fact of empirical knowledge of objective particulars, then they cannot be definitive or criteriological marks of objective particularity. We are faced with the following dilemma: If transcendental principles are deducible

from the fact of Humean experience, then they cannot be used to make out the objective particular--subjective state distinction. If transcendental principles are not deducible from the fact of Humean experience, but only from the fact of knowledge of objective particulars, then the skeptic is not refuted.

Letting P be the class of subjective propositions, Q the class of corresponding objective propositions, and R the class of transcendental propositions, we may extend this problem by arguing that the overall strategy of transcendental arguments would seem to have to be one of the following: (1) P entails Q, which in turn entails R; (2) P entails R, which in turn entails Q; (3) Q entails R, which in turn entails P; (4) Q entails P, which in turn entails R; (5) R entails P, which in turn entails Q; or (6) R entails Q, which in turn entails P. Now (5) and (6) may be rejected out of hand. Transcendental propositions are not proved on them at all. (3) and (4) may also be summarily rejected. Not only do they assume something which the skeptic denies, but even the transcendentalist is not prepared to say which set of particular claims concerning objective particulars is true.

For several reasons, (1) and (2) are also unacceptable. On both, P entails Q. But if we could show that the truth of particular objective knowledge-claims is deducible from corresponding claims about subjective consciousness, then we would have a method which, far more powerful than transcenden-



talism presumes to be, could answer another skeptical question of how, at any given time, we know which perceptions, if any, are veridical, and which illusory. Further, since Q clearly entails R -- if we know particular claims about objective particulars to be true, we know that there are objective particulars -- a method which allowed derivations of Q-propositions from P-propositions would render a transcendental method superfluous. Further, (2) must be rejected on the grounds that, as will be elaborated later, particular empirical statements are not deducible from transcendental principles. Finally, to reintroduce one horn of the original dilemma, if (1) is correct, the subjective state--objective particular distinction via transcendental principles suffers obliteration.

(1)-(6) oversimplified the alternatives. Perhaps we can preserve the test of objectivity by holding that Q entails R but P does not. But if P does not entail R, given that it does not entail Q, we have failed to answer the skeptic. To refute skepticism and preserve obvious truths (such as the inferrability of 'S knows that something is F' from 'S knows that the objective particular, a, is F'), the transcendental method must countenance the following logical relations: P entails R, Q entails R, P does not entail Q, R does not entail Q, R does not entail P; it is optional to permit that Q entails P. This handles all of the above objections except that transcendental principles cannot provide criteria of objectivity. But is this a worrisome objection?



I think not. I take it to be a fundamental tenet of Kantian philosophy that both states of objects and states of persons are parts of the same natural order, and that transcendental conditions of knowledge, therefore, do not accord privileged status to either type of state. There could be justified knowledge-claims about neither objective particulars nor mental states of persons unless transcendental principles were true. So I suggest that conformity to rules of synthesis, reproduction of the diverse contents of consciousness according to rules, does not distinguish knowledge of the external world from knowledge of our inner experiences.

A brief excursion into Wolff's interpretation of Kant in his Kant's Theory of Mental Activity will help clarify the objection and my response to it.<sup>2</sup> On Wolff's view, all consciousness has synthetic unity; all the changing contents of consciousness are united as my thoughts. This unity is acquired as the result of (and presumably only in virtue of) a certain activity or operation called 'synthesis,' which organizes our perceptions in rule-governed ways. There exists an order of representations qua mental contents or immediate objects of consciousness. This is the subjective time-order and is part of the mental history of an individual. Synthesizing these representations, reproducing them according to rules, produces an order of representations qua representations (signifying something other than themselves), which is necessary

and so, since necessity of connection, order or organization is definitive of 'objectivity,' objective. 'Connection in the object' therefore means 'connection of the contents of consciousness qua representations.' Therefore, the very synthetic activity which produces the unity of consciousness produces the objective realm.

Now Wolff holds that conformity to rule-governed ways of organizing perceptions, which are the categories (or equivalently for him, the categorial principles), provides a way to distinguish necessary connection or objectivity from subjective association or subjectivity, in terms immanent to experience. Thus he seems to be supporting the view I am trying to reject, that transcendental principles provide criteria of objectivity. But this is a confusion; the view Wolff's interpretation supports is different from the view I want to reject. The source of difference lies in the meaning of 'objectivity.'

If 'empirical knowledge' means 'empirical knowledge of objective particulars,' and 'objectivity' means 'physical objectivity,' then to argue that transcendental principles provide criteria of objective knowledge is to argue that all and only (justified) knowledge-claims about objective particulars satisfy those principles. But this view is both false and un-Kantian. For example, consider the conditional categorial principle of causality that every objective happening follows from some precedent occurrence in a lawlike manner.

Every mental event, as well as every physical event, must satisfy this principle. On the interpretation under consideration, this would not be so. A subjective judgment, a judgment about a sense impression, unlike an objective judgment which makes reference to an objective particular, cannot conform to categories, and so cannot conform to the category of succession according to a rule. But after all, the entire thrust of Kant's anti-Cartesian program is to show that the contents of consciousness are not better known than the fact that objective particulars exist. To require satisfaction of an additional, special condition to move from subjective awareness to physical objectivity flies in the face of this enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

Wolff's view, however, does not suffer from this defect. Since he holds that the synthetic unity which confers objectivity is the act of judgment or cognition, at bottom he holds that all judgments conform to categories. Even organized subjective experiences have objectivity. And this is how it should be. Suppose I want to talk about my mental contents, which are themselves representations. To do so I must judge about them by means of other representations. But this talk is perfectly objective. All judgments are representations of representations. Whether the subject-representation represents something mental or physical is irrelevant to the question at hand. The Kantian view is that all experience, whether part of systematic doctrine or not, whether purported experience of the outer or the inner, conforms to the true transcendental

principles. Wolff's interpretation supports this view.<sup>4</sup>

Having discovered the objection that transcendental principles cannot provide criteria of objectivity to be faulty, we can reaffirm the need to accept the following logical relations: subjective propositions entail transcendental propositions; objective propositions entail transcendental propositions; subjective propositions do not entail objective propositions; transcendental propositions do not entail either subjective or objective propositions.

We should also repeat that the transcendental proposition in question here is the proposition that objective particulars exist, not, in departure from the prevalent goal of Kantian advocates, that we must be able to use concepts of objective particulars. We wish to argue that in order to have experience, objective particulars must exist, but it is not the case that the experiencer must have or have had knowledge that any specific objective particulars exist or have existed. A transcendental argument will attempt to show that all experience, inner or outer, must take place in a world of objective particulars. It does not show that each experiencer must have the concept 'objective particular,' which he uses in making specific, true, justified knowledge-claims about the external world. The strategy is to show that while the skeptic may play his game, his activity implies that there are objective particulars, and, consequently, implies that his position is mistaken.



## VI

We distinguished the classes of subjective (claims about one's particular subjective states), objective (claims about specific objective particulars), and transcendental propositions -- in the present case, the proposition that objective particulars exist. Now let the class of 'acknowledged' propositions contain exactly those claims in fact accepted by both skeptic and transcendentalist. Let the class of 'irrelevant' propositions contain all those propositions rejected by both skeptic and transcendentalist, and all, if any, rejected by the transcendentalist but accepted by the skeptic, and nothing else. Let the class of 'contested' propositions contain just those claims in fact rejected by the skeptic but accepted by the transcendentalist. I use 'reject' as meaning 'deny or withhold,' and not so that rejecting a proposition entails accepting the negation of that proposition; otherwise, rejected propositions would be contested. And let the class of 'privileged' propositions contain all and only those claims which must be true if anyone is to enter into discourse or debate.

The class of subjective propositions is identical with the class of acknowledged propositions. The class of objective propositions is either a subset of the class of irrelevant propositions or a proper subset of the class of contested propositions, depending on whether or not the transcendentalist happens to reject the view that we can sometimes know, at a given time, that our perception is veridical at that time.

The anti-skeptical transcendental proposition is a member of the class of contested propositions.

To refute the skeptic, we cannot assume what he denies; hence, no contested proposition may appear as a premise in a transcendental argument. But is it enough to assume only what the skeptic accepts? Is an argument with only acknowledged (and, perversely, irrelevant) propositions as premises sufficient to refute skepticism? If we show that something the skeptic accepts entails something he denies, we show he holds inconsistent beliefs. But unless we enjoy the felicitous situation in which the very position we wish to refute asserts the truth of what he accepts and the falsity of what he contests, our argument would merely be ad hominem, and would not conclusively refute the skeptical thesis itself.

The skeptical position of the Cartesian-Humean idealist happens to be of the felicitous sort. It states that we know with certainty the truth of various subjective propositions, but cannot know with certainty that objective particulars exist. To deduce the existence of objective particulars from our knowledge of our inner states therefore refutes this position. It does not, however, establish our certain knowledge of the external world unless it is true that our claims about our particular subjective states are certainties. Consequently, if we wish to establish the certainty of the non-conditional transcendental proposition that objective particulars exist, our refutation of Cartesianism suffices if, and only if, the

acknowledged premises used are certainties as well. Now the class of privileged propositions is a subset of the class of certainties. Therefore, if the premises of our argument are privileged, the argument establishes the certainty of the existential, transcendental principle.

Notice that I said that valid inferences from privileged premise-sets are sufficient proofs of certainty. I did not say they were necessary, and if there are certainties which are not privileged, they are not necessary. There are non-privileged certainties, such as Descartes' cogito. The proposition that I am thinking is irrevisable for me whenever I affirm it. At no later time can I have reason to doubt (disbelieve or withhold) the proposition that I am thinking, for whenever I consider a reason, I am doing some considering, and since considering is a species of thinking, any such putative doubt-maker would self-destruct. And as regards thinking that I was thinking at an earlier time, that is, remembering, the proposition to be assessed -- that I was thinking then -- is different **from** the original proposition, and so the dubitability of the former fails to impugn the acceptance-value of the latter. Therefore, that I am thinking is a certainty for me. But it is not a privileged proposition. It is not the case that 'I am thinking' must be true if anyone is to enter into discourse or debate.

It does turn out, however, that transcendental propositions are privileged. So we must stipulate that those pri-

vileged propositions which are transcendental cannot appear among the premises of a transcendental argument. Otherwise, not only would we beg the question, but if our transcendental arguments always included transcendental premises, then, if a transcendental proposition always requires a deduction, a vicious regress is generated.

On the view I shall pursue, transcendental principles are principles which purport to be true of the actual world and can be known to be true in all possible worlds in which judgment occurs. And so it is natural to suppose that the transcendental procedure begins from the fact that judgment or thinking occurs and deduces the truth of the transcendental principle. But this poses a technical difficulty, given my definitions. The proposition that judgment occurs (that somebody or other is judging) is not only a privileged proposition -- it must be true if anyone is to enter into discourse or debate -- but is a transcendental proposition as well, since it purports to be true of the actual world and can be known to be true in all possible worlds in which judgment occurs.

In response, we may simply decide to say that it is the anti-skeptical transcendental proposition which is contested and so cannot be assumed, and allow that there are other transcendental propositions, such as that judgment occurs, which the skeptic accepts, and so can be used without begging any questions. Or we could simply amend our definitions to obviate the difficulty. But it so happens that there is a way out



with preservation of present machinery. Privileged propositions have this peculiar feature that, for those of existential form, their existential instantiations are not privileged, although they may still be certain. So, for example, while the proposition that somebody or other is judging is privileged, as was shown, the proposition that I am judging is not privileged but is still certain, as was shown. So since all transcendental propositions are privileged, the proposition that I am judging is not transcendental. Yet that proposition will serve as well as its existential generalization as premise of our transcendental argument.<sup>5</sup>

Two points should be noted concerning my characterization of transcendental principles. First, I claim they are true in any world in which any kind of judgment occurs; I do not restrict my claim by saying they are true only in worlds in which non-analytic judgment occurs. All judgment, whether analytic or synthetic in its logical form, is nevertheless synthetic activity. Further, not all judgments could be analytic, since not every judgment could be a rule of descriptive meaning. If there are rules of descriptive meaning, some judgments must have descriptive meaning, and hence be non-analytic.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, there is no possible world in which there are only analytic judgments.

Second, I claim that transcendental propositions are true in any world in which any kind of judgment occurs; I do not say 'any world in which judgment is possible.' To say

that someone has a capability for judging but never exercises that capability -- unlike someone who has a capability for eating fifteen pancakes but never exercises that capability -- seems nonsensical to me. It makes sense only in a situation where, for example, a baby is born unconscious and remains comatose for a long while; we might wish to suggest that when his physical affliction is removed, he will gain consciousness. But if this is the sense of 'possibility of judging,' then it is an insufficient starting-point for a transcendental argument.

So we wish to show that a certain kind of act requires the existence of a certain kind of object. All consciousness or judgmental activity takes place in a world of objective particulars. We do not flout the tradition which says that nothing will demonstrate necessary existence, that no existential claims can be necessary, that all necessities are ultimately conditional, when 'necessity' means 'logical necessity.' A transcendental argument cannot show principles to be true in all possible worlds simpliciter. But it can establish a relative, conditional, synthetic necessity -- that a certain concept is instantiated in all possible worlds in which judgment occurs. If we dispute about the concept, the concept has reference. If I soliloquize about the concept, it has reference. Most important, if I talk or think to myself about anything at all, the concept in question has reference.

The overall structure of a Kantian refutation of epistemo-

logical solipsism is, then, that what the solipsist acknowledges entails propositions sufficient to support the transcendental propositions he denies, so that what he accepts entails the transcendental conclusion. To this extent I agree with Beck's reading of Kant.<sup>7</sup> But Beck takes the starting-point of the refutation to be something merely accepted, but not certain. What distinguishes our argument from ad hominem argument is that all the premises are either analytic or philosophically certain synthetic propositions.

## VII

My partial account of transcendental arguments has rested on the philosophical demands of the skeptical case. In this section I want briefly to trace some textual confirmation of this account.

As is well known, transcendental truths are supposed to be a priori synthetic truths. The peculiarity of synthetic propositions, knowable a priori, is that their truth value can be determined independently of experience even though they tell us something about the world. A priori synthetic truths are truths which can be established conclusively despite the fact that formal logic and semantics are insufficient and particular observations are not necessary to do so. Appeal to particular facts of experience or observational procedures is not needed for the verification of propositions knowable a priori. But for necessary propositions, which tell us how

the world must be, verification by appeal to observations is not possible. On this understanding of the terms, all knowable necessities are knowable a priori.<sup>9</sup> But it does not follow from the fact that a proposition is knowable a priori that it is necessary. If 'necessary' means 'logically necessary,' then to deny this last claim is to affirm the impossibility of logically contingent a priori knowledge, and so to give up the Kantian enterprise.

Seen another way, if 'necessary' means 'logically necessary,' then, on Kant's official view at least, synthetic necessities would be impossible. In all analytic propositions, the concept of the subject contains the concept of the predicate or the complement of the predicate. S contains P if and only if 'not(<sup>all</sup>S are P)' is a contradiction (if 'S is P' is explicitly analytic) or is reducible to a contradiction by intersubstitution of definitional equivalents (if 'S is P' is implicitly analytic).<sup>10</sup> A proposition is synthetic if and only if it is not analytic. Hence, a synthetic necessity would be a logical truth whose contradictory is consistent. But this is impossible. Since, as we have introduced the notions, the synthetic and the logically contingent coincide, the impossibility was to be expected.<sup>11</sup>

Also, as we have introduced the notions, and as Kant rightly saw, no synthetic proposition is derivable from exclusively analytic propositions.<sup>12</sup> This can be shown as follows: A tautology is a propositional function which is true for all



possible values of the variables it contains. A proposition is analytic provided it is derivable from a tautology by substitution. As we said, a proposition is synthetic just in case it is non-analytic. Now suppose that  $p$  entails  $q$  and that  $p$  is a tautology. Since  $p$  is a tautology,  $\text{not-}p$  is a contradiction. If  $\text{not-}p$  is a contradiction, then, since anything follows from a contradiction,  $\text{not-}p$  entails  $q$ . Contraposing,  $\text{not-}q$  entails  $p$ . Contraposing our initial assumption,  $\text{not-}q$  entails  $\text{not-}p$ . Therefore,  $\text{not-}q$  entails  $p$  and  $\text{not-}p$ . Since whatever entails a contradiction is a contradiction,  $\text{not-}q$  is contradictory. But if  $\text{not-}q$  is contradictory,  $q$  is a tautology. Therefore, if  $p$  entails  $q$  and  $p$  is a tautology,  $q$  is a tautology. Since analytic propositions are tautology-derivable, but no non-analytic proposition is tautology-derivable, no synthetic propositions are derivable from analytic propositions alone. But since the denial of epistemological solipsism is a synthetic proposition, one stricture we can place on its proof is that at least one of its supportive premises must be non-analytic, that is, synthetic.

I raise these terminological questions in an effort to align orthodox Kantian doctrine with my partial account of it in sections V and VI. Specifically, I urge that there are useful and legitimate senses of 'necessary' such that necessary propositions in those senses are deducible without commission of modal fallacy from premise-sets some of whose members, though knowable with certainty, are not necessary in any of

those senses. A conclusion can only be as certain as its least certain premise. But the situations are different for the alethic and variants of non-alethic modalities.

Formally, a necessary conclusion may follow from premises some of which are non-necessary -- for example, if  $p$ , then necessarily  $q$ ;  $p$ ; therefore, necessarily  $q$ . This argument-form is valid, and an instance of it may even be sound. But it appears to be question-begging, since one could not know the first premise without first knowing the conclusion. More radically, since a necessary truth follows from anything or nothing, we may with formal propriety produce arguments none of whose premises are either necessary or true, or arguments whose premise-sets are null. But this is not a satisfactory way to refute an opponent.

All this is true for strong (S5) modal logic (where the alternativeness relation is an equivalence relation -- transitive, symmetric, and reflexive -- and so) where every possible world must be taken account of. Synthetic necessity is truth in all possible worlds in which synthetic activity occurs. Like epistemic, doxastic and other non-alethic modal notions, its domain is a proper subset of the set of all possible worlds. Consequently, if we have available the non-necessary but certain premise that synthetic activity is occurring (in our world), we are in a position to deduce synthetic necessities. If so, we will have deduced necessities from non-necessities, though certainties from certainties. In these circumstances,

we will have produced an argument which satisfies all of the procedural assumptions adopted in chapter I, section IV.

With this, we have the form of an answer to the Humean attack on a priori propositions of philosophy: A proposition can only be verified by reflecting on concepts or by recourse to observation. Philosophical principles can be verified in neither of these ways. Therefore, philosophical principles are unverifiable. Why should we accept the first premise? It is analytic only if 'going beyond concepts' is synonymous with 'having recourse to observation.' And if it is not analytic, then, if it is a priori, it is synthetic a priori, and the skeptic turns dogmatist. The Kantian answer is that it is not analytically true; it is false. We can verify philosophical principles by appeal to the logically contingent, but not inductive nor essentially introspective fact that conscious activity is occurring.<sup>13</sup>

In general, then, transcendental method begins with the act of judgmental consciousness and logically deduces the fact that certain a priori concepts are instantiated. In particular, we are trying to produce such a deduction for the concept 'objective particular.' The emphasis on the fact of conscious activity as premise, and existential proposition as conclusion, are both unusual. Yet consideration of some of Kant's crucial claims supports my emphasis. As my foremost concern remains philosophical, I do not intend my exegesis to be decisive or exhaustive.

At the opening of the 'Analytic of Concepts' in the Critique of Pure Reason Kant says two very important things.

By 'analysis of concepts' I do not understand their analysis, or the procedure usual in philosophical investigations, that of dissecting the content of such concepts as may present themselves, and so of rendering them more distinct; but the hitherto rarely attempted dissection of the faculty of the understanding itself, in order to investigate the possibility of concepts a priori by looking for them in the understanding alone, as their birthplace, and by analysing the pure use of this faculty. This is the proper task of a transcendental philosophy; anything beyond this belongs to the logical treatment of concepts in philosophy in general. (B90-91)

Transcendental philosophy, in seeking for its concepts, has the advantage and also the duty of proceeding according to a single principle. For these concepts spring, pure and unmixed, out of the understanding which is an absolute unity; and must therefore be connected with each other according to one concept or idea. Such a connection supplies us with a rule, by which we are enabled to assign its proper place to each pure concept of the understanding, and by which we can determine in an a priori manner their systematic completeness. (B92)

The first passage states that transcendental philosophy attempts to elicit the analytic implications of the use of the 'faculty of the understanding,' that is, the operation of judging, and does not proceed by articulating the constituent elements of any conceptual content. That the understanding is the use of concepts, and that 'the only use which the understanding can make of these concepts is to judge by means of them' (B93) is unequivocal throughout Kant. Further, in analyzing the pure use of understanding we consider only what follows from the occurrence of the act of thinking or judging in general, and not what additional conditions must obtain if particular acts of representation are to take place (vis a vis



their particular representative function).

The second passage reaffirms this truth, adding that since I am the judger who does all my judging, so that there is a self-reflexiveness about my analytical enterprise, I can expect a systematic interconnection between, and a completeness about, the various implications of the fact of judgmental consciousness. This interpretation also makes sense of Kant's claim that only one proof can be given for each transcendental principle. (B815-816) Our starting-point is always the same, and is the only logically synthetic premise in the proof.

Another very important statement to study is Kant's assertion that a transcendental argument must show 'how subjective conditions of thought can have objective validity.' (B122) In the very next sentence ('For appearances can certainly be given in intuition independently of functions of the understanding.') Kant appears to countenance the existence of non-judgmental consciousness which would be possible even if objective particulars did not exist. But this appearance is illusory. Inspection will reveal that the sentence functions dialectically. Kant means to say that it is not obvious that mere sense consciousness requires thinking -- which has its own requirements in turn, among which is the existence of objective particulars -- but it does. The subsequent argumentation bears this out.

Kant's question is how subjective conditions of thought

can have objective validity; it is not how subjective judgments can be verified. Again, he is not anxious to provide criteria for distinguishing truth from falsity in everyday empirical judgments.<sup>14</sup> The conditions of thought, the concepts indispensable to all judging, must be shown to be objectively valid, that is, to be instantiated. It is not the case that each judgment requires the use of objectivity concepts -- where objectivity is contrasted with subjectivity, not in the sense in which all judging is objective, the sense of 'object' employed by Wolff, and used in noteworthy statements such as that 'the a priori conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience.' (B197)<sup>15</sup> What is meant is that no judging could occur at all unless the concept of an object were instantiated.

I confess that I am taking an unequivocal stand on an equivocal issue. Sometimes Kant identifies the objective validity of a concept with its having sense or meaning, as in B195. We saw that those taking the Wittgensteinian variant of the linguistic turn subscribe to this interpretation. For them, to say that the possibility of experience is what gives objective validity to a concept is to say that concepts are meaningful only if there are empirical criteria for their application.

A second textually supported reading identifies 'objective validity' with 'necessary universality (for everybody),' validity

which is not restricted to the state of a subject at a particular time. My judgment is objectively valid if everyone else also always connects his perceptions in the same way under the same circumstances.<sup>16</sup> The 'operational' definition of 'objective validity' employed by transcendental phenomenologists such as Muck is similar to this universality one.<sup>17</sup>

But can this be a définition of 'objective validity'; specifically, can universal interpretation of perceptions be a necessary condition of objective validity? Objectively valid judgments can withstand no breach of consensus? This view is too strong, as is Mahaffy's view that 'objectively valid' means 'necessary for all cognition of objects,' in consequence of which, no empirical concepts can have objective validity, which is flagrantly unKantian.<sup>18</sup>

Further, universal interpretation is insufficient for objective validity as well. If we had accepted the doctrine of transcendental idealism, our indispensable beliefs would be regarded as true. But we rejected that doctrine in chapter I. In fact, in chapter II we even rejected the inference from indispensability to justifiability.<sup>19</sup>

The remaining textually supported view is that objective validity is truth (of a principle) or reference (of a concept). Kant affirms this equivalence at B816, where he is explicitly focussing attention on the nature of transcendental proof. He also seems to employ this sense in the discussion immediately subsequent to his characterization of transcendental arguments

as establishing (and/or explaining) the objective validity of subjective conditions of thought. (B122-123) And in the Critique's 'General Note on the System of the Principles,' Kant says that objective validity can be established only by appeal to outer intuitions. (B291) Also, in a note to Bxxvi, he contends that the objective validity of a concept is its real, and not merely its logical, possibility. But if real possibility is coextensive with existence, as argued in 'Postulates of Empirical Thought,' then objective validity is reference.

The evidence for the favored interpretation is vitiated if 'truth' means something like 'coherence' for Kant, as many hold. Yet at B82 he says, '...truth...is the agreement of knowledge with its object';<sup>20</sup> at B197, '...truth, that is, agreement with the object'; and at B670, '...to truth, that is, to conformity of our concepts with the object...'<sup>21</sup> These statements of a correspondence theory of truth are not decisive, however, since if a Wolffian view on which an object is analyzed as a 'that which' is correct, conformity of concept to object is conformity between concepts.

For well-rehearsed reasons, a coherence view, as expressed clearly by people such as Neurath, is unacceptable.<sup>22</sup> Not only does coherence fail to differentiate between entrenched myth and scientific system, but the choice between any individually coherent but jointly incompatible systems is always arbitrary. If maximal consistency is truth, then why should



Kant think the conceptual framework endorsed in Critique is indispensable?<sup>23</sup> But the best reason to accept the correspondence interpretation is that the skeptical position is most plausible on it; hence, a refutation of skepticism employing the correspondence interpretation is strongest. More bluntly, the final authorization of my interpretation is its consistency with the demands of an adequate anti-skeptical theory. None of the alternative interpretations suggested fulfill this minimal requirement.

### VIII

In the next four sections I want to survey some accounts of transcendental method, most of which differ in important ways from those already criticized. I hope to reinforce and further develop my positive account of transcendental argument by criticism of these defective alternatives.

The first account to be described has already been rejected as useless to the anti-skeptical task. Despite its obvious uselessness, it is widely favored. In fact, the identification of transcendental method with analytic epistemology is the preponderant Anglo-American view. For example, according to Milmed, transcendental principles are deducible from the nature of empirical knowledge.<sup>24</sup> They are true of all our empirical knowledge because they are true of all possible empirical knowledge, by definition of 'empirical knowledge.' It is a supplementary, synthetic premise of a transcendental argument

that our definition of 'empirical knowledge' is not vacuous, but has application. The categories cannot be applicable to all contents of consciousness; it is violation of categorial principles which characterizes illusion, dreaming, and so on.

In his book on Kant, Korner opts for a similar view.<sup>25</sup> Judgment is unification of diverse representations. Objective, empirical judgment and subjective, empirical judgment differ in that the objective refers to an object and not merely to a subjective impression, and the objective, if true, is true for everybody, regardless of his particular state. Korner rightly notes that neither the content of, nor the temporal relations among, the percipient-judger's perceptions can be the basis of objective reference and general validity, since these features are shared by subjective and objective judgment alike. The resolution is that objectivity is contributed by the objective judgment itself, by the way in which it further unifies representations already unified in the empirical concepts of the subjective judgment. These further concepts are rules governing the connection of the particular concepts of the subjective judgment, and hence concern the logical form of judgment. These rules or ways of conferring objectivity are the categories, and the propositions which state their necessity for making empirical knowledge-claims about objects are categorial principles.

It does not follow from the above that any of the objective judgments we make are true, that any pure concepts apply

to anything. Korner's Kant secures objective reference by appeal to the Copernican revolutionary interpretation of transcendental idealism -- objects are made to conform to concepts and not conversely. Hintikka insists on this interpretation of Kant in which 'genuine knowledge is maker's knowledge,' and 'reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own.'<sup>26</sup> Bossart and others sanction this view also.<sup>27</sup>

On this view, transcendental idealism entails the collapse of the mental content--independent reality gap, and so the belief--actuality gap. If transcendental idealism is true, then subjective conditions of thought, concepts indispensable to thinking, are objectively valid. No transcendental argument would be needed. But such idealism seems acutely inadequate to cope with the problem of the role of the given in knowledge. If my categories of thought literally determine what I observe, then what I observe provides no independent control over my thought.<sup>28</sup> Further, it provides a redefinition-cum-resolution of the skeptical problem rather than a direct solution on the skeptic's own terms; and we agreed to seek a method which attempts to refute skepticism rather than condemn it as misguided.

In addition to Milmed and Korner, Allison, Kalin, Meerbote, Machina, Crawford, Dryer, Bartley, Sellars and many others have argued that Kant's transcendental principles are analytic implications of the concept of empirical knowledge, and are not deducible from Humean consciousness.<sup>29</sup> Allison argues that the principles are the necessary conditions for

experiencing a public, spatiotemporal world distinguishable from the self and its ideas; we can define 'objectivity' only in terms of them. Also subscribing to their source in the human subject, he explains empirical reality by transcendental ideality. Crawford characterizes the principles as rules for systematizing experience deduced from the nature of scientific thought. Sellars insists that Kant is not seeking to prove there is empirical knowledge, but only to articulate the concept of empirical knowledge. Bartley sees Kant's problem as providing a tenable theory of learning, granted that knowledge exists. Meerbote says that Kant intends to explain certain features of the concept of knowledge rather than prove we have knowledge; he is asking how knowledge is possible, not whether we have it. And so on.

I have no doubt that these interpretations are exegetically sound if based on limited portions of the Kantian texts. In the Prolegomena Kant is explicit that only objectively valid consciousness or judgment may be called 'experience,' that the mere comparison and connection of perceptions in judgments is insufficient for experience.<sup>30</sup> In the Critique of Judgment Kant describes transcendental principles as stating universal conditions under which things can become objects of our knowledge.<sup>31</sup> And frequently in the Critique of Pure Reason, where Kant regularly says that transcendental propositions are necessary conditions of the possibility of experience (or a possible experience in general), he identifies experience



with empirical knowledge.

So undoubtedly Kant's argument sometimes runs: if there are objective particulars about which we have knowledge, they all have qualities of some intensity, they are extended and locatable in space, the event of the changing of their qualities or states presupposes some preceding event upon which it follows in a lawlike manner, they persist through changes, they are all part of one spatiotemporal system and so are interrelatable, and however remotely, they interact with one another, and so on. If this is all Kant is doing, he is merely articulating the structure of knowledge of objects and is not addressing himself to the epistemological solipsist's challenge. If he adds to the antecent, 'and there are objective particulars about which he have knowledge,' he has begged the skeptical question. Therefore, if 'experience' means something like 'experiential knowledge of relatively permanent, law-governed objects,' or 'discursive knowledge of spatiotemporally-coordinated objects,' Kant fails to answer the skeptic. Since I believe that in the first Critique Kant is sometimes concerned to refute the skeptical thesis, concerned with the actuality of transcendental knowledge and not its mere possibility, this strain of thought is of no use to me. And it is only a strain of thought, not to be confused with a more far-reaching method.

## IX

A cluster of wrongheaded theoretical requirements is exhibited

in the following remarks by Walsh:

If a transcendental proof is to issue in a necessary conclusion, it is not only required that it should start from an unshakeable fact; we must further be able to specify the single condition or set of conditions which make the fact possible. We must, in other words, be in a position to say that only if a certain proposition is true can we have the fact as we have it. And this requires two other things. First, that we should from the start be in possession of a complete list of all the possibilities to be considered, that is to say of an exhaustive set of hypotheses. Second, that we should be able to rule out all of these hypotheses except one definitively out of court, and to show that the remaining one is self-consistent.<sup>32</sup>

Walsh goes on to characterize his "unshakeable" premise as one for which the supporting evidence is 'so abundant that there is no practical likelihood of our being wrong' about it.<sup>33</sup> It is not a philosophical certainty. In fact, the transcendental conclusion itself enjoys the suggested epistemic status as evidently as any other candidate proposition, so that argument to such a conclusion would be otiose. But let us shelve this concern and turn to a more important one.

To show that a certain proposition is true only if another is true, all we must do is deduce the latter from the former. Walsh's talk of uniqueness is entirely misleading. He has confused the hypothetico-deductive method with deduction. We are not (and need not be) beginning with some phenomena and standing conditions and trying to pick the best or only adequate hypothesis from a finite set of alternatives. We could never have such a complete set since there are an indefinite number of sufficient conditions for any fact. All that can be required, and all that a transcendental proof intends to

provide, is a rigorous logical deduction of a proposition from another, certainly true proposition.

Korner, Kekes, and Ledger Wood are guilty of similar confusion. Korner sets up his attack on the possibility of transcendental deduction as follows: Statements about a region of experience presuppose we have the means of differentiating within that experience between objects and their properties and relations -- having a method of differentiation. Such a method belongs to a categorial scheme if and only if among the concepts exhibited by the scheme are some which are constitutive of, that is tell us what is to count as, an object of experience, and some which are individuating for those objects, that is tells us the criteria by which in general one object is to be distinguished from another. A scheme is established (or has application) when it is shown that a method of prior differentiation belongs to it, when (i) there is a non-empty attribute P such that 'x is an object of (a region of) experience' entails and is entailed by 'x is P' (condition of comprehensive applicability), and (ii) there is a non-empty attribute Q which is applicable to every object of the region, and 'x is an object of the region and x is a Q' entails and is entailed by 'x is a distinct object of the region.' A transcendental deduction elicits the conceptual scheme presupposed by our statements about experience.<sup>34</sup>

If one could validly argue that a certain categorial scheme is necessary in that no thought or discourse which does

not fit into this scheme is possible, then one could conclude that the necessary conditions for the applicability of this scheme are necessary conditions for all thought. Korner discounts this strategy. Sometimes he discounts it on the grounds that an unattainable enumeration of all possible schemes is required. But this rests on the confusion of hypothetico-deductive and transcendental methods. At other times he discounts it on the grounds that a multiplicity of consistent schemes adequate for the empirical differentiation of reality are possible, even actually available. He argues that the uniqueness of the favored scheme cannot be established through comparison with undifferentiated experience, nor through comparison with alternative competitors to see they are lacking. The first suggestion is incoherent; the description of the second suggestion shows that uniqueness fails to hold. He concludes that the only legitimate claim involved in the uniqueness claim is that alternatives to the scheme we are actually employing are not statable once we have adopted the scheme. So it seems that we can attach no meaning to the question whether we have to be in the scheme in the first place, which is the question a uniqueness argument would have to answer, according to Korner.<sup>35</sup>

The second horn of Korner's dilemma, that exposure of defective alternatives precludes uniqueness of the proffered alternative, can be escaped. Its intended force is reminiscent of Rorty's complaint that imaginable schemes cannot be shown



to be impossible. But reductive strategies are not wedded to the thing reduced. And argument by elimination does not endorse the things eliminated.

Further, Korner's positive claim that alternatives to the scheme in use are unstatable, if the scheme in use is uniquely adequate, is too strong. Even Strawson, who held that every possible form of experience is coherently describable, recognized that not every coherently describable form of experience is possible. Analogously, even if every scheme adequate for empirical differentiation is statable, not every statable scheme is adequate for empirical differentiation. Hence, it is gratuitous to preclude specifications of inadequate schemes. And this glance back to Strawson reminds us of another possibility for which Korner's argument fails to account, namely that the actual use of other schemes requires the prior acquisition of the favored scheme.

Finally, on Korner's view, the individuals which are the ontic commitments of formal theories are ideal rather than empirical individuals. Consequently, even if adoption of the favored scheme is required by every formal theory, no existential, anti-skeptical conclusions are forthcoming. Korner's type of transcendental argument will not even explain, let alone establish, the relation between thought and reality.<sup>36</sup>

In several articles, Kekes repeats Korner's mistakes. He tells us that one way of meeting the skeptical challenge is to<sup>show</sup> how the anti-skeptical propositions derive from a par-

ticular conceptual system, and then show that the system is the only possible one. But, according to Kekes, this Kantian proof of uniqueness and necessity rests on the mistaken belief that Aristotelian logic, Euclidean geometry, and Newtonian mechanics are necessarily true. The discovery of propositional logic, spherical geometry, and quantum mechanics refutes Kant's argument. Perhaps Kant misidentified the necessary components, but there are some. No, it is impossible to show that any component of any conceptual system is necessary. It can be shown that some components are necessary vis-a-vis a particular system, but not vis-a-vis any system, since this would require having the unattainable knowledge of all possible systems.<sup>37</sup>

The postulational method of science -- postulating intervening variables to explain the character of the output, given the input -- is the regressive method in Kant. The logical structures of the progressive, transcendental method and this hypothetical method are inverted. Transcendental propositions are neither empirical hypotheses nor postulational explanations. So again, the inability to complete an infinite series is irrelevant.

Kekes' specific criticism of Kant's "uniqueness" proof is also incorrect. Recall that our transcendental conclusion has the general force that there is a predicative function, specified by the analysis of objective particularity, which is satisfied, that a certain, abstractly specified, type of entity must exist (if we are conscious). What values in the

domain satisfy the function is left undecided; what in experience satisfies the conclusion is left an open question. The argument is intended to encroach minimally on scientific theory and discovery. No substantive propositions of physics follow from the conclusion. Generally, transcendental propositions are not axiomatic, and need have no, non-trivial deductive consequences, imply no empirical claims.<sup>38</sup>

And so the basic error in the postulationist criticism of Kant is perhaps best exemplified in yet another proponent, Swing, who in his book on transcendental logic, says that the indispensability of principles cannot be established, since it is logically impossible to prove the uniqueness of any postulate.<sup>39</sup> The simple answer to this is that postulational uniqueness is not indispensability of principle. Indispensable principles cannot be unique and need not be postulates. They cannot be unique because logically necessary conditions cannot be unique. They need not be postulates because necessary conditions of some proposition need not be sufficient conditions for that proposition. Once again, all that we seek is the logical derivation of one proposition from another, certainly true proposition. That other derivations of other propositions can be constructed in no way diminishes our accomplishment. And notice, to return to the final clause of Walsh's account, that if the premise is self-consistent, and the argument is valid, then the conclusion is self-consistent.

Finally, in addition to other versions of the postula-

tional account -- instance Ledger Wood's conception of the transcendental method as proceeding from abstractive analysis of de facto experience (insofar as it is structural) to a regress to its presuppositions, which he identifies with the hypothetical method of science -- there is a Strawson-postulationist hybrid offered by Wilkerson.<sup>40</sup> Using the notion of material sufficiency -- resources sufficient for a task -- Wilkerson shifts the burden of proof to the skeptic. If the truth of a transcendental principle does provide an explanation of our linguistic practices, then anyone rejecting that explanation must provide an alternative. The expectation, of course, is satisfaction at the skeptic's failure.

After concealing our disappointment in learning that the paradigm linguistic practice needing explanation is our distinguishing between the subjective and the objective,<sup>41</sup> we may justifiably complain that, as with the anti-skeptics of chapter III, Wilkerson fails to realize that the skeptic need not attempt to replace some of the features of empirical discourse by others regulatively preferable. The essential skeptical charge is that the system in use lacks rational justification. The skeptic does not dispute the coherence of the system, but the possibility of demonstrating that it corresponds with reality. And so even if the skeptic cannot offer a viable alternative, it does not follow that the system he is criticizing is rationally supported. But the skeptic can provide an adequate alternative. If the world being as



we think it is materially sufficient to account for our possession of the system in use, then the mere thought that the world is as we think is materially sufficient as well. And even if such thought were also 'materially necessary,' since I showed that conceptual priority has no interesting cross-categorical implications, the conceptual priority of objective particulars would be insufficient to show that they are not subjective or mind-dependent after all, or that we cannot know otherwise, as the epistemological solipsist suggests.

# X

In a series of recent articles Gram provides the following account of transcendental arguments.<sup>42</sup> Let  $O$  be an unspecified epistemic operator, and let  $S$  be a person. Then an epistemic premise is a premise of the form ' $SO(Ex)(Fx)$ ' which states that  $S$  is in a certain epistemic relation de dicto to a thing under a certain description.<sup>43</sup> Transcendental arguments are indirect proofs whose only assumption is an epistemic premise with subjective predicate as descriptive predicate  $F$ , where subjective predicates are such that the skeptic affirms that they, but not their negations, are knowably applicable. Ascriptions of negations of subjective predicates, objective epistemic propositions, are transcendental propositions. So, schematically, we argue transcendently when we argue as follows: (1)  $SO(Ex)(Fx) \dots (n) q \dots (n+m) -q \therefore (n+m+1) SO(Ex)(-Fx)$ .

Gram argues that no successful argument of this form is

possible. (A) If a premise which is a partial analysis of the concept of the epistemic relation contained in the epistemic premise had no independent support, its inclusion in the premise-set of a transcendental argument would destroy its (essentially) reductive strategy (since such a premise is as dubious as the epistemic premise itself). (B) If such a partially analytic premise had independent support, since it would state necessary conditions of being in the epistemic relation, the argument would become superfluous. And (C) if such an independently supported premise is true, we could infer its necessary conditions solely from the description of the thing to which S is epistemically related (so that the epistemic premise is superfluous).<sup>44</sup>

In effect, (C) tells us that if the description of some phenomenon does not imply the existence of some other phenomenon, then the perception or awareness of (or whatever epistemic relation in which we stand to) the first cannot require the existence of the second. But (C) is false. Hintikka correctly argues that the description of sensuous color phenomena does not imply the existence of visual sense organs, but the perception or awareness of sensuous color does require the existence of visual sense organs.<sup>45</sup> Nor, similarly, is it true that if the concept of perception implies something, then the description of what we perceive implies that thing too. The concept of perception implies the concept of consciousness (using the elliptical idiom of concept-implication); the

description of things perceived does not.

Gram allows that Hintikka's criticism of (C) is sound, but argues that Hintikka-type conditionals, partially analytic premises of the form ' $\text{SO}(\text{Ex})(\text{Fx}) \rightarrow (\text{Ex})(\text{Gx})$ ' where ' $(\text{Ex})(\text{Gx})$ ' does not follow from ' $(\text{Ex})(\text{Fx})$ ' alone, cannot be established transcendently.<sup>46</sup> This is tantamount to the claim that (A) are (B) each rule out transcendental argument; Hintikka's counterexample fails to comply with either (A) or (B); so Hintikka's conditional does not threaten Gram's overall assessment of transcendental argument. But while (A) is a truth about indirect proof, we have been given no reason to believe that transcendental arguments must be indirect. In fact, if we pause to reflect on our anti-skeptical project, we see that proceeding indirectly from a single assumption lacks all advantage. Epistemological solipsism is neither obviously absurd nor logically, highly complex, so that a reductio of it alone lacks promise. Supplementary, independently supported premises are needed. But this is just what is needed for direct argumentation against epistemological solipsism. Since a successful refutation of our skeptic need not be indirect, (A) is an irrelevant criticism.

Condition (B), which Hintikka's conditional allegedly violates, is false. If it is possible that some of the claims accepted by the skeptic, other than the epistemic premise, are partial analyses of some epistemic concept relevant to the epistemic premise, then it is false that supplementation of

the transcendental argument by such an analytic premise would assume what it is to prove. An accepted proposition of the form ' $SO(Ex)(Fx) \rightarrow (Ex)(Fx)$ ,' whose consequent is also accepted by the skeptic, is such a premise. Since there are instances of this form -- for example, let 'SO' stand for 'I am immediately aware that' -- (B) is false. Therefore, transcendental arguments can have both an epistemic premise and an independently, but not transcendentially, supported premise. The point is this: addition of an independently supported, partially analytic premise does not render transcendental argumentation superfluous, since although the consequent of such a premise states a necessary condition of the epistemic premise, it does not give us the necessary condition we seek.

Transcendental arguments are not ruled out by conditions (A), (B), or (C). But Gram's version of transcendental arguments can be ruled out. The argument-schema exhibiting Gram's account is not indirect or reductive. If the objects satisfying premise (1) and conclusion (n+m+1) are distinct, the two propositions are simultaneously satisfiable, and hence consistent. And relocating the negation sign in (n+m+1) from within the propositional function to the front of the formula -- giving the negation large scope -- while producing a proposition contradictory to (1), makes the argument intolerably strong, concluding that the skeptic cannot truly affirm the application of even the subjective predicate to anything. So long as 'O' represents an epistemic relation the skeptic acknowledges he



has to something de dicto, this consequence follows. And if we construe 'O' differently, the skeptic will not embrace the epistemic premise. Therefore, Gram's transcendental argument is either too strong to be credible or too weak to refute epistemological solipsism.

We can extend this last objection to show that transcendental arguments cannot be indirect, if that means reductive of a single premise. The single premise is either epistemic or not. If it is not, then it is either a proposition with no epistemic operator at all or a de re epistemic proposition. In either case, the proposition is existential. Now if the existential proposition is accepted, then the argument's conclusion will be unacceptably strong. And if the existential proposition is contested, then the argument is question-begging. Given the result of the previous paragraph, we can conclude that, whether based on an epistemic premise or not, transcendental arguments are not reductive.

There is a weaker sense of 'indirect proof' in which supplementary premises are permissible. In this weaker sense, Ruf, Howell, and others have insisted that transcendental proof must proceed indirectly.<sup>47</sup> Against this one might adduce Kant's own remarks on the illegitimacy of reductive method in proving synthetic principles outside of mathematics.<sup>48</sup> But these remarks have been entirely misunderstood, and on Kant's (and my own) view, the issue of reductiveness is a red herring.

Kant tells us that direct proof is desirable because,

unlike reductio, we see from what our conclusion follows. He then says that the impossibility of the joint truth of not-p and some subjective conditions under which alone anything can be conceived by our reason does not entail p.<sup>49</sup> But 'subjective conditions' here concerns the Ideas and dialectical illusion; such conditions may 'be false,' confusing the subjective with the objective. In essence, Kant's "restriction" of apagogic method to mathematics amounts to nothing more than the admonition not to use reductio when the assumptions of the proof are not certain. So instead of deducing q from p we can assume not-q, deduce not-p, and conclude that, since we know for certain that p, not-not-q, that is, q. The denial of a transcendental principle can be shown to be false, though not self-contradictory, by showing that it has a certainly known falsehood as a consequence. But we need not proceed indirectly.

But if, as we acknowledge, our transcendental conclusion is existential, Howell has a general argument in support of his view.<sup>50</sup> He says that existential conclusions can be validly inferred only by existential generalization or indirect argument. Admittedly, in our own case, existential generalization is unavailable -- we cannot commence debate by confidently pointing to an objective particular. So our argument must be indirect.

The major premise of his argument is false. With the help of necessary truths, existential conclusions can be inferred directly from other existential propositions. And if

the existential premise, conjoined with necessary truths only, entails the conclusion, then the premise by itself entails the conclusion. And this accurately depicts our own strategy. By the use of necessary truths, we deduce the conclusion that objective particulars exist from the privileged, and hence certain, existential proposition that judgment is occurring (which is itself derived by existential generalization from the certainty that I am judging).

## XI

Ruf's theory of transcendental argument contains several avoidable blunders. He argues that transcendental arguments are not deductive, but presuppositional, on the grounds that their conclusions must be synthetic a priori, but if their premises were solely analytic, their conclusions would not be synthetic, and if their premises were solely empirical, their conclusions would not be a priori.<sup>51</sup> This overlooks the possibility of a mixed premise-set, which turns out to be characteristic of Rufian transcendental arguments. It also overlooks the possibility of explicating presupposition in terms of deductive consequence, which also turns out to be characteristic of his theory. Carelessness in distinguishing in practice between definitionally distinguished propositions and statements also engenders needless difficulties. Suitably refined, however, Ruf's theory is interesting.

Statements are datable acts with spatiotemporal identity

conditions.<sup>52</sup> A statement 'exists' if and only if it has a truth value. A statement p 'presupposes' a statement q if and only if the truth of q is a necessary condition of the existence of p. A 'transcendental presupposition' is a statement whose own existence entails a fact which secures the truth value of the statement itself.<sup>53</sup> Transcendental presuppositions are synthetic a priori, transcendental statements. If p is such that its existence entails its truth, then p is a synthetic a priori truth; if p is such that its existence entails its falsehood, then p is a synthetic a priori falsehood. Transcendental proofs of synthetic a priori falsehoods are indirect: The joint assumption that p is true and that p is stated or supposed entails a contradiction. Transcendental proofs of synthetic a priori truths are indirect: The joint assumption that p is false and that p is stated or supposed entails a contradiction.

Rufian transcendental arguments, then, can schematically be represented as follows:

- (1) S asserts or supposes that p. (Supposition)
- (2) -p (Supposition)
- (3) If p exists, then p has a truth value.
- (4) If p has a truth value, then S asserts or supposes p.
- (5) If p exists, then S asserts or supposes p.
- .
- .
- .
- (n) q
- (m+n) -q



- (m+n+1)  $\neg$ (S asserts or supposes p, and  $\neg$ p).
- (m+n+2) If S asserts or supposes p, then  $\neg$ ( $\neg$ p).
- (m+n+3) If p exists, then  $\neg$ ( $\neg$ p).
- (m+n+4) If p exists, then p.
- (m+n+5) Necessarily, if p exists, then p.

(1) and (2) are suppositions for indirect proof. (3) follows from the definition of statement-existence. (4) follows from the definition of statement-existence and the nature of statements. (5) follows from (3) and (4) by transitivity of implication. (m+n+1) follows by indirect proof, and entails, via material implication and De Morgan's theorem, (m+n+2). By transitivity of implication, (m+n+3) follows from (5) and (m+n+2), and (m+n+4) follows by intervening use of double negation. Since to suppose that (m+n+4) is false leads to contradiction, given only definitional and logically true lemmas, (m+n+4) is necessarily true, that is, (m+n+5).

Ruf compares his transcendental arguments with arguments from self-refutation, and notes the strength advantage of the former. Transcendental arguments begin with mere supposals on the part of anyone, whereas arguments from self-refutation require actual assertions by a particular person.<sup>54</sup> Now as Ruf sees the advantage, there is effectively no advantage at all. After all, we are dealing with datable, occurrent speech acts -- not abstract propositions which may or may not be actually affirmed by someone -- and we are dealing with an epistemological solipsist who procedurally assumes the egocentric

predicament, for whom the someone performing the speech act is always himself. Hence, as with my version, any successful instance of Ruf's transcendental argumentation must begin with my act of judgment.

However, behind Ruf's comparative evaluation may be the unexpressed insight that, whereas arguments from self-refutation establish the falsity of a proposition expressed by a sentence-token used in a speech act by appeal to the event of the speech act, transcendental arguments establish such falsity (and consequently truth of the negation) by appeal to the analytic requirements for the occurrence of any speech act. But if this is true, as I think it is, then transcendental arguments need not begin with the assertion or supposition of epistemological solipsism, the denial of epistemological solipsism, or any other proposition in particular. The mere fact that something or other is being asserted or supposed suffices. And this is obviously an awesome advantage in power over alternative anti-skeptical methods.

Notice that transcendentially established claims are synthetic a priori, on Ruf's account. Since the asserted or supposed  $p$  is logically contingent, it is synthetic.<sup>55</sup> But since  $(m \rightarrow n \rightarrow 5)$  expresses a necessary truth,  $p$  is knowable a priori. If the fact that a statement has a truth value entails that that value is true, then, if the fact that it has a truth value can be ascertained without recourse to particular observations, its truth is knowable a priori. That

a statement has truth value can be ascertained without recourse to particular observations. Therefore, the truth of transcendental statements is knowable a priori.

My more powerful account of transcendental arguments retains this virtue. The fact that I am judging is logically contingent, as is the existence of objective particulars. But the speech act premise, since self-affirming or self-verifying, is knowable a priori. And all the other premises are analytically necessary, and so knowable a priori. Since the transcendental conclusion that objective particulars exist is a deductive consequence of a premise-set, each of whose members is knowable a priori, it is knowable a priori. But it is also synthetic. Therefore, it is synthetic a priori.

Finally, recall that the reductive strategy employed in Rufian transcendental arguments is inessential. Since premises supplementary to the assumption for reductio are used, we may optionally, with equal propriety, proceed directly. And in the case of my version of transcendental argument, it is only natural to proceed directly. It would be a pointless complication to assume that objective particulars do not exist.

## XII

The strategy of a Kantian transcendental refutation of epistemological solipsism is to show that the existence of objective particulars is a necessary condition for the occurrence of judgment. Since I judge, judgment occurs, and so

objective particulars exist. Since I am certain that I judge, I can (by following the proof) know with certainty that objective particulars exist. This is the anti-skeptical thesis.

I claim that if one shows the existence of objective particulars to be a necessary condition of the occurrence of judgment, then one can know with certainty that objective particulars exist. But in chapters II and III anti-skeptics such as paradigm case, non-vacuous contrast, and parasitism theorists were defeated by the following skeptical rejoinder: 'For the acquisition of concepts, for learning the meaning of words, etc., belief is as good as knowledge, and so reference or actuality is not guaranteed. Therefore, no kind of argument can establish that a kind of objective entity exists. In principle, at best one can establish that particular beliefs must be held. But to this result I am indifferent.'

This skeptical counterargument is not possible for transcendental arguments. A valid transcendental argument precludes further question as to whether we can really know its conclusion. If the argument is valid, so that the fact of judgment-making -- whether the judgment qua representation is true, false, justified or gratuitous -- implies the truth of the judgment that objective particulars exist, then what sense can we make of the judgment that there is a belief--knowledge gap between which a resourceful skeptic may sneak? If a transcendental argument is valid, it is sound. The very act of going through the argument is itself a judgmental act.



If a proposition's truth is necessary for all judgment, then that proposition cannot correctly be judged false by anyone, and its negation cannot correctly be judged true by anyone.

More precisely, if a transcendental argument is valid, then, if its conclusion were not true, no judgment could falsify it. But if no judgment could falsify it, it could not be falsely believed, since it is not possible that there be a judgment when it is not true. Hence, the conclusion of a valid transcendental argument is unmistakable. But this does not entail that a transcendental conclusion is a certainty, since, as we saw in chapter I, irrevisability is necessary and sufficient for certainty, but unmistakability is neither necessary nor sufficient for irrevisability. Yet transcendental conclusions are irrevisable; they could not be revised so as to be unwarranted in the light of subsequent reasons, since to adduce further considerations requires judgment, and judgment entails them. In fact, transcendental conclusions are maximally warranted, so long as their proofs are fully grasped, since no state of affairs which we could describe would render any other proposition more warranted than them, since whichever state of affairs we would describe, we would be judging, and judging, the occurrence of which we know with certainty, entails them. Therefore, valid transcendental arguments issue in philosophical certainties.

Notice that no verificationist principle is used in any of this. Therefore, the view that any transcendental argument

requires supplementation by a verificationist premise in order to succeed is false. And notice that the skeptic cannot escape by saddling himself with the in any case uncomfortable belief that objective judgments are meaningless, since all judgments, and not just some proper subset of judgments, entail the anti-skeptical conclusion.

How could we show that the fact that judgment occurs implies that objective particulars exist? In chapter I, section III, I set forth three individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for objective particularity -- reidentifiability, existential independence, and attributive independence -- leaving it an open question whether reidentifiability implies the other two. Now it is natural to distinguish the temporal dimension of objective particulars, that persistence and continuity embodied in the notion of reidentifiability, from the non-temporal features of existential and attributive independence. This distinction elicits two overall proof-strategies. We either establish the necessity of there being some kind of reidentifiable entity for judgment to occur, and then argue that only something which is neither a self nor a state of a self could be reidentifiable; or we show that judgment requires the existence of something external to our minds, something identifiable and independent, and then go on to argue that such a thing must be reidentifiable.

This dissertation has provided ample evidence that other methods -- methods which begin from the content of judgment --

which try to give a Cartesian answer to a Cartesian question, cannot succeed. One cannot get from inner content to outer content, from conceptual content to what must exist. Ontological arguments for descriptive expressions or concepts are impossible. Having a sense does not imply having a reference; understanding does not imply knowledge.

But the existence of one sort of thing can imply the existence of another sort of thing. And when the existence of the first is a philosophical certainty, we have an unanswerable proof of the existence of the second. But this dissertation has also exposed the pitfalls of straining to leap directly from the existence of conscious activity to the existence of some non-self.<sup>56</sup>

A Kantian transcendental argument innovatively pursues the remaining alternative by showing that judgment, which is an act, guarantees the possibility of our awareness of something which can be identified as the numerically same thing in different perceptual situations at different times (something reidentifiable), which implies the existence of something reidentifiable, which in turn implies the existence of something different from the self and any of its states, that is, something outer. Consciousness is intentional, but it is an intentional act. By focussing on the activity of judgment rather than its representative function, Kantian arguments offer new promise of showing that any world in which consciousness is present is a world in which objective particulars exist.

Kantian transcendental arguments offer genuine promise of refuting epistemological solipsism in that, of all the available alternatives, only they (i) comply with all of the skeptic's procedural assumptions, (ii) satisfy all of the formal requirements induced by the nature of the anti-skeptical conclusion, (iii) avoid imposition of any gratuitous restrictions, (iv) do not overstep their bounds in purporting to decide substantive scientific questions, (v) foreclose all avenues of escape, and (vi) do not include conditions which preclude the possibility of their sound instantiation. The difficult question of whether a sound instance of a transcendental argument can actually be produced depends for its answer on the acceptability of its analytic premises, that is, the alleged analytic requirements for the occurrence of any judgmental act. But this rests on the very large question of the nature of judgment. It is not my purpose here to provide a theory of judgment. But it remains an entirely open question whether a Kantian theory, sufficient to support the needed analytic premises, might not after all be tenable.<sup>57</sup> To this extent, Kantian transcendental arguments are very much viable candidates for the long sought conclusive refutation of epistemological solipsism.



## NOTES

## CHAPTER IV

1. This so-called principle of epistemic deductive closure has been disputed, but if the knowledge operator in epistemic logic behaves the same as the necessity operator in alethic modal logic, then the principle is true, since its analogue --  $(N(p \text{ entails } q) \ \& \ Np) \text{ entails } Nq$  -- is true. In any event, the truth of this positive claim is not required for my criticism; it only serves to exhibit another, perhaps acceptable inference-form, easily confused with the form I am criticizing.
2. Robert Paul Wolff, Kant's Theory of Mental Activity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).
3. Kant even seems to hold that consciousness of the 'pure manifold' of intuition, space and time, implies an a priori synthesis. See A101-102, B154 and B160.
4. Although Wolff's interpretation faithfully depicts much of Kant's thought on this question, in the final analysis, we must reject the theory depicted. (Wolff himself makes clear that as commentator he does not endorse all that he interprets.) For example, 'objectivity' is not supposed to mean 'having to do with objects existing independently outside our minds,' but rather 'asserting what is necessary and universally true.' But this necessity seems to be explicated in terms of transcendental ideality, which we have repudiated. 'Necessity of connection' ought to mean merely 'that is the way my perceptions must be organized, if my act of representation is to be correct.' But for Wolff's Kant an object is a way of organizing perceptions, a 'that which'; the object is the concept of the object; an object is a set of judgments. This transcendental idealism conflates the conceptual and the real. At the very least, this is not a suitable way of refuting the skeptic on his own territory. And there are other problems with the notion of universality. Does it mean 'universal applicability'? Then if 'objective particulars exist' is an objective judgment, and so characterized by universality, is everything an objective particular? This sort of question may motivate us to distinguish various species of a priori, synthetic truths, as Kant seems to do, as follows: (i) Taking the meaning of Aristotle's 'categories' seriously, we distinguish a class of metaphysical, categorial principles which are true of everything in the universe, taken distributively. There are two sub-species of categorial principle: (a) Dynamical transcendental principles are synthetic a priori propositions which are discursively certain (provable via concepts) and conditionally necessary in relation to empirical thinking; (b) Mathematical transcendental principles

are synthetic a priori propositions which are intuitively certain (provable by construction in intuition) and unconditionally necessary in relation to a possible experience. (ii) There are non-categorical transcendental propositions, conditionally necessary in relation to empirical thinking in general but not about everything that exists. (iii) There are geometric and arithmetic synthetic a priori propositions, for which principles (ib) account. (iv) There are dynamical, but not transcendental, synthetic a priori truths, such as Newton's laws of conservation and action-reaction, for which principles (ia) account. And (v) there are subjectively certain, synthetic a priori propositions (such as self-affirming propositions) which are not necessary or universal in any legitimate sense. Using this system of classification, we could say that the proposition that objective particulars exist is a transcendental but not categorical truth (of kind (ii)). Transcendental concepts such as that of objective particularity have referents, but it is false that their referents are universal components in every experience. On whether categorical principles (of kind (i)) must have universal applicability, see W.H. Walsh, 'Kant on the Perception of Time,' The Monist, 51, 3 (July, 1967): 376-396, and G.J. Warnock, 'Every Event Has a Cause,' in Flew's Logic and Language, pp. 312-330. Walsh argues that to allow any break in the connectability of things jeopardizes the continuity of time, and that relative persistence and regularity is insufficient to enable us to discriminate the real from the imaginary. Warnock allows that if there were too many random, inexplicable happenings, we would find ourselves in linguistic as well as practical difficulties, but argues that some disorder and chaos can be tolerated.

5. The instantiation of our transcendental conclusion, on the other hand, is neither privileged nor certain.
6. See Danto, Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge, p. 180.
7. Lewis White Beck, 'Once More Unto the Breach -- Kant's Answer to Hume, Again,' Ratio (June, 1967): 33-37. The premise Beck uses is a proposition about how constant conjunction of empirical events leads us to judge a causal connection between them.
8. To be careful, we may say that the truth of necessary propositions cannot be ascertained by recourse to first-hand observation, since it might be argued that we can learn necessities by the testimony of authorities.

9. Kripke argues that there are knowable necessities which are not knowable a priori. In particular, identity statements containing only proper names are necessarily true, if true, but some such identities are only knowable a posteriori. The following is a correct proof in modal logic:
- (1)  $(x)(y) ((x=y) \supset (Fx \supset Fy))$
  - (2)  $(x) N(x=x)$
  - (3)  $(x)(y) ((x=y) \supset (N(x=x) \supset N(x=y)))$
  - (4)  $(x)(y) ((x=y) \supset N(x=y))$

Assuming that proper names are suitable substituends for the variables, we can see how identities containing them are necessarily true if true. But surely, Kripke argues, the truth of many such identities were established by empirical discovery (and, he would have to add, could not have been established otherwise). So the Kantian implication from knowable necessity to a priori knowable is faulty. Kripke's argument rests on his view of proper names. He holds that proper names do not behave logically like definite descriptions, since they cannot induce the de re -- de dicto ambiguity in modal contexts, but descriptions obviously can. This leads him to reject the Frege-Russell disguised description theory of names, and to adopt the view that names are always rigid designators, that is, designators which denote the same thing in every possible world in which they denote anything at all. So his argument is that names are always rigid designators; descriptions generally are not rigid designators -- though some are, for example, 'the prime number between 3 and 7' -- therefore, names are not truncated descriptions. Kripke's argument that names are rigid is this: If the meanings of names were fixed by the descriptions used to introduce them, then we could not use names in contemplating or describing counterfactual situations. In other words, rigidity is required to allow for counterfactuals. For example, if names are not rigid designators, then you cannot say truly that the teacher of Alexander might not have been a teacher -- you cannot say that Aristotle might not have been a teacher. For consider 'It is necessary that the teacher of Alexander is a teacher.' On its de dicto reading, it is true, but on its de re reading, where the modal operator is within the scope of the description, it is false. Now replace 'the teacher' of Alexander' with 'Aristotle.' According to Kripke, on the Frege-Russell view, the resulting sentence expresses a necessary truth. But the proposition expressed is not necessarily true. Therefore, we must reject the description theory and hold that names are rigid designators. In a talk at Vanderbilt University, Leonard Linsky noted that there is for Kripke an unjustified connection between "fix the meaning" theories and de dicto readings such that the descriptions which do the fixing of meaning force the



de dicto interpretation on modal compositions containing them. But Kripke always interprets modal propositions containing names de re -- since, again, names cannot induce the de re--de dicto ambiguity. But, Linsky argued, these interpretations by Kripke are gratuitous. If we allow modal propositions having descriptions to have de re interpretations, as surely we must, then we may use them (as well as names) to describe counterfactual situations. In particular, the thesis that names are rigid designators is logically equivalent to the thesis that names cannot induce the de re--de dicto ambiguity in modal contexts, given Kripke's semantics for quantified modal logic, so that the latter consideration is not an argument for the former.

To prove his point, Linsky asks us to consider:

- (a) Santa Claus does not live at the North Pole.
- (b) It is not the case that Santa Claus lives at the North Pole.

Now ordinarily, there are no scope ambiguities in the use of negation with simple predications about individuals, but this is due to the existential presuppositions of the logic -- constants always refer, given the semantics. But with vacuous names such as 'Santa Claus,' scope operators are functional. Witness (a) and (b). An analogous situation obtains with respect to modal ambiguities. For suppose that all you know about Homer is that he wrote The Iliad or The Odyssey. Then the suggestion that Homer existed but wrote neither epic is unintelligible to you, as it should be on Russell's theory. So, 'It is necessary that Homer authored The Iliad or The Odyssey' (supposing Homer existed) is true. But it is false that Homer himself could not have but been an author. So names can induce scope ambiguities in modal contexts.

The crux of the issue is whether we give the designator in question a constant interpretation as in a formal system. In Kripke semantics, you assign an extension to each predicate, and then evaluate each well-formed formula at each possible world. De dicto necessity claims require evaluation of descriptions at each possible world (since the same description may pick out different individuals in different worlds). But for de re claims, we keep the value of the description fixed and see if it falls under the extension of the predicate in all the other worlds. There is no reevaluation of the description. With rigid designators, the two evaluation procedures will always give the same result -- the ambiguity collapses.

So modal propositions with constants get the same value de dicto or de re. The relevant question is whether ordinary proper names should function as constants in the formal system. To assume so is merely to assume the non-descriptive rigidity of names. If you know that a name should be so treated, then not only are identities



containing the name necessarily true if true, they are knowable a priori as well. And so our position should be this: Names have senses. If we treat the sense functions of names as constant, then identities containing them are necessarily true if true, but knowable a priori. If we do not treat our sense functions as constant, if they can pick out different individuals in different worlds, then identities containing these names will only be knowable a posteriori, but they will not be necessary. Therefore, Kant's thesis, as Kant understood it, remains unscathed.

10. This account of containment applies to non-subject-predicate judgments too.
11. Here again Kripke would object, since he holds that contingent analyticities exist. An example is 'I am here now.' The proposition expressed by this sentence is clearly contingent, but it is not clear that it is analytic. We need not resolve this dispute here because, whether or not contingency implies syntheticity, the relevant proposition that objective particulars exist is uncontroversially both contingent and synthetic.
12. See, for example, Critique of Pure Reason, B764.
13. As does Thomas Kaehao Swing, in his Kant's Transcendental Logic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), we can trace Kant's journey to the necessary-for-the-possibility-of-experience interpretation of apriority. In the Introduction of Critique Kant gives one negative and two positive criteria for a priori judgments: independence from experience, universality and necessity. If experience can never give necessity and universality, the negative criterion is derivable from the positive, but not conversely. Necessity and universality are claimed to be equivalent, reflecting Kant's belief that every a priori judgment takes the form of a universally quantified propositional function that cannot be falsified. But this view is no good for Kant. That space is infinite is a priori but singular, hence not universal; that some natural numbers are even is a priori but particular, hence not universal. All the genuine principles of the Analytic, however, are universal in form. But since necessity can be ascribed to any a priori judgment regardless of its form, it is the test that survives. If necessity is taken as the sole defining property of the a priori, the a priori becomes a purely logical notion. Kant also suggests a genetic account: 'a priori judgment' means 'judgment which has arisen completely a priori,' that is, all the constituents of the judgment are non-empirical or pure. The constituents are pure intuitions and pure

concepts. Since this view depends on the existence of pure intuitions, as badly argued for in the Aesthetic, we should junk it. And in the second edition Kant's admission of pure and impure a priori judgments does lead to the abandonment of this account. He briefly suggests that a judgment is a priori if at least one of its concepts are pure, but many a posteriori judgments satisfy this (for example, 'A caused B'). Finally, Kant comes upon the alternative of demonstrating the necessity of a priori judgments by showing that they are necessary for the possibility of experience. See chapter 5 of Swing's book.

14. See, for example, B278-279, Note 3 of 'Refutation of Idealism.'
15. See B138, and then B234-235, where Kant disambiguates 'object.'
16. Kant, Prolegomena, paragraph 19. We must reject the view expressed here since Kant is explicit that only objectively valid consciousness or judgment may be called 'experience,' (paragraph 20) and that comparison and connection of perceptions in judgments is insufficient for experience. Or we might just balk at Kant's too strong use of 'experience.'
17. Muck offers a version of speech act theory. His account is unacceptable in that it assumes that all intentional acts are rational, thus begging the question. See his The Transcendental Method (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), and 'The Logical Structure of Transcendental Method,' International Philosophical Quarterly, IX, 3 (September, 1969): 342-362.
18. John Mahaffy, Kant's Critical Philosophy.
19. According to Ralf Meerbote, in his Kant's Transcendental Skepticism, a dissertation written at Harvard in 1970, Kant holds that objective validity for humans gives maximal reason for belief, but it does not entail objective sufficiency, that is, truth. I do not see much textual support for this interpretation, but it is interesting, given the result of chapter I that maximal warrant is a sufficient condition for certainty. This leads to an interpretation such as Frankfurt's, on which all that both Descartes and Kant were seeking were reliable foundations for science. Of course, if this is the correct interpretation of 'objective validity,' then my version of transcendental arguments all the more easily establishes objective validity.
20. Kemp Smith should have translated Erkenntnis as 'knowledge-claim,' not 'knowledge.'

21. See B236 also, and B848-849, where, in expressing his views on knowledge, belief, and opinion, Kant says that intersubjective agreement is a consequence of correspondence with the object.
22. Otto Neurath, 'Protocol Sentences,' trans. Frederic Schick, reprinted in A.J. Ayer, Logical Positivism (New York: The Free Press, 1959), pp. 199-208.
23. The question of whether facts are just true species of judging (as Sellars puts it) for Kant ultimately raises difficulties that cannot be faced in this dissertation. Consider the following problem for my view. Kant says (B194) that the verifying third thing in the case of empirical propositions is access to what they are about, which is achieved by observation. But then observation must differ from judging if we are to avoid a coherence view. But if observation does differ from judging, what becomes of the tenet that all consciousness is judgmental? Is observation an unconscious act? That is no good. At the other extreme, at B377 Kant claims that observation, that is, intuition or immediate representation of an individual thing, is a species of knowledge, so that not all knowledge would require judgment. If we discover inconsistencies in a theory, we should choose the proposition which makes the theory more plausible. Within the context of an anti-skeptical theory, I choose the interpretation I have offered.
24. Bella K. Milmed, Kant & Current Philosophical Issues (New York: New York University Press, 1961).
25. Stephan Korner, Kant (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955).
26. Jaakko Hintikka, 'Transcendental Arguments: Genuine and Spurious,' Nous, VI, 3 (September, 1972): 274-281.
27. William H. Bossart, 'Is Philosophy Transcendental?' The Monist, 55, 2 (April, 1971): 293-311.
28. This is one horn of the dilemma Scheffler, in Science and Subjectivity, pp. 13-14, dubs the 'paradox of categorization.' The other horn, that if my categories do not determine what I observe, then what I observe is formless, nondescript, or ineffable, raises other problems.
29. Henry E. Allison, 'Kant's Transcendental Humanism,' The Monist, 55, 2 (April, 1971): 182-207.  
Martin Kalin, Kant's Theory of Transcendental Propositions, dissertation written at Northwestern University, 1970.



- Kenton Machina, 'Kant, Quine, and Human Experience,' The Philosophical Review, LXXI, 4 (October, 1972): 484-497.
- Patricia Crawford, 'Kant's Theory of Philosophical Proof,' Kant-Studien (1961-62): 257-268.
- D.P. Dryer, Kant's Solution for Verification in Metaphysics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966).
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- Wilfrid Sellars, 'Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience,' The Journal of Philosophy, LXIV, 20 (October 26, 1967): 633-647.
30. Kant, Prolegomena, paragraphs 20-22 (pp. 47-52).
  31. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, in The Philosophy of Kant, ed. Carl J. Friedrich (New York: Random House, 1949), Introduction, section V (pp. 272-277). The ambiguity of 'object' makes even this passage unclear.
  32. W.H. Walsh, 'Philosophy and Psychology in Kant's Critique,' Kant-Studien, Heft 1-3 (1966): 193.
  33. Ibid., p. 196.
  34. Stephan Korner, 'The Impossibility of Transcendental Deductions,' The Monist, 51, 3 (July, 1967): 317-331. See also Korner's Categorical Frameworks (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), and his contribution in 'Symposium: Transcendental Tendencies in Recent Philosophy,' The Journal of Philosophy (October 13, 1966): 551-566. Also, Experience and Theory: An Essay in the Philosophy of Science (New York: Humanities, 1966).
  35. The latter part of this paragraph summarizes the account of Korner's argument given by Eva Schaper in 'Arguing Transcendentally,' Kant-Studien, 63 (1972): 101-116.
  36. Korner's view about formal theories is presented in Experience and Theory, pp. 172-178, as cited in Edward MacKinnon, 'Epistemological Problems in the Philosophy of Science - I,' The Review of Metaphysics, XXII, 1 (September, 1968): 113-137.
  37. John Kekes, 'Skepticism, Rationalism, and Language,' Metaphilosophy, July, 1971; 'Transcendental Arguments and the Skeptical Challenge,' The Philosophical Forum, IV, 3, 422-431.
  38. Crawford gets this right. Gram, in Kant, Ontology and the A Priori, pp. 181-183, gets this wrong.



39. Swing, p. 118.
40. Ledger Wood, 'The Transcendental Method,' in The Heritage of Kant, eds. George Tapley Whitney and David F. Gowers (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp. 3-35.  
T.E. Wilkerson, 'Transcendental Arguments,' The Philosophical Quarterly, 20 (July, 1970): 200-212.
41. Wilkerson does try to argue that this ability to distinguish the subjective and the objective follows from 'I am conscious of a series of representations, ordered in time.' But in chapter II I argued that this entailment does not hold.
42. See Moltke Gram, 'Transcendental Arguments,' Nous, V, 1 (February, 1971): 15-26; and 'Must Transcendental Arguments be Spurious?' Kant-Studien (1974): 304-317. Gram also talks about transcendental arguments in his book, and in 'Categories and Transcendental Arguments,' Man and World, 6, 3 (September, 1973): 252-269. But it is extremely difficult to sort out the relations between his various claims and arguments, and so for expositional ease I have pursued his most recent and systematic account. This section on Gram benefits immensely from 'On the Formal Structure of Transcendental Arguments,' an unpublished paper by Scott Shuger.
43. Gram, Nous, p. 22.
44. Ibid., pp. 23-26.
45. Hintikka, 'Transcendental Arguments: Genuine and Spurious,' p. 278.
46. Gram, Kant-Studien, pp. 307-308.
47. Henry Ruf, 'Transcendental Logic: An Essay on Critical Metaphysics,' Man and World (1969): 38-64.  
Robert C. Howell, Transcendental Arguments, dissertation written at University of Michigan, 1967.
48. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, B817-822.
49. Ibid., B820
50. Howell, pp. 112-113.
51. Ruf, p. 48.
52. Ibid., pp. 40-41

53. Ibid., p. 49. Reference to facts seems dispensable, and I dispense with them in what follows. Note also that Ruf defines statement-existence in terms of the possession of truth value by both the statement and its negation. I have simplified, since as a matter of semantics, if a statement has a truth value, then so does its negation.
  54. Ibid., p. 51.
  55. Again, Kripke notwithstanding. And again, even if this implication fails, it is obvious enough that the proposition that objective particulars exist is synthetic.
  56. For example, Bennett in Kant's Analytic.
  57. As an indicative first step of how a Kantian would fill in the details, I offer the following extrapolation from the A-edition 'Transcendental Deduction' and the 'Refutation of Idealism.'
- (1) I am judging.
  - (2) Some act of judging is occurring.
  - (3) Any act of judging is an act of consciousness or awareness.
  - (4) Acts of consciousness or awareness are representative (have a content).
  - (5) Awareness of the instantaneous is impossible.
  - (6) So the content of awareness is non-instantaneous.
  - (7) Any non-instantaneous content is a successive content, that is, a series of items occurring in an order, and not all at a single instant.
  - (8) So judgmental awareness is of a succession of items.
  - (9) Awareness of succession implies awareness of a plurality of items as a plurality -- awareness of a diversity or manifold.
  - (10) Awareness of a plurality of items as a plurality requires that the plurality be apprehended as a numerically identical collection over the time during which the awareness is occurring.
  - (11) This identity of the manifold over time requires that the act of awareness of this identical manifold connect up or relate the various elements which comprise it, that is, be aware of all the elements together.
  - (12) Such a connective awareness requires that earlier items in the series be re-recognized together with the later items, and that all the items be recognized as belonging to this unity over time.
  - (13) Only a persisting, identical subject of awareness can be connective; a series or collection of diverse subjects of consciousness is incapable of such connective activity.

- (14) So any act of judgment requires a persisting judger.
- (15) An identical judger must be able to be aware of his unity of consciousness.
- (16) But awareness of an objectless awareness itself is impossible. I can be aware of consciousness only by being aware of the object of consciousness.
- (17) So awareness of a persisting consciousness requires awareness of a persisting object of consciousness.
- (18) So awareness of succession requires awareness of something persisting.
- (19) This something persisting cannot be an item in the series, or of the succession, since only by being aware of it can I be aware of the series.
- (20) This series of items (of acts of representation) constitutes my mental life.
- (21) So the persisting something is not part of my mental life.
- (22) But if something is not part of my mental life, it is existentially and attributively independent of me.
- (23) And since it is something which I can perceptually identify and which persists, it is reidentifiable.
- (24) So the persisting something required for awareness of succession, which in turn is required for judging, is an objective particular.
- (25) So I am aware of an objective particular.

From the nature of my activity of judging I deduce that I am aware of a succession. The status of the items in the series (subjective or objective) is left an open question. Also, what I judge is wholly irrelevant. So I need not judge that I am confronted with a temporal sequence in order to generate the argument. Even if I judge that certain features are simultaneously occurring, the same consequences ensue. Awareness of succession is shown to require awareness of something persisting. It is not enough that I have the concept of something persisting, since such a concept is a concept, and like all representations, is one of the items of the series which constitute my mental life. The proof shows that I could not be aware of any of these items unless there was awareness of a persistent, so that the persistent cannot be identical with any of those items.

The argument as presented has weaknesses -- (7) involves contraries, not contradictories (although this is not serious, since the remaining alternative is an uninterrupted, abiding thing, which just brings us closer to our conclusion that much faster), and more seriously, (3) seems to imply that the object of judgment is always objectual, never propositional. Whether this is so, if so, whether it is a difficulty, and if a difficulty, whether it can be remedied, are questions beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

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